



50 years of the Auckland Harbour Bridge

It's an unusual way to celebrate a birthday - getting children out from behind their desks to clamber and climb all over a national icon.

The birthday was the 50th for the Auckland Harbour Bridge - and the children from classes at Bucklands Beach Intermediate and Mt Richmond Special School in Auckland had won bridge walks as prizes in anniversary competitions sponsored by the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA).

'Given that the bridge has grown up with Auckland, we thought that the best way to mark its anniversary was to share the celebration with the next generation of Aucklanders,' said Wayne McDonald, the NZTA's Regional Director for Auckland and Northland.

As the children saw how the bridge had helped develop a modern and growing city from the top of its sweeping arch 64 metres above the sea, they might well have been puzzled by its pre-decimal beginnings.

In 1959, steel for the bridge would have been weighed in tons, pounds and ounces, its length measures in yards and inches, and tolls to cross it paid in shillings and pence.

In fact, the history of the bridge, and its contribution to the growth of Auckland by providing a direct north/south link over the Waitemata, can be counted in numbers.

In 1959, 11,200 vehicles crossed the bridge each day. Fifty years later, the average daily count is around 154,000 and sometimes reaches 200,000.

'There have been many changes to help the bridge keep pace with the rapid growth it helped spark right across the region,' Mr McDonald said.

The NZTA is now looking towards the future. Work has started with local government partners to protect a new route under the Waitemata Harbour for road and rail tunnels.

Until then, the existing bridge still has a lot to give.

'Thank you for taking us on top, under, over and around the bridge', Fiona Aiono from Room 3 at Bucklands Beach Intermediate told the NZTA. 'It was probably the best day of my life.'



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What's on

This section has now moved to the NZTA website. Check it out on www.nzta.govt.nz



Chief Executive Geoff Dangerfield.

Welcome

One of the key roles of the NZTA is the responsibility to allocate money from the National Land Transport Fund to land transport activities.

The *Government policy statement on land transport funding (GPS)* sets the overall strategic direction and provides funding parameters for individual types of activity.

To this end, we are in the process of bringing together the first ever three-year National Land Transport Programme (NLTP), a step forward from the annual programmes of previous years. This will bring more certainty and lower compliance costs to all involved.

We have been working closely with regional transport committees during the development of their regional land transport programmes, which feed into the NLTP. The final NLTP will give effect to the government's policy direction, as outlined in the GPS, and allocate resources where they can be best used.

The NZTA Board will be making significant changes to our investment direction in response to the GPS.

I'm looking forward to finalising the NLTP and setting the direction for our work over the next three years. Defining our investment priorities in infrastructure and services will enhance economic productivity and make for better-connected communities. You can read more about the GPS and NLTP in this newsletter.

Extra care and attention is required during the winter months as wet and slippery roads are less forgiving when a driver makes a mistake. By adjusting your driving for the conditions, you can go a long way towards ensuring your safety and that of others on the roads this winter.

National Land Transport Programme 2009-12

Investment strategy guides assessment of transport projects



Things are well on track towards releasing New Zealand's first three-year National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) at the end of August.

The NZTA is developing the 2009/12 NLTP from the recently submitted regional land transport programmes and prioritising the activities from a national perspective against the funding available, as outlined in the *Government policy statement on land transport funding (GPS)* released in May this year.

The priorities signalled by the government in the GPS focus on increasing economic growth and productivity in New Zealand. The GPS requires the NZTA to ensure that the use of land transport funding supports this goal.

This means the NZTA will be investing in high-quality infrastructure projects that support efficient movement of freight and people. Also required is a strong emphasis on value for money and the economic efficiency of projects.

Regional transport committees across the country have recently considered what effect these changes will have on the transport priorities in their regional land transport programmes.

The GPS outlines a list of 'impacts' that the government wishes to achieve through land transport funding. The NLTP will ultimately be aligned to delivering these. (See box on next page.)

To help achieve this, the NZTA has developed a new process for assessing projects and prioritising funding. This process will reflect the greater priority for roads of national significance, the priorities for transport and the greater emphasis on economic efficiency signalled in the GPS.

