



Information for Mana Esplanade Residents and Businesses - May 2019

## *Mana Clearways Review*

### **Summary**

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and Porirua City Council are facing pressure to do something about the increasingly frequent and lengthy queues that are occurring for traffic using Mana Esplanade.

NZTA has provided us with data relating to current traffic volumes and, based on traffic volumes alone, some changes to clearway hours can certainly be justified. Extending the clearway hours, however, is likely to take some time (probably months) for NZTA to action.

In the meantime, the Paremata Residents Association believes that urgent action needs to be taken and that Mana residents and businesses need to be consulted about steps that might alleviate the current situation. This pamphlet outlines our proposed approach to complement the NZTA review and we would welcome your feedback.

### **Current Situation**

Increasingly frequent and lengthy queues are occurring for traffic using Mana Esplanade. For northbound traffic - especially at weekends and before holiday weekends - these queues sometimes now extend to beyond the Whitford Brown intersection and because there may be only one or two vehicles legally parked in the kerbside lane on Mana Esplanade contributing to the delays, many motorists cannot understand why vehicles are allowed to park in those lanes at such times. In fact, some people believe that parking should be banned on Mana Esplanade at all times and that it should be turned into a 4 lane highway.

### **Environment Court Conditions – the expected functions of the kerbside lanes**

Many people are not aware the original clearway plan put forward by Transit NZ (now NZTA) in 1998 was rejected by a panel of independent Commissioners who described it as *“too tight a fit within the narrow road corridor”* and *“so deficient in so many respects that it is inconsistent with the purpose of sustainable management”*. And when the Environment Court eventually approved Transit’s revised clearway proposals in 2001, it did so in the knowledge that the road would not meet many of the normally applied standards for lane and footpath widths, noise, vibration and air quality levels, proximity to houses and so on. Hence, the Court expected **that the kerbside lanes would be available for parking and cycling outside peak hours and would ALSO act as buffers to keep the traffic further away from the adjoining footpaths and properties.**

This important function was emphasized in the Court’s many conditions, one of which directed Transit to take steps to *“encourage heavy commercial vehicles to use the central lane at all times of the day”* and to *“discourage all drivers from travelling in the kerbside lanes during off-peak hours”*. We believe that this stretch of road is unique – nowhere else in New Zealand is NZTA required to do this. Moreover, if there had been any suggestion that the kerbside lanes would be used by through traffic outside of peak times, we believe that the proposal would certainly have been rejected by the Environment Court.



Further background information can be found in a potted history on the Association's website at [www.paremataresidents.co.nz](http://www.paremataresidents.co.nz).

It is imperative, therefore, that the clearway hours be kept to a minimum and only applied to cope with peak traffic. The more traffic that uses the kerbside lanes, the greater will be:

- the harm being done to the health of residents and pedestrians from the insidious effects of noise, vibration and poor air quality;
- the risks for pedestrians and cyclists;
- the dangers for residents and others turning into or backing out of properties; and
- the adverse effects on businesses operating alongside the road.

### NZTA's Clearways Review

NZTA has provided an assessment of changes that could be made to clearway times based on current peak traffic flows in both directions on the Esplanade. The Paremata Residents Association has reviewed their assessment and agrees that changes along the following lines could be justified (subject to further discussion with NZTA).

	Southbound		Northbound	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Weekdays	6.30 – 9.30am	6.00 – 9.30am	3.30 – 6.30pm	2.00 – 6.30pm
Saturdays	10.30 am – 1.30pm	10.30am – 3.00pm	10.30am – 1.30pm	10.00am – 4.30pm
Sundays & Public Holidays	3.30 – 6.30pm	2.30 – 5.30pm	None	10.00am – 4.30pm

Extending the clearway hours, however, requires an extensive process of prior consultation and publicity to meet the Environment Court's conditions. And to increase the clearway hours beyond a maximum of 3.5 hours on any day in either direction, NZTA must apply for an alteration to the Designation in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991. This will therefore take at least some months for NZTA to achieve.

### Paremata Residents Association's Proposed Approach – what can be done in the meantime?

Although we believe that clearway times must be kept to a minimum, it should also be recognized that the clearways were only ever expected to be in place for a limited time. Since Transmission Gully is now not expected to be finished until sometime in 2020, we suggest that **every effort needs to be made to make the best of a bad situation until then.**

If there are ways in which residents and businesses can help avoid the build-up of queues by not parking (or asking their visitors not to park) in the kerbside lanes when build-ups are likely, everyone should benefit by:

- Avoiding the frustration of those caught in the queues
- Keeping the traffic moving through the area
- Reducing the potential for some types of crashes
- Maintaining better relationships within the communities.

Our major recommendation, therefore, is that residents and businesses do what they can to avoid parking in the kerbside lanes during the proposed new clearway times outlined in the table above – and at any other times when there is a likelihood that traffic volumes could be heavy (e.g. prior to long weekends or when major events are scheduled in Wellington or further north).

We appreciate that it is not just residents and their visitors that park in the kerbside lanes – for instance, particular problems can be caused by people visiting roadside businesses, people who launch their boats between the Paremata bridges and people attending services at St Barnabas. We are suggesting that, at times when such parking is anticipated to cause problems, NZTA and the





Police could be asked to place temporary “no parking” signs along the edge of the appropriate stretches of footpath.

At the same time, it would also be helpful if motorists were to respect the substandard nature of the current road and the important role that the kerbside lanes play in reducing health and safety dangers. In particular, the increasing failure by heavy vehicles to use the centre lanes at all times is a major concern of residents. Therefore, in return for residents’ support/cooperation, we will ask NZTA to take stronger measures to encourage heavy vehicles to use the centre lanes at all times.

We see it as important to maintain good relationships with NZTA, PCC, GWRC, local business owners, residents and other members of the community – particularly at this time when we are seeking their help to produce a community-driven Vision Document for the area and when we expect to be involved in discussions on highway revocation changes in conjunction with completion of Transmission Gully.

### Paremata Roundabout Update

Also included with this information is a pamphlet about the work currently being undertaken at the roundabout. It is expected that these changes, pushed for by the Association, will help with the efficiency of traffic flow along Mana Esplanade, especially southbound during early evening peaks.

### Your Feedback

We would welcome your feedback on this issue. You may like to simply send us an email with your comments to [secretary.parematara@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.parematara@gmail.com). Alternatively you could jot down your thoughts in the space below and either mail it to our PO Box (54 186) or drop it in our Secretary’s **letterbox at 48 Mana Esplanade**. If you would like to be kept updated, please also advise us of your contact details.

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My comments on the Mana Clearways proposals are (*continue overleaf or separately if needed*):

Contact details: Name..... Address.....  
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