

# COAST TO COAST

PUBLISHED BY THE CHRISTCHURCH REGIONAL OFFICE OF TRANSIT NEW ZEALAND

DECEMBER 2007

## Keeping our roads safe over Christmas and the New Year

**Once you're lounging back full of turkey and Christmas pud – spare a thought for the people who will be working over the holiday period on state highways.**

Transit New Zealand regional manager, Colin Knaggs says Transit, together with its contractors, oversees the all-important job of keeping the roads well maintained and safe over Christmas and New Year.

"No matter what time of the year, we are out there looking after the state highway network. It's not always easy, especially over the holidays when you have to give up time with your family."

Transit contractor Tony Barnes and team will be keeping our roads safe over the holiday break.

Tony Barnes from Fulton Hogan, which Transit contracts to maintain roads of the Christchurch region, says their work varies from maintaining the roads to resurrecting signs that come down either through adverse weather or being hit by cars.

"No matter what, we are on call 24/7."

Repairing signage on islands and roundabouts is what keeps the team busy most of the time but Tony says they prefer that to being called out to an accident.

"We attend every vehicle accident with either the police or Fire Service and help with site safety. We have a TMA [Truck Mounted Attenuator] vehicle that is equipped with bright flashing lights and signage which stands out clearly and keeps the traffic moving. You often have to discourage people from stopping to stare."

If the accident involves a fatality, the crew can be at the scene for up to six hours. "We are involved with marking out the scene and then later we clean up the area getting rid of glass and dealing with any road damage. We also fix any damaged 'road furniture' such as signs or barriers," says Tony.

"Thankfully it's pretty quiet on the state highways during the holiday period." Quiet and occasionally very entertaining.

"You see a lot of Santas out on the road at this time of year," he says. But no sleighs and no reindeer, unless you count the Great Dane he once saw.

"A woman was driving the car, there was a man in a Santa suit in the passenger seat and from behind them, sticking out the window with its tongue lolling everywhere, was this huge dog with a set of antlers fixed onto his head."

A good Christmas story to take back to the kids.



**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from  
Transit's Christchurch Regional Office.**

# Christchurch Southern Motorway project - a step closer

The Christchurch Southern Motorway project is a step closer now that Transit has received feedback from the public.

“From the 1600 mailouts we have received around 100 submissions, the majority of which support the project,” says Geoff Griffiths, Transit’s regional projects manager. “The issues that were raised included concerns around potential noise and access to and from the motorway, which is to be expected on a project of this nature.”

Geoff says that over the next few months Transit will be responding to submitters and in some cases meeting with them to provide further information on issues raised.

“We are assessing all potential environmental effects that the Southern Motorway project might have. This

includes issues such as noise, vibration, cultural, heritage, ecological, avian, air quality, traffic and construction related impacts. We are also liaising with stakeholders over urban design and landscaping along the motorway corridor.”

