

Media Statement
17 February 2010

Infrastructure Council supports governance structure proposed for Auckland

The New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development has come out in support of the overarching structure that has been proposed by the government for the future governance of Auckland.

"While we think there are enhancements that can be made to ensure strong alignment between the Auckland Council and the Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) and to better define the role and authority of Local Boards, we think the government has struck the right balance between strategic leadership at the Council level, implementation capacity at the CCO level and local input at the community level", says NZCID Chief Executive, Stephen Selwood.

"Talk that CCOs will make all decisions behind closed doors is scaremongering, Selwood says

"All CCOs will be operating in a public environment. This will require a high level of public interaction and consultation. The CCOs are there to serve the wider Auckland community and will inevitably have to build strong understanding of the needs of local communities as represented through the Local Boards.

"Overarching this, the Bill provides for the Council to set the direction and operating culture of the CCOs through Statements of Corporate Intent and the Council will have ultimate control of its own Council Controlled Organisations.

"That the Auckland Transition Board and the Government will make the initial appointments to CCO Boards, no doubt in consultation with current Auckland leaders, is the only practical option to keep things moving in the interim until the new Council is formed at the end of the year.

"The last thing that industry can afford right now is any discontinuity in the important work of the CCOs in the delivery of key infrastructure services", Selwood says.

Key messages of the NZCID submission of the Local Govt (Auckland Law Reform) Bill:

The NZCID submission strongly endorses the overarching framework provided in the Bill for the Auckland Council to be able to operate effectively from its establishment on 1 November 2010, including:

- A unitary Council comprising a governing body led by an executive Mayor and its local boards;
- Provision for the development of a spatial plan for Auckland;

- The establishment of Local Boards to lead and oversee the provision of local services and amenities in local communities and;
- Arrangements relating to the governance of council-controlled organisations (CCOs), and in particular the management of transport and water supply and wastewater services.

Improvements to the Bill sought by NZCID include:

- Ensuring that the regional spatial plan has statutory authority in terms of the Resource Management Act and becomes the guiding planning framework that the Council Controlled organisations shall be required to give effect to
- Providing for integration of the regional spatial plan with national plans such as the National Infrastructure Plan, Government Policy Statements, New Zealand Transport Strategy and other relevant national spatial planning policies and processes
- Using Statements of Corporate Intent and a combined Executive Management Board as the primary vehicle to provide for consistency of purpose and clear authority, control and accountability between Auckland Council and the proposed CCOs
- Requiring strong integration between central government and the Auckland Council, especially in the development and implementation of the Spatial Plan
- Requiring plans of CCOs to give effect to the regional spatial plan
- Strengthening the governance of the Auckland Transport Agency (ATA) to provide for improved alignment between central government agencies and the ATA