



Road safety a key focus for the NZ Transport Agency

Improving safety on New Zealand roads is one of the NZ Transport Agency's strategic priorities and recent legislative changes will do just that by encouraging safer behaviour by road users.

On 1 November, two pieces of legislation came into effect, which aim to improve road safety for all New Zealanders.

Drug-affected drivers

NZ Police now have greater powers to deal with the problem of people driving under the influence of drugs due to changes in the Land Transport Amendment Act. People who drive when their judgement and reactions are impaired by drugs are a danger to themselves and other road users.

Many people who drive under the influence of drugs assume that if they are pulled over by the police, they'll only be tested for drink-driving. However, now anyone stopped at the roadside who the police suspect are impaired by drugs, will be tested.

This legislation includes people using illegal drugs, but also those using prescription medication that can impair driving ability. This is an important change for New Zealand.

The NZTA is supporting the police in this initiative with an advertising campaign to raise awareness of the new legislation which includes television advertising aimed at those taking illegal drugs.

Also, stickers urging people who take medication to check they can safely drive are being placed on Pharmacy Guild bags. For more information, go to www.transport.govt.nz.

Road User Rule

New requirements for the safe and efficient use of our roads have been outlined in the Land Transport



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What's on

This section has now moved to the NZTA website. Check it out at www.nzta.govt.nz/training/whatson



Chief Executive Geoff Dangerfield.

Welcome

We all want to experience trouble-free journeys and drive in a safe environment. This is what NZTA customers want and so this is one of our challenges as contributors to the transport network.

In order to achieve this, earlier this year the NZTA developed five strategic priorities to focus our direction. Improving road safety is one of them.

It's hard to think of an area of NZTA activity that doesn't have a safety aspect to it. We are committed to supporting transport safety by promoting safe behaviour, ensuring roads and vehicles are safe, and encouraging safer speeds. We work with many partners to achieve this goal.

Recent changes to the Road User Rule and Land Transport Amendment Act are good examples of the work being done to introduce safer practices on our roads. You can read more about these and other safety initiatives in this newsletter.

We are looking forward to the release of the Ministry of Transport's road safety to 2020 strategy *Safer Journeys*. The strategy will define which aspects of road safety (eg speed reduction, better engineering, young drivers) will be given greater emphasis over the next 10 years. We have been working closely with the Ministry on its development and are keen to finalise the initiatives the NZTA will be working towards.

Make sure you stay safe when driving in the holidays by taking time to ensure that you and your vehicle are safe before hitting the road. Plan ahead, schedule rest stops and allow plenty of time - make the journey part of the holiday.

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Road User Amendment Rule 2009 which came into force on 1 November.

The most high-profile change to the Road User Rule is a ban on the use of hand-held mobile phones when driving. Evidence shows that using a mobile phone while driving affects driving performance and can substantially increase the risk of a crash because of driver distraction.

Although the legislation allows for hands-free options, the NZTA recommends that drivers minimise the potential for distraction by switching phones off while driving, or pulling over in a safe and legal place to make or receive calls.

The amendment Rule also requires most motorcyclists and moped riders to use headlamps or daytime running lamps during daylight hours. Poor visibility is a contributing factor in many multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes, and daytime headlamps will help make motorcycles more visible to other road users.

Another significant change specifies that drivers crossing special vehicle lanes (ie bus lanes) to turn left may only enter the lane less than 50 metres from where they will turn off. Setting a nationally consistent maximum distance for these lanes has made the requirements clearer for drivers and makes enforcement easier.

There are 21 other provisions in the Road User Rule amendment. For more information go to www.nzta.govt.nz.

Safety as an ongoing focus

In 2010 the NZTA will start to develop action plans for the initiatives outlined in the Ministry of Transport's road safety to 2020 strategy, *Safer Journeys*.

The NZTA is currently working with the Ministry on the final strategy and will play a major role in implementing it. The strategy will outline the actions the government needs to take to improve road safety over the next 10 years.

Public opinion is feeding into the development of the strategy following a consultation period earlier this year. The *Safer Journeys* discussion document presented New Zealand's key road safety challenges and outlined more than 60 possible initiatives to address them. Public consultation ran from August to October and more than 1500 submissions were received.

The document proposed a 'safe-system' approach to improving road safety, by moving beyond seeing road safety as a matter of 'fixing the driver or user' and

instead focusing on improving all the parts of the road system that impact on safety (ie the road, the vehicle, the travel speed and the road user). The approach recognises that despite their best efforts, people inevitably make errors. It aims to help them travel safely and help minimise the impact when they, or others, do occasionally make mistakes. For more information please go to: www.transport.govt.nz.

