

Infrastructure Committee

11 February 2021

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take: 1

Department: Property & Infrastructure

Title | Taitara Options report to reinstate Meads Road access past the Homestead

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

The purpose of this report is to consider the options to reinstate access to Hunter Valley following damage to Meads Road in the flooding event in December 2019.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Infrastructure Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Authorise** staff to implement the recommended Option 4, namely, to make safe the damaged section of Meads Road, implement rolling road closures for elevated lake levels and form a new walking track above the road;
3. **Authorise** staff to continue investigations for securing long term access into the future with commencement subject to prioritisation through the Long Term Plan.

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29/01/2021

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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2/02/2021

CONTEXT | HOROPAKI

- 1 A section of Meads Road in Hāwea has been closed since December 2019, between the homestead and Terrace Creek. This road provides access to Hunter Valley Crown estate and Department of Conservation [‘DoC’] land and is used by the station and also for recreational purposes such as tramping, hunting, four wheel driving and the Epic MTB race.
- 2 Cracks first appeared in the road in December 2019 during a period of elevated lake levels, and there is a risk of a 60m long section of the formation falling into Lake Hāwea.
- 3 The cracking is located within legal road, approximately 500m before the legal road is stopped after which it continues as a farm track through Crown estate. The Crown estate is subject to a pastoral lease held by Orange Lakes (NZ) Ltd.
- 4 QLDC has historically maintained the road up to the homestead so the damaged section of road is located in an area that has not been historically maintained by QLDC.
- 5 An options report was first brought to Infrastructure Committee in February 2020. The Infrastructure Committee authorised staff to commence work on design of the recommended option which was to construct a new road alignment to reinstate access to the Hunter Valley.

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

- 6 Investigations commenced in March 2020, and Orange Lakes (NZ) Ltd made it clear that they do not want to see a new road running through key farm grazing paddocks within their property.
- 7 QLDC noted that a survey was required to inform the options, but access was initially declined by Orange Lakes (NZ) Ltd.
- 8 Permission was subsequently granted in September 2020 for access to complete a topographical survey.
- 9 The survey was carried out in October 2020 and options confirmed. Key updates since the February 2020 report are as follows:
 - a) Retaining is likely to be required for the alternative alignment resulting in an increase to the cost estimate.
 - b) From a risk perspective, given it has been over a year without showing significant movement, it is possible that the slip has stabilised. It is now considered an option to reinstate (make safe) and open the road with lake level monitoring to mitigate the risk of failure.
 - c) As well as reinstating the road, a new track could be formed above the existing road to secure walking access during periods of time when the road is closed. This in Council officers’ view could be done with minimal impact on station operations,

compared to the realignment option which cuts through the farm. There could be a delay implementing this option, as it would be outside road reserve so approval from LINZ and the lessee for an easement would be required.

- 10 Legal advice relating to this matter is that continuing with the temporary road closure signage is not an option to manage the issue long term. However the Council must be cognisant of its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 as a PCBU [‘Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking ‘] to consider safety in implementing a solution. Any decision to carry out works and re-open the road must be carefully considered.
- 11 Reinstatement (per Options 2, 3 and 4) would involve minor earthworks, drainage improvements and pavement repairs at the site of the existing slip. Orange Lakes (NZ) Ltd have also sent Council a quote from their contractor to complete a similar scope of work.
- 12 Sketch drawings are attached for Options 4, 5 and 6 below. They should be viewed alongside the options assessment for context.
- 13 Under Option 2 and 3, reactive opening and closing of the road per bullet point (b) above is not recommended because there is no safe route for the contractor to implement and manage road closure signage beyond the slip. This is addressed with Option 4 by forming a new walking access track per (c) above, that can be used during periods of road closure.
- 14 Option 1 Do nothing.

Advantages:

- 15 Minimal cost to Council.
- 16 Consistent with Council’s historic approach of not maintaining past the homestead.

Disadvantages:

- 17 Should this option be selected and repairs or alternative routes are not selected, the temporary road closure that is in place at the homestead would require formalising. This would likely require a road stopping process.
- 18 By stopping the road, Council would potentially be forfeiting public access through to the end of the existing legal road corridor resulting in access issues to the DoC conservation land.
- 19 This option does not address how the lease holder might access their land beyond the site of the slip; access to the station is of significant importance to the lease holder.
- 20 Safety issue for vehicles or pedestrians who may continue to use the road at their own risk, and possible issues relating to legality of access if the road is stopped.
- 21 Risk of the damaged road dropping out and Council losing physical access through to the end of the existing legal road corridor.

22 Option 2 Reinstate (make safe) damaged section of road.

Advantages:

23 Low cost option – cost estimate is \$150k.

Disadvantages:

24 No active management, once the road is opened future slips remain a health and safety risk.

25 Risk of the damaged road dropping out and Council losing physical access through to the end of the existing legal road corridor.

