



Selwyn District Council Media release
Thursday 20 August

Coes Ford remains closed despite vandalism

The Coes Ford bridge remains closed to traffic despite the gate being damaged and forced open.

The Council received reports overnight that the gate on the Springston side of the ford had been damaged and removed. Crews will be working to reinstate the barrier across the ford this morning.

The incident has been reported to Police.

The ford remains closed due to continuing high water levels in the Selwyn River. Council group manager infrastructure Murray Washington says the flow in the river increased from 8 to 15 cubic metres per second (cumecs) on Wednesday and had only slowly receded to 10 cumecs this morning.

The flow needs to be down to less than 4 cumecs before gravel extraction and works to reopen the ford can safely begin, he says.

“We must reiterate how important it is that the ford closures are maintained,” Mr Washington says. “We understand that local residents can be frustrated by the closures, but there’s a severe risk that motorists unfamiliar with driving across the ford could be caught unawares by river levels that are unsafe for driving.

“Anyone damaging or removing the barriers is putting others at significant risk – these actions are extremely irresponsible.”

Mr Washington says that following recent high rainfall, groundwater levels in the upper Selwyn catchment are saturated, and any additional rainfall is likely to cause a rise in river flows.

“We’re working to reopen the ford as quickly as possible, but we’re asking the local community to be patient, to understand the rapidly changing conditions we’re dealing with, and to think about the safety of others.”

ENDS

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