

TREC Pānui

East Coast recovery and rebuild mahi



“Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini”
Success is not the work of an individual, but the work of many

TREC Pānui is a monthly newsletter from the [Transport Rebuild East Coast \(TREC\) Alliance](#) updating communities across Te Tairāwhiti (Gisborne) and Te Matau a Māui (Hawke's Bay) about the work being done to rebuild state highway and rail networks impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Kia ora koutou

Welcome to our March/April edition of TREC Pānui. Over the past month we've been getting out and about in communities across Hawke's Bay, Wairoa and Tairāwhiti to talk about the TREC work programme and gather community insights. You can read more about this engagement and upcoming community drop-ins below. We encourage you to come along or send us your thoughts any time at info@trec.nz.

Local contractor & supplier hui

Working alongside local contractors and suppliers is key to TREC's work. We hosted hui in Wairoa, Napier, and Gisborne in late February and early March with a fantastic turn out.

It was great to connect, share updates about our programme of work and future opportunities, and get feedback so we can continue to adapt our approach.

Ngā mihi nui to everyone who attended. If you're a contractor or supplier interested in TREC work, please email procurement@trec.nz.



Local contractor & supplier hui in Napier late February.

Community drop-in sessions

In the past couple of weeks, we've been enjoying meeting with locals, talking with, and listening to Hawke's Bay communities at drop-in sessions and will be hosting similar sessions in Tairāwhiti in April.

These drop-ins are an opportunity for you to ask us questions, and for us to update communities about our ongoing recovery work as well as critical resilience projects across the state highway network.

We're also gathering thoughts and local insights about three potential rebuild projects: SH2 Devil's Elbow, SH2/SH5 Eskdale, and SH35 Mangahauini Gorge. Potential options are different at each of these locations and you can find out more about each one at [Have your say | Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency \(nzta.govt.nz\)](#).

You don't need to attend a session to provide feedback, you can fill out our online questionnaire at the link above. It's open until 5pm on Tuesday 16 April. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@TREC.nz.

Transport Rebuild East Coast

Some of the work underway



Thank you for your patience and for helping to keep our people and other road users safe while this essential work is done.

Tairāwhiti Gisborne

Work along State Highway 35

35

Each state highway TREC is working on across the East Coast of Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island) has its own recovery, rebuild and maintenance needs.

State Highway 35 (SH35) is a critical local and regional connector getting whānau, goods and services to where they need to go, and it is an ongoing focus for our recovery and rebuild programme.

We're currently addressing the most critical and damaged sites so the corridor can remain open, and we are taking care to better understand how to address long term resilience including at Mangahauini Gorge, which suffered significant damage in Cyclone Gabrielle.

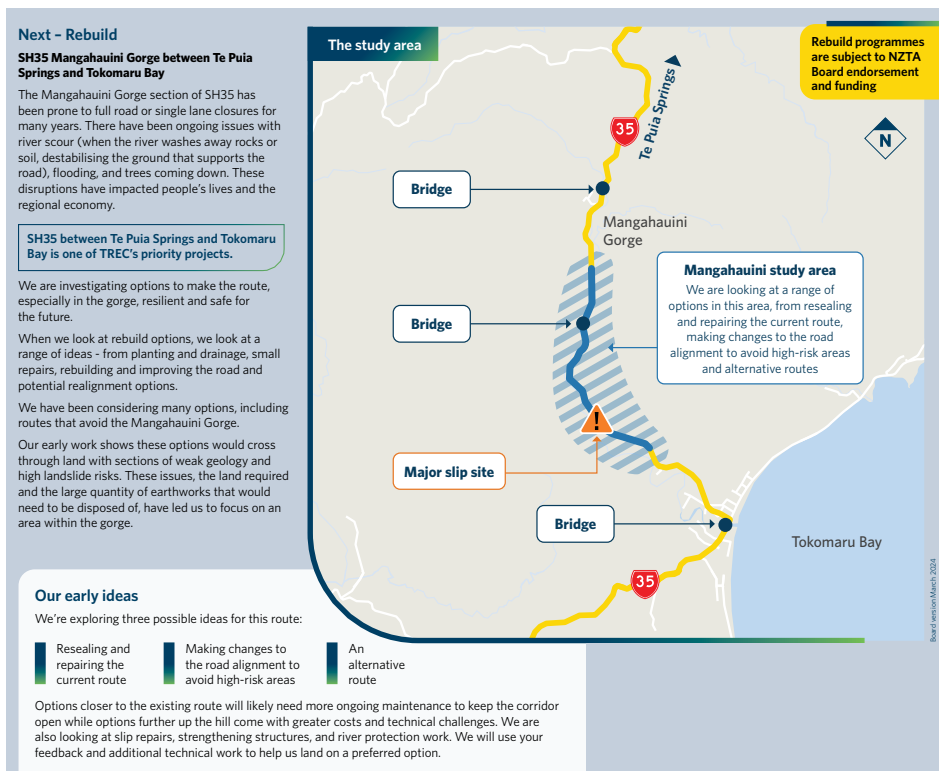
Working together with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) we're investigating how to deliver greater resilience across Tairāwhiti and are completing a further corridor assessment.

