



29 January 2020

Road spending welcomed, but time has been wasted

Road spending of \$5.3 billion announced by the Government today is well overdue, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

“We are only sorry a couple of years has been wasted in getting on with building and improving the vital arterial roads of New Zealand,” Leggett says.

“It’s not rocket science to understand that with the base of our economy in tourism and exports, and growth in our major cities, we need roads that are fit for purpose. That is, at least four lanes, and engineered properly for the conditions, speed limit and in consideration of both the commercial and public use of these roads.

“That the Melling interchange, Tauranga Northern link, Waikato expressway from Cambridge to Piarere, and the Kāpiti expressway from Otaki to north of Levin, were put on hold for a couple of years is a setback. Clearly, these are big projects that won’t be completed for several years.

“The 2.2 billion being spent on big Auckland roading projects including the new Mill Road connection, Penlink corridor and connection between Papakura and Drury, are essential. And it is good to see the plan to upgrade SH1 from Whangarei to Port Marsden, improving freight connectivity for Northland.

“With 93,000km of road and only 4,000km of rail, rail will never be able to meet the essential demands of delivering goods to New Zealanders, so investment in roads should be ongoing. Trucks transport about 70 percent of New Zealand’s land-based freight, so roads have to be where the largest investment goes.

“Roads are the lifeblood of the economy – pretty much everything you need, every day, comes to you on a truck – so a strong roading network is the essential backbone.

“Infrastructure spending delivers a better future for New Zealand by improving productivity and giving better access to our essential export markets; as well as providing door-to-door delivery of essential goods such as food and medicines.

“We are pleased to see the Government finally taking the advice of the Prime Minister’s Business Advisory Council to invest in infrastructure, including roads.”

For more information contact:

Josie Vidal, RTF manager communications & government relations

Mob: 022 092 9353

About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Association NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate 16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports about 70% of New Zealand's land-based freight measured on a tonne/kilometre basis.