

Project update

May 2015



A view of the works around Rangiriri.

Earthworks a challenge

The Rangiriri section of the Waikato Expressway has thrown up some challenges in the first two years of construction – none more so than around earthworks.

Although most of the 1 million cubic metres of earth to be moved is now complete the contractor is behind where they need to be for finishing the section by late 2016.

The main problem has been highly variable, low strength soils encountered in the excavations in the 4.8km undulating stretch of land. The quality varies greatly, as does the water content, meaning a large portion of what was going to be cut out and used elsewhere in filling operations has to be discarded and other suitable material brought in instead.

A significant amount of soil conditioning using lime and cement has been needed to improve excavated materials for re-use in fills.

This means the completion date of late 2016 is going to be a stretch and the Transport Agency says it is now more likely to be 2017. A lot will depend on the amount of earthworks

achieved before the winter shutdown. The resource consents do not allow major earthworks through the wet winter months.

“We will be doing our best to meet the late 2016 date but people should be prepared for a later opening in view of the earthworks issues,” said project services manager Peter Simcock.

“We understand people will be disappointed to hear that, especially local residents who have been living in and around this construction site for the past two years.”

Meanwhile, at the Te Kauwhata interchange, 68,000 cubic metres of fill has been brought in at DOC Gully to construct the new link road between the interchange and the roundabout. At peak there were 28 truck and trailer loads coming in each day.

Surplus excavated soils are being placed in the remainder of the gully.

Watch for changes

A big thank-you to everyone for working in with us around the access to Rangiriri village from the southern entrance. To enable construction of the interchange and new four-lane highway there will be changes to traffic management from time to time in order to maintain access.

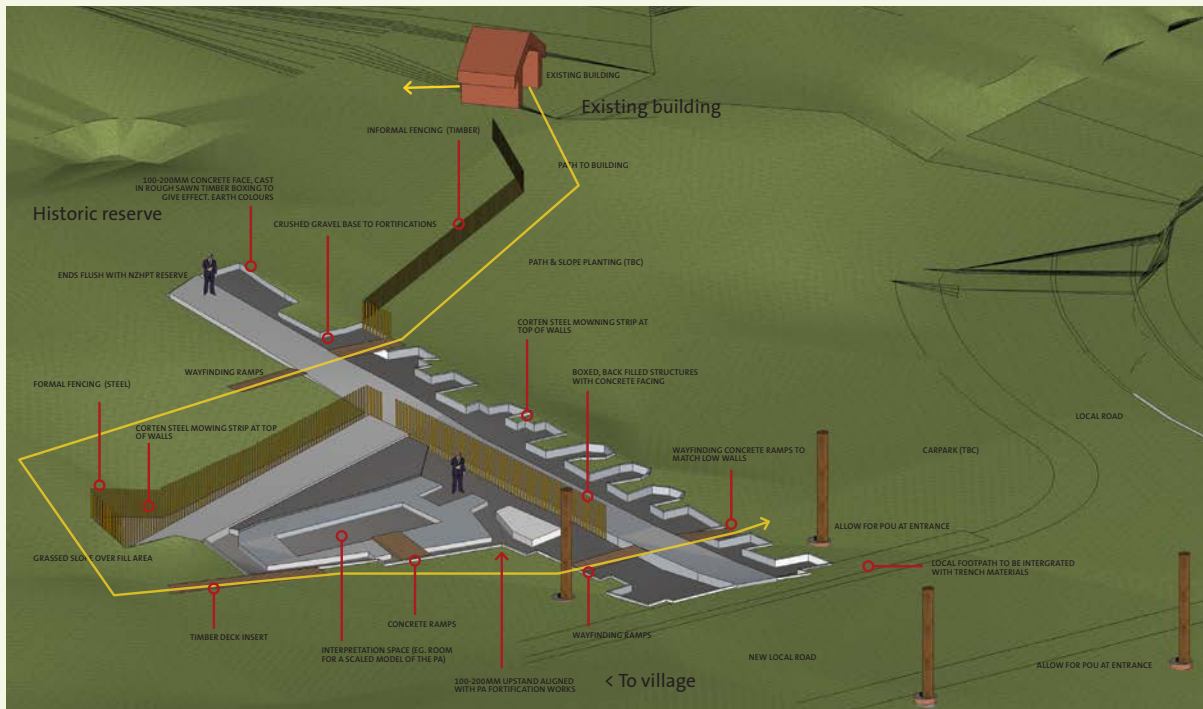
Currently there’s no left turn into Rangiriri, and that is expected to remain until later in the year. This allows for pavement construction work to safely proceed in the area.

This means that anyone travelling from the Glen Murray bridge needs to follow the detour signs.

