

Submission



Hikina te Kohupara – Transport emissions pathways to achieve net zero emissions by 2050

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Introduction

1. Ashburton District Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the discussion document released by the Ministry of Transport – *Hikina te Kohupara – Transport Emissions Pathways to Net Zero by 2050*.
2. Council supports the submission from Taituarā as well as the joint submission from Canterbury Regional Transport Committee and Canterbury Mayoral Forum. While Council is also a signatory to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission, this submission reflects matters of emphasis for Ashburton district.
3. Located an hour's drive south of Christchurch, more than 35,300¹ residents live in the district, with the main town of Ashburton accounting for over 50% of residents. The rest of our residents live rurally or in smaller towns or villages.
4. Ashburton district has experienced moderate and sustained population increase since the mid-1990's, increasing by 23% between 2006 and 2013 (a 3.3% increase per year). This growth, however, is now slowing, with an average growth of 1.3% per year since 2013. The expansion of irrigation and agricultural diversification on the Canterbury Plains have been major factors in this growth.
5. We acknowledge that 47% of total domestic CO₂ emissions are caused by transport and that without largely decarbonising transport, Aotearoa/New Zealand will not be able to achieve the target set by Climate Change Response Act 2002 of net zero carbon by 2050.
6. Ashburton District Council recognises that climate change is a major issue that requires immediate attention. We understand that decreasing our country's carbon emissions is no easy feat but that the transition will be well worth while and will make Aotearoa/New Zealand a greater place to live.

¹ Source: Statistics New Zealand Population Estimates 30 June 2020

7. With that being said, Council agrees that any changes need to be staged in order to allow residents to adapt.

Themes

8. We support all three main themes outlined in Hikina te Kohupara. Further comment on the themes is included below.

Theme 1 – Changing the way we travel

9. We acknowledge that physical inactivity costs, and that walking and cycling has many physical and mental health benefits. Council has taken steps to ensure that Ashburton is pedestrian and cyclist friendly. At the beginning of the year we adopted our Walking & Cycling Strategy which provides a framework to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive, with the aim of increasing the number of people using these networks. We are also currently undertaking an upgrade of our CBD which aims to make the town centre more pedestrian-focused. This upgrade is due to be completed in December.
10. While we support this theme, we believe it is important to note that not all people in Aotearoa/New Zealand can change the way they travel easily. Many of our residents live rurally, therefore we do not expect many of these residents to walk or cycle as a form of transport for reasons of practicality. Due to our high rural population, public transport is also not currently a viable option for our district, so increasing public transport use is not a relevant strategy for us.

Theme 2 – improving our passenger vehicles

11. We support this theme, however Council notes that it is likely that many kiwis cannot afford to transition to a low or zero emission vehicle. We strongly support the implementation of some form of incentive to help people with this transition. We also support the investment in electric vehicle charging stations as electric vehicles are expected to become increasingly common.
12. Council understands that biofuels still emit CO₂, but at a lower rate than fossil fuels. The Ministry of Transport website states that biofuel use in NZ has declined due to the fact that biofuels cost more than fossil fuels. Therefore we suggest there would need to be incentives for the uptake of this. We acknowledge the importance of ensuring that any biofuels used in Aotearoa/New Zealand be advanced or 'drop-in' biofuels, as these emit less CO₂ and have a low indirect land use change.
13. We note that there is currently a review being undertaken of 2008 Biofuel Sales Obligation, which may result in an obligation for suppliers of petrol or diesel to also supply a minimum proportion of biofuels. The Ministry of Transport website states that our domestic biofuel production capacity is currently very small and that if a biofuel mandate is introduced, for the first few years these fuels will need to be imported from overseas. Council questions whether a cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken for this as the importation of the fuel will likely result in the creation of CO₂ emissions.
14. Council agrees with the suggestion that Government investigate supporting a domestic biofuel industry as this will not only increase our capacity but it will also create jobs and have a positive

impact on our economy. We note that biofuel production in NZ may reduce the cost for biofuel, as well as reduce the CO₂ emissions from importation.

Theme 3 – supporting a more efficient freight system

15. Page 118 of Hīkina te Kohupara states that the pathways are modelled on emissions falling if 10 to 20 percent of road freight shifted to rail and 5 to 15 percent shifted to coastal shipping by 2050. We strongly agree with the point made stating that further work needs to be done to explore whether mode shifts of this scale are practically achievable as this seems like a large shift.

Specific consultation questions

16. Consultation question 1 – Council agrees with the principles in Hīkina te Kohupara.
17. Consultation question 4 – Council supports the following key actions:
 - a. the development of clear guidance and expectations to link urban density and mixed land use with accessibility
 - b. removing barriers and improving funding for tactical urbanism and innovative approaches to street design
 - c. setting higher funding assistance rates for walking & cycling investments and dedicated/priority bus lanes to strongly incentivise road controlling authorities to prioritise and accelerate street changes.

We note the proposed action of ‘setting targets for councils to deliver public transport and active travel networks that require street changes by a specific date’. Council suggests that these targets are not uniform for all Councils as some areas do not have public transport and active travel networks may not be appropriate in particular areas.

18. Consultation question 6 – We believe that pricing will have a large impact on behaviour, in particular the purchase of low emission vehicles or fuel. Council suggests that incentives will be necessary to support the transition in order for Aotearoa/New Zealand to reach net zero by 2050. If there are also going to be penalties for high-emission vehicles, it is important that there is regard for low-income communities and issues of just transition.
19. Consultation question 8 – Council supports the proposed actions to decarbonise the public transport fleet.
20. Consultation question 10 – We believe that further work needs to be done to explore whether the possible actions for freight are feasible.
21. Consultation question 13 – We note that pathway four in Hīkina te Kohupara is the only one which reaches the Climate Change Commission’s 2035 target for transport emissions. Council supports pathways one and four as they are the most impactful and cost-effective.

Conclusion

22. Council notes that collectively, we all have a role to play in reaching the goal of net zero emissions. We thank the Ministry of Transport for the opportunity to make a submission on the discussion document.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hamish Riach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Hamish Riach

Chief Executive