



Media Release

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Transport infrastructure must be a focus for new Government

The new Government must continue to make major investments in transport infrastructure if New Zealand's economy is to continue along its present growth track, says Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley.

"While it is pleasing that three parties have finally agreed on a governing arrangement, the hard work really starts now," says Shirley. "Despite significant investment in recent years New Zealand still faces a major infrastructure deficit that we desperately need to get on top of."

"The Roads of National Significance projects are a good start and must continue but in addition local government needs greater assistance to improve regional roads and both road and rail need to be better integrated to make the most efficient use of freight hubs and inland ports."

"Large scale transport projects involving all modes must meet strict benefit-cost targets if taxpayers are to get value for money. It is also critical that the Government invests in projects that enhance the overall connectivity of the transport system without the unnecessary gold-plating that simply drives up the cost."

The election campaign illustrated that the time for road pricing has arrived. All parties agreed that the use of demand management through road pricing can have an impact on traffic congestion in Auckland. We know that a high proportion of peak time traffic is single-occupancy cars and road pricing can have a direct impact on this. As long as the system devised is fair across all road users then there is broad support for its introduction."

"The road transport industry is equally as adamant that the National Land Transport Fund must remain a ring-fenced, user-pays fund that is reinvested back into roading and not used to subsidise other transport modes that make no contribution to it."

"The new Government must also seek to reinvigorate the stalled Driver Licensing Review. The review has the potential to introduce a more fit-for-

purpose licence system that would remove a large part of the costs and compliance burden of the current scheme. Transport operators have long considered the present system as a major impediment to attracting new drivers as it takes too long and is far too expensive to gain a license."

"The future of immigration policy is of concern to the road transport industry and we would caution the new Government to consider very carefully the implications of further restrictive policy in this area."

"Finally, the upward trend to the road toll over the last few years is of deep concern to the road transport industry. The new Government must tackle this issue with some urgency by continuing to invest in the improvement of safety infrastructure such as safety barriers, road straightening and level crossing signals. Driver behaviour must also be addressed and distractions, speed and the use of alcohol and drugs targeted as the key causes in many serious accidents."

"So, while I congratulate the new governing parties on finalising their arrangements it is critical that they get their feet under the desk as soon as possible. There is plenty to do and we are already many years behind where we need to be," says Shirley.

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