

Rangiriri project update

February 2018



The Te Kauwhata interchange

Thanks from us all

Construction of the Rangiriri section of the Waikato Expressway is now substantially complete. It's been a quite a journey for all involved, especially for the people who live, work or travel through the area, since construction began in early 2013.

It wasn't possible to have a public walkover and ribbon cutting event to mark completion – as the NZ Transport Agency has done on other expressway sections when they have opened. That's because traffic has been on the new alignment, all four lanes and 100km/h, since Easter 2017 while finishing works continued and the paa reinterpretation project got under way.

The \$125 million Rangiriri section is a 4.8km stretch of four-lane highway which connects the completed Ohinewai section in the south to the Longswamp section (under construction) to the north with interchanges at Te Kauwhata and Rangiriri.

It also included a "project within the project" – the symbolic reinterpretation of the Rangiriri Paa – scene of the 1863 Battle of Rangiriri and first major conflict of the Waikato invasion by British forces.

About 220 people attended an iwi-led event on 16 December, mainly centred on the paa project. Crown-Maori Relations Minister Kelvin Davis joined representatives of Waikato-Tainui, including King Tuheitia, to celebrate the completion of both projects.

The paa site was significantly damaged by an upgrade to SH1 in 1965, and the new SH1 route to the west of the paa provided the opportunity to reinstate the area.

"The Rangiriri project is far more than roading infrastructure. The project is a symbol of the Crown's dedication to partnering with tangata whenua and righting past wrongs," Mr Davis said.

The event also recognised the efforts of the project team, including the contractor Fletcher Construction. A collaborative approach to planning, design and construction was required to complete this challenging piece of infrastructure.



King Tutietia enters the paa area, via the large tomokanga (entrance)



Part of the crowd at the opening event where structures were blessed and unveiled

A special place in NZ history



Peter Simcock

Rangiriri was never just about building a four-lane expressway, says the NZ Transport Agency's Peter Simcock.

"It was also about the Crown and Waikato-Tainui working together to preserve the cultural and historical significance of Rangiriri, about doing things differently and recognising the area's history for all New Zealanders."

Hamilton-based Delivery Portfolio manager Mr Simcock has also overseen the completed Te Rapa, Ngaruawahia and Cambridge sections, and has Longswamp, Huntly and Hamilton sections under construction, says the Rangiriri project provided challenges and rewards.

"It has been a difficult site to work on with the variable ground conditions and terrain. But the expressway component of the project has a huge benefit for SH1 users and local people coming and going at Rangiriri and Te Kauwhata interchanges. And it allowed us to re-route SH1 from the paa

site and work with Waikato-Tainui to create something special.

"This is a nationally significant site and we feel this project represents a better way of doing things."

The old SH1 cutting was filled in with about 20,000 cubic metres of earth, and the area contoured as it was in 1863 when a fierce battle took place at the site between 1400 British forces and about 500 Maori.

What has been created is a scaled representation of the fortified paa. Large pou tell the story of the area and mark the battle trench down to the Waikato River. A carpark on Te Wharepu Road allows for easy public access to the area which has been designed to provide a space for continued education and contemplation about the battle and subsequent invasion of the Waikato.

Waikato-Tainui Te Arataura chairwoman Rukumoana Schaafhausen says:

"Rangiriri will be a significant site in New Zealand for continuing education about the battle and the Land Wars. It will also be a place for contemplation not only for our iwi but for all New Zealanders.

"The roading and paa projects together are an important symbol of the successful partnership between the Crown and Waikato-Tainui, realising a vision of the past while building for the future."



Cr Jan Sedgwick at the paa site

Good outcome for local communities

By Cr Jan Sedgwick, Whangamarino ward councillor, Waikato District Council

It's been a long road indeed for the people of Rangiriri and nearby Te Kauwhata and Glen Murray, all of whom have patiently watched, waited, queued, wiped the dust off their cars, and finally rejoiced in the completion of the Rangiriri section of the Waikato Expressway.

For Rangiriri it has created a dramatic approach, accented by the pou leading from the paa site towards the Waikato River. The reinterpretation of the paa site (cut through by the former SH1) is a demonstration of the partnership between Waikato-Tainui and the Transport Agency, with the result being the start of what could become a stop-off point for tourists and New Zealanders to visit an historic site.

Te Kauwhata has benefitted from the project by gaining a full diamond interchange, reflecting growth potential where the population is predicted to double within the next five years as new housing subdivisions come on stream. It also opens up pedestrian and cycle access from Te Kauwhata to the Waikato River, and links to the Te Araroa Walkway, adding to the enjoyment of this particularly beautiful part of the Waikato.

But for both Rangiriri and Te Kauwhata, a new connection has also begun, with the revocation of the old SH1 and creation of a cycleway and walkway alongside the now very much quieter road. This opens up new routes for the many recreational cyclists and walkers to explore.

Local history is reflected not only in the bridge barrier designs, and the extensive native plantings, but timely acknowledgement of the architect of Rangiriri Paa, Pene Te Wharepu, in naming the connector road Te Wharepu Road.

This has been a project that has required much patience from local communities but an acknowledgement that the outcome has created huge safety improvements and enhanced entrance to these north Waikato settlements.



End of a long journey for Fletcher



Andrew Rose

Fletcher Construction built the Rangiriri section of the Waikato Expressway. Project manager Andrew Rose looks back on their involvement.

The Rangiriri section of Waikato Expressway has been a long journey for Fletcher Construction.

We began our involvement in 2008 with what was one of the earliest, if not the first, Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) contracts for the Transport Agency.

Reflecting on the ECI process and the finished product we celebrate:

- An efficient and unhindered consent
- The full integration of tangata whenua, recognising Waikato-Tainui's mana, accepting and utilising their input through a specific working group
- A Project Charter drawn up with the purpose to understand each participant's drivers, to form a common vision: "Honouring the past we are building the future" and to define the way we would work together: 'Mahi tahi' – working as one.

The spirit of the charter has been met in the project delivery and outcomes. SH1 has been removed from the paa site and upgraded to expressway standard for improved safety, reliability and travel time. There are improved environmental outcomes with 55,000 plants and specific wetlands for stormwater treatment.

These large civil projects bring many benefits to our communities. It makes our job a lot easier when there is strong support from community leaders who can see the long-term benefits, who support construction and keep us accountable for our community deliverables.

So we acknowledge Waikato District Mayor Allan Sanson, local ward councillor Jan Sedgwick, Rangiriri community leader Phil Rogers, and our Tainui contact Raymond "Moko" Kumar.

We also appreciated the TK rugby club for security, enjoyed our project floats in the Christmas parade and regular engagement with local fire service and police personnel.

We couldn't deliver it without the help of our subcontractors and suppliers. There are too many to mention. We do however want to acknowledge the local guys Wattle Contracting and Broughton Contracting who have been with us since the start, providing local labour and local knowledge.

We acknowledge the Transport Agency for their Waikato Expressway vision, for awarding the Rangiriri section to Fletcher Construction and for working with us when the times were challenging and the going got tough.

It has been a privilege to have delivered this truly historic section of the expressway and we thank all participants for their contribution and support.



Looking south over Rangiriri village

Expressway overview

The Waikato Expressway is one of seven Roads of National Significance. It will improve safety and reliability, and reduce travel times and congestion on State Highway 1 by delivering a four-lane highway from the Bombay Hills to south of Cambridge. The Expressway is being built in sections.

