

# TAIRĀWHITI GISBORNE

## AT A GLANCE

*Our focus in Gisborne is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system. One that supports the COVID-19 recovery to enable a lift in social and economic outcomes for local communities and maintain critical connections to neighbouring regions. Our focus is also to help provide appropriate levels of service across networks while increasing use of public transport, walking and cycling.*

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS AND IMPACTS

This section sets out the how the current pandemic might impact on land transport in Gisborne. Significant levels of uncertainty remain regarding the scale and duration of COVID-19 impacts, particularly in the medium to long-term. We will continue to monitor and update as things change.

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON KEY SECTORS

- Although Gisborne's economy had been lagging behind the national average pre-COVID-19, it is better positioned than most to ride out the impacts of the pandemic because of the scale of the primary production, healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing and education sectors.
- These sectors are expected to recover in line with, or above, BAU in the longer-term.
- The Gisborne/Hawke's Bay economy relies on temporary migrant employment, with use of migrant labour above the national average in the agriculture, horticulture and admin support sectors
- Gisborne is one of only two regions to grow population primarily as a result of natural increase, and will be less impacted by an expected slowdown in international migration
- Gisborne's reliance on international tourism is relatively low, with international visitors contributing only 20% of the region's total tourism spend.<sup>30</sup>

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITIES

- In percentage terms, Gisborne region is forecast to have the lowest number of job losses of any region, over the 2020-21 period.
- Under the slower recovery scenario:
  - the region's forecast fall in employment to 2021 (relative to BAU) is -5.0%, significantly lower than the national average of -6.7%<sup>35</sup>

- Gisborne is the only region forecast to return to BAU employment levels by 2025.<sup>35</sup>
- Reduced international migration may impact on labour supply for some sectors, particularly primary production. This may create opportunities to re-deploy local labour.
- Māori, Pasifika and youth, are likely to experience the greatest impacts, particularly those in smaller regional centres. An increase in youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) is expected.

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE LAND TRANSPORT SYSTEM

- Given the relative resilience of the Gisborne economy, no significant changes are expected in the nature, scale and location of transport demand over the medium to long-term. The 10-year outlook remains largely unchanged.
- Maintaining safe and reliable connections to Eastland Port and to Hawke's Bay and Bay of Plenty remain critical to supporting the region's economic recovery.
- There will be an ongoing need for transport services to support COVID-19 recovery by improving access to employment and essential services for vulnerable communities.
- There will be ongoing pressure on transport revenue as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown.

## REGION STEP CHANGES

### IMPROVE URBAN FORM

Gisborne’s population is forecast to be reasonably steady, reaching 50,000 in 2028.<sup>27</sup>

### TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY

Existing urban networks are generally fit for purpose, but growth in freight is placing pressure on key urban routes. Gisborne has limited public transport services, and walking and cycling trips have been declining.

### SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS

Serious crashes in the region are concentrated in the Gisborne urban area and on high-risk rural roads. Focus is needed on high-risk intersections, run-off road crashes, vulnerable users and driver behaviour.<sup>47</sup>

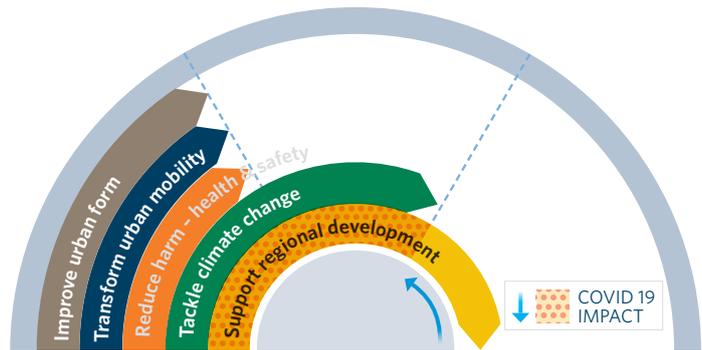
### TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Some transport networks are at risk from sea level rise. More intense storm events combined with unstable terrain is likely to increase erosion and flooding risks. Already a low-carbon emitter, Gisborne is well placed to focus on plans for a low-emissions economy.