The NZTA's first Investment and Revenue Strategy will guide this process. The first section of the strategy deals with how the NZTA allocates land transport funding through the NLTP to achieve the impacts envisaged by the government.

The Investment and Revenue Strategy will provide a revised assessment framework based on the new GPS. This will guide the NZTA Board when it considers the 2009/12 NLTP and makes funding decisions during the three-year period.

Detailed questions and answers on the NLTP process are available at <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/nltp/>.

continued >>

Transport 'impacts' the government wishes to achieve

The short to medium-term impacts in the GPS are split into:

Impacts that contribute to economic growth and productivity

- Improvements in the provision of infrastructure and services that enhance transport efficiency and lower the cost of transportation through:
 - improvements in journey time reliability
 - easing of severe congestion
 - more efficient freight supply chains
 - better use of existing transport capacity.
- Better access to markets, employment and areas that have economic growth potential.
- A secure and resilient transport network.

Other impacts:

- Reductions in deaths and serious injuries.
- More transport choices, particularly for those with limited access to a car.
- Reductions in CO2 emissions.
- Contributions to positive health outcomes.

How's the development of the NLTP coming along?

Regional transport committees have adopted and uploaded their regional land transport programmes into LTP online. This is the NZTA's web-based system used by approved organisations (regional and territorial local authorities) to create, submit, and manage their land transport programme activities. These

activities are the building blocks for the construction of the NLTP by the NZTA.

The NZTA aims to publish the final NLTP by the end of August 2009. The final NLTP will be available as a full national document, and also as the component regional documents.

Additional investment in state highway network

Over the next three years the NZTA will be investing more in high-quality infrastructure projects which will contribute to increasing economic growth and productivity in New Zealand.

This comes as the result of the *Government policy statement on land transport funding* (GPS) through which the government signalled that there will be an extra billion dollars for investing in the state highway network over the next three years.

The investment in state highways, which in total will amount to \$10.7 billion over 10 years, reflects the importance of the network to New Zealanders. According to the National Freight Demands Study in 2008, around 70 percent of all freight in New Zealand goes by road, and about 84 percent of people go to work by car truck or motorbike. Another interesting fact is that while state highways represent 11 percent of New Zealand's roading network they cater to around 50 percent of the traffic.

Priority projects for the investment in state highways network include the seven roads of national significance:

- Puhoi to Wellsford – State Highway 1
- Completion of the Auckland Western Ring Route – State Highways 20, 16, 18
- Auckland Victoria Park bottleneck – State Highway 1
- Waikato Expressway – State Highway 1
- Tauranga Eastern Corridor – State Highway 2
- Wellington Northern Corridor (Levin to Wellington) – State Highway 1
- Christchurch motorway projects

Roads of national significance are routes that the government has identified as requiring work, as a matter of priority, to reduce congestion, improve safety and support economic growth and productivity.



This new section focuses on some of the work happening in the regions and introduces the regional directors for the areas featured. Regional directors are members of the NZTA's senior leadership team. They play a key role in working with local and regional government to put in place the NZTA's new planning and funding approach.

Wellington, Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough

Introducing Deb Hume



Dr Deborah Hume was appointed the NZTA's Regional Director for Wellington, Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough in September last year.

Prior to the appointment she was General Manager Strategic Support at Transit NZ. Previous to this, her role was as Principal and Group Manager with URS New Zealand Limited, leading their national management services business. She has a PhD from Queen's University in Canada.

Dr Hume has wide ranging experience in the infrastructure sector, particularly in relationship management and in developing and implementing organisational strategy. She prefers to work collaboratively to deliver on commitments and to maintain a strong stakeholder focus and is enjoying working with our partners at the top of the South Island and in the Wellington region.

Improving safety on Rimutaka Hill

A series of improvements and upgrades are set to improve safety on the Wellington region's Rimutaka Hill this year.

The work has been able to be done earlier through the funding injection provided by the government's Jobs and Growth Plan, announced in February. Work began on the Rimutaka Hill Road in May.

