

MURIHIKU SOUTHLAND

AT A GLANCE

Our focus in Southland is to help create a safer, more resilient land transport system. One that supports economic and regional growth as part of the recovery, maintains critical connections and provides appropriate levels of service across all transport networks.

COVID-19 INSIGHTS AND IMPACTS

This section sets out the how the current pandemic might impact on land transport in Southland. 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

- Manufacturing and primary production are the two largest sectors in Southland's economy and both are expected to perform reasonably well during the economic downturn. Healthcare and government services also make significant contributions and are expected to remain relatively stable.
- While the region is not as reliant as some on tourism, international tourists contribute 37% of the total tourism spend, so border closures will negatively impact on the economy.⁵⁴
- Southland's manufacturing sector is closely tied to the aluminium smelter in Tiwai. The smelter exports the majority of its production so is dependent on the speed of recovery in the global economy.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITIES

Under the slower recovery scenario:

- Southland region's forecast fall in employment to 2021 (relative to BAU) is -6.3%, slightly lower than the national average of -6.7%³⁵
- the impact on Southland District is forecast to be slightly higher (-6.9%), reflecting its greater reliance on the tourism sector³⁵

- modelling suggests employment levels will return to close to BAU levels by 2025³⁵
- Māori and Pasifika, and youth, are likely to experience the greatest impacts. An increase in youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) is expected.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE LAND TRANSPORT SYSTEM (OVER THE COMING DECADE)

- 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 (although there are question marks surrounding the continued operation of the Tiwai aluminium smelter).
- Maintaining safe and reliable road and rail freight connections to Port Otago remain important to supporting the 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

Invercargill is the largest urban centre and provides most core services for the wider region, although there is low planned growth and a stable/declining population.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY

There is a high reliance on private vehicles for most travel needs and this trend is likely to continue across the region.

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS

Southland has particular issues around run-off road and head-on crashes, crashes at intersections, speeding and crashes involving vulnerable users.⁴⁷ Crashes in the region highlight the need to focus on Invercargill and surrounding areas and high-risk rural roads.

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

There is an increased risk to coastal roads and infrastructure around Bluff from sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and increased intense weather. Inland, areas around Milford are at risk from increased heavy rainfall, rockfall and landslides.



SIGNIFICANCE OF STEP CHANGE TO REGION 2021-31



97,467

REGIONAL POPULATION²⁵

4.4%
REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH 2013-18²⁵

2.1%
OF NATIONAL POPULATION²⁵ 2018

3.2%
OF NATIONAL DEATHS & SERIOUS INJURIES (DSI)⁴⁷

94 TOTAL DSI⁴⁷ ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR PERIOD 2016-19

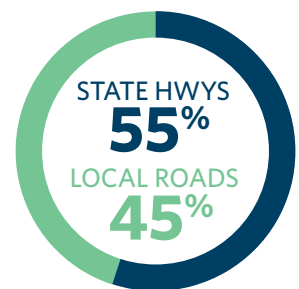
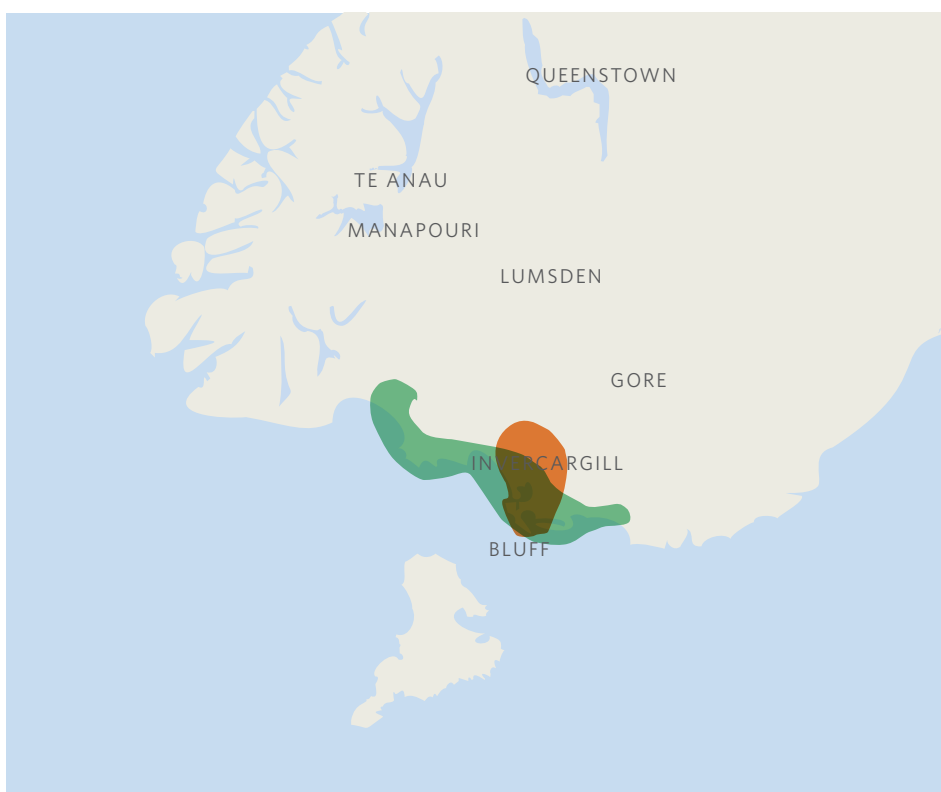
3%
OF NATIONAL VEHICLE EMISSIONS⁴⁸