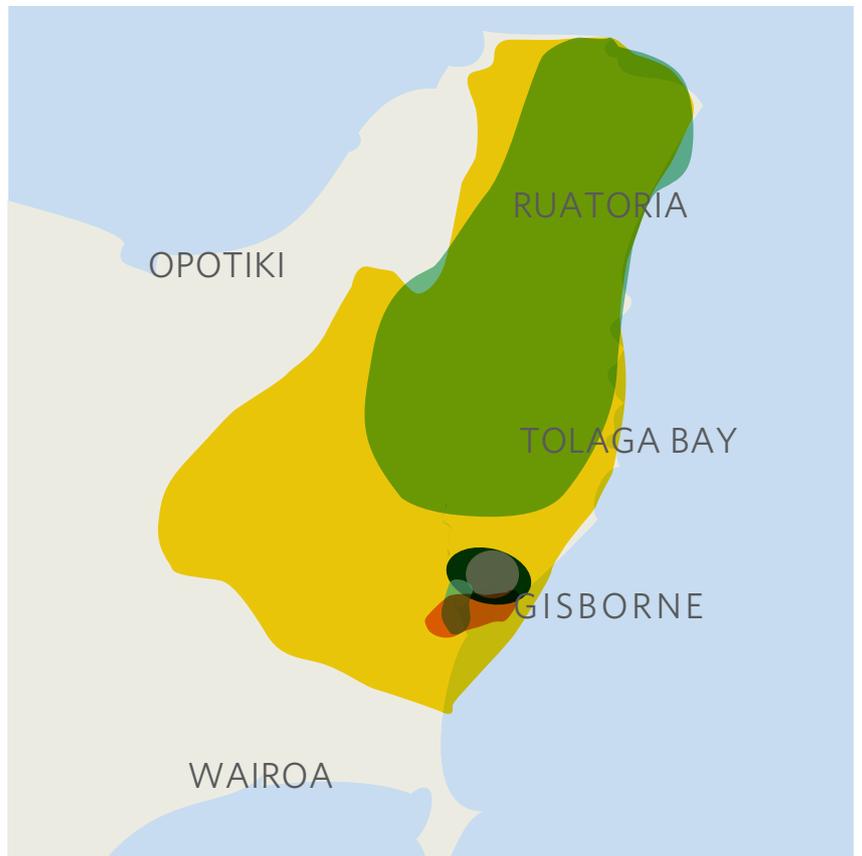
### SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gisborne has a proportionally low-level of working age population, meaning high levels of youth and senior residents. Access to employment, education and essential services needs to improve, particularly for remote communities in the north of the region.

We aim to better collaborate with partners to explore opportunities to improve regional development particularly associated with Eastland Port, existing industries (such as forestry and farming) and for domestic tourism-based initiatives.



SIGNIFICANCE OF STEP CHANGE TO REGION 2021-31



**47,517**  
REGIONAL POPULATION<sup>25</sup>

**8.9%**  
REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH 2013-18<sup>25</sup>

**1%**  
OF NATIONAL POPULATION<sup>25</sup> 2018

**1.5%**  
OF NATIONAL DEATHS & SERIOUS INJURIES (DSI)<sup>47</sup>  
**44** TOTAL DSI<sup>47</sup> ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR PERIOD 2016-19

**1%**  
OF NATIONAL VEHICLE EMISSIONS<sup>48</sup>

**7%**  
OF NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT YEAR END MARCH 2018<sup>26</sup>

**4.9%**  
REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE  
**4.1%**  
NATIONAL RATE YEAR END JUNE 2019<sup>49</sup>

Pre COVID-19 data

## GISBORNE TODAY

Because of the level of uncertainty of population and economic trends, this section has not been reviewed in detail for Arataki V2.

**GISBORNE IS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST REMOTE REGIONS AND HOME TO APPROXIMATELY 48,000 PEOPLE, 1% OF NEW ZEALAND'S POPULATION.<sup>25</sup>**

The population has large number of young and senior age groups, with a comparatively small working age population.

Gisborne city is the main urban area home to approximately 75% of the region's population<sup>34</sup> and is the key hub for employment and services. Communities in the north of the region are small, relatively isolated, highly reliant on a single road transport connection and experience high levels of deprivation. Barriers of distance, affordability and network resilience mean these communities face challenges accessing employment, education and essential services that are concentrated in Gisborne. Gisborne residents rely on access to Waikato Hospital for a range of specialist medical services.

