

UPDATE 3
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Busy nights in the tunnel

Mt Victoria Tunnel is a bright and busy place late at night - but not with traffic.

A team of tradespeople in orange protective gear and a convoy of orange, blue and yellow scissorlifts take over the tunnel from 9.00pm to 6.00am Sundays to Thursdays. Currently they are high in the ceiling drilling 4000 holes for bolts for the trays that will hold communications and electrical cables.

Other workers are in the pedestrian/cyclist path fixing straps and anchors to strengthen it against the possibility that some day another major earthquake will hit Wellington.

Outside, traffic controllers have placed cones to keep vehicles out, closing the tunnel at a time when traffic is usually light. Alternate routes are through Newtown or round the bays.

Two custom-made shelters on either side of the tunnel host late night pedestrians and cyclists who take our free Mt Victoria Tunnel bus from one side of the hill to the other.

At times our work, particularly outdoors, has been noisy for our neighbours. Recent outdoor activities included spraying concrete and installing anchors to strengthen exterior slopes while, at the Basin Reserve corner, ducts were installed for communications cables. As much as possible, noise is minimised with measures such as sound barriers, timing noisiest work before 11.00pm and installing muted beepers on machinery.

This is Stage 2 of the three-stage upgrade planned for the 1931-vintage tunnel on State Highway 1 so it continues to operate effectively as a vital link in Wellington region's transport network. Memorial Park Alliance is conducting the upgrade which will take until mid-2016.

Benefits will include:

- A new communications system, including emergency management
- Lighting replaced with brighter, more efficient LED lights
- Pedestrian walkway strengthened
- Entrance exterior slope strengthened and concrete surfacing improved
- New wall panels replacing outdated panels
- Ventilation improved by replacing fans
- Three control rooms refurbished and a fourth built to contain upgraded and new equipment.

Latest technology to keep tunnel users safe

The latest technology is integral to new features being installed in Mt Victoria Tunnel to bring the 85-year-old up to 21st Century standards.

The 623m tunnel is already in NZ Transport Agency's national camera network in which transport operations centres monitor traffic and act on information such as flashing warnings on electronic message signs.

We will improve incident detection by upgrading the current smoke and traffic incident detection cameras and by adding thermal cameras that see better in smoky conditions. This will increase the ability to respond rapidly to fire or accidents.

In an emergency, a radio broadcast system will allow operations centre staff to interrupt car radios with messages. Illuminated exit LED markers and exit signs will glow to guide people out while traffic signals for vehicles exiting at the Basin Reserve will

