



**Wanganui Regional Office
Media Release**

28 June 2006

Embargoed until 6pm

Transit forecast delivers major safety projects for Manawatu/Wanganui

Two major safety projects for the Manawatu and Wanganui areas are programmed in Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast 2006/07 released today.

The Ohingaiti-Makohine SH1 project is programmed for construction within five years and the Papatawa realignment SH2 is proposed for design and construction within five years.

"The Ohingaiti-Makohine project addresses a long-standing concern about the poor alignment and steep grade of this section of road. Of particular benefit is removal of a 25 km/h bend and the replacement of a level railway crossing with a tunnel," regional manager Errol Christiansen says.

"The Papatawa realignment will remove a potentially dangerous section of highway. In spite of warning signs, motorists have difficulties assessing the risk due to the tight curve and the location of the bridge over the railway line," he says.

The region's largest project continues to be the \$18 million Hihitahi Bluffs realignment. Two bridges have been completed and the third bridge is under construction, bringing the project completion date to April 2007.

"This route is the most well-used route through the central North Island. One of its main benefits is that opening out the highway will greatly reduce the tendency of the road to ice up as it will no longer be in the shade from the hills," says Mr Christiansen.

Other activities announced in the Forecast to improve safety and efficiency on the state highway will be undertaken over the next three years. They include intersection improvements, realignments, seal widening and the installation of traffic signals at the Grey/Princess Street intersection in Palmerston North. Some of the works are a result of crash reduction studies undertaken in the Manawatu/Rangitikei District.

Over this period three passing lanes and passing lane extensions are planned for SH1, and two passing lanes for SH3. The passing lanes on Calico Line, North and South (near the Marton turnoff) on SH1 will also be completed.

Transit also proposes to build stock effluent disposal facilities on SH2 near Dannevirke, on SH4 near National Park and SH1 near Taihape as part of a national programme of sites.

A Bulls Bridge cycleway improvement will be progressed during the next three years, with investigations as the first step.

Maintenance of the state highway network is a focus of work for the region and includes resurfacing of 61 kilometres of highway.

Information with a national focus is included in a separate media statement.

Transit's 10-year State Highway Forecast 2006/07 and a media kit will be available at 6pm today on our website at www.transit.govt.nz

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Errol Christiansen, regional manager

Ph 06 345 4173027 453 1647

Or communications advisors Anthony Frith 04 496 5479

And Marie Watson 04 496 6639

www.transit.govt.nz