

BEFORE THE HEARING COMMISSIONERS

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (“the Act”)

AND

IN THE MATTER of submissions by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (submitter 805 and further submitter 2103) on Proposed Christchurch City Council Plan Change 14

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RICHARD TANCRED JOHN OSBORNE ON BEHALF OF
WAKA KOTAHI**

**NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
20 September 2023**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My full name is Richard Tancred John Osborne. I am the Regional Manager, System Design, for the Central & Lower South Island at Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (**‘Waka Kotahi’**) and am presenting evidence on behalf of the organisation.
- 1.2. As Regional Manager, System Design I am responsible for leading and supporting the design of the integrated transport system with our partners, such as local councils, in the South Island. I have been in this role since mid-2020.
- 1.3. As Regional Manager, System Design, I help lead the Waka Kotahi relationship in the Christchurch area with iwi and local and central government, to integrate land use and transport planning for the region. This involves working with our partners to ensure land use and development is integrated with the current and future transport network needs and delivers the appropriate outcomes for the region and New Zealand.
- 1.4. While I am not giving expert evidence, for completeness I have the following qualifications and experience relevant to my evidence:
- 1.5. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) from Otago University, a Post Graduate Diploma in Commerce (Resource Economics) and a Master of Applied Science (Resource Management) from Lincoln University.
- 1.6. Prior to working at Waka Kotahi, I was employed by Christchurch City Council for over eight years in several roles including Head of Transport and Head of Planning & Strategic Transport. I have approximately twenty-five years' experience in resource management and transport matters, including in district plan development, transport planning and policy development, transport business cases, plan changes and the preparation and processing of resource consent applications.
- 1.7. I am authorised to give evidence on behalf of Waka Kotahi.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1. The purpose of my evidence is to outline the Waka Kotahi role in maintaining a safe, efficient and effective land transport network, describe the existing and future transport environment and outline the outcomes Waka Kotahi seeks in relation to the Proposed Christchurch District Plan.

2.2. This evidence takes into account Waka Kotahi objectives and statutory obligations, as well as prior experience with integrated land use and transport planning, and as a funding allocation agency across the region.

2.3. My evidence addresses the following matters:

- (a) Waka Kotahi statutory obligations and the transport framework; and
- (b) Planning for growth in the region and the effect of growth on Waka Kotahi operations and investment.

3. STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS AND TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK

3.1. Waka Kotahi is a Crown entity with the sole powers of control and management for all purposes of all state highways.¹ The key objectives, functions, powers, and responsibilities of Waka Kotahi are derived from the Land Transport Management Act 2003 ('**LTMA**'). Section 95(1) of the LTMA requires Waka Kotahi to:

- (a) Contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest;² and
- (b) Manage the state highway system, including planning, funding, design, supervision, construction, and maintenance and operations, in accordance with the LTMA and the Government Rounding Powers Act 1989.³

3.2. Section 96(1)(a) of the LTMA also requires Waka Kotahi to exhibit a sense of social and environmental responsibility when meeting its statutory obligations and undertaking its functions under the LTMA.

3.3. In performing its functions, Waka Kotahi must give effect to the strategic priorities and transport outcomes set by the Government through the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021/22-2030/31 ('**GPS**'). The GPS sets out four strategic priorities for the land transport system: safety; better travel options; improving freight connections; and climate change.⁴ The GPS also sets out the Minister of Transport's expectation that Waka Kotahi will have a greater role in long term, integrated planning, including:⁵

3.3.1. Encouraging consistent, good practice planning so that the interaction between transport use and land use is well managed;

¹ Section 93(2), LTMA.

² Section 95(1)(a), LTMA.

³ Section 95(1)(c), LTMA.

⁴ GPS, Overview section, page 6.

⁵ GPS, section 3.7.

3.3.2. Encouraging future-focused planning to provide certainty to the sector and communities; and

3.3.3. Working collaboratively with local government to ensure that transport infrastructure effectively supports urban growth, including consideration of the extent to which urban development supports 'quality urban environments', improves transport choice, supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and is consistent with and has regard to spatial planning exercises.

