

2

Muldoon's Corner Easing Project



Project progress

Since the project began back in August 2009 the earthworks team has now moved a staggering 100,000m³ of material – that is nearly 50% of the 230,000m³ required in total.



Forest debris is laid across the slope at fill site A and planting of natives such as flax has just began.

Some of the excavated or 'cut' material has been placed as 'fill' in the gully at the first bend as you head south from the summit. This area has now reached its finished level so the team has spread forest debris, saved from the original site clearance, over the new slope to prevent slips and has also started planting natives towards the bottom of the slope. The new road alignment will eventually lie over this fill area.

The gully at the next corner down the hill is being prepared for filling and the team has started laying the new concrete culvert here too.



The stone-filled gabion baskets on the left help retain the fill slope as well as protect the stream at the bottom of the gully.

The 'fill' site lower down the hill has received the majority of the cut material and is close to its finished level. This area is outside this project's scope of work but will be available for road re-alignment in the future.

The recent change in weather has seen the earthworks programme slow down. Periods of heavy rainfall on construction sites are always difficult to manage, particularly when large areas of ground are exposed, and the team is working hard to ensure that no extra sediment gets washed into the streams.

Looking ahead

It is the start of the fish-spawning season so the earthworks programme is designed to ensure that it does not impact on the native fishes' natural habitat. The onset of winter also means there will be less activity visible on site, but the team will still be working during the coming months on tasks such as planting and preparatory work for the summer season.

The next stage of work will require single lane closures during off-peak hours. This is expected to start in early July, weather permitting, and manual stop/go signs will be used to control traffic through the site. Priority will be given to vehicles travelling uphill, where possible, to avoid them starting and stopping on steep slopes.



A borehole drill rig high up against the cut face of the hill monitors groundwater and helps to determine where rock anchors are placed in this area to stabilise the slope.



These are just some of the controls that help to keep sediment out of the streams and watercourses. The two holding ponds allow sediment to settle and clean water can then flow from the top of the ponds into the stormwater drains. Weather conditions have started to deteriorate but the NZTA project manager Simon Cribb (left) and Opus engineer to the contract Keith Atkinson made sure they were wrapped up against the elements when on site earlier this month.

Partnering Charter

The key partners involved in this project – regional councils, iwi, road user representatives, and emergency services – have established a strong working relationship. This should lead to successful project outcomes and enable any issues to be quickly resolved if they arise.

A Partnering Charter has been agreed and signed which defines a combined set of values and objectives for the project. It sets the scene for the partnership between the project and its stakeholders over the next two and a half years.

“This project will on completion significantly improve safety, comfort and ease for all users of this section of the Rimutaka Hill Road. During the construction period the road must continue to function effectively as a critical lifeline between the Wairarapa and Wellington providing access to regional facilities such as the port, airport and hospital.”

The promotion of shared values encourages positive behaviour within the project team and the following core values were considered the most important:

- **Responsibility** - Commit to fully engage on cultural and environmental issues to ensure actions and outcomes meet or exceed project requirements
- **Collaboration** - Commit to addressing any issues or concerns and support and fully co-operate with others to overcome obstacles and achieve desired project outcomes
- **Communication** - Commit to effective and efficient flow of ideas and information to other team members and stakeholders, including the travelling public. To maximise available media outlets to give real-time updates
- **Enthusiasm** - Commit to being proactive, constructive and positive in all dealings within the project team
- **Honesty** - Commit to sharing ideas and issues with integrity, trust and respect, keeping our shared goal in mind

Finally, the charter sets out the main project targets and stakeholder expectations against which the team's performance will be measured. These cover:

- Effective communication
- Safety and incident response
- Meeting cultural and environmental expectations
- Performance – during construction and the finished quality of product

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