

28 February 2023

Ma Parata
General Manager
Kuru Contracting
Tolaga Bay



WELLINGTON

Lambton Centre
Level 4, 117 Lambton Quay
PO Box 715, Wellington 6140
T 0800 327 646

Support for the Hikuwai / SH35 Deviation Roading Project

Dear Mr Parata,

Federated Farmers of New Zealand wishes to confirm its support for the work your company is undertaking to construct a bypass that will re-establish traffic connections along SH35 in the area of Hikuwai No1, Hikuwai No2 and Hikuwai No3 Bridges.

Rural properties, communities and consequently the essential primary sector industry in the Tolaga and Tokomaru Bay areas were hit especially hard by the recent cyclone. The re-establishment of traffic connections is vital and it is similarly important that these connections are fit for the purposes required by affected communities.

Establishing a fit for purpose connection addresses two urgent needs for the primary sector;

1. Animal welfare concerns. Extensive hill country slip damage and flooding on fattening land make livestock and feed management extremely difficult. There is therefore an urgent need to either temporarily destock and/or bring in feed from the south. Both efforts require the use of heavy transport.
2. Getting remaining viable product to market. To minimise further produce degradation and to support wellbeing through gainful employment is critical at this stage of the recovery. Again heavy transport access is required for this purpose.

We share the concerns of the local community that proposals to only install a bailey bridge at the location of the damaged No.1 bridge on the Hikuwai River risks limiting traffic along SH35 to light vehicle access only. To do so clearly risks limiting the level and types of assistance required to support the recovery effort in this area.

In addition we recognise the longer term need for constructing greater access resilience for the communities north of the Hikuwai. Given the high possibility of increased cyclone related damage in the future an alternative transport route, of which the Hikuwai deviation would form part of, would seem to us a sensible investment at this critical time.

As such, we gladly add our support for Kuru Contracting to continue with its work on the Hikuwai / SH35 Deviation Project and ask that Gisborne District Council and civil defence authorities provide the necessary support for this project to be delivered.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hooper
National board member and transport spokesperson