

# HIGHLAND HIGHWAYS

PUBLISHED BY THE DUNEDIN REGIONAL OFFICE OF TRANSIT NEW ZEALAND

SPRING 2007

## Celebrating new Tumai realignment

**Minister for Transport Hon Annette King officially opened the State Highway 1 Tumai-Waikouaiti Realignment at the end of September in an event that celebrated Transit's successful completion of the work ahead of time and on budget.**

The ceremony – held at the former rail crossing with the old state highway, near Aberdeen St, Waikouaiti – began with an iwi blessing before presentations from a number of speakers, who joined together in planting a tree.

The formal opening of the \$7 million project was attended by dignitaries and stakeholders including local community representatives. Attendees included Dunedin mayor Peter Chin; deputy mayor Syd Brown; Matapura Ellison, on behalf of the area mana whenua; Otago Regional Council CEO Graeme Martin; local ward councillor Andrew Noone; and Transit Acting Chair Bryan Jackson.



From left to right: Transit Dunedin Regional Office Mike O'Cain, Minister of Transport Hon Annette King, Dunedin City Council Mayor Peter Chin, local councillor Andrew Noone, Transit Acting Chair Bryan Jackson and local iwi representative Mat Ellison plant the tree.



One of the moa bones uncovered at the Tumai site.

The 3.4 kilometre realignment has created a shorter and gentler route which is not as steep as the former highway, and a new northbound passing lane. As well as being safer for motor traffic, it is safer for cyclists as it bypasses the narrow Tumai rail overbridge and features wider sealed shoulders.

Hon Annette King said the project was an important achievement for all who travelled on the state highway between Dunedin and Oamaru, and for local residents.

"The new highway is much safer and easier to drive, providing improved passing opportunities," she said.

"The \$7 million project is a great example of the government's ongoing commitment to highway safety, the 2010 road safety targets and to the development of this country's most strategic land transport infrastructure," Hon Annette King said.

Following the ceremony, the Minister and some of those attending drove down the old SH1 and onto the new SH1 to view the project in detail before meeting at the Golden Fleece Hotel for a light lunch.

Some of the moa bones and the remains of other extinct birds uncovered during construction work at the site, which are now housed at the Otago Museum, were also on display at the opening.

Transit regional project manager Simon Underwood says it was important to celebrate the opening with the local community and the many others who had contributed to the project.

## SH88 Harbour Cycleway

**A project to extend the Harbour cycleway, which parallels State Highway 88, is currently being investigated, and work could start in the next year, says project manager, Marcos Santana.**

The first 1.2km section of the cycleway was completed last year, linking Ravensbourne (from opposite Adderley Tce) to north Dunedin (via Magnet St). The planned 1.3km extension would enable the cycleway to continue all the way through Ravensbourne to Jessie St.

“As well as providing a safe cycling alternative to the highway, the extended cycleway will enhance what is already proving to be a highly regarded recreational facility,” says Marcos.

The project is the latest in a number undertaken on SH88 over the last five years – either by Transit or with Transit as a partner – to improve cyclists’ safety.

Transportation planner, Phil Dowsett, says the highway’s status as a national route connecting Otago and Southland with the Port of Otago means that a significant number of heavy vehicles use it. Combined with the narrow form of the highway carriageway, particularly through the Ravensbourne area, this can cause cyclists to feel unduly uncomfortable and at risk.

***“As well as providing a safe cycling alternative to the highway, the extended cycleway will enhance what is already proving to be a highly regarded recreational facility.”***

Transit received 77 submissions to its latest draft 10-year State Highway Forecast urging improvements for cyclists. However, the route’s topographical constraints mean that further solutions are neither easy nor straightforward, Mr Dowsett says.

“Transit has decided to undertake a study of the whole route to identify how safety could be further improved for cyclists without disadvantaging other road users. The cycleway off the highway is a good solution for many cyclists however those who cycle at speed are seeking safe provision at the highway’s edge.”

The resulting Network Management Plan will provide a way forward and a basis for seeking future funding from Land Transport New Zealand to carry out a continuing programme of improvements. The Plan is expected to be completed early next year, following extensive initial consultation with key stakeholders before consultation with the wider public.

## Safety improvements to start soon on SH1, Oamaru

**The Thames St Safety Improvements project on SH1 in Oamaru is now in the final design stage, with construction activity likely to start before Christmas.**

The first construction step is to relocate the Boer War Memorial to Lower Thames St, where it will have a similarly prominent location. The 400-500 tonne monument will be re-oriented to face north to enhance its exposure to Thames St. Over winter, 13 Elm trees in the Thames St central median were removed for storage and future replanting to allow the project to go ahead.

The aim of the work – which is along the four-lane section of SH1 between Orwell St and the Coquet St/Severn St/Lower Thomas St intersection – is to reduce the number and severity of crashes occurring along this section of road. The Usk St, Eden St and Severn St intersections have the highest crash rate of all state highway intersections in the Waitaki District.