'Modifications to the Rimutaka Hill Road - a section of highway between Featherston and Upper Hutt - will provide benefits to the 5500 motorists who use it every day. These will be enhanced by the upcoming Muldoon's Corner realignment work to be started later this year,' says Dr Hume.

'Firstly, we are putting a number of improvements in place including new curve advisory signs, wider edgelines to define the road better, no passing lines and new edge marker posts. We are also installing an extra guardrail at a number of sites and removing two short passing lanes.

'These may seem like small changes, but they provide significant improvements for road users in an area that has limited space,' says Dr Hume.

The work covers a 13km length of SH2 on the Wairarapa side of the hill road from 1km

north of Pakuratahi River Bridge to the twin bridges over Abbots Creek. This area has historically had a high number of crashes.

'We undertook a number of studies for SH2 between Upper Hutt and Featherston to identify what we could do to improve the route for our road users. The final crash reduction study report recommended the improvements we are implementing,' Dr Hume says.

In September this year work will begin on the Muldoon's Corner realignment project. This will focus on improving the section of the hill below the summit on the Wellington side where there are several hairpin curves (including Muldoon's Corner).

Due to the narrowness of the construction site and the anticipated weather conditions, earthworks will take place over a three-year period. This will help ensure steady traffic flow and avoid lengthy delays for motorists. Large quantities of rock will be gradually removed from the hillside and used as fill embankments in the gullies and so form a base for the new road.

The driver licence theory test is changing

A computerised version of the driver licence theory test is being trialled in Wellington in August, before being rolled out across the country.

Using a computerised test will allow the NZTA to easily add, change or delete questions if any changes are made to the road code. Besides English, the computerised theory tests will be available in nine other languages. This removes the need for and cost of interpreters.

The current theory tests - for cars, motorcycles and heavy vehicles - are taken as multi-choice paper-based scratch tests. The computerised version will stay as close as possible to the original

test format but questions will be randomly selected from the full content of the road code so no two tests will be the same.

Both the paper-based and computerised tests are made up of 35 questions. There are 25 questions about road rules and road hazards and 10 questions about safety practices that relate to cars, motorcycles or heavy vehicles (depending on the theory test being taken).

These changes will start to affect people across New Zealand taking car, motorcycle and heavy vehicle driver licence theory tests from August 2009 onwards.

Eureka Bend back to full capacity on Takaka Hill

The Tasman region's Takaka Hill Road is once again operating at full two-lane capacity following the removal of the temporary one-lane Bailey bridge in May.

The one-lane bridge was installed at Eureka Bend on State Highway 60 (SH60) in 2006 after a slip reduced the road width.

'People travelling on SH60 have waited patiently for nearly three years to have their road back to two lanes. It's good to know motorists will now be able to travel past each other without needing to wait at the Bailey bridge,' Dr Hume says.

Extensive work was carried out to ensure the road would not slip away again and the

road shoulder has been widened to allow more room for cyclists and pedestrians.

'We appreciate the effect this road restriction has had on road users and have worked hard to stabilise Eureka Bend to protect it from further slips. It's important to us to keep people moving on the highway, particularly in this area which sees many more vehicles on the road during holiday periods,' Dr Hume says.



Canterbury and West Coast

Introducing Mark Yaxley



The NZTA's Canterbury and West Coast Regional Director, Mark Yaxley, brings a wealth of transport sector experience to his role.

Before taking up this job in 2008 Mark was Acting Southern Partnership Manager with Land Transport NZ and prior to that a Principal Planning Advisor for Land Transport NZ and Transfund. He also spent several years in management and roading roles with the Waitaki district and Dunedin city councils.

Mark says his experience in asset management, service delivery, and transport planning and funding in both local and central government settings has been a huge help in his new role. Mark believes this enables him to look at transport issues and potential solutions from a much broader perspective. He said it has also given him a good grasp of the transport issues facing the Canterbury and West Coast regions.

Permanent traffic lights signal change on the West Coast

They have been a long time coming but the West Coast now has its first permanent traffic lights.



Traffic lights at Iron Bridge.



Traffic lights at Fern Arch.

