

TARANAKI

AT A GLANCE

Our focus in Taranaki is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system that supports economic and regional growth as part of the recovery, encourages increased use of public transport, walking and cycling in New Plymouth and provides appropriate levels of service across all transport networks.

COVID-19 INSIGHTS AND IMPACTS

This section sets out the how the current pandemic might impact on land transport in Taranaki. Significant levels of uncertainty remain regarding the scale and duration of COVID-19 impacts, particularly in the medium to long-term. We will continue to monitor and update as things change.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON KEY SECTORS

- Taranaki's economy is comparatively well placed to recover from the pandemic, because of the scale of the manufacturing, mining, healthcare and social assistance, and government services sectors.
- These sectors are expected to recover in line with, or above, BAU in the longer term. Significant levels of primary production are also expected to help mitigate the impacts of the economic slowdown on the region.
- The region has the lowest reliance on temporary migrant workers of any region (0.8% of regional labour force), so will not be unduly impacted by reductions in immigration.²⁵
- The region's reliance on international tourism is comparatively low, with 21% of total tourism spend coming from international visitors.⁴⁹

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITIES

- Under the slower recovery scenario:
 - Taranaki's forecast fall in employment to 2021 (relative to BAU) is -6.3%, slightly lower than the national average of -6.7%³⁵
 - within the region New Plymouth city is forecast to perform slightly below the national average with a 7.1% fall in employment relative to BAU, 2021³⁵
 - the region is forecast to return to near BAU employment levels in 2025.³⁵

- Population growth is expected to slow, at least in the short to medium-term, given the region's reliance on net migration. The region's economic performance comparative to other regions may lead to increased inward internal migration.
- Māori, Pasifika and youth are likely to experience the greatest impacts, particularly in smaller regional centres. An increase in youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) is expected.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE LAND TRANSPORT SYSTEM

- Given the relative resilience of the Taranaki economy, no significant changes are expected in the nature, scale and location of transport demand over the medium to long-term. The 10-year outlook remains largely unchanged.
- Maintaining safe and reliable connections to Waikato and Palmerston North remain important to supporting the region's recovery.
- There will be an ongoing need for transport services to support COVID-19 recovery by improving access to employment and essential services for vulnerable communities.
- There will be ongoing pressure on transport revenue as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown levels.

REGION STEP CHANGES

IMPROVE URBAN FORM

With the sea to the north and challenging terrain to the west and south, most of New Plymouth’s residential growth will be in the east of the city leading to pressure on the transport system.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY

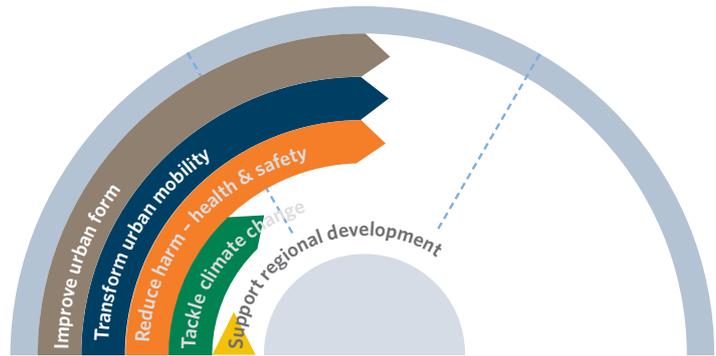
Taranaki is highly dependent on private vehicles; they make up 84% of journeys to work.⁵²

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS

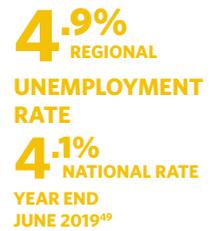
Serious crashes in the region are concentrated in and around New Plymouth and Hāwera, along SH3 that connects these two centres and on high-risk rural roads. Head-on and run off road crashes, high-risk intersections, crashes involving vulnerable users and driver behaviour are primary contributors.⁴⁷

