

# MINO-1053 State Highway 2, Melling

3 May 2024

Provide advice on the sewerage pipe risk identified by Wellington Water under State Highway 2, Melling.

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## NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) response:

### Background

On 13 March 2024, Wellington Water Limited (WWL) received preliminary information that 360m of the wastewater pipelines under State Highway 2 (SH2) is in very poor condition (structural condition grade 5). The pipelines' poor condition was confirmed on Wednesday, 27 March 2024.

NZTA, Upper Hutt City Council and Hutt City Council were notified following the confirmation. WWL set up a project team to investigate, assess any immediate risks to the wastewater network and the surrounding area, and to develop solutions.

### Impacts

The wastewater pipelines cross under SH2, so a collapse would have major environmental and transport impacts.

- **Environmental impacts:** The 825mm diameter concrete pipeline has a large flow, serving all of Upper Hutt and most of Hutt City's western hill suburbs. Due to the location of the pipelines, containing the sewage would be challenging and would require the assistance of pumps.
- **Transport impacts:** A collapse could result in partial or full lane closures of the north or southbound SH2 lanes, causing major disruption to customers using this corridor to commute and surrounding area.

### Current situation and next steps

A technical assessment of the pipe condition from specialists ProjectMax on 8 April 2024 confirmed the very poor structural grade but noted that no cracking was observed, which suggests that the pipes are still structurally stable. There is no indication of imminent failure at this stage.

WWL, responsible for managing the wastewater trunk main, is preparing contingency plans to remedy the pipe, while preparing to install flow sensors to monitor the flows in the pipe and monitor for potential failure. A potential solution of lining the water pipe is being explored as the least disruptive methodology. WWL will be approaching the councils for funding approval and will be discussing with the RiverLink project team.

NZTA Wellington Transport Alliance, in liaison with WWL, will monitor the pavement surface for any visible cracking and take immediate mitigation measures. We are also working with the Wellington Transport Operations Centre (WTOC) to determine how traffic will be managed and to develop a communications plan in the event of a failure.

Multiple options around contingencies and detours already exist within WTOC response plans, and NZTA is in the process of reviewing these. NZTA's escalation procedures have been provided to WWL for use in the

event that an issue does develop. NZTA is awaiting additional information from WWL regarding mitigation and renewal in order to further refine its contingencies.

In the event of a failure, WWL anticipate that the repair would likely extend over several weeks. Implementing the pipe lining method would involve accessing manholes and installing an emergency bypass. While imminent collapse is not likely, in the event of collapse WWL would need to excavate the road which would contribute to the timeline.

Noted by Minister

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