MIN-4087 Infrastructure Sustainability Council (ISC) Connect Conference – speaking points

27 April 2023

Provide speaking points for the Minister's keynote address to be delivered at the ISC Connect New Zealand Conference dinner to be held on 3 May 2023.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Background

- The ISC is an independent and non-profit organisation that works to provide for improved sustainability outcomes for infrastructure through the provision of a sustainability rating tool, the ISC Sustainability Rating Scheme.

- Infrastructure sustainability rating tools certify and recognise the sustainability performance of infrastructure projects against a range of environmental, social, cultural and economic criteria. These tools assist Waka Kotahi through its Sustainability Rating Scheme Policy and other aligned policy, such as the Resource Efficiency policy, in setting requirements for sustainability, environmental best practice and performance in planning, designing, constructing and maintaining our land transport system.

- The ISC Connect Conference is an annual event delivered with attendees present in person over the day event and present virtually online. The 2023 preliminary conference programme consists of four sessions as outlined below:
    - Session 1: Uniting Nations: The power or purpose
    - Session 2: Leading and Governing Positive Change
    - Session 3: Building Bench Strength Across Projects and Supply Chains
    - Session 4: Improvement and Innovation for Best Practice: Embedding Sustainability at the Outset

- Waka Kotahi collaborates with the ISC and our partners in embedding sustainability within the wider infrastructure community and in lifting the transport sectors commitment to driving more sustainable outcomes and innovations.

- The Government is committed to a greener, safer, more resilient, and more equitable transport system but has faced many challenges in recent years including extreme weather events, COVID-19, supply chain disruptions and rising costs.

- It is therefore especially important to direct our efforts into solutions that will have the most impact, and to work together across government, business and sectors, to ensure we have a transport system that supports the wellbeing of New Zealanders and liveability of our places, now and into the future.

Proactively Released

Waka Kotahi and Sustainability

- Waka Kotahi has an important role in caring for the environment. Toitū te Taiao, our Sustainability Action Plan, was released in 2020 and sets out our sustainability vision – we are striving for a "low carbon, safe and healthy transport system" demonstrating our commitment to working with the sector to provide for improved cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes.

- Our Sustainability vision is cast widely to reflect the national and global challenges we face including the need to:
    - mitigate emissions related to the land transport network consistent and respond to climate change
    - improve public health outcomes, including through the provision of mode shift
    - reduce environmental harm through protecting and where possible enhancing our indigenous biodiversity, water quality and providing for resource efficiency utilising less virgin materials, reducing energy consumption and the use of water
    - recognise that in addition to providing for people movement and place functions, the transport system plays an important role in shaping places for people and their environment that serve multiple purposes
    - recognise, respect and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partner with Māori to improve sustainability outcomes

- As part of activating this vision, Waka Kotahi adopted the ISC Sustainability Rating Scheme in 2020 and the Resource Efficiency Strategy and associated Policy in 2021/22.

- Under the Resource Efficiency policy, all Waka Kotahi projects are required to evaluate opportunities for Resource Efficiency throughout all project stages and develop Resource Efficiency and Waste Minimisation plans, which outline actions that will be taken to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions, increase uptake of recycled and alternative materials, reduce the use of virgin and carbon-intensive materials, reduce water consumption, and reduce waste. Projects are required to report on these measures annually.

- Waka Kotahi sustainability policy requires all capital projects and programmes[1] over $15 million to consider the merits of the IS Rating Scheme, with high-value projects of over $100 million required to complete IS rating certification.

- There are currently 16 Waka Kotahi projects implementing or proposing to implement the ISC rating scheme. Six of these have formally registered with ISC and are actively undertaking the rating. The remaining ten are in the process of scoping requirements and registering with ISC. Seven projects are with the New Zealand Upgrade Programme and aim to achieve an 'excellent' award level rating as a minimum.

- The ISC rating scheme is in early stages of implementation at Waka Kotahi, and we are beginning to see emerging sustainability outcomes, including carbon reduction in design (Takitimu North Link digital twin), full recycling of the Park Estate bridge demolition (Paparkura to Drury), and the electrification of site buggies (O Mahurangi/ Penlink).

Proactively Released

[1] The Network Outcome Contracts are not currently included at this time.

Embedding climate action

- The Minster has asked that Te Manatū Waka – Ministry of Transport ensure that the draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport has a greater focus on reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, as well as building greater resilience so our transport network can better withstand the increasing frequency of extreme weather events.

- It is imperative that resources are used not simply for rebuilding or maintaining our infrastructure, but to build back better. This includes making sure our infrastructure can withstand natural hazards which are increasing in their frequency and severity, and reducing emissions from the transport sector as we move towards a zero-emissions economy.

- This aligns with the vision outlined in the Emissions Reductions Plan and the National Adaptation plan.

- Waka Kotahi is committed to embedding climate action into all that we do, supported and driven by our response to actions in both the Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) and as part of the response to the Carbon Neutral Government Programme (CNGP).

- Waka Kotahi is working with its supply chain to embed resource efficiency requirements through our strategy, supporting policy, and guidance for all stages of our project lifecycle, and have developed a voluntary Key Result Area (KRA) metric for our Network Outcome Contracts.

- We are also delivering and reporting through our initiatives being funded through the Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

- Cities are moving away from car dependent, low-density suburban development, towards an efficient and liveable urban form that supports public and active transport, which will require less investment in car-based infrastructure, and more in public transport, walking and cycling. It also requires broader thinking about how transport networks influence urban development, and their impacts on social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

- This is why the Government has been investing in transformational projects such as the Auckland City Rail Link and Auckland Light Rail.

City Rail Link (CRL)

- The CRL team aims to build New Zealand's largest transport infrastructure project without using unnecessary resources or creating unnecessary waste.

- To reduce emissions associated with the project they used electricity supplied from the national grid, rather than from diesel generators. Across two stations alone, that avoided 1 million litres of diesel use, reducing the carbon footprint by 15,000 tonnes, the equivalent of 18,000 Auckland to London flights.

- Fly-ash, a waste product from coal-fired power stations, was used as a partial cement replacement. Using fly-ash for the 362 20-metre piles in Albert Street has reduced their GHG footprint by over 8 persent, [saving approximately 122 tonnes CO2 equivalent of GHG emissions].

Proactively Released

- CRL has adopted and adapted the Infrastructure Sustainability Council (ISC) IS rating framework as a basis to evaluate and improve sustainability performance, working with mana whenua to make it more appropriate for the New Zealand context.

- The CRL project will need to meet criteria across the framework's six themes:
  - Management and Governance
  - Using Resources
  - Emissions, Pollution and Waste
  - Ecology
  - People and Place
  - Innovation

- CRL is a pilot project for the use of the IS rating framework in Aotearoa New Zealand and is targeting an 'Excellent' rating for both the design and construction phases.

- The project will reduce travel time, improve access to employment and education opportunities, provide opportunities for commercial and residential development around stations, and future-proof the Auckland rail network by doubling capacity to handle peak-time passenger movements, and being able to run longer trains more frequently.

- A six-carriage electric train takes about 625 cars off the road. Nine train carriage capacity is now planned for CRL and will move the equivalent capacity of three Auckland Harbour Bridges or 16 extra traffic lanes into the city at peak times.

- PwC has estimated the benefit-cost ratio for the CRL project will generate total benefits, including wider economic benefits, of $11.930 billion present value over a 60-year period, giving a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.

- The CRL project has also won multiple awards including:
  - Deloitte Energy Excellence Award
  - Sustainable Business Network's Supreme Award - the NZI Transforming New Zealand Award

Supporting Cyclone Response

- Recent weather events such as Cyclone Gabrielle and the Auckland floods have bought resilience and climate change to the forefront of planning, design, construction and operation of transport infrastructure.

- In February, the Government provided $250 million of emergency funding the to enable Waka Kotahi to respond to the immediate transport issues and reconnecting communities that had been cut off. As we move into the next stages of the recovery, we will be in a better position to assess the full extent of the damage and to determine our next steps.

- Waka Kotahi is working on a cyclone recovery plan that includes embedding sustainability in the recovery programme.

Proactively Released