

# intransit

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## Thinking outside the square in the deep South

**New road signs designed to raise awareness among cyclists and motorists that they need to share the road have made their mark in Central Otago and Queenstown this summer. Around 30 signs saying 'Share the Road' were put up by Transit just before Christmas.**

"Cyclists have the legal right to ride two abreast, but at the same time, they need to be considerate of passing by motorists and cycle in single file," says Transit project network engineer Roy Johnston, in Dunedin.

What started as an idea by a local cyclist in Queenstown turned into reality in just over a month. When the idea of using existing winter ice/grit signs – which are left blank in summer – was discussed at the Central Otago Road Safety Group, Transit decided to implement it.

**So far we have received lots of praise for this initiative from motorists and cyclists. It's great to see how small safety measures can make such a difference.**

"We thought it was a really good idea to use signs that are usually needed only in winter. With the help of our consultants, we came up with a plastic clip-on sign that can be easily attached to the existing signs in summer," says Roy.

"So far we have received lots of praise for this initiative from motorists and cyclists. It's great to see how small safety measures can make such a difference."

Transit plans to use this innovation on other road safety and litter signs in the future.



'Share the Road' clip-on sign, attached to existing signs usually used only in winter.

This initiative is just one of many measures Transit employs to make state highways safer.

"It is great to see such collaboration among those with an interest in road safety at a regional level. This supports what we are trying to achieve all around the country," says Transit general manager network operations Roly Frost.

"While all Transit's work on state highways has an element of safety improvement, there are several national initiatives specifically targeted at road

safety improvements, such as the safety retrofit programme."

Transit has this financial year significantly increased its investment in safety retrofit work. The safety retrofit programme includes initiatives such as profiled markings, seal-edge drop-offs, roadside barriers and shoulder widening, which help prevent vehicles leaving the road and in case they do leave it, help reduce the severity of the crash. ■

# All aboard on NZ's first bus-only road

**The Northern Busway officially opened last month with the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Helen Clark, leading a crowd of several thousand people on a 1.5 kilometre stroll between the bus stations at Smales Farm and Akoranga in Auckland.**

Transit built the 6.2 kilometre two-way busway alongside the northern motorway on Auckland's North Shore. The \$300 million project marks a successful partnership between Transit, the Auckland Regional Transport Authority, and the Auckland and North Shore city councils.

Transit's acting chairperson Bryan Jackson says road authorities are often criticised for being too focussed on building more roads for more cars, but with the Northern Busway, Transit is breaking new ground with New Zealand's first bus-only road.

"This is a not just another piece of pavement. This project will improve congestion by taking cars off the motorway. It is a great example of our commitment to providing an integrated transport system."

There are five bus stations along the route and during peak times, a bus pulls into them every three minutes. The trial of the busway has already removed approximately



The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Helen Clark, leads a crowd of Aucklanders on a stroll down NZ's first bus-only road.


400 cars per day off the motorway. For this year's Waitangi week, the first full week of operation of the busway services, Northern Express bus service recorded just over 70 percent more passengers in comparison to last year's Waitangi week. As more commuters decide to use buses instead of cars, the numbers are expected to grow.

"When we look at its success already, we can feel proud that we are making a valuable contribution not just to transport, but to the environment as well," says Bryan.

"This concern for the environment was

also integral to how we approached the construction of the busway."

"For example, wood, plastic, steel and concrete were re-used on site; fish relocated from diverted streams; skinks resettled when their usual habitat was threatened; and new islands built for the rare Northern New Zealand Dotterel to nest safely."

Moving forward, Transit is redeveloping a busy motorway interchange to bring the busway closer to the Auckland Harbour Bridge and investigating if the busway can be extended towards growing communities north of Auckland. 

## Auckland's ALPURT B2 a step closer

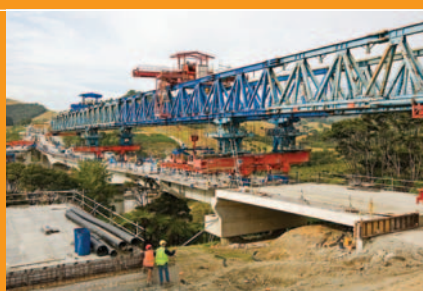
**Auckland's Northern Motorway extension, known as ALPURT B2, is a major step closer to completion.**

Last month the final segment for the northbound structure of the Waiwera Viaduct was lowered into place.

"It's a significant achievement for the project," says Transit Auckland regional manager Peter Spies. "It is the first time that the entire 7.5km length of the ALPURT B2 toll road has been connected since physical works began in December 2004."

