



The Lyttelton Tunnel canopy destroyed by the earthquake

The road to recovery

Message from Geoff Dangerfield, Chief Executive, NZ Transport Agency

The scale of the damage wrought by the 22 February earthquake in Christchurch has been difficult for those outside the city to comprehend.

But as we come to terms with the tragedy and as the long and difficult process of rebuilding begins, the critical role which the region's transport infrastructure will play in the recovery becomes clear.

Functioning highways are critical lifelines in a natural disaster, and the state highway network in Canterbury has come through both the September and February earthquakes in relatively good shape, with no catastrophic damage to bridges or pavements. This has allowed them to remain open for use by emergency services and for the transport of fuel, food and water in the immediate aftermath of the quake. The strength and resilience of the network will be equally important in the recovery and rebuilding process.

The resilience of the bridges on the region's state highway network is due in large part to seismic retrofitting work carried out over the past decade. More than \$20 million has been invested nationally in seismic retrofitting of bridges and

other state highway infrastructure across the country, and the value of that investment has become very clear in recent weeks.

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) will also be supporting the rebuilding effort in Christchurch in many other ways. Our people have valuable specialised engineering skills to share and we will help with the assessment and repair of transport infrastructure. We will also help with the provision of emergency funding and other expertise, advice and resources - as best we can.

Our Christchurch-based staff, consultants and contractors have been working with a sense of urgency and commitment to respond to this disaster, while at the same time dealing with damage to their own homes and the effects on their own families. I am very proud and thankful for their efforts.



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In the longer term we will work closely with local government to think about how we can help with the redevelopment of the city from a transport planning perspective. We will be able to contribute to thinking about how to rebuild the city with the best possible transport system for people, including how to make sure each transport mode can play its part.

The road to recovery for the city will be long, and at times it will be difficult. We are committed to doing everything we can to help our friends in Christchurch rebuild their city.

Due to the Christchurch earthquake on 22 February, this issue of Pathways will not feature a southern regional column. This decision was made with respect to those affected by the earthquake and with particular regard to its impact on the Southern region.



Severe road cracking at Anzac Drive/New Brighton Road roundabout

New cycle and walkways link Manukau Harbour

The NZTA has built new cycling and walking paths as part of the SH20 Manukau Harbour Crossing project.

The links total 3.5 kilometres and connect the communities of Mangere Bridge and Onehunga across the Manukau Harbour.

NZTA State Highways Manager for Auckland and Northland, Tommy Parker said the pedestrian and cycling routes will benefit the Mangere Bridge and Onehunga communities, and are an integral part of the

project to construct the duplicate motorway bridge across the harbour.

‘The NZTA and our project partners know that the communities on both sides of the harbour have been waiting a long time for this and we are hoping it will upgrade recreational facilities for the whole area,’ Mr Parker said.

The new cycle and pedestrian ways include pedestrian bridges, boardwalks and additional walking areas along the

Coronation Road causeway. There have also been safety and lighting improvements to the Onehunga Mall underpass, along with new paths through Onehunga Lagoon and around the Onehunga Harbour Road footbridge.

The \$230 million Manukau Harbour Crossing project was opened seven months ahead of schedule in August 2010. The new duplicate bridge on the Southwestern Motorway is part of the Western Ring Route.

DYNAC goes live – information and safety

When major events, weather or traffic incidents cause congestion or delays, a new and highly sophisticated traffic control and information system called DYNAC is providing state highway travellers throughout the country with better, faster and more reliable information.

Its development allows the NZTA's traffic operations centres (TOCs) to better manage road events.

It's a great step forward in the better management of traffic and provides vital safety information to drivers quickly and accurately.

Both Auckland and Wellington already have extensive traffic management initiatives including variable message signs, cameras and monitors. However, DYNAC brings a totally coordinated, computerised management system to the many devices that keep an eye on traffic conditions.

