



### KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

In meeting the objectives of the NZTS and LTMA the key regional transport issues for the West Coast region include:

- › Road safety: a key concern is the potential conflict between heavy and light vehicle traffic, particularly on single-lane bridges on SH6
- › Ensuring secure and efficient transport corridors to the east via SH73 and Arthur's Pass, and via SH7 and Lewis Pass, to the north via SH6 and Hope Saddle, and to the south via SH6 and the Haast Pass
- › Increasing traffic due to the coal mining, dairy and tourist industries
- › Lack of passing opportunities.

#### How we plan to address these key issues

State highway 6 forms the essential spine for land transport on the West Coast. A strategic study looking at route security (including areas of rockfall and coastal erosion) and passing opportunities will be undertaken. Significant works on SH73 over recent years have greatly improved the security of this strategic link. The latest improvement to be completed was the construction of a new rail bridge at the Otira Underpass, which has allowed the vertical clearance to be increased for road traffic. Vehicles of all legal dimensions can now use this route to access the West Coast.

Traffic volumes on the West Coast are generally quite low and the state highway network is maintained to a high standard for low-volume highways. In maintaining this standard, Transit acknowledges the large tourist content of the traffic in this region. While the emphasis for Transit in the West Coast region is on maintaining the existing state highway network, there are a number of activities prioritised in the 10-year State Highway Forecast to improve road safety as well as route security and efficiency in the West Coast region.

A further priority is managing the connections between state highways and local roads as well as access to state highways from adjacent land to support the strategic long distance travel function of key arterial roads.

The Arahura River Bridge is in urgent need of replacement. There would be significant negative impacts on the West Coast network if the bridge was to become unserviceable. We are working closely with ONTRACK and will be carrying out design in 2007 with construction following soon after.

The lack of alternative access to and through the West Coast means that both SH73 and SH6 are of great strategic importance to the West Coast economy.

#### Road Safety – Secure and Efficient Transport Corridors

Transit has identified a number of small to medium activities to improve the safety and efficiency of sections of state highway, including the Goat Creek Bridge Replacement on SH73. In addition, traffic signals will be installed on SH6 through the Buller Gorge to improve the safety of passing vehicles in some of the narrower locations.

#### Stock Effluent Disposal Facilities

In accordance with the plan agreed with local authorities a new stock effluent disposal facility is proposed for SH7 at either Reefton or Springs Junction, depending on stock movements. A facility at Jacksons on SH73 is also being progressed.

#### Walking and Cycling

We are proposing to prepare a West Coast Cycle Strategy in association with local authorities, to improve our long term planning and ensure good decisions that lead to safer and more efficient transport networks.

#### Passing Lanes

Limited passing opportunities in some parts of the region's road network lead to driver frustration and accidents. Transit will continue to develop a strategy to identify possible locations for passing opportunities, using a mix of slow vehicle bays, seal widening and passing lanes.

## Strategic Studies

A new strategic study proposed is the Route Security Study for SH6, which will identify mitigation measures for sections of SH6 under threat of coastal erosion and rockfalls.

## Maintenance and Operations

Maintenance activities make up the majority of the forecast expenditure in the West Coast region.

In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, we propose to:

- › Undertake 91km of resurfacing
- › Strengthen 6.5km of highway
- › Improve the availability of road condition information to road users at critical points on the network using electronic variable message signs, as erected on SH7 (at Lewis Pass and Rahu Saddle). Signs for SH73, at Arthur's and Porters Pass, are soon to be commissioned
- › Use thermal mapping technology on the inland network to predict where ice may occur
- › Introduce more road weather stations to improve emergency responses to ice and snow on roads, and continue to trial the use of the de-icer calcium magnesium acetate
- › Continue to monitor Waiho River erosion at Franz Josef and take appropriate action to ensure SH6 remains safe and open
- › Continue risk analysis of rock falls and river erosion and prioritise works accordingly, to avoid road closures
- › Strengthen a number of bridges on the network to reduce their vulnerability in the event of a severe earthquake
- › Work with the Department of Conservation to ensure maintenance works within national parks represent best practice
- › Complete the strengthening of the three suspension bridges (Fox, Cook, and Karangarua) on SH6 in south Westland to remove the current weight restriction, which is a significant impediment to heavy goods movement in this area
- › Continue with improvements in traffic management during incidents on the network.