

Waitohi Picton Matters

April 2026

Introducing Waitohi Picton Matters

I am pleased to be able to write this introduction to Council's newest communication piece; **Waitohi Picton Matters**.

Being a local, Waitohi Picton matters a lot to me. The town and its people matter a lot to our Council as well.

Speaking of "a lot," there is going to be plenty happening in our town over the next few years with multiple projects getting underway. The Waitohi Picton Matters newsletter will be produced each quarter and will have a strong focus on the nationally important Cook Strait Ferry Replacement Programme and what it means for Picton, along with other projects being delivered by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail and Council.

As a Council, we are working closely with all the key agencies involved; Port Marlborough, KiwiRail, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) and, last but by no means least, Ferry Holdings Limited (FHL) who are responsible for procuring the new ferries.

By 2029, there will be two new rail-enabled Interislander ferries crossing Cook Strait, and the port infrastructure in both Picton and Wellington will be upgraded and ready to welcome them.

For Picton, the key sites around town will include Port Marlborough's Waitohi Ferry Redevelopment Project and a new overbridge in Dublin Street, constructed by KiwiRail.

In addition to this, other developments include previously planned NZTA intersection upgrades at Kent/Dublin and Wairau/Kent, the designation change to Kent Street to become State Highway 1 and Wairau Road/Nelson Square returning to a local road.

Council is also further developing the Picton Truck Park on Dublin Street, as part of the solution to truck parking issues around town, and we will share updates about the development along the way.

There are certainly lots of pieces to this new ferry puzzle; "we have been here before," I hear you say.

IREX, the ferry project cancelled in December 2023 and the precursor to this current initiative, did create some challenges for us as Picton locals.

However, this is a fresh project, and I personally am excited to see Picton play its part in this infrastructure project of national significance. We are the home of the Cook Strait ferries after all!

I was thrilled to see recently that StraitNZ Bluebridge has also signed a new 39-year commercial agreement with Port Marlborough which secures the future of their Cook Strait ferry services in Waitohi Picton to 2064. That is great news for our port and further cements Picton as the South Island's critical Cook Strait link.



Interislander and Bluebridge, our key ferry partners in New Zealand's critical Cook Strait link

The combination of these various projects will undoubtedly create some impacts on us as residents and on visitors to our town, but all the agencies are already talking together to minimise these as much as possible.

It is important that everyone understands what these various projects mean for our community. Through this newsletter, Council, Port Marlborough, FHL, KiwiRail, NZTA and Marlborough Roads will do our collective best to deliver the information needed about everything that matters for Waitohi Picton.

Mayor Nadine Taylor



Keeping Picton connected

Picton has long been the South Island's front door to the rest of the country.

Ferry Holdings Limited (FHL) say that the Cook Strait Ferry Replacement Programme is about providing a safe, reliable and resilient ferry service, making sure that connection remains strong, reliable and fit for the future without changing what makes Picton unique.

The programme will deliver two new ferries and the necessary port upgrades to support them at Picton and Wellington in 2029. Ferry Holdings Limited was created by the Government to lead the programme end-to-end, bringing ship design, port works and national transport needs together under one organisation.

Chair of Ferry Holdings, Chris Mackenzie, says this programme is about restoring long-term certainty to a connection that sits at the heart of the national supply chain — and Picton is a vital part of that.

"For Picton, the strategy is careful and measured. Instead of expanding the port footprint or building more than is needed, the programme is taking a minimum viable product approach. That means replacing ageing infrastructure and making targeted upgrades so that the new ferries can operate safely and efficiently — nothing more, nothing less," he says.

Delivery in Picton is being done in partnership. Ferry Holdings is working closely with Port Marlborough, KiwiRail, NZTA and Council to make sure the programme works for New Zealand as well as Marlborough. Port Marlborough is leading the design and construction of the Waitohi Ferry Redevelopment Project, using its experience and knowledge of the harbour.

Importantly, ferries will keep running while construction happens, with work carefully staged to reduce disruption for residents, businesses and visitors.

As Sandip Ranchhod, Chief Executive says, "We're in the reliability business. That means sequencing work carefully in live ports and making sure freight keeps moving whilst we build the future system. The aim is clear; to protect Picton's role as a trusted transport hub, with new ferries entering service in 2029 and confidence rebuilt through steady, disciplined delivery."

For more information go to:
www.ferryholdings.co.nz



New ferries will ensure a safe, reliable and resilient service

Port Marlborough update

Port Marlborough has been busy clearing the way to introduce the necessary infrastructure required to accommodate two new rail-enabled ferries arriving in 2029.

Port Marlborough is working closely with Ferry Holdings and key partners to deliver the Waitohi Ferry Redevelopment Project, which includes constructing a new wharf, installing a new linkspan, and upgrading links to the ferry terminal while supporting and maintaining existing customer operations across the port for all customers, including KiwiRail and Interislander. The project scope also includes enabling works, planning and design as well as obtaining required consents.

The deconstruction of the old 250-metre Vehicle Access Bridge is well underway; six bridge spans weighing close to 200 tonnes each were dismantled by the end of February, and during March and April, HEB Construction will deconstruct the remaining two bridge spans along with the old linkspan.