When the DYNAC system is fully implemented in 2014, it will maximise traffic efficiency and safety on New Zealand's state highways by integrating the management of:

- traffic and weather systems
- electronic message signs
- lane control signals
- the Auckland Harbour Bridge moveable lane barrier
- tunnel safety systems
- traveller information services.

DYNAC's first stage was installed in Wellington early last year, monitoring traffic on SH1 from Tawa to central Wellington and on SH2 to Petone. Auckland's extensive highway network has now been brought into the system.

DYNAC is run from NZTA's TOC at Smales Farm on Auckland's North Shore and from a smaller centre at Johnsonville in Wellington.

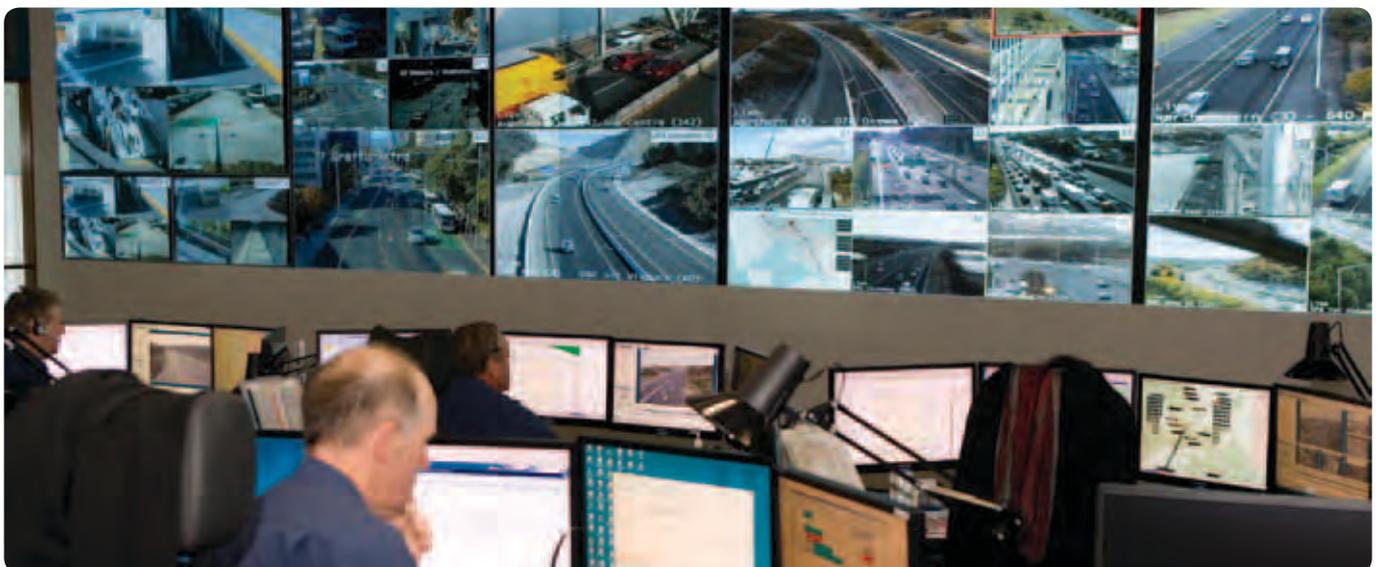
Operators monitor and control hundreds of cameras, a small number of which can count vehicle numbers. Systems also monitor the speed of traffic and vehicles that are too heavy or high. All this essential information is then assessed by computers and operators who get real-time information on incidents on the network and can advise the travelling public, police, road contractors and others quickly and accurately, using over 330 electronic message signs in Wellington and Auckland.

For operators working at the TOC, DYNAC provides a user friendly system that will eventually replace 14 previously separate systems and can instantly update sign messages and traffic management plans to deal with specific incidents.

This makes the system effective and efficient to operate under high stress circumstances. In future it will also:

- provide quality historical traffic and incident data for analysis
- provide real-time traffic and incident data to the travelling public
- deliver improvements in performance and capacity
- allow the NZTA's and Auckland Transport's operational units to centrally monitor all traffic management operations from any one command centre
- have the capacity to include systems from other regions as they come online.

