

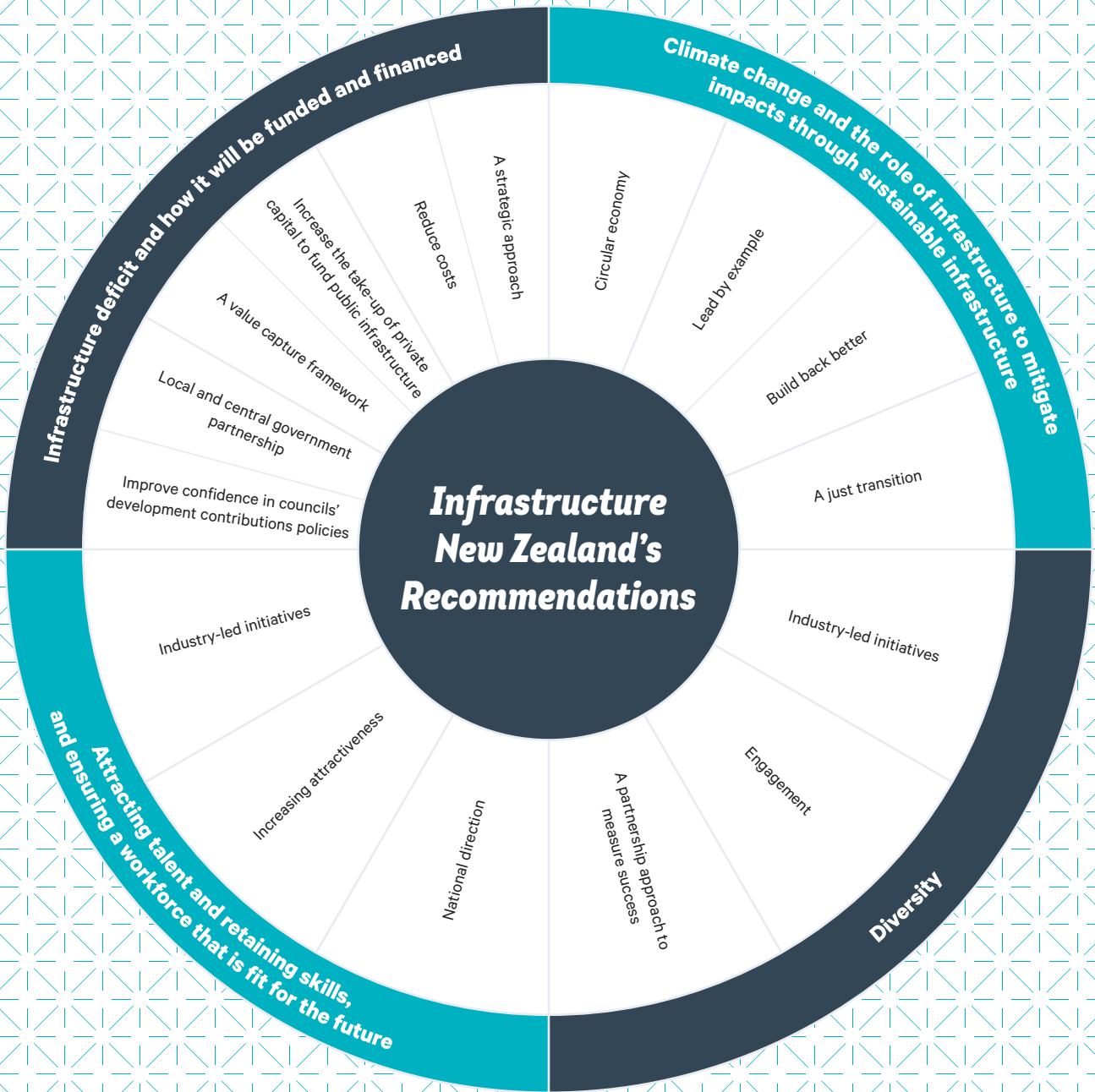


NEW ZEALAND'S
LEADING
INFRASTRUCTURE
MEMBER
ASSOCIATION

***Achieving
future-fit
infrastructure
outcomes:***

*Government
priorities
for 2022-23*

**Infrastructure
New Zealand's
Recommendations**



Message from Claire Edmondson, Chief Executive



Infrastructure has often been an after-thought in public policymaking which goes some way in explaining our significant national infrastructure deficit. It therefore gives me much pleasure to present Infrastructure New Zealand's latest report, *Achieving future-fit infrastructure outcomes: Government priorities for 2022-23*. With the 2023 General Election on the horizon, this report seeks to get serious debate on infrastructure started early.