Previously, construction has been undertaken at disparate work sites. The completion of this segment enables rock, material and equipment to be moved freely across the entire length of the project.

The completion of this segment was not without its challenges. The 537-metre balanced cantilever Waiwera Viaduct



The final segment for the northbound structure of the Waiwera Viaduct is lowered into place.

is believed to be the largest of its kind in New Zealand. This method of construction was chosen as it allows the bridge to be constructed without access from the ground, minimising the impact on the sensitive environment below. At its highest point, the viaduct sits 31 metres above the estuary.

The design and construction of ALPURT B2 is being managed by the Northern

Gateway Alliance, comprising Transit New Zealand, Fulton Hogan, Leighton Contractors, URS New Zealand, Tonkin & Taylor and Boffa Miskell.

Once completed, ALPURT B2 will give motorists a quick, efficient, integrated and safe route between Auckland and Northland. It extends north from Grand Drive in Orewa to connect with the existing State Highway 1 route at Titford's Bridge, Puhoi. It will allow state highway traffic to bypass Orewa, easing traffic congestion in the town.

Although the northern and southern ends of the project are beginning to look complete there is still a considerable amount of work to be achieved in the mid-sections. The project is on track for completion in early 2009.

For more information on ALPURT B2 visit [www.transit.govt.nz/projects/alpur\\_b2](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects/alpur_b2). 

## Resealing revamp minimises delays

**A revamp of Transit's resealing practices for the Wellington state highway network proved its worth recently, with the resealing of a busy section of State Highway 1 north of Wellington being completed without a hitch.**

Several sections of highway between Otaki Bridge and Te Horo were resealed over two weeks in January. Wellington Anniversary weekend and a number of large events in Horowhenua fell within this period, posing a potential challenge for staff planning the work on this busy road.

Transit central operations manager Mark Owen says Transit has learned a lot from a similar project on SH1 near Paraparaumu last year that caused significant delays for motorists.

"We listened to what the public had to say last time and were committed to doing a better job this time around. We revamped our road surfacing and traffic management strategies and followed through on our promise to give road users better and earlier warning of potential delays."

Mark says an important part of planning was the decision not to reseal in the lead

up to, or over, Wellington Anniversary weekend.

"We picked this time of year because a number of people were still on holiday, meaning there was less traffic on the roads. Obviously this changes over anniversary weekend and we planned for that."

Mark says that, as with any resealing project, there were times when motorists experienced short delays.

"This resurfacing is part of Transit's

normal road maintenance to provide safer roads, by retaining the surface texture and skid resistance of the highway. We can't do this work without causing some disruption, but as this recent project demonstrates, careful planning and ensuring the public is well informed about the work is the key to minimising delays."

Mark says the way in which this resealing was undertaken has become the standard for similar sites where the effect on traffic flow can have a major impact on businesses and commuters. ☑



Traffic flowing smoothly during the reseal of SH1, near Otaki.

## When the rubber sticks to the road

**This summer, a number of sections of state highways around New Zealand have experienced problems with the road surface softening due to the bitumen seal melting. While it is the first time this has happened on a significant level since around 2000, Transit network operations manager Dave Bates says Transit is working hard behind the scenes to prevent the problem from reoccurring in the future.**

"New Zealand has experienced prolonged hot conditions this summer, which has at times caused the temperature of the bitumen – the glue that holds our roads together – to rise to around double the air temperature.

"We've also had unusually hot evenings, which means the road hasn't been able to cool down sufficiently overnight."

The heat causes the bitumen to soften,

resulting in a stickier, slightly spongy road surface. Dave says the softening has had no significant effect on cars, but some trucks have been inconvenienced. One reported event involved two trucks getting stuck side by side in a passing lane on State Highway 5, between Napier and Taupo. While this kind of thing is uncommon, Transit understands how delays affect the tight schedules of motorists, especially truck drivers.

**Transit is researching and implementing a number of measures to reduce the likelihood of further road seal softening in future.**

Gritting is the most effective short-term remedy for softening roads and Transit has gritting trucks on call at all times to carry out emergency gritting works.

Dave says Transit is also researching and implementing a number of measures to reduce the likelihood of further road seal softening in future.

"It's a tricky balance, because in New Zealand, our road materials have to be flexible enough to handle temperatures in all seasons.

"We're doing a number of things, like modifying the ingredients of the bitumen to increase the range of temperatures it can withstand, and mixing the road seal with the gravel pavement underneath so we don't have layer upon layer of bitumen storing heat."