Further stages of DYNAC will provide weather alerts and alarms, using MetService's localised roadside weather monitors and be able to update drivers on natural road hazards, such as black ice, snow, rain or fog. It will also integrate the control of 107 variable message signs across New Zealand and provide additional traffic and event information to the travelling public through third-party partners.



Inside the Auckland Traffic Operation Centre where a network of live cameras and computers enable staff to keep on top of a whole range of traffic issues

Buyers warned to beware when purchasing vehicles online

The NZTA is reminding people to be cautious when purchasing vehicles online through auction websites.

The agency is fielding an increasing number of enquiries from buyers who have purchased vehicles online without having had them properly inspected by an expert first, only to find afterwards that the vehicle is in poor condition.

NZTA Access and Use Group Manager, Ian Gordon says there has been an increase in recent months in the number of cases where buyers are finding that the actual condition of the purchased vehicle differs greatly from how it is portrayed on the internet by the seller.

'Too many people see a car on the internet for sale, and think the photos displayed are enough to give an accurate picture of the car's condition,' says Ian.

'Vehicle safety should be top of mind for all car buyers, and we urge anyone looking to buy over the internet to make sure the vehicle undergoes a thorough pre-purchase inspection before committing to the purchase.'

Ian says paying a professional to carry out a pre-purchase inspection was a small price to pay to avoid being left with a vehicle that is worth much less than what it was purchased for, or needs significant work to be brought up to a roadworthy standard.

He says consumers should also be aware of their rights under the Sale of Goods Act, Fair Trading Act and Consumer Guarantees Act.

Sites like TradeMe can also provide an audit history of the transaction which a buyer is able to use at the Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal or at the Courts Disputes Tribunal.

Ian says while the NZTA could provide advice on vehicle safety issues, it does not have the authority to seek compensation from a seller on the buyer's behalf.

'When purchasing a car online, it is very much a case of buyer beware.'

Further push to reduce truck crashes in North Canterbury

The NZTA has stepped up its efforts to reduce truck crashes on SH1 in North Canterbury.

Since 2003 there have been 53 truck roll-over crashes on SH1 between Christchurch and Kaikoura, with 15 of these in the last five years being fatal or causing serious injury. Last year alone, there were seven truck roll-over crashes, five caused serious injury and one was fatal.

The main cause of these crashes has been trucks taking corners too fast. The NZTA's Southern Region Access and Use Manager, Greg Allnut says the NZTA is working hard to reduce the number of truck crashes on this section of state highway, especially single heavy vehicle roll-over crashes on corners with speed advisory signs. New safety measures mean truck operators who have a vehicle involved in a 'driver at fault' roll-over crash on a speed advisory corner can now

expect much closer compliance checking from the NZTA and the New Zealand Police. This increased and targeted compliance will include checking truck speeds, driver log books and vehicle safety standards.

'The management and staff of transport firms have a major influence on the attitudes and behaviour of their drivers. They have the power to reward safe driving and foster a safe driving culture so we are very keen to work together with operators to make this happen,' Greg said.

Letters have been sent to truck operators who regularly use SH1 in North Canterbury outlining the new safety measures that have the support of the New Zealand Road Transport Association and New Zealand Trucking Association.



The 'Keep It 10 Below' campaign, which featured along State Highway 1 between Kaikoura and Christchurch encouraging truck drivers to take corners at speeds of less than 10km/h

New ways to reduce rural crashes

The NZTA is considering interesting ways to help prevent crashes in rural areas. If formally introduced, they may be small measures that make a big impact on safety at rural intersections and roads.

Wide rural centreline trial

The NZTA has just begun an extensive two-year trial of new wide rural centreline markings on various sections of state highways around New Zealand.

The new road markings incorporate a painted median approximately one metre wide to provide greater separation between each lane of the highway.

Data collection surveys will be carried out at the trial sites before and after the new road markings are installed to evaluate their effectiveness.

