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Committee Secretariat  
Transport and Industrial Relations  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

### **National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) Empowering Bill**

This submission is on behalf of Mt Victoria Historical Society Incorporated.

Mt Victoria Historical Society was founded in 1986 and its aims are to:

- Develop and promote interest in, and knowledge of, the Mt Victoria area in Wellington
- Research and record its history
- Encourage the protection of its natural and built heritage

We can be contacted via:

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## **1. Introduction**

Firstly, we would like to state that we are supportive of the proposal not to split the National War Memorial Park in two by a motorway. In principle, therefore, we support the works required to trench this road and create a park above it.

## **2. Concerns**

We have two key concerns, which can be summarised very briefly as follows:

- 2.1 We are concerned at the extremely wide-ranging powers granted to the Minister and the Agency in a situation which, unlike the Canterbury Earthquake, cannot be considered a national emergency.

The granting of resource consents, heritage authorisations, and building consents for whatever works may be required – without any further input from the normal authorities, let alone the public – is a risky approach. In the event that further rights or authorisations are required, the Bill also enables the Governor-General to grant them by Order in Council. Although these will be subject to “strong parliamentary oversight”, this is “through an expedited disallowance process” and, again, there will be little transparency. We question the necessity of meeting the 2015 date, particularly when it comes at the expense of transparency and the robust, well-tested public processes developed under the RMA and the HPA.

There are a number of significant heritage buildings and features in this area and, with the lack of transparency and haste involved, work could well be completed before issues of potentially long-term impact on the city and its heritage are understood. The Tasman Street Wall, Mt Cook Police Barracks and Former General Headquarters Building are particularly at risk given their closeness to the road.

- 2.2 The land taken for the project construction area (as set out in Schedule 10, Figure 3) includes the site of the Sisters of the Home of Compassion creche. We are extremely concerned that the New Zealand Transport Agency may therefore consider that it has the powers to move or modify this building without further public notice, consultation or New Zealand Historic Places Trust approval.

This building is not part of the War Memorial Park project and final decisions have not been made about the Basin Reserve flyover. Therefore no action must be allowed to be taken in relation to this building under the National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) Empowering Bill.

### **3. Community Forum**

Under Subpart 7 36(2)(i), the Minister will convene a community forum including representatives from “a group that the Minister is satisfied represents the interests of local residents”.

We request that the Minister invite the convenor of Mt Victoria Historical Society under this category, as the Society represents the interests of nearby residents involved in heritage matters.