

# Southern



The NZ Transport Agency's Southern region comprises the local government regions of Canterbury, Otago, Southland and the West Coast. This 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme factsheet covers the Southern region, except Greater Christchurch, which is covered separately.

## OVERVIEW

Safety and route resilience, particularly for freight and tourists, will remain the greatest challenges facing the Southern region during the next three years.

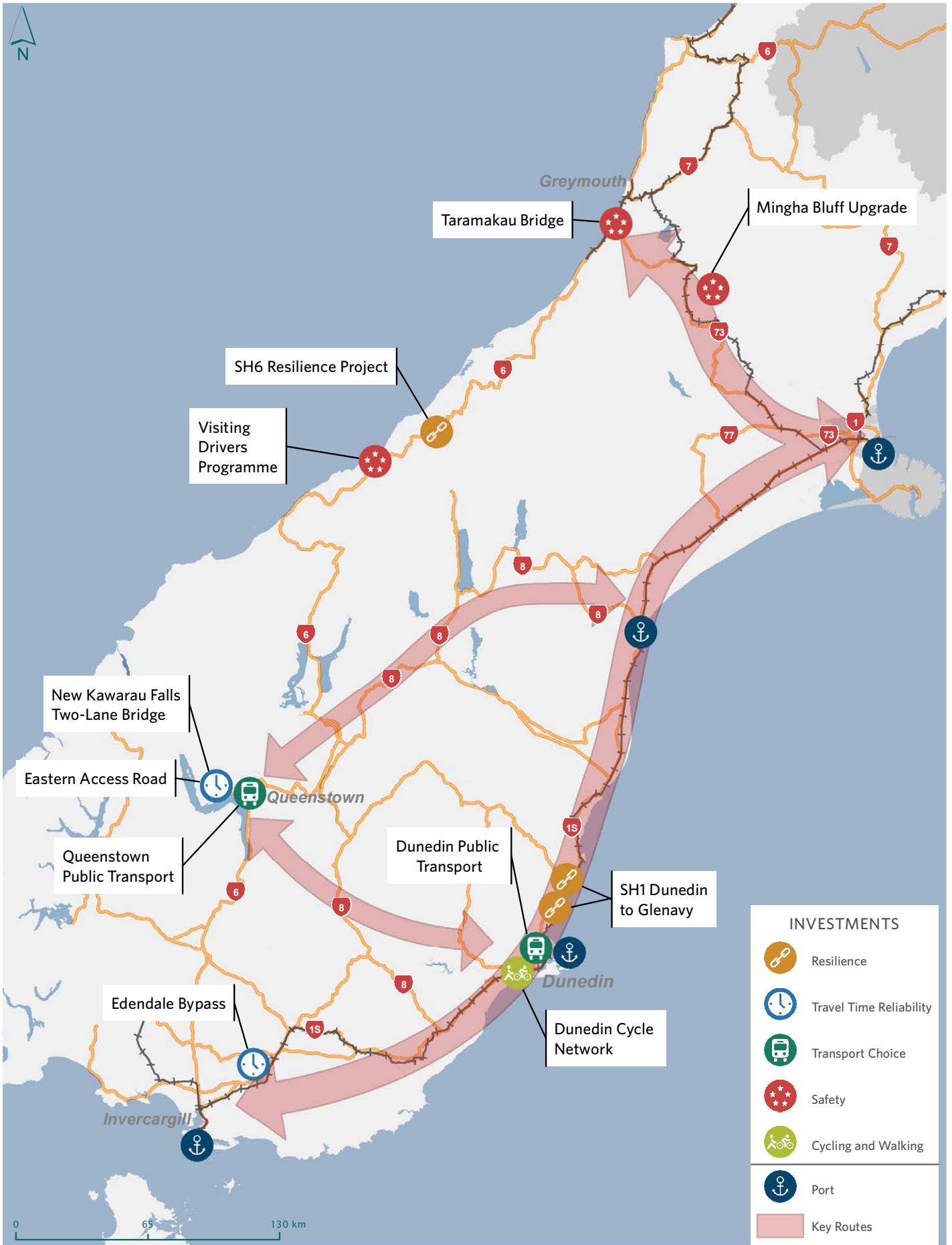
The region's transport network runs through mountainous terrain and over high alpine passes. There are long distances between towns and tourist destinations, and roads are often affected by flooding, snow, ice and slips. This can make roads treacherous and lead to motorists being stranded during extreme weather events.

