

6 March 2024

██████████
Senior Journalist
BusinessDesk
████████████████████

REF: OIA-14332

Dear ██████████

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 18 December 2023 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Here is the list of 13 projects, as drawn from National's transport plan, which the party committed to implementing in government.

- *Northland – Whangārei to Port Madsen, Warkworth to Wellsford*
- *Auckland – Mill Road Stage 1, East-West Link, North West Alternative State Highway*
- *Bay of Plenty – SH29 Tauriko West, Tākitimu Northern Link Stage 2*
- *Waikato – Cambridge to Piarere, Southern Links*
- *Greater Wellington – Petone to Grenada Link Road and Cross Valley Link, Second Mt Victoria Tunnel*
- *Nelson – Hope Bypass*
- *Canterbury – Belfast to Pegasus motorway including the Woodend Bypass*

Please provide the following information for each roading project:

1. *The date of completion for any indicative business case.*
2. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).*
3. *The date of completion for any detailed business case.*
4. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).*
5. *The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.*

I will answer each part of your request in turn.

Firstly, I want to provide you with some essential context to this response, namely that your request cites projects which are from the National Party's transport policy for the 2023 General Election, *Transport for the Future*. Those are proposals from a political party and in many cases are not the same as the projects currently underway as part of the National Land Transport Programme (funded by the National Land Transport Fund) or the NZ Upgrade Programme (NZUP) (funded by the Crown).

The key differences in the size and intent of these projects mean that they should not be compared to prior or existing projects which are detailed in this response.

Many of the cost estimates in this response are taken from business cases completed multiple years ago, and before significant social and economic events such as the global COVID-19 pandemic and the associated significant increases in property and material prices due to global inflation. This means that the prior cost estimates cannot be relied on as an accurate representation of potential project costs in 2024.

In terms of the most recent cost estimates for these projects, these are also not yet final and are likely to change following the finalisation of the new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) 2024.

Northland – Whangārei to Port Marsden

It is important to note that this project was significantly re-scoped in 2021, as part of a wider realignment of the NZUP, from the originally proposed four-lane road, to a project focused on safety improvements, before any business cases were produced.

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**
- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

No indicative or detailed business case was produced for the originally proposed road project. No preferred option for a four-lane highway has been identified at this stage. Any future options for such a project will be determined by the GPS, for which a draft was released on 4 March 2024.

As such, I am refusing your request for this information in relation to the Northland – Whangārei to Port Marsden project under section 18(g)(i) as the information is not held by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) and I have no grounds for believing it is held by another department or government organisation.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Northland – Warkworth to Wellsford

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

An Indicative Business Case was not produced as work on this corridor began before the implementation of the business case process at NZTA.

The *Puhoi to Wellsford Road of National Significance Warkworth to Wellsford Scheme Assessment Report* was completed in September 2016. The estimated cost of the indicative route identified in this report was between \$1.42 billion and \$1.77 billion.

- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**

The detailed business case was completed in October 2019.

- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The cost estimate range in the 2019 Detailed Business case is \$1.73 billion to \$2.07 billion.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

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Auckland – Mill Road Stage 1

Please note that Mill Road is the prior name for this project, and upon its inclusion in the NZUP as a rescoped package of work in early 2023, was changed to the Manukau to Takanini Access and Safety Improvements (MTAS) and is not the prior four-lane Mill Road project. The Government has identified Mill Road as one of its Roads of National Significance in the draft GPS 2024.

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**

The initial work for a four-lane improvement project was completed in 2013 as a corridor upgrade study. There was no specific Indicative Business Case completed for this project, and this study was completed before the implementation of the business case process at NZTA.

The Supporting Growth Alliance completed the South Indicative Business Case in July 2019, which looked at the complete strategic network of infrastructure to support the growth. This included a four-lane corridor between Manukau and Drury, including stages 2 and 3.

- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The 2019 South Indicative Business Case for the MTAS estimated a cost range of between \$1.25 billion and \$1.57 billion for the four-lane Mill Road component of the strategic network.

- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

There was no specific detailed business case completed for the delivery of a four-lane Mill Road.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Auckland – East-West Link

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**

The Indicative Business Case was completed in December 2014 and can be found at: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/east-west-connections/EWC-IBC.pdf. The addendum to this business case can be found at: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/east-west-connections/EWC-IBC-Addendum.pdf.

- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The 2014 Indicative Business Case estimated a cost range of between \$1.25 billion and \$1.75 billion.

- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**

The detailed business case was completed in 2015.

- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The 2015 Detailed Business Case estimated a cost range of between \$1.62 billion and \$1.75 billion and can be found at: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/east-west-connections/EWC-DBC-Part-A-Final-Vol-1.pdf.

5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.

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Auckland – North West Alternative State Highway

1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.

The Indicative Business Case was completed in July 2019.

2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).

The 2019 Indicative Business Case estimated a cost range of \$731 million to \$892 million.

3. The date of completion for any detailed business case

The Detailed Business Case was completed in August 2021.

4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).

The scope of the project was extended in the 2021 Detailed Business Case, resulting in an estimated cost range of \$1.92 billion to \$2.32 billion.

5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.

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Bay of Plenty – SH29 Tauriko West

1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.

No Indicative Business Case has been produced for this project. However, a Programme Business Case was completed in September 2016, which is available at:
www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/tauriko-network-plan/Tauriko-Network-PBC-September-2016.pdf.