This report squarely focusses on the short-to-medium term. It is success in the short-to-medium term that will set us up for success in the long-term.

The report's structure is unique in that it combines the main political parties' positions and Infrastructure New Zealand's own recommendations captured under our four key priority areas. By doing so, this publication seeks to readily provide members with insights into political parties' "thinking". It also provides a reference point to help gauge how well the Government is doing in responding to our recommendations.

This report would not have been possible without input from the Labour, National, Green and ACT Parties. I would like to acknowledge them for engaging with us.

Infrastructure New Zealand's recommendations combine elements of operational, technical as well as strategic policy and are influenced by the Māori proverb 'Ka mua, ka muri: Looking back in order to move forward'.

The four key priority areas and our recommendations in each of those areas will form a significant part of our policy and advocacy efforts.

Introduction

Infrastructure New Zealand is the nation's leading infrastructure member association. Our core purpose is to advance best practice development of world-class transport, energy, water, telecommunications, and other public infrastructure for all New Zealanders. We contribute to, and advocate for, strong leadership on infrastructure, and we do that through research, advocacy, and public and private sector collaboration.

Our members are leaders from diverse sectors across New Zealand, covering the range of those involved in infrastructure in New Zealand, including the major engineering consultancies, the major constructors and contractors, the major funders, the advisory firms, and the legal advisors. Accessibility to this pool of knowledge and expertise means the public sector often relies on Infrastructure New Zealand for advice and feedback on matters relating to the infrastructure sector and urban development in general.

Achieving future-fit infrastructure outcomes: Government priorities for 2022-23 replaces Infrastructure New Zealand's earlier publication Infrastructure Priorities for the 2020-23 Government. That document is now out-of-date as much has occurred since then.

This report focuses on the short-to-medium term and highlights key initiatives we believe the Government should prioritise, as well as other projects it needs to progress so work can continue beyond the 2023 General Election. This publication also offers a stocktake of the main political parties' key positions on infrastructure issues – the focus being more on the what than on the how. Its preparation has involved engagement with the Labour, National, Green and ACT Parties.

This document builds off the four key areas Infrastructure New Zealand has identified as key to addressing critical issues impacting on the sector's ability to deliver world-class infrastructure for the benefit of all New Zealanders:

- 1. The infrastructure deficit and how it will be funded and financed.**
- 2. Climate change and the role of infrastructure to mitigate impacts through sustainable infrastructure.**
- 3. Attracting talent and retaining skills and ensuring a workforce that is fit for the future.**
- 4. Diversity – of thought and people.**

This document may be updated periodically to capture political parties' updated/new positions.