3.4. The GPS 2024 has just finished a round of public consultation (15 September 2023). "Sustainable urban and regional development" remains one of the strategic priorities for the Government. The outcome this objective is aiming to achieve is that;

*"People can readily and reliably access social, cultural and economic opportunities through a variety of transport options. Sustainable urban and regional development is focused on increasing housing supply, choice and affordability, and developing resilient and productive towns and cities through effective transport networks that provide a range of low-emission transport options and low congestion."*⁶

3.5. Land use planning has a significant impact on transport policy, infrastructure and services provision, and vice versa. When development is completed, it has a long-term impact on the transport network. Changes in land use can affect demand for travel, creating both pressures and opportunities for investment in transport infrastructure and services, or for demand management. Likewise, changes in transport can affect land use in both positive and negative ways.

3.6. To deliver on the outcomes set by the GPS, Waka Kotahi has developed several strategies which are summarised below.

Arataki – The Waka Kotahi thirty-year strategic view

3.7. Arataki⁷ – baseline network version is the Waka Kotahi thirty-year view on strategic changes and actions needed to deliver the long-term outcomes for the land transport system. It includes a national view as well as a pan-regional view for the South Island and for Christchurch.

⁶ Draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024/25-2033/34, page 28, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Draft-Government-Policy-Statement-on-land-transport-2024.pdf>.

⁷ <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/planning-and-investment/planning/arataki/>

Toitu te Taiao – The Waka Kotahi Sustainability Action Plan

- 3.8. Toitu te Taiao⁸ is the Waka Kotahi sustainability action plan. This seeks to address the strategic challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health. This plan seeks to transform sustainable urban transport and liveability by:
- (a) Reducing or avoiding the need to travel;
 - (b) Shifting to modes of transport that are more environmentally friendly; and
 - (c) Improving the energy efficiency of transport modes and vehicle technology.

Emissions Reduction Plan

- 3.9. The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 ('Amendment Act') provides a framework by which New Zealand can develop and implement clear and stable climate change policies.
- 3.10. A key change introduced by the Amendment Act is the requirement for Government to set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, including specific transport reduction targets, establish a system of emissions budgets and develop and implement policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- 3.11. Transport is one of New Zealand's largest sources of emissions, so decarbonising transport will be critical to the overall success of our collective response to the climate change imperative. The transport chapter of the first emissions reduction plan ('ERP') (released in 2022) sets out a comprehensive and ambitious approach to reducing emissions, including for transport.
- 3.12. Through the ERP, the Government has set four (national) transport targets that will support these focus areas and align with achieving the sector sub-targets for transport. This is approximately equivalent to a 41 per cent reduction in transport emissions by 2035 from 2019 levels.
- 3.13. Waka Kotahi is responsible for several actions under the ERP, including some significant targets related to reducing reliance on cars and supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport. Reaching these targets is closely dependent on ensuring well-functioning urban areas that support better use of infrastructure and more liveable cities to reduce the number and distance of trips that people need to make. Accordingly, amending the walkable catchment provisions as proposed will help to give effect to these targets.

⁸ <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/about-waka-kotahi-nz-transport-agency/environmental-and-social-responsibility/toitu-te-taiao-our-sustainability-action-plan/>

3.14. Sub-national targets are in the process being developed for Tier 1 urban environments, which includes Christchurch.⁹ These targets are expected to be ready by the end of 2023. While these targets are currently unknown, it is likely that 'business as usual' (or a do-minimum) approaches to integrated transport planning will be insufficient to meet the national and (pending) sub regional national targets in the ERP. Hence, amending the walkable catchment provisions as proposed will help give effect to future regional targets.

4. GREATER CHRISTCHURCH MASS RAPID TRANSIT

- 4.1. Over the next 30 years, Greater Christchurch is projected to grow to 700,000 people. Without an improved public transport system, it is expected that this growth will result in many more vehicle trips and increased traffic congestion across Greater Christchurch which is in conflict with the climate emergency and a well-planned and well-functioning city.
- 4.2. In response, the *Public Transport (PT) Futures Programme* has been developed via the Greater Christchurch Partnership.¹⁰ The PT Futures Programme involves the development of two business cases that together explore an investment programme aimed at increasing the mode share of the public transport network in Greater Christchurch.
- 4.3. The first business case delivered in 2020 (Greater Christchurch Public Transport Combined Business Case) recommended a programme of improvements to increase the uptake of public transport over the next decade. The second business case has a longer-term focus and considers the future role of mass rapid transit (MRT) in Greater Christchurch. Rapid transit is different from conventional public transport, being a quick, frequent, reliable and high-capacity public transport service that operates on a permanent route (road or rail) that is largely separated from other traffic.
- 4.4. The MRT Indicative Business Case (IBC) was developed in coordination with the draft Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan. In 2023 the IBC for MRT was completed and endorsed by the Whakawhenua Kainga Committee¹¹ and independently by Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils, and the Waka Kotahi Board.

