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# Big delays from Auckland motorway closure, says NZTA

New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), Fuseworks  
January 23, 2012, 8:47 am

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The NZ Transport Agency is warning drivers of considerable delays during Auckland Anniversary Weekend when it closes a section of Auckland's Southern Motorway (State Highway 1) to complete work before opening the new northbound Newmarket Viaduct.

The motorway's northbound lanes will be closed between the Market Road off-ramp and the Gillies Ave on-ramps from 5pm Saturday, 28 January, for final preparations to allow drivers on to the new northbound viaduct from Anniversary Monday morning, 30 January.

"Travel delays will be inevitable, they will be considerable and they will be widespread" says the NZTA's acting State Highways manager for Auckland and Northland, Steve Mutton.

"We're talking about trying to re-direct up to 65,000 vehicles on the Sunday alone," he adds. "Even with detours, the impact of the closure will be felt well beyond the Southern Motorway. If people absolutely must travel we're urging that they allow a lot more time for their journey."

"We accept that this may cause frustration - particularly on a long weekend - but our best advice is to stay away from the motorway during Auckland Anniversary weekend," Mr Mutton says.

The closure is necessary so that the NZTA can switch the motorway's northbound lanes across to the new viaduct. At the same time, the blue lifting gantry used for the viaduct's construction has to be moved on to the existing northbound viaduct to help with its demolition.

Mr Mutton says construction of the new viaduct is ahead of schedule and the NZTA and its NGA Newmarket alliance partners (NZTA, Leighton Contractors, Fulton Hogan, Beca, VSL, URS, Tonkin & Taylor and Boffa Miskell) want to deliver the benefits from the project to drivers as quickly as possible.

"To have reached the stage where we're now ready to switch northbound traffic across to the new structure, ahead of schedule, is a remarkable achievement," Mr Mutton says. "We've had fantastic support from drivers while we've replaced the old viaduct and we're now asking people to help us again to keep the city moving through this closure."

"We're taking advantage of a long three- day weekend to complete our work so that we can deliver this important project to Aucklanders. We appreciate the support and patience of all drivers and we'll be working hard to finish as quickly as possible."

Detours will be in place during Anniversary weekend and detour routes to key destinations are available online, at [www.nzta.govt.nz/aklsummerseason](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/aklsummerseason) and [www.facebook.com/switchmyroute](http://www.facebook.com/switchmyroute).

Mr Mutton repeats, however, that alternative routes will not be able to cope if regular weekend traffic flows occur.

"Even with a managed closure and detours in place, congestion will be extensive."

The Automobile Association is also urging people to avoid unnecessary trips. If they do have to travel says AA spokesman Simon Lambourne, they should plan their journeys and drive with patience and care.

"The closure of the northbound lanes will no doubt cause congestion and delays on the motorway and on local roads," Mr Lambourne says, "but the short term pain will be well worth it given the long term benefits of the new viaduct."

The new southern viaduct at Newmarket opened in September, 2010, after a similar motorway closure.

Like the old viaduct built in 1965, its replacement is almost 700 metres long but it has wider lanes, is seismically stronger, and will produce less traffic noise.

"The viaduct stands at the heart of one of the most critical transport links for Auckland and New Zealand - one that carries on average more than 160,000 vehicles daily," says Mr Mutton.

The opening of the viaduct's northbound lanes on Auckland Anniversary Monday will mark the latest in a series of large NZTA projects to improve travel through the central motorway junction (CMJ). The viaduct is located at the southern end of the CMJ. At its northern end, the Victoria Park tunnel opened last November, and new southbound lanes through St Marys Bay and across the Victoria Park flyover opened earlier this month.

"These are huge projects designed to help Auckland's economy and its communities," Mr Mutton says. "With the support of drivers during Auckland Anniversary Weekend we will be able to deliver the next very significant improvement to their motorways to make travel more reliable, quicker, and safer."

The NZTA is running an extensive communications campaign using traditional and social media, and a large sign has been fixed to the lifting gantry on the viaduct to make people aware of the closure and its impact on travel.

The southbound lanes on the Southern Motorway are not affected by the Auckland Anniversary Weekend closure.

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Why a long weekend????

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**NY** 10:11am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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Motorways, motorways for more cars and even more cars.

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**Pilgrim** 10:11am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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Because their burecrates and they can

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**simon** 10:17am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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BEcause Holidays have less traffic on city motorways the weekdays. Notice it will be open on both Friday and Monday afternoon for holiday traffic. Good planning really.

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**Mike** 10:25am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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Frustrating ...yes. The motorway upgrades are always going to be one of those frustrations we have to deal with. Lets hope they get done what they need too and that they keep the traffic delays to a minimum.

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**Percy** 10:34am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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Well Done NZTA a great job

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**Dirk the Digger** 10:38am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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Got to be done, stop whinging.

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**Carl Cooke** 10:39am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

0 1

They said EXACTLY the same thing when they closed the southbound lanes on the viaduct, and there was no disruption at all, because motorists used their common-sense, something the NZTA doesn't seem to think they have !

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**B A Grinch** 10:53am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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I think that it is excellent that this important project has gone so well and will be completed ahead of schedule. Well done to all involved.

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**Dang** 11:19am Monday 23rd January 2012 NZDT | [Report Abuse](#)

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I see the phoney has managed to convince Yahoo to stop the comments about his mate Mr Dotcom, c'mon people, demand some answers instead of accepting the continual excuses and cover ups, expose him for what he is, this is serious and a threat to our nations security, we are being sold out so the trash can be gratified

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