

# THE WATERVIEW CONNECTION LEGACY



Te Whitinga - the crossing



Waterview Reserve Playground



Howlett Reserve Walkway

## The Waterview Connection is set to open in early July 2017

*The \$1.4 billion dollar NZ Transport Agency project, New Zealand's largest and most ambitious project ever, will soon open for vehicles heralding the biggest catalyst for change in Auckland since the Harbour Bridge was built in 1959.*

"We're extremely proud to deliver this world-class project to Auckland which will progress the way that people move in and around this city," says Iain Simmons, Alliance Project Manager.

"This is a landmark moment for this truly outstanding project and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our team for their massive efforts over the last five and a half years to get us to this point."

The jewel of the Waterview Connection crown is the twin 2.4km-long three lane tunnels which stretches between Waterview in the north and Owairaka in the south.

Designed, built and commissioned on this project, the tunnels connect the existing motorway network - State Highway 16 at Waterview and State Highway 20 in Owairaka - to complete the Western Ring Route, a 48km motorway route linking the west of Auckland, Manukau, the city and the North Shore.

"The tunnels look exceptional and its state of the art operational and safety gear has been rigorously tested during our commissioning phase," says Iain.

He says the Great North Road Interchange is also a spectacular engineering feat but adds that the Waterview Connection's legacy is more than just delivering a motorway.

"It's been a privilege to be a member of the community since we started work. The relationships our team has developed with local people will endure long after the project is complete," says Iain.

"It's my belief that our collaborative effort with local residents and other key stakeholders has been crucial to achieving outstanding results for local communities. It's an approach that all other infrastructure projects should commit to and actively pursue," he says.

The Waterview Connection's former Project Manager, John Burden, also thanked the community.

"We have had our challenges but we have genuinely done our best to be considerate, available and responsive, and we have appreciated the inclusion and openness we have received from the community in kind."

Over the past few years the project has completed a range of community facilities including a playground, two skateparks, helped to rehabilitate Oakley Creek by diverting the waterway and will soon open shared paths that will include Te Whitinga - the crossing which spans State Highway 20 to connect neighbours that are now separated by the new motorway.

"I'm particularly excited about a series of interconnected shared paths that will allow people to cycle from Maioro Street all the way to Point Chevalier and onto the CBD or West Auckland," says Iain.

"Cyclists and walkers will be able to travel safely on well-lit and purpose built shared paths, while enjoying the natural green environment along Oakley Creek all the way out to the Waitemata Harbour."

## PUBLIC OPENING EVENTS

A ceremonial opening on Sunday 18 June will be followed by public open days to allow people the chance to experience the tunnel up close before opening to traffic. 60,500 tickets have been snapped up for the public open days which will take place over the next two weeks.

The Well-Connected Alliance has been working through schools directly affected by the project to ensure as many children as possible get a chance to walk into the tunnel.

"Interest in the project is so high right across the city that I doubt even 200,000 tickets would be enough meet the demand," says Alliance Project Manager Iain Simmons.

"With demand so high, we've had to find the best way to use the few tickets we have most effectively. We thought using local schools would give us the furthest reach into our neighbouring communities."

Iain says the project had only a few hundred tickets to distribute.

"There's certainly not enough for everyone who wants one - even the project's own plans to celebrate the end of the project have been cut back sharply where some of our own people will miss out."

The six schools are located in the north and south ends of the project - Wesley Primary, Wesley Intermediate, Christ the King and Owairaka District School in the Mt Roskill area, and Waterview Primary and Pt Chevalier's St Francis School in the north.

"We have chosen the 6 schools most affected by our works and also where we have developed a strong relationship with teachers and pupils over the years," Iain says.

"I know there will be some disappointment from those who have missed out. We have tried to be as fair as possible with the limited number of tickets we have."





Alford Street Bridge crosses Oakley Creek as part of Waterview Shared Path

## Connecting Communities by bike

The Waterview Connection project will leave behind better places and spaces for local communities in surrounding areas.

A playground, enhanced sports fields at Valonia Reserve complete with new a change room facility and volleyball court have been completed as a part of the project.

With the project set to open in early July, a series of interconnected cycleways - the Southwestern Shared Path and Waterview Shared Path will open in the coming months.

