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Auckland Metro Programme Newsletter

December 2025

On track for 2026: CRL testing, summer rail upgrade and what's next

KiwiRail and our partners are entering the final phase of delivering the City Rail Link (CRL), which will give Auckland a more connected transport system and make it easier and faster to connect with people and places.

KiwiRail is the network maintainer of Auckland's rail network and has a key role in testing and commissioning the new CRL tunnel. We will also maintain the CRL infrastructure, including tunnels, signals and train radio systems, on an ongoing basis after it opens next year.

Over the last year we've progressed the final stages of the five-year Rail Network Rebuild (RNR) programme,

which replaces foundations and installs modern drainage on priority areas of the network. We've delivered critical upgrades and large new infrastructure projects across the Auckland network to enhance and make more resilient the building blocks on which the CRL trains will travel for decades to come.

It's not just the city centre that is benefitting from network upgrades and renewals. RNR work completed on major sections of the Southern, Eastern and Western lines has improved the reliability of Auckland's train system.

At Henderson Station, we are rebuilding aging foundations, installing modern drainage and renewing old assets

that slow down trains. In addition, we're building a third platform and rails at Henderson to allow extra space for trains to pick up and drop off passengers and change direction back into the city, making sure we get the most out of the CRL when it opens, and into the future as services increase.



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Summer rail upgrade 2025-26

Auckland trains will not be running across the entire network from 27 December to 18 January, with buses replacing trains on all lines to allow crews to work safely and deliver more work on tracks and at stations during a sustained period.

During the closure, KiwiRail teams will be working night and day to complete RNR's final stages, upgrades of level crossing and track infrastructure and continue construction on our Henderson Station Project and three new Drury rail stations in South Auckland.

Teams will work to improve drainage in flood-prone West Auckland from Swanson to Glen Eden. Track infrastructure will continue to be upgraded at priority locations in South Auckland and in central suburbs such as Parnell, Morningside and Kingsland.

Auckland Transport (AT) teams will continue building new pedestrian bridges at three stations as part of their level crossing removal programme to improve safety in anticipation of a greater frequency of trains.

[Rail replacement buses](#) will operate when passenger trains aren't running or

are on a reduced frequency.

From 19–26 January, full train services will operate on the Onehunga Line. Reduced passenger services will also be operating on the Southern Line between Newmarket and Puhinui and the Eastern Line between Ōtāhuhu and Manukau. The Eastern Line will remain open for freight services, ensuring freight can continue to run from Auckland's port to KiwiRail's Southdown hub in South Auckland.

All other lines will be closed for continuing upgrade and renewal works until 26 January.



CRL timetable testing

Testing of the new City Rail Link timetable means the entire network will be closed on 27–28 January 2026, with buses replacing trains on all lines. This is the first round of trialling the full train timetable to ensure the new services can run reliably and passengers have a great experience from day one.

Additional closures are planned in the lead-up to CRL's opening for further tests and trials. These will be limited to weekends and public holidays as much as possible, though there is likely to be a longer closure in the April school holidays.

What's been achieved

- **Completion of the Third Main Line**, a 6.5km additional track to separate freight from passenger rail between Westfield Junction and Wiri Junction, along with the redevelopment of Middlemore Station, marking the end of the Wiri to Quay Park Third Main Line Project.
- **Pukekohe to Papakura electrification** – 19kms of newly electric track, enabling smoother, faster journeys into the city centre from South Auckland.
- The final stages of the **Rail Network Rebuild**, which will be completed during the summer closure. Intensive work to replace track, foundations



and drainage in priority areas has been delivered across all lines on the network since early 2021.

- **The new Western Power Feed**, now supplying power to the network, is enhancing the resilience and reliability of Auckland's metro system network and supporting the future growth of train travel.
- **Construction is progressing well at Drury and Paerātā Railway Stations**, which will cater

to population growth in South Auckland. Construction will begin on a third station, Ngākōroa, before the summer closure.

- **Construction of our Auckland Rail Operations Centre** which brings together all rail partners working out of once place to improve collaboration.

Please see our [website](#) for more on where KiwiRail is working to improve the Auckland rail network.

It's electrifying: Western Power Feed powers on

Our new traction substation in Glen Eden is officially live and powering the Auckland metro network.

