



Submission: Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34

Business Canterbury
Tuesday, 2 April 2024

Introduction

1. Business Canterbury welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34 (“the draft GPS”).
2. Business Canterbury is the home and voice of business in Waitaha Canterbury. Representing over 2,600 businesses and approximately 75,000 employees, we are the largest business support agency in Te Wai Pounamu South Island. We also form part of the BusinessNZ Network, alongside BusinessNZ, the EMA, Business Central, and Business South. We are also part of the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Network.
3. With a strong backbone of manufacturing, construction, and agriculture, alongside our growing reputation as a hub for innovation, world-leading tertiary education and new technology including aerospace, Waitaha Canterbury is in a good position to move in tandem with Government and lead the transition to a more innovative, productive, and sustainably growing economy.
4. Our advocacy is informed through in-depth discussions with Canterbury business leaders from a wide range of sectors and sizes, to set out a range of fit-for-purpose policy settings that will enhance the role of Government, both locally and in Wellington, as an enabler of a strong business environment.

General Comments

5. The Canterbury economy is incredibly important to the New Zealand economy. Directly contributing 14% to national GDP, Canterbury businesses also play an important role in the supply chain through our large manufacturing, processing, construction, professional, and primary industries.
6. High-quality, reliable, and resilient transport infrastructure underpins the productivity and performance of businesses. Canterbury businesses in particular rely on roads for access to rail, air, and sea connections with customers across New Zealand and the world.
7. There are key roading infrastructure vulnerabilities that are or are likely to impact the resilience of our regional economy over the medium-long term. This includes the Ashburton bridge, interisland connections, access to the Port of Lyttelton, and efficient transport corridors between Mid Canterbury, Waimakariri, Selwyn and Christchurch. We experienced some of these vulnerabilities first-hand with the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes.
8. There must also be a significant focus on leveraging transport infrastructure to enable growth opportunities for Canterbury, and long-term planning, and continued investment is key to unlocking businesses' own investments in growth. Key to that growth is access to a safe, reliable, and efficient state highway corridor throughout the South Island.
9. Canterbury is the perfect testing ground for significant long-term infrastructure projects because of our scale as New Zealand's second-largest city, our contribution to the New Zealand economy and as a strategic trade hub for the South Island, all without significant geographic barriers.
10. Canterbury has seen how infrastructure can enable growth in a regional economy following significant private and Crown investment over the last decade. Rolleston, for example, grew by more than 770 per cent between 2001 and 2021, meaning house prices are well below the national median, and our commute times are significantly shorter than in other main centres.

Specific Comments

11. Business Canterbury welcomes the four strategic priorities in the draft GPS, particularly the priority of 'Economic Growth and Productivity'. By prioritising economic growth and productivity as a deliverable, roading infrastructure is being appropriately recognised as being key to the performance of businesses, the economy, and therefore living standards.
12. Business Canterbury welcomes the endorsement of alternative funding and financing arrangements in the draft GPS. We believe that only through unlocking additional and long-term investment in land transport infrastructure, will New Zealand be able to adequately address infrastructure deficits and build for future growth.
13. Business Canterbury supports the continued promise of a Woodend bypass and a second Ashburton bridge, noting that the last draft GPS had construction beginning over the next two to three years.
14. Business Canterbury is pleased to see the inclusion of a 'Canterbury Package'. We would welcome the expansion of that package (SH75 Halswell Road improvements, SH1 Tinwald corridor improvements, Rolleston access enhancements, and Brougham Street corridor improvements) to also include SH1 safety improvements in North Canterbury, a wider SH1 Canterbury bridge upgrade project, and the construction of a four-lane, grade-separated highway between Rolleston and Ashburton.
15. Business Canterbury notes that the use of the land transport system can be limited following regular disruptions at the Cook Strait.
16. Road users, including businesses in Canterbury contribute significantly to funding available for transport infrastructure projects. The deficit between revenue from and funding for the region should be addressed and prioritised over time.
17. Business Canterbury would like to see further roading infrastructure investments in Canterbury and strongly encourages the continued development of a project pipeline in the region reflective of our contribution to national GDP.
18. Business Canterbury notes concern about the lack of timelines given in the draft GPS and would expect Canterbury and Christchurch projects to be a priority for the Government given our region's contribution and importance in the wider New Zealand economic context.
19. Business Canterbury endorses the BusinessNZ submission and supports the Christchurch City Council submission.

Kind regards,



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