If you want to share your thoughts about SH35 including what a better state highway would look like to you, your whānau and your community, then come along to one of our drop-in sessions mentioned earlier or provide feedback in the survey online. Just select that you want to provide feedback on the SH35 and Mangahauini section:

[Have your say | Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency \(nzta.govt.nz\)](https://www.nzta.govt.nz)

Work underway or planned (SH35)

- \$45M of recovery work is planned across SH35. Over 190 recovery sites were identified with over 100 completed to date.
- \$41M of maintenance and operations work is planned this season (until June 2024) to keep roads safe and accessible across Tairāwhiti.
- We're replacing Hikuwai Bridges No. 1 and No. 2 so people travelling the road have a secure, future-proofed connection.
- NZTA has a range of ongoing projects on SH35 in addition to recovery and resilience work, including at Busby's Hill and Hicks Bay.
- We're investigating improved resilience solutions at Mangahauini Gorge which suffered major damage - from road underslips to a landslide that created a dam.
- We're undertaking a further SH35 corridor assessment to identify options and solutions for high-risk sites and seek funding to deliver the work.



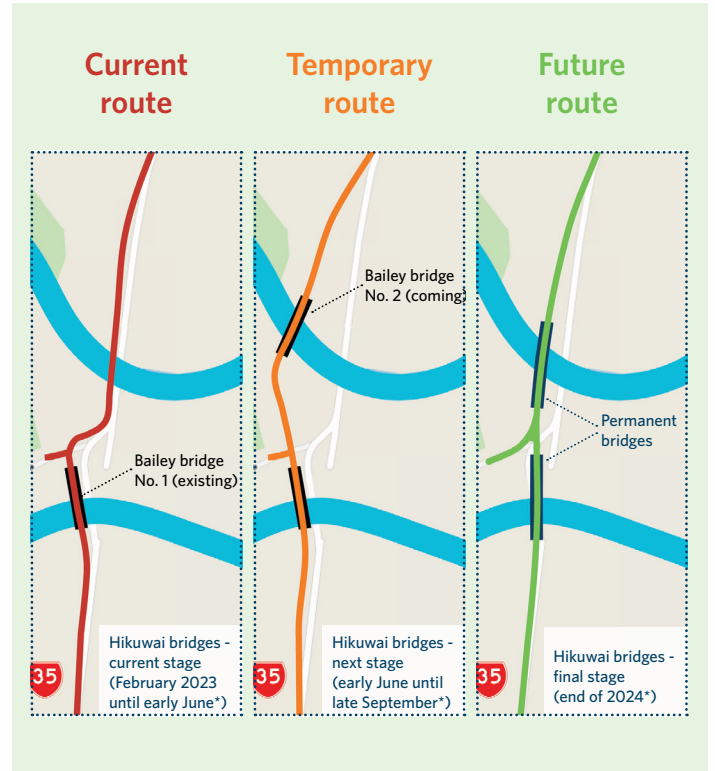
Hikuwai Bridges - Construction about to begin

Construction will soon begin on two new bridges crossing the Hikuwai River on SH35. The new bridges will increase resilience to future weather and earthquake events.

Hikuwai No. 1 bridge was destroyed in Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023, initially cutting access north and south of the river. While Hikuwai No. 2 bridge wasn't damaged in the cyclone, it will also be replaced to match the same height of the new No. 1 bridge.

A road realignment and new Bailey bridge will be put in place first so the new, permanent bridges can be constructed away from traffic. The new bridges will be higher to allow high water to pass underneath them, with piers placed further apart and rounded in shape to avoid debris getting trapped. The piers will be set on piles to provide additional strength.

You can read more about the project [here](#). We will continue to add updates to our website.