KiwiRAP

An example of the safe-system approach in practice is the New Zealand Road Assessment Programme (KiwiRAP). This is a road safety partnership currently underway between the AA, NZTA, Ministry of Transport, ACC, and NZ Police.

In January 2008, stage one of KiwiRAP saw the release of maps highlighting the collective and individual risk levels of 172 sections of the rural state highway network, primarily between major centres.

Work is currently underway on stage two. This involves giving star ratings to rural state highways based on their safety engineering features. The star ratings are derived from road protection scores of 100 metre-long sections, combined into five kilometre lengths for the average star rating.

The star ratings are based on the engineering features of the section of road, and traffic data that has been used to target safety efforts for a number of years. Between one and five stars will be awarded to the road link depending on the level of safety on that road.

The star-rating system will systematically assess risk and help identify safety shortcomings that can be addressed with practical road improvement measures. It will help the NZTA to prioritise safety improvements to the state highway network as part of implementing the road safety to 2020 strategy *Safer Journeys*.

KiwiRAP will present the star ratings as an information tool for drivers. It will help them make choices about which roads require extra care and attention when driving. The ratings will help drivers understand how risk can vary according to changes in the road environment. A risk-aware driver will be more likely to adapt their driving to reduce the risk of being involved in a crash.

The release of the KiwiRAP star ratings is planned for mid 2010. For more information, go to www.kiwirap.org.nz.

Instructor qualification for cyclist skills

To ensure consistent training and ultimately improve cycle safety, the NZTA is developing a national cyclist skills training qualification for bicycle instructors.

The qualification has been developed by the NZTA and the Skills Active Aotearoa Industry Training Organisation in consultation with cycling groups. This nationally-recognised qualification will be part of a wider training and quality-management system to help cycle skills training providers deliver safe, consistent and effective programmes.

To ensure New Zealanders have access to high-quality bicycle handling and road safety training, a pool of highly-skilled cyclist skills instructors are needed. While there are currently many individuals with significant experience and expertise in cyclist skills instruction, the new qualification will allow the sector to increase the number of people available to deliver training programmes throughout

schools and to the growing number of adult riders that are returning to cycling.

The qualification will focus on three areas of competency: managing safety, cycling proficiency, and teaching/instruction. It will ensure instructors know how to deliver the new cyclist skills training guidelines which have been developed in consultation with key cycling groups.

Improving bike handling skills and having a clear understanding of the road code leads to increased confidence levels for new or returning cyclists. In addition, participation in these courses dramatically reduces the likelihood of being involved in a crash.

'Ensuring that cycle skills courses are delivered consistently and effectively by highly-skilled professionals is a priority for the NZTA. This project is taking us towards a future where New Zealanders have an opportunity to become confident, capable and safe cyclists', said Glenn Bunting, Network Standards and Safety Manager.

Tracey-Lee Burkhart, Project Manager at Skills Active Aotearoa said the development of a national standard for cycle instructors would ultimately improve the safety and enjoyment of cycling for all New Zealanders.

The NZTA is aiming to have the new qualification developed and lodged on the National Qualifications Framework by June 2010.



Construction underway on Matahorua Gorge project

Construction of the NZTA's SH2 Matahorua Gorge Realignment has begun nine months ahead of schedule and is on track to be completed in 2011.

NZTA Central Regional Director Jenny Chetwynd joined Minister of Transport Steven Joyce in early October to turn the first sod on the project, which will provide a shorter, safer and more reliable route across the Matahorua Gorge.

The project has been advanced by the government's Jobs and Growth stimulus package announced earlier this year, which has also seen construction of the SH50 Hawke's Bay Expressway Southern Extension begin early.

Ms Chetwynd says the realignment is the region's largest roading project in recent years, and will provide a significant economic boost for the region and beyond. The route is used extensively by logging trucks, farmers and other commercial transport operators, as well as being popular with tourists.

'The Matahorua Gorge is a lifeline for the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne regions, and

this project will benefit farmers, truckies, tourists and the local communities that rely on this important route.'

Ms Chetwynd says the 3.1 kilometre realignment involves the construction of a 150 metre viaduct and a 'road over rail' overbridge. The realignment eases the sharp twists and turns of the existing route through the gorge, providing a straighter, shorter journey that will be safer, easier and more reliable for motorists.

