

## **Central government review of Auckland CBD rail loop business case underlines need for better long term infrastructure planning in New Zealand**

### **Media Statement 21 December 2010**

The government's decision to review the Auckland CBD rail loop business case underlines, once again, the urgent need to achieve aligned vision between central and local government on the future development of Auckland.

"The review is welcome, as it provides the opportunity for the Auckland Council and government to agree on the merits of the project. But one would have to question why both parties had not already worked in collaboration on the development of the business case in the context of the overall development plan for Auckland", says NZCID Chief Executive, Stephen Selwood.

"The need for this review is symptomatic of traditional piecemeal 'project by project' infrastructure planning and delivery in Auckland.

"The preliminary business case on the CBD rail loop looks positive. Construction of the loop would provide an opportunity to accommodate some of Auckland's future growth within an intensified CBD and promote a shift from road to rail.

"But its release has not been made in the context of the overarching plan for Auckland. There are important questions to be asked as to how well the rail loop fits with the future development of the CBD, including recently announced proposals for the development of the waterfront.

"Will the future growth of the CBD be centred on the waterfront from Wynyard Quarter to the city or on the CBD rail loop alignment from Britomart to Newmarket? Is there sufficient demand or economic justification for both to be delivered in the same time frame? If so what is the optimal phasing of both investments? These are the critical questions that the Auckland spatial plan - the Auckland plan - must address.

"It's time to move away from project by project, and agency by agency, litigation of the future development of Auckland.

"The formation to the new Auckland Council and the development of the Auckland Plan provides an opportunity for united thinking about the long term growth and investment plan. The plan process should seek to achieve alignment between all parliamentarians, Aucklanders, and the Auckland Council on the city shaping infrastructure investment priorities for the region.

"That done, all major public investments can then be considered on their merits in the context of the overall spatial plan for Auckland", Selwood says.