



Media Release

7 July 2017

Enduring solution needed for Manawatu Gorge

Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley is urging NZTA and Government to consider an enduring solution for the troubled Manawatu Gorge.

News that the Gorge is to remain closed indefinitely due to unstable geology and the risk of slips and rockfall is extremely disturbing to freight operators who have historically relied upon the route.

“The Manawatu Gorge is critical to east-west freight across the lower North Island,” says Shirley. “It is vital that we find a solution that can be relied on and will not require the almost constant remedial work the Gorge has required in recent times.”

“If money was no object a tunnel would be the most logical solution, however, tunnels, as we know are expensive not only to build but to maintain.”

“The road transport industry is adamant that a long-term view is needed, it is no good just patching up what we have got, because we know the Gorge route will always be problematic. It’s better to bite the bullet now and commit to doing something that will stand the test of time.”

“Finally, I am pleased that NZTA has agreed to take over responsibility for the Saddle Road route from Tararua District Council. With the Gorge out, Saddle Road is now a crucial piece of nationally significant infrastructure that requires additional work to improve its resilience and safety,” says Shirley.

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