



April 2023

Northland Rail Programme Newsletter

Kia ora

We have been making good progress repairing the damage to the North Auckland Line (NAL) caused during the late January weather event and Cyclone Gabrielle. This line is an important freight connection for Northland and we are focussed on reopening it as quickly as possible. However, the amount of the damage – particularly the massive slip at Tahekeroa, near Helensville – means it will take time.

The good news is that just before the line was closed, we got regulator approval to run 18-tonne axle loads on the NAL. This means that when the line does reopen we will be able to run longer trains, which will help us grow rail freight in Northland and reduce freight congestion on the region's roads.

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

Progress repairing the North Auckland Line

At this stage, the North Auckland Line (NAL) is expected to remain closed for at least another 8 – 9 weeks.

The combination of the 27 January rains and Cyclone Gabrielle resulted in more than 100 damage sites on the NAL between Swanson and Whangārei.

We have removed numerous fallen trees and smaller slips along the line between Swanson and Whangārei and made excellent progress repairing the track south of Makarau. There was significant flooding in that part of the region, which undermined large sections of track and washed away large amounts of ballast. We have now repaired major washouts at Waimauku, Woodhill and both south and north of Helensville – adding rock protection beside the tracks (see pictures on the next page).



North Auckland - slip covered rail line at Tahekeroa

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North Auckland - laying down geotech cloth prior to laying ballast at Woodhill



North Auckland - repaired line with rock protection after washouts south of Helensville

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There is a fairly large slip across the tracks near Makarau and we are currently awaiting the results of geotechnical assessments. Once we clear the slip we will be able to get work trains up to the site of the massive 350 metre long slip at Tahekeroa.

Enabling works for the Tahekeroa slip are complete, including clearing construction vehicle access right through the site. The removal of slip material is well underway - to date more than 3,500 cubic metres of earth has been removed from the site. Construction of a temporary bund to protect site works is underway and access is currently being cleared to enable clearing of the rail line. All going well we are hoping to get a work train to the site, and begin repairing the line, around mid-May.

Further north, between Tahekeroa and Whangārei, there are a number of slip sites that have been geotechnically assessed and we are currently awaiting remediation design solutions. These include places where there have been slips under the tracks and retaining structures will likely need to be built.

NZ Upgrade Programme work – Whangārei to Kauri

To minimise disruption to our freight customers, we have brought forward project work planned for later this year to upgrade the line between Whangārei and Kauri.

We are replacing replacing ballast, sleepers, and rail, to raise the standard of the line - as we have done in recent years when upgrading the track between Swanson and Whangārei to an 18-tonne axle load.

Work is underway and we're aiming to get as much of the upgrade done as possible before the NAL reopens – which will avoid further disruption for our freight customers.



Northland - work getting underway to upgrade the rail line near Kauri