

Transport

HIGHLIGHTS

Labour will:

- Build a 21st century transport system that reduces congestion, improves safety, reduces carbon emissions and provides greater choice.
- Rebalance the transport budget to invest in the most efficient and sustainable combination of transport modes. For freight, this means investing in roads, rail, ports, and coastal shipping. In our cities, it means a greater emphasis on public transport, and walking and cycling.
- Invest in the Congestion Free Network 2.0 for Auckland.

Introduction

Transport is at the heart of a modern economy, connecting producers to markets and offering communities opportunities for economic development. It is also a significant cost - Central and Local Government spends over \$5 billion per year investing in transport, and the average household spends nearly \$200 a week on transport.

Transport is crucial to the New Zealand economy and a well-directed, future-proofed, focussed, multi-modal network has huge benefits for productivity, jobs and business growth.

Under the current government, the value for money taxpayers receive for their transport taxes has fallen dramatically. The government has been overly focused on a handful of hugely expensive roading projects selected for political reasons, rather than on improving the whole transport system as an integrated, multi-mode network.

Labour will:

- Rebalance government transport expenditure away from low-value projects towards the investments that will best improve growth, reduce congestion, and move our transport system to a more sustainable footing
- Redirect funding to upgrades for rail, coastal shipping, public transport, regional roads, safety, and cycling
- Review the 2018 Government Policy Statement for Transport with a view to better achieving growth, value for money, and sustainability
- Ensure good urban design and integration of transport infrastructure with residential and urban development through a National Policy Statement and other planning mechanisms.

Public transport

Boosting public transport is about giving choices so that fewer people need to drive to work or elsewhere, leaving the roads freer for those who choose or need to drive. Each person taking a bus, train or ferry is a car off the road, which means less congestion, faster journeys for freight, and less need to expend large sums of taxpayer money on more roading projects.

People want to use public transport as a cheaper, less stressful, healthier and environmentally friendly alternative to driving. It is up to government to ensure that services are convenient and frequent enough to meet demand.

Labour will:

Auckland

- re-negotiate the 30 year Auckland Transport Alignment Plan (ATAP) with Auckland to develop a modern transport network based on the Congestion Free Network 2.0 (www.greaterauckland.org.nz). Key components will be:
 - Building a Light Rail connection down Dominion Rd from the City Centre to Mt Roskill within four years
 - Extending Light Rail to the airport as soon as possible, within ten years
 - Within one year developing a regular bus service from Puhinui and Manukau to the airport, to be progressively upgraded to bus rapid transit and extended to Botany and Howick within ten years.
 - Building a North-western Light Rail from the City Centre to Waimauku within ten years
 - Extending light rail to the North Shore after completing the first two lines
 - Continue to fund the City Rail Link on a 50:50 basis with Auckland Council
 - Invest in more electric trains, electrification to Pukekohe, and building a third main trunk line urgently between Westfield and Papakura
 - Build a range of significant cross-town bus priority routes including New Lynn-Flat Bush, Point Chevalier-Botany, Silverdale-Whangaparoa, and Howick-Glenfield
 - Allow Auckland Council to collect a regional fuel tax to fund the acceleration of these investments, along with infrastructure bonds and targeted rates to capture value uplift.

Wellington

- Work with the community to develop a Congestion Free Network plan for Wellington to guide future urban investments
- While the Wellington Congestion Free Network is being developed, work on a range of projects including:
 - Rapid public transport from the Railway Station to the Airport, including through fast tracking the feasibility investigation of light rail
 - Providing on-going funding to ensure that the Capital Connection service continues to provide a commuter service between Wellington and Palmerston North
 - Investing \$22m to double track the Trentham to Upper Hutt line.
 - Upgrading the Wairarapa Rail Line, and investing in new trains for the line
 - Undertaking track upgrades and constructing more passing loops on the Wellington Rail Network
 - Upgrading railway stations on the network, beginning with the Porirua, Paraparaumu, Waterloo and Johnsonville stations to ensure they are connected to shopping and community facilities
 - Investigating a new arterial route between the Terrace Tunnel and Mt Victoria Tunnel that separates through traffic from local traffic. We would expect this to include the duplication of the Mt Victoria tunnel, and that the project would be developed in tandem with rapid transit programme
 - Improving local connections in the Hutt Valley area including SH58 between SH2 and Transmission Gully and the Cross Valley link between Wainui Rd and SH2

- Working with Councils to prioritise walking and cycling including the construction of the Great Harbour Way between Petone and Wellington by 2020
- Supporting the Farer Fares campaign to provide discounted public transport for tertiary students in the Wellington region.