2%
OF NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT YEAR END MARCH 2018²⁶

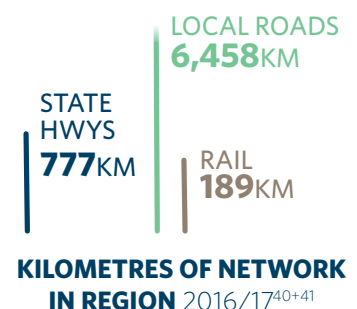
3.7% REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

4.1% NATIONAL RATE YEAR END JUNE 2019⁴⁹

Pre COVID-19 data



PERCENTAGE OF KILOMETRES TRAVELLED 2016/17⁵¹



KILOMETRES OF NETWORK IN REGION 2016/17⁴⁰⁺⁴¹

SOUTHLAND TODAY

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

SOUTHLAND IS NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTHERN-MOST REGION WITH JUST OVER 97,467 RESIDENTS. INVERCARGILL IS THE LARGEST URBAN CENTRE.²⁵

It provides most of the core services for the wider region, including the main hospital and tertiary education. South Port in Bluff is the country's seventh largest port by volume,²⁸ handling primarily bulk, non-containerised goods. Prior to border closures, it also provided an important tourist gateway to Stewart Island.

Southland has a history of strong economic performance, built around the primary sector and manufacturing. However, the region's high level of productivity, fifth highest in New Zealand, does not translate to household incomes. The region faces two key challenges for its future. The first is a static population and the second is economic reliance on a limited number of industries such as dairy and aluminium, with questions over the long-term future of the Tiwai Point smelter. Tourism has played an increasing role in the region's economy, driven by strong growth in international visitor numbers. Visitor numbers have been

significantly impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and increased international border restrictions but are expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels around 2025.

While traditional tourist destinations such as Milford Sound have experienced significant increases in traffic, visitors are also travelling independently and exploring places off the beaten track such as the Catlins. There are questions as to whether parts of the network, particularly unsealed roads, will meet the requirements of the tourism industry and international visitors once the region recovers. During peak tourist activity, there were also issues when travelling tourists meet rural, heavy traffic on some roads.

