

The Treasury

Submissions on a New Independent Infrastructure Body Information Release

February 2019

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Infrastructure Body Consultation

The Treasury

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A New Independent Infrastructure Body - Submission by the Quake Centre

The Quake Centre, based at the University of Canterbury is:

- a collaborative initiative between industry, University of Canterbury, University of Auckland and local government.
- an industry led research centre that at its core identifies industry needs in the fields of earthquake engineering, progressively broadening to wider infrastructure resilience needs.
- supported by 20 partner organisations across local government, civil contracting, engineering consultancy and large infrastructure asset owners.

The Quake Centre supports the proposal for a new independent infrastructure body (IB) and welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback.

What do you think are essential features of the new independent infrastructure body, so it can deliver on its core purpose to strengthen infrastructure strategy, planning, investment and delivery?

The following features are identified as necessary for the proposed Infrastructure Body to be effective.

- The IB should take a long-term, cross generational and cross-cultural view of New Zealand's existing and future infrastructure needs.
- It should consider a broad range of measures including:
 - Inter-generational equity
 - The Treasury's Living Standards Framework
 - Resilience to sudden shocks and long-term trends such as climate change

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- It should be independent of any particular Minister or Ministry and it should take a cross-sector and across the whole of government view. This would include, central and local government as well as SOEs, COOs and the private sector.
- Advice to the government should be of similar standing to that of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, i.e., the IB should be accountable to Parliament and not to the Government of the Day.
- The appointment of the Governance Board of the IB should be for a period of at least 5 years and be such that the appointment is longer than any electoral cycle. The appointment should be politically neutral and could be managed by the State Services Commission or a cross-party select committee.

Thinking about the possible functions proposed in this document, how important is each function?

The Quake Centre consider all of the eight functions identified to be essential.

Are there any other functions, in addition to the proposed list above, which you think the independent infrastructure body should carry out?

- It is essential that the infrastructure body maintain a detailed model of the infrastructure of New Zealand. This should be in the form of a digital twin. This is an essential tool for modelling current and future performance of New Zealand infrastructure in respect to the needs of the communities it serves.
- The digital twin needs to be built such that a broad range of aspects are considered including:
 - Community and infrastructure resilience
 - Interdependency of infrastructure types
 - Cultural, environmental, health, social welfare and economic impacts
 - Planning and land-use decisions
- To fulfil the needs identified above there is a requirement to set, own and maintain the data standards on which the digital twin is built and performance of the infrastructure is measured.
- The infrastructure body should consider the state, performance and maintenance of existing infrastructure as well as the opportunities created by new infrastructure.
- The IB should have the authority to require organisations that own or manage nationally significant infrastructure to provide adequate information to a recognised standards such that the performance of the organisation can be benchmarked both nationally and internationally.
- The IB should develop and publish an infrastructure strategy based on the above information that is in line with the current 30 year strategy requirements for local authorities. As per some overseas infrastructure bodies, the Government should be required to respond to this strategy in a formal way.

- The IB should provide guidance, training and, in certain circumstances, mandate the use of technologies such as Building Information Management (BIM) for projects of the appropriate scale and complexity.

How could the new independent infrastructure body best assist local government to support and deliver infrastructure projects?

The IB could best assist local government in the following ways:

- Setting standards for assessing the performance, condition and investment needs of local government owned infrastructure assets.
- Creating a framework for prioritising infrastructure investment.
- Providing guidance and independent review for procurement and delivery of infrastructure projects for mature infrastructure owners.
- Providing consultancy and training on procurement and delivery for less mature infrastructure owners.

Conclusion

The Quake Centre strongly supports the development of a new Infrastructure Body that:

- takes a broad, long-term and independent view of the infrastructure needs of New Zealand,
- Is concerned with existing as well as future infrastructure
- is strongly connected to, but independent of, central government
- has the capability and mandate to set standards in respect to data and performance
- can provide support to infrastructure owners as required, particularly in regards to procurement and delivery
- maintains a digital infrastructure model for NZ based on consistent infrastructure categorisation standards.

The Quake Centre is happy to discuss further any of the above points as required.

Regards

Greg Preston

Quake Centre Manager.