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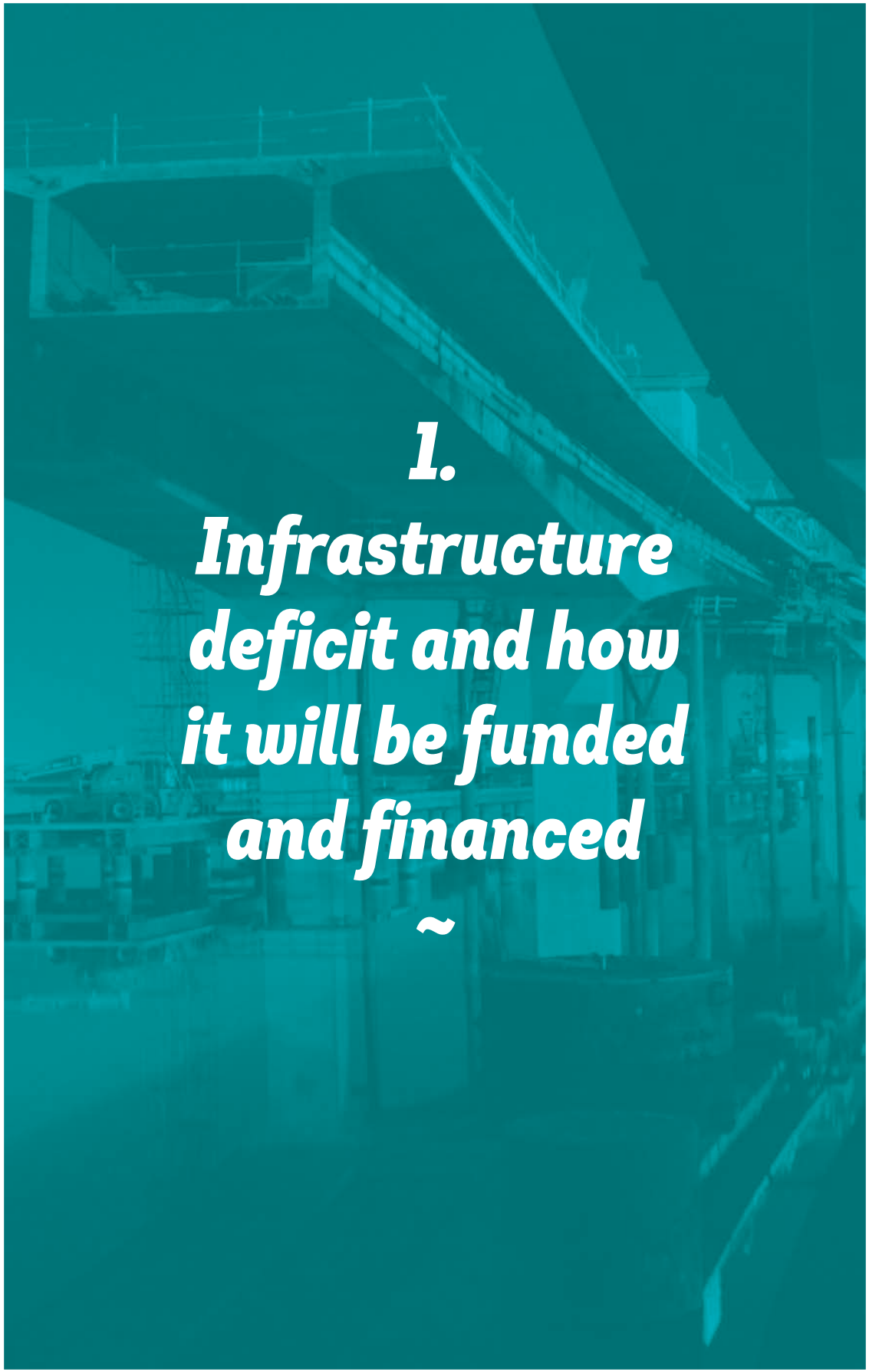
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1. Infrastructure deficit and how it will be funded and financed

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A lot has been said about New Zealand's significant national infrastructure deficit and the need to address it. The dollar amount of that deficit varies depending on source. Treasury's 2022 Investment Statement puts the figure at \$210 billion. The New Zealand Infrastructure Commission: Te Waihanga (Te Waihanga) has stated the nation would need to spend \$31 billion on infrastructure each year, for the next 30 years, if we are to build our way out of current and future infrastructure challenges. That puts into context the severity of the situation New Zealand is in, and it is simply not sustainable. We must make better use of the infrastructure we have and find better ways to pay for future infrastructure projects, including using the range of funding and financing tools we already have, which include public-private partnerships, special purpose vehicles under the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act 2020, lease structures and development contributions and developer agreements used by local government. We must also prioritise the infrastructure we need to build, and enable the project and skills pipeline required to deliver it; this has been recommended by Te Waihanga and we support it.

The Labour, National, Green and ACT Parties have various positions on funding and financing infrastructure. The Labour Party's policies are also being reflected in the Government's actions and policies. Table 1.1 below lays out the parties' key positions on funding and financing of infrastructure projects.

Table 1.1: Political parties' positions on infrastructure funding and financing

Labour/Government

- Acknowledge that historic underinvestment in infrastructure has been a handbrake on the New Zealand economy, and has led to lower productivity, ageing and neglected schools and hospitals, caused congestion in our cities and held back our regions from reaching their economic potential.
- Build new infrastructure to remain globally competitive and connected to the world.
- Recognise that infrastructure requires long-term planning and an eye to the future.
- Plan for the next 30 years, not just the next three. Invest \$57.3 billion in infrastructure over the next five years.
- Increase investment in modernising schools and hospitals, enable more housing, tackle congestion in the transport system and provide New Zealanders with greater choice, and roll out new telecommunications and energy infrastructure to prepare the economy for the future.
- Deliver new transport infrastructure.

National

- Establish a National Infrastructure Bank to offer an avenue for institutional investors like ACC, the New Zealand Super Fund, iwi, KiwiSaver providers and overseas pension funds to invest in New Zealand infrastructure assets.
- Take a strategic, master-planned approach to delivering infrastructure outcomes.
- Unlock real investment in infrastructure so can build things when and where they are needed, rather than playing catch-up. That means innovating on finance, thinking long-term, and fixing planning rules so they are no longer a barrier.