The lights, which became fully operational recently, are located at two places in the Buller Gorge. One set has been installed at Iron Bridge and the other at Fern Arch. The signals are part of a \$694,000 NZTA project to improve road safety on two areas of SH6 through the Buller Gorge that have high crash rates due to the poor visibility of oncoming vehicles.

Vehicle detecting sensors allow the lights to switch to green if there are no vehicles

approaching from the other direction. A manual push-button system has also been installed on the traffic lights to cater for cyclists. A major effort has been made to minimise the environmental impact of the traffic lights on the surrounding national park – this includes the use of solar energy to power them.

The world's first traffic lights began operating in London over 140 years ago.

Recycled crushed concrete for new Southern Motorway – Christchurch

An NZTA decision to use recycled crushed concrete in the construction of the new Southern Motorway is a move that will have positive environmental spin-offs.

Aggregate is an important resource for construction and building which is so vital to the economic wellbeing of Canterbury. The Christchurch Southern Motorway project will be the most significant roading project to be carried out in the greater Christchurch area in the next few years and will require a lot of aggregate to construct. Work on this \$180 million dollar project is scheduled to start in March 2010.

NZTA State Highways Manager for Canterbury-West Coast Region, Colin Knaggs, says there are real pressures on construction aggregate sources within greater Christchurch with reports suggesting there is approximately 10 years supply available. In developing the Christchurch Southern Motorway project the NZTA looked at more sustainable alternatives rather than being totally dependent on importing the aggregate from traditional sources such as riverbeds and quarries.

Using recycled crushed concrete will cost about the same as getting the same quantity of aggregate from usual sources like quarries and riverbeds. It will also have real environmental benefits. Much of the concrete will be sourced from several significant demolition projects planned for Christchurch in the next few years – concrete that might otherwise have ended up in local landfills.

In 2007 the NZTA was granted consents to stockpile 60,000 cubic metres of recycled crushed concrete at locations near the site of the new Southern Motorway. Site preparation works for the storage site have been completed and material is being stockpiled as it becomes available from demolition sites around Christchurch in preparation for its use in construction.

Mr Knaggs says having these stockpiles near the new Southern Motorway



Stockpiled recycled crushed concrete for the Christchurch Southern Motorway.

construction area should mean fewer longer distance truck movements to transport aggregate from quarries and riverbeds that are much further away. Having less of these trips required during the construction phase of the project will mean less heavy vehicle noise, fewer exhaust emissions and help ease traffic congestion.

Info day for ski field bus drivers a success

More than 80 bus drivers from the lower South Island are now much wiser about what it takes to keep their buses out of trouble on demanding ski field access roads.



Members of the Heavy Motor Vehicle Safety Intervention Group.

Recently the Otago/Southland Heavy Motor Vehicle Safety Intervention Group, that includes the NZTA, ACC, the NZ Police, Department of Labour and the Bus and Coach Association, ran what is believed to be one of the first ski field bus driver safety information days in New Zealand. The event was held at the spectacular Coronet Peak ski field near Queenstown.



NZTA Transport Regulatory Advisor Greg Sims talks to the bus drivers.

Topics covered ranged from bus dynamics to maintaining a vehicle being used in alpine conditions. Other sessions included fitting chains on buses and identifying and negotiating ski field road hazards.

Group spokesperson Dermot Harris says the day more than achieved its goal of giving bus drivers the sort of information they need to safely negotiate ski field access roads. He said bus drivers from

outside the Queenstown area are not always that familiar with the local ski field roads so it is really encouraging that so many made the effort to attend.

Dermot Harris said the excellent response to this initiative confirmed the Otago/Southland Heavy Motor Vehicle Safety Intervention Group's view that there would be demand for a ski field bus driver skills day. Feedback from bus drivers who attended showed the majority felt it was worthwhile. A number felt, as a result of the day, that they were better informed about what is required to keep themselves and their passengers safe as well as the motorists they share ski field access roads with.

Given the popularity of the information Mr Harris said similar events may run at other ski fields around the country.

