

Media release
30 July 2007

NZCID WELCOMES ROYAL COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO AUCKLAND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development has welcomed the announcement by Government that there will be a royal commission of inquiry next year to look at reform of Auckland's local government. The Royal Commission will conduct an in depth public review of how Auckland's local bodies could be best restructured to meet the needs of the fast-growing region and could bring forward the necessary changes for the 2010 local body elections.

"Reform of Auckland's complex local governance structure is critical to transforming Auckland into a leading twenty-first century metropolitan region, which is able to compete on the international stage," says NZCID Chief Executive, Stephen Selwood.

"This requires significant investment in our infrastructure including high speed broadband, effective transport networks, high quality water services and resilient energy supply. It also requires advancing our arts, sporting and cultural identity, and building strong social cohesion across a diverse multicultural society.

"Yet current progress is tortuously slow, plagued by indecision, competing leadership, inadequate regional funding and complex approval processes.

"Tinkering around the edges of the existing governance structures will not achieve the kind of step change that is required for Auckland and New Zealand. Selwood says.

"Rather than settle for a regional compromise that each of the existing Councils can live with, and which will inevitably hold back transformational governance reform, a Royal Commission of Inquiry will be able to objectively assess proposals and determine the best governance structure to lead Auckland's future development.

"The Inquiry would evaluate current proposals to strengthen the existing structure against more fundamental reform proposals including a "One Auckland" structure.

"We need a new and simpler local governance structure that operates more efficiently and can make timely decisions which take into account the interests of all Aucklanders."

This requires transformational reform of Auckland's local governance, Selwood says.