



Title: **Testing our thinking - Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan**

Reference: **NIPC24-0002857** | Submitted: **22/11/2024 05:45 pm** | Submitted by:

## Summary of information submitted

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### Page 1 - Introduction

[NIPC24-0002857](#)

### We're seeking feedback

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Our Discussion Document, [Testing our thinking: Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan](#), sets out our thinking as we begin work to develop a National Infrastructure Plan. The Discussion Document sets out what we expect the Plan will cover and the problem it's trying to solve, as well as the approach we're proposing to take to develop it.

We're sharing this now to test our thinking and give you the chance to share your thoughts. Let us know if we've got it right or if there are issues you think we've missed.

We'll use your feedback as we develop the Plan. We'll be sharing our thinking by presenting at events around the country, hosting workshops and webinars, and sharing updates through our website, newsletter, and social media. We'll also seek feedback on a draft Plan before publishing the final Plan in December 2025.

### Submission overview

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You'll find 17 main questions that cover the topics found in the Discussion Document. You can answer as many questions as you like and can provide links to material within your responses. On the final page (6. Next steps) you can provide any other comments or suggestions that you would like us to consider as we develop the National Infrastructure Plan. Submissions are welcomed from both individuals and organisations.

A few things to note:

- You can save progress using the button at the top right of this form.
- A red asterisk (\*) denotes a mandatory field that must be completed before the form can be submitted.
- We expect organisations to provide a single submission reflecting the views of their organisation. Collaboration within your organisation and internal review of your submission (before final submission), is supported through our Information Supply Platform. You'll need to be registered with an Infrastructure Hub account, and be affiliated with your organisation to utilise these advanced features. Many organisations will already have a 'Principal respondent' who can manage submissions and assign users at your organisation with access to the draft responses.
- Submissions will be published on our website after the closing date. The names and details of organisations that submit will be published, but all personal and any commercial sensitive information will be removed.

## Further assistance

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Each submission that is started is provided a unique reference identifier. These identifiers are shown in the top right of each application page. Use this identifier when seeking further assistance or communicating with us about this submission by using one of the following methods.

- Use [info@tewaihanga.govt.nz](mailto:info@tewaihanga.govt.nz) to contact us with any questions relating to our Discussion Document and consultation.
- Use [inform@tewaihanga.govt.nz](mailto:inform@tewaihanga.govt.nz) for help managing roles and permissions of user accounts affiliated with your organisation in the Information Supply Platform (ISP).

## Submission method

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Our preferred method is to receive responses through this form. However, we anticipate some submitters will wish to upload a pdf document, especially where their submission is complex or long. If this submission method is necessary, please use [this word template](#) and save as a pdf. We ask that you retain the structure and headings provided in the template as this will support our processing of responses.

### Select a submission method

To continue, select the method you will be using.

[Online form](#)

The Discussion Document includes five sections. Below we're seeking feedback on why we need a National Infrastructure Plan. We also want to test our thinking on our long-term needs and make sure we have a clear view of what investment is already planned.

## Section one: Why we need a National Infrastructure Plan

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A National Infrastructure Plan can provide information that can help improve certainty, while retaining enough flexibility to cancel or amend projects as circumstances or priorities change.

### 1. What are the most critical infrastructure challenges that the National Infrastructure Plan needs to address over the next 30 years?

- 1. To obtain and prioritise the list of critical infrastructure projects that "NZInc" needs - projects to be submitted by infra owners on standardised platform, with priorities established by independent Technical advisory Panel.*
- 2. From the prioritised list, the top "###" (10, or 20 (say)), are "locked in" for funding - this top list has bipartisan approval, and can't be "crossed off the list", due to change in governments, or political direction.*
- 3. Strategic Planning - there is no real strategic planning and coordination in place for infrastructure delivery (anymore) in NZ. This leads to reactive responses and rushed delivery, which leads to poor quality workmanship and outcomes (use development of Waikato Expressway as an example) - bit by bit, as opposed to whole of network (i.e. the golden triangle - AK, HAm, TGA)*
- 4. Delivery - there are currently too many processes holding up delivery of projects (e.g. through extensive, multiyear processes just to obtain a consent to do work - the current review of RMA legislation may improve this. E.g. Waikato Expressway took 20+ years. Equivalent in Western Australia (Perth to Mandurah) took six years.*

### 2. How can te ao Māori perspectives and principles be used to strengthen the National Infrastructure Plan's approach to long-term infrastructure planning?

*We need to be "good ancestors" - i.e. making good decisions now so our grandchildren (future generations) are not overly burdened with "the bill", resulting from "kicking the can down the road."*

## Section two: Our long-term needs

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The National Infrastructure Plan will reflect on what New Zealanders value and expect from infrastructure. To do this, the Plan needs to consider New Zealanders' long-term aspirations and how these could be impacted over the next 30 years.

### 3. What are the main sources of uncertainty in infrastructure planning, and how could they be addressed when considering new capital investments?