'Not only will this realignment shave valuable minutes off journey times for motorists, it will save them petrol, reduce the risk of crashes, and will be much less vulnerable to weather-related delays and closures.

'We've also been able to save millions of dollars on the project thanks to the innovative and cost-effective design of the viaduct proposed by our contractor Downer EDi Works. This means the project will be cheaper and faster to build than we initially envisaged, while retaining all of its benefits.'

Ms Chetwynd said the local community and iwi had been supportive of the project

since its inception, and getting construction underway early would be welcome news.

She said the scheduled completion of the project in 2011 is a quick turnaround for a project of this magnitude. Disruption to motorists during construction is expected to be minimal.



Left to right: NZTA Central Regional Director Jenny Chetwynd, Hawke's Bay Regional Transport Committee Chair Alan Dick, Minister of Transport Hon Steven Joyce, Mayor of Wairoa Les Probert

Toll road north of Auckland – first milestones

New Zealand's first fully electronic toll road has shown that electronic toll collection can play an important role in bringing forward the construction of strategically important roads so that road users can reap their benefits sooner.

The NZTA's *Northern Gateway Toll Road operating report for the period to 30 June 2009* published in October, for the Northern Gateway Toll Road north of Auckland, provides performance results for the first five months of its operation from January to June 2009.

While acknowledging that there have been challenges early on, NZTA Regional Director for Auckland and Northland Wayne McDonald said, 'The report shows strong demand for the road and high levels of payment compliance by road users. Actually, they have both exceeded our expectations'.

The payment compliance levels are over 94 percent and almost two million vehicles have used the road. Overall traffic volumes are eight percent ahead

of forecast, including five percent for light vehicles and 148 percent for heavy vehicles. If the vehicles that have used the now less-congested Hibiscus Coast route are included, this means that more than 2.7 million vehicles already benefited from the road's early construction.

'This shows that our customers have recognised the road's benefits and are willing to pay for safer and easier journeys between Auckland and Northland', Mr McDonald said.

The early completion of the toll road was made possible by the NZTA borrowing half of the construction costs. The revenue that is collected from tolling is being used to repay this debt. When the debt is repaid, the toll will be removed.

'We are pleased to say that not only have all of our debt repayment obligations been met to date, we are also ahead of the budget. We are well positioned to achieve our targets and repay our debt within the anticipated 35-year period', said Mr McDonald.

And where to from here?

'Our initial goal was getting motorists to use the toll road and this has now been achieved. During this period we've also learned from the challenges we faced early on. Now we are concentrating on refining and improving the toll collection system and responding to customer needs', said Mr McDonald.

'We've already upgraded the self-service kiosks so they are easier and faster to use. We will continue to encourage customers to take advantage of our online and free phone payment facilities or to open an account. As part of this we will be improving our website to make paying online easier.'

To find out how to pay the toll, go to www.tollroad.govt.nz.

The Northern Gateway Toll Road operating report for the period to 30 June 2009 is available on www.nzta.govt.nz.

Hawke's Bay Expressway Southern Extension underway

Hot on the heels of the SH2 Matahuria Gorge Realignment, another major Hawke's Bay roading project has started construction early.

Just four weeks after the first sod was turned on the Matahuria Gorge project, the sod was turned on the \$12 million SH50A Hawke's Bay Expressway project, which will provide a shorter, safer more direct route to the south of the existing expressway.

Central Regional Director Jenny Chetwynd says the project will provide a significant economic boost for Hawke's Bay by extending the expressway, the region's key transport spine, enabling more efficient travel and providing a long-term transport solution that will support future growth and free up local roads.

'This southern extension provides the final connection of the expressway to the south, enabling an easier journey that will save time, petrol, and potentially lives,' says Ms Chetwynd.

'It will give motorists a clear run between York Road and Longlands Road, and will also remove the bottleneck at the intersection of York Road and Maraekakaho Road, which is a traffic choke point and crash blackspot.'

Currently the expressway comes down from Napier and then stops suddenly at York Road. Motorists then have to negotiate a zig-zag via Maraekakaho Road and two intersections before they get a clear run through to the SH2 connection.

The project involves a 3.2 kilometre greenfields route directly connecting the intersections at York Road and Longlands Road. There will be an upgraded 'four-legged' roundabout where the current expressway terminates and the new extension commences. The extension will continue southwards to a new 'five legged' roundabout with Longlands Road, Maraekakaho Road and the existing SH50A Irongate Road will terminate on either side of the expressway with two new cul de sacs formed.