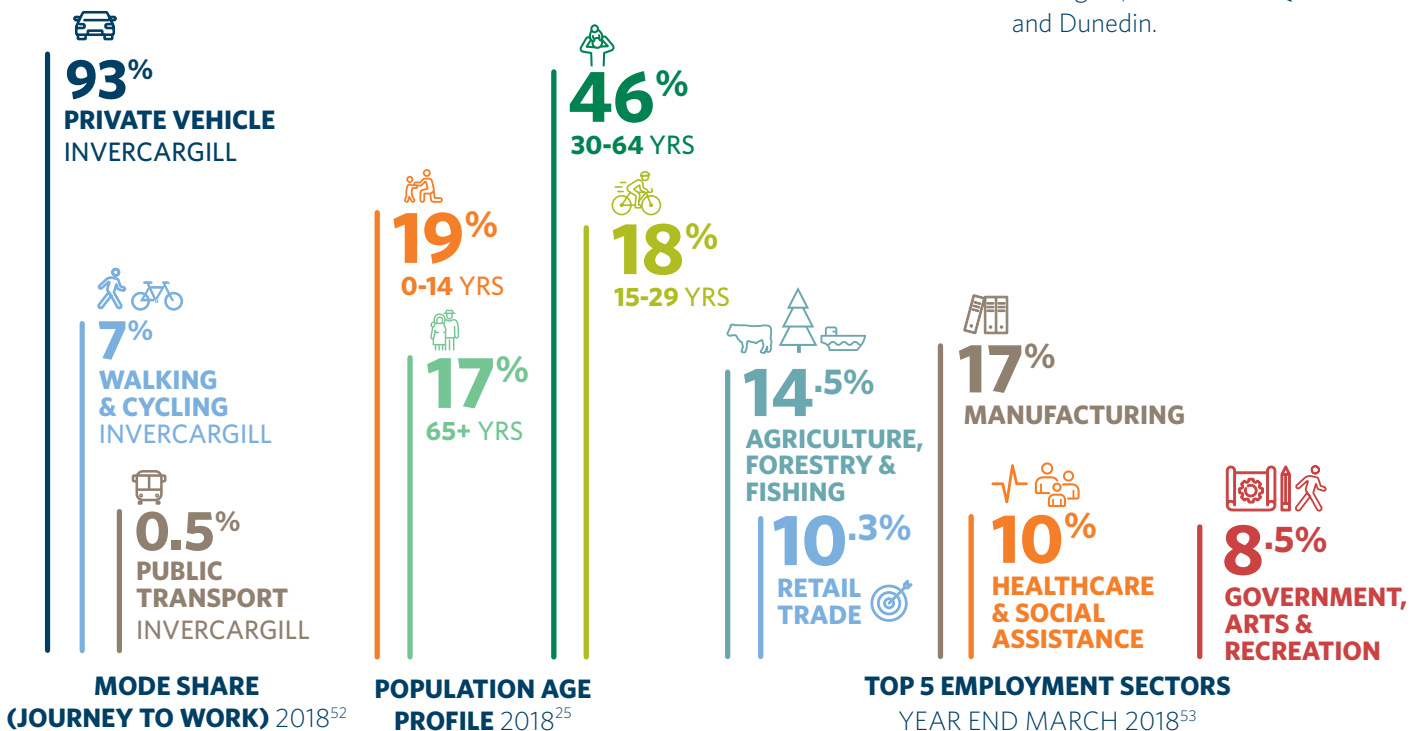
Southland has an extensive network of state highways and local roads, as well as a freight rail connection linking Invercargill and Dunedin. As a rural-based economy, these networks are critical for moving goods to production

centres and on to domestic and international markets. The movement of freight north to Dunedin/Port Chalmers and beyond, and the tourist connection to Queenstown are two key connections into and out of the region.

The transport system is broadly fit for purpose and provides reliable travel times on a day-to-day basis. However, the age of the region's infrastructure is becoming an issue, with a significant number of bridges coming to the end of their design life. One of the major challenges for the region is the ongoing affordability of transport and infrastructure because of a limited population growth and the rising costs of maintaining and renewing infrastructure. Compared with other regions, Southland only has a small number of significant resilience issues. The most significant of these relates to a coastal section of SH1 to the port.

The Southland Regional Development Strategy Action Plan identifies two key areas where transport can support economic growth in the region. These are:

- Support the tourist industry through enhanced visitor experiences, corridor improvements and increased visitor information.
- Safe and reliable connections within the region, and north to Queenstown and Dunedin.



SOUTHLAND TOMORROW

Low population growth is projected for the region up to 2043 and as a result, there is likely to be little urban development pressure in Invercargill and Southland District. The population is aging in line with the national average, with the exception of Gore District which is forecast to have a higher proportion of residents over 65 years.²⁷

Growth of employment in the region's core primary sectors is expected to continue. Retail and healthcare are also expected to remain important employers for the next decade. As a result, access for freight and the transport connection to South Port will continue to be important. Tourism will be impacted by COVID-19 in the short to medium-term, with uncertainty regarding future trends, particularly in numbers of international visitors. Access to Milford Sound and Queenstown is likely to remain a focus.

Southland faces a range of effects from climate change. Sea level rise, flooding, and storms are predicted to intensify over the next 30 years along with increased slips and erosion. This increases risk to communities and the road and rail networks that support them. Coastal and rainfall flooding at high tide results in traffic lanes being submerged over a length of approximately 70m, affecting access for freight to South Port. Further inland, the land transport system that serves areas such as Milford may be affected by heavy rainfall, rockfall and landslides.

Regional and rural communities will look for improved connections to Invercargill and Dunedin for their young people to access education and work, and for senior 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 these communities, and improve access to services in Invercargill and Dunedin. 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.

Over the coming decade, councils in the region will face increased maintenance and renewal of assets such as aging bridges. The region's large network is important for freight, and their ability to afford this will depend to a degree on the performance of primary industries over the next 10 years. There will be greater pressure on the ability of some councils to maintain infrastructure and provide appropriate services to residents, as a result of an increasingly number of people living on fixed incomes.