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

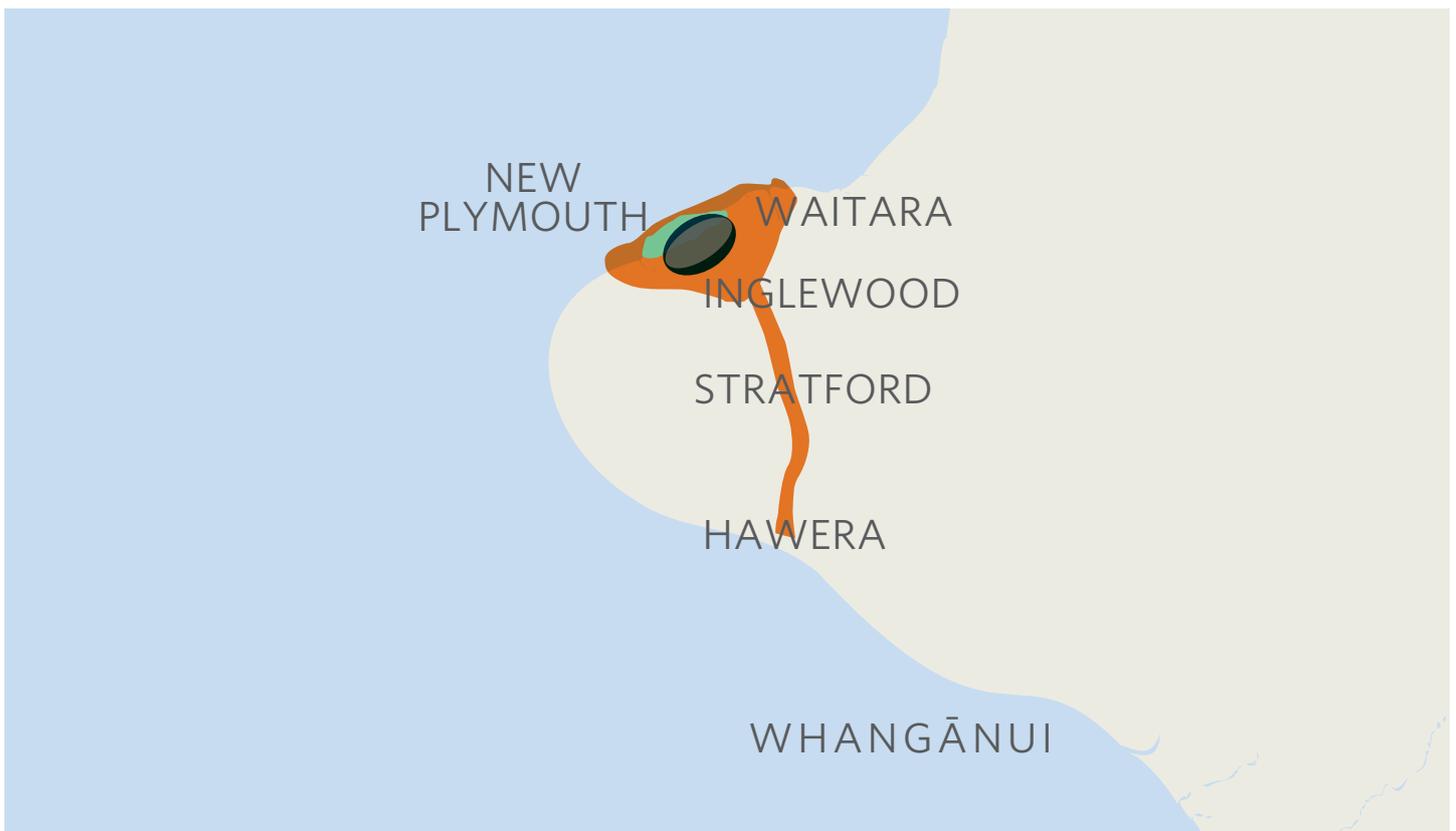
More intense storms are likely to increase erosion and landslide risks in the east of the region.



SIGNIFICANCE OF STEP CHANGE TO REGION 2021-31



Pre COVID-19 data



TARANAKI TODAY

Because of the level of uncertainty of population and economic trends, this section has not been reviewed in detail for Arataki V2.

TARANAKI IS HOME TO APPROXIMATELY 118,000 PEOPLE, OR 2.5% OF NEW ZEALAND'S POPULATION. NEW PLYMOUTH, THE PRIMARY URBAN AREA, IS HOME TO NEARLY 70% OF THE REGION'S POPULATION.²⁵

