

Short-term. Or long term. A view of today. Or a view for the future.

Do we want to future proof the region, or not?

There is one question that needs to be answered in this process – Are NZTA committed to taking advantage of the whole opportunity in front regional New Zealand, or are they simply here to move vehicles from one point to another?

There seems to have been limited assessment of the economic benefits. And I mean that in the inclusive sense. The one our current government is leading nationally and internationally. The one that looks at social, health, environmental, cultural economics, as well as the financial. It's been done through one lens.

And I can say that with certainty. CEDA is the Economic Development Agency and Regional Tourism Organization for Manawatu, and we had no official engagement from NZTA through this process. I find that quite incredible. We have had one 'information visit'.

Our region is performing strongly. And in the next 10 years we have over \$3b of commercial investment coming into the region. Part of this is central government funding for the regional freight ring road and Kiwirail sidings project. Cementing our place as the lower north island distribution hub.

Business community feedback – D&L Sector.

Road safety and accessibility for all; SH3 is a critical route for the growing distribution and logistics sector within the region and therefore the creation of a wider shoulder would not give cyclists and walkers any protection from heavy vehicles.

We're hearing that truck drivers do not want to be balancing on a 100km speed limit road with bikes, it's simply a recipe for failure. How does this fit in for such a key distribution hub for the North Island? Have we consulted the users?

NZTA states that the Left-hand lanes being crawler lanes of 60km/h will be adding additional safety – this doesn't stack up. More people get killed in town than on open roads. Recent examples in region are devastating eg Summerhill.

Quoted in the [Manawatu Standard 26 March](#) - "That proposal is a complex issue to work through... [to introduce it] now would be to over complicate this process and lead to delays," agency legal counsel David Randall said. The question is why was it not factored in from the outset, given NZTA's Statement of Performance objective of 'One Connected Transport System: Transform land transport system performance by integrating digital technology with physical infrastructure to create a safe, connected system that works for everyone. " ?

I am quite astounded of the view of what a cyclist is in the evidence produced to date. It seems so very far removed from the NZTA statement of performance. We can't focus on one group here. Not just lycra-clad cyclists. Not just commuters. Not just visitors. Not just community. It's all of them and more. It's Recreational and leisure cyclists and walkers. We have a large pool of cyclists in region and nearby, and it's a recreational activity that is growing. And it's in an iconic location, central location that is already popular. We must plan for the future. This whole issue smacks of short termism, a lack of foresight, and it's to the detriment of regional New Zealand.

It's not enough for NZTA to offer to join future discussions on a shared path. If we don't act now it is only going to increase the cost in the future. This is an iconic opportunity. To say cyclists can use Saddle and Pahiatua is laughable – I invite you to cycle it with me and see how you go. To say walkers and runners can use the Te Apiti - Manawatu Gorge walking track shows the lack of

understanding – have you seen the people traffic using this space for training, leisure and exploring? It's already nearing capacity.

Manawatu-Whanganui Region ranks 6th in Size out of the 16 regions in New Zealand – this isn't somewhere to be discounted.

Visitor Sector – The Facts vs Perceptions and the growth.

What's not being looked at is the significant of the tourism market here, one that appears to be – in this process – very little known or disregarded.

The fact is - Visitors spent more than \$1 billion in Manawatū -Whanganui region in the year to June 2018.

Of that \$1 billion, nearly half was spent in Palmerston North and Manawatu alone.

The increase in Domestic Tourism Expenditure 2009 – 2018 has been significant and outperforms some of the traditional tourism destinations in NZ.

- Manawatu District grew 40%
- Palmerston North City at 32%
- Manawatu-Whanganui district overall at 31%

(FOR COMPARISON: **Dunedin City 38%**, **Waitomo District 28%**, **Taupo District 28%**,)

VISITOR NIGHTS – There were more than 2.8 million visitors in Palmerston North and Manawatu in the year to May 2018, across both private and commercial accommodation.. This is significant and growing.

For commercial accommodation – hotels and motels - The new record high for guest nights in the region for the 12 months ended January 2019 is nearly half a million, with the occupancy rate increasing to 51.35. Nationally guest nights declined in January.

