



## **Transit Regional Office Auckland**

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**Media Release**

### **Faster delivery of Auckland's projects in Transit's 10-year Forecast**

Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast released today shows the strongest ever investment and level of activity in state highway measures to address Auckland's congestion and safety issues - against a background that sees the region's traffic growing by 2 to 4 percent each year.

Population growth, suburban expansion and the still relatively cheap cost of travel, are all contributing to increasing congestion, particularly for peak period commuter trips and freight, with key 'hot points' around the Central Motorway Junction and major arterial routes.

"The capacity and range of the motorway network in Auckland is being upgraded and extended to relieve congestion and support the Auckland Growth Strategy," says Transit Chairperson David Stubbs.

"The congestion will ease with a combination of critical motorway links and improvements, including the Western Ring Route, completion of the Northern Busway, passenger transport improvements and a suite of travel demand management measures."

Transit's forecast includes \$330 million of expenditure on state highway improvements and \$62 million on maintenance and operations in Auckland in the upcoming financial year, with a total of \$3.8 billion for the full 10-year period.

"This increase of almost 40 percent over last year's level of activity will add to the very self-evident momentum of major work already underway," said Mr Stubbs.

Major projects in Auckland already committed to start in 2005/06 include: SH20 Mt Roskill Extension (\$169M) and the SH20 to SH1 Manukau Extension (\$174M) – both part of the strategic Western Ring Route.

Other large projects currently underway are – the SH1 Northern Motorway Extension ALPURT B2 (\$365M), SH1 Northern Busway (\$180M), SH1 Esmonde Road Interchange (\$35M), Stage 2 of the SH1 Central Motorway Junction Improvements (\$140M), SH18 Greenhithe Deviation and Upper Harbour Bridge Duplication (\$131M), and SH1 Waiouru Connection Interchange (\$19M for Transit share).

Mr Stubbs says the additional \$500 million funding for land transport over three years announced by the government last week, has not yet been factored into this 10-year forecast.

"In August we will release an amended forecast incorporating the share of \$500 million allocated to state highways."

"Transit plans short-term borrowing and tolling to fund key projects. This way we can make earlier starts on the three key projects required to complete the Western Ring Route. The

SH18 Hobsonville Deviation (\$193M) is planned to start no later than 2007/08, subject to finalising debt repayment arrangements, and SH20 Avondale Extension (\$1.2billion approx) and the SH20 Manukau Harbour Crossing (\$189M) could start in 2009/10. Also due for an accelerated start is the Harbour Bridge to City project (\$300M, 2008/09) which will involve constructing a northbound tunnel under Victoria Park on the western side of the Victoria Park Viaduct.

“We are particularly delighted to be able to put these dates on the Avondale project as this will be the largest and most ambitious construction project in Auckland since the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

“Our programme is ambitious and will need the full co-operation of the region’s seven local authorities to see it realised,” he says. “We have also worked closely with the contracting industry to develop a realistic timetable for the major projects, and this will continue.”

As pressure on the motorways increases Transit plans to progressively give public transport priority over private cars. Examples are the SH1 Northern Busway and specific bus priority measures on state highways in Auckland. Excluding the busway, a total of \$6.4 million is planned to be spent. Transit is also planning traffic management measures on severely congested sections of Auckland’s motorways. Ramp metering is a key part of this package due for implementation from 2005/06 to 2008/09. Further expansions of Advanced Traffic Management Systems and development of Transit’s Advanced Traveller Information Services are in progress.

Transit sees tolling as a way to implement demand management on state highways, as well as an opportunity to start some projects earlier due to the contribution of toll revenue. Transit’s first toll project, the SH1 Northern Motorway Extension (ALPURT B2) is under construction, having obtained the required statutory approvals in April.

Mr Stubbs says safety remains a major focus, and accelerating a range of smaller projects in Auckland is also a priority. Maintenance activities, which account for some 40 per cent of Transit’s budget in any one year, include low-cost but highly effective safety improvements such as upgrading lighting, laying skid-resistant road surfacing, building traffic devices to manage speed, protecting motorists from roadside obstacles and drop-offs and widening the seal on key sections of the highway.

“Traditionally, the largest portion of the maintenance budget in Auckland goes to resurfacing the motorway network and 2005/06 is no exception. The two major projects this year will be the resealing of the centre four lanes of the Auckland Harbour Bridge and the rehabilitation of State Highway 20B which provides the eastern access to Auckland International Airport. Both these sections of motorway carry some of the highest traffic loads in New Zealand.”

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