



Media Release

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Road safety programme should include new highways

The Government's investment in road safety improvements should include the building of critical new highways, says Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Nick Leggett.

"We welcome the Government's investment in the safety of existing roads; it is nevertheless disappointing that there is still no commitment for critical new state highways which would drive productivity, reduce congestion and also improve safety. Sadly, this announcement looks like the 'one pronged approach' and it won't make the waka go faster."

Nick Leggett said that for some key routes a modern four-lane highway is the only practical solution. The recently completed RONS projects such as the Waikato Expressway and State Highway 1 north of Wellington have proven just how safe these modern four-lane highways are."

"The RTF is very positive however about additional median barriers, shoulder widening and greater use of rumble strips, which are useful improvements. The RTF especially welcomes these upgrades on long-neglected local roads."

He said it is also pleasing that there will be an investment in improving level crossing safety as there are hundreds of dangerous level crossings around New Zealand, many of which require significant re-engineering to make them safe for heavy vehicles.

"One significant project that will disappoint the freight industry and the local community in the Bay of Plenty is the Tauranga to Katikati upgrade, which has still to be prioritised by this Government. The road is one of the most dangerous in the country and is carrying ever-increasing traffic volumes. While some safety improvements will be made to the existing road the route desperately requires a four-lane highway with appropriately controlled access points and separation of opposing traffic."

"Other projects like Otaki to Levin, Christchurch to Ashburton and a new East-West Link are also required to reduce traffic congestion, improve the free flow of freight and reduce the risk of serious accidents."

“The Government’s investment is a good start but it should not come at the expense of new modern highways, instead it should go hand-in-hand with them,” says Leggett.

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