The IBC has three investment objectives:

⁹ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020. Appendix.

¹⁰ <https://greaterchristchurch.org.nz/>

¹¹ The Urban Growth Partnership for Greater Christchurch

- (a) Increased proportion of the population within key prioritised locations and along identified transport corridors within Greater Christchurch with improved access to Christchurch's Central City by 2051
 - (b) Improved journey time and reliability of PT services relative to private vehicles within Greater Christchurch by 2051
 - (c) Reduced emissions from transport movements across Greater Christchurch by 2051.
- 4.5. The IBC identified a preferred 22km route from Hornby through the central city to Belfast, with express bus services extending out to Rolleston, Kaiapoi and Rangiora. The route connects key residential areas to key employment areas and other critical locations like the Christchurch hospital, and key activity centres.
- 4.6. Intensification and growth along the proposed route and around the stations is fundamental to the success of any rapid transit proposal.

5. WIDER LAND USE/TRANSPORT CONTEXT

5.1. The draft *Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan (Spatial Plan)*, as well as the *Future Development Strategy (FDS)*, are going through a separate process at the time of this hearing.

5.2. Waka Kotahi is a non-voting member of the Greater Christchurch Partnership and the Whakawhanake Kāinga Committee and has been an active contributor to the draft Spatial Plan.

5.3. The Introduction section of the draft Spatial Plan states that:¹²

“The Spatial Plan sets out the partners’ shared vision for the future of Greater Christchurch. It is a plan for action, for starting now to make the transformational shifts needed to secure the future of Greater Christchurch. This includes a clear pathway for how the city region will create prosperous and well-functioning urban environments, and build greater resilience in the context of the changing environment. It sets out what the priorities are and what needs to happen to achieve them.”

5.4. In order to meet growth projected population growth and address new transportation demand, the Spatial Plan sets out the following 'key moves':

- (a) Key move 1 – The prosperous development of kāinga nohoanga
- (b) Key move 2 – A strengthened network of urban and town centres

¹² Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan, page 13.

- (c) Key move 3 – A mass rapid transit system
- (d) Key move 4 – A collective focus on unlocking the potential of Priority Areas
- (e) Key move 5 – An enhanced and expanded blue-green network

5.5. The Spatial Plan has also denoted the three key centres along the proposed MRT corridor; Central City, Riccarton and Papanui, as Priority Development Areas (PDA). The purpose of this is to ensure all stakeholders and partners are progressing urban development initiatives in a way that would contribute most efficiently towards the vision for the future of Greater Christchurch.

5.6. The Riccarton key activity centre is a key node where intensification is anticipated to support a compact urban form with a combination of land uses. As outlined in Mr Morahan’s evidence, the busiest public transport route is the corridor from the city to Hornby via Riccarton and Main South Roads.¹³ There are also cycleways running parallel to Riccarton Road, to the north and the south. It therefore has good transport options.

5.7. The introduction of MRT would provide the opportunity to reshape Riccarton and other key centres and neighbourhoods along the route to maximise the benefits of high frequency travel and create more attractive, safer, vibrant and accessible centres. However, Riccarton is one of the key centres along the proposed corridor that will be subject to development constraints because of the qualifying matters proposed in PC14. The Waka Kotahi expert evidence addresses this issue in more detail. In summary, Waka Kotahi supports intensification along key transport corridors and key activity centres. Any application of qualifying matters in these areas that constrains urban intensification needs to be robustly justified.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. In conclusion, Waka Kotahi has a direct interest in the plan change as the location of development strongly influences travel demands and directly impacts its ability to achieve the outcomes sought in the GPS. Waka Kotahi is supportive of intensification and growth along Riccarton Road, which is a key transport corridor, and around the key activity centre.

Richard Osborne

20 September 2023

¹³ Para 44, statement of primary evidence, Chris Morahan, Christchurch City Council