

# **Submission**

## Government Policy Statement on Land Transport

PREPARED BY: Ashburton District Council SUBMITTED TO: GPS Policy Team

PO Box 94 Ministry of Transport
ASHBURTON PO Box 3175
WELLINGTON 6140

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#### Introduction

Ashburton District Council welcomes the opportunity to submit on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018 (the GPS). Council is a member of the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee and supports the regional submission. This submission is from the Ashburton District Council (Council) highlighting issues as they relate to this district.

Ashburton district is predominantly rural and has a population of approximately 34 000 people. Council maintains one of the longest road networks (approximately 2613km) in the country. The road network is heavily utilised by our residents and agricultural producers. Approximately half our population is rurally based and rely on our roading network to carry out their daily activities. At present the district has no public transport system in place and it is unlikely that there will be opportunity to provide for one in the next 10 years. Agriculture underpins the economy of the Ashburton district with over a third of the district's gross domestic product coming directly from the dairy, meat and arable and crop industries. These producers rely on the road network to move their product.

Funding Council receives from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) contributes to our transportation needs striving for a safe, effective and efficient network. Council believes that the NLTF should be used to continue to maintain and upgrade our existing roading infrastructure to continue to enable our district's financial contribution to New Zealand's economy.

Ashburton District Council wishes to make the following comments on the GPS.

#### 1. Section 2: Strategic direction

Ashburton District Council strongly supports the four strategic priorities of safety, access, environment and value for money. Council particularly supports the emphasis on safety and resilience and notes the growing concern around the impacts of extreme climate events on communities and their transport systems. Council supports increased investment in footpaths and cycleways which will enable greater access to active travel modes. Council strongly supports the development of a new road safety strategy and action plan. However, Council is concerned about the sector's ability to meet resourcing requirements within the GPS' timeframes.

Also welcomed is the planned development of a second-stage GPS particularly if this is to provide greater detail on funding sources and the role of rail. As stated in our submission on the KiwiRail proposal on 20 April 2018 (enclosed), Council considers passenger rail to be of little benefit to rural areas such as Ashburton.

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#### 2. Section 3: Investment in land transport

Ashburton District Council supports the proposed increase in funding. However Council seeks clarification around the source of this additional funding noting that as a greater proportion of motor vehicles become more fuel efficient (including electric vehicles) the means to substitute traditional fuel excises and road user charges will become critical.

Council supports NZTA taking the lead on providing for integrated planning and activity management of the transport system including public transport as well as enabling monitoring and reporting on changes under the GPS. To enable greater efficiency and consistency in transport planning and investment Council recommends that NZTA should also fund and implement standardised national data collection. Specifically Council strongly supports the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee submission point 17:

"We **recommend** that the Government lead the development of a nationwide data, modelling and analytics toolset, for use by central and local government to support transport planning, development and review of investment priorities and business cases, project benefits realisation, and outcomes reporting. A centralised approach will be cost effective and provide greater consistency, including in the consideration of holistic benefits and externalities in transport planning and investment."

### 3. Section 4: Funding Sources and management of expenditure

Ashburton District Council would need to see greater detail around funding sources and management of expenditure before it is able to provide comment. Council welcomes the ability to work with government to develop a range of funding approaches.

At present local transport operators and companies working within this district contribute significantly to the NLTF. A greater proportion of these contributions need to be returned to the district to support the continued maintenance and renewal of roading infrastructure upon which our district relies. Council could in principle support a regional fuel tax if revenue raised was returned in an equitable manner to the districts that raised the funds.

Council looks forward to working with central government to implement the final GPS.

A Dalziel

**Chief Executive Officer** 

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Jonne Fauel

Mayor