Green

- Fund infrastructure projects through general taxation.
- Reallocate funding from planned low-value, climate destabilising motorway projects – focus on infrastructure projects that will help reduce emissions and increase resilience in the face of climate change.
- Support public ownership and financing of all new transport infrastructure.

ACT

- Introduce a GST-sharing scheme to fund infrastructure – share 50 percent of the GST revenue of building a new house with the local council that issued the consent to help them cover the infrastructure costs associated with new housing developments. This could potentially provide an environment for local councils to approve more housing consents and enable builders to build houses with less delay.
- Taxpayers should not be the only source of infrastructure funding. Increase the level of private sector funding to inject much-needed discipline into decision-making while allowing the Government to maintain prudent levels of public debt.
- Create a dedicated public-private partnership agency to get things built.
- Introduce a system of 30-year infrastructure partnerships between regional and central government. The regional partnerships would take control of the prioritisation of projects within the budget allocated to them by the central government. Meanwhile, central government, through Te Waihanga, would be responsible for assessing the performance of these infrastructure partnerships against pre-determined and agreed metrics, like population growth, road fatality rates, and congestion levels.
- Under infrastructure partnership agreements, regional alliances would receive significant government funding each year to support the development of infrastructure. However, funding above those taxpayer investments would have to be raised from private investors at home and abroad.
- Match government funding with local knowledge to get more and better infrastructure built, such as the Auckland Transport Alignment Plan.
- Depoliticise infrastructure projects so they survive political cycles – use the long-term nature of these plans to insulate infrastructure from political pressures. Infrastructure, with its very long time horizons is profoundly unsuited to decision-making by political leaders, beset by three-year tunnel vision.
- Remove barriers to finance for build-to-rent schemes.
- Require councils to commit to short and long-term water quality objectives, and to plan and budget to renew and upgrade aging and failing water and wastewater infrastructure.

Several of these policies have merit – some more than others. There are two key considerations in deploying the funding and financing toolkit:

1. equity – equitable outcomes for taxpayers, and for society at large – to ensure fairness and ensuring no group is affected disproportionately
2. optimising efficiency to reduce opportunity costs in the longer-term.

In terms of equity, one example is the use of fuel taxes to fund transport infrastructure. Fuel taxes are easy to implement and manage, and they can provide a steady stream of revenue to fund identified transport projects. However, they are essentially a distance-based charge – that is, the more someone drives, the more fuel used and the greater fuel tax they pay. This may be particularly inequitable for poorer households living in areas further from city centres, and potentially worsened by poor access to rapid and frequent public transport options.

Those who live further away from key nodes/city centres/work locations requiring them to drive greater distances, in areas with inadequate access to frequent/rapid transport networks cannot easily change their travelling patterns (fuel and vehicle use is relatively inelastic). They may also be less able to afford fuel-efficient, hybrid or electric vehicles.

This all means poorer households tend to pay a disproportionate portion of their household incomes to pay for transport infrastructure the fuel tax would fund – an inequitable outcome.

In terms of optimising efficiency and reducing opportunity costs, the Auckland Light Rail project is a case in point. The project will be New Zealand's largest-ever infrastructure project. With early estimates putting project costs at \$14.6 billion, it presents a huge opportunity for the transport, construction and infrastructure sectors. The project is also one that the private sector would find commercially feasible to finance. However, the Government has said it is not considering private capital – such as public-private partnership opportunities – to fund the project. This is a significant missed opportunity. The Government's decision to commit and tie in at least \$14.6 billion to a single project means at least that much less to spend on other essential infrastructure projects, particularly ones the private sector would not be interested in financing, resulting in significant opportunity costs for the society as a whole – ultimately, this could include delaying the funding of critical lifesaving drugs or medical procedures.

Table 1.2 lists other specific initiatives the Government should consider for the short-to-medium term.

Table 1.2: Infrastructure New Zealand's recommendations for infrastructure funding and financing in the short-to-medium term

A strategic approach

- Infrastructure projects that have a positive benefits-cost ratio should be able to progress and not thwarted by change in government or political cycles.
- The New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2052 should be supported by an implementation plan and a monitoring framework to ensure it remains relevant and fit-for-purpose. Te Waihanga should be required to report on its monitoring and implementation.
- Te Waihanga has recommended a priority list of key infrastructure projects. We recommend this should be publicly available. This list should contain projects that are needed within the short, medium and long-terms and getting planning underway to deliver them. The list's progress should be monitored and reported on by Te Waihanga.
- Te Waihanga has begun publishing a pipeline of work to enable the industry to better coordinate projects, e.g. importing tunnel boring machines and specialists from overseas to work on multiple projects. It has recommended that the infrastructure pipeline be strengthened to broaden the detail of information provided and improve the coverage across all regions and sectors. We support this recommendation.

