

Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua highway

15 November 2021

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency

We assisted Waka Kotahi to obtain RMA approvals for Te Ahu a Turanga, the 11.5km-long new section of state highway 3 to replace the broken link through the Manawatū Gorge. The road had been closed in 2017 by landslides and instability, having previously provided an essential connection between the Manawatū and Wairarapa / Hawkes Bay.

The closure of the Manawatū Gorge road in 2017 had an immediate, significantly detrimental impact on the people living in Ashhurst, Woodville, and in the surrounding districts, as well as people and freight moving around the lower and central North Island. People have been forced to use less safe alternative routes that are not fit-for-purpose for an inter-regional state highway link.

Working in partnership with four local iwi groupings, Waka Kotahi has been striving to reinstate a safe link as quickly as possible, and has achieved great things in a short space of time by adopting a highly collaborative, inclusive approach to developing the project.

We supported Waka Kotahi, and latterly the Te Ahu a Turanga Alliance, in this work, through an initial process to designate land for the new highway, and in a process where an application for resource consents was referred directly to the Environment Court for consideration. Because of the support of iwi and the collaborative process adopted, these were very efficient processes, with the direct referral in particular being the fastest such process undertaken in New Zealand.

Construction of the project has begun, and the Te Ahu a Turanga Alliance is making excellent progress towards its goal of opening the road by the end of 2024.

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