Each bridge span is removed using two cranes lifting in tandem. Once on the ground, the spans are cut into smaller sections, transported off-site and processed for reuse, with approximately 90 per cent of the material diverted from landfill and recycled into aggregate, aligning with and exceeding Port Marlborough's sustainability targets.

For more information and the most up to date information about the project, go to:
www.portmarlborough.co.nz/waitohi-ferry-redevelopment-project



Contractors on site at Port Marlborough preparing to de-construct the remainder of the Vehicle Access Bridge and linkspan

KiwiRail's key part in new ferry delivery

KiwiRail's relationship with Picton goes back a long way, and our Interislander service takes great pride in carrying thousands of people, and much-needed road and rail freight, to and through the port and township each year.

Working with Ferry Holdings Limited, Port Marlborough and Centreport in Wellington, KiwiRail has a key part to play in delivering the new Cook Strait Ferries as well as the infrastructure and operations that will bring these new ships into service in 2029.

At the port, KiwiRail is also working with Port Marlborough to ensure our existing ferry services keep running safely and smoothly during construction as infrastructure is replaced and upgraded.

As part of these works, we are leading the design and construction of the new Dublin Street Overbridge that will replace the existing rail yard level crossing.

The greater rail capacity of the new ferries will also see an increase in rail movements to and from the Picton rail yards.

The Dublin Street Overbridge will deliver a step-change in improving traffic flow, separating these rail operations from road traffic and improving the safety and efficiency of these movements. This will improve safety and help to speed up freight and vehicle movements, contributing to improved economic growth and productivity for the region.

This new bridge is being funded from central government, through Ferry Holdings Ltd and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA).

KiwiRail is working closely with NZTA, Marlborough Roads and Council on planning for the overbridge works, and we will be sharing more detailed information with the community in the coming months.

Update from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi is planning improvements to the road network around Picton.

Following engagement with the Picton community, businesses and stakeholders in June last year, NZTA is progressing designs for the Picton road network improvements project.

This work will improve the way vehicles navigate Picton as they travel to and from the Picton Port by making the roading network safer and fit-for-purpose. We will share our final designs with the community and stakeholders soon before construction begins in the third quarter of 2026.

Visit the NZTA website for more information on the planned road network improvements: www.nzta.govt.nz/pictonproject

As part of this project, we are working closely with KiwiRail to ensure that planning for their construction of the Dublin Street Overbridge is integrated with our work and that the phasing of the two projects is carefully managed.

We are also working with Council, Ferry Holdings Limited and Port Marlborough to ensure a united approach to the wider work that is planned in Picton, ahead of the two Cook Strait ferries entering service in 2029. Collectively, our aim is to ensure the local community continues to thrive during what will be a busy construction period.



NZTA's Picton road network improvements project includes the Lagoon Road/Queen Charlotte Drive/Kent Street/Dublin Street intersection

Keeping Picton moving

Minimising disruption for locals is a key focus of the new Picton Works Coordination Group led by Marlborough Roads System Manager Wayne Oldfield.

The group includes all the key agencies involved in the various Picton projects and meets regularly to plan for and manage roadworks and traffic management around Picton during the work.

One of the key focuses of the group is to ensure a coordinated approach to NZTA's intersection upgrade work and the construction of KiwiRail's Dublin Street Overbridge.

Wayne says he is looking forward to work getting underway on the roading changes required.

"The community can be assured that safety is our number one priority and minimising disruption wherever we can for locals and visitors alike, acknowledging that this is a complex, nationally important project with multiple work sites," he said.



Marlborough Roads

Antenno keeps you in the loop

Council's mobile app Antenno alerts you to water shutdowns, sports ground closures, sewer outages, local road closures and even changes to waste and recycling collections.

Use Antenno to keep up to date with what's coming up in and around Waitohi Picton. It's free to install and available on both Apple and Android smartphones.

To learn more about Antenno including how to download the app go to:

www.marlborough.govt.nz/services/apps



Picton Truck Park progress

Council is working towards providing more overnight parking spaces for truck and trailers at the Picton Truck Park.

Stage One of the Truck Park on Dublin Street opened late last year with twelve overnight parking spaces and a brand-new ablutions block in place with pay-to-use showers, laundry, toilets and cooktops.



Picton Truck Park is a start to addressing truck parking issues

Parking spaces are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Council has collaborated with Blenheim company Kiwi Cash Limited to fund the new setup. Trading as Penny, the company operates similar successful self-serve sites around New Zealand, including the Riverlands Roadhouse south of Blenheim.

Group Manager Property and Community Facilities, Jamie Lyall, says that Council entered into a lease with Port Marlborough from 1 April for use of part of the remainder of the Waitohi Domain site for the Waitohi Ferry Development Project.

"A further area is now available for additional truck parking. A concept for this extension is being worked on in the interim. We hope it will double the capacity of the current Picton Truck Park," Mr Lyall says.

Picton Truck Park will, in time, be able to cater for up to sixty truck and trailer units once the rest of the land becomes available, post the ferry development project.

"This initiative is in line with Council's aim to provide a serviced and safe overnight space for drivers and trucks that's away from Picton's suburban streets," Mr Lyall said.

A pass is required to access the park, through a barrier arm, using licence plate camera technology. The cost is \$10 for a 24-hour period. Companies or drivers register with Penny to use the services. For more information go to: www.go-penny.com