Next steps for the Waterview Connection



SH20 WATERVIEW CONNECTION - TYPICAL SECTION THROUGH GREAT NORTH ROAD

The Avondale and Waterview community are getting the chance to have their say about the proposed surface and tunnel option for completing the Western Ring Route through Auckland.

Several hundred people attended a series of community open days which provided opportunities for people to speak directly with the Waterview Connection project team about the proposed tunnel and surface option for the route that will connect SH20 to SH16. More of these open days will follow this month.

Completing the Western Ring Route has been identified by government as one of seven roads of national significance. The route will improve transport links for businesses, provide more reliable travel time to Auckland International Airport and reduce reliance on SH1 through central Auckland.

The NZTA has also briefed key stakeholders including local government, schools and community groups. Comments for this initial round of consultation close on 31 July. The NZTA Board will meet in Auckland in August to consider community/stakeholder feedback being received.

The Board has already noted that the proposal will have greater effects than a previous full tunnel scheme and has committed to working fairly and openly with the community to manage the effects.

'As the project design is developed and more detailed technical information becomes available, we will continue to talk with the community about issues they have raised such as noise, visual effects, air quality and urban form,' said Waterview Connection Principal Project Manager Clive Fuhr.



Western Ring Route map.

'We understand that residents have a number of issues they want to know more about and we look forward to working with people to get their views on how the project can best be integrated into the surrounding area.'

The NZTA anticipates going into the statutory approval process in early 2010.

Agricultural vehicles' guide 2009 available

Keeping farmers and other road users safe on the road is the focus of the NZ Transport Agency's updated *Agricultural vehicles' guide 2009*.

Available free of charge, the guide contains important information on the safe and legal operation of agricultural vehicles on New Zealand roads.

Originally developed in 2008 in collaboration with the Agricultural Transport Forum, an updated 2009 version has now been produced and is available to download or order in hard copy.

Topics covered in the guide include:

- vehicle registration and licensing
- warrant/certificate of fitness
- vehicle equipment issues
- road user charges

NZTA Vehicle Policy Senior Engineer Bruce Currie says agriculture is a critical part of the New Zealand economy, and agricultural vehicles have become more common on our roads.

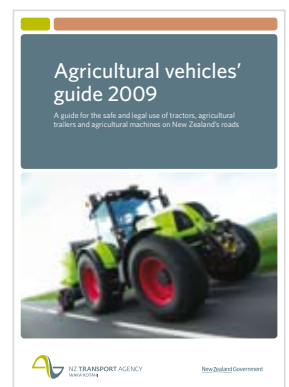
'Unfortunately we're seeing no reduction in the number of agricultural vehicles involved in road crashes. We want to make sure drivers of agricultural vehicles have the information they need to stay safe, follow the road rules and avoid crashes.'

'The guide brings a lot of important information together in one document for easy reference by people involved with agricultural vehicles - this should make compliance much easier.'

The guide benefits from the experiences of the members of the Agricultural Transport Forum which is comprised of industry representatives including Rural Contractors

New Zealand, Horticulture New Zealand, Tractor and Machinery Association, Federated Farmers, New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association, as well as the NZ Police.

Copies of the 2009 guide can be downloaded or ordered here: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/commercial/agricultural-vehicles-guide>



New ads target young drink-drivers

The NZTA and NZ Police have launched a new road safety television advertising campaign that focuses on youth drink-driving.



Despite increased police enforcement, which has resulted in more drink-drivers being caught, drink-driving remains a major cause of road crashes. It is one of the two largest causes of deaths and injuries on New Zealand roads.

In particular, drink-driving by young people is a serious road safety and public health issue in New Zealand, with younger drivers continuing to be the largest problem group in this area. Young drivers cause nearly half of all the alcohol-related road

crashes on New Zealand roads. As a result of these crashes involving young drivers, around 1000 people are injured or killed each year.

The new ad, Trapped, focuses on the instant and chilling consequence of drink-driving by showing young drivers there is nothing glamorous or fun about drinking, driving and crashing. It links drink-driving by young people with the risk to themselves and their mates, demonstrating they won't always walk away.



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What's on

The What's On section has now moved to the NZTA website.



www.nzta.govt.nz/training/whatson

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