Currently, four sites have the trial markings installed – SH35 at Gisborne, SH29 at Tauriko near Tauranga, SH22 at Drury and SH1 at Huntly. During February and March, the trial markings will also be installed at Drury near Auckland, Huntly, Hastings, Waikanae, Woodend and Templeton in Canterbury. Further sites for the trial markings are also planned for later in 2011.

'Research undertaken overseas indicates that a wider centreline with rumble strips can be expected to reduce all crashes by 15 percent and head-on crashes by 55 percent,' says Chief Advisor on Road Safety, Colin Brodie.

Rural intersection active warning systems

The NZTA is considering new ways to help prevent crashes at rural intersections and reduce their severity if they do occur.

New research undertaken by the NZTA aims to identify whether rural intersection active warning (RIAW) systems have the potential to improve safety at high-risk rural intersections.

Colin says a RIAW system could include a range of measures. 'It may include vehicle-activated warning signs. However, variable speed limits in high speed priority road environments appear to be most effective in reducing drivers' speeds, with reductions of up to 17km/h being reported.'

'RIAW systems have the potential to reduce the number and severity of crashes at rural intersections by slowing motorists as they approach major intersections, increasing driver awareness of possible upcoming hazards and improving motorists' gap judgment on the minor road intersection approaches.

Intersection crashes account for 26 percent of fatal and serious crashes on state highways and for the third highest number of rural injury crashes behind run off road and head-on crashes.

Focusing safety improvement at high-risk rural roads is one of the proposed actions within the 'Safer Roads and Roadsides' theme of the *Safer Journeys: New Zealand's road safety strategy 2010–2020*.

Once the next stage of the RIAW research is completed, one or two systems are likely to be trialled at identified high-risk intersections in rural areas.



Wide rural centreline markings, which are currently being trialled on SH35 near Gisborne

New motorcycle and moped safety measures target riders

A new motorcycle testing and training programme is being developed by the NZTA as part of new safety measures aimed at better training for motorcycle and moped novice and returning riders.

Proposed changes recently consulted on by the NZTA include strengthening motorcycle licence tests and removing the option to complete approved car-based driving courses to reduce motorcyclists' time on a restricted licence.

Motorcyclists would instead have the option of completing a new competency-based training and assessment programme as an alternative to the standard testing regime. The current 70km/h restriction on learner motorcyclists would also be removed so riders can travel at the same speed as the vehicles they share the road with.

These changes would also introduce a power-to-weight restriction for novice motorcycle riders, optional refresher training for returning riders and promote the benefits of high-visibility and protective clothing.

Moped riders would no longer be able to ride on their car licence but would instead be required to complete a moped-specific basic handling skills test along with a motorcycle learner theory test to obtain a new Class 6M (moped) licence.

The new measures if approved, when the Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment Rule 2011 is signed by the Transport Minister Steven Joyce, are likely to be in place in 2012.

'Motorcyclists are 20 times more at risk of being involved in a fatal or serious injury crash than car drivers. With more new riders every day, these steps are vital to keep riders safe on the road,' says the NZTA's National Manager, Road User Behaviour, Michael Cummins.

Patience a virtue when teaching teens to drive

Learning to drive can be an emotionally-charged experience for teenagers because they traditionally tend to push the boundaries.

Research* conducted last year by the NZTA and ACC has revealed a fifth (21.3 percent) of respondents said they fell out with their teacher when they were learning to drive because impatience, stress and anger got the better of them.

The research also shows that dads are the preferred parental instructor over mums. Over a third, (37 percent) of New Zealanders think fathers are the best teachers (excluding professional driving instructors) and 52 percent were actually taught by their father. This compares to 29 percent who were taught to drive by their mothers, with just 14 percent of those polled saying that mums make the best driving guides.

Due to the sometimes fraught nature of the learning-to-drive process, teens (and parents) are often eager to 'get the learning over with' and pass the restricted

licence test so they can drive solo and become more independent. Unfortunately, statistics show that this independence comes with much greater risk - young drivers in the first year of driving solo have four times the crash rates of learner drivers.

