



Northland Rail Programme

May 2025

Kia ora,

With the approach of winter we have experienced more weather events in Northland, and it's great to see that the resilience upgrades we have made on the rail line in recent years have really come into their own.

Since Cyclone Gabrielle we have been improving culverts to better manage water flows, stabilising slip-prone slopes and securing embankments to protect against track washouts. They have been holding up well during recent weather events, enabling freight trains to keep running.

With significant Government

investment, our upgrades on the North Auckland Line (NAL) to take larger trains between Swanson and Whangārei started in 2019. We had completed this work when the January 2023 weather event and then Cyclone Gabrielle hit the region – leaving about 200 damage sites in their wake.

While weather repairs were underway, in September last year we completed track upgrades north of Whangārei to Kauri, where Fonterra has its dairy plant. Late last year we completed the upgrade to our Whangārei rail yard, to support moving greater rail volumes in the future.

Our rail infrastructure upgrades and rebuild after the weather events are all but done and we're now making improvements at our Otiria rail yard.

We're also continuing with testing and other background work on the proposal to build a new rail line to Marsden Point and reopen the mothballed line to Otiria, which will be going to the Government to consider funding.

If you have any questions about the work we're doing, please contact us at: northlandrail@kiwirail.co.nz

Eric Hennephof
Northland Rail Upgrade
Programme Director

Inspecting the mothballed line between Kauri and Otiria

This week we begin initial inspections of the 55km stretch of line between Kauri and Otiria. It has been close to nine years since trains have run on the line and rail staff will be out physically walking along the corridor to get an understanding of the state of the track and the 45 bridges.

The information gathered will help us understand the cost and scope of work needed to reopen the line, as part of the Marsden Point Rail Link (a new rail line to Northport / Marsden Point near Whangārei) project. We expect to submit the final business case for the Marsden spur and the reopening of the line north of Kauri by mid-2025.

Once the business case is submitted and if we receive approval to proceed by Ministers, further detailed inspections between Kauri and Otiria may be required.



Otiria yard upgrade

The final part of our Government funded Northland Rail upgrade is work at our Otiria rail yard, which will play an important part as a logistics hub and for forestry if the rail line between Kauri and Otiria is to be reopened.

We have been engaging with the local community and begun improving fencing and security at the site, to eliminate previous issues with trespass, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, and improve the area for our neighbours.

We have also acquired consents and begun flood protection works in the yard which will link to storm-water management work in the area already completed by Whangārei District Council (WDC).

Work currently underway includes:

- installing three swales, or channels, to improve and control stormwater flows across the rail yard. This project will complement the spillway works WDC have already completed upstream.
- installing three sets of culverts, which connect the swales, to allow for greater water flows during storm and flood events.

Fencing ranges from timber fencing at the rear of private properties that



One of the culverts being installed at Otiria rail yard.

back onto the yard, wire mesh security fencing along roads and some farm-type fencing around the lower-security log yard.

Work at Otiria is progressing well and is expected to be completed around July 2025



A swale channel being dug out and lined, before a layer of stones (known as Rip Rap) are added.



Mesh security fencing installed along Otiria Road.