KEY SYSTEM INSIGHTS

- Invercargill is the largest urban centre and provides most core services for the wider region, including the main hospital and tertiary education.
- Southland faces two fundamental challenges; a limited forecast longer-term population growth and a relatively narrow economic base which relies heavily on a limited number of products. A medium-term reduction in international tourists will also impact on employment and population growth in the region.
- There is good capacity on existing roads and opportunities for increased rail freight, but ageing infrastructure, especially bridges, may impact network efficiency and reliability in some areas. Southland may face affordability challenges associated with maintaining appropriate levels of service on the extensive road network.
- The region relies heavily on its extensive road networks to support rural production and enable the movement of tourists around the region. 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.
- The land transport network in Southland has sufficient capacity, however there is an issue of aging infrastructure, particularly bridges. There may be opportunities for increased rail freight. Maintaining safe and reliable road and rail freight connections to Port Otago remain important to supporting the recovery.
- The region will increasingly be affected by flooding and erosion along coastal roads and low-lying areas around Bluff. Ocean view route to the port is at risk to coastal inundation that needs to be addressed within the next 10 years.
- Inland routes such as the road to Milford Sound will be affected by heavier rainfall and increased rockfall from reduced snow falls and more extreme weather events, combined with significant natural hazards risks such as the Alpine Fault.
- The safety record for Southland indicates particular issues in the Invercargill urban area and on high-risk rural roads, the Homer Tunnel and Milford journey.

FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

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

A safe, reliable and resilient transport system to support farming, forestry and tourism sectors, and providing access to remote communities is important to encourage economic growth in the Southland region.

Investment through the National Land Transport Programme is based around the importance of a regional land transport system that is safe, well-connected and resilient to get goods to market and to support growth in tourism.

In the Catlins area east of Invercargill, the Haldane-Curio Bay Road safety improvements are being completed. The \$7 million project is jointly funded by the Southland District Council and Waka Kotahi. Work includes sealing a busy gravel road, and better access to visitor attractions along a popular tourist route.

Historically, this narrow gravel road has had a high-crash rate involving visitor drivers.

The Milford Rockfall/Avalanche Protection Programme will investigate improved ways to reduce the risk of closure from rockfalls and avalanches on SH94 between Te Anau and Milford Sound, one of New Zealand’s premier tourist corridors. Other significant natural hazards in the region relate to the coastal section of SH1 to the port. This section is at risk from coastal inundation and sea level rise with current flooding likely to increase in the long-term.

The recently completed realignment of SH1 at Edendale in Southland provides a safer and healthier environment for residents by reducing traffic noise, vehicle emissions and improving access for the community.



AREAS OF FOCUS: SOUTHLAND 2021-31

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS (MEDIUM)

SAFETY

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

- safety treatments targeting high risk intersections, and run-off road and head-on crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h)
- appropriate walking and cycling facilities for vulnerable users, in areas with significant numbers of pedestrians and people on bikes
- targeting 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
- improved safety outcomes for visiting drivers, including improved signage and markings, and providing safe journeys through to Milford Sound
- the relatively high-volume of freight traffic and the high number of visiting drivers to the region unfamiliar with the network.

HEALTH

Our approach to delivering better health outcomes, particularly the reduction of harmful emissions, will primarily be through initiatives that target other step changes, including improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

We will support future pandemic planning by drawing on our COVID-19 experience and initiatives 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.

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:

- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change

- working with our partners and communities to prioritise interventions and responses to natural hazards in high risk areas
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and 'low cost/low risk' investments
- engaging in long-term strategic planning to respond to vulnerability of existing assets
- 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
- ensuring climate change and carbon emission targets are embedded in the Regional Land Transport Plan
- supporting walking, cycling and public transport.

IMPROVE URBAN FORM (LOW)

Our focus for delivering improved urban form is on multi-agency partnerships with Tier 1 areas, as defined in the National Policy Statement for Urban Development. However, we recognise the potential for growth in and around Invercargill to support a safe and thriving city, with improved access to public transport, walking and cycling options, that also help reduce carbon emissions.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (LOW)

We will support:

- improvements to walking and cycling networks, with a focus on providing safe and efficient access to and within activity centres and to schools, and linking existing infrastructure to provide connected networks
- public transport services, including on-demand services, where they give access to employment and essential services, are a more affordable transport option and help shape a more thriving city
- proposals to address the increasing need for services that enable senior residents to access more social activities and required social services.

