

New footpath steps up pedestrian safety

Pedestrians in Rāwene can now put their best foot forward as a long-awaited footpath project nears completion.

The work, which began in late March, added missing sections of footpath along Parnell Street between the village, Rāwene Hospital and Rāwene Primary School, creating a safer route for pedestrians, especially school children.

As well as gaps in the original footpath that forced pedestrians to cross the road to continue safely, stair sections and steep inclines made it difficult for mobility-impaired users to navigate the walkway.

The new footpath creates a wider, level surface leading from the village to a crosswalk at the hospital entrance. One significant part of the project was turning Nimmo Street East into a cul-de-sac by closing its intersection with Parnell Street. This removed a particularly dangerous crossing area for school pupils.

The footpath is now 330m long and between 1.5m and 1.8m wide. There are two sections with retaining walls and a total length of 55m with safety handrails.



A section of the long-awaited new footpath on Parnell Street in Rāwene creates a safer route for walkers.

The footpath project, costing around \$800,000, was a priority for the Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board and championed by the Rāwene Ratepayers/Residents Association.

While Far North District Council contractor Ventia has now completed most of the project, some additional work is continuing to tidy up the area.

New speed limits hit the road



Kerikeri Road is one of several roads where speed limits have changed.

Kerikeri's two major transport links - Waipapa Road and Kerikeri Road - are among those included in the next phase of speed limit changes to be introduced.

On Tuesday 27 August, the speed limit on Kerikeri Road was reduced from 80km/h to 50km/h from the roundabout at State Highway 10 to Butler Road. On the opposite side of town, the Waipapa Road limit was cut from 80km/h to 60km/h from the roundabout at State Highway 10 to 50m before Edkins Road.

The Bay of Islands-Kerikeri Speed Limit Review assessed more than 300 roads, covering 321km. This follows public consultation conducted in 2022 when 253 submissions were received on proposed speed changes. Two-thirds supported or partially supported new speed limits in the area. The submissions were considered at a formal hearing in March last year.

Earlier this year, Far North elected members decided the new speed limits should go ahead despite the coalition government's decision to halt "blanket" speed limit reductions. They agreed work was already well underway before the government's announcement, and \$800,000 in funding had already been allocated.

That funding includes a 69 per cent share from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, with the remaining 31 per cent provided by FNDC.

The areas that will see changes to speed limits include the Kerikeri-Waipapa urban area. Speed limits have already been activated in Ōpua, Paihia and Haruru to align with work on the state highway network.

Next phase for Hihi Bridge

Work began in August to build a temporary crossing for Hihi traffic while the existing bridge is repaired.

With geotechnical investigations complete, contractors began building the temporary bridge 500m south of the intersection of Hihi Road with Taemaro Road.

Once the temporary crossing is in place, the existing bridge deck will be cut into pieces, removed and replaced with a new concrete deck and guard rail.

The decision to build a temporary crossing was taken after an alternative option to upgrade a nearby road as a detour route was ruled out due to costs.

The project is expected to be finished in December when traffic will be rerouted back over the permanent bridge and the temporary crossing is removed.



A temporary bridge will replace the bridge to Hihi during repairs.

Community initiatives funded



Planter boxes and gardens will be part of the Kaitiāia Street Cleanup.

Supporting local infrastructure and celebrating creativity was a key focus of Te Hiku and Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board meetings in August, with three community groups receiving a share of more than \$11,000.

The Kaitiāia Business Association was granted \$7095 to maintain gardens and installations as part of the Kaitiāia Street Cleanup. This effort aims to improve the town's appearance in preparation for summer and the Mangamuka Gorge reopening, set for December.

Annie Tohill was granted \$1800 towards the 2024 Artisans Affair craft event on 6 to 7 September at Te Ahu in Kaitiāia. More than 35 local exhibitors will be on show over the two days.

The Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board granted Te Kotahitanga e Mahi Kaha Trust \$3000 towards a Movie Night event, part of Te Wiki o Te Reo 2024 in Kaikohe.

The trust has been given permission from Disney to play the film *Coco Reo Māori*. The event will include stalls, food and activities. Participants are asked to bring their own blankets, bean bags or chairs to the family fun event.

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