Once that section of pavement work is completed, the next big change will see no access into Rangiriri village from the southern entrance for seven days while full connectivity is re-established at the intersection. North-bound traffic will need to exit SH1 at the Te Kauwhata intersection and use the new Te Kauwhata Road roundabout to turn around and head south. They will then use Rangiriri Road.



Cultural plans move ahead



A draft concept plan of the pa project

Culture and heritage plans are starting to take shape for the Rangiriri Pa commemorative area which will be built when State Highway 1 traffic moves on to the new expressway section.

The Rangiriri area is steeped in history and was the scene in 1863

of a fierce battle between Maori and colonial troops. SH1 currently cuts through the original pa site and the new route means the cutting can be filled in. This will provide the opportunity to link the heritage landscapes with the commemorative area.

Three-dimensional computer modelling and historic survey maps have been used to reveal the pa footprint, in consultation with Waikato-Tainui. Discussion with Heritage NZ is also in progress.



Plenty of interest at open day



Councillor Jan Sedgwick discusses Longswamp plans with the Transport Agency's Peter Simcock at the information day.

More than 100 people turned up at an open day in Te Kauwhata in February which provided updates on both the Rangiriri and Longswamp sections.

NZ Transport Agency and Fletcher Construction staff were able to explain various traffic management plans for the southern entrance to Rangiriri village, and outline culture and heritage plans for the area. The information day posters can be viewed on the website www.nzta.govt.nz/rangiriri under the publications tab.

Waikato District councillor Jan Sedgwick attended and said it was great to see plenty of local interest in the Expressway work. "I appreciate that where you have infrastructure of this size, there is always some concern about change. Personally I think the Transport Agency and its staff have worked extremely well with the Rangiriri and Te Kauwhata communities to ensure it all goes as smoothly as possible," she said. "Where there has been any disruption they've been quick to inform the community well ahead of time."

Landscaping and plans for planting

About 200,000 plants are needed for the Rangiriri section re-vegetation landscaping - which takes a bit of organising well in advance.

This spring 30,000 will be planted, mainly in the 2-hectare Rangiriri wetland area where earthworks will finish this season. The remainder will be planted in the 2016 season.

Many of the plant types are native to the area and Waikato-Tainui has had early input to the selection, including a portion of weaving flax which can be harvested.

The planting mix includes many wetland species, and specific plants have been selected to create an environment that will support the mudfish population in the area known as "mudfish gully".

The plants come from a range of large commercial nurseries and are grown from eco-sourced seed or cuttings from the Whangamarino and Hakarimata areas.

Expressway overview

The Rangiriri section is part of the larger Waikato Expressway programme of work. The Waikato Expressway is one of seven Roads of National Significance for New Zealand.

Sections update:

- Longswamp - Construction 2016-2018
- Rangiriri - Under construction, opens late 2016 or 2017
- Huntly - Construction 2015-2019
- Ngaruawahia - Opened December 2013
- Te Rapa - Opened December 2012
- Hamilton - Construction 2016-2019
- Cambridge - Under construction, opens 2016



OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Nicola Martin
Waikato Expressway Communications
and Stakeholder Liaison Manager
Telephone: 07 958 7260
Mobile: 027 292 8076
Email: nicola.martin@nzta.govt.nz

NEW STAKEHOLDER MANAGER



Traffic and stakeholder manager Paul Nimmo

Getting traffic safely through a busy construction site is the job of Paul Nimmo, Fletcher Construction's new traffic and stakeholder manager at Rangiriri. Paul has taken over the role from Wendy Austin.

A key focus is designing and implementing traffic management plans (TMPs) so vehicles can pass safely through an active and constantly changing construction environment.

"Another big part of the job is ensuring a close interaction with our neighbouring businesses, landowners and other

stakeholders so they are well informed of upcoming works," said Paul.

He will also oversee signage and line markings for the project.

Paul has previously worked as a road safety engineer and traffic management co-ordinator and designer, designing TMPs for major events such as the Auckland World Triathlon, Hamilton V8s and the Rugby World Cup.

Most recently he has been involved in a regulatory role at Waipa District Council, which he said reinforced the importance of relationships with stakeholders.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS VISIT SITE

About 120 engineering students from Auckland University paid a site visit to Rangiriri recently to learn more about practical aspects of the project.

They were hosted by Fletcher Construction staff and are pictured at the Rangiriri Pa hillside vantage point where they



were briefed on the project. They also visited the KiwiRail bridges at Te Onetea Road.

This document is printed on environmentally-responsible paper manufactured using FSC-certified, mixed-source pulp harvested from sustainable well-managed forests and bleached using an elemental chlorine-free process.