The Transport Agency and councils' safety investment in the Southern region is targeted at making improvements to reduce crash rates and to save lives. A quarter of the region's capital programme will deliver safety benefits for the network, which is higher than the national average.

Investment to maintain the condition, efficiency and safety of the network is critical, as roads attract high numbers of tourists as well as being social and economic lifelines for the many remote communities in the Southern region. The realignment of Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek through the Arthur's Pass National Park, for example, will improve safety and network resilience while supporting the significant growth in freight in the area.

By the end of the 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) period, investment in bridge strengthening and other works will ensure up to 80% of the Southern region's state highway network and a number of local roads that access key industry and business sites will support High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPMVs), capable of carrying heavier loads than standard trucks. As these vehicles can carry more freight on fewer vehicles they deliver significant economic, safety and environmental benefits.





## KEY STRATEGIC RESPONSES

### CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

The geographically spread and relatively isolated communities within Canterbury, Otago, Southland and the West Coast rely on the transport network. As well as being a lifeline for communities, the economy relies heavily on the network to transport its products to market and the growing number of visitors to their destinations.

Challenging geography and climate mean the network is vulnerable to flooding, storms and being blanketed in snow and ice. These types of natural events can quickly close roads, strand travellers and isolate communities. Good planning to manage the network is critical to getting everyone moving again and this involves providing alternative routes where possible.

Work will continue throughout the 2015-18 NLTP period on various new initiatives to help improve the resilience of the network and support economic growth and productivity.

### GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Increasing public transport patronage in the Southern region is a priority, particularly in Dunedin and Queenstown.

A full review of Dunedin's public transport network has been completed by the Otago Regional Council, with the aim of growing bus patronage in the city by 22% over the next three years.

The review covered all aspects of the Dunedin public transport network, and identified a number of cost-effective ways to address the barriers to using the current bus network, including providing a bus hub in the central city to enable people to change services easily; offering a web-based real time information system so people have better information about when their bus is coming; improving bus stop seating and shelters; changing bus routes and improving services on main routes that have the potential to transport the most people; implementing easy to understand and consistent timetables; providing improved information and branding at bus stops; and introducing a simplified fare structure with three main zones and a discount for people who use the bus regularly.

These improvements are all part of the agreed 2015 Regional Public Transport Plan. Otago Regional Council is now in the process of using the partnering delivery model of the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) to develop a closer working relationship with operators to improve customer service and performance, grow patronage and reduce reliance on public subsidies. Tendering for bus services has been designed to recognise the skills and experience of bus operators, and ensure a competitive market for public transport while providing services that give people choices about how they can get to a wide range of destinations.

Transport funders are currently looking at ways to best manage growing transport demand from residents and visitors in the Wakatipu Basin, particularly for trips to or through Queenstown town centre and Frankton Flats during busy times of the year. Improved public transport services and infrastructure are likely to be important components of any potential programme to alleviate the impact of increasing private vehicle trips on the constrained road network. A full review of the public transport network in the area is planned for the second half of 2015 as part of the business case work.

2015-18 NLTP public transport investments are forecast to result in 2.9 million passenger trips being made every year for the next three years in Otago, and 278,000 passenger trips per year for the next three years in Southland.

### ENCOURAGING CYCLING AND WALKING

Working with Dunedin City Council, a number of projects will be progressed in the 2015-18 NLTP period to expand the city's cycleway network and support cycling as a safer and more attractive transport choice for both commuters and recreationalists.

Significant cycling programme proposals include safety improvements for cyclists along State Highway 1, featuring separated cycleways on the one-way system through the Dunedin CBD.

