

Media Statement
26 August 2025



Time for National and Labour to Back Four-Year Term Referendum

Infrastructure New Zealand is calling on the National and Labour Parties to come together and provide New Zealanders with a clear referendum on extending the parliamentary term to four years, and to ensure that local government terms are extended at the same time.

“The Select Committee’s report on the Term of Parliament Bill offers a rare opportunity to reform our electoral system in a way that supports better long-term decision-making,” says Chief Executive Nick Leggett. “We now need our two major parties to come together to deliver a single, simple question to voters.”

“The move to a four-year parliamentary term must also be accompanied by the same shift for local government.”

“Aligning central and local government terms will enable stronger collaboration, provide more certainty for policy development, planning and delivery, and strengthen the confidence of those looking to invest in New Zealand’s infrastructure.”

“This is a constitutional issue that requires the leadership of our two major parties. Asking the electorate one question – should both central and local government move to fixed four-year terms with elections held two years apart – will deliver a reasonable and straightforward choice for voters.”

“We also support measures to increase parliamentary scrutiny of government decision-making, however these should be complementary to an extended term rather than as a prerequisite,” says Leggett. “Initiatives such as strengthening the role and independence of select committees and enhancing the scrutiny of ministers can ensure that an extended term does not diminish public accountability.”

“We urge National and Labour to show leadership, bring this referendum forward, and give New Zealanders a say in a solution that strengthens our democratic decision-making.”

ENDS

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.

Contact:

Nick Leggett
Chief Executive
021 248 2175