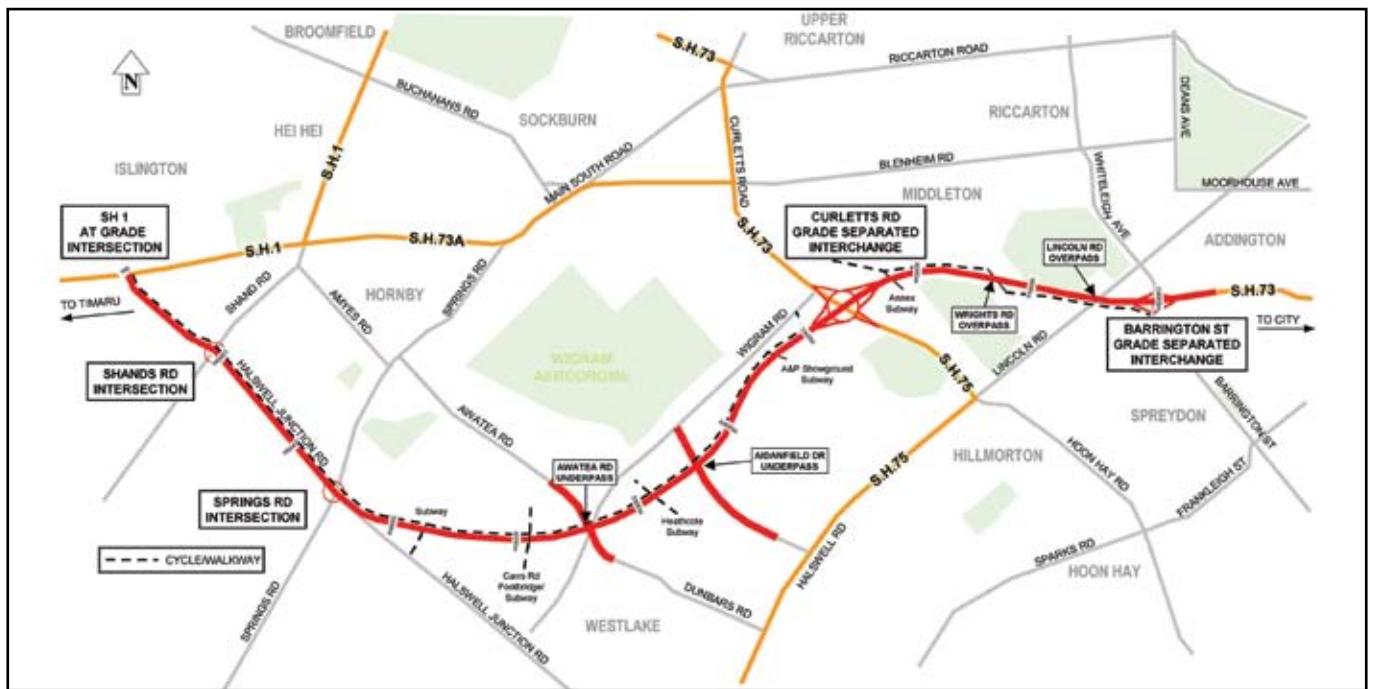
The Christchurch Southern Motorway is part of Christchurch’s integrated transport strategy and a key element in the implementation of the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy.

Estimated to cost \$110 million, the Christchurch Southern Motorway will provide a strategic arterial route between the city and the south-west for through traffic, and will alleviate existing

congestion on adjacent routes. It will also provide a key link to the port of Lyttelton.

Consultation has been ongoing since 2002 and has culminated in a preferred option for the motorway. The current plans can be viewed on Transit’s website at [www.transit.govt.nz/projects](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects).

“Transit plans to lodge resource consent applications with the Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury early next year,” says Geoff. “Subject to obtaining approvals and completing land acquisition, we hope to be in a position to start construction in 2009/10. With six bridges and 10 kilometres of roadway to build it will take at least three years to construct.”



Christchurch Southern Motorway layout.

# Punakaiki road improvements completed

Transit operations manager southern zone, Peter Connors says, “Despite some unexpected delays, the upgrade of State Highway 6 through Punakaiki is now complete.”

The upgrade has been designed to ease congestion, and make the area safer for the 400,000 visitors that visit Punakaiki each year.

To improve visibility as motorists approach the blowholes from the south, Transit cleared vegetation and removed some of the bank on the east side of the road.

Parallel parking for cars and buses on the west side of the road has been provided by widening the area. Bus parking has also

been significantly improved by the use of clearly defined areas.

Defining where parking can occur has ensured increased visibility either side of the new pedestrian refuge between the Visitor Centre and the blowholes.

Road markings and signage have been updated, and Transit has improved access from the state highway into the existing car parks by use of right turn bays and a flush median.

The improvements will now ease congestion on this part of State Highway 6.





## Highway info on the information highway

**“Good information helps drivers make better decisions about how and when they travel, and makes their journeys safer.”**

**Motorists will be able to access New Zealand’s most up to date and accurate online state highway information directly ‘from the horse’s mouth’, following the launch of Transit’s Highway Info web service.**