Dunedin City Council also plans to develop its South Dunedin cycle network. This is in an area of the city where 40% of residents do not have access to a car. This network has been

prioritised to improve accessibility not only for cyclists, but also pedestrians and public transport users, by looking at network-wide improvements and integration. The proposed network will provide connections to the Harbour cycleway and central Dunedin.

Port Chalmers cycleway is expected to be completed from St Leonards at an estimated cost of \$6 million, delivering a safe commute between the communities adjoining the railway and separated from the state highway. It is also expected that the central city and North East Valley corridor, including the City to Harbour Bridge, will receive funding from the Urban Cycleways Fund to provide dedicated cycleways.

Most of the planned cycleways include high-quality shared paths that will also benefit pedestrians.

It is expected that the total cycling and walking investment in Dunedin in the 2015-18 NLTP period will be \$10m. This includes \$3.5m of Urban Cycleways funding.

### MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Keeping land transport networks available for people to get where they want to go easily, reliably and safely is a primary objective of transport investment across the Southern region. Over the 2015-18 NLTP period, \$430m has been allocated for maintenance and renewals of local roads and \$316m for state highways.

The Transport Agency is working with councils to agree how the transport network will be maintained and operated to deliver the right level of service to meet the different needs on different parts of the network.

Given the pressure to achieve value for money from maintenance activity funding, any maintenance cost savings identified by a council will benefit all stakeholders. Savings can be redirected to councils where the condition of the network warrants an increase in maintenance investment and there is strong evidence to support the increase.

## MAKING JOURNEYS SAFER

Across New Zealand around \$3.2 billion is expected to be invested in the transport network over the next three years to deliver improved safety outcomes. Most of this expenditure will be directed at infrastructure improvements through the capital works programme, often where safety is one of the outcomes, such as the \$4m Rakaia – Ashburton safety initiatives. Further related improvements include congestion relief and travel time improvements. A proportion of this investment targets specific safety improvements including high-risk intersections, such as Pinehill Road in Dunedin, which will benefit from \$4m investment in pedestrian and cycling safety initiatives, including Port Chalmers cycleway completion at a cost of \$6m, as well as speed management and education programmes.

Working with the NZ Police and investing together in road policing and road safety promotion is at the heart of the region's investment. Together through targeted programmes the Transport Agency and NZ Police will work to address the factors contributing to crash-related deaths and serious injuries. These factors include speed, drink and drug driving, not wearing restraints, dangerous and careless driving, and high-risk drivers.

## INVESTING IN FREIGHT EFFICIENCY

In collaboration with our freight partners, the draft South Island Freight Plan has been developed and will be consulted on in 2015. The plan looks to better manage all parts of the freight network, including rail, to improve freight productivity throughout the South Island. The priority is to ensure that goods reach their destination, whether in New Zealand or beyond, with minimal impact on other road users. This work ensures investment in the network will be targeted to achieve the best outcome for everyone.

Bridge strengthening work will also continue throughout the region during the next three years to ensure the network is capable of supporting the growth in HPMVs, which can weigh up to 62 tonnes, reducing the overall number of freight vehicles on our highways and improving safety. One area of focus is the route between Blenheim and Christchurch, which will benefit from \$3m investment. By 2018, up to 80% of New Zealand's state highway network will be capable of carrying HPMVs.



## INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Growing public transport, particularly in Dunedin and Queenstown, continues to be a priority in the Southern region, with \$36m earmarked for co-investment with the Otago Regional Council in public transport during the 2015-18 NLTP period.
- Encouraging cycling and walking in Dunedin has been very successful to date and it is expected that the total cycling and walking investment with Dunedin City Council in the 2015-18 NLTP period will be \$10m. This includes \$3.5m of Urban Cycleways funding.
- A key focus in the next three years will be progressing work on building a number of cycleways in the Dunedin area. These include finishing more sections of Dunedin City Council's Harrington Point to Dunedin cycleway to improve safety on what is a busy tourist route, and completing the final stage of the Transport Agency's State Highway 88 shared cycling and walking path between Dunedin and Port Chalmers.
- A range of projects will be delivered during this NLTP period to improve safety throughout the region, including the realignment of Mingha Bluff at Arthur's Pass; construction of the new Taramakau Bridge near Greymouth; completion of Dunedin's one-way system cycleway; completion of the four-laning of the Caversham Highway; and widening the Kakaho Creek bridge at Hampden. The Transport Agency will be investing in Dunedin City Council's widening of Portobello Road near Dunedin and in a range of initiatives to improve safety for visiting drivers, such as the installation of median barriers, rumble strips and road realignments.
- In Dunedin a \$40-\$45m safety improvements project on State Highway 1 between Anderson's Bay Road and Lookout Point will be completed in this NLTP period. It is one of the largest highway projects ever seen in the Otago-Southland area. When finished it will improve safety, ease traffic congestion, reduce travel times and provide better road freight access to the Port of Otago. Stage 1 of the project involving the four-laning of the Caversham bypass was opened in October 2012. Stage 2 from Barnes Drive to Lookout Point is scheduled to open in the final quarter of 2015. This section of the project includes a new bridge linking Riselaw and Mornington Roads. The bridge will improve safety, as traffic on these two local roads will no longer need to use two busy and high crash-risk intersections to cross State Highway 1.
- More reliable travel times will result from the construction of improvements to the network at Frankton including the new two-lane Kawarau Falls Bridge, a bypass at Edendale near Invercargill, a range of improvements along the Kaikoura Coast, and route improvements throughout the region for freight vehicles.
- The Transport Agency has joined forces with our road safety partners and the tourism industry to improve road safety for visiting drivers. The Visitor Driver Safety project is focused on the Otago, Southland and Westland regions, where there are much higher concentrations of visitor drivers on roads. A range of future work is planned over the next three years including changes to road signs and markings so they are more visitor driver-friendly to provide information that will keep road users safe.

- In the 2012-15 NLTP period \$750m was spent on highway and local road maintenance, operations and renewals. A total of \$745m will be invested in the 2015-18 NLTP period.
- The Transport Agency will build a new two-lane bridge at Kawarau Falls, at Frankton on State Highway 6, as part of the Government's Accelerated Regional State Highway Package. This will provide a safer and more resilient southern highway connection into Queenstown, as well as ease traffic congestion in the rapidly growing nearby Frankton Flats area.
- The Queenstown Lakes District Council's Eastern Access Road around the Queenstown International Airport will be completed during the next three years. This road will improve access and safety, from major commercial developments in the rapidly growing Frankton Flats area onto State Highway 6, while improving traffic flows on the wider highway network in the Queenstown area.
- The Transport Agency's \$22m realignment of State Highway 73 from Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek through Arthur's Pass National Park – another Accelerated Regional State Highway Package project – will improve safety and build greater resilience through this alpine pass, an important route connecting Christchurch and the West Coast, in particular for freight.
- During the next three years, the Transport Agency will build a new road bridge across the Taramakau River, on State Highway 6, near Greymouth (subject to programming). This two-lane bridge will greatly improve the safety of all road users who have been sharing a single-lane road-rail bridge.
- The Transport Agency will invest a total of \$7m in the State Highway 1 bypass around Edendale to reduce travel times between Gore and Invercargill and improve safety from the growing number of heavy vehicles accessing the Fonterra milk processing plant at Edendale, one of the largest in the southern hemisphere.
- The Transport Agency will continue investigations into finding new ways to improve route resilience on State Highway 1 between Dunedin and Glenavy, where the highway is often flooded during heavy rain, causing delays or resulting in lengthy detours for road users.

## CASE STUDIES

### IMPROVING NETWORK SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

Travel over the Southern Region's alpine passes, such as State Highway 73 that connects Canterbury to the West Coast, can be challenging for the tourists, freight drivers and locals who traverse them. As the highways are often cut into the side of steep, mountainous terrain they are narrow and prone to rock falls and slips during periods of rain or snow.