Transit will continue to research and implement measures to make the state highway network better cope with New Zealand's challenging climate. ☑

## Aucklanders to have their say on Waterview tunnel

**Aucklanders have the chance to comment on the preferred option for the Waterview Connection project, a key part of the Western Ring Route.**

Transit's Board has confirmed it favours twin 3.2km tunnels running 20-40 metres under parts of Mt Albert, Avondale and Waterview.

Waterview Connection principal project manager Clive Fuhr says Transit believes it is the best solution to avoid significant social and environmental upheaval.


"Avondale and Mt Albert are established suburbs without land set aside for a motorway. Building a surface road through them would have meant extraordinary disruption, which a tunnel largely avoids.

"If a tunnel is eventually confirmed, about

160 residential properties would be required to be removed for the project, compared to about 500 for a surface option," says Clive.

The process of canvassing local community and stakeholder views on the proposal began in mid-February, with an information drop to 4,000 households.

A government appointed public private partnership steering group is also investigating procurement options for funding the Waterview Connection, with a report due to the Ministers of Finance and Transport by 30 June 2008.

For more information on the tunnel option visit [www.transit.govt.nz/projects/waterviewconnection](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects/waterviewconnection). 



Map showing approximate location of the Waterview tunnel.

## What's on

- › **Manuals and Engineering Policy Section Roadshow 2008** – Palmerston North 28 March, Christchurch 3 April, Dunedin 4 April, Wellington 22 April, Napier 30 April, Auckland 1 May, Hamilton 2 May 2008. Contact Jinsong Chen, (04) 496 6669 or [jinsong.chen@transit.govt.nz](mailto:jinsong.chen@transit.govt.nz).
- › **Are you ready to rumble? Road Safety Workshop on improving safety on our roads using profiled markings** – Auckland 10 April, Christchurch 15 April Wellington 17 April 2008. Contact Alister Harlow (09) 625 7470 or [alister@nzrf.co.nz](mailto:alister@nzrf.co.nz).
- › **Level 1 STMS Trainers Refresher** – 14 April 2008 Christchurch; 1 December 2008 Taupo. Contact Kimberley Ng, (04) 496 6688 or [copptm.qual@transit.govt.nz](mailto:copptm.qual@transit.govt.nz).
- › **Level 1 STMS Train the Trainer Course** – 16-18 April 2008, Christchurch; 26-28 November 2008, Taupo. Contact Kimberley Ng (see details above).
- › **Road Safety Barrier Systems Workshop** – 26-28 May 2008, Auckland. Contact Stuart Fraser (04) 496 6698 or [stuart.fraser@transit.govt.nz](mailto:stuart.fraser@transit.govt.nz). Registration forms [www.transit.govt.nz](http://www.transit.govt.nz).
- › **Level 2/3 STMS Training Courses** Auckland: 18 & 19 March 2008; 22 & 23 April 2008; 12 & 13 May 2008; 17 & 18 June 2008  
STMS Assessments by appointment. Contact John Boyson, (09) 428 0018 or 021 207 3954

For more information what is on this year visit [www.transit.govt.nz/technical/conferences.jsp](http://www.transit.govt.nz/technical/conferences.jsp)

## inbrief

### KiwiRAP

New Zealand's latest road safety tool, KiwiRAP, was launched at the end of January by the Automobile Association (AA) and government transport agencies, including Transit.

KiwiRAP is part of an international family of road assessment programmes and is designed to be an information tool for motorists as well as helping transport agencies target road safety efforts.

The first stage of KiwiRAP has produced risk maps, which are based on crash statistics between 2002 and 2006. The results of the next stage of KiwiRAP, which will be a condition assessment of state highways, will be published next year.

KiwiRAP is a road safety partnership between the AA, Transit, Ministry of Transport, Accident Compensation Corporation, Land Transport New Zealand, and New Zealand Police.

For more information on KiwiRAP, including a copy of the report visit [www.kiwirap.org.nz](http://www.kiwirap.org.nz).

### SH4 Okura Realignment

Transit has begun work on the SH4 Okura Realignment. The \$9 million project, located at Okura on SH4 between Wanganui and Raetihi, upgrades a section of highway that has been subjected to a number of road closures and delays. Transit has awarded the contract to Concrete Structures Ltd. The project is scheduled for completion in 2010.

### Board meeting

The next Transit board meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 March 2008. The open agenda is from 2.30pm.

### Your correct contact details?

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