

# Taranaki Regional Update

## August 2020

### Overview

Taranaki has a strong export-based economy and continues to grow as a region. With that in mind, our primary focus for the region is on improving access, and ensuring the region's highway network is resilient, safer and enables reliable journey times. Improving the safety of the key corridors, will reduce the numbers of deaths and serious injuries in the region.

Taranaki contributes significantly to the New Zealand economy, and we're committed to maintaining and improving road quality and safety across the region.

Already, we have a significant number of projects underway or about to start including; the Mt Messenger Bypass, the Awakino Gorge to Mt Messenger safety and resilience improvements project, the SH3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements project and improvements to the Forgotten World Highway (SH43).

In the region's urban communities, population growth pressures remain steady, with the New Plymouth district classified as a high-growth area. New Plymouth District Council has made the most of their opportunities to embed walking and cycling into their transport system, becoming a truly multi-modal city.

Collaborative land use and transport planning for future growth will be critical in creating desirable urban spaces and liveable communities, as well as providing and promoting improved access through more affordable, safe and convenient travel choices.

### Safety, resilience and choice

Together with our co-investment partners, including the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) and Taranaki Regional Council (TRC), we developed the Keeping New Plymouth Moving and Growing business case to provide a balanced transport system.

This balanced transport system has three key priorities or areas of focus for transport in the Taranaki region – improving safety, ensuring resilience and providing more travel choices.

South Taranaki District Council have received a portion of the \$13.95 million investment from Round 1 of our Innovating Streets pilot fund aimed at making streets more people-friendly and vibrant. Waverley and Eltham's town centres were chosen for the projects which will test potential street treatments aimed at reducing issues identified in the Town Master Plans developed last year including speed of traffic, noise, safety and safer crossings and pedestrian access, amenity and sense of place. These projects are expected to begin early next year and be completed within six months.

### Provincial Growth Fund (PGF)

The Taranaki transport network has received significant investment from the PGF which will help to drive economic growth, increase tourism and improve access for communities to key services. The Taranaki projects funded by the PGF totalling \$10m are the SH43 Forgotten World Highway business case (completed), and SH43 Sealing the Gorge.

### NZ Upgrade Programme (NZUP)

The NZUP regional package addresses key challenges our regional state highway networks face including safety risks, resilience and congestion problems, accessibility and travel time reliability. The projects also support regional economic development.

The Taranaki NZUP regional package project of \$13.45m is for improvements to the SH43 Forgotten World Highway.

## **In the last 18 months**

- We have completed the PGF-funded business case for improvements to SH43 (the Forgotten World Highway) and completed design for sealing the first 2km of the 12km section of road through the Tangarakau Gorge. This was one of the key improvements identified in the business case. Following the commitment of further funding from the regional package of the NZ Upgrade Programme early this year, we have begun investigations and design for other improvements identified in the business case including a wayfinding development plan, safety improvements for the route and culvert replacements.
- We have designed a package of safety improvements, including wide centrelines and sections of road safety barrier on SH3 between Waitara and Bell Block. These improvements will complement the more extensive improvements, like roundabouts for key intersections along the route, which are currently being designed. Construction of the roundabouts is scheduled to begin late 2021. Late last year we undertook formal consultation on a proposal to make the speed limit a consistent 80km/h along the route. We are in the final stages of analysing the responses and will announce a decision soon.
- We have invested more than \$17m in maintaining our network, completing our region-wide reseal, surfacing and pavement rehabilitations programmes in March.
- Though our Low Cost/Low Risk Safety Programme, we have made safety improvements to Hawera's main roundabout at the Glover Road/SH3 intersection and made a busy intersection at the Moturoa shops in New Plymouth safer and more accessible by creating a new half roundabout. A new signalised crossing will also be installed as part of the Moturoa safety improvement project. Drainage works to address the issue of water ponding on SH3 at the Rugby Road underpass between Stratford and Inglewood were also recently completed.
- Emergency works have also been completed on SH43, the Forgotten World Highway. Following a large under slip at Tunnel Hill we have reinstated the road to one lane, and we expect to start on permanent repairs in Spring. We've also completed work to construct a retaining wall at the Pohokura Saddle, which has enabled the road to re-open to two lanes.

## **Underway or about to start**

- Construction of the Awakino Tunnel Bypass, expected to cost \$37.5 million, is on track for completion by the end of the year.
- Despite delays caused by the COVID-19 lockdown, resilience work on SH3 between Awakino and Mt Messenger is progressing well and nearing completion. The COVID-19 delays impacted the completion of a new passing lane at the western end of the SH3 Awakino Gorge, an area known as Ladies Mile. The remaining pavement and surfacing works have been deferred until October 2020. Land negotiations and final consultation for the Tongaporutu intersection improvement and Rapanui Passing Lane (North of Tongaporutu) are nearing completion, with work set to start at these two sites in late 2020.
- Around \$4 million is being invested to address the slumping and cracking of the section of SH43 that leads to the Taumarunui Hospital. Drainage works were completed late last year and work to build a large retaining wall is underway.
- With funding through the NZ Upgrade Programme and the Provincial Growth Fund, work to seal the section of SH43 through Tangarakau Gorge and replace a culvert at Pohokura will soon start. Around \$23 million will be invested in the highway over the coming years.

## Investment in Taranaki

<b>NLTP</b>	<b>2015–18</b>	<b>2018–21</b>
Forecast total investment	\$232 million	\$373 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$139 million	\$168 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$8 million	\$11 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$3 million	\$1 million
Regional network improvements	\$38 million	\$96 million

<b>Crown funding</b>	
NZ Upgrade Programme*	\$13.45 million
Provincial Growth Fund*	\$10 million

\*Waka Kotahi led projects only

# Overview map

