

Ngā pārongo hou

Latest council news

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West Coast Rd repairs given high priority

Permanent repairs are expected to begin early this year on two major slips on West Coast Road in North Hokianga. Control measures and heavy traffic restrictions will remain in place and be closely monitored until the works are complete.

The two slips occurred following separate severe weather events in 2022. The first in July reduced West Coast Road to one lane near Waipuna Marae in Panguru, while the second in August closed the road completely just past the intersection with Motutī Road near Kohukohu.

Both slip sites are now open to light, single lane traffic using give way systems. However, a detour remains in place for heavy vehicles at the Kohukohu slip with an exemption for emergency services vehicles.

This means trucks and other heavy traffic travelling to Panguru and Mitimiti will continue to use a detour route via Runaruna Road. The heavy transport detour traverses 9km of hills and is clearly marked by electronic message boards.

While regularly monitored to ensure the road is well maintained, Far North District Council and Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA) acknowledge the detour cannot be a long-term alternative

Geotechnical engineers say that both West Coast Road slips have continued to move due to a combination of soil saturation caused by ongoing wet weather and local geology. Both sites have very similar characteristics to Mangamuka Gorge where a series of devastating slips have kept State Highway 1 closed since August.

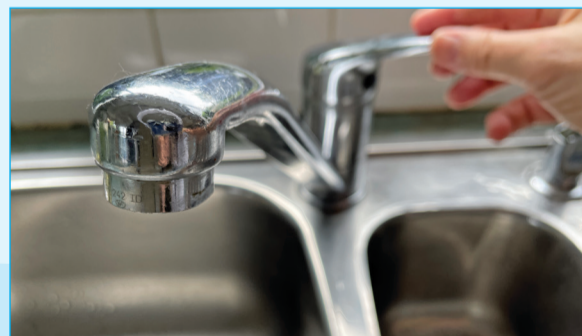


Repairs to two major slips on West Coast Road are expected to start early this year but may take some time. A detour remains in place for heavy vehicles at the Kohukohu slip.

The current cost estimates to repair district road damage in the Far North caused by recent storms stands at \$15.3 million. Of that, the West Coast Road slips will require about \$1.1 million, with the slip closest to Kohukohu estimated to cost just over \$650,000. Both slips are rated as high priority for repairs.

A response from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to the council's funding assistance request has now been received, with funding approved to carry out further geotechnical assessment and detailed design options. NTA warns that due to the scale of the slips, repairs may take some time to complete.

Works to improve Kerikeri water



The Kerikeri-Waipapa water network has undergone additional work to flush out manganese.

The council undertook additional works to improve the quality of the Kerikeri-Waipapa water supply in early January to help flush out manganese from its reticulation network. Manganese is a naturally occurring trace mineral known to cause water discolouration.

Far North Waters Alliance Manager Guillaume de Rouvroy says that despite its appearance, the water is safe to drink.

"Our daily testing indicates that the water source, treatment plant, and network all meet drinking water standards, however, we do acknowledge the concerns and frustration some customers have reported over discoloured water coming out of their taps, which is why we have taken additional steps to resolve the issue."

The maintenance included hydrant flushing throughout the water supply network in the Kerikeri area to help mitigate discolouration of the water caused by the higher-than-normal manganese found in one of its water sources.

The Kerikeri water supply is sourced from both the Puketotara Stream and the Waingaro Reservoir Dam with limits on the daily volume that can be taken from the stream.

During the summer period of high-volume usage, raw water from the reservoir is required to help supplement the stream raw water to meet demand. This is susceptible to manganese.

If water discolouration continues residents are advised phone the council's 24-hour contact centre on 0800 920 029.

Dog owners urged to watch out for dotterels

Summer is a good time to remind dog owners to be extra vigilant around our precious wildlife, especially when visiting beaches. Stricter dog access rules apply to protect the many sea birds that nest there.

The dotterel (tūturiwhatu) is particularly vulnerable because they nest above the high tide line.

Dotterels are now one of our rarest birds with only about 2500 left, making them more at risk than some species of kiwi. You can find out more about dotterels at www.doc.govt.nz

Ōpua-Paihia track reopens



A popular coastal walking track has reopened, but more work is taking place in January.

A wooden boardwalk and bridge that form part of a popular coastal walking track between Ōpua and Paihia reopened in time for the Christmas holiday break.

However, further work on the structure is required by council contractors. The boardwalk and bridge will close on weekdays for the rest of January to allow for the installation of permanent safety rails and other work. The boardwalk and bridge will open at weekends during this time.

Construction challenges have included the discovery that more piles needed to be replaced than were initially identified. A very wet November also caused almost two weeks of delays.

The council will begin a staged upgrade to the entire length of the Ōpua-Paihia track in 2023.