

Huntly project update

March 2020



Vehicles on the new section of expressway just south of Waring Road, with the Gordonton Road interchange in the distance.

Traffic flowing on Waikato's newest road

Traffic is now on the newest section of the Waikato Expressway.

The 15km Huntly section links the completed Ngaruawahia section at Taupiri with the Ohinewai

section north of Huntly town.

The cones and barriers were removed on Monday 9 March, and traffic switched from the old State Highway 1 route via Huntly.

This followed two days of celebrations on 14-15 February to mark completion, with final finishing works and audits pushing the road opening out to three weeks later.

Partnership shines through in project



By Joint Venture Project Manager Tony Adams and Transport Agency Waikato Portfolio Manager Darryl Coalter

Everyone connected with the Huntly project has reason to feel proud. It's been a good project, with some testing engineering challenges overcome and it finished on budget and 10 months early.

But the biggest accomplishment has been cementing the partnership between Crown and iwi which has been a feature on several sections of the expressway – at Cambridge, Rangiriri, Huntly and continues with the Hamilton section and Southern Links project.

You can't be involved in large infrastructure projects without having your treaty partners alongside. The early involvement of the Tangata Whenua Working Group greatly helped plot the route, consenting and design of the Huntly section, and also developed the Cultural Symbolism Plan which led to the impressive pou and artwork along the route.

The relationship with the Fulton Hogan-HEB Joint Venture was recognised when Waikato-Tainui presented project director Tony Adams with a pouwhenua, Kahu Pookere, which was carried during the project completion blessing.

While that journey is now coming to a close for the

Joint Venture at Huntly, the relationship continues with the Transport Agency and their work in the Waikato.

It's been an interesting four and a half years for the contractors – right from the get-go with the sod-turning at Orini Road in spring 2015.

They've overcome steep terrain and access issues – including getting a staging bridge across the Mangawara Stream to get people and machinery into the isolated site.

They've literally moved a mountain with the cutting at the Taupiri Range summit and filled massive ravines to form a level surface to support a

four-lane highway.

The weather didn't help in the first two summers but lost ground was made up.

The area has also been left in better shape – with the intensive ecology work paying big dividends for the surrounding wetlands, bush, wildlife, birds and plants.

Our neighbours have been very patient and we thank you all for that, as have passing highway travellers where we have been in their way at the northern and southern interchanges.

Happy and safe travels, everyone.



Tony Adams is presented with the a pouwhenua "Kahu Pookere" used in the Huntly section blessing, by King Tuheitia's spokesman Brad Totorewa.

Cultural artworks stand alongside route

A feature of the Huntly project has been the partnership between Waikato-Tainui and the Transport Agency.

From early engagement came the creation of a Tangata Whenua Working Group – made up of local marae and other affected iwi groups – and subsequent development of a Cultural Symbolism Plan.

The plan identified important sites which have been marked with massive pou and other artworks. Two former paa sites just off the main route have been symbolically reinterpreted with pou, palisades and gateways, and arrangements made to return the land to iwi ownership.

All sites, apart from the eight pou at the Taupiri Summit, can be accessed by car or walking in for a closer look.



1 Whakataki (Access from Ralph Road, carparking at site)

This stunning work features a giant hinaki (eel trap) strung between two maumahara (canoe cenotaphs). The waka and pou are very different from traditional design – being pre-cast concrete with stainless steel panels attached. All pou portray themes relevant to the naming of Raahui Pookeka (Huntly) and geographical landmarks on the northern side of the Taupiri Range such as Pukemore mountain and Lake Kimihia. The hinaki theme is continued in the layout of the site forming a symbolic paa tuna (eel weir), showing how migrating eels were trapped.

2 Te Tihi (No access)

“Te Kaahui Hakuturi” eight massive pou standing 20m above the ground look down on travellers at the summit of Taupiri Range. The pou acknowledge the path once travelled by the fabled Patupaiarehe and the creatures of the forest. The pou are carved from treated radiata pine and painted white with black detailing to acknowledge the spiritual connection which the Patupaiarehe have to the land. Each pou looks in a different direction across the landscape, guarding over all that drive through this whenua (land). This site was lowered by a 57m deep cutting and removal of 1.3 million cubic metres of earth.



