



Northland Rail Programme

October 2025

Kia ora,

After major Government-funded upgrades in recent years, the North Auckland rail line has held up well to winter weather. Minor culvert repairs and improvements will continue through to early next year.

We are now focussed on preparing for the next stages of the Marsden Point Rail Link project, which proposes to deliver a new 19-km rail line between Oakleigh and Northport, south of Whangārei.

In July we completed the Detailed Business Case for building the spur line and reopening the non-operational rail line between Kauri and Otiria, north of Whangārei. These two initiatives complement

each other and, if progressed, will help rebalance transport in Northland. They will get more freight on rail, will complement other projects in the region such as the expansion of Northport and ultimately stimulate wider economic development in the region.

To inform the Government's considerations, KiwiRail has made the spur project data and reference designs available to interested parties including investors and construction companies, on a confidential basis through GETS (Government Electronic Tender Service).

The Marsden Point Rail Link is a major civil construction project which includes building in part of the coastal

marine environment, major cut-and-fill earthworks and a number of road and farm access overbridges and underpasses.

We need to ensure value for money, so opening it up for market consideration enables interested parties to view the design work completed to date and determine their level of interest and ideas for procuring the next stages of the project.

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



Ongoing work – a new culvert being installed under the track near the Kaipara Flats.

Otiria yard upgrade

Work upgrading the storm water management system within our Otiria rail yard is now complete. Two triple-barrel culverts, a single-barrel culvert and several connecting swale channels have been constructed, in line with flood modelling.

These assets now work together to manage storm water flows through KiwiRail property and carry water away during flood events into the adjacent river.

These improvements complement the Northland Regional Council's (NRC) spillway works upstream and are already showing their worth, with the new channels and culverts successfully capturing and diverting heavy rainfall over winter.

Fencing around the Otiria yard is also nearing completion. The last piece of work is building a security fence along Kingi Road. This month NRC is planning to build a bund and stormwater channel between the road and our yard, and their contractors will erect the fence once this civil work is complete.

We'd like to thank the local community for their support and input into our yard refurbishment.

The Otiria rail yard stormwater management works are the final part



One of the barrel culverts being built

of the Government-funded Northland rail upgrades.

The yard will play an important part as

a logistics hub and for forestry if the rail line between Kauri and Otiria is to be reopened.



Flood management improvements in action – flood waters being successfully channelled after heavy rains in late July.

Kauri – Otiria inspections

Earlier this year we carried out initial inspections of the 55km stretch of line between Kauri and Otiria. This section of the North Auckland Line is currently non-operational but is proposed to be reopened alongside the construction of the Marsden Point Rail Link.

It has been around 15 years since trains have run on this section and our walking inspection, alongside mana whenua representatives, enabled us to visually inspect track

and bridges to assess their current general condition.

While the rail line has generally held up well to recent storm events, the track is damaged in several locations and is heavily overgrown. Bridges are all standing and while they are at no risk of immediate failure, they should not be crossed due to the poor condition of the bridge decks and sleepers.

Overall, the line is in a reasonable state, and areas of damage are repairable.

Further inspections of bridges, culverts, slopes and the track will be required over the next 12 months. This will involve vegetation clearance and Hi Rail vehicles travelling along the track.

As with any railway line, we urge locals to stay safe by keeping off the tracks and bridges. Hi Rail vehicles should be expected at any time.

Concrete sleepers remain stockpiled at certain points along this section of track while we await funding decisions.

Marsden Point Rail Link – ecological surveys underway

KiwiRail is undertaking ecological surveys along the route of the Marsden Point Rail Link. This is another necessary step that needs to be taken before any construction, if the link is funded, can begin.

So far the specialist consultants have focused on understanding the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) near Oakleigh and the wetland flora along the route. We are now beginning fauna assessments, including birds, bats, fish and lizards. The information gathered will feed into the construction methodology.

The Marsden Point Rail Link is a major civil engineering project, stretching close to 20 kilometres. If it proceeds we need to minimise any impacts on plants and animals where possible, and offset any unavoidable environmental changes in specific areas by ecological improvements in other areas. The ecological surveys give us a solid baseline on which to plan this environmental management and meet environmental requirements.

