

1 July 2022

Mike Hunua
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REF: OIA-10234

Dear Mike

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 01 June 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Could NZTA provide a date when the Dome valley safety improvements started construction and the time frame it will be completed now?

Previous media updates have indicated early 2022 but we are now in mid-2022 with no signs of completion anytime soon.

Is the project over budget?

Has the project been delayed again?

Is NZTA concerned with the time taken for this project to be completed and will the contractors pay penalties or does NZTA have the provision to add penalties for delays in contractors completing the project on time in the contract?

The Dome Valley safety improvements project commenced in February 2019. As this project is to reduce the risk of serious accidents on this stretch of the road, it was decided to stage the project so that the site work could be commenced as soon as each stage's detailed design was completed. The actual (where completed) or forecasted completion dates for each stage are in the table over the page.

Table 1 – Construction Start and Completion Dates for Dome Valley, July 2022

Stage	Status	Construction Start Date	Construction End Date
Stage 1	In design (Future award)	Oct 2022	Mar 2023
Stage 2	Complete	Feb 2019	Dec 2020
Stage 3	Under construction	Nov 20	Aug 22
Stage 4	Complete	Sept 2019	March 2021
Stage 5	Under construction	Nov 20	Aug 22

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays to the project’s delivery timeframe. Complicating this further has been the need to accommodate a significant increase in over-dimension loads (houses) being transported northwards through the construction area. A lot of the project’s work is scheduled to take place at night to reduce the disruption that daytime lane closures cause, however this cannot take place when the over-dimensioned loads are proceeding through the site.

Is the project over budget?

The project is funded to completion and so does not run ‘over budget.’ Additional funding has been required due to COVID-19 related delays. It has also had culvert replacement work and 500m of road rehabilitation added to its scope. Additional funding has been provided for any new works that are required as part of the project.

Has the project been delayed again?

As mentioned above, COVID-19 has caused delays to the project’s delivery timeframe through the lockdowns, supply chain issues and the availability of resources.

Is NZTA concerned with the time taken for this project to be completed and will the contractor’s pay penalties or does NZTA have the provision to add penalties for delays in contractors completing the project on time in the contract?

Our predominate concern is that the work can be completed safely for everyone involved, the state highway remains open, and the safety benefits are achieved. While we would like the project to be completed in a shorter timeframe, the reality is that Dome Valley is an essential transport corridor which has required our work crews to work in a physically constrained and high-risk environment. While the project has taken longer than first anticipated, we are focused on ensuring the work is completed safely and to a high standard.

If the contractor is at fault for not meeting contract dates, then liquidated damages would be applied. There is no ability to add penalties (or additional liquidated damages) after the contract is signed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact our Ministerial Services team by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liane Powell', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liane Powell

Acting National Manager, Infrastructure and Delivery