



MEMORANDUM

Date: 21 February 2011

To: Local Government Transport Congress 10-11 February 2011 Delegates

From: Lawrence Yule, President, *Local Government New Zealand*

Subject: Follow up message from the President

We have had time to digest our discussions from the Local Government Transport Congress held on 10-11 February 2011. Just to remind you; this congress was organised to help facilitate a more collaborative process with central government. Let me assert my confidence in our direction - we have taken our first big step on this somewhat complicated route.

I would like to sum up those two fascinating days by reminding those who attended of what we started with. That is what we know are the irrefutable facts of the current situation.

- it is not sustainable
- we need to take a long term perspective in designing an alternative
- and, therefore, we have to progress the issues we in the transport sector face in the knowledge there is little scope for short term influence and consequent change. Certainly not in this election year.

I was heartened by the willingness of the sector to put parochialism aside so that we can create a transport vision to drive a better co-ordinated approach with wins for all parties – central/local, local/local and local/community. I was also impressed by a shared sense of urgency amongst you.

So out of this knowledge and confirmation of our willingness to work together let's draw a line in the concrete for future discussions. Our bottom line becomes first funding priority being to maintain existing levels of service – that is maintenance before capital.

This is of course somewhat modest but in light of the Minister's comments we have to be realistic.

The minister reminded the sector investment in transport is not the silver bullet to growing the economy but that focus on economic growth will continue to shape transport investment decisions. He also reminded the sector not to expect greater revenue sharing. Existing capital projects such as roads of national significance (RoNS) will continue to be investment priorities.

There are then no surprises.

What we as a sector must do now is undertake some comprehensive analysis of what our future transport network will deliver and create multi partisan support for such a "vision" and how it will be delivered. The duration of this research is such that it could extend beyond the political cycle leading up to the next election but once completed and options agreed it is important that we in local government speak with one voice.

Local Government New Zealand on behalf of local government will present the sector as being "part of the solution" in supporting the Government in seeking to deliver its short term outcomes.

We will advocate for a transport network which is resilient to natural disasters, oil and energy constraints, economic impacts and societal changes. We will work to ensure investment in transport matches the real needs of the economy and takes account of external influences. And we will through our messaging work to help adjust community expectations to align levels of service with affordability and need. Finally we will lobby to create a simplified approach to planning / programming that is transparent and delivers better and more consistent resource allocation.

So in summing up the outcome of this work will be an enhanced ability to prioritise what is of importance to the sector. LGNZ and the National Council will then bring our collective concerns to the attention of the government before high-level decisions are effectively set in stone. It is our intention this congress will facilitate the development of a more collaborative process that will eventually see central and local government buying more openly in to a "vision" and process which outlines how we will work together in future.