To enhance resilience to the Auckland Network, ahead of the City Rail Link opening next year, teams have delivered a brand-new power feed that complements the existing power feeds at Penrose and Westfield.

This new feeder station utilises Static Frequency Converted (SFC) technology to transform three-phase 33kV power from the Hepburn Road substation to single-phase 25kV power for use across the rail network.

This new technology allows us to feed power much further and more efficiently into the network when paired with one of our existing transformer power feeds.

Following a successful trial phase which tested integration with Auckland's

electrified network, the new substation is ready to keep trains moving. This means that in future we can isolate smaller sections for maintenance, reducing disruption for passengers. It also provides a backup supply, ensuring trains continue to run even if another feed goes offline.

Looking ahead, we're planning an additional power feed in South Auckland to further boost network resilience and support future growth in the South.



Drury Rail Stations update

It's been a big year for the Drury Rail Stations Project, with major progress being made at both the Drury and Paerātā sites.

This project is part of our commitment to delivering better public transport, faster routes into the city, and a more reliable network for south Auckland's growing population, thanks to significant Government investment.

At Drury, platform stairs, under-track pipelines, pedestrian bridge barriers, and half of the platform shelters have been installed. Carpentry on the pedestrian bridge and roof installation are underway, and the bus loop and car parks are taking shape.

At Paerātā, the pedestrian overbridge steel frame, platform stairs, road bridge barriers, and retaining walls are in place and landscaping is now underway. Civil works are nearing completion, making it easy to imagine commuters travelling in and using the new station.

At both sites, structural steel for the lift shafts is now in place and ready for the lift installation. Artwork provided

by Mana Whenua features on the pedestrian and road bridge barriers, creating a vital link between the new structures and the surrounding environment.

Both stations remain on track for physical works to finish by March 2026. It's been incredible to see the dedication of our teams and contractors, working safely and

efficiently to overcome every challenge and deliver these stations on schedule.

Initial site clearing has begun at Ngākōroa, with contracts expected soon and construction starting before the end of the year.

A huge thank you to the wider community for their patience. We know the disruption hasn't been easy, but it will all be worth it next year.



It's getting hot in here: summer in the rail corridor

As summer approaches, heat-related restrictions on the rail network become more common across both Metro networks.

When rail reaches a surface temperature of around 40 °C, it becomes at risk of warping or buckling. To maintain safe operations for freight and passengers, temporary heat-related speed restrictions are applied.

Our asset team continuously monitors rail conditions and undertakes preventative and reactive maintenance to keep the network as resilient as possible during summer. This includes a rigorous destressing programme, heat-treating newly laid rail, and using robust fasteners, sleepers, and ballast.

Destressing, one of our best lines of defence against heat-related issues, involves pulling or 'stressing' it so it can expand or contract without creating excessive tension.

Last summer, our enhanced planning



schedule and delivery of works, including a comprehensive destressing programme, resulted in the lowest number of heat-related restrictions on record.

During summer, when rail becomes hot and dry, friction increases, and residents may notice an increase in "wheel squeal" noise experienced. Our

teams are working on a lubrication strategy for the Auckland network, which may minimise this noise. This will be rolled out progressively following completion of rigorous testing, commissioning, and training.

We'd like to thank our customers, rail corridor neighbours, and commuters for their patience and support.

Auckland beautification initiative is soaring

With additional funding secured to beautify Auckland's rail corridor, our team has been busy identifying new sites for community-focused murals.

Over the four-day Labour Weekend rail closure, we achieved two quick wins by transforming two old, heavily tagged signal sheds in central and west Auckland.

A group of young artists from Kāhono Youth Arts Collective, led by Tory Whiting, extended their existing mural on Railside Avenue in Henderson, drawing inspiration from Te Taiao (the natural world). The artwork features a Kauri tree, Tōtara branch, and Rewarewa grain – symbolising strength and growth in the community.

Joel Nicholls continued his bird theme with a mural celebrating the flight of a Warou (Swallow) surrounded by Pohutukawa in Parnell. The Warou represents movement, while the Pohutukawa symbolises foundation and fortitude. Designed to be viewed from a moving train, the mural captures the flight of the bird and connects it to the surrounding rail environment.

