



Rail recovery

We're rebuilding stronger highways and rail for thriving East Coast communities

Transport Rebuild East Coast



KiwiRail's network was heavily impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle with the Palmerston North to Gisborne Line (PNGL) most severely affected.

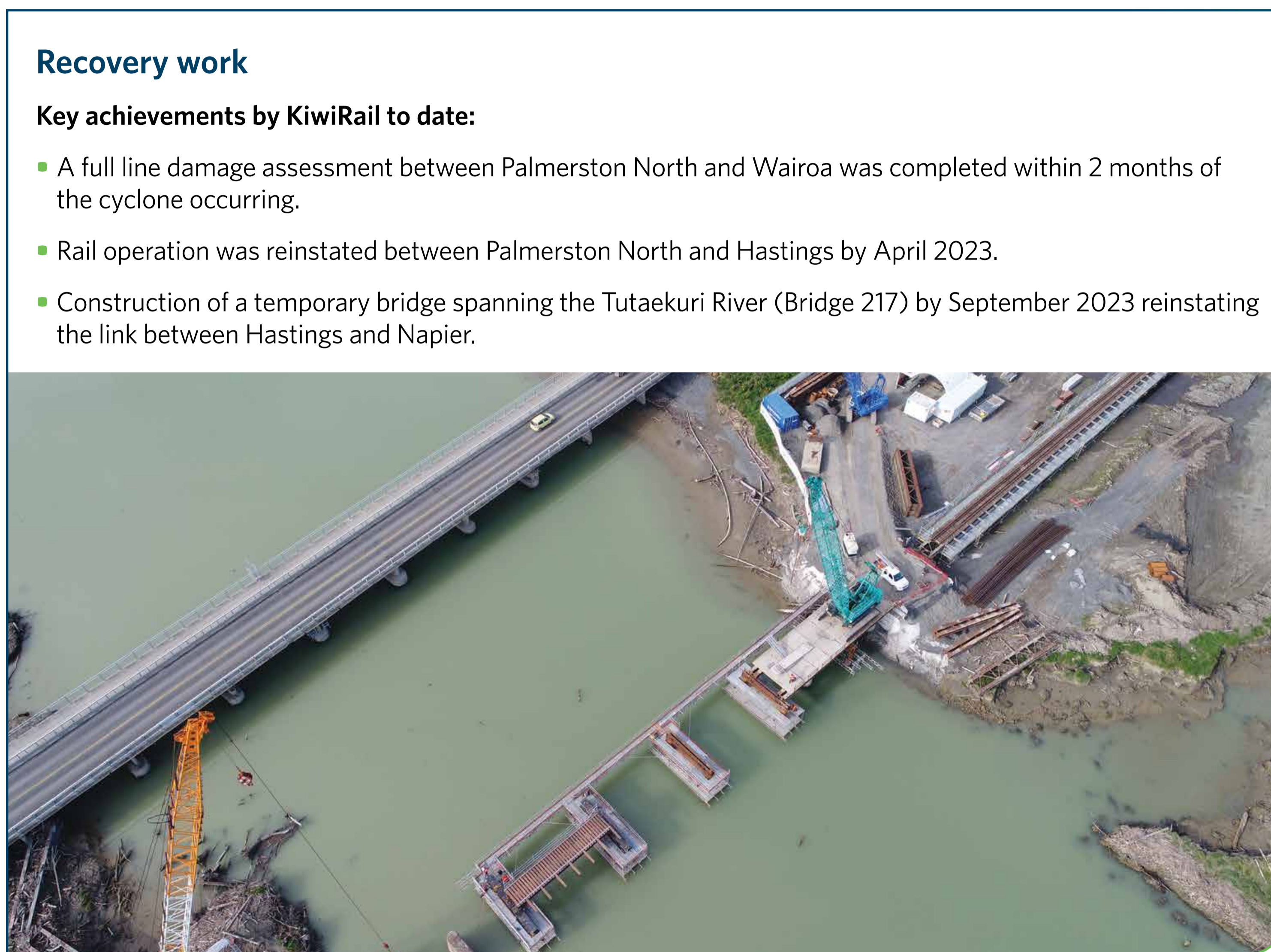
Damage was widespread, with the full line between Palmerston North and Wairoa impacted. An example includes Bridge 176 which had approximately 20m of its northern embankment completely washed away by the flooded Waipawa River.

The key link between Hastings and Napier was also severed when Bridge 217 (spanning the Tutaekuri River) was destroyed by flooding.

KiwiRail's initial focus was getting the Palmerston North to Hastings section operational before considering a more robust rebuild, followed by a more comprehensive full line damage assessment, including between Napier and Wairoa.



Rebuild work at Bridge 176



Rebuilding Bridge 217 across Tutaekuri River

Recovery work

Key achievements by KiwiRail to date:

- A full line damage assessment between Palmerston North and Wairoa was completed within 2 months of the cyclone occurring.
- Rail operation was reinstated between Palmerston North and Hastings by April 2023.
- Construction of a temporary bridge spanning the Tutaekuri River (Bridge 217) by September 2023 reinstating the link between Hastings and Napier.

Make Safe works

KiwiRail is currently carrying out Make Safe work between Napier and Wairoa designed to prevent damage on the rail line deteriorating further.

This work includes culvert clearing, slopes and debris clear out, removing suspended track and, in areas like Eskdale, removing all the destroyed railway track sections.



Make Safe works at embankment / culvert failure

Between Napier and Wairoa

This section was the most severely damaged on the PNGL, with over 400 damage sites and well over 10 sites completely destroyed by flooding, embankment and culvert failures, and landslides.

This 115km section navigates through very rugged terrain, with steep gradients and winding river valleys. There are 8 tunnels and 6 viaducts - including the highest viaduct in Australasia, the Mohaka Viaduct at 95m high.

Just north of Napier, the track in the Eskdale area was severely impacted by the flooding, with sections of track greater than 100m completely gone, or far from their original alignment.

Further north into the Esk River valley, slope risks are more common, with numerous landslides, debris flows, culvert and embankment failures, landslide dams, and rockfalls.



Culvert / embankment failure at PNGL



Eskdale Station, within the lower Esk Valley

What's next

Napier to Wairoa

There is a process to go through to determine if funding will be granted to repair and reopen the line between Napier and Wairoa, which includes approval from the Government. In recent months we have been undertaking technical investigations on the line and are working on initial advice, which we expect to give to the Government for its consideration in the coming months.

South of Hastings

Works are underway to develop concept and permanent detailed designs with construction estimated to begin in 2024.

Rebuilding Bridge 217 (Tutaekuri River)

The TREC team plans to design and build a new, permanent bridge over the next couple of years to replace the temporary bridge opened in September 2023.