

Tunnel construction

A 235-metre tunnel is a significant feature of the new bypass.

The design and construction is similar to the Northern Gateway Tunnel in Auckland and will be large enough to accommodate loads up to and including house removals.

A 110-tonne roadheader machine will excavate the upper portion (top heading), and then the lower section (bench) at a rate of up to 3 metres per day in two work shifts.

The tunnel will be constructed with permanent rock bolts and steel fibre reinforced shotcrete, sprayed at high velocity, stabilising the rock face.

The shotcrete also has synthetic fibres for protection in the event of a fire. Other safety measures to meet New Zealand and international best practice standards include a safety egress passage, public warning system and a deluge fire suppressant system.

The tunnel will allow easy movement for wildlife over the new road, ensuring their safety from traffic.

The finished tunnel will also incorporate cultural elements, acknowledging Ngāti Tama tūpuna, the traditional guardians of the northern gateway to Taranaki.