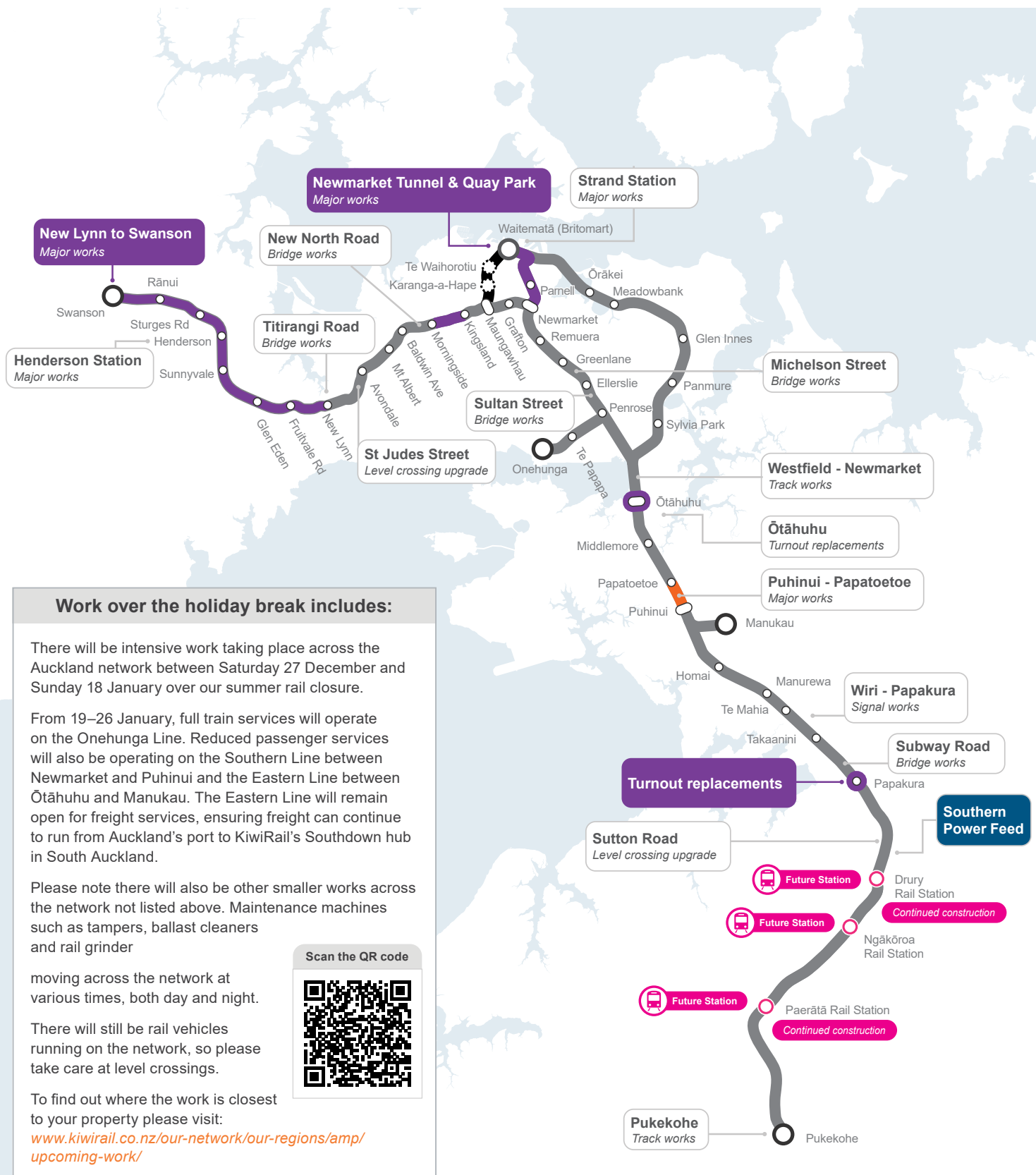
Several artists have been commissioned to complete murals during the Christmas rail closure, with new works planned for Pukekohe, Wiri, Papatoetoe, Parnell, Hobson Bay, and

Maungawhau. These artworks aim to enhance Auckland's rail network and reduce graffiti, and we look forward to continuing supporting local artists through this initiative.





KiwiRail summer rail upgrades



If you have queries please contact our Community Engagement team on 0800 801 070 ext 43042 or by email at contactus@kiwirail.co.nz. For public transport information, visit www.at.govt.nz or call 09 366 6400.

www.kiwirail.co.nz

KiwiRail