Work is now underway to realign and widen the notorious five kilometre section of State Highway 73 from Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek, near the Arthur's Pass township. This section of the highway is narrow at many points, with tight corners following the contour of the mountainside, resulting in poor visibility and safety concerns. Freight trucks and tourist buses travelling in different directions can struggle to pass on the narrow, winding carriageway, causing delays for the vehicles behind them.

The \$22m project is one of the Government's five Accelerated Regional State Highway Package projects. When completed in two years, State Highway 73 will offer safer and more predictable journeys between the two sides of the island, and continued growth in traffic volumes because of its greater reliability is expected.

As well as the engineering and traffic management elements of the project, steps to manage the environmental and heritage impacts of the work are being taken.

Collaboration with the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury and the NZ Fish and Game Council has resulted in agreement that seed from rare plant species will be collected and redistributed once the work is completed and other affected plant species will be replanted in the area. Where fish habitats will be disturbed, the fish will be captured, removed from the affected streams and returned to re-established areas. Where water is diverted, new passages will be built for fish to reach spawning grounds. Heritage New Zealand has identified features along the route that will be preserved, and the significance of the route for local iwi will be recognised with an interpretation panel.



## COMBINED OTAGO-SOUTHLAND REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - THE POWER OF ONE

Covering almost one-third of the South Island, the Otago and Southland regions face common transport challenges. These include having a large land area and road network, comparatively low populations in many areas, natural hazards impacting on transport networks and infrastructure upgrades being required to enable heavier freight vehicles to access key parts of the network. The two regions also have many similar safety issues.

These shared issues led the two Regional Transport Committees to jointly develop their Regional Land Transport Plans with a focus on maintaining the existing transport network, while promoting key improvements to transport services and infrastructure to:

- reduce the social cost of crashes
- support economic productivity and growth by enabling freight and visitor journeys
- increase network resilience
- enable all forms of transport to have appropriate access to the network
- ensure value for money investments
- improve inter-regional journeys.

Joining together to create these plans has seen greater awareness among the representative councils that journeys do not end at administrative boundaries. Many journeys in Otago and Southland and further afield, particularly the movement of freight to and from rural hinterlands, and the flow of visitors involve travel across the two regions.

Focusing on critical journeys and taking an inter-regional approach has allowed the two Regional Transport Committees to identify transport activities that will have the greatest benefits for both regions. The outcome is that the two plans are well aligned and address a common suite of cross-regional transport issues. The collaboration is also a great example of local authorities working with the Transport Agency for the benefit of both regions. The Regional Transport Committees are now considering whether one plan that covers both regions will be the next evolution.

## VISITING DRIVERS PROJECT

The Visiting Drivers Project is one example of the Transport Agency, its road safety partners and the tourism industry working together. The focus of the project is on improving road safety for visiting drivers, while maintaining our reputation as an attractive and safe tourist destination.

Self-drive overseas visitor numbers are on the rise and are expected to continue growing. The project is focused on the Otago, Southland and West Coast regions, which have highest concentrations of visitor drivers on their roads.

Initiatives that have already been rolled out nationally as a result of this project include a 'steering wheel safety tag', similar to a luggage tag, fitted to the steering wheel of hire vehicles, reminding drivers of key New Zealand road rules.

The rental vehicle industry has also amended its standard form rental vehicle agreements, making it easier for rental vehicle operators to immediately cancel hire agreements if drivers pose a danger to others. A range of work is planned over the next three years including changes to road signs and markings so they are more visitor driver-friendly, to the more effective provision of information to help keep visitor drivers safe on our roads.



## DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

The NZ Transport Agency has worked with Regional Transport Committees to support development of their Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs), which inform the development of the NLTP.

RLTPs span six years and are produced in consultation with the community. All submitted activities must contribute to the purpose of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and be consistent with the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS).



For more information on the NLTP in this region and nationally, go to [www.nzta.govt.nz/nltp](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/nltp)

If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 699 000 or write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 6995, Wellington 6141