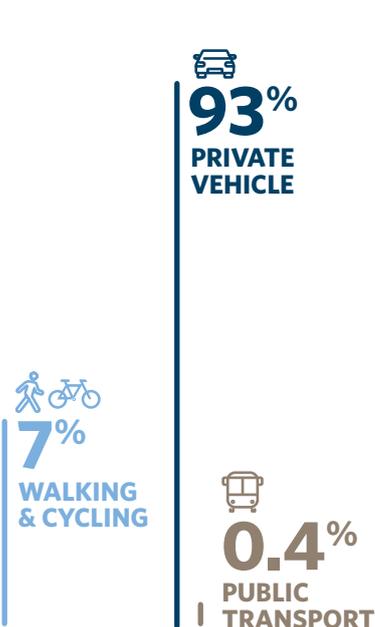
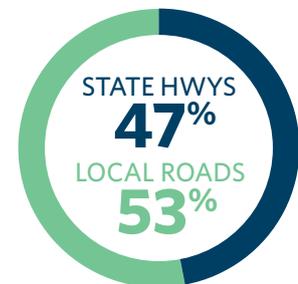
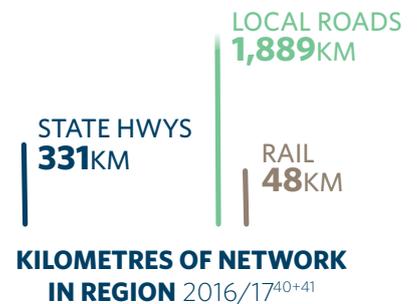
The regional economy is largely based on primary production with forestry, fishing, sheep and beef farming, horticulture and viticulture all being significant contributors. A key focus for the region is to grow its tourism economy.

Recently, the Gisborne economy has lagged behind other parts of the country. The Tairāwhiti Regional Economic Action Plan, He Huarahi Hei Whai Oranga, was launched in February 2017, with a focus on freight, tourism and efficiency. Gisborne has received funding from the government to address challenges around access to social and economic opportunities and to help diversify the economy.

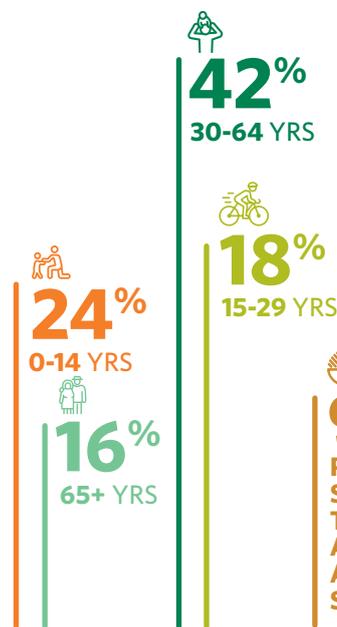
Gisborne has a limited number of public transport services and around 90% of trips to work are by private vehicle.<sup>52</sup> The number of people walking and cycling is declining, however planned investment in urban cycleways seeks to increase the number of local trips by bike or on foot, with a focus on safe journeys to schools. The urban transport system is generally well connected, with capacity to manage

projected volumes in most areas. The key areas of growing pressure include growth in freight, particularly export log volumes to Eastland Port and other sites, and growing traffic volumes on a few key urban routes.

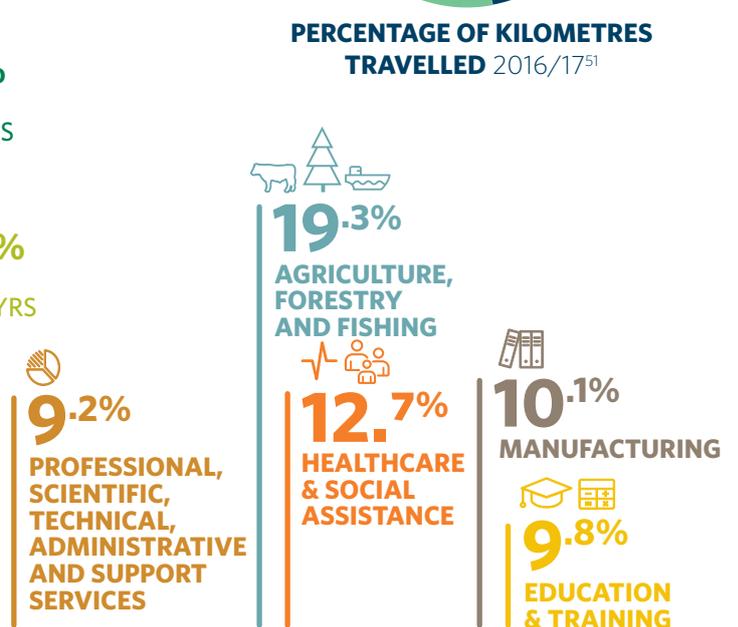
Elsewhere in the region, challenging terrain and long distances result in relatively long travel times. The region is highly dependent on SH35 and SH2, particularly through Wairoeka Gorge which has significant resilience challenges, with no viable alternate routes in most locations. The reliability of these corridors is therefore critical to the region.



