



**Christchurch Regional Office
Media Release**

28 June 2006

Embargoed until 6pm

Transit Forecast makes Arahura River Bridge replacement top priority for West Coast

Replacement of the Arahura River Bridge on SH6 is the key priority on the West Coast in Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast 2006/07 released today.

The single-lane road and rail bridge shared with ONTRACK, needs to be replaced to ensure the route security of SH6. The design phase is planned for 2006/07 with construction proposed to start within five years.

"Route security on the West Coast is of prime importance to us, as in many areas of the Coast there are few alternatives if sections of the state highways are closed because of extreme weather conditions, slips or accidents. We are working closely with ONTRACK with a view to opening the new bridge within the next five years," says Colin Knaggs, Transit's regional manager, Canterbury and the West Coast.

Four small to medium projects to improve safety and reduce environmental impact are also included in the Forecast.

New stock effluent disposal facilities are planned at Jackson on State Highway 73 and Reefton-Springs Junction on State Highway 6. These projects complement Transit's national programme to provide a safe and convenient network of stock effluent disposal facilities.

Two additional projects to improve safety are scheduled for completion in the next three years. On SH73 options for a replacement bridge and road realignment will be investigated at Goat Creek, while on SH6 improvements to single lane bridges will be investigated at Buller Gorge. In addition traffic signals will be installed to improve safety for passing vehicles in some of the narrower locations.

"On the Coast we are concerned about road safety where there is an interaction between heavy and light vehicles, especially on single-lane

bridges,” says Mr Knaggs. “It is good news that we will be investigating options to improve safety at Goat Creek and Buller Gorge.”

Studies already underway to address safety issues are:

- Scoping study on the Gates of Haast Realignment on SH6.
- Strategic study to investigate passing opportunities.

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:

Colin Knaggs, regional manager

Ph 03 366 4455 or 0274 953624

Or communications advisors Anthony Frith ph 04 496 5479

And Marie Watson 04 496 6639

www.transit.govt.nz