Ms Chetwynd says the NZTA is grateful to the local community and iwi, who have been supportive in getting the project to this point.

The project has been designed by Opus International Consultants and will be constructed by Higgins contractors. It is due to be completed in 2011.



Left to right - NZTA Regional Director Jenny Chetwynd, Hawke's Bay Regional Council Chairman Alan Dick, Mayor of Hastings Lawrence Yule, Minister of Transport Hon Steven Joyce, MP for Tuki Tuki Craig Foss

The Focus On section highlights some of the work happening in the regions and introduces the regional directors for the areas featured. Regional directors are members of the NZTA's senior leadership team. They play a key role in working with local and regional government to put in place the NZTA's new planning and funding approach.

Waikato and Bay of Plenty



Introducing Harry Wilson



Harry Wilson brings a broad range of experience to his role as NZTA Regional Director for the Waikato/Bay of Plenty, including a strong understanding of local government and land use issues, and the importance of the regional rural economy.

The former Chief Executive of Environment Waikato feels he has come full circle in his new role. He assisted the Regional Transport Committee in his former role to help accelerate several key state highway projects, including the Waikato Expressway, and now he is involved in seeing them built.

Harry is impressed with the high calibre and commitment of the NZTA staff in his region and is looking forward to working with them to meet the challenges ahead.

Bay of Plenty ready to see construction of the Tauranga Eastern Link

With over 80 percent of submissions in support of the tolling proposal, Bay of Plenty residents have indicated they would like to see construction started sooner rather than later on the Tauranga Eastern Link.

Tauranga Eastern Link is a key strategic transport corridor for the Bay of Plenty region and a highway recognised by the government as a road of national significance. Introducing a tolling system would allow the NZTA to bring the construction forward.

Tauranga Eastern Link - a 23 kilometre four-lane motorway from Te Maunga junction to the junction of SH2 and SH33 near Paengaroa - will help manage population growth, ensure economic development, and improve efficiency, safety and access to the Bay of Plenty.

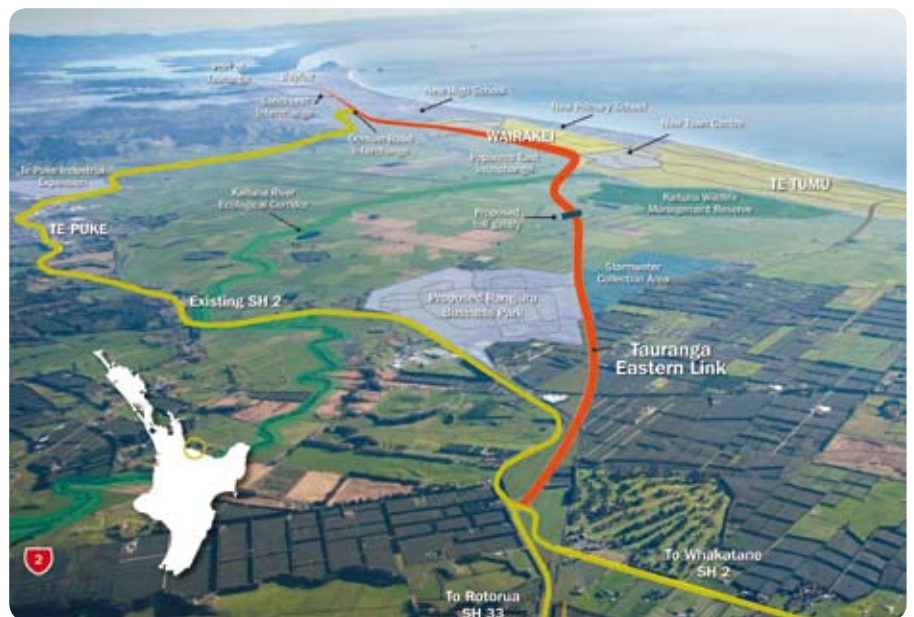
As part of the consultation process on introducing tolling, the NZTA held tolling hearings in October and an independent hearing panel will now produce a submissions and hearings report. This report will be submitted to the NZTA

Board to assist them in their decision as to whether to progress a toll proposal. This decision is expected to be made by the end of the year.

If the Board decides to progress tolling they will submit a formal tolling proposal to the Minister of Transport for his consideration. The Minister of Transport will then decide whether to take the proposal to Cabinet and, following discussions with Cabinet colleagues, will decide whether to recommend to the Governor General that an Order in Council be established to toll the road.

