

MIN-3364 – Update on South Island Flooding

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has asked the Transport Agency to provide an update on the flooding in the South Island for Hon Peeni Henare, who is in the region today.

9 December 2019

CANTERBURY

The Current situation

SH1 remains closed at the Rangitata Bridge and inland (on Route 72) at the Arundel bridge, which is also over the Rangitata.

Our expectations

Route 72 (inland route between Christchurch and Timaru) is expected to be opened this afternoon. This route adds 45 – 60 minutes to road user travel time.

SH1 is unlikely to be opened today due to high water levels across SH1 in about three places close to the Rangitata Bridge. Once these water levels drop, SH1 reinstatement will be rapid.

SOUTH WESTLAND

The Current situation

SH6 through South Westland is closed north of Haast and south of Harihari. (Note: Residents and essential services can go south of Hokitika to Harihari.)

Our expectations

In South Westland, crews are beginning to tackle multiple slips on the Fox Hills, between the two glacier townships and it is hoped this area of highway will be open by the end of this week.

Harihari to Whataroa will take longer to clear. The area around Whataroa at Mt Hercules is where there are the most slips and we are aiming to have services reconnected for Christmas, if not shortly after Christmas.

The road between the two glacier towns, Fox and Franz Josef, through the Fox Hills is being targeted to open by the end of this week. There are four or five slips along this section of road.

Essential services and residents can get between Haast and Makarora in Otago during daytime hours (10 am to 4 pm). Work on a slip at Clarke Bluff is continuing outside these hours this week.

Apart from South Westland, the West Coast's other highways through the Otira Gorge, north to Punakaiki and Buller District and south to Hokitika are open for business.