

➤ Room for improvement on the Western Ring Route

The NZ Council for Infrastructure Development welcomes Transit NZ's announcement today that by tolling Auckland's Western Ring Route they would be able to complete the project by 2015, 11 years earlier than would otherwise be possible. However Council Chief Executive Stephen Selwood says Australia is completing projects of comparable size in less than four years, and claims that Transit would be smart to take on board the lessons from those projects which would enable them to deliver the Western Ring Route even earlier, by 2012.

"It is great to see a concrete proposal that advances a project of critical importance, put out to consultation", says Mr Selwood. "As road users we can now make the choice as to whether we want to wait decades to see this vital strategic route completed, or do we want to enable it's financing to be advanced through tolls".

Mr Selwood praises Transit for putting forward to the public a funding option that will get us the roads we need earlier, but says he would have expected a tighter delivery timeframe.

"You don't have to look far to see projects around the same scale as the Western Ring Route constructed and operating in less than 4 years", Mr Selwood added that excellent examples of this were both Sydney's Westlink tollway, constructed in just 3 years, and the 40km length of Melbourne's Eastlink, commenced last year and expected to open in 2 years time.

"Planning and consent processes are the main hold up in New Zealand" says Mr Selwood, "Transit estimate that planning and consenting in the lead up to construction will take 5 years, 1 year more than construction of the entire route itself, yet this corridor has been in the planning pipeline for a decade already. The Victorian State Government passed special legislation to enable planning and approvals for Melbourne's Eastlink to be progressed earlier, and the New South Wales Government has a dedicated process to consider critical infrastructure projects. In New Zealand it would only make sense to do the same for this vital transport corridor. One option would be to use the "call in" process which exists under the Resource Management Act to consider projects of national importance. If we were to streamline planning and approvals and start construction sooner, New Zealanders would have use of the complete Western Ring Route even earlier in 2012."

(ends)

I Notes to editors

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NZ Council for Infrastructure Development

NZCID (www.nzcid.org.nz) 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