Reduce costs

- Ensure the planning system does not continue to disproportionately hamper infrastructure delivery through delays and excessive costs. The reform of the resource management system provides a key opportunity to address this, that is, a more efficient system that still provides good environmental outcomes. The reform process is, however, a 10-year work programme.
- The COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 is meant to be a stop-gap measure by providing for a short-term consenting process to fast-track projects that can boost employment and economic recovery. The Act has meant consent applications for infrastructure projects have been able to be processed much quicker than would be the case under normal process. Applicants estimate that using the fast-track process saves an average of 15 months per project. We recommend that the Act should be extended by at least five years and beyond 8 July 2023, when the Act is due to be repealed.

Increase the take-up of private capital to fund public infrastructure

- The Government should review its current, overly conservative approach to using private capital for public infrastructure, while ensuring ownership remains with the Crown.
- Explore funding and financing opportunities with, for example, ACC and the New Zealand Super Fund, which would enable profits to be used for social good.
- Government cannot fund everything within the short- and medium terms. Accessing private capital provides an ability to bring forward projects that would have otherwise been delayed for several years, reducing opportunity costs on society. It also means using private capital to fund public – and often social – infrastructure that would otherwise not occur.

A value capture framework

- Partner with the industry and start work immediately on establishing a value capture framework for local and central government to use.
- Ensure that a value capture framework is in place before the Auckland light rail project is complete.

Local and central government partnership

- Consider the merits of councils being able to retain the GST component of their revenue to invest in new infrastructure projects.

Improve confidence in councils' development contributions policies

- The approach to setting development contributions policies by councils needs to be strengthened.
- Developers often complain that they are overcharged for development contributions and that the relationship between their individual developments and infrastructure for which development contributions are payable (i.e. the causal nexus test) tends to be poorly demonstrated, particularly for citywide charges. They also lack confidence in the cost allocation process and the modelling of charges.
- In order to improve developers'/industry's confidence in councils' development contributions policies and practices, consider the merits of requiring an independent review and approval of councils' development contributions policies – such as by the Commerce Commission or Te Waihanga – before a council can adopt its development contributions policy.



2.

Climate change and the role of infrastructure to mitigate impacts through sustainable infrastructure

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Climate change and its implications are well-recognised, with several councils around the country and the Government having already declared a climate emergency. The time to act is now.

There is an opportunity to design and build our cities in a way that makes them better and more sustainable places to live. This ranges from quality compact urban forms to shifting to a low-emissions transport fleet. There is also an opportunity to make better use of the infrastructure we already have, including using it in transformational ways.

Infrastructure will play a significant role in how we respond to climate change, whether it is mitigation, adaptation or increasing resilience. Infrastructure-related decisions will have a significant impact on our path to decarbonisation and net zero emissions. Table 2.1 lays out the parties' key positions on the role of infrastructure to mitigate climate change impacts through sustainable infrastructure.

Table 2.1: Political parties' positions on sustainable infrastructure to mitigate climate change impacts

Labour/Government

- Secure a low-carbon future for New Zealand, powered by clean energy and underpinned by protecting and restoring nature. Good progress has been made in laying the foundations, but the work is unfinished.
- Reduce New Zealand's reliance on global energy prices.
- View climate change is an opportunity for new jobs and higher wages.
- Use New Zealand's clean, green and innovative image to create new jobs in new industries.

National

- A specific position was not released at the time this document was published.

Green

- Ensure the primary focus of infrastructure investment is to mitigate the impacts of, and being resilient to, climate change – building new highways that will just induce more private vehicle use and lock-in emissions is not the answer.
- Invest now in making infrastructure resilient to climate change impacts that are already happening or already 'baked in' based on emissions to date.
- Provide proper alternatives to private vehicle use.
- Provide infrastructure that makes people feel safe to walk and cycle.
- Provide mass rapid transit in the cities, rapid regional rail across the country to connect all of New Zealand.