Work protecting highway from flooding to start soon

A site north of Gisborne has been blessed ahead of critical construction work that will stop a river spilling onto a main highway. A karakia was held at Turitaka Hill on SH35 near Tikitiki, in the lead up to work starting soon.

The project will be instrumental in preventing the adjacent Waiapu River from running onto the road during severe storms. To do this, the construction work will involve strengthening the toe of the riprap revetment (rock wall) along the road to hold the riverbank wall together and prevent further erosion. Strengthening rock bags will be placed at the toe of the rock wall.

A strong line of defence along this stretch of road is important to ensure communities stay connected. No detour is available, and communities rely heavily on this route for accessing essential services.

There'll be no delays for motorists, as all work is taking place off road. However, a 70km reduced speed limit will be in place due to large trucks moving on and off site from the river.

In other preparations, construction crews have worked closely with TREC's environmental team to ensure all rock bag placements have minimal impact on live fish in the working zone. This careful placement will further allow all fish the ability to easily swim out of the area.

On top of keeping fish species safe, all habitats in the working zone have been carefully considered. As an access trail for construction machinery needed to be cut back, all trees on site have been assessed by environmental and ecological teams.

Any disturbed areas will be reinstated once construction work is complete.



Plan ahead: Upcoming closure north of Napier

2

Night Closures 8-9 April: A stretch of SH2 between Pan Pac Whirinaki and Tutira Store will be closed overnight Monday 8 April and Tuesday 9 April. The road will close each night at 9pm and reopen 5am the following day.

Three pieces of critical work are being done during the closure to minimise ongoing disruption for road users:

- Rock removal at Devil's Elbow
- Installing a new culvert at Tongoio Falls
- Asphalting at Te Ngarue Stream Bridge

The road needs to be closed for this work as the worksites are too narrow for a one lane closure and there is no viable detour.

If weather delays the work, contingency dates are Wednesday 10 April and Thursday 11 April.



Network updates



Recovery works continue along the state highways across Hawke's Bay, Wairoa and Tairāwhiti. This work is to restore state highways to a functional level to keep them open and operational. It includes the ongoing focus on opening roads to two lanes and maintaining them, so they are safe to travel on.

- 2** On SH2 work continues at sites such as Devil's Elbow, Waikoau Hill and Waikare Gorge. Bridge repairs are happening at Maraetaha Bridge and Tauwhatinui Bridge.
- 5** On SH5 work continues on Captain's Culvert, and is expected to be completed by the end of June. Also on SH5 work continues at Tarawera culvert under ecologist investigation, and we expect to start work at Pokopoko Gully in the next week.
- 35** Along SH35 we have multiple work fronts underway through Mangahauini. Hicks Bay and Mangatuna underslips have been completed. We're asking the community to take extra care and stick to the 70km/h temporary speed limit around the Turitaka erosion site. Crews are starting road access and will soon begin to leave the site with heavy loads making it slow for them to accelerate.
- 38** On SH38 Waikaretaheke Stream underslip repairs are continuing this month, before moving onto a culvert repair.
- 50** Meanwhile on SH50, Tukipo Stream Bridge repair works are complete and work continues at Mangamate Stream Bridge.

Local partner profile: Tūpore Infrastructure

A big shoutout to our teams who are well and truly getting stuck in across the East Coast.

One such site is Devil's Elbow on SH2. A start has been made on the retaining wall following on from the concrete foundation work completed before Christmas.

The wall will be three metres high and the wall and backfill is expected to be completed soon. Road works, pavement and guardrail installation will follow as the next steps towards reopening to two lanes.

Local contractors Tūpore Infrastructure are on the job. General Manager Kyle Russell says things are progressing very well despite a very difficult work environment with various complications.

"We have a lot of environmental considerations while we are working next to a live stream and need to be very careful not to let any materials like silt or concrete get into the waterway. But the team is doing a fantastic job and we are on programme at the moment to finish on time," he says.

The team appreciates everyone's patience when using the road.

Tūpore is a local Māori owned business with more than 100 local staff, many of whom were personally affected by the cyclone and have worked on rebuild and recovery work ever since.

"That personal connection means they definitely take a lot of pride in getting it right for their community," Kyle says.



Workers lay a perforated drainage system to remove water from under the backfilled retaining wall.

Meet Tūpore Infrastructure

This highly successful Hawke's Bay civil construction business started in 1973 as Russell Roads by the Russell family. They've continued to expand over the last 50 years and now provide infrastructure construction services across Hawke's Bay. In 2023 they renamed their business Tūpore Infrastructure to better reflect their kaupapa of making lives and communities better.

