

April 2020



Tēnā koutou

As a country we have all felt the impact of the coronavirus and I hope this message reaches you, your whānau and communities in good health.

I would like to update you, as shareholders of Ātīhau-Whanganui Incorporation (Ātīhau), on the progress we have made developing a permanent road following the major slip at Te Oreore on State Highway 4.

We at Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency are grateful for Ātīhau's generosity and acknowledge the vital role you have played in helping us respond to the slip.

Your support enabled us to design and quickly build a temporary road, which we were able to open in time for Christmas. We value an ongoing relationship with you and mana whenua Ngāti Rangi and Ngāi Tahuariki.

As our discussions continue, we appreciate your willingness to work with us to determine and build a permanent replacement road, as soon as possible. Before we start this work, we plan to remove water using wells in the landslip

area to improve the ground stability. We recognise how important it is that the new road creates minimal cultural and environmental impact, while providing a permanent and resilient link for communities living alongside, and using, this road.

Our work on the Te Oreore slip is part of a SH4 programme to improve the road's resilience. You may have seen works that have started on damage from earlier storms on six other SH4 sites, which are at various stages of planning, design, consenting and construction.

Ngā mihi nui

Wayne Oldfield
Senior Manager System Management,
Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency

Image above: Iwi attend the opening of the temporary road south of Raetihi, that connects State Highway 4.



We had planned to hold information sessions locally where we would share our progress with you in person. However, we have cancelled these due to the COVID-19 nationwide shut down. We will, instead, be sharing this information online – please check [**the project's website for more information**](#) as it becomes available.



Te Oreore slip

In October last year a major slip south of Raetihi on State Highway 4 destroyed a large section of the road, forcing it to close. The section of slippage was similar in size to the larger slips in the Manawatū Gorge in 2011.

The slip caused major disruption to road users - iwi, the community, businesses and tourists. With around 2,000 vehicles using the road each day, the closure meant anyone travelling between Ohakune or Raetihi and Whanganui had to take a detour via Fields Track, adding at least 30 minutes to any journey.

The slip was primarily caused by a weak layer of material within the underlying rock and increased pressure from groundwater following prolonged rainfall. The depth of the weak layer is approximately 40 metres

below the road. This increase in water pressure caused a large amount of rock and soil to move.

Following the slip, our focus was to reinstate State Highway 4 as fast as possible. Work to reopen the road started in November, with a temporary road built on Ātīhau-Whanganui Incorporation whenua before Christmas.

We greatly appreciate the help provided by Ātīhau and for being allowed to reconstruct the temporary road on your whenua.

Accelerated work advances permanent road

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has been working through an intensive process over the last few months to identify options for a permanent replacement of the section of SH4, which was taken out by the Te Oreore landslip.

Senior Manager System Management Wayne Oldfield says very good progress has been made in a short time.

“We recognise that a replacement road is key for Ātīhau-Whanganui Incorporation and others who rely on SH4 for moving livestock and other goods, getting to work, along with other aspects of daily life. Our project team has worked flat out over the past few months investigating, developing and evaluating options to build a business case for the permanent replacement road.

“The temporary road, opened in December last year, is a short-term solution for local communities, farmers, freight operators and other SH4 road users,” he says.

The wide-ranging investigations that inform the options involved specialist geotechnical work, exploring environmental, social and economic factors, and identifying property and consenting requirements.

A number of options for the permanent road have been evaluated against criteria, including:

- Resilience to earthquakes, storms and floods
- Effects on cultural heritage, such as wahi tapu and significant sites, rivers and tributaries, cultural landscapes of value or significance to manawhenua
- Network resilience - the route's ability to be reinstated after closure from natural hazards and traffic accidents
- Constructability - how efficiently, quickly and safely it can be built
- Effects on landscape and amenity
- Effects on the Mangawhero River, its tributaries and the Whangaehu River
- The amount of property needed to be acquired or transferred.
- Effects on ecologically sensitive areas
- Traffic and road safety
- Cost - affordability

Following the evaluation, a preferred option will be announced with details provided on the [project's website](#).

The project team has been in discussions with the Ātīhau-Whanganui Incorporation board and management, and iwi representatives to evaluate options for the replacement road. After Waka Kotahi confirms a preferred option the project will continue to work closely with Ātīhau about the land agreements for the route.