Key features of the project include:

- Installing traffic signals at Usk and Ouse streets
- Replacing the Eden and Ribble St roundabouts with traffic signals
- Modifying the Lower Thames/Severn/Coquet St intersection and installing traffic signals
- Relocating the Boer War Memorial
- Modifying pedestrian crossing points between Orwell and Dee streets
- Extending cycle lanes through to Severn St.

For more information on this project visit our website at [www.transit.govt.nz/projects](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects).

## Other project updates

- Work realigning a stretch of SH8 between Lawrence and Beaumont is expected to be completed in November. Known as the Tunnel Hill realignment project, construction has involved taking out three 55km bends and providing slow vehicle lanes on each approach to the crest over a 1.3 kilometre length of highway, at a cost of \$1.6 million.



Work is underway on the Tunnel Hill realignment project.

- Construction to create two new passing lanes at Waihola and Clarendon on SH1 is planned to be finished in early 2008. The \$2.1 million combined project involves putting in a new northbound passing lane north of Waihola, as well as realigning the highway at Clarendon and creating a southbound passing lane.
- The public will be consulted in early 2008 about the project to upgrade SH1 along the Caversham bypass and through to Lookout Point. Currently Transit is investigating a number of options, says Transit project manager Simon Underwood. These range from four-laning the existing Caversham bypass, with the potential to ultimately convert the Barnes Drive and Lookout Point intersections, to grade separated intersections (an overpass at Barnes Drive and underpass at Lookout Point).

## Planned work for Otago and Southland in 2007/08

Transit expects to complete the construction of nine projects in the 2007/08 financial year. The projects are:

- SH1 Tumai realignment
- SH1 Waiholo north passing lane
- SH1 Clarendon passing lane
- SH1 one way pair pedestrian safety improvements (DN)
- SH8 Morven Hills Bridge widening (one lane to two lane)
- SH8 Tunnel Hill realignment
- SH84 Wanaka roundabout
- SH1 Boundary Creek Bridge widening
- SH94 Eweburn to Henry Creek safety improvement (18km).

We also expect to begin construction of:

- SH1 Thames Street safety improvement in Oamaru
- SH8 Pig Hunters Road safety improvements.

In addition, several new projects and strategic studies in Otago and Southland are part of Transit's work programme in 2007/08. These are outlined in Transit's 10-year State Highway Plan and Forecast for 2007/08 to 2016/17.

Nine new projects are included in the Otago programme, including two on SH1 – a vertical realignment at Moeraki and a curve realignment at Waitati, says Transit Dunedin regional manager, Mike O'Cain.

Other new projects in Otago include intersection improvements on SH87 at Riccarton/School Road and northbound and southbound passing lanes between Balclutha and Clinton on SH1. Transit will also investigate passing lane opportunities for SH6, SH8 and SH93. Improvements for cyclists on SH88 are also planned. (see story pg 2).

Of 14 planned projects in Southland, Boundary Creek widening and Eweburn seal widening, already noted above, will be completed.

"Most of our region's projects have been progressing toward funding for a while, but it's particularly pleasing that we are able to include two new passing lanes in Otago and six in Southland, especially since Southland has been asking for more passing lanes for many years," Mike says.

Transit will also begin investigating these new projects:

- SH1 Dipton curve realignment (south of Dipton)
- SH94 Falls Creek Bridge widening
- SH1 Dowling Rd/Mona Bush Rd passing lanes
- SH1 Baird Rd – Kerr Rd passing lanes
- SH6 Wilsons Crossing passing lanes.

Consultation on Transit's planned work programme took place during March this year.

"By far the greatest number of submissions related to state highways in Otago. Around 80 requested improved cycling options on SH88, and a significant number were about cycling facilities around Alexandra and passing lanes," Mike says.

Nationally, Transit will undertake the greatest number of project investigation, design and construction starts ever in 2007/08, at an investment value of \$1.2 billion. Almost 40 percent of the work relates to activities that contribute to state highway safety.

Visit our website for details on the 10-year State Highway Plan and Forecast at [www.transit.govt.nz/planning/forecast.jsp](http://www.transit.govt.nz/planning/forecast.jsp).

### Consultation proves a winner

**Transit has played a key role in achieving positive roading outcomes for SH6 to service three new developments and the airport expansion at Frankton Flats near Queenstown.**

Work recently began on the Five Mile development – the construction of a high-density township that will become home to 10,000 people. Resource consent applications are about to be lodged for another development, known as Remarkables Park, which will include a retirement village, resort, shopping centre, and new primary school, in addition to accommodation for young people working in the region.

A third development called Shotover Park is also being planned for the near future.

The developments have created the need for two new intersections – where roundabouts will be built – that connect SH6 with Grants Road and at a place west of Glenda Drive.

Transit regional planning manager Bruce Richards says integrating the development plans with the services required a great deal of consultation and partnership between Transit, the Queenstown Lakes District Council, Queenstown Airport Corporation and the developers.

"Transit and the local authority have been instrumental in getting the parties in the same room to talk with each other to achieve a positive outcome. It's been a very good result."

