Media Statement
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National Infrastructure Plan a Chance for Generational Change

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“This is a once-in-a-generation chance to make big changes to our infrastructure system - let's grab it and not miss this opportunity,” says Infrastructure New Zealand Chief Executive Nick Leggett in response to the release of the draft National Infrastructure Plan.

“The draft Plan is a clear-eyed assessment of the infrastructure challenges facing New Zealand, our historic underperformance and provides a solid pathway for improvement, particularly from our government agencies.”

“It rightly recognises that Aotearoa spends a lot on infrastructure, among the top 10 percent of OECD countries as a share of GDP, but we get one of the lowest returns. That’s simply not a sustainable situation when we look at the future demographic, geographic and resilience challenges confronting us.”

“The Plan, at its heart, prioritises getting better outcomes from every infrastructure dollar, and includes a call to action when it comes to improving how we manage the assets we already have,” Leggett says. “It reinforces the message that we need to do much better on the basics and provides an opportunity to make the changes required.”

“The reality is if we don’t face up to this now there will be real pain for our future generations. It’s important that both the sector, our businesses and communities participate in this consultation because the issues identified, and the changes recommended, will impact us all.”

Infrastructure New Zealand particularly supports the emphasis on:

- The prioritisation of asset management to protect existing infrastructure and ensure it delivers what New Zealanders expect from it.
- Reducing regulatory hurdles and simplifying planning to make it easier for infrastructure providers.
- Building confidence within the infrastructure sector through a steady project pipeline that allows providers to invest in workforce capability and capacity.

“What the infrastructure sector needs over the long-term is policy and political stability to plan, deliver and manage infrastructure efficiently,” Leggett says.

“Investors, councils and contractors alike need consistent signals from Government as well as opposition political parties. Policy certainty builds confidence, which leads to effective planning, more efficient procurement and better value for money.”

“We are encouraged that the draft Plan also presents a New Zealand-specific framework for infrastructure planning that takes into account the country’s unique characteristics.”

“New Zealand needs solutions that are tailored to our context – our small widely-dispersed population, our terrain and our exposure to natural hazards,” says Leggett. “We also need a shared national vision to guide investment decisions and create a long-term infrastructure pipeline that endures across election cycles.”

Just this week Infrastructure New Zealand released a report looking at how foreign direct investment is already helping us deliver world-leading mobile tower infrastructure quickly, innovatively and at scale.

“The experience of Connexa shows that if we are open new ways of doing things, including greater use of private funding and financing and developing a solid forward pipeline, we do have the ability to deliver critical infrastructure that supports our communities and economy.”

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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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