

Have your say - testing our thinking on the National Infrastructure Plan

Date: 26 November 2024

These comments are from an interested citizen, who was under-impressed by the content. It didn't really "cut through" and mostly just went on and on in "echo-chamber" groupspeak. Infrastructure is too important to be just "captured by the policy elites". So they are made constructively; and I hope that they can be taken on board.

p.8. The scope of "infrastructure" is not clearly defined. Clearly your view seems to be that it is "engineering works" so it would be best to spell this out. You seem to be excluding "national infrastructure" like

- a nationwide postal service - delivery to remote places etc as in the former NZPO
- sound voting systems to make the democratic society real. Continued reliance on postal voting seems anachronistic.
- civil defence and emergency response system geared for climate change contexts.
- location and staffing of the courts system to give a reliable justice infrastructure.

These, like national infrastructure for hospices, for maternity care, and for cancer treatment usually require "engineering works" like buildings, but that is a lesser need than for numbers of and training for staff to run them. They are key bits of "national infrastructure" for a sustainable NZ.

p.19 "we can get better at working together". The organisational reforms of the 1980s/90s deliberately set out to "silo-ise" NZ's decision and action systems. Before then, infrastructure like the Kaimai and Remutaka tunnels, and Wellington Airport, were built because there was a real "working together" environment. It was co-incidental, but ironic, that the day I received your email (22 Nov) also saw three media reports about fractured decision systems for infrastructure:

- The *Riverlink* flood control / state highway access / urban design project under way in Lower Hutt has now been dissolved

into a series of loosely-co-ordinated works handled by different agencies

- A decision to be announced next week on the future of the inter-island rail ferry system. A nation of 5 million people spread over 2 islands thousands of kilometres from anywhere else, the islands themselves separated by sea which is too wide to bridge and too deep to tunnel under, clearly needs a national infrastructure view of how the islands are connected. Under the present set-up, it is seen as being separate features of boats, trains and road vehicles using ports at each end all with their own local perspectives. So your study will need to be much sharper about the decision processes needed before the engineering works are planned in a holistic way.
- Kiwirail proposal for its own electrification needs in the upper North Island, seemingly in isolation from other planning.

p.27 Fig 7. Emphasise, i.e. give priority to, “Resistance to natural hazards and to “technology change”. The others are relatively 2nd-level.

Good luck with the plan. Please look critically at the wording and “common sense” of your writing. You will not get “buy-in” if yesterday’s draft is the stylistic and format template for the completed study.

Regards,

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