**MODE SHARE (JOURNEY TO WORK) 2018<sup>52</sup>**



**POPULATION AGE PROFILE 2018<sup>25</sup>**



**TOP 5 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS YEAR END MARCH 2018<sup>53</sup>**

## GISBORNE TOMORROW

Prior to COVID-19, the population was forecast to reach 50,000 in 2028, with growth heavily focused in Gisborne city. Elsewhere, rural communities are projected to decline.<sup>27</sup> Because the majority of Gisborne's population growth comes from natural increase, it is expected that the forecast level of growth will largely be maintained, although reduced migration may slow growth slightly. If current settlement patterns continue it could increase reliance on private vehicles and make journey times longer.

The primary sector is expected to provide the base for Gisborne region's COVID-19 recovery. Forestry is set to become more important thanks to initiatives such as One Billion Trees, with a flow-on effect of heavy vehicles moving to Eastland Port. This could put further pressure on key urban routes. Other primary industries and manufacturing are still important, but there will be changes to the nature and movement of freight, because of the transition to a low-emissions economy. Employment in service industries is growing in Gisborne, but this may slow in the short to medium-term because of the COVID-19 related slowdown.

Coastal erosion, sea level rise, flooding, storm intensity is forecast to increase over the next 30 years raising risk to communities and the road and rail network. This will add to existing resilience challenges because of steep-to-hilly country and a large proportion of land that is unstable and susceptible

to erosion, combined with limited or no alternate routes in many areas. Closures along Waioeka Gorge connecting Gisborne with Bay of Plenty can isolate communities and impact on time critical delivery of food produce to the port and Auckland. Devil's Elbow is also prone to natural hazards and considered the highest risk to the region from land slippage. Of the region's 1,889km of local roads, 37% are unsealed.<sup>40</sup> Forecasts of hotter, drier summers will worsen damage caused by heavy vehicles on unsealed roads and increase dust issues. Hotter summers also bring increased risk of droughts and wild fires.

Rural and remote communities are looking for improved connections to the Gisborne urban area for their young people to access education and work and for older residents to access health and social services.

Emerging technologies, such as on-demand shuttles, could provide a feasible shared transport option in the future to help people get around within remote communities in the north of the region, and improve access to services in Gisborne city. Improved access to high-quality data and information will enable better management of the existing transport system to get the most out of existing infrastructure.

The proportion of the region's population on fixed incomes is likely to place pressure on Gisborne District Council's ability to maintain existing infrastructure, fund new infrastructure and provide appropriate services to residents.

## KEY SYSTEM INSIGHTS

- Gisborne's social and economic opportunities are dependent on connections north to the Bay of Plenty and south to Hawke's Bay (and on to other regions) to support key industries, move goods to market, enable visitors, provide access to specialist services (including medical) and allow communities to thrive. Providing a safer and more reliable journey is important on these routes, particularly through the Waioeka Gorge. Consideration should also be given as to whether rail freight can support the region's economy.
- Transport can support regional development by improving access to employment, education, training and essential services for remote East Cape communities, enabling the movement of goods to Eastland Port and access to visitor destinations, and ensuring safe and reliable connections to neighbouring regions.
- While Gisborne has relatively low levels of total death and serious injuries (DSIs), the transport system performs poorly in terms of DSIs per capita. To improve safety outcomes, focus is needed in the Gisborne urban area, on high-risk rural roads, targeting speeding, alcohol and drug impairment and those not wearing seatbelts.
- Road networks across the region face resilience challenges because of unstable terrain combined with heavy rain and limited viable alternate routes. These impacts are expected to increase as a result of climate change and an increase in extreme weather is forecast for the region. Sea level rise is also expected to impact on coastal communities and low-lying roads because of increased coastal erosion and flooding.
- Gisborne faces challenges around managing the impacts of forestry and logging, including the impact of heavy vehicles on local, often unsealed roads, and conflict between vulnerable road users and heavy vehicles when freight routes pass through town centres.

## FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

This section represents the existing commitments (e.g. the NLTP and NZUP). V2 has not been updated to include economic stimulus packages as that space continues to evolve.

For the population of Gisborne, having a resilient transport network is crucial. The region's relative isolation means it relies on the state highway network and local roads to connect its communities, to get goods from farm gates and forests to markets, and to support growth in tourism.

Reliable and efficient transport connections remain the greatest challenge for the region. Closures have a significant social and economic impact on rural communities.