Since 1987, New Zealand has had a graduated driver licensing system (GDLS). This system helps to protect young learner drivers by introducing them to the more hazardous driving conditions once they have had some experience, and has proven successful in reducing crashes.

'It's important for parents of young drivers to understand how the GDLS works. The restrictions are there to protect young drivers when they're at their most vulnerable,' says National Manager, Road User Behaviour, Michael Cummins.

'Parents and caregivers need to know why their ongoing support and monitoring will contribute to their teen's safety - however emotionally charged the teaching and ongoing monitoring may sometimes seem.'

The NZTA will launch an awareness-raising and education campaign in May to encourage parents to continue to be involved in their teen's driving throughout the restricted licence phase of the GDLS process. New resources will provide constructive and practical tools to help parents manage the relationship with their teen so they can become more effective driving supervisors in and out of the car. The new campaign will complement the existing Practice programme, developed by the NZTA and ACC, for learner drivers and their coaches in the learner licence phase.

Proposed changes to legislation to improve the safety of young drivers will see the restricted driving test strengthened to encourage 120 hours of supervised practice and the driving age raised to 16. This legislation is expected to come before Parliament in the middle of this year.

* The online research was conducted in August 2010 with approximately 600 respondents.

Tell us what you think - draft state highway classification

The NZTA has released a draft classification of all state highways and an engagement process is now underway.

Classification is about understanding the function of our highways so they can be made safe and fit for purpose. Is a highway primarily for moving freight to ports and airports, or people to jobs and tourists to key destinations? Is it connecting one region with another or helping people travel within a region?

Once understood, highways can be classified according to core functions. They will be put into categories such as 'national strategic' or 'regional strategic'.

Then levels of service can be set. What can people expect when they use each category of road? For example, what speed can you expect to drive on each category of highway?

Right now, we want to know what you think about the criteria and thresholds we have used to create the categories.

The NZTA will seek feedback on levels of service - or road user experience - later in 2011.

Submissions close on Thursday 31 March 2011.



Find out more and fill in the online feedback form at: www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/classification-system.

Or post feedback direct to this address:

State highway classification, NZ Transport Agency,
Private Bag 6995, 44 Victoria Street, Wellington 6141.

Highway corridors can provide a 'feel good' factor

The look and feel of our highway roadside can influence the impression both locals and tourists have of their region.

This is one of the findings in a recent study of West Coast highway corridors carried out for the NZTA by Lincoln University. The study, which included a survey of West Coast highway stakeholders, is part of a larger NZTA project on how state highway roadsides can be improved from both an environmental and visual perspective.

NZTA Environmental and Urban Design Manager, Carl Reller, says one of the reasons tourists come to New Zealand is because of our clean green image and the appearance of our highway roadsides can influence their perceptions.

State highways impact on their surroundings in various ways, from how they blend into the surrounding landscape, to environmental pressures they may place on adjacent ecosystems. The NZTA works hard to minimise these with measures that include planting to enhance biodiversity and taking steps to integrate highways into their surrounding landscapes. Carl says the NZTA's *Guidelines for highway landscaping and environmental and urban design framework* direct a lot of this work.

Many of those surveyed in the West Coast study wanted highway roadsides that reflected the region's distinctive way of life. They also felt that heritage objects used to promote the region's unique character

needed to be well presented and, where possible, used in conjunction with roadside amenities such as rest areas. Survey participants did not like roadsides that did not have a West Coast look or gave a poor impression of the region. The survey of stakeholders showed they would like improved signage about roadside reserves, including the facilities that were available at any particular reserve.

The information from the study will be valuable in helping with the management of highway roadsides in other parts of the country.



RoNS update – let's talk

Project teams for the seven roads of national significance have been busy in recent months getting feedback from individuals and groups about the projects. This is a very important aspect of the NZTA's work that runs for the duration of the project from planning to post completion. Consultation has taken place on the Puhoi to Wellsford, Christchurch Northern, Southern and Western corridors, and the Mackays to Peka Peka and Peka Peka to Otaki sections of the Wellington Northern Corridor and the Waikato Expressway. The teams have engaged with communities, neighbours and partners to gain feedback in many ways including formal and informal feedback at open days, conversations, meetings and general information sent to homes.

