


Reference Number: 2023/998

31 July 2023



Email: 

Tēnā koe 

### Response - Official Information Request

I refer to your request for information received on 21 July 2023. Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and I provide the following information.

***“All correspondence between the council and the minister on construction of O2NL”***

Please find attached all correspondence between Horowhenua District Council and the Minister of Transport relating to the construction of O2NL.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or free phone 0800 802 602.

Horowhenua District Council publishes responses to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) requests that we consider to be of wider public interest, or which relate to a subject that has been widely requested. To protect your privacy, we will not generally publish personal information about you, or information that identifies you. We will publish the LGOIMA response along with a summary of the request on our website. Requests and responses may be paraphrased.

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact the LGOIMA Officer on [LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz)

Ngā mihi



Monique Davidson  
Chief Executive

15 March 2023

Hon Grant Robertson  
Minister of Finance

E: [REDACTED]

Hon Michael Wood  
Minister of Transport

E: [REDACTED]

Dear Ministers Robertson and Wood

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the many New Zealanders who were affected by Cyclone Gabrielle, and who continue to feel the effects and loss, in the aftermath of the destruction. We can proudly say that our district is providing support where we can, through manpower, donations and financial contributions. There is real strength in our community, we too are devastated by what we have seen and we are more than ready to support where we can in order to build a resilient future.

When we look at our own district, and its future, we too need to build resilience. We too have climate change, environmental and economic challenges. One thing that we are sure about, is the impact Ōtaki to North Levin Expressway will have on the Horowhenua District and wider region.

The Ō2NL project will deliver numerous benefits for our community, including addressing a dangerous stretch of road and improving resilience in the transport network. This will in turn lead to numerous productivity benefits and will strengthen distribution and supply chains. As the vegetable bowl of the lower North Island, improving Horowhenua's connectivity to the rest of the country is vital, and will assist with improving food security and delivering wider wellbeing outcomes. These benefits extend well beyond the Horowhenua District boundary providing prosperity and wellbeing benefits to the wider Manawatū-Whanganui region, the Wellington region and the nation.

Horowhenua is part of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework, demonstrating the opportunities that exist within Horowhenua to address serious housing shortages within the Wellington region. However, realising this opportunity relies heavily upon Ō2NL improving the district's proximity to Wellington. Ō2NL will support district growth, unlock the potential of housing growth areas, improve business opportunities, and increase the range of employment and education opportunities accessible to our community.

We are aware that some hefty decisions will need to be made in terms of cyclone recovery and how this will be funded. We do however continue to strongly advocate for Ō2NL and implore you to stay the course, and continue with Ō2NL plans.

Yours sincerely



Bernie Wanden  
**District Mayor**



Monique Davidson  
**Chief Executive**

# Hon David Parker BCom, LLB

Attorney-General  
Minister for the Environment  
Minister of Revenue  
Minister of Transport  
Associate Minister of Finance



Bernie Wanden and Monique Davidson  
Horowhenua District Council

Dear Bernie Wanden and Monique Davidson

Thank you for your letter of 15 March 2023 to the Hon Michael Wood MP regarding the new Ōtaki to north Levin (Ō2NL) highway. I am replying to you as the issues you raise fall within my portfolio responsibilities as Minister of Transport.

I agree it is crucial that our road system provides resilience and safety, and the Government acknowledges issues with the current state highway in this area.

As you reference in your letter, I understand the importance of growth in your region and am pleased that the Ō2NL project will support it, including improved access to active modes alternatives in your district.

The Ō2NL project has been approved to complete the pre-implementation phase. Pre-implementation includes the purchase of property, procurement, lodging of consents, and site investigations.


Progression from this phase to the construction phase is subject to approval from the Joint Ministers. We continue to work with Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to support the construction of Ō2NL.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker'.

Hon David Parker  
**Minister of Transport**

19 July 2023

Hon David Parker  
Minister of Transport  
E: 

Dear Minister Parker

### **Ōtaki to North of Levin (Ō2NL) – Construction Phase Funding**

Thank you for your letter received 7 July 2023, in response to our letter dated 15 March 2023.

We are surprised and concerned that your letter gives the indication that the Ō2NL project still needs sign off from the Cabinet Joint Committee and no indication as to when that decision might be made.

Following the former Minister of Transport, Michael Wood's response to a question in Parliament on 17 May 2023, the subsequent press release from his office the next day, plus a conversation that we had when the Minister was in Levin to highlight the Capital Connection service upgrade, we were delighted to be able to inform our community that the uncertainty over the construction phase of the Ō2NL project was over and not something we needed to be concerned about. We felt that we were in a position to turn our attention to preparing for Ō2NL.

With this latest revelation, those in our community who are directly impacted by Ō2NL will once again have to place their lives on hold and anxiously wait to find out, if and when they will have to uproot and move on. It is unfair and misleading that Central Government have given the impression that the project will commence in 2025, when in fact the funding for the project has not been fully committed.

The Ō2NL project is the most transformational project that this district will ever be part of and is the major catalyst for the significant growth that is forecast for not only the Horowhenua, but wider region. Not only is it a critical part of the future planning for this district, it also provides a safe and resilient state highway network that has been lacking for many years.

It is our job to advocate for our community and as such, we are seeking confirmation of the funding commitment for the entire project, including the construction phase. This will ensure the project achieves legacy outcomes that will benefit not just this generation, but those yet to come.

Yours sincerely



Bernie Wanden, JP  
**District Mayor**



Monique Davidson  
**Chief Executive**

*Cc Terisa Ngobi, MP Ōtaki*

**Hon David Parker** BCom, LLB

Attorney-General  
Minister for the Environment  
Minister of Revenue  
Minister of Transport  
Associate Minister of Finance



**19 JUL 2023**

Bernie Wanden and Monique Davidson  
Horowhenua District Council  
[REDACTED]

Dear Bernie and Monique

Thank you for your letter of 19 July 2023 regarding the new Ōtaki to north Levin (Ō2NL) highway.

Further to my letter of 7 July, I am pleased to inform you that the Government has confirmed its commitment to deliver the full scope of the project, as set out in the Detailed Business Case (DBC). The Government has agreed to and committed the \$1.5 billion of funding.

Preparations are underway for the procurement stage, to engage the design and construction team to build the project. Construction is programmed for 2025 and completion of the new highway and walking and cycling path for 2029.

I am looking forward to finally have this highway underway and support the growth in Horowhenua and the wider region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker'.

Hon David Parker  
**Minister of Transport**

cc Deputy Mayor David Allan [REDACTED]