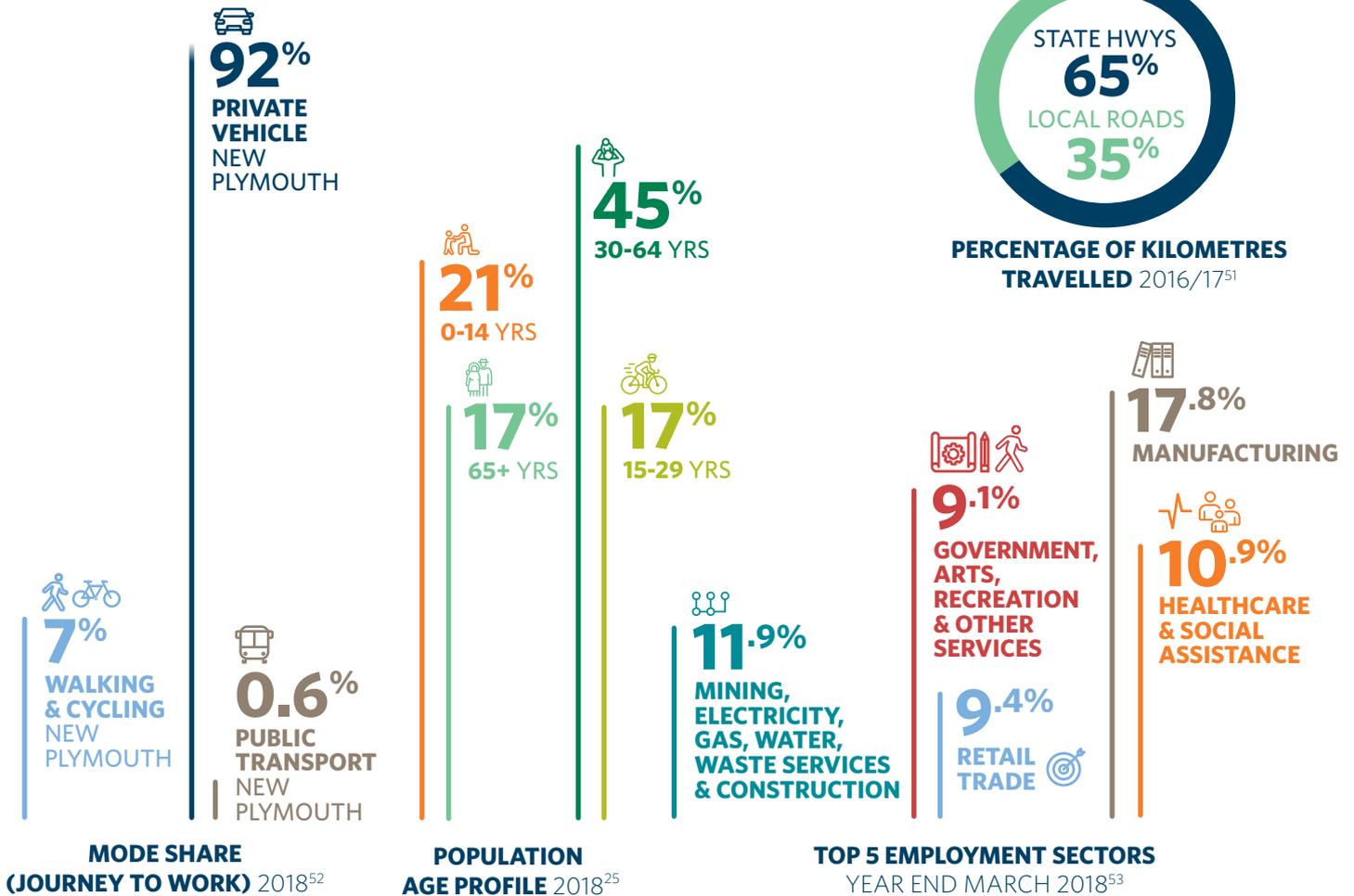
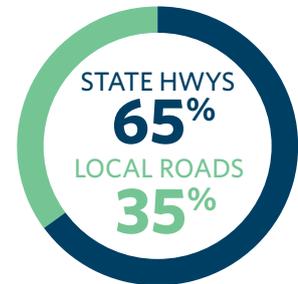
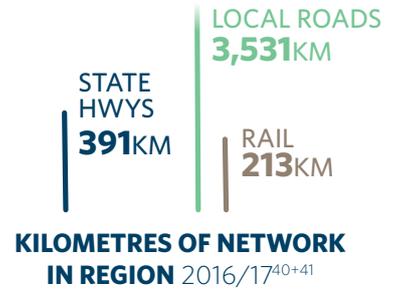
Taranaki has the second highest productivity in New Zealand, contributing 2.9% of New Zealand's GDP¹⁸ from just 2.5% of the country's population.²⁵ The region's economic performance is underpinned by two high income, export oriented sectors: dairy farming and processing, and the oil and gas industries. However, both sectors have experienced relatively low commodity prices since 2014 and the region faces a challenge to diversify as part of the transition to a low-emissions economy. Make Way

for Taranaki, the Taranaki Regional Economic Development Strategy, is led by a team consisting of central government, local councils, iwi and business representatives. An action plan was developed out of this strategy and was launched by regional leaders and ministers in April 2018. The region is home to pilot projects for introducing hydrogen powered transport technologies.

