

Meeting with stakeholders on Auckland's Rapid Transit Programme- Wednesday 19 February 2020

Reason for this briefing	Representatives of six organisations co-signed as letter to you on 17 December outlining their concerns about the Auckland Light Rail Project and requesting a meeting with you. In your response to this letter you agreed to meet.
Action required	Note the contents of this briefing in preparation for your meeting on Wednesday 19 February.
Deadline	Monday 17 February
Reason for deadline	To allow time for the briefing to be read prior to the meeting.

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	First contact
Amelia East	Project Director, Auckland Light Rail	██████████	✓

MINISTER'S COMMENTS:

Withheld to protect the privacy of natural persons

Date:		Briefing number:	OC200089
Attention:	Hon Phil Twyford	Security level:	

Minister of Transport's office actions

- Noted*
 Seen
 Approved
- Needs change*
 Referred to
- Withdrawn*
 Not seen by Minister
 Overtaken by events

Purpose of report

1. On 17 December six organisations co-signed a letter to you regarding the Auckland Light Rail project and requested a meeting with you.
2. The purpose of this report is to prepare you for this meeting which is on Wednesday 19 February. The meeting's attendees are:
 - 2.1. Barney Irvine, Principal Advisor Infrastructure - Automobile Association
 - 2.2. Matt Lowrie, Director - Greater Auckland (previously transport blog)
 - 2.3. Viv Beck, chief executive - Heart of the City
 - 2.4. Alan MacDonald, Head of Advocacy and Strategy - EMA
3. Bike Auckland and Generation Zero also signed the letter but are unable to attend the meeting.
4. Auckland Light Rail's Project Director Amelia East and Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Advisor Suzanne Cookson met some of these stakeholders on Thursday 13 February and notes from this meeting are attached to this briefing as Appendix 1.

Background

5. In their letter of 17 December, the stakeholders said that despite their different views and priorities they were united in two beliefs:
 - 5.1. That Auckland needs a high-quality rapid transit system.
 - 5.2. That the current process, especially the lack of transparency, will not achieve the best outcomes for Auckland.
6. The group outlined its concerns with the Project which alleged there was:
 - 6.1. A lack of transparency including about factors that have guided decision-making and the steps followed to settle on two 'bidders'
 - 6.2. No opportunity for public feedback to inform the Government's approach and if engagement comes later it will be after key decisions have been made
 - 6.3. That by not engaging the public this will result in poorer outcomes and a lack of buy-in
 - 6.4. Risk of judicial review due to an irregular process
7. The group asked for the following information:
 - 7.1. The requirements the Government is seeking from the project, in terms of outcomes
 - 7.2. The extent to which financial questions have been decoupled from technical questions
 - 7.3. How much consideration was given to other delivery options and approaches

- 7.4. The extent to which the project has been considered as part of a network-wide solution versus in isolation
- 7.5. How value for money and affordability have been incorporated into the analysis
8. You answered these questions in your response to their letter which is attached to this briefing along with the original letter as appendices 1 and 2.

Key messages

9. Your organisations represent a diverse range of views and I'm interested to hear your comments first hand.
10. We are on the same page in terms of agreeing the importance of rapid transit in Auckland.
11. The confidential process is still underway so I am limited in the information I can share – which I acknowledge is challenging.
12. The Government is yet to make a decision on the preferred delivery partner.
13. Once selected, I expect the preferred delivery partner to meaningfully engage with iwi, stakeholders and communities to gain feedback on their Proposal.
14. The Respondents were asked to provide solutions within their Proposals. The purpose of this was to demonstrate their credentials and show what they considered the best approach – it was not to lock in an approach.
15. The proposed solution is a starting point and will be modified through the negotiation period. Normal consenting processes will require extensive engagement and further changes are possible at this stage.

Recommendations

16. The recommendation is that you:
- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------|
| (a) | Note the contents of this briefing | Yes/No |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------|

Amelia East
Project Director, Auckland Light Rail

MINISTER'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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APPENDIX 1

Notes from the Ministry's meeting with stakeholders on Thursday 13 February

1. Auckland Light Rail's Project Director Amelia East and Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Manager Suzanne Cookson met with the following stakeholders on Thursday 13 February:
 - 1.1. Barney Irvine, Principal Advisor Infrastructure - Automobile Association
 - 1.2. Matt Lowrie, Director - Greater Auckland (previously transport blog)
 - 1.3. Viv Beck, Chief Executive - Heart of the City
 - 1.4. Melanie McKay, Public Affairs and Communications Manager – EMA
 - 1.5. Barbara Cuthbert, Chair - Bike Auckland
2. The purpose of this meeting was to:
 - 2.1. pre-engage with these key stakeholders prior to an announcement and to reassure them of the intention to engage more fully with them once the limitations necessary to the commercial process are lifted.
 - 2.2. listen to their concerns so that future communications can address these.
3. The key insights from this meeting are:
 - 3.1. As expected, the stakeholders were frustrated by the lack of answers, but appreciated that the meeting signalled an intent to engage more fully in future.
 - 3.2. The stakeholders expressed concern about what they claimed were irreversible decisions being made without input from key interest groups (e.g. businesses, ratepayers) and communities.
 - 3.3. The stakeholders said they were motivated by a desire to get the best outcomes for Auckland.
 - 3.4. They said they spoke on behalf of the groups they represent and would like information to pass on.
 - 3.5. They challenged the validity of the current process – as they did in their letter.
 - 3.6. Their questions were wide-ranging and covered
 - 3.6.1. the perceived changes to the Government's procurement approach and how this would be seen by foreign companies looking to invest in New Zealand
 - 3.6.2. changes to property development rights and the impact on individuals
 - 3.6.3. the long-term cost to ratepayers
 - 3.6.4. the impact on business of further disruption and whether the project would be coordinated with other infrastructure projects

- 3.6.5. the detail of the plan from the designated route to the cost of travel
- 3.6.6. whether the current solutions had been compared against the original NZTA plan
- 3.6.7. what decisions stakeholders and communities will be empowered to influence.

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