The twin shared paths will enable for people for the first-time ever to travel continuously

on purpose-built cycleways through Waterview, Mt Albert, and Owairaka.

For those travelling on the northwestern cycleway from West Auckland or Central Auckland, they will be able to ride through Unitec Campus, Phyllis and Harbutt Reserves to link to Alan Wood Reserve in Mt Albert. They would then be able to continue on the Southwestern Shared Path along the new motorway at Owairaka to connect to Te-Whitinga or carry on their journey to Hillsborough or further afield to the Auckland International Airport.

## Community Information Meeting

The Well-Connected Alliance held an information meeting this week with community members to update them about the project.

The information meeting was initiated by the WCA to update neighbours about our work after the delay to the tunnel opening due to testing and commissioning of the safety equipment.

"It's important that we keep people in our community regularly updated about work. Local residents and other key stakeholders have been important partners of the project since the outset," says Alliance Project Manager, Iain Simmons.

"Although we officially ended the Community Liaison Group Meetings in March this year, we want to ensure that our collaborative relationship remains strong by ensuring there is a constant two way flow of information right till the tunnel opens."

At the meeting, the completion of the testing and commissioning of the tunnels was discussed as well as the progress on Waterview Shared Path which is due to be open in late winter.

Those that attended were also given an overview of the work to be carried out by Waterview Tunnel Joint Operation (the team responsible for the operation and maintenance of the tunnels when they open) from its Alliance Operations Manager, Emilio Marquez.

After five and a half years of consistent communication and engagement between the project and community members, the final get-together was frank, honest and sincere - a testament to the relationship that has formed during this project.

Albert-Eden Local Board member, Margi Watson says the regular community liaison group meetings (CLG) have worked well.

"From raising community concerns to working through solutions like the location of the stack, well-designed community spaces have all been achieved at the CLG meeting. They gave up their evenings for five years to make sure the end result was the best outcome possible.

"They've worked alongside our schools and groups to ensure we have been protected from the construction disruption as much as possible. They've built solid relationships in the community and will be missed."



Alliance Operation Manager, Emilio Marquez

## Waterview Tunnel - operation and maintenance

The Waterview Tunnel will soon open for traffic in early July and is set to transform the way that people and freight move around Auckland.

To operate and maintain New Zealand's longest road tunnel and the Great North Road Interchange, a new alliance has been formed - the Waterview Tunnel Joint Operation (WTJO).

The WTJO is made up of a mix of people from the Well-Connected Alliance and SICE - a specialist tunnel operations from Spain.

"It is the first arrangement of its kind in New Zealand. Usually ownership passes over to the client after the work is complete but this arrangement will ensure the expertise and knowledge developed during the installation and commissioning of tunnel safety systems will remain in the same hands after opening," says Emilio Marquez, Alliance Operation Manager of the WTJO.

WTJO consists of approximately 50 people and notably consists of an incident response team of 18 people and 4 vehicles - two 17 tonne attenuators and two 4x4 response units. This team will be responsible for dealing with any incident in the tunnel and for keeping traffic flowing underground with minimal disruption.

"They are ready to go and will be on duty 24/7 when the tunnel opens," says Emilio.

"They've been rehearsing live exercises inside the tunnel with the NZ Police and Emergency Services. They will have a level of service anywhere of responding to a fire alarm within six minutes, and within 15 minutes to any other incident."

If the incident response team is the mechanical muscle, the tunnel operators are the eyes of an extensive tunnel traffic management system that also includes cameras and electronic signage.

The tunnel will be monitored and managed 24/7 by a team of 10 tunnel operators, there's a public address system, full mobile and radio rebroadcast coverage, emergency telephones every 150 metres, ventilation fans to remove fumes, sprinkler/deluge system to control fire or spills, and 18 cross passages (inside the tunnel proper and in the two ventilation buildings at either end of the tunnel) 150 metres apart to allow people to cross from one tunnel to the other if there is an incident or emergency.

"The tunnel operators have gone through extensive training and have played a key part in the Tunnel Acceptance Testing, having been exposed to all sort of incidents they can expect in the tunnel, like fires, accidents."