Central Government AM Leaders Forum submission to the draft National Infrastructure Plan

Submission

The **Central Government AM Leaders Forum** a small, informal group of central government AM leaders who meet regularly to share insights and support each other.

We are overall supportive of the intent of the draft National Infrastructure Plan, welcoming the focus on improving asset management practices, as we manage the challenges of doing asset management well for central government daily.

We would like to see clear recognition of asset management as a key discipline, with an even greater focus on strategic asset management planning being the driver for investment decision making and projects, rather than asset management often being an afterthought to investment planning and project creation.

We would like to see asset management clearly defined as the strategic function it is intended to be, rather than being referred to interchangeably as asset maintenance. Asset maintenance is about maintaining existing assets, as they are, replacing broken valves, cleaning gutters and painting walls. Asset maintenance is generally only OPEX spend. Asset management, on the other hand, is about how you use your asset portfolio to deliver the services your organisation needs. It includes everything from ensuring proactive asset maintenance plans are in place, through to renewals and strategic planning about new projects/assets to meet changing demands and levels of service over the whole asset lifecycle (50+ years in the case of much of our infrastructure).

We support the general intent to reach consensus on funding levels for each asset class, however this needs to be an area of continued maturity, given the poor-quality asset management information and lack of strategic direction, most particularly robust and agreed levels of service.

We are aware that current AM maturity in Central Government is not as high as it should or could be, and we are committed to improving that. However, we face a number of immediate and practical challenges, and have outlined these below, for the Commission's consideration and potential future support:

No consistency across government in how AM roles are defined, titled, or remunerated.

Job descriptions vary widely, and many roles doing AM work don't clearly reflect that in their titles, making it hard to benchmark, recruit effectively, or offer clear career pathways.

We need support to help lift maturity in this space by developing a standardised framework for AM roles in central government. This could include:

- Consistent role titles and editable job description templates across levels (e.g. Junior Asset Manager to Chief Assets Officer/Executive)

- Clear competencies and work requirements aligned to each level

- Indicative salary bands, benchmarked to market and public sector scales

- Links to training pathways (e.g. Āpōpō competency framework, internships, graduate programmes etc.)

We also see value in extending this to key AM-adjacent roles - finance, data, contracts, stakeholder engagement, and technical specialists - especially those likely to be hired as internal FTEs.

No centralised or standardised online resources for Central Government AM practice

Other core government functional areas, like Procurement, or Protective Security, have their own online portal, where any staff member can log in to access resources such as templates and guidelines.

We need a resource like this to be developed, to help standardise practice, enable consistent reporting and support new entrants into the AM profession. This could build on existing sources like the Audit NZ website and Āpōpō, and include:

- Simple and adaptable templates for Asset Management Plans

- Asset Register core data requirements and example schemas

- A simple process flow / 'to-do' list to guide agencies through what is required of them to do asset management well, with potentially more detailed 'how-to' guides for key areas such as levels of service and determining asset criticality

- A choice of the types of support materials above, to reflect the current AM maturity of the agency, size and type of assets in their portfolio

- Recommended governance structures for AM, and how to integrate with existing functions like Finance and PMO, to ensure joined-up decisions

- Access to resources such as ISO55000 series standards and the Āpōpō Guide

- Access to centrally managed systems and software that could hold data and be used by all central agencies, e.g. an approved asset register and lifecycle forecasting tool, or an AoG GIS capability.

In short, we want to **make it easy for asset managers in central government to do the right thing**, and we would like to see the Commission lean into supporting this goal.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Current Active Members