The Order in Council sets out the parameters of the road tolling scheme, including all of the relevant conditions from which the NZTA would be eligible to toll the route - when tolling can start, toll tariffs, and how the scheme will generally operate etc.

If the tolling proposal is approved by Cabinet, the Order in Council is likely to be in place by July 2010, and the construction contract awarded late 2010.



Straighter highway will improve safety and reduce travel times

The Piarere to Oak Tree Bends realignment project between the SH1/SH29 intersection at Piarere and Tirau township has improved road safety and travel times along the 4.2 kilometre section of SH1 in the South Waikato.

NZTA State Highway Manager Kaye Clark says the \$10 million project has improved safety through a section of SH1 with a history of crashes by removing a series of 14 tight curves that were out of context.

The straightening of the highway has also enabled the project to deliver on the government's priorities of encouraging economic growth and productivity by making this stretch of SH1 more efficient. This section of SH1 is the main route south from Auckland to Rotorua and Taupo and carries high volumes of freight and tourism traffic.

Mrs Clark said prior to the project, some of the tight corners had signposted speeds as low as 55km/h and the average speed through this section of SH1 was 75km/h.

'Motorists can now safely travel at 100km/h when conditions are good.'

Mrs Clark says the straightening of the highway presented the project team with some big challenges, but they rose to the occasion by completing the project on time and under budget.

'One of the biggest challenges was the cutting back of a large 500 metre-long bluff, which stands 45 metres above the highway. A large deposit of boulders was discovered in the bluff face and these had to be removed. Some of the boulders were up to four metres in diameter. A second 300 metre-long bluff also had to be excavated.'

Overall, 200,000 cubic metres of material was excavated during this project, including 80,000 cubic metres of rock.

The project started in April 2008 and was completed in September 2009. The completion of the project was celebrated with an official ribbon cutting in October.



From the top of the northern bluff, looking south



(left to right) South Waikato District Council Mayor Neil Sinclair, NZTA State Highway Manager Kaye Clark, Taupo MP Hon Louise Upston, Ngati Raukawa representative Lorna Pope and Ngati Raukawa kaumatua Toiamoko Manaia

Waikato Expressway on track



NZTA's Waikato Expressway team has set ambitious targets to ensure work on the strategic transport corridor between Auckland and Cambridge continues at pace.

The team has set a number of key milestones, including:

- engaging an alliance partner for the design and construction of the Te Rapa Bypass by March/April 2010
- issuing a design and construction tender for the Ngaruawahia Bypass by the second half of 2010
- completing design of the Rangiriri Bypass by early 2011
- issuing the secondary investigation and design tender documents for the Huntly Bypass within two months.

When fully complete, the 96km expressway, one of the government's seven roads of national significance, will offer a predominantly four-lane new or improved

state highway between the Bombay Hills and Cambridge.

The expressway will stimulate significant economic growth by reducing travel time between Auckland and the Waikato and offer a more reliable route. It will also play a huge role in making the region safer by reducing the number and severity of road crashes.

In August, the NZTA announced more than \$300 million had been earmarked for the Waikato Expressway.

The funding was part of the \$938 million investment in the region's land transport network, to be spent over the next three years.

Regional director Harry Wilson noted the expressway investment had national implications.

'Given the Waikato makes such a significant contribution to the national economy, the investment in the expressway is something all New Zealanders will benefit from.'

Wanganui buried treasure

An archeological discovery on an NZTA roading project in Wanganui has given locals and historians alike a fascinating peek into the past of the area.

Wanganui State Highways Manager Errol Christiansen says excavations have just been completed on the site of the \$2.4 million State Highway 4 Putiki Drive project to restore the river bank adjacent to the highway, just downriver from the Whanganui River city bridge.

The excavations have uncovered sites that have been buried for over a century, including a hāngī pit, a midden (Māori food disposal site), and Māori campsites used extensively for fishing in the Whanganui river. A number of important artefacts were also found, ranging from carved fishing

lures, clay pipes, buttons, and food remains that shed light on their eating habits.

'Discoveries like this happen from time to time, particularly in areas that have such a rich history as Wanganui,' says Errol.

'It's an important part of our agency's role to ensure that the site is treated with respect and that the right procedures are followed to ensure the recording of these discoveries and the preservation of significant artefacts.'

The excavations have been carried out by Archeology North, led by Dr Michael Taylor, who also led the excavations when an ancient Māori pa was found on the site of the NZTA's SH3 Bell Block Bypass project in New Plymouth.

