

**REPORT ON PROGRESS OF  
THE TRANSIT NEW ZEALAND  
RESEARCH PROJECT  
"HEAVY TRANSPORT ROUTES"**

*By*

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## **1. Introduction**

The research is being undertaken because:

- New Zealand's national economy relies on its road network to move goods to markets and export ports;
- since deregulation of the road transport industry in the 1980's there has been a substantial increase in the number and use of heavy vehicles on the road network; and
- there may be potential for greater road transport productivity through increased axle loads and payloads.

## **2. Stage 1**

The current study is Stage 1 of a possible multi-staged project investigating the possibility of increased legal load limits for specific road routes.

### **2.1 Project Objectives**

The objectives of the current Stage 1 are:

- identify the currently used heavy transport road routes;
- evaluate the present load and dimensional capacities of a few (1 - 3) of the identified heavy transport routes; and
- determine, for the few evaluated routes, the vehicle types that are currently used and would be used if current legal load and dimensional limits were increased.

### **2.2 Progress**

Heavy transport route corridors (based on vehicle numbers and freight tonnages) which are currently used have been identified from information obtained from the road transport industry and Transit New Zealand traffic monitoring group. From these data the routes have been ranked highest to lowest (based on vehicle numbers and freight tonnages). Refer Annex 1.

The project is now at the stage where a few (1 - 3) of the most heavily trafficked/tonnaged routes are to be evaluated for their present load and dimensional capacities. (Initially one route is being evaluated to test the evaluation procedures.)

The route Tokoroa (Kinleath) to Port Tauranga (including both routes from Putaruru to SH29: SH1 and 27; and local roads Whites Road to Rapurapu Road) has been selected for the initial evaluation. This route was chosen because it has one of the highest heavy vehicle/tonnage flows (refer Annex 1) and it has the clear purpose of presently being the major route from south Waikato to Port Tauranga for exports of timber (in particular), dairy and other agricultural produce.

Evaluation of the route will include use of existing road management inventories to identify restraints. Such restraints could include:

- bridge strength and dimensions;
- overbridge dimensions;
- railway crossings;
- road geometry; and
- pavement strength.

Affected local authorities will be consulted for their comments on the route.

Subject to the results obtained from the first route evaluated, a further two routes may be selected and evaluated.

Consultation with the transport industry will be undertaken to determine current and future heavy vehicle use in regard to the evaluated routes.

### 3. Use of Project Results

The results of Stage 1 of the project will be used to determine:

- if legal load limits could be raised on selected routes without physically upgrading the route; and
- whether the economics of upgrading selected routes should be studied.

In association with these determinations the following matters will be considered for the selected routes:

- regional planning;
- environmental impacts;
- vehicle safety;
- public consultation; and
- alternative solutions outside roading.

#### 4. **Project Publicity**

The project has received considerable publicity and generated correspondence. An information letter has been sent out to all regional, district and city councils. Articles on the project have appeared in:

- Transearch (April 1993)
- In Transit (April 1993)
- New Zealand Trucking (June 1993)
- Transport News (August 1993)
- Transport News (October 1993)

#### 5. **Project Completion**

The draft final report for the project (Stage 1) is due in April 1994.

**ROUTES RANKED BY HEAVY VEHICLE/TONNAGE FLOWS**

The following list ranks routes by their heavy vehicle/tonnage flows:

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Route</b>
1	Auckland to Hamilton
2	Tokoroa to Port Tauranga
3	Murupara to Paengaroa, then to Port Tauranga
4	Kawerau to Paengaroa, then to Port Tauranga
5	Stratford to Hawera
6	Hastings to Napier
7	Christchurch to Timaru
8	Taupo to Napier