

Report pursuant to s 42A Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of:

A Notice of Requirement to construct, operate, use, maintain and improve approximately 11.5km of new State highway connection between Ashhurst and Woodville

And:

A hearing by Manawatū District Council, Palmerston North City Council and Tararua District Council pursuant to s 102

Requiring Authority:

New Zealand Transport Agency

Hearing date:

4 April 2019

S42A Technical Evidence Addendum: Social Impact

By: Kirsty Austin

NJ-015652-992-944-V1-e



1 Introduction

1. My name is Kirsty Jane Austin. I am a sole practitioner, working in the fields of social impact assessment and resource management policy.
2. I prepared evidence on the social impact aspects of the Proposal on behalf of the Section 42A reporting team. I describe this document as my Evidence in Chief ('EIC').
3. I reiterate I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it.

2 Scope

4. In this addendum I provide comment on two main matters that have changed since I addressed them in my EIC. These matters relate to:
 - a. community engagement; and
 - b. social effects associated with cyclist and pedestrian wellbeing and recreation provision.
5. I conclude with recommended changes to the conditions.
6. Wording of the conditions and the condition numbers have been changing as I write this addendum. Unless otherwise stated, I refer to condition numbers used by the Section 42A reporting team. I have also attempted to provide cross references to Ms McLeod's numbering.

3 Community engagement

7. The opportunity for the community to provide feedback as design details are finalised, has been strengthened as a result of changes to the Project since the NoR was lodged. The changes have addressed most matters related to engagement that I raised in my evidence in chief.
8. In particular, the role of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) now explicitly includes the ability to provide input into design matters of relevance to the community. This is clarified

by amendments to condition 8 (the condition that establishes the CLG), and conditions relating to management plans that the CLG will have an opportunity to contribute to (condition 11 – Cultural and Environment Design Framework; condition 12 – Landscape Management Plan; condition 22 – Construction Traffic Management Plan; condition 26 – Network Integration; and conditions PN2 and PN2A - Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve Car Park Management and Reinstatement Plans).

9. Other recent changes to the Project that relate to the CLG are:

- a. a more comprehensive list of potential representatives on the CLG (condition 8d);
- b. a requirement to establish the CLG in sufficient time to allow for consultation (condition 8a). A minor amendment is required to this condition to establish the CLG at whichever one of the options listed occurs first. I suggest wording in section 5 of this addendum;
- c. clarity on the role of the CLG in relation to monitoring the effects of construction (condition 8iii). As a result of this change, I no longer consider it necessary to resource the CLG with a person qualified in social impact assessment (this was included as condition 8g in the Section 42A Planning Report); and
- d. a requirement for NZTA to outline to the CLG how the CLG's feedback has or has not been incorporated into design matters (condition 8f).

10. I agree with the above changes and consider they will contribute towards mitigating potential social effects. As a result of these changes I no longer consider it necessary for a Community Engagement Plan to be prepared (this was included as condition 8A in the Section 42A Planning Report).

11. One matter on community engagement that was agreed at the conferencing between social experts has not been reflected in the Project changes. This relates to engaging with parties who are directly affected by construction traffic. Ms Linzey and I agreed that in addition to the CLG's involvement, directly affected landowners should also have an input into specific design matters. These matters were identified as landscape mitigation and construction traffic and associated noise mitigation (pages 13 and 32 of the Joint Statement of Transport and Social Experts).

12. Condition 12 addresses landscape by requiring consultation with directly affected landowners on landscape mitigation. However, the conditions have not been amended in relation to land owners directly affected by construction traffic (and associated noise).
13. I maintain that directly affected landowners along the construction traffic route should be engaged with as construction management details are developed (page 13 of the Joint Statement of Transport and Social Experts). This could be addressed through an amendment to condition 22 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) and I suggest wording in section 5 of this addendum. I envisage that this requirement would include providing residents with the opportunity to comment on aspects of the Construction Traffic Management Plan that will detail the circumstances in which night time construction traffic will occur and how it will be mitigated, and similarly, for construction traffic during peak times.
14. I consider that this is important for managing potential adverse effects on residents' wellbeing during the construction phase. I acknowledge that condition 22 now requires a description of how heavy vehicle movements will be limited through Ashhurst and Woodville at night and peak times. However, the community has still not been given any indication of how many nights during the five-year construction phase they could be expected to be affected. I also note comments by NZTA's experts which indicate that a faster construction phase could be beneficial for bringing forward the positive effects of the new state highway sooner (for example, paragraph 19 of Ms Linzey's Statement of Evidence, 8 March 2019, and paragraph 26 of Mr Dunlop's Technical Assessment #1 - Transport). While I do not doubt that there is a widespread desire to have the new state highway operating soon, this type of debate should be made with the people who may have to live through a more intensely noisy and disruptive construction environment.

