



Will be considered for: release with redactions

MIN-4310 – Transport update for Nelson/Richmond

8 September 2023

The Prime Minister is visiting Nelson on Monday, 11 September 2023. This document provides information on public transport in Nelson, background on local Strategic Investment Programme projects and talking points.

Public Transport in Nelson/Richmond

- The new electric bus services in Nelson/Richmond started on 1 August 2023.
- The changes included the rollout of 17 new electric buses (covering approximately 80% of the fleet), the introduction of a new fare structure, an increase in the frequency of existing services, new bus routes to Wakefield and Motueka (providing public transport options to Brightwater, Mapua, Hope and Tasman), as well as a new airport bus service.
- The changes were successfully implemented and have been well received with a significant increase in the number of people using the bus. There were almost 68,000 passenger boardings in August 2023, more than double the 33,000 boardings in August last year and up from 43,000 in June just before the changes.
- The bus operator in Nelson is SBL Group Ltd. Nelson/Tasman driver wages have been uplifted from **Section 9(2)(b)(ii)** effective from late 2022.
- Public transport services have operated in the Nelson-Richmond urban area since 1927. The contracted bus network dates from 1998, when four local routes (to Atawhai, The Brook, Toi Toi/Hospital, and Washington Valley) were introduced along with the Late Late Bus in Nelson. The network expanded to include the two major and previously commercially operated Nelson-Richmond routes when a new contract was introduced in 2012. It has gradually evolved since then to include a Stoke loop service and a pair of local Richmond routes, which were introduced on 3 August 2020.

Regional perspectives on transport in Nelson/Tasman

- On 15 August 2023, Mayors Tim King and Nick Smith hosted a meeting on road transport infrastructure with local business leaders. Craig Churchill, Regional Public Service Commissioner and Emma Speight of Waka Kotahi attended.
- The business leaders advocated strongly for the importance of reliable transport connections to Nelson/Tasman, and within the region. Key themes from the meeting included:
 - Unanimous support for investment in the Hope Bypass to alleviate challenges faced in getting produce to the Port, and to assist workers to get from the urban areas to rural horticulture businesses
 - Support for designing a resilient detour route between Nelson and Richmond for situations when SH6 Whakatu Drive is closed
 - General support for the Rocks Road walking and cycling path



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- Support for the new bus service in the region.

Nelson and Richmond projects as part of the Strategic Investment Programme

- The draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024 sets out a series of projects that are strategically important for the development of New Zealand's transport system in the coming decades. The State Highway 6 Hope Bypass in Richmond and the Nelson Rocks Road shared path are identified as projects in the Strategic Investment Programme.
- The Waka Kotahi Board ultimately have the power to approve projects funded from the National Land Transport Fund. By highlighting Strategic Investment Programme projects, the Government expects that their strategic importance will be given particular consideration during the development of the National Land Transport Programme.

The Hope Bypass, State Highway 6, Richmond and the Richmond Programme Business Case

- The Richmond Programme Business Case (PBC) was endorsed by Waka Kotahi and Tasman District Council in 2021/22. This work identified an emerging programme of transport options that could be delivered over the short, medium and long-term out to the year 2050. Waka Kotahi and Tasman District Council are currently undertaking short-term improvements to the road network, including: cycle lanes along key routes, priority lanes for freight and public transport, targeted safety upgrades for pedestrians and cyclists.
- A bypass would deliver significant travel time benefits for through traffic, and as a result would reduce the level of rat-running on local streets. The bypass would strongly support the desired safety and liveability objectives for the project, and these outcomes potentially may not be delivered unless the Hope Bypass is introduced.
- Significant housing growth will also generate significantly more vehicle trips, and regardless of how much active mode infrastructure is provided, the majority of new trips would still be car-based. The funding provided in the draft GPS could enable further design work and consenting to progress over the next 3 years (2024-27).

Nelson (Rocks Road) shared path, State Highway 6

- Safer, more resilient travel choices on State Highway 6 along the waterfront with a new shared walking and cycling path would better connect the communities of Nelson and Richmond. With better travel choices, the city can reduce emissions and develop a more sustainable and resilient transport system. This work would include separated and enhanced walking and cycling facilities. Construction work could start as early as 2028 and would take around five years to complete.

Transport Choices Programme

- The following Transport Choices projects are planned for the Tasman and Nelson regions:



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Re-Imagine Richmond:

- This project is based on the Richmond PBC and complements work underway (or completed) by the Streets for People and the NLTP 2021-24 programmes. The focus of this project is improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure around schools. It is creating new roundabouts with raised tables, speed tables at key crossing points, separated cycleways, shared use paths, traffic calming for walking and cycling, a slow speed town centre and new protected secure cycle parking areas.
- Scope of packages:
 - Package 1: Traffic calming and crossings around William St, Richmond
 - Package 2: Raised crossings from Queen St to Wensley Road
 - Package 3: Raised tables around Richmond School

South East Nelson package:

- This suite of projects south of the Nelson city centre includes:
 - Creating a 500m extension to the existing Maitai River shared path
 - Bus interchange improvements
- A variety of bus stop improvements (shelters, timetable holders, wayfinding and e-readers).

Moving Motueka:

- This project is based on the Tasman Walking and Cycling Strategy, alongside the Regional Public Transport Plan.
- It will provide access for the community by creating a network of separated cycling routes, safer roundabouts, traffic-calmed slow-speed areas, raised tables, bus shelters, secure cycle parking, and a signalised intersection upgrade.
- The scope of this project includes:
 - Walking and Cycling Improvements across Motueka – network of crossing and traffic calming projects
 - Whakarewa Street / High St (SH60) Signalised Intersection
 - Small sections of cycleway / shared path

Talking points:

- Use of Public Transport in Nelson and Richmond has increased significantly since the introduction of the new electric bus services at the start of August.
- Nelson and Richmond now have 17 new electric buses, which cover 80% of the bus fleet. A new fare structure, increased frequencies and new bus routes to Wakefield and Motueka, as well as a new airport bus service are helping to make public transport a leading option for residents and visitors.
- The results speak for themselves with almost 68,000 passenger boardings in August 2023, more than double the 33,000 boardings in August last year and up from 43,000 in June just before the changes.
- It's important that bus drivers are being attracted to operate these services and it's great to see the uplift in Nelson/Tasman driver wages from **Section 9(2)(b)(ii)** effective from late 2022.
- The government recognises the importance of investing in transport infrastructure with two key projects identified as strategic investments in the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport.



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- The Hope Bypass would deliver significant travel time benefits for through traffic and reduce rat-running on local streets. This would also improve safety and liveability in the area.
- The funding outlined in the draft GPS could enable further design work and consenting to progress over the next 3 years (2024-27).
- A shared walking and cycling path on Rocks Road would provide for safer and more resilient travel along the waterfront and would better connect the communities of Nelson and Richmond. With better travel choices, the city can reduce emissions and develop a more sustainable and resilient transport system.
- Waka Kotahi expects construction could start as early as 2028 and would take around five years to complete.
- Waka Kotahi has been working with Nelson and Tasman Councils on a range of transport projects, including the Transport Choices programme. I recognise the pressure this puts on council officers and the work your council staff are doing.
- The government has recently announced a package of \$12.216m in resilience funding for the Top of South, which includes State Highway resilience projects on SH6 (Rai Saddle and Canvastown, as well as Kawatiri to Owen River), SH63 (The Wash and Windy Point) and SH60 (Birds Hill).