



**Wellington Regional Office**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Easing congestion and motorist safety key components of Wellington state highway forecast**

Easing congestion and increasing safety for motorists on state highways in Wellington is the key aim of a number of projects announced in Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast for 2005/06 – 2014/15 for Wellington.

Transit proposes several improvements to address congestion on SH2 between the Hutt Valley and Ngauranga, with the \$53 million Dowse to Petone Interchange project scheduled for a construction start in 2006/2007 and the Melling Interchange now featuring in the forecast for a construction start in 2013/2014.

Safety improvements include construction of the Centennial Highway Median Barrier planned for a construction in 2007/2008 and the Rimutaka Corner Easing seen later in the forecast.

Stage 1 of the Kapiti Western Link Road is also included in the 10-year forecast with an estimated construction start date of 2007/2008.

“This is a joint project with Kapiti Coast District Council to build a parallel route to SH1 between Pekapeka and Poplar Avenue at Raumati to free up congestion on both the state highway and local roads,” Transit regional manager Graham Taylor said.

The forecast also includes projects for improving walking and cycling facilities.

Mr Taylor said the forecast did not take account of possible additional funding consequent on consideration by Government of Transit and the Greater Wellington Regional Council's scoping of options for the SH1 Western Corridor. Nor does it take account of the extra \$500 million for land transport announced by the government last week.

“This additional land transport funding is excellent news and comes on top of an already record level of investment nationally in state highways for 2005/06 and the years to follow. Transit is working on proposals for how the extra funding could be spent and will release an update incorporating the necessary changes to the state highway forecast in the coming weeks.”

Transit's current 10-year forecast is divided into a firm one-year programme for 2005/06, which Transit is fully committed to delivering. The first three years will be known as the State Highway Plan and contains the best estimates of time and cost for the listed projects and activities. For the rest of the decade the forecast is less certain due to the potential for issues in the planning stages to affect timing and costs. Large projects are forecast over 10 years and small and medium-sized projects with construction costs of less than \$3 million have been planned over three.

“The timeframe for the development and construction of the projects in the forecast is likely to change depending on the use of regional distribution funding, which comes from the increase in petrol tax from April 2005 and will be allocated regionally on a population basis,” Mr Taylor said

He said that all large project proposals were reviewed to ensure integrated solutions that fitted with the Wellington region’s local authority plans and that the benefits of the plan were sustainable.

The 2005/06 – 2014/15 State Highway Forecast is the first prepared under the full provisions of the Land Transport Management Act and Transit consulted more widely than in the past on its draft plan. Over 900 written submissions were received and the views of 100 organisations or individuals were heard at hearings in 17 locations nationwide.

**Major features of the plan are:**

- Dowse to Petone Intersection upgrade on SH2, including a new interchange at Dowse Drive and overbridge at Korokoro planned for a construction start in 2006/2007
- Kapiti Western Link road (Stage 1 ) planned for a construction start in 2007/2008 as a joint project with the Kapiti Coast District Council
- A new interchange at Whitford Brown/Porirua on SH1, new interchange at Melling on SH2 and curve easing at Muldoon’s Corner on the Rimutaka Hill Road on SH2, forecast for construction starts later in the 10-year period
- Centennial Highway Median Barrier planned for a construction start in 2007/2008.

Other projects in the 10-year forecast for construction in the next three years are:

- Otaki Roundabout
- Waiohine Bridge Replacement on SH2, north of Greytown
- Waikanae Weigh Station
- Carterton Roundabouts
- Old Hautere Road Safety Improvements
- Improvements to the Kent Terrace/Ellice Street intersection at the Basin Reserve
- Street lighting between Petone and Ngauranga and between Maoribank and Owen Street on SH2
- Cycling and walking facilities in Hutt City and between Petone and Horokiwi on SH2.

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