ACT

- There are two problems to solve for climate change – how to mitigate emission levels, and how to assist communities in adapting to a changing climate.
- The Emissions Trading Scheme sets a hard cap on emissions and allows trading emissions reductions for cash. There is no simpler system to incentivise businesses to reduce or mitigate their emissions. No other policies or interventions are needed, which is why ACT opposes subsidies for electric vehicles and businesses to invest in reducing carbon emissions. The price on carbon is more than enough incentive to reduce emissions.
- In place of the Zero Carbon Act, introduce a no-nonsense climate change plan which ties New Zealand's carbon price to the prices paid by our top five trading partners. This will show the world New Zealand is doing its bit. It is a simple and effective response to climate change.
- Change New Zealand's climate change regulations to provide carbon credits for New Zealand wood products that store carbon for at least fifty years.
- Adapting to climate change should first focus on making infrastructure more resilient.
- Adapting public infrastructure to be more resilient to climate change should be based on sound risk assessments. Because much of the country's infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, road, rail and ports are in potentially vulnerable areas these should be a priority for investments in climate resilience. Projects which meet a "low emissions" key performance indicator such as a bike bridge across Auckland's Waitemata Harbour may sound attractive to politicians, but they have little value in terms of reducing environmental effects compared to mitigating the risks from coastal landfills or failing wastewater infrastructure which discharges raw sewage into rivers and onto beaches.
- While much attention is given to reducing emissions from encouraging a mode-shift from private vehicles to public transport, walking and cycling, most private and business journeys will continue to be made by vehicles for the foreseeable future.

A lot of the initiatives in Table 2.1 concentrate more on the how (projects) and not so much on the what. While they are well-intentioned, financial and capacity constraints mean not every initiative will be able to be delivered. It is vital a proposed infrastructure projects' sustainability score is also taken into account – in addition to value for money, positive business-cost ratios and net benefits in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing – when prioritising a capital works programme.

Table 2.2 outlines key levers that the Government needs to consider now.

Table 2.2: Infrastructure New Zealand's recommendations on sustainable infrastructure to mitigate climate change impacts

Circular economy

- Identify and consider how existing infrastructure using fossil fuels can be repurposed to use green energy, such as coal-powered power stations.
- Consider options around requiring every new dwelling in tier one council areas to have access to charging infrastructure. An arrangement with, for example, Crown Infrastructure Partners could be explored with the extra costs paid back through targeted rates over several years.
- Immediately explore the merits of using treated wastewater for irrigation and other agricultural purposes so that it is not just pumped into the ocean.

Lead by example

- A stocktake of how resilient public infrastructure (at the local and central government level) is to the adverse impacts of a changing climate, and setting the scene for a national dialogue on choosing between continued use or alternative solutions.
- Promote green infrastructure solutions for government projects.
- Facilitate approaches that promote a move to a circular economy, such as converting waste into energy. This may involve a refresh of the policy on responding to unsolicited bid proposals for infrastructure projects that may serve as a case study in enhancing sustainability and/or reducing the emissions profile.

Build back better

- The Government's commitment to reducing New Zealand's emissions profile needs to be accompanied by a commitment from local and central government that all infrastructure projects will go through a sustainable and climate lens. This is especially critical because of the long-lived nature of infrastructure.

A just transition

- There is a need to accelerate investment in new energy sources, and for the infrastructure industry to embrace a move towards carbon neutrality and developing renewable energy goals to help with a just transition. There is already considerable interest and activity in the production of green energy, whether that be from solar or hydrogen. It is, however, vital we have new technology and alternatives to fossil fuel readily available before implementing new taxes or other methods to force people to move away from fossil fuels. The Government must accordingly ensure New Zealand does not wean off fossil fuels like natural gas too early to look good internationally and end up being even more reliant on imported fuels, and more susceptible to fluctuations in global energy prices.

3.
***Attracting talent
and retaining skills,
and ensuring a
workforce that is fit
for the future***



The infrastructure sector is struggling to attract talent and retain the skills needed to deliver projects. At the same time, there is a worldwide war for talent. New Zealand is a small nation struggling to compete with other countries like Australia. We are losing the people we have to better pay and better opportunities (including accelerated residence pathways) elsewhere. The sector has also struggled, like many others, to recruit staff from overseas during the Covid-19 border closures. This has been made worse by the fact that we do not train enough of the people the infrastructure sector needs.

There are three key related factors:

1. attract skilled people from offshore who would like to make New Zealand their home
2. training the local workforce – including for roles not considered skilled for the purposes of the immigration programme – to reduce an over-reliance on migrant labour
3. reducing the loss of talent to other countries like Australia.

