

4/08/2025

Te Waihanga the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission  
Level 7, The Todd Building  
95 Customhouse Quay  
Wellington 6011

## **Submission on the Draft National Infrastructure Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft National Infrastructure Plan.

Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) support the direction set out in the draft National Infrastructure Plan (the Plan).

### **Support for a clear, long-term strategy**

We welcome the Plan's intention to establish a clear, long-term strategy for nationally significant infrastructure projects, providing certainty for communities, councils, and industry. New Zealand cannot afford to fund every potential project, and a strategic, integrated plan will ensure investment is targeted where it delivers the greatest national benefit.

### **Alignment on Manawatū infrastructure projects**

After many years of planning and advocacy, we support recognition of the Manawatū Regional Freight Ring Road (MRFRR) as a nationally significant infrastructure project and its inclusion in the Plan. This will be a significant investment for the region, creating important connections to Te Utanganui, the Central NZ Distribution, and other key destinations in the city and Manawatū region, including Linton Military Base and Ohakea Airbase. The MRFRR will be a key catalyst for unlocking the economic development potential of Palmerston North and the Manawatū.

Having seen the full list of projects included in the draft Infrastructure Priorities Program (IPP), we strongly support recognition and inclusion of Linton Military Base and Ohakea Airbase in the Plan. Defence is a significant part of the Manawatū economy with both Ohakea and Linton providing employment for a large number of people in the region.

There is also a very strong connection between MRFRR and Linton Military Base that should be recognised as these projects are advanced. The MRFRR includes a second bridge crossing over the Manawatū River, which creates more direct connections to Linton and strengthens resilience for the Military. The MRFRR will also strengthen the connection between Linton and Ohakea.

### **The case for freight and logistics**

While the draft National Infrastructure Plan sets a strong direction, it is currently light on freight and logistics - areas critical to New Zealand's future prosperity and resilience. Freight underpins New Zealand's economy and is forecast to grow by 60% over the next 30 years, driven by population growth, changing consumer demands, and regional economic development. Supporting this growth requires well-planned, strategic infrastructure that enables the safe, efficient, and low-emissions movement of goods across the country.

Investment in freight infrastructure is not just about moving goods; it underpins productivity across every sector, supports export competitiveness, and ensures communities can reliably access essential products and services, even during disruptions. Progress on the New Zealand Freight and Supply Chain Strategy has been slow and the recent and disappointing decision by the Ministry of Transport to not refresh the strategy makes it imperative that the National Infrastructure Plan steps up to provide the clear direction and investment needed to advance this work. A stronger focus on freight and logistics within the Plan will ensure infrastructure decisions drive improvements in the resilience, sustainability, and efficiency of New Zealand's supply chains to meet the demands of the future economy.

### **Infrastructure Priorities Programme – Future Tranches**

We appreciate that Te Waihangā has previously gone through two tranches of applications for the IPP. Previously Te Waihangā has indicated the potential for a third round of applications. We would be supportive of a third round, as we believe that there are two further projects that are worth considering.

The first is the KiwiRail's Central North Island Freight Hub. This hub is a critical part of the Te Utanganui network and aligns with the MRFRR to leverage Palmerston North locations as a key logistical Hub.

The second is the Palmerston North Wastewater Treatment Plant. We have been working on this for some time, and it is a significant upgrade of the existing facility. Unfortunately, due to work being done for 'Local Water Done Well', we were not in a position to submit an application to the IPP.

### **Conclusion**

We commend the Commission for its transparent and independent approach to prioritising nationally significant infrastructure and for its commitment to addressing maintenance backlogs alongside new, well-planned investments that deliver value for money.

Yours sincerely




**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Palmerston North City Council