

By email

15 August 2024

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister

Wellington Ferry Terminal

Thank you for your visit to CentrePort last week. I write today in the context of Greater Wellington Regional Council being the majority owner of CentrePort and the convenor of the Future Ports Forum. The Forum is a collaboration of all agencies needing to be involved in the Wellington Ferry Terminal development.

GWRC supports the points made by CentrePort in their letter to you dated 13 August. We recognise the need for a fit-for-purpose and pragmatic interim ferry terminal option. We also note the importance of that option being able to lay the foundation for a long-term, value-for-money solution that can meet the requirements of our national supply chain into the future. Specifically, we want to emphasise to you the opportunities and national benefits of transitioning to a multi-user ferry terminal facility in Wellington.

The Future Ports Forum has developed a Masterplan and design concept for a multi-user facility at Kaiwharawhara. This allows for an upgraded Interislander facility to be extended into a multi-user terminal, servicing both ferry operators from the same location. This has several advantages, creating a level playing field for all ferry operators, offering significant efficiencies in port side operations, and freeing up land at Kings Wharf for future conversion to city-centric uses.

A multi-user ferry facility would be a medium to long-term proposal, requiring careful planning across multiple agencies, further consideration of alternative financing options, and a Government commitment. It would involve reclamation to create additional land at Kaiwharawhara as well as a new transport interchange providing access to SH1.

The current access for ferry traffic to and from Aotea Quay is barely sufficient for one ferry operation and could not provide capacity for two. A new interchange would provide significantly enhanced capacity, much greater resilience, as well as direct access from SH1, as part of the core national infrastructure required to support New Zealand's economic growth. Multiple studies have acknowledged that the inter-island ferry service is in fact a core part of SH1, providing an essential connection between North and South islands.

The New Zealand Transport Agency has previously included a Port Access project within the National Land Transport Plan (NLTP), the initial stages of which focussed on the development of a business case. However, NZTA has no current commitment or allocated funding to port-related transport improvements on the state highway. GWRC, as the regional transport planning authority, is happy to work with NZTA to facilitate the planning needed for state highway transport improvements in this area. The first step to doing this would be to re-prioritise and fund the business case as part of a variation to the Regional Land Transport Plan.

As part of this consideration, we also advocate aligning one or more other projects to the reclamation work, in order that the reclamation work might benefit from fill from other projects (e.g. Mt Victoria Tunnel etc).

We would also be willing to convene a revitalised Future Ports Forum to bring this nationally important facility to fruition. While the multi-user terminal facility requires a significant investment across multiple agencies, it also enables a much-needed step-change in outcomes in comparison to the status quo. Strategically the transition to a multi-user facility ultimately provides the strongest long-term option to deliver a safe, resilient, reliable and efficient Cook Strait connection that can support economic growth for future generations.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter
Chair

Copy: Lachie Johnson, Chair of Centreport Ltd