

31 May 2010

Northern Gateway Toll Road six-monthly operating report available

Detailed information on the second six month period of operations of the Northern Gateway Toll Road is now available in a report published today on the NZ Transport Agency's toll road website.

The toll road's operating report for the for the period 1 July through to 31 December 2009 shows that the six-monthly total for all traffic using the road was 4.2 percent higher than forecast, bringing the total number of journeys since the toll road opened in January last year to 4.3 million - 3 percent ahead of forecast.

NZTA Regional Director for Auckland and Northland Wayne McDonald said the higher than forecast traffic volumes had contributed to greater than expected revenue collection, with paid toll revenue 4% ahead of budget.

Key results for the six months to 31 December, 2009 include:

- The overall compliance rate (percentage of trips that have been paid) on the road has remained steady at 94 percent
- Total revenue released to repay debt for construction of the road was \$2.9 million, about 4 percent higher than initial forecasts
- Nearly half (49 percent) of trips taken on the toll road during the six month period were by pre-paid account holders
- 56 percent of casual users paid manually at the kiosks, 25 percent paid using the web, 18 percent used the freephone service and one percent paid by mail
- The average cost per transaction to operate the tolling system for the six month period was \$0.78

Mr McDonald said several changes had been introduced to improve services for toll road customers, including extending the toll payment period from three to five days and upgrading the payment website for easier use.

To download a copy of the *Northern Gateway Toll Road Operating Report for the period ending 31 December, 2009*, go to www.tollroad.govt.nz.

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Questions and Answers – Northern Gateway Toll Road Operating Report

Q: What is this report about?

A: This report provides performance results for operations on the Northern Gateway Toll Road for the six-month period through to 31 December 2009.

Q: What are the toll tariffs?

A: The toll tariffs for the period covered by the report were \$2.00 for light vehicles (under 3.5 tonnes), \$4.00 for heavy vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes) and \$0 for motorcycles. The zero toll for motorcycles was subject to review, with public consultation undertaken in late 2009. The NZTA Board considered the outcome of public consultation in March 2010, and agreed that motorcyclists receive the same benefit as other light vehicles using the toll road and should therefore be tolled \$2.00. The \$2.00 toll for motorcycles will be introduced from 1 June 2010.

Q: What was the toll revenue for the six months to 31 December 2009?

A: The total toll revenue paid for the six month period to 31 December 2009 was \$2.9 million. This was 4% ahead of our year to date budget. The toll revenue is the portion of all the tolls paid that is designated for repayment of the construction debt, which allowed the road to be built early. Higher than expected pre-paid account registrations and higher traffic volumes are contributing to greater than expected revenue collection.

Q: What have you done to improve services for customers?

A: Our first priority was to upgrade the self-service kiosks so that they are easier and faster to use. We have simplified the process for customers to pay their tolls using the kiosks and made the payment process easier to understand, cutting the average time taken to pay a toll and helping to reduce queuing at the kiosks. We have also made improvements to the tolling website to make payment of trips easier, and extended the deadline for toll payments from three to five days after using the road.

Q: What have you done to collect unpaid tolls?

An internal collection process has been in place since the toll road opened, and a civil debt collection process was introduced early this financial year to target higher value debts. This helped to reduce the value of unpaid tolls to 31 December 2009 to about 5% of total toll revenue, down from the 6.1% reported for the period to 30 June 2009.