4 Social effects associated with cyclist and pedestrian wellbeing and recreation provision

15. I maintain my position as stated on page 33 of my EIC, that without mitigation there is a potential negative social effect on wellbeing¹ in relation to cyclist and pedestrian safety.

16. I acknowledge that since the NoR was lodged, NZTA has committed to mitigating adverse safety effects on cyclists and pedestrians arising from the Project by:

- a. providing for walking and cycling access across Ashhurst Bridge prior to the Project opening (condition 26B²);
- b. providing pedestrian and cycling facilities between Ashhurst Bridge and Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve Carpark (condition 26C³); and
- c. extending the cycling and walking path adjacent to State Highway 3 in Woodville, from Hampson Street through to the western side of the proposed roundabout (Ms McLeod's condition 26b ii).

17. Notwithstanding the above changes, I note that Ms Fraser and Mr Read still remain concerned about cyclist safety along the new state highway (Joint Statement of Transport and Social Experts, pages 19, 22 - 24). Ms Fraser also remains concerned about cyclist and pedestrian safety along Napier Road (SH3) between Cambridge Avenue and Ashhurst bridge (Joint Statement of Transport and Social Experts, page 14).

18. On page 35 of my EIC, I concluded that overall there would be neutral social effects from the impact of the Project on recreation provision⁴, noting that there would be some minor improvements and some adverse effects on existing recreation. With the changes to the Project since the NoR was lodged, I now consider that the rating is low positive. This conclusion is based on the following:

¹ Categorised as an effect on the 'quality of environment'

² Ms McLeod's condition 26b iv (2 April 2019)

³ Ms McLeod's condition 26b iii (2 April 2019)

⁴ Categorised as an effect on the 'way of life'.

- a. there will be a re-introduction of easy and fast vehicle access to existing recreation facilities on both sides of the Ruahine Ranges;
- b. viewing areas and rest stops will provide passive recreation / leisure opportunities in the form of views of the region, rivers and bush areas;
- c. a pedestrian facility is now proposed on the new bridge over Manawatū River (condition 26E⁵). This will enable views to the Gorge, which was highlighted as a means of reinstating the communities' link to the Gorge and associated sense of identity in Ms Linzey's social impact assessment. It will also provide an opportunity to plan for and link to future walking tracks on the northern side of the Gorge;
- d. safer pedestrian and cyclist links are now proposed to existing recreation provision at the eastern and western ends of Manawatū Gorge (as referred to in paragraph 16 above);
- e. the community now has opportunities, via the CLG, to input into design details relevant to recreation matters as they are developed in the Cultural and Environmental Design Framework and Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve Carpark Management and Reinstatement Plan (conditions 11d and PN2b); and
- f. the scope of the Manawatū Gorge Scenic Reserve Carpark Management and Reinstatement Plan has been broadened to require an integrated approach to designing pedestrian and cycling provision in the area (from Ashhurst, to the Reserve, and to the new Manawatū River bridge) (condition PN2 c⁶).

⁵ Ms McLeod's condition 5e viii (2 April 2019)

⁶ Ms McLeod's condition PN2A c (2 April 2019)

5 Conditions

19. As outlined in paragraph 9b of this addendum, I consider condition 8 (Community Liaison Group) should be amended as follows:

- a) *The Requiring Authority must establish a Community Liaison Group at least 30 working days prior to the commencement of construction, or at least 30 working days prior to the completion of the CEDF (under Condition 11), a LMP (under Condition 12), a CTMP (under Condition 22), or a MGSR Car Park Plan (under Condition PN2), whichever is the earliest (to allow sufficient opportunity for consultation).*

20. As outlined in paragraphs 11 - 14 of this addendum, I consider condition 22 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) should be amended as follows:

- c) *take into account the outcomes of any consultation with the Community Liaison Group established by Condition 8, ~~and~~ Councils and directly affected parties in relation to clauses g and h (for the purposes of this condition, directly affected parties include, but are not limited to, affected houses and other sensitive locations identified in Condition 21d v);*

Kirsty Austin

3 April 2019

