



Tolling will contribute to upkeep of new roads

The Government's decision to introduce tolling on the three new roads: Ōtaki to north of Levin, Takitimu North Link and Penlink, is the right thing to do to ensure funding is available for ongoing maintenance and renewals, says Infrastructure New Zealand Chief Executive Nick Leggett.

"When it comes to the stewardship of our roading infrastructure, building the road is only the beginning. Modern roads, like all assets, require ongoing investment in maintenance and upgrades, and tolling can be an important contributor to those."

"I recognise that the debate around tolling and other forms of road pricing stirs strong opinions in New Zealand where we have very limited experience of it," says Leggett. "Overseas, however, it is commonplace and contributes to the management and sustainability of modern, highly functional road networks."

"From a funding point of view, tolls won't cover the entire cost of maintaining and renewing these roads, but they can make an important contribution. The proposed linking of toll fees to inflation is sensible too."

"Freight and commercial operators will be concerned that tolls do represent another cost. However, the benefits of safer, faster and more reliable routes far outweigh any additional cost to both operators and their customers," says Leggett.

"The fact is that successive governments have been shielding road users from the true and rising costs our land transport infrastructure for many years. Road user charges (RUC), fuel excise duties, registration fees and general taxation no longer provide the level of funding required to maintain and improve our network. Adding tolling to these routes is a timely and necessary decision."

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Infrastructure New Zealand is Aotearoa's peak membership organisation for the infrastructure sector. We promote best practice in national infrastructure development through research, advocacy, and public and private sector collaboration. We promote public and media discussion on issues of importance to the infrastructure sector. Our membership is comprised of around

140 organisations, including government agencies, consultants, contractors, financiers, utilities, and academics. These organisations employ approximately 150,000 people in infrastructure-related roles and are united in their commitment to creating a better New Zealand through outstanding infrastructure.

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