

# Otago/Southland regional transport update – August 2019

## Overview

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Safe, resilient and well-maintained roads are critical to provide access to remote communities and serve the farming, forestry and tourism industries that support economic growth in the Otago/Southland region.

Investment in the region recognises the importance of a regional land transport system that gets goods to market and maintains the growth in tourism. To support this an additional \$85 million is being invested to maintain and improve the state highways and local roads.

Safety improvements are being made to significant sections of the network throughout the region, to improve the safety for all road users, including visiting drivers.

Public transport in Dunedin has seen excellent improvements in the last year. Bus patronage is up 10% on 2017/18 with 1.8 million rides.

In Queenstown, together with the Otago Regional Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council, we introduced the first subsidised bus service in Queenstown. Launched in November 2017, it offers more affordable and reliable public transport services. In a year, bus patronage in Queenstown increased by 111%, with over 1.2 million rides.

In urban areas, investments have encouraged a shift from the use of private vehicles towards public transport and active travel options, such as walking and cycling. This co-investment with our partners will also provide safer and improved access to schools, employment and goods and services that have great social and economic benefits. This also helps create an urban environment where people want to live, work, study and play.

## Dunedin

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In Dunedin we've established Connecting Dunedin, a partnership between the Dunedin City Council, Otago Regional Council and the Transport Agency to ensure the city well placed to respond to the city's future needs.

It is working to ensure good alignment and co-ordination of key transport projects, future land use and transport development for the Central City, new hospital and harbourside redevelopment. Currently, the work programme is focused on a range of cycling, safety and public transport projects.

### **In the last 18 months:**

- A new \$6 million Dunedin central city bus hub opened in March 2019. The hub provides one central city service point for public transport and enables easier transfers between services. The facility aims to help continue to grow public transport usage in the city and includes a real-time bus information system to make it easy for everyone to move around.
- Bus patronage in Dunedin to-date this financial year, is up 10% on 2017/18 with 1.8 million rides.

- A new, smarter bus card system is being trialled in Dunedin later this year to help build on these gains and make it easier for customers to use public transport. Approved funding for this project is \$5.5 million.
- The new \$8 million one-way separated cycle lanes on SH1 one-way system through central and north Dunedin opened in March 2019, providing safer and improved access for cyclists on this busy key arterial route. These new cycle lanes on the one-way system are one of the first cycling projects to better connect Dunedin.
- The roll-out of pedestrian crossings at eight CBD intersections has been completed. This project was jointly funded by Dunedin City Council and the Transport Agency. The crossings increase safety throughout the inner city. The risk of fatal and serious injuries to pedestrians is higher in Dunedin than in other cities of a similar size. Safety and accessibility projects are also planned for the central business district and tertiary precinct.

### **Underway or about to start:**

- Tenders have been called to build the final section of the SH88 shared cycling/walking path between St Leonards and Port Chalmers. This will provide a safer alternative route for cyclists to SH88, which is the main road freight link between Dunedin and Port Chalmers. This final stage of the \$28 million project will take three years to complete. Safety improvements to SH88 will be carried out as part of this project. This will include installing safety barriers, high-performance road marking and improved road signage.
- Work on the Dunedin City Council's Central City Cycle Network project that includes a cycle bridge over Water of Leith and connecting with the SH88 shared path to Port Chalmers will be completed. The project also provides a route through the industrial area to Portsmouth Drive and via the rail corridor to Anzac Avenue in front of Dunedin's rail station. The \$7.8 million project, jointly funded by the Transport Agency, is designed to improve access and safety for cyclists. This cycle way is scheduled to open in May 2020.
- \$12.2 million is being spent replacing Dunedin's street lighting with LEDs – the contract was awarded in May 2019. We are providing 85% of the funding for this work. LED lighting increases safety and significantly reduces energy use and on-going maintenance costs. Work on this project starts in July 2019 and will take up to two years to complete.
- Work continues on Dunedin City Council's \$69.5 million Portobello Road safety and resilience project, the latest stage of which was completed in May 2019, with the opening of the \$12.5 million, 2km section connecting Broad Bay and Portobello. This Peninsula Connection project widens 15km of road from Vauxhall to Portobello, improving safety and delivering a shared path for cyclists and walkers. Low-lying sections of the road will be raised to protect against rising sea levels. This project is jointly funded through the National Land Transport Programme.