The region relies heavily on road and rail connections to the rest of the North Island for the movement of people, freight and visitors. SH3 provides the main northern connection linking Taranaki to the Waikato and upper North Island.

SH3 south provides a connection between New Plymouth and Palmerston North. It is critical to supporting the dairy industry as it connects the

dairy production centre in Hāwera to distribution centres in Palmerston North. Currently heavy vehicles travel 75 million kilometres on Taranaki roads every year,⁶³ driven by the oil and gas, dairying and forestry sectors. This has a significant impact on local roads in particular. New Plymouth's transport networks are generally well connected and fit for purpose, with capacity to accommodate projected traffic volumes in most areas. The key area of pressure on the transport system is the link between New Plymouth city centre and the residential and business growth areas to the east of the city.



TARANAKI TOMORROW

Pre-COVID-19, Taranaki's population was forecast to grow 11.3% by 2043 to 130,800 with the majority of that growth expected to be located in New Plymouth.²⁷ In the smaller urban areas and rural parts of New Plymouth, South Taranaki and Stratford districts, low growth or declining populations were projected.²⁷ The majority of Taranaki's growth in recent years has been from net migration (rather than natural increase), so population growth rates are likely to slow in the short to medium-term because of border restrictions. New Plymouth district will have a higher number of people over 65 years old, so providing good access for senior residents will be important to ensure they remain socially connected, active and able to actively participate in their communities.

Increased rain and storm intensity, coastal and soil erosion, sea level rise, flooding, slips and storm surges are predicted over the next 30 years, increasing risk to the road and rail network. As the oil and gas centre of New Zealand, the region is exploring alternative energy options in response to climate change.

There are a number of natural hazards risks in the Taranaki area. These relate predominantly to rockfall, landslip, erosion and flooding along SH3. These are expected to worsen with climate change effects.

Employment in service industries was growing in the New Plymouth urban area pre-COVID-19, but this is expected to slow in the short to medium-term because of the impacts of the pandemic. Manufacturing and primary production continue to be important, while expanded forestry harvesting over the next decade will increase freight movements in the south and east of the region. While international visitor numbers have dropped sharply (and are forecast to remain below pre-COVID-19 levels for the foreseeable future), the majority of Taranaki's tourism revenue comes from domestic visitors. Domestic tourism is expected to increase, at least in the short-term, as more New Zealander's holiday at home. The nature and direction of freight movement will change because of these employment and land-use changes as we transition to a low-emissions economy. Reliable inter-regional connections will continue to be important.

Rural communities will look for improved connections to New Plymouth and Whanganui for access to education, employment, and essential services.

Emerging technologies, such as on-demand shuttles, could provide a feasible shared transport option in the future to help people get around within smaller towns and rural communities, and improve access to services in New Plymouth and Whanganui. Improved access to high quality data and information will enable better management of the existing transport system to get the most out of existing infrastructure.

An increasing proportion of residents on fixed incomes is likely to put pressure on Taranaki councils' ability to maintain existing infrastructure, fund new infrastructure and provide appropriate services to residents.

KEY SYSTEM INSIGHTS

- It is important that growth in housing and employment in and around New Plymouth, including new facilities like schools and healthcare, is managed in a way that reduces dependency of private vehicles and average journey length.
- Walking and cycling levels are above the national average supported by ongoing investment in infrastructure. Public transport services are limited and focused on access to essential services.
- Taranaki relies on safe and reliable SH3 connection north to Waikato, and the road and rail connections southeast to Manawatū-Whanganui to enable the movement of people and freight. Safe and reliable connections to these neighbouring regions are critical to the region's social and economic outcomes, and COVID-19 recovery.
- While Taranaki has relatively low levels of total death and serious injury (DSI) crashes compared to other regions, the location of the crashes indicates increased risk on the networks in and around New Plymouth and Hāwera, SH3 between these two centres, and high-risk rural roads.
- Only a small proportion of Taranaki's road network is likely to be impacted by sea level rise resulting from climate change. However, networks in the north and east of the region are expected to come under increased pressure from storm intensity combined with relatively unstable terrain.
- Harvesting of forest blocks is forecast to peak over the next decade, increasing freight movements to Port Taranaki and placing pressure on the maintenance of road networks in the south and east of the region.
- We will look for ways to support initiatives to diversify the region's economy as part of a transition to a low-emissions economy.

FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

This section represents the existing commitments (eg the NLTP and NZUP). V2 has not been updated to include economic stimulus packages as that space continues to evolve.

We are supporting a number of specific actions in the Regional Development Action Plan through funding, delivery or advisory services. Among the actions is a series of business case investigations along SH3 and SH43 Forgotten World Highway improvements, to help strengthen Taranaki's connections to the rest of the country.

We will also be engaging with the 'H2 Taranaki' Hydrogen Ecosystem Development Centre in its role as land transport regulator, helping guide development of zero emission transport solutions.

We are progressing options to help improve road safety, reduce crashes and ease congestion on SH3 between Waitara and Bell Block.

SH3 Mt Messenger bypass will take SH3 around the existing problematic steep, narrow and winding section of road at Mt Messenger. There is also a range of safety, resilience and reliability issues on this route being dealt with through the corridor safety improvements project.

This map shows all projects underway during the period



New Plymouth walking and cycling investment

NEW PLYMOUTH

Taranaki public transport investment

SH3/SH3A New Plymouth to Hāwera safety improvements

STRATFORD

OPUNAKE

HĀWERA

Mt Messenger/Awakino Gorge improvements and Mt Messenger Bypass

Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements

Proposed SH43 resealing (12km) PGF

SH43 Forgotten World Highway improvements

KEY

- Safety project
- Walking and cycling project
- Access project
- Resilience project
- Public transport project
- Port
- Key routes
- Project delivered
- Project underway
- Project in pipeline

Interactive map available online
www.nzta.govt.nz/arataki-map6

AREAS OF FOCUS: TARANAKI 2021-31

IMPROVE URBAN FORM (MEDIUM)

While our focus is on multi-agency partnerships in the largest and fastest growing urban centres, we recognise the potential for growth in and around New Plymouth to support a safe and thriving city, with increased access to public transport, walking and cycling options and reduced carbon emissions. We will engage in planning processes to support a well-integrated and well-designed land-use and transport system that:

- enhances existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- supports an increase in active modes, including trips by foot, bike and e-scooter etc
- reduces the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- results in lower emissions per capita
- maintains or improves the safety and efficiency of the transport system.

The *Keeping New Plymouth moving and growing* business case is intended to consider the strategic responses to growth pressure, which we will continue to support.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (MEDIUM)

Projected population growth in Taranaki over the medium to long-term will increase travel demand on the region's networks and provide opportunities to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling. Our focus will be on:

- supporting improvements to walking and cycling networks, with a focus on providing safe and efficient access to and within activity centres and schools
- supporting public transport services, including on-demand, where they provide access to employment and essential services, are a more affordable transport option and/or help shape a more thriving city
- supporting development of the New Plymouth Network Operating Framework as a tool for optimising the transport network performance.

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS (MEDIUM)

SAFETY

Support implementation of the *Road to Zero: New Zealand's road safety strategy 2020-2030* and associated *Action plan 2020-22*, and regional safety strategies, with a particular emphasis on:

- continuing safety interventions targeting high-risk intersections, run-off road, high-volume roads and head-on crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h)

- separated facilities and infrastructure improvements in areas with significant levels of walking and cycling
- targeting road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, people not wearing seatbelts and speeding
- speed management to provide safe and appropriate speeds on high-risk rural roads. Targeted use of safety cameras to reduce speeding.

HEALTH

Our approach to delivering better health outcomes, particularly the reduction of harmful emissions, will primarily be through initiatives that target other step changes, including improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and efforts to reduce carbon emissions. We will also continue to work to ensure that the noise impacts of transport are appropriately managed through a mix of land-use planning and mitigation works.

We will support future pandemic planning by drawing on our COVID-19 experience and initiatives such as low-cost and temporary street calming and active transport projects that enable social distance while bringing health benefits from increased physical activity and reduced air emissions.

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE (LOW)

We will continue to work to understand the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation.

ADAPTATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and 'low cost/low risk' investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption of the land transport system.

MITIGATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to ensure urban form and transport planning supports reductions in emissions, private vehicle travel and average trip length.
- ensuring network design and operation makes the best use of existing transport systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the move to public transport and low emission options, and actively managing speed, urban freight and congestion.