Caring for our environment post Cyclone Gabrielle

The precious local environment and ecosystems were significantly damaged by severe winds and torrential downpours and are continuing a journey of recovery following Cyclone Gabrielle.

As the state highway construction work in Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti ramps up, the TREC team is committed to working within environmentally sensitive areas in a way that protects surrounding natural resources during and after construction.

To do this, we carefully plan works to minimise impacts on the environment including freshwater, terrestrial and coastal ecosystems and the species that live in them.

State Highway 2, near White Pine Bush Hawke's Bay

Safeguarding native fish during stream works

TREC ecologists get involved early in construction planning to work out the best way to look after any native fish species near the work area. Together with the construction teams they design how the construction work can be done in way to protect the fish.

As part of our environmental protection work, TREC does 'electric fishing' in waterways near construction sites. This is to salvage native fish from streams before work starts to help protect them from harm.

TREC ecologists get in the water with a backpack electric fishing machine. This includes a hand-held wand which puts an electric field through the water to gently stun nearby fish. The fish are then scooped into a net so they can be released safely away from construction works.

Prior to electric fishing, fish exclusion fences are put in place upstream and downstream of where the work will happen.

The electric fishing takes place between the two fish exclusion fences. Once fish are captured in the electric fishing process, they are safely relocated away upstream or downstream of the work area with the exclusion fences stopping any fish re-entering the site.

Aligning with nature

TREC ecologists have carried out a number of successful salvage operations to capture and relocate fish safely away from harm's way including:

- Three longfin eel and 2 kōura (freshwater crayfish) at White Pine Bush on SH2.
- Nineteen longfin eel, 6 shortfin eel and 30 elvers (tiny eels that can't be distinguished to species level) at Hicks Bay on SH35.
- Ten īnanga, 2 redfin bully, 6 common bully and 9 elvers at Tauwhatinui on SH2.
- Over 2,100 dwarf galaxiids and 1 rainbow trout at Mangamate Stream on SH50.



TREC ecologists Abby Macredie and Kate Rogers, along with TREC Environmental Officer Melissa Tran-Trung electric fishing in mid-February to safely remove as many fish as possible away from a construction site before works begin. Three longfin eels and two kōura (freshwater crayfish) were found on this site and then all released upstream outside the exclusion zone.



Once a stream diversion was put in place, the fish exclusion fences were removed to allow fish to freely move up and downstream within the diversion channel.

Staying cool in the face of a fiery trailer

When Ngawaka Heremia saw a car pull up to his traffic stop earlier this year with its trailer on fire, he didn't think twice about jumping in to help.

The 28-year-old was operating stop/go with a local Hawke's Bay ProTraffic management team supporting a SH5 shoulder widening job.

When a car smelling of burning rubber and brake fluid pulled up, its trailer wheels burst into flames. Ngawaka says he dropped everything, ensured the safety of other drivers by putting them on 'stop', and grabbed the nearest fire extinguisher.

"The driver was astounded at what had happened and was very thankful for our help," Ngawaka says.

It turned out the driver had unknowingly driven for about five hours with the trailer's brakes engaged.

TREC Temporary Traffic Management supervisor Taryn Martin says this demonstrates the importance of being kind to traffic management crew who are there to ensure drivers can get to their destination safely while contractors maintain and fix roads.

"It's important to be patient with our traffic management teams as they're putting in the hard yards to keep everyone safe and with a smile on their face!"

Ngawaka says while most people are understanding of the job his crew need to do, it's not completely unusual to encounter abuse from drivers. He asks all his crew to respond with kindness, because "you can't get angry at kindness".

Ngawaka has been recognised as a 'TREC Safety Hero' for his quick actions by the TREC Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

"The odd drivers look at us as big walking road cones and think of us as obstacles to them getting to where they want to go. But I would ask those people what if it was someone in your family doing this job?"

Next time you're driving through a site, give the teams a friendly wave and thank them for the critical role they play in helping to keep everyone safe.



Safety Hero Ngawaka Heremia.

Whakapā mai ■ Get in touch



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We value your feedback. Please get in touch if you have any questions or thoughts for the team.

This newsletter provides the latest information about the rebuild of state highway and rail networks damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023. TREC Pānui is produced by the Transport Rebuild East Coast (TREC) Alliance.