### **Queenstown**

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The Transport Agency is taking a multi-agency approach to managing transport opportunities and growth challenges in Queenstown, reflecting the town's rapid expansion as a holiday destination and lifestyle choice.

### **In the last 18 months:**

- The new \$22 million two-lane Kawarau Falls Bridge opened in May 2018, improving safety and access. The original single-lane bridge across this main access point into Queenstown was a congestion hot-spot, particularly during peak holiday periods. It is being upgraded to provide separated access for walking and cycling and should be completed by the end of the third quarter of 2019, creating an important link in the Queenstown Cycle Trail Network.
- We have invested \$6.4 million to improve safety and access at the busy SH6/Tucker Beach Road intersection in Frankton. Difficult right-hand turns across the highway have been resolved by building a new slip road on to SH6 to Frankton. The new slip road opened in May 2019.
- With our partners, Otago Regional Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council, we introduced the first subsidised – flat rate of \$2 – bus service in Queenstown. Launched in November 2017, it offers a more affordable, frequent and reliable public transport service. It is an important step in helping to reduce the town's reliance on single occupancy car trips. We've provided \$9.7 million in funding to run the service in 2017/18 and 2018-21.
- From July 2018 to May 2019, bus patronage in Queenstown increased by 111%, exceeding the target of 105% with 1.2 million rides.

### **Underway or about to start:**

- Work will progress over the next 12 months on the business case in to the next steps to improve traffic flows on SH6, between Grant Road and the Kawarau Fall Bridge, in Frankton.
- We're looking at several possible improvements to this highway corridor that will provide better connections to other parts of the network and improve walking, cycling and public transport links.
- As part of the Wakatipu Way to Go partnership between the Transport Agency, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council, we're working through detailed business cases on multiple projects to provide more transport choice for residents and visitors to Queenstown.
- This business case work is advancing across range of projects and includes:
  - Rapid Targeted Interventions (RTI) Single Stage Business Case and Implementation starting in 2020 (subject to funding)
  - Queenstown Town Centre Detailed Business Case and Frankton to Queenstown Single Stage Business case (which are being managed together)
  - Wakatipu Active Travel Network Single Stage Business Case
  - Frankton Masterplan and Integrated Transport Programme Business Case
  - Grant Road to Kawarau Falls Bridge Single Stage Business Case
  - Wakatipu Ferry Detailed Business Case
  - Transport Modelling (feeding into above cases)
  - Queenstown and Frankton Parking Strategy and Detailed Business Case
- Consideration is also being given to activities that will improve access and public transport efficiency in the area, such as bus priority measures; new transport hubs; a more pedestrian friendly town centre; improved parking management, new on-road/off-road shared

walking/cycling opportunities; and a range of public transport service improvements, including water ferry services.

## **Safety**

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Together with our partners, we're improving safety for all road users, including visiting drivers, in Otago/Southland.