Errol has expressed his gratitude to the archaeological team, Nga Hapu o Putiki Wharanui, and the Historic Places Trust for working closely with the NZTA throughout the excavation process.

'It's a privilege to be involved in this valuable excavation exercise that will help the people of Wanganui learn more about their history.'

Mr Christiansen says construction will now continue on the Putiki Drive project, which will stabilise the riverbank alongside the state highway while also widening the road.

Significant artefacts will be given to Whanganui Regional Museum, and a full report on the discoveries will be available next year.



Excavation in progress. From left Ivan Bruce (New Plymouth), Chris Shenton (Putiki) and Annetta Sutton (Wanganui)



Some of the kahawai lure points excavated at Putiki



Putiki Drive

New ads focus on speed

The NZTA and NZ Police have launched a new road safety television advertising campaign for young male drivers, that focuses on speed.

Speed continues to be one of the leading contributing causes of crashes, casualties and fatalities on New Zealand roads. Last year 137 people were killed and 2631 people were injured in speed-related crashes.

Driving at high speeds on the open road is seen as the main problem but this is only part of it; urban speed is too. In urban areas more than half of all drivers habitually travel over the 50km/h speed limit. Driving faster than the speed limit increases both the likelihood of a crash and the severity of that crash.

Male drivers are still the primary offenders in speed-related crashes. They were at fault in 81 percent of speed-related crashes in urban areas last year. As such, the new advertising campaign primarily

targets young male drivers (16-29 years) who often drive faster than other drivers in urban areas. They underestimate the dangers of travelling a little bit faster than the speed limit in 50km/h areas.

They are confident with their driving ability and are comfortable that nothing untoward will happen. They are not consciously speeding - they are simply driving at speeds that are habitually comfortable. The campaign aims to get young male drivers to habitually reduce their speed in 50km/h zones.

They perceive the risk of crashing, being caught or being injured from speeding as low. Consequently the objective of the campaign is to show these drivers that urban areas are full of everyday urban hazards, so any speed above the limit is dangerous. They won't always be able to react in time to avoid every unforeseen situation in a dynamic urban environment.

The advertisement will be supported with print, radio, outdoor and online advertising.



News in brief

Auckland to get new integrated ticketing system

The NZTA Board has agreed to establish a national ticketing programme for public transport in New Zealand. It has also approved funding for the development of the Auckland Regional Transport Authority's (ARTA) integrated ticketing and fares system as a first step.

The Board is satisfied that the system being proposed by the preferred tenderer will provide an efficient, high-quality and value-for-money integrated ticketing solution for Auckland and for a national ticketing programme in the future.

The NZTA will continue working closely with ARTA in the months ahead as they negotiate with their preferred tenderer.

Feet First wins Plain English Award

The NZTA's walk to school initiative – Feet First – recently won 'Plain English Champion – Best Project' in the 2009 WriteMark Plain English Awards.

Feet First 2009 is a flexible year-long project designed to help primary schools promote walking in fun and unusual ways. See www.feetfirst.govt.nz.

The Feet First team worked with schools, territorial authorities and whānau to develop a project they could all take ownership of. By acknowledging these groups as subject matter experts they led the way in the communication style.

New website for the NZTA

The NZTA comes into contact with nearly every New Zealander through everything from driver licensing to safe driving advertising campaigns to road and travel information.

To improve customer service, a new NZTA website – www.nzta.govt.nz – was launched on 9 December. The site contains streamlined and merged information from the previous Land Transport NZ and Transit websites.

The new website has been designed to help customers access all the transport information they need, quickly and effectively. It is now a one-stop shop for transport information in New Zealand and a key tool to help the NZTA deliver against our strategic priority of 'improving customer service and reducing compliance costs'.

SH1, Northern Motorway Ramp Signals project

The final southbound group of ramp signals at the Tristram, Northcote and Esmonde interchanges were commissioned in October, marking a significant milestone for delivery of the project across the Auckland motorway network. The project outcomes to date for this three-year \$50 million contract have been achieved. These include:

- a 15 percent increase in vehicle throughput
- a 15 percent improvement in travel speed
- a 24 percent reduction in crashes
- a 91 percent improvement in the reliability of journey times.

The project also enables an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 54,500kg a day – the equivalent of nine petrol tankers a week. Some 14 of the 70 ramp signal sites include additional managed priority lanes to assist the movement of freight, and to encourage higher vehicle occupancy rates.



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