



23 May 2025

Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure

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Hon Simon Bridges, Chair, Waka Kotahi

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Kia ora korua,

Waka Kotahi Proposals to Downgrade O2NL

We write in respect of recently announced Waka Kotahi proposals to downgrade extensive parts of the O2NL works.

We are four Councils which work together under the Wellington Leadership Forum, planning for the future growth of the Lower North Island. O2NL will be a significant link between regions as well as opening up the freight and distribution capacity of the lower and central north island.

As you will be aware the Transmission Gully and Kapiti Expressway routes have been very well received in the Lower North Island. This modern route incorporates a twin carriageway with modern grade separated interchanges and with appropriate room for growth along what is slated as a significant growth corridor.

The growth anticipated in the Wairarapa - Wellington - Horowhenua Future Development Strategy is already in motion in the Horowhenua - Kapiti corridor, fuelled in part by higher quality road access along the southern part of this corridor (Kapiti Expressway and Transmission Gully). In tangible terms this means significant new residential development.

The recent downgrade proposals announced by NZTA reduce O2NL to a minimum viable product. In particular:

- a. Reducing the northern part of the expressway from four lanes to two.
- b. Removing the Tararua Road interchange for exit/entrance into Levin town replacing it with a five-road roundabout.
- c. Cancelling the bridge that connects Manakau Heights to the rest of the Manakau
- d. Taking away the Southbound on-ramp at the Southern end of the expressway requiring commuters to travel through Otaki to enter O2NL.

These retrograde proposals will essentially curtail growth in these areas rather than support it.

We want to acknowledge the work of NZTA officials who will be able to very clearly articulate the significant impact these changes will have on the local communities and wider region. These changes are short sighted and undermine the governments going for growth vision and strategy.

We request an opportunity to meet on this issue, to understand what options you have to intervene as the Minister of Transport and the Chair: Waka Kotahi, to give the Lower North Island the quality of roading infrastructure that it is going to require to cater for the urban and industrial growth that is already materialising on this corridor.

Nga mihi



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Dr Rachel Keedwell
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