

**Manawatu Tararua Highway (Te ahu A Turanga) NOR Submission –  
Bruce Gordon Chair Horizons Regional Council and Regional Transport  
Committee: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Firstly thank you for this opportunity to speak to our submissions on the Notice of Requirement by the New Zealand Transport Agency to designate a roading corridor over the Ruahine Ranges for the Manawatu Tararua Highway.

I am here to speak to the two submissions by Horizons Regional Council and the Regional Transport Committee.

I am supported by:

- Ged Shirley – Group Manager Regional Services and Information, Chair Accessing Central New Zealand
- Jon Roygard – Group Manager Natural Resources and Partnerships
- Phil Hindrup – Manager Transport Services
- Craig Nash – Spearhead, Programme Manager Accelerate25

Between us we will endeavour to speak to the two submissions to cover key points and answer any questions of the hearing panel members. There are really two key aspects to our submissions. These are:

1. The absolute necessity to approve the NOR to re-establish a nationally significant east-west strategic roading connection;
2. Future-proofing walking and cycling opportunities into and over the Ruahine Ranges to maximise social, cultural, and recreational opportunities and provide for users safety.

Prior to handing over to my colleagues, I want to say this. A safe, resilient east-west connection between the Horizons and Hawkes Bay regions is critical to ensuring both regions' prosperous well-being, now and into the future. Other key points I want to emphasise are:

- The Manawatu Gorge replacement route is joint 1<sup>st</sup> equal with the Otaki to North of Levin Expressway as being the most significant transport activities for our region, as defined in the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2025 (2018 review).
- The Gorge closure has increased both region's vulnerability to a significant natural event as we have lost a vital lifeline connection to the eastern parts of our region and the Hawkes Bay.
- The Ashhurst and Woodville communities are hurting and will continue to hurt for some years. It is our job to support and provide for the well-being of these communities and granting the designation will do that.

- The current east west connections are neither safe nor resilient and cannot be relied on into the future should the NOR not be approved.

We therefore ask that the recommendation by the commissioners is to approve the designation so that necessary land purchase and construction can commence as soon as practicable.