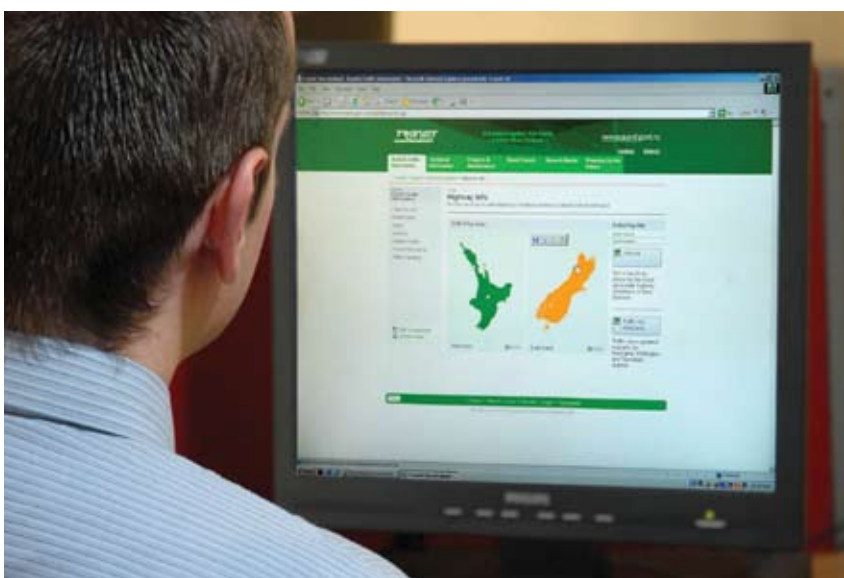
Highway Info provides free, regularly updated information about closures, delays and warnings across the entire state highway network. The information is refreshed every ten minutes and updated around the clock by Transit highway management staff.

“We understand that up-to-the minute highway information is crucial for motorists to plan their travel, especially for holidaymakers and commercial transport operators,” says Transit general manager network operations, Roly Frost.

“Good information helps drivers make better decisions about how and when they travel, and makes their journeys safer.”

Roly Frost says Transit will continue to explore new and convenient ways using the latest technology to communicate timely and accurate highway information to motorists.

The Highway Info service can be found at [www.transit.govt.nz](http://www.transit.govt.nz)



## PROVIDING FOR TIMARU TRANSPORT NEEDS IN THE FUTURE

**How to cope with a projected 50 percent growth in transport activity in Timaru over the next 25 years is the focus of a recently completed Transportation Study by Transit and the Timaru District Council (TDC).**

The region is experiencing significant economic growth leading to increased travel needs that affect state highway efficiency, local access and safety.

The study considered rail, public transport and cycling options to develop an overall transport strategy for the future. A key finding indicated that traffic on State Highway 1 (Evans St) would rise from 18,000 vehicles a day to a predicted 30,000, resulting in significant pressure being placed on the existing roadways in the Timaru urban area. While the recommended strategy encourages greater use of rail for freight and further development of the public transport, walking and cycling network, the state highway will remain a vital piece of transport infrastructure for Timaru.

The study included all state highways in Timaru – SH1, SH78 and SH8, and local roads from Washdyke in the north to Saltwater Creek in the south.

Michael Blyleven, Transit regional transportation manager says the study recommends SH1 remains on Evans Road, however the section from Washdyke to Wai-iti Road requires greater capacity to cater for all road users safely.

“This would require widening the road to provide four lanes for traffic, thereby removing the dangerous areas where traffic merges from two lanes to one. It is likely that the widening will alternate from side to side along the corridor.

“The improvements would be developed in stages and include a series of intersection upgrades and traffic signals. This would ensure continued efficient access to the state highway from key local roads.”

The study also recommends making improvements in public transport services, and walking and cycling facilities.

Alternatives that were considered included utilising other local roads and a bypass that used the railway corridor, but this was considered environmentally and economically unfeasible.

Transit and the TDC will now consult with stakeholders to identify ways to minimise the impacts of upgrading the state highway along Evans Street. The stakeholders include homeowners, businesses, service providers, land development advisors and transport user groups.

“We plan to hold an open day in the New Year where interested parties can find out more about the proposals and help Transit and TDC identify the best way to implement the strategy,” says Michael.



# Everybody wins when the bus comes first

## Transit recently asked residents living alongside Main South Road and Main North Road for feedback on planned bus priority measures designed to encourage greater use of buses serving southern and northern Christchurch.

Initial feedback shows strong community support for good reliable bus services and for peak period bus lanes.

Main South Road is the southern gateway to Christchurch for buses to and from the Selwyn District. In the last five years traffic flows have increased by 15 percent, with resulting congestion adversely affecting the reliability of bus services.

Transit senior transportation planner, Mike Tottman says, "With the Selwyn district expected to grow by around 4,000 households in the next ten years, congestion will worsen considerably unless changes are made now."

Along the Main North Road in the last 10 years traffic flows have increased 36 percent, with the resulting congestion slowing buses and affecting service reliability. The Waimakariri district is expected to grow by another 5,000 new households in the next ten years, so planning also needs to occur now.

