

Our Reference: EXT-39 / 25729139

5 August 2025

National Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga
95 Customhouse Quay
Wellington 6011

Webpage for submission <https://tewaihanga.govt.nz/national-infrastructure-plan/feedback-on-draft-national-infrastructure-plan>

Waimakariri District Council staff submission on the draft National Infrastructure Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Waimakariri District Council staff (Council staff) thank the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission (Te Waihanga) for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft National Infrastructure Plan (NIP).
- 1.2. Council staff appreciate the ongoing engagement with Te Waihanga to align strategic infrastructure priorities at national and local levels. This alignment will be vital to develop resilient infrastructure that will allow the Waimakariri District and the wider Canterbury region to continue to grow and prosper.
- 1.3. As a local government authority, the Waimakariri District Council owns and manages billions of dollars of infrastructure on behalf of the community. The Council is legally responsible for managing these assets responsibly and sustainably for the community.
- 1.4. We see the draft NIP as an opportunity to raise the standards for infrastructure management and funding across both central and local government. Both sectors are facing the challenges of securing funding, attracting and retaining skilled workers, adapting to climate change and managing, maintaining and renewing aging infrastructure.

2. Background

- 2.1. Waimakariri District is located in the Canterbury Region, north of the Waimakariri River. The District is approximately 225,000 hectares in area and extends from Pegasus Bay in the east to the Puketeraki Ranges in the west. It lies within the takiwā of Ngāi Tūāhuriri one of the primary hapū of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. The District shares boundaries with Christchurch City to the south, Selwyn District to the south and west, and Hurunui District to the north.
- 2.2. The Waimakariri District is geographically diverse, ranging from provincial townships such as Rangiora and Kaiapoi, through to the remote high country farming area of Lees Valley. Eighty percent of the population is located in the east of the district and approximately 60 percent of residents live in the four main urban areas of Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend/Pegasus and Oxford. The remainder live in smaller settlements or the district's rural area, including approximately 6000 on rural-residential or rural 'lifestyle' blocks.

- 2.3. Geographically, socio-culturally and economically, the Waimakariri District is primarily a peri-urban area. Residents are drawn to and identify with the outdoor lifestyle and recreation opportunities available in our district. However, due to its proximity to Christchurch City, the district has a significant and growing urban and peri-urban population. Consequently, primary production and construction are the two largest economic sectors in the district.

3. Submission

- 3.1. Council staff have completed the online survey; this cover letter highlights our key submission points.

4. Summary of Position and Recommendations

- 4.1. WDC has a very high standard of infrastructure, however this is due to careful planning and budgeting.
- 4.2. Having a specified level of service nationally will support regional growth,
- 4.3. WDC has robust processes for making key infrastructure decisions, including providing information to the public. Council staff suggest that Government may wish to work with selected territorial authorities to increase transparency and public engagement in decision-making processes.
- 4.4. Council staff are concerned the requirements of the infrastructure plan pipeline process and information sharing processes are not compatible with existing reporting process required of territorial authorities. This will lead to an increased administrative cost and loss of efficiency. We suggest that the Infrastructure Commission reviews the existing infrastructure reporting systems used by local government and makes use of existing information when updating the pipeline or requesting information.
- 4.5. Council staff agree that improved information sharing about the changing needs of our communities should assist in decision making for infrastructure. However, we caution against using purely population-based decision-making tools, centralised decision-making. Infrastructure projects benefit from local prioritisation and decision making, using local knowledge, and being debated at a local level. In addition, the North Island population density is higher, providing many areas with a higher funding base. The South Island economy is dependent on quality infrastructure to continue to deliver growth and to provide an adequate service level to residents.
- 4.6. Theoretically user pays for infrastructure has some benefits, however any assessment of this approach must consider the public good delivered by the infrastructure. Also, some infrastructure must be provided at a minimum service level to support basic societal functions. For territorial authorities' infrastructure such as libraries, pools and even roading could become unaffordable for residents (and thereby less supported) if full cost recovery was required.

4.7. Council staff thank Te Waihunga for the opportunity to comment on the draft NIP. Our contact for service and questions is [REDACTED], Senior Policy Analyst, Strategy and Business Unit [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the General Manager.

[REDACTED]
General Manager Utilities and Roading
Waimakariri District Council

