

➤ Geography and population challenges no excuse to put infrastructure in the too hard basket

"New Zealand's geography and population challenges should be the impetus for more focus and positive moves to deliver New Zealanders the infrastructure they desperately need, not an excuse to put infrastructure in the too hard basket" says NZCID Chief Executive Stephen Selwood. This is in response to media comments made earlier today by Economic Development Minister Trevor Mallard.

"We acknowledge and welcome recent positive moves by the Government. Infrastructure development is a key component of the Government's economic transformation agenda. Our findings clearly show a further step change is required."

"It is wrong to suggest that New Zealand shouldn't be doing better in world infrastructure rankings based simply on population and geography challenges" Mr Selwood adds, "while some parts of New Zealand do have relatively sparse populations and geographical challenges, in those areas it is electricity transmission that is the most significant issue and the solution is quite manageable to address."

"In reality the biggest pressures are being felt in areas which have huge population growth. Waikato, the Bay of Plenty and Auckland for example have experienced substantial growth and diminishing investment in recent times. These three regions peg out an area characterised by high growth, concentrated distribution and high inter-regional demand. By 2025 this triangle will collectively count for 54% of NZ's population and 51% of the nation's GDP. Obviously if the needs of this area and areas like it are not addressed the situation is only going to get worse."

"Our findings clearly show that New Zealand's investment and planning is lagging behind the rest of the world, and we should and could be doing much better in relation to the countries we compete with and like to compare ourselves to. Ireland, the United Kingdom, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland share similar land and population conditions to New Zealand as nations or as corresponding urban centres. They have historically faced similar infrastructure challenges but have addressed development proactively and are now achieving a turnaround to great effect. While we are bigger in actual land mass than Ireland our usable land space is actually comparably smaller. And Ireland in particular has made huge advances in infrastructure thanks to strong leadership and long-term national planning. It is clear that if New Zealand is to share the benefits of their learning curves and success and achieve the social, economic and environmental goals to which the government aspires, fundamental issues must be resolved with urgency".

"New Zealand's main problems are not population and geography challenges. What is really holding back infrastructure development is a lack of funding, the torturous consent process facing developers and, in Auckland in particular, difficulties arising from governance and decision-making. And we need strong leadership from the Government and their commitment to infrastructure development to make change for good happen."

"Encouraging best practice in national infrastructure development is a key objective of the NZ Council for Infrastructure Development" added Mr Selwood. "What we are really interested in is the development of world class infrastructure for the benefit of all New Zealanders. The council is a not for profit organisation and



important advocacy for and research into infrastructure issues is made possible by our membership. NZCID members come from diverse sectors across New Zealand, equity owners, service providers, public sector agencies, and major infrastructure users; a full list of which is available on our website: www.nzcid.org.nz"

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I Notes to editors

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NZ Council for Infrastructure Development

NZCID is an authority at the forefront of infrastructure development issues. Our numerous members stem from sectors across New Zealand, including: equity owners, service providers, public sector agencies, major infrastructure users. Together we share a clear purpose: world class infrastructure for the benefit of all New Zealanders. A goal we are committed to achieving by:

- ↘ Raising awareness of the fact that infrastructure underpins our community's quality of life and that inadequate infrastructure holds back New Zealand's economic and social growth
- ↘ Generating valuable debate on the quality and level of infrastructure provision to meet New Zealanders' needs
- ↘ Encouraging the implementation of best practice infrastructure provision and management
- ↘ Identifying the condition of New Zealand's infrastructure and the challenges facing our infrastructure providers

Further information on infrastructure development, NZCID and its members can be found at:
www.nzcid.org.nz