1. *Localism - only thinking about the local issue, and not how the whole picture fits together - can see this in local govt waters discussion, and also long term transport priorities - no more strategic transport network development strategies (just each RCA, looking within their own tenet) - e.g. Strategic plan for developing the transport network in the "golden triangle" - AK- HAM - AKLD. Due to lack of long-term planning, priorities can be hijacked at local and central govt election times*
2. *when undertaking economic evaluation of projects (and yes they cost a lot), part of the decision making cost and project evaluation needs to include the "future cost of the work if the work is deferred" - thereby transparently showing the "future cost of kicking the can down the road"*
3. *From my experience, the "Actual need" based on a pure technical assessment of the infrastructure backlog, is watered down, and/or not fully reported through to decision makers "because we know theres not enough money, so what use is it to put the truth in front of the decision makers" - in my experience there needs to be more honesty in reporting what the "actual infra backlog is, vs what may be palatable to put in front of decision makers".*

### Section three: What investment is already planned

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We already gather and share data on current or planned infrastructure projects through the National Infrastructure Pipeline. This data, alongside other information gathered by the Treasury or published by infrastructure providers, helps to paint a picture of investment intentions.

#### 4. How can the National Infrastructure Pipeline be used to better support infrastructure planning and delivery across New Zealand?

1. *Funding should be based on the project being transparently developed through the gates of a transparent tool such as the national infrastructure pipeline*
2. *By taking a system wide approach and lining priorities up - so projects delivered in logical order. develop*

### Section four: Changing the approach

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We have used our research and publicly available information on infrastructure investment challenges to identify key areas for change. The next question and the following three pages seek further detail on the three themes in section four of our paper. Within each of the three themes, we explore some topics in more detail, outlining the evidence, discussing the current 'state of play', and asking questions about where more work is needed.

#### 5. Are we focusing on the right problems, and are there others we should consider?

*We also need to consider work-force development and training - particularly in Engineering - there's a current focus on "going to uni to get a degree", but there's a major*

gap in "Technician Level" Engineering expertise, and people do build stuff on the ground (apprentice, trades etc).

## Page 3 - Capability to plan and build

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### Changing the approach — Capability to plan and build

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Section four looks at changes that we can make to our infrastructure system to get us better results. We've broken these changes down into three themes: capability to plan and build, taking care of what we have, and getting the settings right.

For the first theme, we look at three key areas:

- Investment management: Stability, consistency, and future focus
- Workforce and project leadership: Building capability is essential
- Project costs: Escalation means less infrastructure services.

### Investment management: Stability, consistency, and future focus

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We're interested in your views on how we can address the challenges with government infrastructure planning and decision-making.

#### 6. What changes would enable better infrastructure investment decisions by central and local government?

*Refer also to previous answers as well.*

1. *Use the pipeline tool as a gateway/prerequisite to have the project considered for funding*
2. *including "the future cost of deferring the project" is transparently recorded and publicised in any decision not to proceed. This may help when local or central govt politician announces "project X at the current value of ##M will be deferred for 10 years when it will cost \$M+".*
3. *Having the Critical "NZ Inc" projects on a ring-fenced list that can not be interfered with through election cycles (see previous response to Q1)*

#### 7. How should we think about balancing competing investment needs when there is not enough money to build everything?

*Have a prioritised list - the most important is targeted first, the others will just have to wait.*

### Workforce and project leadership: Building capability is essential

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We're interested in your views on how we can build capability in the infrastructure workforce.

**8. How can we improve leadership in public infrastructure projects to make sure they're well planned and delivered? What's stopping us from doing this?**

*Polys come in on a platform, and change what they think is best - without considering the technical work that has been done previously. Great example of Auckland 2nd harbour xing. Millions spent on options over 25+ years, and poly comes up with a better solution.*

*Having projects on NZ Inc list (see previous answers)*

*Having funding linked to prioritised list on NZ Pipeline, will mean that decision makers will need to justify why their pet project gets the nod over other higher priority projects (As assessed by NZ Inc Independent Industry experts).*

**9. How can we build a more capable and diverse infrastructure workforce that draws on all of New Zealand's talent?**

*See previous answers - School education system is about getting kids to uni (as the pinnacle achievement in life) - change the system to see the value in all areas of society - from trades, apprenticeships, technicians to uni*

**Funding Assistance** - (Transport Infra Focus) set aside a (small) portion (%) of NZTA/govt. funding to be put aside for training and development of cadets/technicians (e.g. through each of the RCA's subsidy) - also only Contractors who have active training and development programmes can get govt funded contracts)

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**Project costs: Escalation means less infrastructure services**

We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve our ability to deliver good infrastructure at an affordable cost.