"If Christchurch traffic continues to grow at its current rate, in ten years' time there will be around 12,500 vehicles a day sitting in congested traffic," says Mike Tottman. "That has serious implications not just for transportation, but also for the environment. One full bus equals 40 fewer cars on the road. However, to encourage people to use the bus, we have to remove the buses from this congestion in order to provide a quick and reliable service. Bus priority measures provide the means to achieve this."

Transit's outline plans were detailed in a flyer that was delivered to residents along both roads and other stakeholders in October. Three open days took place and exhibitions giving more details about the proposals were displayed at Northlands Mall and The Hub, Hornby Mall.

The plans currently envisage bus lanes, either permanent or operating only at peak times of the day along congested sections of both Main North and Main South Road. This would likely result in reduced street parking where bus lanes are proposed.

"Bus lanes will make the bus service much more reliable by allowing buses to bypass lines of congested traffic, which is especially important in the early morning and late afternoon," says Mike Tottman. When they are not in operation, the bus lanes revert back to parking.

Other proposed measures include amended junction layouts, special bus traffic signals, bus gates and better spacing and location of bus stops.

The measures being investigated by Transit form part of a city-wide bus priority proposal being considered by Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury.

Once all the feedback has been considered in the New Year, each measure will be evaluated and may be adopted according to suitability. Further consultation will then be undertaken with residents and stakeholders during the detailed design stage.

One of the displays informing people about the proposed bus priority measures.



## Majority of Woodend community favour eastern bypass options

Stage two of consultation on the Woodend bypass revealed that the majority of Woodend residents favoured an eastern bypass option, rather than widening State Highway 1 through Woodend. The responses were split fairly evenly between a long eastern bypass and a short eastern bypass.

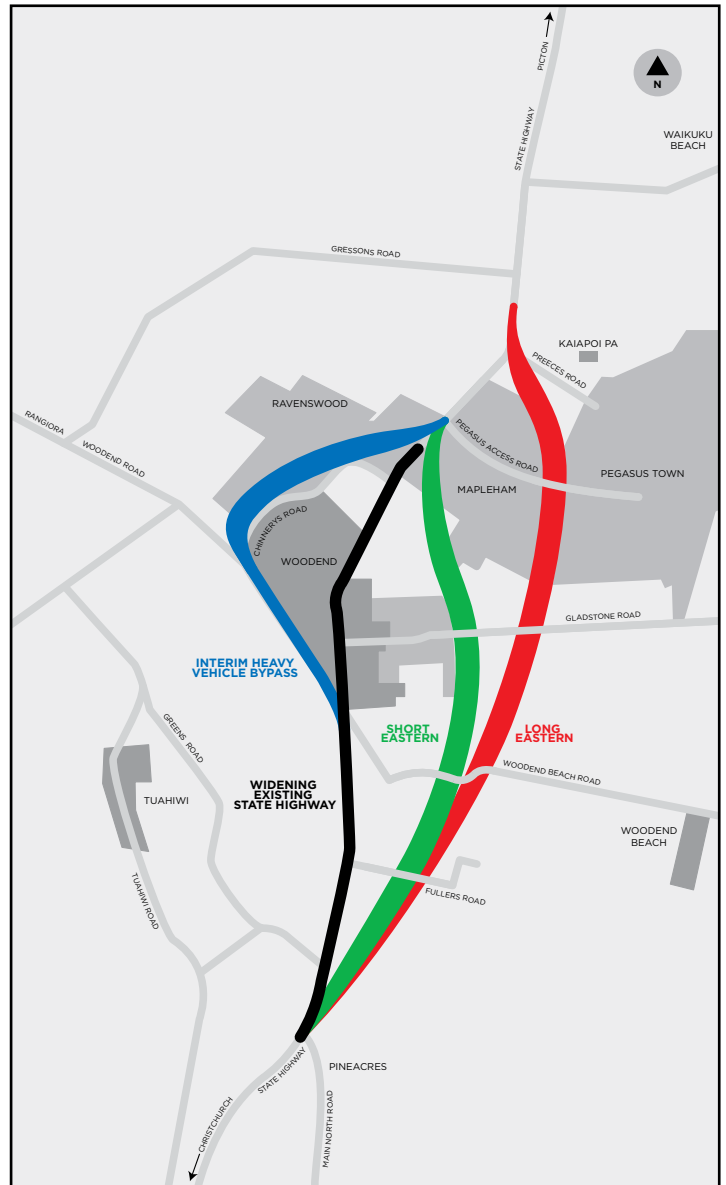
This feedback was gained after Transit sent detailed information, including a stylised map identifying each option, a letter, a FAQ sheet and a feedback form to around 1,300 local households and other interested parties.

