

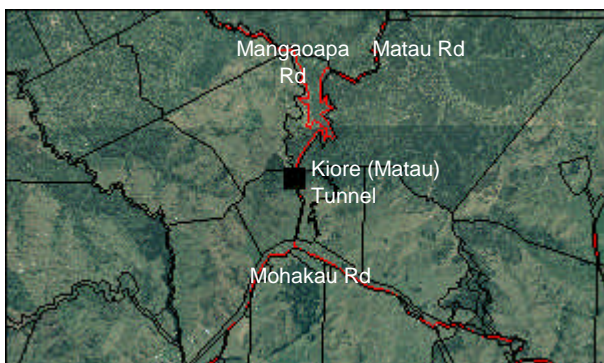


Kiore (Matau) Tunnel

Mangaoapa Road

1910

Use:	Road tunnel	Historic Value:	3 out of 5
Materials:	Concrete, reinforcing mesh	Architectural Value:	2 out of 4
NZHPT Registered:	Not registered	Technical Value:	1 out of 2
Legal Description:	Mangaoapa Road	Symbolic Value:	- out of 3
		Rarity Value:	1 out of 2
		Townscape Value:	1 out of 2
		Group Value:	- out of 2
		Overall Heritage Value:	8 out of 20



The Matau, Junction, Mangaoapa and Mangamaire Roads were originally located in the Clifton County, with the surveying being finished in 1893. The land was steep, and progress was held back by limited funds and difficult communication. Some settlers battled on, and Matau became one of two villages which met these settlers' basic needs. A school was opened in 1896 with a roll of 10 pupils; a post office and a small store were added, and farmers made butter in their own dairies as the road was too poor to be able to establish a dairy factory.

Before the early 1900s, the main route to this village was via Purangi and Tarata. However, inland railway advanced and a railway line from Stratford to Ongarue was started in 1905. The settlers of Matau decided that because of this, the road over the saddle to Kiore needed to be completed. Slow progress meant that by 1908 the railway had gone as far as Huiroa, but the road was still not complete. In fact, by this stage the Kiore tunnel had only just begun to be dug out.



In 1910, the completion of the tunnel marked the completion of the road to Kiore. This road became the main access to the village and surrounding farms. The ease of it compared to earlier access routes gave a new life to the area and greater value to the land. Settlers could now sell their land for profit if they wanted to move away, instead of having to just leave it.

By 1950, the tunnel started to show signs of decay, with the timber lining beginning to rot through and collapse. A Fielding firm was employed to take the old timber out, and replace it with reinforced concrete. This was done to about three quarters of the tunnel, with the original timber remaining to line the rest, and the total cost was £3,820. No further work was carried out on the tunnel until 1994, when the lining was replaced with rock bolts, reinforcing mesh and concrete.

The Kiore Tunnel has many names, also being known as the Matau Tunnel, the Matau Valley Tunnel, and the Mangaoapa Road Tunnel. No matter what it is called, however, it still stands and is still in use. It is perhaps one of the most treasured tunnels in Taranaki, as it is one of the few that still retains its original cross section, and has had no widening or lowering take place.

Bibliography

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p64
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