



16 February 2026

Hon. Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

NZUAG Review of Options to Improve the Management of Works and Records in Network Infrastructure Corridors

Minister:

Introduction

On 1 September 2025, you invited me to lead a review that investigates options to improve the planning, delivery, and management of works in Infrastructure Corridors, with a focus on the National Code of Practice and the respective roles of government and the network infrastructure sector. The Review, as a second priority, also identifies options and recommendations to improve Corridor workflow and asset management. NZUAG engaged Martin Jenkins to conduct the Review, assisted by Harrison Grierson. On behalf of the board of NZUAG, I submit the Review report for your consideration.

Recommendations

Network infrastructure is a large, highly complex system, with many independent actors, components, interactions, and downstream effects. Such systems are difficult to reform without major intervention, and there are no silver bullets to solve all the challenges; but there are significant opportunities for improvement. In summary, the report offers you a spectrum of policy options to strengthen stewardship, compliance, and planning processes. It recommends:

1. A revised system stewardship and regulatory model, led by MCERT and NZTA;
2. A primarily sector-based funding model;
3. Various initiatives to improve system performance;
4. And a review of these arrangements.

The board of NZUAG includes representatives from across the network infrastructure sector — corridor managers, utility operators, and contractors. **We support the broad thrust of the Review report — in particular, a centrally-led and strengthened stewardship and regulatory model, which we believe is essential for the success of the other initiatives — subject to important caveats:**

- A. MCERT should lead, with NZTA in support (to minimise conflicts of interest with NZTA's roles as a Road Controlling Authority and a part-funder of local roads);
- B. Any initiatives should support the holistic management of our infrastructure corridors and, where practical, a continued collaborative approach, rather than simply exercising greater roading control;

C. Sector participants have differing views on the various initiatives to improve systems performance; for example:

- The extent of stronger compliance and enforcement mechanisms, and the checks and balances therein;
- Standardisation of processes and systems versus the ability to opt in or out of any national or federated framework or to impose alternative mechanisms;
- Control and influence over future systems development and the costs imposed.

However, once we have a clear indication of policy direction and leadership, these concerns can be worked through and decisions made. Hence, we additionally recommend that you signal a strong commitment to sector engagement in the work arising from this Review.

The Government's decision to establish MCERT accelerates the shift to a more strategic, holistic, and integrated government oversight of New Zealand's network infrastructure system (which ideally should include all types — road, rail, water, electricity, gas, telecommunications, oil, etc. — irrespective of ownership). The new National Policy Statements for Infrastructure reinforce that more holistic stance, and espouse general principles which should guide any implementation of the Review's recommendations.

Closing

The Review team consulted widely with the network infrastructure sector, and the draft report's main points were discussed in two well-attended webinars (now available online). Noting the sector's awareness, we will make the full report available to them 4 weeks from today, to give you time to consider it.

NZUAG thanks NZTA for funding the Review (which was delivered for approximately half of the budgeted cost) and the officials from NZTA, NZ Infrastructure Commission, and Treasury for their input and support to the Review's governance group. We stand ready to engage with you and your officials on the choices to be made, and on developing and implementing the outcomes of those choices. We should be able to measure success through the frequency, duration, scale, and causes of planned, overdue, and unplanned works and asset strikes in the infrastructure corridors.

Sincerely,



Jim Donovan
Independent Chair, NZUAG