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Kakanui Flood Protection Improvements Project



State Highway 1, through the Kakanui River flood plain just south of Oamaru is much less likely to be impacted by flood closures with the completion of improvement work to help keep it open even in a one in 50 year-flood.

This \$3 million project built by Oamaru-based Whitestone Contracting Ltd and delivered on behalf of the government by the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), took 7 months to complete. It's part of a nationwide work programme to reduce the risk of natural events such as floods from closing our highways.

This low-lying section of SH1 near Maheno experiences periodic flood closures when water from the Kakanui River rises above road level during heavy rain events.

This occurs every 5 years and can make the highway unpassable for up to 2 days. This seriously impacts the lives of communities and businesses who depend on the goods and services transported on this key highway connection between Christchurch and Dunedin. Detour routes are a major inconvenience involving extra hours of travel, hundreds of additional kilometres, and add more cost to people's journeys.



New flood protection works on SH1 looking south toward Maheno.

Keeping the existing highway layout and raising the height of the road by just over a metre, was the best and most affordable of the flood reduction options we carefully considered. Extensive investigations carried out before raising the road showed this increase would have minimal impact on flood levels on nearby properties.

What the project does

- Provides greater safety with a wider road and 300 metres of safety barrier on its western side.
- Reduces disruptive floods by raising the height of a 350-metre section of SH1 through the Kakanui River flood plain.
- Delivers new road surfacing and markings.
- Offers safer and better access to the historic Clarks Mill.
- Builds a new bridge structure over the existing historic Mill Stream Culvert.

The benefits

- Fewer flood-related disruptions, with the highway passable for traffic during one in 50-year floods.
- Reduced flood-related delays on the main highway between Christchurch and Dunedin.
- Improved road access to keep communities and businesses connected during major flooding.
- Greater resilience on a flood-prone low-lying section of SH1 between Oamaru and Dunedin.



Safety barriers on a completed section of improvement work SH1 north of Maheno

More project information can be found at:
nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-kakanui-flood-protection-improvements