### **In the last 18 months:**

- We've completed the \$14 million Boost safety programme targeting highways in Otago and Southland. This programme has seen the installation of safety barriers, rumble strips and upgraded curve warning signs.
  - Almost 13km of barriers have been installed and 71.8km of line markings have been added to the 10km stretch of road between Dunedin to Mosgiel on SH1, making the road safer for everyone who uses it.
  - In addition, 920km of rumble strips, 13km of median barriers have been added to several Otago rural highways as part of the Safety Boost Programme, and an intersection speed zone has been installed on SH6, at the Luggate–Cromwell Rd/SH8A intersection.
  - Rumble strips, barriers and improved signs have been added to 935km of high-risk rural state highways in Southland. The safety improvements include 430km of rumble strips and 3kms of barriers.
- We have completed the delivery of the \$10 million visiting drivers' road safety programme on key visitor routes in the Otago/ Southland region. Work included installing safety barriers, improved road markings and signage that will keep both visitor and local drivers safe.
- In the coastal area of the Catlins, we completed a \$7 million safety upgrade of the Haldane to Curio Bay Road in December 2018, which included sealing the 23km regional tourist route to provide better access to visitor attractions along this route. Traffic volumes on the road have risen 55% over the past five years to more than 500 vehicles a day. Historically, this narrow gravel road has had a high crash rate involving visitor drivers. This co-investment project with the Southland District Council has increased safety and accessibility for both locals and visitors using this route. The upgrade has the potential to unlock more of the area's tourism potential, creating new business and job opportunities.

## **Regional development**

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Climate change is affecting the resilience of the region's land transport system as a freight corridor and reliable connectivity of its communities.

### **In the last 18 months:**

- A new \$ purpose-built Alpine Operations Centre opened in January 2019 near the eastern entrance to the Homer Tunnel. The building houses tunnel operations staff, the Milford Road avalanche and rockfall protection programmes team and is a base for road maintenance

crews. Queenstown's tourist economy will be supported through an on-going rock fall protection management programme at Nevis Bluff on SH6 to reduce the risk of closure of this vital tourism corridor.

### **Underway or about to start:**

- Funding has already targeted coastal erosion along SH1 at Katiki Beach between Palmerston and Ōamaru. Rock protection work was completed at three sites on Katiki Beach in 2017, and further work will be completed at another seven sites by the end of this year.
- Construction started in July 2018 on the \$13 million SH1 Edendale realignment 30km north of Invercargill. The new alignment, due for completion in mid-2020, will improve safety by moving highway traffic out of the Edendale township, and help the region prosper by providing better access to economic and social opportunities.
- A record \$6 million is being invested in Invercargill public transport in this National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). This investment targets better services, simplifying fare structures and upgrading infrastructure such as bus shelters.
- We have worked with the Southland District Council and Gore District Council on providing funding assistance for a suitable replacement for the single lane Pyramid Bridge over the Mataura River. This was destroyed by severe flooding in February 2018. A construction tender is expected to be let in the coming months. The Transport Agency has approved up to \$6 million in emergency works funding for a replacement bridge.
- Detailed design funding was approved in May 2019 for a project involving a new roundabout to improve safety and reduce the severity of crashes at the SH1/Elles Road Intersection in Invercargill.
- Detailed design work has been finished for the new \$22 million Beaumont Bridge in the Clutha District. Construction funding for this new bridge is expected to be included in the next NLTP.
- Investigations will continue during the next three years into Otago's public transport networks. These will focus on opportunities to expand the network, increase capacity and the frequency of services, and the use of new technology to make public transport a more attractive travel option. This, along with the investment in walking and cycling networks and travel behaviour change programmes, will provide safe and convenient alternatives to motor vehicles as travel choices in Dunedin and the high growth area of Queenstown Lakes area.

### **Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment in Otago-Southland**

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Through the Provincial Growth Fund, we are investigating the feasibility and costs of establishing rail hubs to consolidate the transportation of logs through the region to Southport and investing in improved state highway access to the Rosebank Industrial Park in the Clutha district.

## Investment in Otago-Southland

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<b>NLTP</b>	<b>2015-18</b>	<b>2018-21</b>
<b>Forecast total investment</b>	\$662 million	\$998 million
<b>Forecast maintenance and operations</b>	\$473 million	\$558 million
<b>Forecast public transport investment</b>	\$43 million	\$92 million
<b>Forecast walking and cycling</b>	\$6 million	\$68 million
<b>Regional network improvements</b>	\$107 million	\$254 million
<b>Provincial Growth Fund</b>		\$0.5 million