**10. What approaches could be used to get better value from our infrastructure dollar? What's stopping us from doing this?**

*Less red tape - processes (see comments of RMA reform) - quicker time to delivery*

*Capacity and Accountability - there's simply not the capacity (and in some cases willingness) of infra owners to hold contractors to account for delivering excellence. Maybe because it's hard, and takes effort, drama, etc*

## Changing the approach — Taking care of what we've got

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The second theme in section four looks at how we can get better at taking care of what we have. It looks at three areas:

- Asset management: Managing what we already have is the biggest task
- Resilience: Preparing for greater disruption
- Decarbonisation: A different kind of challenge.

### Asset management: Managing what we already have is the biggest task

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Asset management means looking after our infrastructure. We are interested in your views on how we can improve planning for this.

#### 11. What strategies would encourage a better long-term view of asset management and how could asset management planning be improved? What's stopping us from doing this?

*Asset owners and their governors "don't want to know" the truth.*

*There is a reluctance in some areas of industry to "tell it like it is", as there's a perception it may be career limiting. (in some organisations it's not a perception)*

*Make conditions of central govt funding conditional on having the details of condition data and associated long-term back log published*

*Through some delivery models (e.g. some alliance style maintenance contracts) the Asset owner has lost the ability to target "what's best for asset" vs "what's best for the supplier".*

*Happy to be contacted for further details on this.*

### Resilience: Preparing for greater disruption

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We are interested in your views on how we can better understand the risks that natural hazards pose for our infrastructure.

#### 12. How can we improve the way we understand and manage risks to infrastructure? What's stopping us from doing this?

*We're scared of the truth. We need to lean into it. We can only understand the problem, when we pick the scab and uncover the truth. We need to make it ok, for infra owners to front up and say, "well actually, our backlog is this, and we've been putting it off for too*

*long, and here's the size of the problem, so we'll need to cut out the nice to haves until we get this under control"*

*As mentioned previously, in some organisations, it's career limiting to raise this.*

## Decarbonisation: A different kind of challenge

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We're interested in your views on how we can improve understanding of the decarbonisation challenge facing infrastructure.

### 13. How can we lower carbon emissions from providing and using infrastructure? What's stopping us from doing this?

*More efficient delivery of transport infrastructure. Reducing Carbon is a long term game, if we decide we want to have an efficient transport system, we need to invest to make it efficient, and carbon emissions will reduce.*

#### Page 5 - Getting the settings right

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## Changing the approach — Getting the settings right

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The third theme in section four looks at how we can get our settings right to get better results from our infrastructure system. It looks at three areas:

- Institutions: Setting the rules of the game
- Network pricing: How we price infrastructure services impacts what we think we need
- Regulation: Charting a more enabling path.

## Institutions: Setting the rules of the game

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We're interested in your views on what changes to our infrastructure institutions would make the biggest difference in giving us the infrastructure we need at an affordable cost.

### 14. Are any changes needed to our infrastructure institutions and systems and if so, what would make the biggest difference?

*Institutions: - uncover what the real backlog is - make it transparent, report it, then decisions can be made and prioritised to reduce it*



*Network pricing - do it, but dont invent our own system - adopt what other countries already have in place*

*Regulations: remove red tape - the higher on the NZ Inc list, the quicker the project should move.*

## Network pricing: How we price infrastructure services impacts what we think we need

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We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve network infrastructure pricing.

### 15. How can best practice network pricing be used to provide better infrastructure outcomes?

*Move to all vehciles paying RUC's, based on km's travelled and technical assessment on "damage" to roads - i.e the heavier the more damage. This includes EV's and electric buses. Ring fence the funding for repairs and maintenance*

## Regulation: Charting a more enabling path

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We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve regulation affecting infrastructure delivery.

### 16. What regulatory settings need to change to enable better infrastructure outcomes?

*No comment.*

## Additional information to support our development of the Plan

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Section five in the Discussion Document is on the next steps. In this section, we're asking you for any additional comments, suggestions, or supporting documentation that we should consider in our development of the National Infrastructure Plan.

## 17. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that you would like us to consider as we develop the National Infrastructure Plan?

Click 'Add another' to add multiple suggestions or comments.

*Item 1*

*HAppy to be contacted.*

## 18. Attach any documents that support your submission

Click 'Add another' to add multiple attachments in PDF format.

*Document 1*

*No attachment*

## Thank you for your response

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Thank you for providing feedback on our Discussion Document. We'll use your comments as we continue to develop the Plan. This will not be the only opportunity for you to provide feedback, but it is an important way to test our emerging thinking on the development of an enduring National Infrastructure Plan.

If you have prepared a submission on behalf of an organisation, you'll need to be an authorised *respondent* to make the final submission. If you entered a new organisation during sign-up, or your organisation does not already have a *Principal respondent* assigned, you will have been asked to nominate yourself or someone else for this role as you started this submission. Our team will have worked to verify these accounts allowing *Principal respondents* to manage access and assignment of requests for information to people within your organisation.

If you require any assistance please reach out to our team at [inform@tewaihanga.govt.nz](mailto:inform@tewaihanga.govt.nz).

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