The Victoria Park Tunnel (VPT) project is the most advanced road of national significance and poses some interesting challenges for the team because of its proximity to people's homes, the Auckland CBD, and key motorway links. Community and Stakeholder Liaison Manager for VPT, Helen Cook says the community's interest in the project is intense. 'In the 12 months since tunnel construction began we have produced nearly 150 community updates to tell residents what's coming up and how they might be affected, hosted 70 visits to the site, and held numerous meetings with local residents and businesses. Our next big event is a community open day on 26 March.'



Travel information just a click away

An innovative way of getting real-time travel information to people using state highways has been built by the NZTA to help drivers make smarter travel choices.

The InfoConnect initiative helps people reduce their travel times and make their journeys more enjoyable and safer.

Based on the NZTA's website, InfoConnect uses information from the NZTA's various sources, including road and traffic information and webcam coverage, and incident reports in Auckland, Waiouru, Otaki, Paremata, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. It also uses information from the NZTA's planned roadworks, unplanned road closures and delays maps and holiday traffic patterns.

This information is then made available free to web developers and other businesses who by using innovative technologies develop applications, such as traffic updates, interactive maps showing the location of road incidents and real-time traffic webcam. Road users can access these applications with their smartphones, iPads, computers or satellite navigation systems.

The NZTA's Project Manager Deidre Hills, who led the development of InfoConnect, explains the initiative is effectively a winning three-way relationship between

the NZTA, web developers and the travelling public.

'Developers benefit from having access to our information. Meanwhile, the NZTA benefits from the developers who make our information accessible to a wider audience. But ultimately, the road users benefit by having greater access to verified road condition information. So everybody wins,' says Deidre.

Ensuring that travel information is timely and accurate, together with the ever-changing technology and devices on offer, can sometimes be challenging when considering how to best invest in such a fast moving industry.

'In developing InfoConnect, we saw an opportunity to improve the way traffic information was shared, by providing it to third parties who had the funding resource and expertise to develop the wide variety of communication channels required,' says Deidre.

A range of businesses and developers have been building applications with the help of InfoConnect. 'Larger organisations like the

Automobile Association have built some excellent ones, but so have technical-minded people at home.'

InfoConnect also utilises New Zealand's Open Government Information and Data Re-use Work Programme. This aims to make non-personal data and information held by the government more widely available, easy to use and compliant with open government data principles.

As for the future, there are a number of exciting and innovative applications in the pipeline from organisations and developers, especially in the mobile communications and radio markets.

The NZTA's InfoConnect application

The NZTA has developed an InfoConnect application of its own called HighwayInfo. HighwayInfo provides real-time information to drivers on state highways, at-the-minute camera updates at traffic hot spots and updates on upcoming road delays. To find out more, visit: www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/current-conditions/highway-info/index.html.

Auckland/Northland



This calendar year sees continuing work in the many major highway projects around the Auckland region.



So far the summer construction season has been kind to earthmoving and sealing schedules. This should mean on time or early completion of the key projects – essential to making safer, more convenient and more direct links around the ever-growing region.

A key project completed in the latter part of last year included the north-to-south links between SH20 and SH1 in South Auckland and the opening of a new foot and cycle bridge spanning the Hobsonville Deviation across the head of the Waitemata Harbour.

The cycling theme continued with the opening in early December of a new cycle and footbridge at the northern end of the Manukau Harbour Crossing and the official opening and public open day of a new footpath and cycleway at the southern end on 20 February.

Progress is well underway to complete the Western Ring Route – one of the government’s seven roads of national significance providing strategic and economic benefits to Auckland and

New Zealand. A key part in completing that route is the Waterview Connection – the largest and most complex highway project in New Zealand to date. Encompassing 2.5km of road tunnels, the Waterview Connection will complete the SH20 link from Maioro Street in Mount Roskill with 5km of new motorway to connect it with the North-Western Motorway (SH16) at the Great North Road interchange.