Christchurch

- Develop a rapid transport network for Christchurch, which may include heavy rail, light rail and bus rapid depending on costs, and suitability for the corridor. \$100million in capital spend will be provided for multi-modal commuter transport in Christchurch including heavy rail from Rolleston to the CBD.

Regional Rapid Rail

- Create a passenger rail service linking Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga and, if justified by demand, upgrade it in stages to a rapid rail network throughout the Golden Triangle.

Other areas

- Work with local government to develop public transport network plans. These plans will include a mix of investment in rail and bus services, and may involve rapid transport corridors in major cities, and developing frequent local bus networks in smaller cities

People with disabilities

Many people with disabilities are reliant on public transport to get to work and training, to attend appointments, and to partake in community, recreational and social activities.

Labour will:

- Ensure that public transport networks, including buses and trains, are accessible and that transport providers train their staff in disability awareness
- Implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission report “The Accessible Journey”
- Promote the use of modern technology and good communications on bus and train services, for example voice and visual screen announcements of stops and of changes to the service.

Walking and cycling

Walking and cycling are cheap, low-infrastructure, healthy, and environmentally friendly modes of transport. However, too many of our local streets and roads have not been designed for people to walk and cycle along.

Relatively small investments, in the scale of the transport budget, could give our cities world class cycling infrastructure as seen through much of Europe. Safe, grade-separated cycleways give more people the choice to cycle, help decongest the roads, save the country money on oil imports, clean up our air, and reduce our climate impact.

Labour will:

- Ensure that future roading projects will make provision for cycling, for example by cycleway design alongside roads or with separate bikeway networks

- Make cycle and pedestrian safety a priority and ensure that legislation, the road code and by-laws are made sufficient to protect all road users
- Update New Zealand's transport design standards to ensure they meet world's best practice for street design
- Renew the urban cycleway fund to allow councils to get on with developing cycle facilities at lower cost
- Create a new contestable 'Active Neighbourhoods' fund of \$15 million per year that will enable local communities to propose local walking and cycling projects that are smaller than those generally funded by the Urban cycleways fund. The fund will co-ordinate with local government to ensure good urban connections and to leverage funding for maximum effect
- Fund up to \$30 million to build Skypath across the Auckland Harbour Bridge, providing a safe walking and cycling option for commuters.

Roading

High cost roading projects in planning and under construction are placing the transport budget under significant strain. In some cases they are not delivering the best value for large sums of money spent. The current government has also cut funding for new local roads and local road maintenance in real terms in order to fund large-scale projects. This has left cash-strapped councils to pick up the tab, which has pushed up local government debt, and seen local roads degraded when maintenance has been deferred.

Labour will:

- Review the scale and timing of planned projects with a high cost (such as the East West Link) to identify evidence based solutions that can deliver improved transport and social outcomes at a lower cost and in a shorter timeframe
- Continue the planned investment in new state highways in regional areas. However, large planned projects with a high cost will be reviewed to see if better value for money solutions can be found
- Give local communities more of a say on how the money is spent in their areas
- Make more funding available for transport projects of regional importance by doubling the funding range of \$70-\$140m to \$140-\$280m.

Freight transport

Labour will invest intelligently, based on solid business cases, in multi-modal freight transport. We are not ideologically committed to one mode over another. In each instance, for each freight corridor, we will make the most beneficial, cost-efficient, and sustainable investment choices.

Rail freight

Rail freight is more energy-efficient and cheaper than road freight but decades of asset stripping left our rail network severely degraded. The current governance of KiwiRail places the organisation entirely outside the transport funding system. KiwiRail needs to be reformed to be able to be better placed to deliver on national transport priorities. Expansion of rail services should be encouraged wherever practicable.

Labour will:

- Reform the structure and governance of KiwiRail to ensure it is best placed to deliver on national transport priorities
- Continue upgrading the KiwiRail rail network, including improvements to speed and journey time reliability
- Allow rail projects to be funded from the National Land Transport Fund where there are benefits to local communities
- Retain current electrification of the North Island Main Trunk line, and investigate expansion of electrification to Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga and between Wellington and Palmerston North; and have a long-term goal of electrifying all rail
- Re-open mothballed railway lines where community and business support exists and there is evidence that the service would be sustainable, notably the Napier to Gisborne rail line
- Investigate a rail line to Marsden Point and Northport and upgrading the North Auckland Line to take pressure off the roads in Northland.
- As part of Labour's broader commitment to a procurement policy that recognises the wider benefits of New Zealand based manufacturing, actively consider the role of the Hillside workshops in the manufacture and maintenance of rolling stock.