26 Option 3 Reinstate (make safe) damaged section of road. Rolling road closures for elevated lake levels.

Advantages:

27 Low cost option – cost estimate \$150k plus ongoing cost to administer closure.

28 Active management of the risk and closure based on lake level monitoring.

Disadvantages:

29 Ongoing cost to administer rolling closure.

30 Once the road is opened, closures would require notifying on both sides of the slip. There would be no safe route for contractors to implement and manage road closure signage beyond the slip.

31 Stranded visitors may need to be boated out.

32 Risk of the damaged road dropping out and Council losing physical access through to the end of the existing legal road corridor

33 Option 4 Reinstate (make safe) damaged section of road. Rolling road closures for elevated lake levels. Form new walking track above road.

Advantages:

34 Low cost option – cost estimate \$200k plus ongoing cost to administer closure and cost of easement

35 Active management of the risk and closure based on lake level monitoring

36 Stranded visitors have legal walking access out and contractors can access the far side of the slip to implement a closure safely without crossing the slip

Disadvantages:

- 37 The walking track will be located just outside the road reserve in places, so will require an easement which has not yet been negotiated and could potentially be a cause of delays
- 38 There will be ongoing cost to administer rolling closure
- 39 Risk of the damaged road dropping out and Council losing physical access through to the end of the existing legal road corridor

40 Option 5 Realignment of road.*Advantages:*

- 41 Shifts the vulnerable section of road away from the lake and secures access to the Hunter Valley long term.

Disadvantages:

- 42 Cost estimate is \$2.7m.
- 43 Not supported by the Station leasee due to impact on farm.

44 Option 6 Anchored retaining wall on existing alignment.*Advantages:*

- 45 Robust repair for the damaged section of road.

Disadvantages:

- 46 Cost estimate is \$1.8m
- 47 The section of Meads Road south of the slip through to Terrace Creek is also at risk of slippage in a similar event and therefore this repair would not necessarily fix the problem in the event of a similar occurrence in the future

- 48 This report recommends **Option 4** for addressing the matter because it will resolve the public safety issue and reinstate access in the short term, for a relatively low cost. It is also recommended that the Infrastructure Committee direct staff to continue investigations into securing access long term. This would involve creating a Point of Entry for the project, with a scope to undertake a business case exploring options such as significant strengthening of the existing alignment, or legalising and constructing an alternative alignment.

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

> SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

- 49 This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because of the levels of community interest, and relation to public safety and access.
- 50 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are any individuals or groups who may wish to access the Hunter Valley Station as per the lease agreement between LINZ and Orange Lakes (NZ), along with the Station managers themselves.
- 51 The Council will consult with the affected groups who are station managers/owners, LINZ and DoC. The risk of issues arising from this consultation strategy is considered low. There is high community interest in maintaining permanent public access to the DoC conservation area which the recommended option seeks to achieve. The Council has not undertaken any engagement with the community on this matter.

> MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

- 52 The Council has not undertaken any consultation with iwi on this matter.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

- 53 This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK00010 Operational Asset failure results in damage to private property and/or loss of community services within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a moderate inherent risk rating.
- 54 The approval of the recommended option will support the Council to implement additional controls for this risk. This shall be achieved by improving the drainage on the slip and reinstating access, with closures of the road during elevated lake levels. A management plan for the closures would be prepared and implemented under the roading contract, as per existing process to manage other comparable risks on the network eg Kinloch Road closures during flooding.
- 55 The pedestrian access route included in Option 4 is currently at risk as negotiations have not commenced between QLDC/LINZ/Station to use the Crown land for this purpose. If agreement cannot be reached Council is exposed to visitors being stranded during periods of road closure.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

- 56 An estimated additional \$200k needs to be added to existing budgets to complete the physical works. If agreed, this amount could also be met through a reprioritisation of existing drainage and unsealed roading renewals budgets without materially affecting the level of service elsewhere on the network. It is anticipated that the ongoing monitoring cost and temporary closures would be met from existing roading opex budgets, this will be a minor cost as lake levels can be checked remotely so would only require a site visit

by the contractor once the lake elevation threshold is reached to place signage. The cost of getting the easement is unknown and would vary depending on whether the alignment could be agreed with LINZ and the lessee, and whether a PWA process is necessary.

COUNCIL EFFECTS AND VIEWS | NGĀ WHAKAAWEAWE ME NGĀ TIROHANGA A TE KAUNIHERA

57 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Significance & Engagement Policy 2017.

58 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

59 This matter is not included in the Ten Year Plan/Annual Plan however could be delivered within general infrastructure management activities.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES | KA TURE WHAIWHAKAARO, ME KĀ TAKOHA KA WAETURE

60 Possible ongoing legal involvement as there could be a road stopping, easement or a land acquisition depending on which option is selected.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002 PURPOSE PROVISIONS | TE WHAKATURETURE 2002 O TE KĀWANATAKA Ā-KĀIKA

61 The recommended option:

- Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by reinstating and future proofing access to Hunter Valley;
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council, or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

ATTACHMENTS | NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA

A	Option sketches (Option 4, 1 page; Option 5, 2 pages; Option 6, 1 page)
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