

# Safety high priority for new Bowl access road

THE PLANNED realignment of the current road access from Pukekura Raceway to the TSB Bowl of Brooklands aims to increase public safety, minimise damage to surrounding trees and secure the Bowl's ability to continue hosting world class events.

The realigned road is required for four main reasons. First, the new stable block built by Taranaki Racing Club has compromised access to the road for emergency vehicles and we need to ensure that ambulances and fire engines can get down to the Bowl with ease.

Second, the stable block also makes access to the Bowl difficult for large vehicles associated with the setting up of events.

Third, the existing road is slumping and fourth, a recently completed stormwater pipe running beneath the existing road further increases the unsuitability of the road for heavy vehicles.

Mayor Peter Tennent says: "It would be irresponsible of us to continue with the existing road.

"We have conducted an emergency management review and it's clear that the current access provision for emergency vehicles is inadequate.

"We can't sit back and continue with a situation where emergency vehicles have difficulty getting down to the Bowl.

"So we need to fix this, and the other issues, as soon as possible and before the next big event at the Bowl which is the fireworks display on 5 November."

The challenge, says Mayor Tennent, is to

do so in a way that minimises damage to the surrounding park environment.

"Of the two main options for the route of the realigned road, we have been assured that the one we have selected will cause the least damage to the surrounding environment," he says.

"We are particularly keen to protect a puriri tree that's thought to be between 300 and 400 years old. The advice we have received from two qualified arborists tells us the option we have selected poses the least risk to the life of this tree.

"It has been well documented in the media that the Friends of the Pukekura

Park have a different view, and we'll of course be speaking with them, as we have done throughout this process."

Ensuring access to the Bowl from the racecourse is of particular concern to Suzanne Porter, CEO of Taranaki Arts Festival Trust (TAFT) which manages the venue and holds the annual WOMAD festival.

"Events need safe and easy access to the bowl stage," says Ms Porter. "The existing road is hard for large vehicles to manoeuvre through and down and it is currently extremely dangerous with people walking down this road and large vehicle movements.



The existing road entrance to the rear of the TSB Bowl of Brooklands' stage swings to the left at the top of this photo, where a new stable has been built. More stabling is out of shot, straight ahead.