The NZTA is running its tender process to construct the Waterview Connection tunnels and Great North Road Interchange. That contract will be awarded later this year. Once completed, the Western Ring Route will provide a 48km alternative route around Auckland, reducing dependency on SH1 particularly around Auckland’s city centre and Harbour Bridge. To learn more about the project visit: www.waterviewconnection.co.nz.

Another section of the Western Ring Route is the Hobsonville Deviation across the top of the Waitemata Harbour. Scheduled to be opened later this year, it will be a vital and

much needed new link, providing the hugely important alternative route around central Auckland.

The Puhoi-Wellsford project, also a road of national significance, is underway and is at the scheme assessment development phase. This includes developing an indicative route for consultation (held between November 2010 and January 2011), conducting the initial geotechnical surveys on private land and developing a draft assessment of environmental effects. This phase will continue through 2011 and will help contribute towards resource management planning applications for notice of requirement likely in early 2012.

In the Northland region, a number of projects are currently under construction that will together add up to safer and more convenient travel. They include:

- a new passing lane on Old North Road, just south of Whakapara on SH1
- completion in late 2011 of stage 2 of the Kamo bypass on SH1 – once finished it will relieve congestion along Kamo Road and improve journey times north and south
- widening of the seal on Mountain Road, which will make a safer and more convenient link between SH1 north of Kaiwaka and across to SH12 at Maungataroto.



Hobsonville deviation: Brigham Creek Road interchange

Waikato/Bay of Plenty

Waikato/Bay of Plenty



Despite challenging weather over the summer construction season, Waikato/Bay of Plenty highway projects continue to make solid progress.



Waikato Expressway

The Waikato Expressway continues at pace with all sections now in their secondary investigation and design or construction phase.

Earthworks on the Te Rapa section are underway and construction of the Taupiri Link (part of the Ngaruawahia section) is progressing with pre-load earthworks west of the North Island main trunk railway (NIMTR) completed prior to Christmas. Meanwhile, work has started on the roundabout at the junction of SH1 and Gordonton Road. Piling for the footbridge over the NIMTR will begin in March.

The contract for constructing the main Ngaruawahia section will be awarded in March and the physical works for the Rangiriri section will begin in the middle of the year.

Consultation for sections is still under investigation and design is progressing

well. Public information days for the Hamilton section took place in February, the notice of requirement for Cambridge has been lodged, and the secondary investigation and design for the Tamahere section is underway.

In addition to the earthworks at Te Rapa, preparatory work for construction of the western lanes of Avalon Drive has also begun. Construction will take approximately 12 months to complete.

Inner-city Tauranga intersection upgraded

Traffic at one of Tauranga's major cross-city intersections was restricted for 12 days in January while its surface was completely reconstructed.

Fraser Street at its intersection with State Highway 2A (15th Avenue) was closed as part of the Hairini Link Advanced Works project designed to increase capacity and improve safety in the area. Heavy rain part

way through the closure looked like forcing an extension to the closure but contractors pulled out all the stops to get the intersection open on time.

An investigation into the long-term plan for SH2A is also underway.

Rotorua's tourism mile upgraded

Transport Minister Steven Joyce visited Rotorua in February to mark the completion of the 16-month project to upgrade 1.2km of SH5 (Fairy Springs Road).

The project, funded from the government's economic stimulus package, improved safety and reduced congestion along the route. It involved four-laning the highway, adding two new sets of traffic lights to improve turning movements, adding cycle lanes and advanced waiting areas for cyclists at traffic lights, removing parking and placing power lines underground.

East Coast detour to become permanent

SH35 on the North Island's East Coast will become more than 1km longer when a detour, forged following a major slip in August last year, is upgraded to become the permanent highway.

The original highway is too unstable to reinstate, so the detour at Maraeanui Hill, 32km east of Opotiki will be widened and sealed. The work is expected to be completed by August.



