



April 2023

Hawke's Bay Cyclone Gabrielle Rail Recovery

Kia ora

This is the first of a series of updates we will be sending out to Hawke's Bay stakeholders, to keep you updated on our work to rebuild flood damaged rail lines in the region.

This week we celebrated a significant milestone, reopening the line from Woodville to Hastings. This is the result of a lot of hard work by KiwiRail's track and other teams. We have also been working closely with Napier Port, and have set up a temporary container terminal site in Hastings. It means we are able to rail freight to and from Hastings – reducing congestion on southern Hawke's Bay roads – and freight can then be moved by truck to Napier and the port. It was great to see the first freight train arrive in Hastings on Monday.

There is a lot of hard work ahead of us but we are committed to reinstating the rail line to Napier and to Wairoa, However, given the scale of the damage in these sections it will take some time.

We appreciate your patience as we reinstate this crucial Hawke's Bay infrastructure.

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

Daniel Headifen

KiwiRail Programme Director

Hastings - Napier progress

There has been significant damage to the rail line between Hastings and Napier, particularly in the Awatoto area - including major track washouts and the loss of spans and a number of piers to the rail bridge (Bridge 217) next to the Waitangi road bridge.

We currently expect it will be at least six months before the line reopens.

Along the 20km section of line, damaged signals cables are currently being decommissioned and telecommunications fibre cables are being relocated, where necessary, to enable rail work. We are also currently removing large amounts of wood debris that has piled up a few metres deep behind Bridge 216 and 217,

and against tracks. After Easter we plan to begin removing large sections of damaged track in the Awatoto area.

Repairing Bridge 217 is a crucial step in reopening the line. In the short term we plan to undertake temporary repairs to the bridge, including installing temporary piers and replacing damaged spans with rail spans we hold in stock for emergencies.

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Wood debris being cleared from a rail bridge in Awatoto



Flood damaged tracks around Awatoto



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Permanent repair to the bridge will take some time and we are focused on reopening the bridge and line to Napier Port in time for peak freight season towards the end of the year.

This week casings for temporary bridge piles are being railed from Christchurch to Hastings (see picture to the left). A bridge contractor has been appointed and we expect the temporary rebuild work to begin toward the end of April.

Steel pile casings being loaded onto a rail carriage in Christchurch for Napier bridge repair

Napier – Wairoa progress

The rail line from Napier to Wairoa suffered some extensive damage in Cyclone Gabrielle. Given the terrain, inspecting some of the line has been difficult but we have made steady progress.

We have completed more than 80 per cent of our initial inspections along the length of the line, and are aiming to complete inspections in the next fortnight. There are major damage sites, particularly in the Esk Valley up to Tutira. The inspections so far have shown that the work done to reopen the line in 2019 has held up relatively well, but there is a huge amount of work needed to reopen the line after the cyclone.

Once inspections are complete we will develop a work schedule for repairs - with an initial focus on emergency works, for example clearing blocked waterways, to ensure line repairs can be undertaken safely and the line does not deteriorate further over the coming winter. At this stage we are unable to give a timeframe for reopening the line to Wairoa.

With SH2 to Wairoa closed, KiwiRail has been in discussions with Waka Kotahi about the potential use of the rail viaduct over the Waikari River, near



Example of a site that needs emergency works south of Waikoau between Napier and Wairoa

Putorino, for vehicle use. Unfortunately, more than 4km of single-track railway, including the near 200m long viaduct itself, would need to be modified to accomplish this. It ranges from needing a substantial amount of aggregate to cover tracks and form a one-way road, changes to the viaduct itself, and some steep embankments that pose a safety risk to the public. So the decision has been made not to alter the railway for non-rail vehicle use and Waka Kotahi is now concentrating its efforts on using a replacement Bailey bridge to reconnect SH2.



Damage to a bridge in Esk Valley