

**NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY SUBMISSION ON THE NOTICE OF REQUIREMENT BY THE MINISTER OF
CORRECTIONS FOR THE PROPOSED WAIKERIA PRISON CAPACITY INCREASE**

In accordance with Section 96 of the Resource Management Act 1991

TO: Otorohanga District Council
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RECEIVED ON

25 MAY 2017

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ATTENTION: Lana Gooderham

Introduction

This submission relates to the Notice of Requirement (NoR) for the alteration of Designation D55 in the Otorohanga District Plan for the purpose of authorising the construction, operation and maintenance of prison facilities and prison infrastructure to provide for up to 3,000 prisoners at Waikeria Prison, located at the end of Waikeria Road. The current designation allows for a maximum of 1,250 prisoners.

The NZ Transport Agency's Role

The NZ Transport Agency (the Transport Agency) is a Crown entity with the sole powers of control for all purposes of all state highways. The Transport Agency is also a significant investor in the local road network. The Transport Agency's objective, functions, powers and responsibilities are derived from the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA), and the Government Rounding Powers Act 1989 (GRPA). The statutory objective of the Transport Agency is to undertake its functions in a way that contributes to an effective, efficient and safe land transport system in the public interest¹.

¹ LTMA Section 94

The Transport Agency has an interest in the application as the road controlling authority for State Highway 3 (SH3), and as co-investor in the local road network with Waipa and Otorohanga District Councils. The proposed expansion of Waikeria Prison will result in significant additional traffic on the transport network, including SH3.

The Transport Agency's Submission

The Minister of Corrections has given notice to the Otorohanga District Council pursuant to Section 181 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) to alter Designation D55 in the Otorohanga District Plan which relates to Waikeria Prison. This alteration will provide for the construction, maintenance and operation of prison facilities for up to 3,000 prisoners. The existing prison is located at the end of Waikeria Road, approximately 1.6km south of Te Awamutu (in Otorohanga District). Waikeria Road connects with SH3 at an existing intersection approximately 3km south of Kihikihi (in Waipa District).

Traffic Increase

As part of the NoR process, a Transportation Assessment was commissioned by the Department of Corrections (the Department) to consider the effects of the prison expansion on the local roading network and the state highway. It is anticipated that prison-related traffic will increase from 716 vehicles per day (vpd) to 2,800 vpd. Peak hour traffic will increase from 100 vehicles per hour (vph) to 470 vph. To mitigate the effect of the additional traffic, the Transportation Assessment recommended mitigation measures which include upgrades and works on the local roading network, as well as an upgrade to the SH3 / Waikeria Road intersection and implementation of a monitoring condition. The Department has been in discussions with the Transport Agency and Waipa District Council (WDC) in relation to the upgrade of the SH3 / Waikeria Road intersection.

SH3 / Waikeria Road Intersection

The SH3 / Waikeria Road intersection is an existing 'Give Way' intersection, located approximately 3km south of Kihikihi. A key concern for the Transport Agency is the existing sightlines at the intersection. The Transportation Assessment measured sightlines from the intersection northwards at 180m, which is below the 262m requirement in accordance with Austroads (the accepted design guide for intersections in New Zealand). The sightline for right turns from SH3 was measured at 220m, a deficiency of 42m. The existing safety concerns with the intersection are likely to be exacerbated with the increase in prison traffic, particularly as it is anticipated that a significant portion of the traffic will be turning right out from Waikeria

Road onto SH3 when exiting the site. The Transport Agency has emphasised the critical importance of improving sight distances at the intersection throughout the consultation process.

Proposed Intersection Design

To mitigate the potential adverse effect on safety, the Transportation Assessment included a proposed design for the intersection, measures to improve sight distances, and a proposed monitoring condition. The Transport Agency identified concerns with the proposed design, including ongoing deficiencies in sight distances.

As a result of further discussions between the Department and the Transport Agency, it was agreed that the Department would undertake further investigation into alternative options. It was identified that a superior outcome could be achieved by acquiring additional land to the south of the intersection and/or opposite the intersection. This additional land would allow for alternative designs that would enable a safer intersection layout and would address deficient sightlines.

The Transport Agency understands that the Department has commenced negotiation/investigation into acquiring the additional land (currently in the ownership of AgResearch). The Transport Agency has similarly commenced internal discussions regarding the potential vesting of any additional land with the Crown for roading purposes and any steps required to facilitate/enable this.

The Transport Agency has acknowledged that due to the proposed land acquisition, the required upgrade to the intersection may take longer than originally anticipated; and that this shouldn't delay the overall project. It is considered that temporary traffic management measures could be put into place to allow for the safe entry and exit of traffic until such time that the intersection improvements are complete.

Memorandum of Understanding

At the time of writing this submission, investigations into alternative intersection designs as preferred by the Transport Agency are ongoing. The Department has indicated its commitment to achieving an appropriately safe outcome. The Department and the Transport Agency have agreed to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) recording the ongoing commitment of both parties to working together to this end. The purpose of this MoU is to clearly set out the options for the intersection improvement, the processes through which the chosen option will be pursued, and the implementation of the chosen option.

Decision Sought

The Transport Agency seeks that the Otorohanga District Council **confirms** the alteration to Designation D55 as sought, and **includes** the following conditions (or conditions to similar effect):

- 1. The requiring authority shall upgrade the intersection of SH3/Waikeria Road to accommodate the additional traffic generated as a result of the prison expansion, including specifically improving sightlines towards meeting relevant Austroads standards. Detailed design, including comments from the NZ Transport Agency as road controlling authority, shall be submitted to Otorohanga District Council for approval prior to construction.*
- 2. A traffic management plan shall be prepared by the requiring authority and approved by Otorohanga District Council, in consultation with Waipa District Council and the NZ Transport Agency, prior to construction commencing, outlining temporary traffic management measures to be employed during construction and until such time as the upgrade of the SH3/Waikeria Road intersection in Condition 1 is completed.*


The Transport Agency **does** wish to be heard in support of this submission.

The Transport Agency **does not** wish to present joint evidence.

A copy of this submission has been served on the applicant.



Signed by Jenni Fitzgerald
Under delegated authority for
The NZ Transport Agency



Date