Work is well-underway at the Te Rapa Section of the Waikato Expressway

Central



Construction and consultation have been the focus of work for the Central region, as a number of major capital projects near completion and consultation continues on the Wellington Northern Corridor road of national significance.



Finishing line nears for major regional projects

The SH2 Matahoroa Gorge Realignment and the SH50 Hawke's Bay Expressway Southern Extension are both on track for completion in March, on time and within budget. The two projects were advanced by the government's Jobs and Growth Stimulus Package and will be the first two stimulus projects to be completed by the NZTA.

The centerpiece of the Matahoroa Gorge project, the Matahoroa Bridge that glides over the difficult gorge route that it replaces, has already been completed and celebrated in style. On Sunday 13 February, hundreds of locals turned up for the once in a lifetime chance to walk over the bridge and take in the stunning view across the gorge.

Calling for feedback on the Kapiti Coast

The Kapiti Coast has been in community feedback mode as the NZTA asks for feedback on proposals for the Wellington Northern Corridor. Submissions have now closed and are being analysed for the MacKays to Peka Peka Expressway section, following a 10-week consultation period that saw more than 1600 submissions

received expressing a range of views on the NZTA's route proposal. A final proposal will be presented to the community midway through the year for formal consultation.

The NZTA is also seeking feedback on proposals around the interchanges and connections for the Peka Peka to Otaki section of the expressway. Following earlier consultation with the community, a route was agreed by the NZTA Board in December 2009, and Regional Director Jenny Chetwynd is encouraging the community to give further feedback. Consultation for this section runs until 18 March.

The northern most piece of the Northern Corridor, the Otaki to Levin section, has seen investigation work begin that will help the NZTA identify options to help improve safety and reduce congestion on this 30km stretch of SH1. Once this work is complete, the NZTA will be asking the public to have their say.

Wheels turning on Richmond cycleway

Construction is well underway on the Richmond Deviation Cycleway, which is

due to be opened for public use by early May. The project will connect the existing Whakatu Drive and Railway Reserve shared paths to give improved and safer walking and cycling opportunities for the residents of Richmond. This project signals the 'turning of the first sod' for the Tasman Loop Cycle Trail – a \$2.15m project funded by central government as part of the national cycle trail promoted by Prime Minister John Key.

NZTA office arrangements

In November 2010 we announced plans to relocate the NZTA Whanganui office to Palmerston North and to set up a new office in New Plymouth as part of a review of our services in the Central region. Bringing our expertise together in Palmerston North will bring us closer to a number of our key stakeholders and to the centre of a major transport hub.

The shift to Palmerston North is expected to be completed by early April, with a new office to be established in New Plymouth by mid-2011.



Hundreds of people turn out for a chance to walk across the new bridge at Matahoroa Gorge during the open day on 13 February

More e-newsletters to support public transport sector

The NZTA is continuing to embrace technology as a way to better engage with key organisations and the general public. The latest move was the launch of the e-newsletter *Exchange*, with support from a range of key transport organisations.

The Public Transport Leadership Forum launched *Exchange* to inform transport sector leaders and rail, bus and ferry operators about their vision and planned initiatives.

Exchange is expected to be the first in a series of e-newsletters. Stay in the loop with their progress and success stories by subscribing at www.nzta.govt.nz/about/newsletters/exchange/index.html.

Model communities are well on track

It's all go in New Plymouth and Hastings, New Zealand's first walking and cycling model communities. Project teams are well into managing the programmes designed to transform walking and cycling in their cities.

In Hastings, work is progressing well on the planned year one arterial work for

Flaxmere and Omaha. The other two arterials, Havelock and Clive, which are set for construction in year two, have agreed plans with consultants to proceed to design phase.

In New Plymouth, project planning is underway on the off-road shared pathways, with site visits, consultation

and agreed solutions identified. Construction started in January.

Both locations have also run a number of successful campaigns to encourage their communities to give walking and cycling a go.



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