Airports, ports and coastal shipping

Our port system suffers from a lack of coordination, which results in ports being played off against each other by international shipping lines and over-capitalisation. This is a poor outcome for New Zealand. At the same time, coastal shipping is under-developed; resulting in higher than necessary economic and environmental costs as freight that could travel by sea is carried on the roads. In 2008, Labour in Government launched its "Sea Change" strategy, which aimed to revitalise and transform coastal shipping in New Zealand. National has abandoned it, but Labour would refresh and resume implementing it.

Labour will:

- Develop a national ports strategy and encourage collaboration and complementary operation between ports, particularly in the northern North Island
- Refresh and implement Labour's "Sea Change" Strategy to revitalise coastal shipping
- Allow projects that allow for improved use coastal shipping to be funded from the National Land Transport Fund
- Encourage an expansion of air services to other countries where there is likely to be an expansion of trade or where there may be potential for attracting significant new growth in tourism to New Zealand, together with adequate employment protections.

Transport funding

In many areas of New Zealand there is a significant shortfall in funding relative to project infrastructure requirements. RONS projects that are currently under construction will take up a large portion of the transport budget in the short term. Some urban areas are struggling with the pressures from population and tourism growth leading to a need for significant investment.

In the short-term extra transport funding is required. However, over the medium term it is acknowledged that due to technology changes a shift away from fuel tax is likely to be required, to a fairer system based on distance and road use.

The current transport funding framework heavily favours planning and funding of State Highways above other transport options. Reform is needed to deliver ensure a mode neutral approach is taken to planning and investment decisions. A reformed NZTA will have a greater flexibility to ensure the best projects are delivered.

Labour will:

- Introduce regional fuel taxes to enable regions to raise funds for specific projects that are a regional priority, but would not otherwise qualify for funding from the National Land Transport Fund
- Review the whole vehicle levy system (WOFs, vehicle registration fees, fuel tax, and road user charges) to see if it is still fit for purpose in an era of rapid disruption
- Restructure the New Zealand Transport Agency to ensure it can fund the best transport solution for a given region or corridor, regardless of mode, operator or agency responsible. This includes allowing NZTA to fund rail projects where there is a public interest in doing so
- Ensure that project evaluation methodology is fit for purpose and appropriately reflects the costs of different transport modes.

Transport safety

Labour will keep a relentless focus on road safety by focusing on the highest areas of enforceable risk, including speeding, drink driving, intersection behaviour and safety belts.

Labour will:

- Take decisive action to reduce New Zealand's increasing road toll. We will review the Safer Journeys Strategy to ensure all reasonable actions to lower our crash rate are being undertaken by the relevant government agencies. This update should ensure the strategy uses world's best practice in road safety, including investigation of the 'Vision Zero' framework. Specific attention will be given to a renewed drive to encourage and enforce seatbelt wearing, expanded use of alcohol interlocks, investigation into roadside drug testing, improving regional and local roads, and increased visitor driver education
- Ensure funding is provided to improve safety on sections of state highways and local roads that have been identified as problem areas
- Improve the focus on pedestrian safety by updating our street design standards and provide funding to improve areas where pedestrian safety is seen to be an issue, with a special focus on schools
- Improve road transport and bus driver regulations around meals and rest breaks
- Introduce labour standards into Transport Operator Safety Systems in the trucking industry
- Investigate a Safe Rates system for the freight and courier industries, where remuneration levels and methods of contracting are considered as part of the overall safety requirements for drivers
- Consider the introduction of rural driver training programmes, especially for young drivers in poorer disadvantaged communities
- Expand access to driver testing and licensing into smaller towns where access to a car is the only means of getting to education or work and for longer-term visitors to this country.

Future transport technologies

Changing transport technologies will present both increasing challenges and opportunities for the transport system in the future. Emerging technologies such as driverless cars, greater fuel efficiency and new fuel sources will have impacts on both the funding as well as the operation of the transport system.

Labour will:

- Increase the uptake of electric vehicles by focusing on converting high use government fleet vehicles to electric power
- Support trials of electric vehicles in freight distribution to reduce the reliance on diesel vehicles in this area to improve local air quality, as well as reducing carbon emissions
- Continually monitor evolutions and externalities in the transport area to ensure that new technologies not only provide accessibility and environmental benefits but also benefit passengers and workers.