

Ministerial direction referring the Basin Bridge proposal to a board of inquiry

I consider that the matters lodged by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) being a notice of requirement and five resource consent applications relating to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Basin Bridge proposal ("the matters") are a proposal of national significance and, under section 147 of the Resource Management Act 1991, I direct those matters to be referred to a board of inquiry for decision. My reasons are as follows:

National Significance

I consider the matters are a proposal of national significance because:

- The proposal is adjacent to and partially within the Basin Reserve Historic Area and international test cricket ground; in the vicinity of other historic places including the former Home of Compassion Crèche, the former Mount Cook Police Station, Government House and the former National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum; and is adjacent to the National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu). The proposal is likely to affect recreational, memorial, and heritage values associated with this area of national significance (including associated structures, features and places) which contribute to New Zealand's national identity.
- The proposal is likely to result in significant and irreversible changes to the urban environment around the Basin Reserve. In particular, the proposed elevating of westbound traffic on State highway 1 is likely to compete with the open space aspect that exists for the current ground level layout of the Basin Reserve roundabout.
- The proposal has aroused widespread public interest regarding its actual or likely effects on the environment, including on heritage values and experiential values associated with the Basin Reserve. This includes on-going media and public attention on the options for traffic improvement around the Basin Reserve, including local, national and international coverage.
- The proposal is intended to reduce journey time and variability for people and freight, thereby facilitating economic development. The proposal is also likely to provide for public transport, walking and cycling opportunities; reduce congestion and accident rates in the area; and improve emergency access to the Wellington Regional Hospital. If realised, these benefits will assist the Crown in fulfilling its public health, welfare, security, and safety functions.
- The proposal relates to a network utility operation (road) that, although physically contained within the boundaries of Wellington City, as a section of the Wellington Northern Corridor Road of National Significance will affect and extend to more than one district and region in its entirety.

Direction to a board of inquiry

In reaching my decision, I considered the following:

- The Environmental Protection Authority's recommendation that I refer the matters to a board of inquiry.
- The views of the applicant and the relevant local authorities, and the capacity of the local authorities to process the matters.
- A board of inquiry is a decision-making body consistent with that used for other sections of the Wellington Northern Corridor, including the Transmission Gully, MacKays to Peka Peka and Peka Peka to North Ōtaki Expressway proposals.
- The board of inquiry process provides for a comprehensive assessment of the proposal within a streamlined process.
- The board of inquiry process will provide greater certainty for all parties as a decision is required within nine months of notification.

Dated at Wellington this

3rd

day of

July

2013

Hon Amy Adams

Minister for the Environment