

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
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30 June 2023

Waka Kotahi Cycling Action Plan

Feedback from Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

Herenga ā Nuku plays a key role in negotiating, establishing and improving outdoor access for New Zealanders. This includes making people and organisations aware of public access locations and ensuring that access endures over time. Our mandate includes all forms of public access, including on/by foot, bike, horse and vehicle.

In recent years, Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa has advocated in submissions for improved outdoor access for walking and cycling within and between urban/residential areas. This may be in response to Regional Land Transport Plans, District Plans or proposed new legislation such as the Natural and Built Environment Bill.

For example, in Herenga ā Nuku's submission to Te Tai Poutini Plan, a new region-wide District Plan for the West Coast, it said:

Much of our work focuses on modes of active transport, providing advice about public access and promoting unobstructed access where public access is available, and demand exists to use it. We support the creation, maintenance, enhancement and promotion of walking and cycling access, for recreation, for safety, health and wellbeing, for a shift to more sustainable travel, and including for commuting to local destinations such as schools, places of work and shops.

The Cycling Action Plan has four strategic priorities, all of which build on Herenga ā Nuku's position. The priorities include the actions Waka Kotahi will take to achieve them and are followed by a strong case for change and a

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vision for 'connected networks of safe and attractive cycleways and quiet streets' and a transport system that is 'safer and healthier and that helps us to protect our climate',

Our feedback is, therefore, strongly in support of the Cycling Action Plan.

In addition, in response to one of the plan's focus areas being to support the reallocation of existing street space to help complete urban cycling networks, we encourage the creation of cycleways that move cyclists off and away from roads. We emphasise the value of using and safely accessing greenspace, especially with regard to urban design in peri-urban areas that are being transformed into new suburban developments.

The plan has a strong focus on urban areas and getting around on bikes "for everyday trips in New Zealand's towns and cities." As the action plan transitions to becoming the National Cycling Plan, we would like to see it offer greater support for cycling in more rural communities. For example, cycling a few kilometres into small rural towns is largely a thing of the past as roads have become busier. Parents report cycling such routes years ago themselves but not allowing their children to do so now due to the danger from the volume and speed of traffic.

The potential to enable more active transport to school, to work, to recreation opportunities and so on for rural communities, as well as for visitors staying at out-of-town campsites, for example, is immense. There is a need to separate cyclists from often narrow and busy roads, and to do so would release the latent demand for cycling in those areas. We acknowledge that this need for separation is included in the high-level principles for cycle networks, and it is important that such consideration extends to rural communities, where it can contribute to a variety of wellbeing objectives.

These points relate strongly to Waka Kotahi's healthy, safe people outcome of "Protecting people from transport-related injuries and harmful pollution, and making active travel an attractive option".

Under the plan's strategic priority of 'streamlining funding', we support Waka Kotahi in its aim to have a greater ability to invest in projects that are not directly related to roads – tracks and walkways that take active transport away from roads. We note that Herenga ā Nuku is well placed to be able to advise on small-scale improvements (\$30,000-\$100,000) across the whole country that can address severance and improve the resilience of communities.

The executive summary states that:

Our local government partners have a particularly critical role to play in delivering most of the networks required to create safe, connected and attractive cycling networks.

We have a pivotal role to play alongside local councils.

Through this feedback as well as our developing relationship with those involved in multi-modal and active transport at Waka Kotahi, we aim to support the priorities and vision of the new plan as well as to seek a place at the table for ongoing conversations, cooperation and collaboration, and the finalisation and implementation of the proposed National Cycling Plan. It may be appropriate for Herenga ā Nuku to sign it.

Waka Kotahi has highlighted the value of a national plan, laying out a vision, strategic priorities and actions to achieve them and will be developing a National Walking Action Plan to go alongside the Cycling Action Plan. While we are the smallest government agency, we have a clear focus on free, certain, enduring and practical access to the outdoors. We are increasingly contributing to local and regional plans and to legislation as we advocate for this access, promoting active transport, community connectivity, reduced reliance on vehicles and the

consequent benefits to health, wellbeing and the environment. Many of our comments above relate to both walking and cycling.

Herenga ā Nuku sees itself as an ideal partner, stakeholder and contributor to both new national plans for walking and cycling, alongside Waka Kotahi and local councils.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ric Cullinane', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ric Cullinane
Tumuaki | Chief Executive
Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa