

Media Statement
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Metro rail funding welcome but asset management must be a priority

The confirmation of funding for metro rail upgrades in both Auckland and Wellington should reassure train users in both major cities that there is a better focus on shoring up vital daily commuter services.

“The North Island’s two largest cities simply cannot function without reliable daily passenger rail,” says Infrastructure New Zealand Chief Executive Nick Leggett. “These networks move tens of thousands of people every day, and years of under-investment in core renewals and maintenance has impacted reliability, disrupted journeys, and ultimately eroded people’s confidence. This additional investment will also benefit freight transported by rail.”

“Investment in the management of these assets needs to be part of a bigger priority shift for New Zealand when it comes to making the most out of the infrastructure we have. More focus and better investment in expertise must be driven across all infrastructure assets.”

The Draft National Infrastructure Plan sets out that around 60% of investment should be directed towards renewing and replacing existing infrastructure.

“It’s not always the exciting, shiny, new stuff that’s most important. If we want safe and reliable services that enhance our productivity and community connections, we must invest in extracting the full value from the infrastructure we’ve already got.”

Leggett says the upgrade work announced today is particularly important to get the Auckland network ready for the City Rail Link (CRL) in 2026.

“You can’t expect to reap the full reward of a project like the CRL if your basic track infrastructure is fragile.”

“Maintenance and renewals must be properly funded across our whole infrastructure system,” Leggett says. “This applies to roads, water, electricity networks, community facilities, schools and hospitals.”

“The bigger picture is that New Zealand must be world leaders in excellent asset management, not the exception.”

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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 social infrastructure for all New Zealanders. We do this through research, advocacy, and public and private sector collaboration. Our membership is comprised of over 150 organisations, including central and local government agencies, consultants, contractors, financiers, utilities, and academics – collectively employing approximately 150,000 people in infrastructure-related roles. Together, we are committed to creating a better New Zealand through outstanding infrastructure.

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