

94 Milford Road news

August 2017

Welcome to this first edition of *Milford Road news*, a regular update to let you know about the interesting work happening on this iconic highway.

The day-to-day management of SH94 between Te Anau and Milford Sound is the responsibility of the Milford Road Alliance, a partnership involving the NZ Transport Agency and Downer NZ. The alliance's responsibilities include managing the Milford Road avalanche control programme and Homer Tunnel, and providing incident/emergency management on a route that in places traverses extreme alpine terrain.

This arrangement brings greater stability to the management of the Milford Road along with a strong local customer and safety focus, together with more informed, collective and speedy decision making.

I hope you enjoy our first update. Your comments and questions are welcome. Please email these to office@milfordroad.co.nz

KEVIN THOMPSON

Milford Road Alliance Manager



Sensors get the measure of major Milford Road slip site

The red slip is a large active landslide that stretches for 800 metres above the Hollyford River section of the Milford Road.

This potential hazard for passing traffic is frequently monitored and checked by Milford Road Alliance staff. Twelve British sourced sensors, that have never been used in New Zealand before, are allowing even closer tabs to be kept on what is happening at this slip site. The sensors operate 24/7 and in all weather conditions, to monitor any movement on existing cracks and rock at the slip site. The information is then relayed back to nearby receiver units. Here it is collated and transmitted for pickup by staff at road level, or where cell or radio telephone

coverage is available, sent directly to a website for visual checks or via email and text alerts.

Previously the site could only be assessed by people going there to check it and using photographic comparisons of the slip. These new sensors support this work and eventually should mean people spend less time working in rock fall hazards zones such as the red slip.

Consideration is now being given to using these sensors at other high-risk rock fall sites along the Milford Road, to help build a more accurate picture of these hazard areas, and provide increased safety for Milford Road users.

Win-win for road safety and tourism

The collective efforts of the Milford Alliance and the Department of Conservation (DoC), has delivered multiple benefits for Milford Road travellers.

While clearing a slip and realigning the road near the Hollyford Valley, they came up with a plan for additional parking near the start of the popular Lake Marian walk.

DoC Fiordland District Senior Ranger Ken Bradley said at the busiest times of the year when the existing carpark was full, up to 40 vehicles would park along Milford Road. They posed a danger to highway traffic – especially vehicles that weren't parked safely.

DoC provided land on the other side of the highway for the new carpark that was formed out of slip material. The slip clearing work also enabled the existing carpark to be expanded. From here, visitors can access the Routeburn and Key Summit track – one of the major attractions in the Fiordland National Park.



NZ Transport Agency Director of Regional Relationships Jim Harland says the realignment of the highway, creation of a lookout and larger safe parking areas are great examples of the Transport Agency and alliance working with others to improve customer's experiences on the iconic Milford Road.

Safety first at Falls Creek Bridge

Safety improvements are being made at the scenic Falls Creek Bridge, a popular stop-off point for visitors on SH94 between Te Anau and Milford Sound.

The Falls Creek Waterfall and Hollyford River are both major attractions at this location, but the current road and bridge are narrow and there isn't a lot of space for pedestrians or tour buses when it gets busy. In recent years, vehicles have also hit the bridge on numerous occasions. With strong growth in visitor numbers it is more important than ever to make this area as safe as possible.

The Milford Road Alliance is widening the highway on the Milford side of the bridge to create two full traffic lanes

and a pedestrian walkway. The latter will extend from the car parking area on the Milford side to a new footbridge over the creek, allowing visitors to safely walk and view the waterfall. New protective rails on the bridge provide greater safety for drivers.

There are plenty of challenges for the construction team including changeable weather and the demanding alpine terrain. Strict environmental controls have to be followed, with the work site in the heart of the Fiordland National Park, and in an area of significant historical importance.



MORE INFORMATION



To keep better informed about what is happening on the Milford Road and when closures for maintenance are likely:

- Visit our website: www.highwayinfo.govt.nz/traffic/regions
- Phone 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49)

- Register for traffic updates at: www.onthemove.govt.nz

You can also follow us on Facebook & Twitter:

- www.facebook.com/nztasouthisland and
- Twitter: twitter.com/NZTACWC

The latest traveller information is also available at: www.tfc.govt.nz.