

Auckland City Rail Link

June 2016

On 2 June 2016, the Mayor of Auckland, New Zealand Len Brown, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the New Zealand Minister of Transport launched the co-funded \$NZD 2.5 billion Auckland City Rail Link (CRL) project.

This Occasional Paper provides background and details to the CRL project and an overview of the structure of government in New Zealand.

The Auckland City Rail Link Project

An underground city loop train service has been part of the public discussion for more than 50 years in Auckland, however an agreement to build the CRL as a joint local and central government project was reached in 2013 between Auckland Council and the central National Government.

In 2003, the Britomart Transport Centre – built to serve as the public transport hub in the central business district of Auckland, combining a bus interchange with a railway station – officially opened.

As a result of the construction of Britomart, the railway line was electrified in 2007, which paved the way for the possibility to build the CRL.

As part of his election campaign for Mayor leading up to the 2010 local government election, Len Brown focused on his intention to advocate for the CRL.

Upon Len Brown's successful election, the central Government entered into discussions and confirmed it would co-fund for the CRL project.

Commencement of construction on the CRL

In January 2016, the central Government announced it would work with Auckland Council to bring forward the start date of the main works to 2018 and formalised its funding commitment from 2020.

On 2 June 2016, Len Brown, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the New Zealand Minister of Transport and local and central government dignitaries attended a sod-turning event to launch the construction of the \$NZD 2.5 billion CRL project.

Auckland Transport chairman Lester Levy has said that safety of workers would be the priority in the underground working conditions.

Construction of the CRL project will incorporate two 3.4 kilometre twin tunnels that will link up Auckland's existing rail infrastructure to double the speed and capacity of the rail network.

The CRL project is expected to deliver \$NZD 1.30 of benefit for every \$NZD 1 spent and double the number of train passengers to 30,000 people at peak times.

It is expected the project will be completed in late 2022 or early 2023.



New Zealand Transport System Governance

Both central and local government play a role in New Zealand's transport system.

Some of central government responsibilities in relation to transport include:

- investing in transport infrastructure and services, including subsidising public transport services and transport infrastructure provided by local government;
- setting the legislative framework for the transport system and participating in and negotiating international transport agreements; and
- ownership responsibility for transport Crown entities, including the New Zealand Transport Agency, KiwiRail, the Civil Aviation Authority, Maritime New Zealand, and the Transport Accident Investigation Commission.

Local government has the responsibility for regional and local transport planning and own the local road network.

Auckland Council

Auckland Council officially became a unitary authority on 1 November 2010, as the result of eight separate Councils amalgamating. Mr Len Brown, who is affiliated with the Labour Party, was elected the first Mayor of Auckland City Council and has held the position since. Mr Brown has announced he will not be re-contesting the position at the upcoming 8 October local government election.

Entering into its sixth year of operation, Auckland Council operates on a \$3 billion budget with approximately 8000 staff.

The city has a population of approximately 1.5 million, which accounts for 33.4 per cent of New Zealand's population. It is expected Auckland will grow by more than 700,000 people in the next 30 years.

Auckland Council Restructure Background

The restructure process was initiated by the central Labour Government in 2007, stemming from public and political concern that the (then) current local government structure was hindering progress of Auckland.

A Royal Commission on Auckland Governance was established to enable an independent investigation into local government arrangements and how best to implement changes to the governance of Auckland.

Upon the release of the Final Report, the National Party held government and had the responsibility to respond to recommendations and ultimately oversee the amalgamation process.

Auckland Council was structured to consist of two complementary decision-making parts, the governing body and local boards.

The Governing Body

The governing body consists of the Mayor and 20 governing body members. The Mayor is elected by all voters in Auckland City Council and governing body members are elected by voters in the ward they represent. The governing body focuses on major region-wide strategic decisions.



Local Boards

There are 21 local boards that consist of between five and nine members who are also elected by voters from the local community. Local boards have the responsibility to make decisions at the local level including activities and facilities.

Council Controlled Organisations

Council Controlled Organisations have the responsibility to oversee certain council assets. These organisations operate separately, but are accountable to the governing body.

When establishing the new Auckland Council, Auckland Transport was formed as a Council Controlled Organisation and has the responsibility to oversee:

- the planning and funding of public transport;
- promoting alternative ways to get around the city; and
- operating the local road network.

Further information

The build is on for the City Rail Link Media Release is available [here](#).