



## **Dunedin Regional Office**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Construction to realign Otago blackspot gets green light**

Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast published today confirms the realignment of SH1 from Tumai to Waikouaiti will begin in the 2005/06 financial year.

Costing \$5.1 million, the new 3.4-kilometre alignment will bypass the particularly difficult route over the Tumai Rail Overbridge. The new construction will also include a 1km-long northbound passing lane.

"We are close to finalising the last property transaction and expect to let the tender for construction work by February 2006," said Transit regional manager Mike O'Cain.

"Planning to provide for the significant growth in tourist traffic and growth in tourist areas is also one of the main issues facing state highways in the Otago region," said Mr O'Cain.

"We are looking to work constructively with the Queenstown Lakes District Council on a strategic study to sort out, from a medium to long-term point of view, an appropriate roading hierarchy. We want to make sure that the state highway network operates well for everybody rather than getting clogged up with access points from lots of different subdivisions."

Transit is also working with the Dunedin City Council to confirm the strategic direction for the arterial corridors through Dunedin city, particularly through the central city areas.

The forecast also includes a proposal for four-laning and upgrading of the Caversham Bypass route, between Lookout Point and Andersons Bay Road in Dunedin.

Safety continues to be a major focus with plans to investigate and improve 'out of context' sections of state highway, remove or protect roadside hazards, further develop the provision of stock effluent disposal facilities and improve walking and cycling facilities.

Small and medium-sized safety projects (up to \$3 million) planned to get underway in the next three years include: SH8 Tunnel Hill realignment, west of Lawrence; SH6 Gentle Annie West realignment, Kawarau Gorge; SH1 Moeraki vertical realignment; SH1 Lookout Point safety improvements, Dunedin; SH8 Pig Hunter's Road Realignment, west of Milton; SH6 Boyd Road realignment, south of Frankton; SH85 Macraes Road intersection improvement and SH87 Riccarton/School Road intersection improvements. Further projects have been identified but these are dependent on progress with other projects and the availability of regional distribution funding.

Transit has included an estimate of \$40 million from regional distribution funding in its 10-year forecast for Otago state highways. (Regional distribution funding comes from the

increase in petrol tax from April 2005 that will be allocated to a region on a population basis.)

Mr O’Cain said there was also a number of projects either just completed or currently under construction. These include on SH1 Sharpes Bend realignment and the Waianakarua (north) Bridge widening, near Oamaru; and on SH6 making the Wye Creek bridge two lane south of Frankton and retrofitting the section from Ripponvale to Lake Hayes, and on SH8 Butchers Dam has been realigned and a crash barrier installed at Half Mile east of Alexandra. The stock effluent facility at Raes Junction on SH90 will be operational by year-end.

Two passing lanes were recently completed in the Kawarau Gorge and up to a further 10, mainly north and south of Dunedin are planned, subject to funding.

SH88 to Port Chalmers will continue to be progressively upgraded with a focus on providing for walking and cycling. Work is currently underway on widening the carriageways and providing footpaths between De Lacy and Jessie Streets in Dunedin and further work is planned. The handrail on the Balclutha Bridge will be raised to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

“As state highways in Otago are generally of a high standard, especially with the number of major projects completed over the last 10 years, a major focus for us in this region is maintaining the current levels of service. Up to 70 percent of the 10-year funding will be spent on maintenance and operations. This includes: resurfacing, managing ice and snow through the use of CMA (calcium magnesium acetate) introducing ice prediction work known as thermal mapping, continuing to manage rockfalls and major slips, maintaining high skid-resistant surfaces and continuing planting in sensitive areas.”

The 2005/06 10-year forecast is divided into a firm one-year programme for 2005/06, which Transit is fully committed to delivering, a three-year plan, known as the State Highway Plan containing the best estimates of time and cost for the listed projects and activities. The remaining seven-year forecast is necessarily less certain but costs are based on 2005/06 estimates with an indicative escalation provision.

“The additional \$500 million funding for land transport over three years announced by the government last week, has not been factored into this 10-year forecast. We propose releasing in August an amended forecast incorporating the share of \$500 million to be allocated to state highways.

“Even before the announcement of the additional funding Transit’s national programme of state highway projects was ambitious. We are delighted at the news of additional funding as it will allow us to accelerate some key projects around the country,” said Mr O’Cain.

Otago’s share of the 10-year forecast in 2005/06 is \$29.7 million and over the 10 years equals \$401.1 million, at this stage. Nationally, without the additional funding the 10-year forecast totals in excess of \$11 billion.

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