Regardless of where they stay – commercial or private – our regions need visitors, and we are all actively working to bring them here, get them to stay longer and spend more in our economies to ensure our residents have a brilliant lifestyle with plenty to see and do.

The visitor economy is an important part of quality of life for residents. By strengthening the visitor economy, services enjoyed by local people, such as restaurants, attractions, arts and entertainment will benefit. • Looked at the other way, actions directly aimed at making somewhere a better place to live and work will also make it a more appealing place to visit.

We know the Gorge tracks are already getting exceptional use – the growth in the last years has been significant. We need to future proof this, as the growth is only going to continue. Te Apiti – Manawatu Gorge is in the centre of a significant four-hour drive market, the 'middle million' as it's known. We have a real, tangible opportunity to not only future proof but to leverage the widespread economic benefits of this.

DRAFT Aotearoa New Zealand Government Tourism Strategy – Governments focus on regional dispersal; we have gateway and destination in one. We need to see Central Government support for integrated transport options as well as from a visitor perspective to be able to leverage and attract commercial investment to grow our blossoming visitor sector, and to actively drive regional dispersal.

As a Central government agency what is your role in regional dispersal, a key driver of government? In your current shape and stance, you're not helping at all, in any form. You have the opportunity for a real lever to change the future for the lower North Island.

Under the Governments tourism Strategy, there are five key Outcomes for Government with the fifth being '**Regions and Communities benefit from Tourism**', which has the priority work areas of:

1. Implement the government investment framework for tourism ›
2. Work with regions to support them to take a strategic and coherent approach when deciding how they want to plan, manage, market and develop their destinations ›
3. Collaborate with regions to build a deeper understanding of the impacts that regional decision-making and investment may have on their natural, cultural and historic heritage ›
4. Support iwi to develop Māori tourism experiences, including distinctive regional offerings › Investigate generating new data to deepen understanding of regional visitor flows and tourism's impact on regional economies ›
5. **Ensure that land transport investment supports safe and resilient transport connections in regional New Zealand, to enable all regions to benefit from visitor growth and realise their tourism potential.**

[New Zealand Government Policy Statement \(GPS\)](#) on Land Transport states that, through strategic priorities, objectives and themes, the GPS 2018 demonstrates our Governments commitment to safety, mode neutrality, liveable cities, regional economic development, protecting the environment, and delivering the best possible value for money.

The Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) has four key objectives, Environmental, Value for Money, Safety and Access. A shared pathway will provide for three of these, with the fourth – value for money – being achieved in the longer term by adding to the social benefits of the wider region and allowing for significant tourism product, while reducing the need for a bigger spend if walking/cycling was to be added on at a later date *(as demonstrated with the Fitzherbert Ave Bridge, Southern Motorway pathway and the Harbour Bridge)*

We simply cannot see how NZTA has reached a decision not to include a shared pathway in light of this.

Here's a reminder of the Strategic Direction [\(slide\)](#) covers

By ignoring this opportunity, there is no alignment from NZTA to regional and central government strategies:

1. Palmerston North City Council 2018 Long Term Plan and Spatial Plan identify Te Apiti and the Manawatu River as key catalysts for regional growth.
2. Accelerate 25 Regional Economic Development Programme which identifies the Manawatu Gorge and associated trails as a priority visitor opportunity.
3. Our Plan: The Government's Priorities for New Zealand which identifies supporting regional growth and development initiatives as a priority.
4. DRAFT Aotearoa New Zealand Government Tourism Strategy – as mentioned before

NZTA's Statement of Performance Strategic Responses outlines the following:

- a) Partnerships for Prosperity: Unlock social and economic opportunities for customers, businesses and communities through targeted partnerships.
- b) One Connected Transport System: Transform land transport system performance by integrating digital technology with physical infrastructure to create a safe, connected system that works for everyone.
- c) The Focus Areas and Outcomes talks to 'Connect and Develop Regions' and 'Keep People Safe' as well as 'Shape the Land Transport System' with a long-term view.

These SoP Strategic Responses don't seem to be a part of the rhetoric here.... where is the partnership approach for communities, why are we not jumping on a significant economic opportunity, and why are we not approaching this with a long-term view?