Work is expected to start as soon as possible on both roundabouts and be completed before next winter at a cost of around \$6 million.

### Kawarau Falls Station development

**Transit is also working in partnership with the Kawarau Falls Station developers to ensure good access to the site.**

The Kawarau Falls Station development involves the construction of a 7 ha site at the old Kawarau Falls camping ground. Because of the amount of material coming in and out of the site it was beneficial to have direct access to SH6 and to improve the intersection at Peninsula Road.

Transit is also working with interested parties to investigate the potential to construct a new Kawarau Falls bridge and is examining funding options.

"A new bridge would manage the increased traffic flow that would be created by the Kawarau Falls development and also the developments occurring beyond the bridge such as Jack's Point," Bruce says.

### New brochure for Milford road users

Transit's new brochure *Driving to Milford Sound? Tips for a safe and enjoyable trip* is for all those who travel on SH94 Milford Road from Te Anau and Milford Sound. The brochure helps road users with information on how to drive safely on this road, especially in winter when snow, ice and risk of avalanches make safe driving critical. The brochure is available on our website at [www.transit.govt.nz/publications.jsp](http://www.transit.govt.nz/publications.jsp).

## Kiosk gives drivers the good oil

**A new information kiosk on State Highway 94, Milford Road, is part of Transit's ongoing effort to make the Milford Road experience safe and enjoyable all year round.**

The kiosk, located 8.5 kilometres from Te Anau, opened for the first time this winter.

"The aim of the kiosk is to make sure road users are fully prepared for driving on the road in winter conditions that can change so quickly," says Transit regional network manager Murray Clarke.

"If you are not prepared for it, you could put not just yourself at risk but also other road users behind you."

Apart from the highway being generally 'open' or 'closed', there can be a requirement for travellers to either carry chains or that chains must be fitted. Kiosk staff provide visitors and drivers with information about driving in the area, while also checking that they are carrying the right chains and know how to fit them correctly. If travellers ignore the opportunity for this assistance they could be fined \$750 for continuing their journey past warning signs requiring chains further down the Milford Road.

While most vehicles are required to stop at the kiosk, accredited bus drivers who have completed the Bus and Coach Association Programme on how to drive on the Milford Road in winter, are allowed to bypass the kiosk by travelling in a separate lane by the kiosk.

During its first year of operation, the kiosk's operation will be fine-tuned to make sure people find the service useful and can get through the kiosk promptly.

Tourism operators, road users and anyone interested in the facility's operations had the opportunity to visit the kiosk at an open day held at the kiosk in August.

The open day gave tourism operators, road users and anyone else interested in the kiosk an opportunity to visit the site and find out more about the new facility.



Transit organised an open day for Milford Road information kiosk in late August which gave tourism operators, road users and anyone else interested in the kiosk an opportunity to visit the site and find out more about the new facility.

## Frosts take their toll on Central Otago's highways

**Intense frosts in Central Otago during June and July have kept Transit New Zealand contractors busy with pavement repairs.**

Highways in the region were badly damaged as a result of the extreme weather conditions over a three-week period during winter, when temperatures dropped well below zero before thawing out at around 15 degrees.

"These sorts of conditions – with a rapid thaw after severe frosts – mean the pavement quickly expands, which causes widespread surface damage," says regional network manager Murray Clarke.

While contractors were initially kept busy carrying out temporary repairs, they are now working to permanently restore the affected highways, at a total estimated cost of around \$500,000. Most of the damage occurred to older pavements which are less permeable than a newly constructed premium pavement, Murray says.

## STAFF CHANGES

**Tony McColl – Resource Planner**



The position of resource planner with the Dunedin Office's Transportation Planning Division has been filled by Tony MacColl. Tony joined the team at the end of February this year – his role is to assist with Transit's statutory/consent planning and LAR work.

He holds a MSc from the University of Otago and is currently studying extramurally for planning papers from Massey University's MRP course. Outside of work Tony's main hobby is fly fishing the rivers and streams of Otago and Southland. He enjoys a variety of sports, listening to music and spending time with family. Tony is married with two daughters.

**Phil Dowsett – Transportation Planner**



Phil joined the Dunedin team of Transit in December 2006 in the new position of transportation planner supporting the regional transportation manager, David McGonigal. A civil engineer by training, Phil who came to Dunedin from England in 1978 has worked for Fletcher Challenge, MWH and for the last 10 years as transportation planner for the Dunedin City Council. Phil has an MBA from the University of Otago and a Master of Engineering in Transportation from Canterbury University.

Beyond work, Phil enjoys running to keep fit and more recently cycling, in addition to fly fishing and tramping. He is married with two children.

### ON THE MOVE:

Peter Robinson, formerly Transit area engineer for Coastal Otago is now area engineer for Southland.

## CONTACT US

### Transit New Zealand Dunedin Regional Office

Broadbase House  
60-66 Tennyson Street  
PO Box 5241  
Dunedin 9058

Tel 64 3 477 8527  
Fax 64 3 477 9237  
[www.transit.govt.nz](http://www.transit.govt.nz)