



Stepping forward

Implementing transport sector reform

Newsletter July 2008



Three-year programme brings shift in emphasis

From next year, the land transport programmes that fund land transport activities will be planned on three-year cycles rather than every year. This will change the way local government interacts with the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) in the development of the National Land Transport Programme with regions playing a more important part.

Each region will have a regional transport committee that will consider activities proposed by approved organisations and the NZTA, for state highways, for inclusion in a regional land transport programme.

In preparing regional land transport programmes, the committees will consider the interaction between land use planning and transport planning and establish transport priorities for the region.

Completed regional land transport programmes will then be presented to the NZTA to be considered for inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme.

Land Transport NZ Programme Manager Bob Alkema says the new system acknowledges that a three-year funding horizon is likely to have more certainty in the first year than in subsequent years.

'We expect supporting information for the latter years to be less robust, so there may be aspects of the funding approval process that could be conditional on supply of information as the project proceeds,' Bob says.

'The processes are new so we expect to provide more support to organisations as we make the transition,' he says.

The NZTA's focus in considering funding applications will shift from the detail of individual projects to the quality of packages and programmes of activities and their effectiveness in delivering integrated transport solutions that meet the government's transport objectives.



'The funding application process will be streamlined because fewer funding applications with less detail will be required for the specific components that make up a package or programme of activities,' Bob says.

This will be the case particularly for approved organisations with good track records of delivering projects.

Processes will also be a lot more visible, with the reasons for funding decisions being made publicly available on the Agency's website, except where the information is commercially sensitive.

'To ensure three-year programmes progress smoothly, we will be introducing a case management system – a partnership approach to programme and activity management – that will monitor activity development so we can identify issues as they arise and deal with them quickly.'

State highways join the regional plan in the three-year NLTP

The development of regional packages and strategies will be led primarily by local government with the NZTA having only one voice on a regional transport committee, says Transit's National Development Manager, David Silvester.

'Local government should be taking the lead in regional planning, as expressed through the regional transport committees. That said, there are components of our transportation system that have a national dimension, such as coastal shipping, rail and inter-regional state highways,' he says.

While the Agency will not be seeking a leadership role in transport planning, there will be occasions when the depth of expertise it has accumulated over the years could make it the logical choice for managing multi-modal strategic studies on behalf of local authorities.

'Transit does these sorts of things now, but we do not go out to lead, although we are happy to provide support and would encourage joint engagement if required,' David says.

The key issue is to have the focus at the front end, in planning. How regional councils meet the community's broader strategic needs, be they economic, environmental or social, will have a huge influence on transport decisions within the region.'



Three-year NLTP capability build begins

Even before the legislation enabling the transition to a three-year national land transport funding cycle was passed, work was underway to build understanding of the new approach.

Land Transport NZ and Transit regional staff have been attending capability workshops so they can spearhead the transfer of knowledge to approved organisations and their elected officials.

Land Transport NZ Acting Partnership Manager Southern, Mark Yaxley, says the three-year programme is a significant departure from the way things are done now.

'While many in the sector have a good knowledge, it will prove challenging for some,' he says.

A key message he took from the capability workshop is that it will be important for consultants advising approved organisations, as well as the technical and elected representatives, to get fully involved in knowledge sharing opportunities about the transition.

Mark encourages anybody working in and with local government on the review of council transport activities in long-term council community planning to take advantage of upcoming planned learning opportunities.

Even before the legislation was passed, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) had held a workshop for regional transport committee officials and technical support group members where speakers from the Ministry of Transport, Transit and Land Transport NZ presented information on the proposed changes.

The NZTA and LGNZ will be working collaboratively on capability building initiatives over the next six months and programme managers in each regional office will be advising the timetable for capability building initiatives in their areas..

Land Transport NZ Programme Manager Bob Alkema says capability building will involve two-way learning between central government and the sector.

'It will be evolution, not revolution and we will be building on what we have now,' he says. 'We don't expect perfection in the first three-year funding cycle, but we will build on this so the next three-year cycle is producing better integrated strategies and plans.'

Key milestones for three-year regional and national land transport programmes

Government Policy Statement and updated NZ Transport Strategy released.	Early August 2008
<i>Planning, programme and funding manual</i> and <i>Regional land transport programmes guidelines</i> released.	Available online in pdf format in mid-August 2008 and printed copies available from early September
Approved organisations make submissions to regional transport committees of components of regional land transport programmes using LTP online.	14 November 2008 (recommended)
Draft regional land transport programmes produced.	November–February 2009
Draft regional land transport programmes submitted to NZTA.	27 February 2009
NZTA reviews draft regional land transport programmes while regional transport committees undertake public consultation.	March–April 2009
Regional land transport programmes finalised by regional transport committees and submitted to the NZTA.	May–30 June 2009
NZTA reviews regional programmes, develops national land transport programme.	July–August 2009 (subject to agreement of Minister of Transport)

The three-year NLTP

- > Processes and decisions are transparent and visible.
- > More regional say in transport planning.
- > Funding applications are streamlined because funding favours activities grouped together consistent with a strategy rather than detailed assessment of individual projects.
- > Funding is more certain over a longer period.
- > First three-year funding cycle will be a learning experience for all.



For more information go to www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/stepping-forward/index.html. You can send questions to nltp3@landtransport.govt.nz. New information and contact links will be provided after the Agency is established.