The Government has laid out its plans regarding reopening New Zealand's borders which would allow migrant skilled labour to be recruited.

Table 3.1 covers the political parties' positions on attracting talent and retaining skills, and ensuring a workforce that is fit for the future.

Table 3.1: Political parties' positions on attracting talent and retaining skills, and ensuring a workforce that is fit for the future

Labour/Government

- Reform New Zealand's approach to skills and training across infrastructure, economic development, healthcare, and housing.
- Develop talent locally and become more self-reliant. The greater the ability to train and nurture the skills New Zealand needs, the more secure the economy will be to global shocks. New Zealand has historically failed to train the workers necessary to enable a highly productive, high wage, and innovative economy. Covid-19 has demonstrated how dependent New Zealand is on migrants – arguably over-dependent.
- Ensure vocational education meets the skill needs of individuals and industry. The six new industry-governed Workforce Development Councils are now in place, while Te Pūkenga, the new regionally-based vocational education provider, is integrating the best of the old polytechnic and industry training models. A new unified funding system is being developed to complete these reforms.
- Investment in fees-free apprenticeships and targeted training has seen more than 175,000 people take up the opportunity since July 2020, including over 80,000 apprentices. The Apprenticeship Boost initiative has so far helped employers keep over 40,000 early-stage apprentices employed and training towards their qualifications through wage subsidies.
- The Mana in Mahi initiative supports people to obtain trades qualifications and enter lasting employment. Since 2018, there have been 4,446 Mana in Mahi placements and there continues to be increasing demand for this programme.

National

- Adjust income tax thresholds to account for the inflation to reduce the tax burden.
- Compete aggressively to attract people with high-quality skills and talent from around the world.

Green

- Greater investment in education, including better income support for students in tertiary education.
- Tertiary education should be free and there should be a guaranteed minimum income for all to allow people to train and re-train without financial pressure.
- Create better work conditions through initiatives such as default opt-out union membership, encourage worker representation on boards of companies, and guarantee regular minimum wage increases. To attract people to jobs you must consider all aspects of people's work decisions, including conditions, stability, pay, and ability to find affordable homes nearby.
- Improve workplace protections for casual, fixed-term, and piece-rate working people, including dependent contractors and migrant workers.
- Ensure migrant communities have legitimate residence pathways that enables them to fully participate in their communities.

ACT

- The private sector needs a long-term committed pipeline of infrastructure work in order to have the confidence to invest in people, plant, and equipment.
- Take politicians out of decision-making on infrastructure projects to avoid the swinging priorities which affect the ability of businesses to plan and develop their people.
- Reduce the middle-income tax rate from 30% to 17.5%. Allow the average full-time worker to keep \$2,000 more a year to help deal with the rising cost of living, almost \$40 more a week.
- Allow existing student visa holders and their partners to apply for the 2021 Resident Visa.
- Allow offshore work visa holders to apply for the 2021 Resident Visa.

Initiatives such as the Workforce Development Councils are a good start but successfully attracting talent and retaining skills will depend on a partnership approach between the Government, universities and polytechnics, and the private sector that not only captures the likely professional and workforce requirements to deliver planned and forecast infrastructure, but ensures our education system support our future workforce needs and is able to identify skills deficiencies. The recommendations in Table 3.2 represent an opportunity to build onto initiatives that are either already underway or proposed.

Table 3.2: Infrastructure New Zealand's recommendations on attracting talent and retaining skills, and ensuring a workforce that is fit for the future

Industry-led initiatives

- Consider how industry-led initiatives can be embraced by the wider sector. The Construction Sector Accord has documented a number of success stories on its website, such as Aurecon's Shared Care programme, HEB Construction literacy and numeracy programme and Fletcher Construction's initiative aimed at showing young women the opportunities the construction sector can offer.

Increasing attractiveness

- Consider the role of the Tertiary Education Commission, Te Pūkenga (New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology) and the Workforce Development Councils in increasing the number of young people pursuing tertiary level education relevant to the infrastructure sector within the short-to-medium term.
- Ensure New Zealand offers the right courses at the tertiary education level (including at polytechnics) so our young people are trained in courses that are relevant to future needs and demands.

National direction

- The New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2052 makes a number of relevant recommendations that include a national infrastructure skills plan to ensure we have the right people with the right skills to deliver our infrastructure, and providing certainty to the industry to invest in skills and training development. We support this recommendation.

