

ROADWAYS TO WATERWAYS

In announcing the release of the draft strategy designed to transform coastal shipping domestic freight services in New Zealand the Minister of Transport, Annette King, referred to the New Zealand Shipping Federation draft strategy document 'From Roadways to Waterways: Enhancing New Zealand's Transport Options'.

The rather apt title, Roadways to Waterways is the way the government see up to 30% of the New Zealand domestic freight being moved in the next 30 years.

With the doubling of the freight task in the next 10 to 15 years the government is taking a lead from Europe where more freight will now be moved by water than by road.

The government see further major benefits with their focus on climate change. The transport industry is reliant on fossil fuels so the current climate change focus is seen as creditable rationale for the movement of domestic freight by sea rather than by road.

With the current road congestion and the large cost and time taken to build more roads along with the international shipping lines talking of moving to a hub and spoke network the transport landscape may/will change.

Through its draft strategy 'Sea Change' (aimed at revitalising coastal shipping) the government are

prepared to support their initiative by:

1.The creation of a Maritime Liaison Unit 'MLU' within the Ministry of Transport.

2.The MLU will be responsible for increasing the level of information about domestic coastal shipping to shippers of freight and other stakeholders.

3.Make it easier for the coastal shipping sector to access government funds. A sustainable business case will be necessary to ensure the proposals can be sustained when government support ceases.

4.Currently one third of the New Zealand seafarers are over 60 so it will seek to develop a larger skilled workforce.

This 'Sea Change' initiative supports the Government initiatives of reducing road congestion and climate change.

In the 'Roadways to Waterways' document presented to the Minister of Transport the Executive Summary concluded with New Zealand's surface transport strategy should refocus to include:

1.Enhancement of coastal shipping as a transport option, through appropriate policy setting and increased funding.

2.Enhancing responsibility for the development of the maritime and coastal shipping at the policy level within central and regional government.

3.Development of a coordinated national ports policy and assistance with ports infrastructure development.

4.Establishment of a maritime promotions unit to work with the shipping industry to promote coastal shipping to:

cargo/freight owners

regional councils

ports owners and operators

5.Expansion of investment in off-road freight solutions and an extension of eligibility criteria to include coastal shipping and related infrastructure.

6.Establishment of a maritime outputs class within the Land Transport Programme with a focus on investment in coastal shipping and related ports infrastructure.

7.Introduction of a maritime training programme.

The Government endorsed the 'Roadways to Waterways' strategy and included much of it in their 'Sea Change' strategy. Submissions close for the 'Sea Change' strategy on 19 December 2007.

Transport Operators need to be aware of the change and the potential impact on their business model.