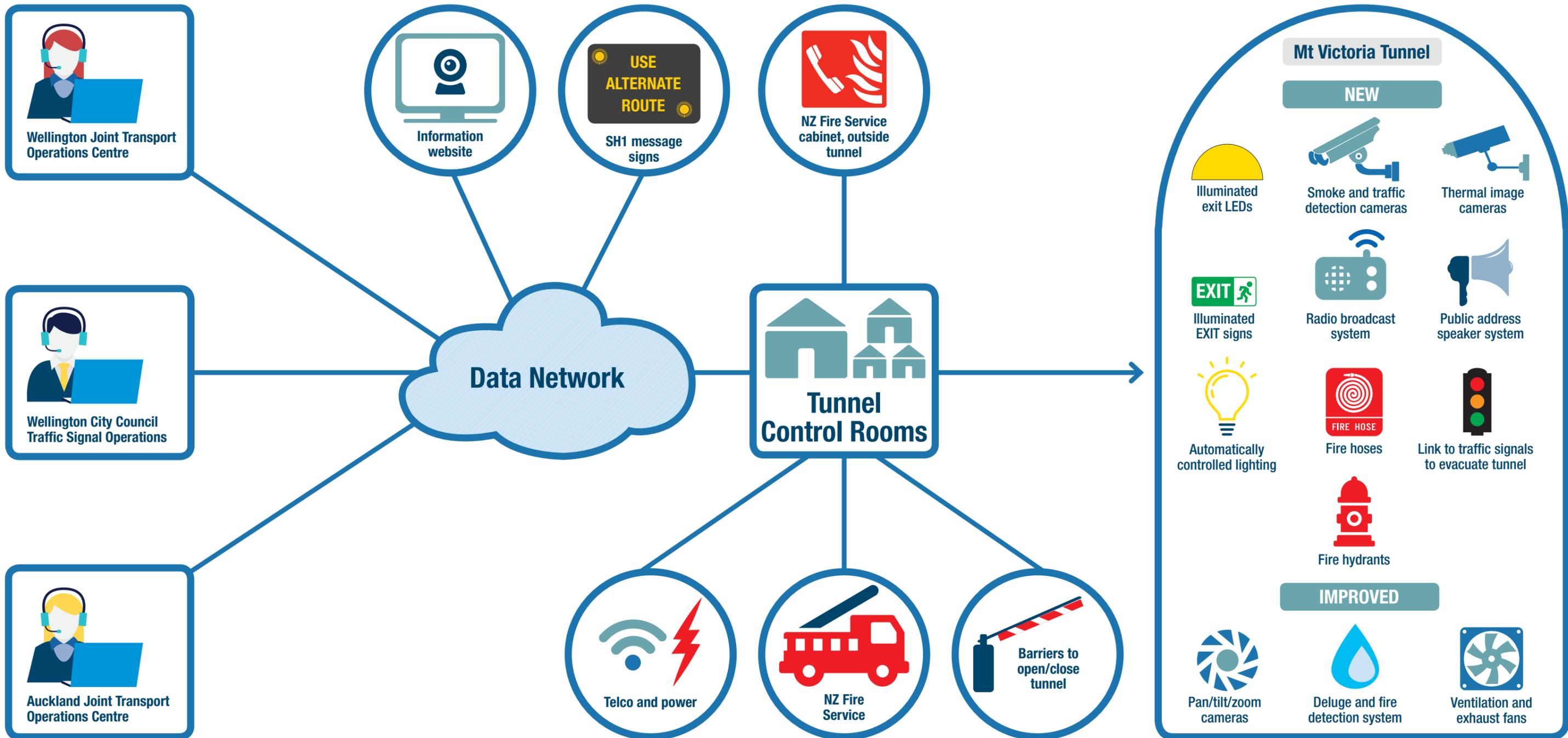
stay green so the tunnel can empty. Upgraded vehicle barriers will close the tunnel.

For everyday traffic, efficient LED lights will replace existing ceiling lights to make the tunnel brighter than it is now. Sensors outside will automatically brighten or dim the lights at each end of the tunnel in response to daylight conditions to make the transition easy on drivers' eyes.

TRIAL OF THERMAL CAMERAS

Thermal image cameras planned for Mt Victoria Tunnel will be a first for New Zealand highway tunnels and will be trialled with a view to wider use.

Two types of thermals will be installed. A central thermal camera that can pan, tilt and will provide real-time video and see through smoke. Fixed thermal cameras at the portals will not be blinded by sunstroke to photograph queues forming outside the tunnel, thus reducing false alarms in the in-tunnel video detection system.



→ Fresh look for passage under the hill

We have put a lot of thought into the appearance of the tunnel, recognising that it is a gateway to the city from the airport. The upgrade will include new wall panels and painting throughout including the portal entries. The new colour scheme will refresh the tunnel's appearance while limiting distraction to drivers as they pass through.

Light green has been proposed for the ceiling and part-way down the sides of the tunnel. For pedestrians and cyclists this theme will continue throughout the tunnel. For drivers, the green is replaced by calm black 30 metres in from either side. Lower walls and panels will be soft white throughout.

Light grey highlighted with white will be used on the exterior, a softer shade than the current plain concrete. Subtle uplighting will highlight the tunnel's name.



→ Free bus service now using Hataitai Bus Tunnel

The free bus operating during Mt Victoria Tunnel night closures has been authorised by Greater Wellington Regional Council to use Hataitai Bus Tunnel to transport pedestrians and cyclists from one side of the hill to the other.

The new route is quicker and more efficient than the previous detour via Newtown. Bus stop shelters are on either side of Mt Victoria Tunnel - the slip road at the bottom of Ellice St on the Basin Reserve side and Taurima St on the Hataitai side.



CONTACT DETAILS

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Tunnel closed 9.00pm – 6.00am Sundays to Thursdays to mid-2016

We provide regular email updates on work progress that impacts on neighbours. Please email us to join our contact list.