There was an impressive 27 percent response rate to the survey. From 350 replies, 114 said they were in favour of a long eastern bypass, 105 preferred the shorter eastern bypass, 19 were happy with either eastern bypass options, 33 liked the heavy vehicle bypass and 66 favoured widening the existing state highway through the township.

Transit senior transportation planner, Mike Tottman says, "Many people have put a lot of thought, time and effort into the feedback we received and we really appreciate this."

While consultation is one of a number of elements that will inform Transit's decision on a preferred option, construction of any of the options will be dependent on the outcome of the Woodend Transportation study and on the rate at which traffic grows through Woodend. The study will help identify the long-term plan for the future transportation requirements of Woodend. It is currently envisaged that no major changes to the state highway will occur within the next 10-15 years.

Right: Woodend bypass options.  
Below: The Woodend Township.



## State Highway 6 suspension bridge strengthening

**State Highway 6 forms the essential spine of land transport on the West Coast. Over recent years significant works have improved the security of this strategic link.**

Maintaining this route is a priority for Transit and currently work is being undertaken to complete the strengthening of the highway's three suspension bridges in South Westland. These are Fox River, Cook River and Karangarua Bridges.

Transit's area engineer West Coast Mark Pinnear says, "The current weight restriction is being removed which is good news for truck drivers as it is a significant impediment to heavy goods movement in this area."

Once the work is completed a Class 1 vehicle load will be permitted on the bridges, effectively raising the weight limit from 35,000kg to 44,000kg. There will still be a restriction of 30 kilometres per hour and only one vehicle will be able to access the bridge at a time.

Another reason for Transit continuing to maintain the bridges is to preserve their historic appeal.

"The bridges themselves are iconic as they are some of the last examples of suspension bridges of their time still in service on a popular tourist route," says Mark.

While work on Karangarua Bridge has already finished, work on the other two bridges is expected to be completed by February.



Karangarua Bridge which is now complete. The work carried out means that the bridges have new and longer steel support beams under them.

## NEW SPEED LIMIT AT LINESIDE RD, SH71

**A new 80 kilometre per hour zone speed limit, replacing the 100 kilometre per hour zone limit has been put in place on Lineside Road, State Highway 71, over the Northern Motorway overbridge between Kaipoi and Rangiora.**

"The new 80 kilometre per hour zone has been created in the interests of road safety," says Peter Connors, Transit operations manager southern zone. "There have been 29 accidents on this road in the last five years and we have had strong support from stakeholders to lower the speed limit to 80 kilometres per hour."

This section of SH71 was included in a national Network Safety Coordination project, a multi-agency initiative aimed at reducing the number and severity of road crashes through a combination of 'Engineering, Education and Enforcement' activities.

Consultation was undertaken with Network Safety Coordination partners including the Waimakariri District Council, New Zealand Police, Automobile Association, Land Transport New Zealand and the New Zealand Trucking Association. All parties have agreed to the proposed changes.

## Road safety education programme

**In the New Year, Transit will commence a campaign aimed at educating Canterbury road users to drive more safely.**

Transit's safety manager, Tony Spowart, says the campaign is an integral part of the Network Safety Coordination projects in the Christchurch region. These nationally driven projects are a multi-agency initiative designed to reduce the number and severity of road crashes through a combination of 'Engineering, Education and Enforcement' activities.

"This is the first time in the Canterbury region that Transit has been allocated funding direct from Land Transport New Zealand to initiate a road user education campaign," says Tony. "The funding allows us to take a proactive role in educating drivers about road safety."

"This campaign will be conducted with our road safety partners that include Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council and the Kaikoura, Waimakariri and Selwyn District Councils. We will be consulting with them about the key local safety concerns that we should be targeting.

"Some of the issues we are considering include educating people about how to safely turn into a right lane, how to merge safely, the dangers of running a red light, roundabouts, following distance and speed," says Tony.

"We plan to use road safety billboards, brochures, radio advertising and advertising on bus backs to get our messages across to the general public."

### CONTACT US

#### Christchurch Regional Office:

Education House, Level 7,  
123 Victoria Street,  
Christchurch.

Tel 64 3 366 4455,  
Fax 64 3 365 6576  
[www.transit.govt.nz](http://www.transit.govt.nz)