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MEDIA RELEASE

Extra funding advances state highway projects

A further \$390 million is now earmarked for state highway projects, as a result of the additional \$500 million funding for land transport announced by government on 23 June. On this basis, Transit New Zealand plans to advance Western Ring Route projects in Auckland, Waikato Expressway projects, Wellington's Dowse to Petone project and a number of small and medium-sized projects around the country.

The extra \$390 million for state highways includes the \$340 million (over four years) allocated by Land Transport New Zealand, plus \$50 million Transit will borrow against future National Land Transport Funds.

"This additional funding comes on top of an already record level of investment in state highways for 2005/06 and beyond, as reflected in Transit New Zealand's State Highway Forecast 2005/06, released on 30 June," said Transit chief executive Rick van Barneveld.

Implications for Auckland

Of the \$390 million, \$280 million will be spent in Auckland to enable construction of Western Ring Route projects, including starting construction of the SH18 Hobsonville Deviation this financial year and accelerating the investigation and design phases of SH20 Avondale Extension and SH20 Manukau Harbour Crossing.

The additional funds now make it likely that construction of the Avondale Extension can start in 2009/10. However, for both Avondale and the Manukau Harbour Crossing projects – projected to cost in excess of \$1,150 million and \$184 million, respectively – to move to the construction phase they would require additional, non-National Land Transport Funds.

"To keep these projects rolling at a good pace Aucklanders will have to support tolling to help fund a number of projects just as they have for ALPURT B2, enabling it to be constructed earlier," said Mr. van Barneveld.

In addition to the SH18 and SH20 projects, construction of the project to eight-lane SH16 Waterview to Rosebank – required to provide balanced road capacity on the Western Ring Route – will now start in 2008/09. Investigation and design of the SH16 Te Atatu to Royal six-laning project will be brought forward two years.

“A key priority, in terms of progressing these projects, is to advance property purchases in Auckland over the next five years to ensure construction projects can proceed unhindered. A total of \$71 million has been allocated for this,” said Mr van Barneveld.

“Once completed, the Western Ring Route will dramatically change traffic flows and reduce congestion through central Auckland by providing a real alternative to SH1 between Albany and Manukau City. It will also link all four cities and provide better access from the west to the airport,” said Mr. van Barneveld.

Implications for Waikato

The \$390 million will also enable faster progress on Transit’s next highest priority for the additional state highway funding, the Waikato Expressway, and a total of \$50 million is to be spent on advancing two component projects. Design and construction of the SH1 Te Rapa Bypass and SH1 Ngaruawahia Bypass is advanced in the expectation that borrowing and tolling will be part of their funding packages. Further additional construction funding for these and other projects may result from the funding review recently commissioned by the Minister of Transport Pete Hodgson.

“Another key Waikato project to be advanced is the SH1 Piarere to Oak Tree Bend Realignment. It has significant safety benefits and construction will now begin as soon as land acquisition is finalised. This is expected to be in 2006/07,” he said.

Implications for other regions

For the Wellington region, the additional funding enables Transit to start the \$78 million SH2 Dowse to Petone Interchange project this financial year, rather than in 2006/07 as programmed in Transit New Zealand’s 10-year State Highway Forecast published in June.

Around the country, an extra \$10 million will be spent in 2005/06 on 14 additional small and medium-sized state highway projects with a construction cost of less than \$3 million. Nationally, an extra \$5 million a year for the following three years is set aside for accelerating similar projects, which will be identified as Transit’s overall programme progresses. Many of these projects deliver significant safety improvements, and the result will be faster achievement of *Road Safety 2010* targets.

The additional smaller projects to be started this year with the special funds are in Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawke’s Bay, Manawatu/Wanganui, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago.

Waikato - total of an additional \$2.8 million for:

- SH4: Tikitiki Road North Realignment
- SH2: Two sets of passing lanes, the Heavens Double passing lanes, and an extension of the Campbell Road southbound passing lane.

Bay of Plenty –an additional \$500,000 for:

- SH36: Hamurana to Te Waereanga Road Seal Widening.

Hawke's Bay – total of an additional \$2 million for:
three extra passing lane projects

- SH2: Napier Airport to Bay View Passing Lanes
- SH2: South of Pukeora Road Passing Lane
- SH2: South of Maharakeke Bridge Passing Lane.

Manawatu/Wanganui – total of an additional \$1million for:
extra safety improvements at the following intersections

- SH57 Queens Street Intersection
- SH57 Koputaroa Bridge to Heatherlea Street East Intersection.

Wellington – an additional \$590,000 for:

- SH2: Maoribank to Owen Street street-lighting project.

Canterbury - total of an additional \$2.8 million for:

- Two further passing lane projects and one extra safety improvement
- SH7 Haypaddock Hill Corner Realignment
- SH1 Clarence North Southbound Passing Lane
- SH1 Seadown South Passing Lanes.

Otago - an additional \$600,000 has been programmed for:

- SH1 Mill House Southbound Passing Lane project, near Oamaru.

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