



THE WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Environment Canterbury
PO Box 345
Canterbury 8140

Submission on the Draft Canterbury Regional Land Transport Strategy

The West Coast Regional Council (the Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit on the *Draft Canterbury Regional Land Transport Strategy* (RLTS), and wish to thank Environment Canterbury for considering our submission.

We note that the draft RLTS does not provide reference to specific projects within the document. Our intent with this submission is to support the key outcomes which would lead to the timely upgrade of State Highway 73 – Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek.

Strategic direction (p.5) in the draft RLTS highlights the requirement to "finish what has been started". Council supports this. The construction of the Otira viaduct has led to a steady increase in traffic as this section of State Highway 73 has become safer and more reliable. However, the Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek section is narrow and winding and can create potential difficulties, particularly for larger vehicles, making travel unsafe and increasing the risk of accidents for both trucks and vehicles passing in the other direction, along with campervans, and the increased number of cyclists and walkers seen on this section of road. This is one of the last low standard sections of State Highway 73 needing to be upgraded. In light of this, the Council supports the concept of finishing what has been started on this network to provide a safe and efficient route between our two regions.

The Council supports the identification of State Highway 73 as a strategic transport network (p.20). Canterbury, as recognised in the draft RLTS, is a major distribution centre for the South Island. However, this can only occur through the development and maintenance of efficient transport networks linking to the suppliers and users in neighbouring regions.

The staging of State Highway investment in rural areas (p.29) places an emphasis on the roads of national significance (RoNS) for the short term (years 1-3) with the medium term focus (years 4-12) moving toward bridge replacement and localised improvements on rural parts of the State Highway network for safety and travel time reliability. While it is recognised that there is a requirement to see the RoNS completed with some urgency, Council is concerned that the timeframe for improvement work to be undertaken on State Highway 73 – Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek keeps being extended out.

The Canterbury Regional Land Transport Programme 2009 – 2012 (RLTP) identified this project as a nationally or regionally significant activity likely to be recommended for inclusion in the next RLTP, the next RLTP being 2012-15. The rationale, when Council sought that this project be brought forward to the 2009-12 RLTP, was that the timing of the design and designation project phases would enable construction to be completed at an appropriate time. As a result of the feedback received from Environment Canterbury in the past, Council seeks that the Short Term focus in the draft RLTS also includes "improvements on strategic rural parts of the State Highway network" to enable the programming of such work near the front end of the next Canterbury Regional Land Transport Programme. Council would support the timeframe for the construction phase of the upgrade of this

important link between our regions be moved forward either to the third year or at the latest to year four if the other priorities do not allow third year commencement of these works.

The Council acknowledges that the Canterbury region faces some major transport challenges as a result of the Christchurch earthquakes but also recognises that additional funding has been provided to assist with overcoming these hurdles. Due to the significance of State Highway 73 to the West Coast and the people, communities and economies of both regions, Council encourages that consideration of the benefits of wider strategic investment be undertaken.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that tapers off to the right.

Ross Scarlett
Chairman West Coast Regional Council