

# MIN-3916 Meeting with Minister Allen, and Tairāwhiti/Whakatāne local government and iwi officials 26 July 2022

26 July 2022

You have requested notes to support your meeting with Minister Allen and local government and iwi officials from Tairāwhiti and Whakatāne regarding the impact of the recent weather event on State Highways 2 and 35 and the financial support that may be available to support the recovery.

## Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

### Update on the impacted corridors

*Please refer to MIN-3912 #1-4 for background information regarding these sites.*

#### State Highway 35 (SH35)

- Ensuring a safe reopening of SH35 near Motu River is the current priority. The road was open to light vehicles for a period from Saturday evening to 7.00 AM Monday. Limited opening periods allow for emergency services, supplies and people to be reconnected through the region, while ensuring that work on the track and to support the road from the river can be carried out without disruption.
- The road will now be open to light vehicles between 6:00 and 7:00 AM, and 5:00 and 8:00 PM each day until further notice while stabilisation works continue.
- The kink in SH35 near Kopuroa as a result of a slump in the road has been straightened out. Waka Kotahi is considering reopening the road to truck and trailer units in the next 24-48 hours. The road has been open to other vehicles throughout.

#### State Highway 2 (SH2)

- A guardrail has been installed at the site of the underslip near Matawai, reducing the road to a single lane. The road remains open to vehicles with a width less than 4m, and the site continues to be monitored for further damage.
- A design for the permanent repair is being finalised and work on site will commence this week. The permanent repair is estimated to be completed within 6-8 weeks.

### Incoming weather for the region

- Weather watches are in place for the eastern Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti, with 90mm expected in the eastern Bay of Plenty over the next 24 hours, 40-60mm in the Motu catchment, and 60-80mm in Waioeka. There are also wind warnings in place. This weather is expected to pass through the region today and have moved south by Wednesday.

## Perceived Waka Kotahi underspend of the Provincial Growth Fund

- On 19 July 2022, Hon Kiri Allan wrote to Hon Michael Wood regarding Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment in SH35. Hon Allan referred to recent comments made by Hon Robertson during a visit to Gisborne.
- section 9(2)(g)(i)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- Waka Kotahi has been allocated \$48.6 million to deliver three projects in the Gisborne region. These projects are SH35 Resilience Improvements, SH2/35 Passing Opportunities and Waikare Gorge (pre-implementation only). Waka Kotahi is progressing the delivery of these projects to the agreed scope and expects to spend all of the allocated funding by the time the projects are complete. Because the projects are not yet complete, not all of the funding has been spent to date.
- The recent weather events have put pressure on the capacity of the supplier/contractor market in the region. Some emergency works are being prioritised over continuing delivery of the two PGF projects, although these are progressed as resource allows. While delivery timeframes for the two PGF projects will be affected, the full PGF funding allocation will be spent in Tairāwhiti.
- Waka Kotahi would be happy to speak to the council directly to provide an update on the two PGF projects it is delivering, and any impact of the recent weather events.
- The confusion regarding an underspend may also be due to previous changes in the amount of funding allocated to Waka Kotahi through the PGF. Waka Kotahi was originally allocated \$93 million from the PGF to invest in Gisborne.
- In 2019, Cabinet decided to reprioritise \$44 million of the \$93 million allocated to Waka Kotahi as the SH2 Waikare Gorge project was unable to be accelerated (leaving \$5 million for pre-implementation work). Of this reprioritised funding, \$28 million was then allocated by Cabinet to an additional suite of local roading projects in Tairāwhiti. Waka Kotahi understands the remaining \$16 million was allocated to other projects in the region.

## Emergency works funding available to local government

- Decisions about allocating funding from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) for local road emergency works are made by Waka Kotahi.
- Waka Kotahi is working closely with the Gisborne District Council and Ōpōtiki District Council on their application following the latest weather event. Once the final application is submitted, it will be taken to staff with delegations for funding approval.
- Gisborne District Council has indicated that they are going to request a bespoke Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) for the works associated with the March 2022 weather event. They will be asking Waka Kotahi to contribute funding beyond the current base rate of 67% for the current year for Gisborne. In the case of emergency works funding, the funding rates can be increased to an enhanced FAR, which is an additional 20% on top of the base rate if the emergency works funding application is greater than 10% of their annual maintenance budget.

- s 9(2)(g)(i)
- Ōpōtiki District Council has indicated that they will be submitting an application for emergency works funding. The council has a base FAR of 75%.

#### Future plans for SH35

- The Waka Kotahi regional Maintenance and Operations team has recently applied for \$20 million of funding to repair damage to the network caused by the March 2022 event. This includes abutment repairs to 17 bridges and culverts, including the Mangahauini No. 1 bridge which suffered a washout in March, three retaining wall repairs at the Mangahauini Gorge, works on dropouts and underslips, and approximately 20km of watertable clearing and scour repairs.
- The pavement repair and renewal programme in the coming year includes a minimum of 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of pavement repairs, 55 lane/km resealing, 1km road rehabilitation, and subsidence repairs. Drainage improvements have also been planned.
- There is a need to update the Connecting Tairāwhiti business case, completed in 2017/18, given the current failures on SH35. A refresh will enable Waka Kotahi to identify the most vulnerable points on the local network and progress these sites for a targeted response. This is due to there being sites which were not of concern when the business case was completed but now are. Sites currently identified by the business case will not be changed by the update, and funding for these has not been affected.
- The updated business case will consider short-, mid-, and long-term options. Resources and funding to progress this work is currently being sought.