

NZTA Media Release 20 June 2019

Wellington is about to get its first set of metered traffic lights, and while road users will notice changes to the Paremata roundabout, the NZ Transport Agency is reminding them that give way rules stay the same.

From 1 July 2019, a set of metered traffic lights will stagger the entry of northbound traffic in advance of the Paremata roundabout, balancing the overall flow of vehicles through the roundabout. Currently the flow of northbound traffic can result in lengthy southbound delays, and considerable difficulty for people attempting to exit Paremata Railway Station Park and Ride.

The Transport Agency's Regional Transport Systems Manager Mark Owen says while it may take time for road users to get used to the change, it will eventually make for a safer and more efficient roundabout.

"As with any change on a road, there will be a period of adjustment as people get used to the new layout. But as they become more familiar with the change, we expect the benefits to become more noticeable."

The system will initially operate between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays, although the lights will only be triggered once the state highway southbound or Paremata Park and Ride queues reach a certain length. At that point, the lights will activate and begin to stagger the flow of northbound traffic approaching the roundabout.

The length of the red lights will vary, but northbound vehicles may be held at the lights for around 15-30 seconds, allowing vehicles travelling in other directions to enter the roundabout safely and freely, balancing out the queues. When the red-light phase finishes, northbound traffic will have between 45-60 seconds to enter the roundabout, before the next red-light phase.

The operating hours and length of red lights may change following a period of monitoring and refinement.

"Although it's similar to a normal traffic light, this metered traffic light will have no green light and will only operate at certain times of the day," Mr Owen says.

"Give way rules still apply to all roundabout users at all times so if the signals aren't operating and there is no yellow or red light indicating a need to stop, road users can continue to the roundabout, following the normal give way rules."

The change followed discussions between the Transport Agency, Porirua City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and local residents' groups to reduce lengthy southbound delays into the Paremata roundabout.

Porirua City Council Transport Manager Darrell Statham says the metered traffic light is the most appropriate, cost-effective and achievable solution to the safety concerns and growing queues at the roundabout.

"The Council is pleased that the NZ Transport Agency has come up with a solution that improves performance at the roundabout and provides a more balanced outcome for all road users."

With the creation of an extra 72 car parks at Paremata Park and Ride, expected to be completed by the end of July, additional rail customers are likely to exit the Park and Ride at peak times. The metered signal will make it easier for them to do so safely.

Greater Wellington Regional Council Sustainable Transport Chair Barbara Donaldson says the extension to the Park and Ride will improve the travel experience for Metlink customers and state highway users.

“More people will now be able to leave their cars at the Park and Ride which will help free up our roads and encourage even more people to utilise our rail services.

“The installation of lights will help manage traffic flow during peak hours, making it easier and safer for train users to exit the car park either in their own car or on a Metlink bus.”

Once the lights are operational, the Transport Agency will monitor the roundabout to see how well the lights are working. If queues get too long in any one direction, the timing on the lights can be immediately adjusted or turned off if needed.

“Our priority is ensuring the safety of all road users, and that traffic is flowing through the roundabout in a balanced way, so we’ll be keeping a very close eye on how things are going to ensure we’re meeting these goals for our customers,” Mr Owen says.

“We’d like to thank the public in advance for their patience while everyone gets used to this change.”

For more information on the SH1 Paremata roundabout improvements, visit:
www.nzta.govt.nz/paremata-roundabout