Connections to neighbouring regions are limited. Both SH2 northwest to the Bay of Plenty and SH35 to the north are vulnerable to closures, and the detours are long when there is any disruption. Gisborne District recognises the need to increase maintenance of local roads in order to maintain existing levels of service, because of increases in heavy vehicles and more frequent storm events.

The Tairāwhiti Regional Economic Action Plan, He Huarahi Hei Whai Oranga, identifies a number of transport objectives to support improved economic and social outcomes for the region:

- Safety and resilience of the network.
- Freight efficiency, including safe and reliable connections to the Eastland Port, SH35 and its connecting routes and SH2 to the rest of the country.

- Tourism-related upgrades.
- Efficient routes for both general and heavy traffic.

With the expansion of forestry harvesting in the region, the upgrading of rural roads remains a priority to cater for the increase in freight traffic. High productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) are a growing proportion of traffic on SH2 south of Gisborne, but full HPMV access is restricted on many roads.

Current projects include:

- bridge strengthening to upgrade parts of the network to carry 50MAX vehicles
- upgrade of SH2 Napier to Gisborne to accommodate full HPMV access, allowing greater movement of goods
- maintaining, operating and renewing local roads and state highways
- road safety promotion to improve road user behaviour
- continued development of the inner harbour
- improved access to Eastland Port.



## AREAS OF FOCUS: GISBORNE 2021-31

### SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MEDIUM)

Gisborne is a priority for regional development support because of the long-term challenges it faces, including high unemployment and low incomes. It is a surge region identified by the government as needing investment to support regional economic development. To support regional growth, improved access to education and employment and to help raise living standards, we will:

- plan and deliver transport infrastructure and services that improve economic and social connections, such as the Tairāwhiti Roading Package and related initiatives
- plan and deliver transport infrastructure and services that maximise the benefits of significant industry development initiatives such as the growth of forestry
- improve collaboration between Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail, Gisborne District Council and Eastland Port to explore opportunities for improved regional development
- explore opportunities to support domestic tourism, including visitor destination management plans, road sealing, township enhancements and improved freight management
- explore opportunities to improve mobile services (tradespeople/car servicing/medical) to remote rural communities
- support improvements in social and economic outcomes in areas of high deprivation, particularly improving access to employment, education and essential services for isolated communities.

### TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE (MEDIUM)

We will continue to work to understand the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation.

#### ADAPTATION

We will focus on:

- prioritising interventions and responses to natural hazards in high-risk areas
- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and 'low cost/low risk' investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption to the land transport system.

#### MITIGATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to ensure urban form and transport planning supports reductions in emissions, private vehicle travel and average trip length
- ensuring network design and operation makes the best use of existing systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the movement of public transport and low-emission options, and actively managing speed, urban freight and congestion.

## IMPROVE URBAN FORM (LOW)

While our focus is on multi-agency partnerships in the largest and fastest growing urban centres, we recognise the potential for growth in and around Gisborne to support a safe and thriving city, with increased access to public transport, walking and cycling options and reduced carbon emissions.

We will engage in planning processes to support a well-integrated and well-designed land use and transport system that:

- enhances existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- supports an increase in active modes, including trips by foot, bike and e-scooter etc
- reduces the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- results in lower emissions per capita
- maintains or improves the safety and efficiency of the transport system
- supports initiatives to improve the amenity of the inner harbour area in Gisborne city.

## TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (LOW)

Our focus will be on:

- growing walking and cycling networks to provide access into and within the central city from surrounding suburbs and enabling safe journeys to schools
- improved public transport services, including on-demand services where these can better meet customer needs in Gisborne, with a focus on supporting access to essential services for non-drivers such as SuperGold and school bus services.

## SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS (LOW)

### SAFETY

We will support implementation of the *Road to Zero: New Zealand's road safety strategy 2020-2030* and associated *Action plan 2020-22* and regional strategies, with emphasis on:

- safety interventions targeting high-risk intersections, and run-off road crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h). This includes high-volume roads with high collective and personal risk
- separated facilities for walking and cycling in areas with significant usage
- targeted road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, people not wearing seatbelts and speeding
- speed management to provide safe and appropriate speeds on high-risk rural roads. Targeted use of safety cameras to reduce speeding.

### HEALTH

Our primary focus around health is reducing harmful emissions in urban areas through improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and other initiatives to reduce overall emissions.

We will support future pandemic planning by drawing on our COVID-19 experience and initiative such as low-cost and temporary street calming and active transport projects that enable social distance while bringing health benefits from increased physical activity and reduced air emissions.

We will also continue to work to ensure that the noise impacts of transport are appropriately managed through a mix of land-use planning and mitigation works.

