



Dunedin Regional Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

Safety, Milford and maintenance - focus for Southland state highways

Five new state highway safety projects are planned for Southland over the next three years in Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast published today. A total of \$16.8 million is planned to be spent in Southland on state highway improvements and maintenance and operations in 2005/06.

The safety projects include: SH6 Lorneville Roundabout, SH93 River Road realignment, SH1 East Road curve realignment, SH98 Mill Road intersection improvements and a major realignment on SH1 at Edendale. Also planned are two stock truck effluent facilities, one near Mataura and further investigation of the need for one at Lumsden. Further safety projects have been identified over three years but these are dependent on progress with other projects and the availability of regional distribution funding.

Recently completed safety projects include: realignment at Underwood on SH99 and side protection work at Greenpoint on SH1, and widening of the Hamilton Creek Bridge on SH94.

Safety projects Transit expect to start early in 2005/06 are construction of the Lorneville Roundabout, and River Road realignment.

Funds have been committed to fully investigate the replacement of the eastern portal of the Homer Tunnel. It was severely damaged some years ago by an avalanche and the investigation will examine both its replacement and extension.

"In the 10-year forecast Transit is acknowledging the importance of the Homer Tunnel and SH94 Milford Road as a pre-eminent tourist route. We have brought international avalanche specialists to Milford to advise on our hazard management on this state highway. The current system is recognised as being world class but we want to ensure ongoing investment continues to keep us at the forefront of maximising access to Milford Sound and minimising avalanche risk," says Transit regional Manager Mike O'Cain.

"As state highways in Southland are generally of a high standard with relatively low traffic volumes, the major focus for us in this region is maintaining the current levels of service. Just over 70 percent of the 10-year funding of \$270 million will be spent on maintenance and operations. This includes 90 kilometres of resurfacing and 15 kilometres of road rehabilitation per year and we will continue the strategy of managing wet-road crashes through maintaining high skid-resistant surfaces."

Further passing lanes are planned, east and north of Invercargill, near Dowling Road / Mona

Bush Road on SH1 and Wilson's Crossing on SH6. They are dependent on regional distribution funding.

Transit has included an estimate of \$29 million from regional distribution funding in its 10-year forecast for Southland 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.)

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.

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