

Christchurch to Ashburton Expressway

Factsheet



National will build the Christchurch to Ashburton expressway, delivering approximately 60km of expressway between the Christchurch Southern Motorway and Ashburton.

The project will see the existing four-lane expressway extended from the Christchurch Southern Motorway through to Ashburton and will include new bridges over the Selwyn, Rakaia, and Ashburton rivers.

The Canterbury region is New Zealand's largest by land area and second largest by population. Strong, resilient and reliable transport networks are needed to continue supporting growth in the region.

The State Highway 1 route between Christchurch and Ashburton is a critical gateway for the rest of the South Island and complements the previous work by National to deliver the Christchurch Northern and Southern motorways, the rebuild of SH1 to Kaikoura and the newly promised extension of the Northern Motorway between Pegasus and Belfast.

Recognising the high volumes of traffic and potential for future growth in the region, National's vision for the SH1 link between Christchurch and Ashburton will deliver a highly engineered and safe road that provides reliable journey times to support the economic growth of the region and access to key markets.

Our commitment:

- National will begin work on the new expressway in our first term, with construction likely to start after 2023.

Background

- The Christchurch to Ashburton section of SH1 forms part of the South Island's most important transport corridor between Christchurch and the rest of the South Island.
- The previous National Government was advancing plans for an expressway between Christchurch and Ashburton. This was an extension of the Roads of National Significance programme that saw the Christchurch Northern and Southern motorways upgraded to modern expressways.
- Traffic volume is growing. In 2018 there were approximately 13,000 vehicles on the Christchurch Ashburton route per day with almost 15 per cent of these being heavy vehicles. There has been average growth of approximately 4 per cent in traffic volumes per year for the past four years with the route adding almost 2000 daily trips since 2014.
- The route is prone to safety issues with almost 500 crashes and 141 deaths and serious injuries on that stretch of road between 2010 and 2019.

Labour's failure

- Labour's changes to transport policy settings in 2018 resulted in \$5 billion being cut from the state highway budget – meaning no progress has been made on this project.
- Under Labour, no money has been set aside for the project for the next ten years, meaning there has been no major highway investment into the Canterbury region since National's Roads of National Significance and SH1 rebuild between Kaikoura and Christchurch.
- An upgrade for this high-volume and high risk area is still required as the area continues to grow and provides a critical gateway through the South Island.

Detail

- The four-lane road will link the northern end of Ashburton to the Southern Motorway extension currently under construction just north of Rolleston.
- The total distance along SH1 from north of Ashburton to the southern end of the Christchurch Southern Motorway is approximately 60km.
- The expressway will see a continuous four-lane state highway (two lanes each way) with separation between traffic traveling in opposite directions.
- It will include wide lanes and sealed shoulders, and mainly grade separated intersections.
- It will provide safe roadsides clear of obstacles, as well as high standard landscaping and environmental controls.
- The route will include new bridges over the Selwyn, Rakaia, and Ashburton rivers.

Project benefits

- It will improve resilience in the roading network and support safer and faster freight and commuter connections between Christchurch and the rest of the South Island.
- It will enhance journey time predictability and reliability by increasing the capacity of the road.
- It will create stronger connections with key hubs, including Christchurch International Airport and the Port of Lyttelton, and support growing volumes of freight to these ports as well as opportunities to link with Timaru in the future.
- It will reduce the number of fatal and serious crashes by investing in highly engineered roading. National's Roads of National Significance are some of New Zealand's safest roads.

- The project will improve access to local community features and maximise the opportunity for future growth in the community, increased local tourism and stronger links with growth in the south.

Project costs

- The project is estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 billion.
- A detailed business case will be carried out for the project. This will assess the various options for the alignment of the road and the different costs for each option.