

New Zealand Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihanga Bill

**Submission of the New Zealand Māori Council Te
Kaunihera Māori o Aotearoa**

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About the New Zealand Māori Council

The general functions of the New Zealand Māori Council are set out in the [Māori Community Development Act 1962](#). This Act conveys the Council's purpose and gives us the framework in which we operate. The Council is made up of sixteen Districts and within those Districts smaller, representative Māori Committees (previously known as Tribal Committees) operate to give voice to local and national issues impacting our people. The Council is elected every three years and includes a Chair, Sir Taihakurei Eddie Durie, Deputy Chair, Henare Mason and six additional members of the National Executive. The Council is also made up of eight national taskforces operating across Kaupapa lines that seek to develop the voice of our people into policy documents that can be supported at the national level from housing and housing affordability to climate change and the environment, through to the economy and employment, health and wellbeing. Matthew Tukaki is the Executive Director of Council, is the Chair of the Tamaki District of the Māori Council and a member of the National Executive. Matthew is also Chair of the National Māori Authority, former Australian Representative to the United Nations Global Compact (including the UN Cities Program), was a member of the Governing Board of the United Nations Global Compact and the former global head of the world's oldest and one of the largest employment companies, Drake International.

Opening Statement

Infrastructure is a fundamentally important need when it comes to the ongoing social and economic development of Māori communities both in an urban and regional / provincial environment. Over the course of the last century we have seen the move of many Māori into an urban environment in search of a better economic future while the population in the regions has become older and less agile. In recent years, however, we have also seen Māori moving back into their traditional lands both to reconnect with culture and to establish a more economic future through affordable housing. In any event the latter presents a significant problem thanks to years of underinvestment into regional infrastructure from the basics of foot paths and street lighting to proper drainage, roads and bridges.

The overlap of services can be compounded by a plethora of tiers of Government that are not always pulling in the same direction that can often confuse Māori such as a Local Councils responsibility over that of a regional council versus the Ministry for the Environment or the Transport Agency. The lack of effective co-ordination can often see many communities miss out on essential infrastructure and that which can provide for a better social and economic future. In any event the notion of mana whenua, where local Māori have a say in local matters, is going to be essential in ensuring demand and need is met with effective planning and provision.

It is estimated that the Māori economy is worth more than \$42 billion and it is our estimation that the value of the asset base can grow providing the infrastructure is in place to support that growth. From better roads and bridges, to improved rail links and port facilities we have an

opportunity to grow jobs, bring down rates of high long-term unemployment and develop up new small business supply chains. In looking to the present, we also need to be mindful of the future. This includes infrastructure to support a growing interconnected world through which Māori can participate online. To enable this to happen we need certainty of telecommunications and internet connectivity. In addition is the potential to grow future forward industry through having the supportive infrastructure in place for sectors such as science, research and even things such as aeronautics and space.

The state of the Māori economy

- More than 200 new Māori businesses were started between 2013 -17. In 2017 the total number stood at over 1100 Māori enterprises
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment figures estimate Māori enterprise is worth nearly \$40 billion and growing faster than the economy as a whole.
- Iwi-controlled post-settlement assets are worth about \$6b and that is expected to double in a decade.
- Most Māori assets lies within the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry. In the fishing industry, Māori investment contributes about 40 per cent – in other words sectors and industries where infrastructure is important.
- Māori employers, while largely flying under the radar have amassed assets of \$22.4b, according to a 2013 report by Business and Economic Research.
- Māori who are self-employed have a combined asset base of \$6.6b assets and the remaining \$12.5b is owned by Māori trusts, incorporations, and other collectively owned enterprises, such as tribal organisations managing treaty settlement funds.
- In 2017 there were over 12,000 workers in Māori enterprises.
- Māori make up 13 per cent of the current New Zealand labor force. But Stats NZ estimates the Māori labor force will double to make up one-fifth of New Zealand's working age population by 2038.

Māori are heavily reliant on the need for high quality, advanced and regionally based forms of infrastructure to further drive growth in the Māori economy.

Suggested Work Program

The New Zealand Māori Council supports the creation of a new Infrastructure commission and in doing so we would like to take the opportunity to map out what needs to be done to ensure that Māori are both included and consulted. In addition, we outline a program of work that we would like to see a newly established Commission to work on and the specific role of a Māori voice:

Suggested programs of work and focus areas:

1. **To enable reform:** we need to do more to cut the red tape that stops infrastructure development and re-development and; that includes making it easier to co-design projects and use Māori land without the loss of culture integrity. Reform also means looking at the structures of Local, Regional and Central Government and posing the question “are the tiers of process too cumbersome to offer a return on infrastructure development either socially or economically?”
2. **High speed future:** we need to do more to enable Māori to benefit from and utilize the development of infrastructure that supports greater participation in the telecommunications, life sciences and online world. This includes an infrastructure plan to increase connectivity in the regions, reduce mobile coverage blackspots and increase the use of existing infrastructure (Marae and Papakainga) as technology hubs for whanau and rangatahi.
3. **Transport for a first world nation:** New Zealand’s roads need greater investment and nowhere more so than the regions and provinces. This includes upgraded bridges, infrastructure with climate change mitigation in mind, improved roading and better access through laneways. In addition is the need to develop working plans to better improve water capture and storage, sewerage and wastewater.
4. **Infrastructure fund:** we need to ensure that what we build can be built. One of the only ways that this can be achieved is if we look at an agreed work program of build projects, cost them and timeline them for implementation. To ensure that the nation can afford the projects the New Zealand Māori Council is calling for the development of a standalone national infrastructure fund where the Government, once projects have been approved, will invest the capital (including forward estimates) into the fund thereby building the foundation for a sovereign fund best able to continue the investment into infrastructure for future years.
5. **Co-design of effective public – Iwi partnerships:** a model of both co-investment and co-development of infrastructure projects led and developed in partnership with local Iwi and Hapu – this would ensure participation and inclusion whereby demand is met with supply.

These suggested approaches are also recognition of the previous calls of Iwi and Iwi leaders to engage further in the development of infrastructure when it comes to the Māori economy.¹

Suggested structure & role of Māori

The Council advocates for a specific Māori Commissioner who would be able to work directly with Iwi and Hapu in a way that both engages them, advocates for involvement, is engaged to support the development of infrastructure projects and programs, advocate for financing and so on. It is our experience that Māori need a specific voice at the table and it also stands to reason that a specific Māori voice is recognition that a significant amount of land is owned or governed by Maori, Iwi and Hapu. This ownership extends not only through land but water and spectrum.

Council welcomes the opportunity to appear before the Committee to further outline its reason for supporting the establishment of the Commission, further discuss the need for a specific Māori Commissioner and the need for a focused work program as outlined in this document.

ⁱ Māori Economic Development Taskforce <https://iwichairs.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Maori-Taskforce.pdf>