

Submission to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee on the Land Transport Management Amendment Bill

NCWNZ is an umbrella organisation representing 47 Nationally Organised Societies and National Members. It has 28 Branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies. It also has three satellite groups and three regional consultation groups. NCWNZ is representative of approximately 350,000 women, via its affiliated bodies. The Council's functions are to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action. NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to consider this Bill. The response has been prepared by the Public Issues Standing Committee following circulation of the questions to NCW members.

General Statement

NCWNZ policy supports an integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system. For social, economic and environmental reasons an efficient and comprehensive transport system is essential to New Zealand.

For these reasons NCWNZ has always supported the concept that freight should be moved by rail and sea whenever possible and that public transport should be advocated before private vehicle use. Therefore rail must be integrated into the Bill. Proposed regional land transport programmes must be able to consider improvement projects for rail, not just for road.

Comments and concerns from NCWNZ members include:-

- Fuel tax could be applied to improving the railway system and coastal sea transport, both urgent priorities, rather than just roads.
- Sustainable development should be taken into account when the fuel excise is set. Fuel is going to become even more expensive. Brian Easton has calculated that the long-run price for oil will rise to US\$100 a barrel. Therefore building roads should not go on ad infinitum to provide additional capacity for even more vehicles. New Zealand needs to get smarter about how people and goods are moved around by making better use of fuel/oil.
- As proposed the regional fuel tax could be used to fund roading infrastructure, but only up to 5c a litre, but not used if rail infrastructure was wanted, to get more freight, logs for example, off the road and onto rail. As proposed this cannot be done which is seen as a serious shortcoming in the purpose of the Bill.
- The proposed scheme for a regional fuel tax has a serious limitation. It can only be levied on a region-wide basis, and not sub-regionally. A region could not therefore use such a tax to fund public transport in Dunedin for instance without those buying fuel in other parts of the region, for example Clutha, Central Otago, Queenstown Lakes and Waitaki, also being levied to pay for Dunedin's public transport.

This is a major Bill covering a number of areas but NCWNZ will restrict its comments to five issues.

Specific Comments

Part 1 Amendments to Land Transport Management Act 2003

Clause 5 New section 4 substituted "4 Treaty of Waitangi"

NCWNZ supports this clause to maintain and contribute to land transport decision-making processes by providing principles and requirements that are intended to facilitate participation by Maori in land transport decision-making processes. It is noted, however, that they do not appear specifically in the list (on pages 18 and 19 of the Explanatory Notes) of those consulted in the preparation of this Bill.

Clause 11 New Section 10 substituted “10 Balance of Fund”

It is unclear in subsection (2) of this proposed change what the approved activities (other than public transport service activities) are that the Agency, territorial authorities public organisations can use their funds for.

Clause 13 New headings and sections 12 to 18K substituted “14 Core requirements of regional land transport programmes prepared by regional land transport committees”

NCWNZ supports these requirements and hopes that using rail transport is seriously considered amongst all these criteria.

Although one of the aims of the Bill is to reduce consultation it seems that regional land transport programmes will still provide opportunities for the public to have a say on land transport planning and funding decisions.

Clause 31 New subpart 3 of part 2 added “Subpart 3 - Regional fuel tax”

NCWNZ supports a Regional fuel tax if it is able to provide an environmentally sustainable, integrated, safe and responsive land transport system. This should include rail, especially improving the system with as much electrification as possible.

However concerns have been raised about the long term implications for this funding arrangement. Given the recent projected extremes of weather patterns, roading infrastructures have come under strain caused by flooding. The dairy boom is also contributing to this stress with an increased volume of trucks travelling the back roads. Members applaud the use of rail by one organisation to transport milk to their factories.

Members seek assurance that, long term, a regional fuel tax will not be the only avenue for funding capital projects like roads, tunnels and bridges. NCWNZ has made a number of submissions requesting the Government to consider reinstating the use of low interest Reserve Bank credit for capital works for territorial authorities. This instrument was used very successfully in the 1930s to create much of the current infrastructure, therefore it seems appropriate eighty years on, to re-institute the practice to bring that infra structure up to a standard to cope with current and future traffic needs.

“Part 4 Administrative and miscellaneous provisions

Subpart 1 – New Zealand Transport Agency

Clause 92 Establishment of New Zealand Transport Agency”

NCWNZ supports in principle the merging of the three entities into one Crown entity and the change to a 3 year planning cycle. With peak oil and climate change challenges there is no room for waste and duplication of bureaucracy.

Concluding Comments

NCWNZ believes that it is very important for our population to behave responsibly with regard to the way we move people and goods to ensure that it is a safe and environmentally friendly way as much as possible. Because of the information available, New Zealanders should now be aware of the economic and environmental costs of continuing to use fossil fuel without consideration of the consequences. The Government must take the lead in ensuring by legislation that New Zealanders do their best to be responsible citizens both nationally and internationally for the sake of the survival of our planet.

This legislation should be an opportunity to encourage the use of sustainable public transport, especially rail transport by building new infrastructure, if necessary, and not just providing more roads. There needs to be enough affordable and accessible public transport available so that people can be encouraged to stop using private cars at the current level. There also needs to be a major education programme to provide the population with the information about the human and environmental costs of continuing as we are, and the advantages of making changes.

This is a large Bill covering many amendments. NCWNZ commends the style and clarity of intent in its presentation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

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