

Media Statement – NZ Heavy Haulage Association

15 October 2019

Heavy Haulage Association Welcomes 4-Laning of Manawatu Gorge Replacement Road

The NZ Heavy Haulage Association welcomes the news that NZTA will provide four lanes over the proposed Manawatu-Tararua Highway, as this would provide for safer travel for all road users.

The concept designs for the replacement for the Manawatu Gorge road initially contained only two lanes on the flatter section on the top of the range. While on the uphill and downhill sections these both included a crawler lane - essentially four-laning these sections, but not the full route.

The Heavy Haulage Association represents the interests of oversize transport operators, and industry representatives were concerned of the safety issues for other road users coming up behind large transporters still not up to normal travel speed on the top of the hill.

The Association's Chief Executive Jonathan Bhana-Thomson welcomed the change in design to allow the crawler lanes to be continued over the top of the hill. "What this will mean is that other road traffic approaching from behind will be able to pass oversize transporters, not be held up, and there will not be safety issues with lines of traffic gathering behind the wide and heavy load."

"We represented our concerns to NZTA and we are pleased that they have made the common-sense decision to change the design to accommodate these matters."

Local Association Board Member, Tina Ware of Manawatu-based JP Ware Transport is excited about the change in design. "Currently we have to grind up the hill over the Saddle Road, and with the increased traffic on the Saddle since the Gorge was closed, this does result in lines of traffic behind us – although we let them past where we can"

"The continuation of the two lanes in each direction over the top of the hill on the new road will mean that there will be less frustration from other road users and it will result in safer travel for everyone."