

# Auckland's Metro Programme Newsletter

July 2022

## Retirement clears the way for works to enable electric trains

Diesel metro train services to and from Pukekohe will finish on Friday August 12. Their retirement signals the end of an era in Auckland rail and clears the way for KiwiRail to ramp up work needed to enable electric trains to run between Papakura and Pukekohe.

When the electrification project is completed in 2024, the entire Auckland metro network will be electrified and quieter, cleaner trains will provide people in South Auckland with faster journey times.

New infrastructure to electrify this section includes a new station at Pukekohe, overhead lines, new signals, underground ducting, track work and upgrades to eight level crossings (including two pedestrian crossings). The project also includes building platforms for three new train stations in Southern Auckland, between Papakura and Pukekohe. Design work on these stations is continuing, with construction



expected to start in 2023 and be completed by 2025.

It is not possible, or safe, to do all this work within the rail corridor when the passenger train services are still operating. A bus replacement service will run between Papakura and Pukekohe instead of the diesel

passenger service between 13 August 2022 and the second half of 2024.

Our rail projects in South Auckland, and elsewhere on the metro network, are designed to support the City Rail Link – enabling more frequent and convenient commuter rail services across the city.

## First step in beating congestion completed

Passengers on Eastern and Southern Line services are now enjoying fewer delays on the busiest part of Auckland's metro network.

KiwiRail is in the process of building a new, Third Main rail line between Wiri and Westfield junctions, with the first part - from Otahuhu Station on the Southern Line through to the

Eastern Line near Sylvia Park Rd - now complete.

Each week 1860 commuter services and 220 freight services travel through this area. The extra track on this section allows Southern and Eastern line passenger and freight services to move alongside each other through the busy Westfield junction.

This extra capacity reduces delays and allows for more frequent services in the future.

The improved track infrastructure is also helping reduce speed restrictions through the area and means freight trains can move onto the rail network from KiwiRail's busy Westfield and Southdown terminals at higher speeds, reducing the risk of disruption to metro services.



## Our big machines – the Tamper

Have you ever noticed one of these operating on a railway line and wondered what it's doing? It's a Tamper, and its job is to pack or 'tamp' the ballast (small stones) under the track. The Tamper measures the track placement, lifts it, and packs the ballast underneath to hold it in place. It's a very important machine which helps create a smoother ride for passengers and freight.

Tamper operator Jerry Hohepa is drawing on his many years' experience in the role to manage the big workload facing his team in Auckland.

"There's a lot of work to do to get the Auckland network ready for City Rail Link, so meeting the demands and deadlines required is challenging.

Tamping requires complete access to the line so we can only work during our network shutdowns, or at night when metro trains aren't running.

During big Auckland wide shutdowns, it isn't uncommon to see several tampers, brought in from other parts of the country, working across the network.



*Improving the gardens of our neighbours in Papatotoe*



*Work on a neighbour's deck*

## Building community relationships

The team busy building the new Third Main in Auckland are also busy building strong relationships with our neighbours and their communities.

"It is no easy task building the new third main through the busiest part of our network but working with close neighbours on either side makes the job even more challenging," says Third Main Track Programme Director Marco Dumas.

"Together with our contractor, Downer, we've put a strong focus on this and despite noisy work being carried out across long hours, our neighbours have been well prepared for the disruption they may experience.

"We've made sure the neighbours know

exactly what to expect and we regularly distribute care packages ahead of intense periods of works.

Giving back to the communities we are working in is also important to our project. Our contractors Downer have had staff helping neighbours with their back gardens by relocating plants and fences that were within our workspace, and we're also delivering weekly food donations to local pataka kai and community pantries.

Letting our neighbours know about the work elsewhere around the network is also bringing wider benefits to communities.

Communities Engagement Manager Jane Sherriff says KiwiRail has teamed

up with Lions Clubs in Auckland to deliver flyers, so that residents know when KiwiRail work is planned nearby and how it might affect them.

"We pay the local Lions Club for this service and then it's wonderful to see that the money goes back to supporting projects within that same community."

Funding from KiwiRail goes towards the Remuera Lions Club's sponsorship of hearing tests for students at One Tree Hill College in Auckland.

Run by the National Foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the tests were part of their Year 9 school screening programme.

*For any queries, email us at [contactus@KiwiRail.co.nz](mailto:contactus@KiwiRail.co.nz)*





KiwiRail's Civil Delivery Manager Loti Aho

## Keeping trains running smoothly

An important part of KiwiRail's \$1.5 billion programme to upgrade the Auckland metro network is fixing the most worn parts of the track infrastructure, where trains currently have to travel at slower speeds.

This involves digging out and replacing the earth foundations below the rails and sleepers.

KiwiRail's Civil Delivery Manager Loti Aho (above) oversees several teams replacing aging track foundations around Auckland's rail network. Loti shares with us how it is to work 24/7 over weekends and public holidays.

### WHY IS THIS WORK SO IMPORTANT?

Solid foundations are important to keeping track infrastructure up to the standard needed to keep trains running reliably. Areas where the track foundations are in poor conditions tend to get track faults – and speed restrictions have to be put in place.

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN THE JOB?

"It takes a lot of planning to deliver these works over a weekend. Once we dig up the foundations they need to be rebuilt and the tracks put back in place, ready for the trains to run again on Monday morning.

"We do feel the pressure – there's a significant responsibility to those using the trains and living next to the rail network to do the job well.

### YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

Coordinating and collaborating with many different people to make it happen. And afterwards, experiencing the smoother train travel through areas where the work is done.

### WHAT'S THE HARDEST THING ABOUT THE JOB?

Rain and missing family time are the hardest thing about working 24/7.



Artist Erika Pearce working on the Te Taou Crescent building

## Keeping up appearances

A once drab grey building covered in graffiti now sports a colourful mural, as part of KiwiRail's efforts to prevent graffiti on the rail network. The building, in Central Auckland's Te Taou Crescent, houses signalling equipment and is one of several that now has colourful artwork.

We understand graffiti is unpleasant and do our best to manage this ongoing issue on our network. However, the cost of removal can be high, and we need to prioritise our spending on ensuring the safe running of the railway. In addition, removing it is challenging on a busy metro network like Auckland as it can often only be done when trains are not running. It's also important to note a lot of the graffiti seen along the corridor is on buildings and fencing backing on to the corridor, but not owned by KiwiRail.

We use several graffiti removal agencies to help with this ongoing work and prioritise those cases that involve offensive graffiti or impact on safe rail operations. We also use measures to minimise graffiti, such as installing murals.