4. *Diversity* ~

Diversity is not just gender and race. Diversity is in thought, how we use technology, age – both young and old – and the list goes on. When we refer to diversity, we are talking about:

- diversity of people and the differences they bring
- diversity of thinking to challenge the status quo
- doing things differently.

All these elements are needed to help move us forward. As the saying goes, doing what we have always done will only get us what we have always got, and will not drive a different or better outcome. It is our differences and collaboratively bringing those differences to a problem that will provide the disruptive value-add we require to move forward and prosper.

Infrastructure New Zealand has already acknowledged this and is doing its part through its two diversity networks: The Infrastructure Collective and The Women's Infrastructure Network, overseen by the Diversity Advisory Board which reports directly to the Infrastructure New Zealand Board.

We need people at all levels in the infrastructure sector to feel comfortable thinking creatively and raising ideas. We need workplace cultures that celebrate diversity, champion inclusivity, and develop programmes and interventions that enable employees to overcome barriers to participation and success. If the status quo is not challenged, we will not change, and we need to.

Increasing diversity in the workforce acknowledges two main points:

1. there is a skills shortage, accompanied by a war for talent
2. we need to be smart about how we address that challenge.

The infrastructure sector needs to do better at embracing diversity to take advantage of the opportunities a diverse workforce presents, such as diversity in thinking, innovative approaches and broader options.

Diversity brings different experiences and thinking to bear, which is a positive. There are numerous examples of diverse thinking that solve big problems, and it is becoming a hallmark of high-performing organisations across sport, military, medical, cultural, corporate and other sectors.

Te Waihanga has stated that “greater diversity has been demonstrated to improve staff recruitment and retention, innovation and group performance, reputation and responsibility, and financial performance”. It has recommended a national infrastructure skills plan that, amongst others, achieves increased diversity in all parts of the infrastructure system.

Increased diversity and inclusiveness will be a key factor in addressing current and future challenges facing the infrastructure sector. Diversity of people and thought will serve as a key conduit in overcoming the types of challenges identified in the other three themes.

Table 4.1 lists political parties' specific positions on diversity, but more could be done.

Table 4.1: Political parties' positions on diversity

Labour/Government

- Focus on attracting the right balance of skilled migrants New Zealand needs as well as create incentives for investment in technology and improving the terms, conditions, training and wages of New Zealand's workforce.
- Partner with industry in some industries to develop industry plans and training programmes to support New Zealanders into skilled positions, increase focus and investment in productivity and to ensure industries have access to the right people, at the right time, with the right skills.
- Ongoing investment in skills and training with the Construction Skills Action Plan, which has already exceeded its target of supporting an additional 4,000 people into construction related education or employment since it launched in 2018.

National

- A specific position was not released at the time this document was published.

Green

- Celebrate diversity and work to eliminate all institutional discrimination in New Zealand.
- It is structural and long-standing discrimination that leads to things like the gender, ethnic and disability pay gap, and a lack of diversity within organisations.
- Implement Green Party's wide range of policies to remove discriminatory laws and practices and promote opportunities for all people.

ACT

- Consider the needs of people in the workplace as a starting point. For example, by asking, "What facilities do women in construction need so they can feel comfortable working on remote sites or underground? Can we provide older workers more flexibility in their working hours so they spend more time with family, and we still retain their skills and experience?"
- This will require more empathy rather than more workplace regulations. Businesses which demonstrate this type of empathy will be more attractive as employers.

A top-down approach to achieving a more diverse infrastructure sector is not realistic. It is only through a shared commitment between industry leaders, advocates, workers, and the Government that diversity will be able to flourish. Table 4.2 looks at the opportunities around building on what we already have, together with a monitoring framework to gauge where we are and where we need to be, thus enabling informed initiatives and a partnership approach between the Government, advocates and the industry to enable diversity to flourish.

Table 4.2: Infrastructure New Zealand's recommendations on diversity

Industry-led initiatives

- Consider how industry-led initiatives can be embraced by the wider sector. The Construction Sector Accord has documented a number of success stories on its website, such as Aurecon's Shared Care programme, HEB Construction literacy and numeracy programme and Fletcher Construction's initiative aimed at showing young women the opportunities the construction sector can offer.

Engagement

- More education and considering what is holding firms back from embracing diversity and taking advantage of outcomes such as diverse thinking.

A partnership approach to measure success

- We are calling on the Government to work with us to formulate diversity measures in the infrastructure sector, that includes measures on gender, ethnicity, age and employee pipeline.



Infrastructure
New Zealand

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