2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.

The Detailed Business Case was endorsed by the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Board in August 2023. The detailed business case is publicly available on our website at: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/tauriko-network-plan/tauriko-network-connections-detailed-business-case.pdf.

4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).

The P50 cost in the Detailed Business Case is \$2.25 billion.

5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.

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Bay of Plenty – Tākitimu Northern Link Stage 2

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**
- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

No Indicative or Detailed Business Case was undertaken for this project.

A Programme Business Case for the broader SH2 Tauranga to Waihi corridor was completed in 2016 and can be found at: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/tnl/docs/sh2-waihi-to-tauranga-corridor-business-case.pdf.

5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.

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Waikato – Cambridge to Piarere

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The development of this project has progressed over several years with the strategic case identifying the need for change on this corridor in 2013. A Programme Business Case was completed in 2015, and a combined Indicative/Detailed Business Case process commenced in 2016. However, ultimately only a Detailed Business Case was completed, so there is no preferred option or estimated cost that falls within the scope of these two questions.

- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**

A draft Detailed Business Case was completed in May 2021 and can be found at:
www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/cambridge-to-piarere/sh1-cambridge-to-piarere-detailed-business-case-may-2021.pdf.

- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

The total cost of the preferred option identified in the Detailed Business Case was estimated at \$635 million. Since the development of the Detailed Business Case there have been significant increases in property and material prices due to inflation, as mentioned at the beginning of this reply.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

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Waikato –Southern Links

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**
- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

No business cases completed as the project was developed before the business case process was introduced.

The latest cost estimate was completed in 2016 and came to \$600 million.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Greater Wellington – Petone to Grenada Link Road and Cross Valley Link

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**
- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

I note that at this stage in the process, the Petone to Grenada Link Road and the Cross Valley link are separate projects.

No formal business case has been completed for the Petone to Grenada Link Road, however scoping and option reporting was completed in 2014 and 2015. In 2017 and 2018, the proposed scheme was re-evaluated. The 2017 evaluation report identified an approximate cost of \$1.2 billion and can be found at:

www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/petone-grenada-link-road/docs/p2g-evaluation-report-sept-2017.pdf.

Further information of the Petone to Grenada Link Road can be found here:

www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/petone-to-grenada-link-road/.

A Cross Valley Connections Programme Business Case was prepared by Hutt City Council in 2018, which was subsequently endorsed by NZTA in 2020 and can be found here:

www.huttcity.govt.nz/council/our-projects/cross-valley-connections.

The business case identified the Cross Valley Link as Stage 2 and 3 of the emerging programme. The cost identified in the business case for both stages was approximately \$130 million.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

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Greater Wellington – Second Mt Victoria Tunnel

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**

The Indicative Business Case for the Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) Preferred Programme Option (PPO) was completed in December 2022. The PPO included an upgrade to the Basin Reserve

and an extra Mt Victoria Tunnel alongside Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) from Wellington Railway Station to Island Bay and continuous bus priority to Miramar and Airport.

The PPO assumed, for the purposes of costing, that the second Mt Victoria Tunnel would be on an alignment diagonal to the existing tunnel. This differs from the second Mt Victoria Tunnel proposed in the National Party's *Transport for the Future* policy document which described a second Mt Victoria Tunnel on an alignment parallel to the existing tunnel.

2. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).*

The June 2022 LGWM Cabinet paper can be found on the Ministry of Transport website: https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Lets-Get-Wellington-Moving-Transformational-Prog...-markedup_Redacted-watermark.pdf.

In paragraph 27 it details the capital cost of an extra Mt Victoria Tunnel at \$1.408 billion and a Basin Reserve upgrade at \$773.5 million. This excludes operating costs.

Please note that these are the most recent published cost for these projects based on cost estimates prepared in 2021.

3. *The date of completion for any detailed business case.*

There is no completed detailed business case. Following the 17 December 2023 announcement that agreement to dissolve LGWM had been reached by Central Government, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, NZTA is reassessing the work required to enable the delivery of a second Mt Victoria tunnel together with an upgrade to the Basin Reserve.

4. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).*

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

5. *The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.*

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Nelson – Hope Bypass

- 1. *The date of completion for any indicative business case.***
- 2. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).***
- 3. *The date of completion for any detailed business case.***
- 4. *The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).***

No individual Indicative or Detailed Business Case was produced for the Hope Bypass project. However, a Programme business case was completed in December 2021.

It includes an estimate for the Hope Bypass of \$243 million.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is publicly available and can be found at: www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/official-information-act/official-information-act-responses/. The information is within the 7 February 2024 response titled "Hope Bypass advice".

Canterbury – Belfast to Pegasus motorway including the Woodend Bypass

- 1. The date of completion for any indicative business case.**
- 2. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the IBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**
- 3. The date of completion for any detailed business case.**
- 4. The estimated cost for the preferred option identified in the DBC (if there is no preferred option, please provide a cost range i.e. the least and most expensive identified options).**

No business case was produced for this project as it was before the business case process was implemented. A Scheme Assessment Report was completed in 2014.

- 5. The most recent cost estimate known to Waka Kotahi. Please also include a specific or general explanation for why costs have increased between the IBC to last known costing stages.**

I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold some information and refuse some parts of your request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

In line with NZTA policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZTA, please contact the Ministerial Services team, by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Elston', with a large, stylized initial 'R' at the start.

Robyn Elston

National Manager, System Design