4 Te Uapata Paa (Access from Orini Road – 20min walk)

This former paa site has been brought back to life with tuuwahatawhata (palisades) and waharoa (gateways) reinstated where there was once a thriving settlement within the red rivers system. This site was once the home of the tuupuna (ancestor) Mahuta after who the Ngaati Mahuta tribe of Waikato take their name and from whom the Maori King Tuheitia is a direct descendant. The site holds archaeological features, which are unique given the age of the site. In addition, the features of the large whare-puni, kumara storage pits and defensive trenches are still visible to the discerning eye.



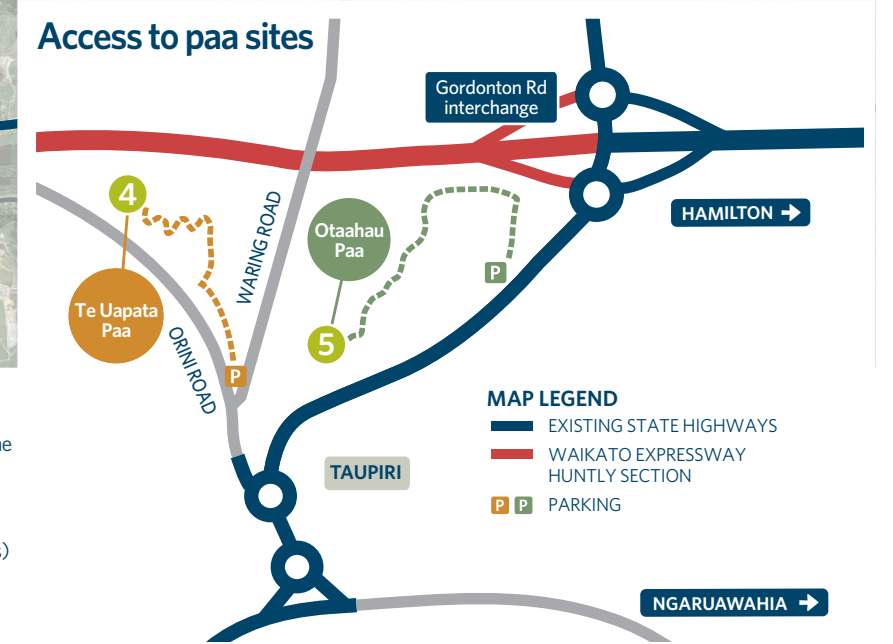
5 Otaahau Paa (Access from Gordonton Road – 20min walk)

Another former paa site, with its headland position reinterpreted with tuuwahatawhata (palisades) and waharoa (gateways). These paa provided food, water and protection. This site lies to the west of Te Uapata Paa on a headland between the Mangamutu and Mangatoketoke streams. According to recorded histories, this site was occupied as late as the 1850s, and at the southern end bordered major cultivations. Visitors can see the remnants of the trench, which protected the southern end of the paa, and kumara pit at the northern end. When the stream levels are low remnants of the ancient palisades can be seen in the Mangatoketoke riverbank.



3 Te Iringa Lagoon (Access south-bound only)

Four waka-maumahara (canoe cenotaphs) are an impressive sight. The waka-maumahara acknowledge the four winds, which blow through the valley and are a reference to the oral histories of Te Iringa. As with all oral history there are versions of events told by victor and vanquished alike, so no two are the same. The two mokomoko (lizards) are symbolic of the two brothers Tapae and Wharetipeti who held domain over this site. A walking track has been established, providing a link to the historic site of Rua’s Hut – an early inhabitant of the area.





At the end of the blessing event, Maori King Tuheitia cuts the ribbon, with Transport Minister Phil Twyford at his side.

Two days of celebrations

Around 17,000 people came through the site on the two days of celebrations on 14-15 February.

Friday 14 February was a special day for guests, VIPs and iwi with a blessing procession moving along the route, stopping for a ribbon cutting at the Northern Interchange bridge.

More than 500 sat down at Te Iringa Lagoon for kai, speeches



Lunch was served in a marquee on the new highway.



The pupils from Rakaumanga School in Huntly helped at lunch and also provided the entertainment.

and entertainment.

The lagoon site was repurposed to accommodate the public from early on the following day. Around 1700 took part in the Expressway Classic half-marathon and shorter running and walking events before the public arrived to explore the site on foot, bike or in a free bus.



On your marks for the Expressway Classic races.



Bikes and buses were a popular mode of transport for people to explore the route.



All event finishers received a medal