

Community-led team challenges Parliamentarians to drop partisan bickering and start *Making Rail Work* for all Kiwis

Date of Release: Thursday 11th August 2022

The *Making Rail Work* team has set out a bold ambition to create New Zealand's first rail co-operative, which could act as a conduit to a public-private partnership for the delivery of inter-city passenger rail in the Golden Triangle. As a co-operative, it would mean real Kiwis would own the assets associated with inter-city rail and be able to hold private sector contractors to account in terms of delivery. Ownership and pricing could not be controlled by the highest offshore bidder.

On Wednesday 3rd August 2022, an All-Party Parliamentary meeting, endorsed by Minister for Transport Hon Michael Wood MP and chaired by Transport Select Committee Chairperson Greg O'Connor MP, provided an opportunity for the *Making Rail Work* team to present their proposal, and for politicians to contribute, ask questions and discuss potential Parliamentary interventions.

MPs attending the meeting commended the *Making Rail Work* approach. Welcoming the chance to understand the frustrations of the community, Greg O'Connor MP proposed to discuss what can be done to create a more joined up approach within the Transport Select Committee context.

We are delighted to hear that, at 2.30pm today, the Transport Select Committee announced an enquiry into inter-city passenger rail in New Zealand: [Link to announcement](#)

While evidence is being gathered, the *Making Rail Work* team is getting on with building the community outreach networks and designing the proposed Golden Triangle co-operative model framework. Working with advocacy groups like, *Save Our Trains*, the team will continue to encourage government and influencers to work together towards a mutually beneficial, long-term solutions.

Susan Trodden, Spokesperson & Community Empowerment Lead for *Making Rail Work*, which started life as TRON, has been on a mission for more than a decade:

"We wanted to make sure that everyone in New Zealand understands the true breadth of societal benefits that intercity passenger rail can bring. We are tired of seeing rail used as a political football while those in the lower echelons of society are forced to watch those who can afford cars prosper and further exacerbate the poverty gap. Further, we have to ask, what New Zealand would look like without inter-city passenger rail as part of the solution to safely and responsibly connect New Zealanders to their work and play? It's not a pretty answer."

The team is now setting its sights on stage two: Hamilton to Tauranga. The line has been discussed for decades but the Councils are yet to formalise a dialogue about how the inter-city passenger connection might cross the regional and political divide that the Kaimai Ranges represents.

That divide is evident in the draft regional transport plans, where Waikato suggests a passenger rail service to Tauranga will be in place in 16 years. On the other side, Bay of Plenty makes no mention of passenger rail at all.

While they are complementary of the proposals put forward by the *Making Rail Work* team, KiwiRail and Waka Kotahi suggest that their hands are tied. They have not been given the remit or the budget to address the problem, which is obvious and apparent, because it is not considered a priority, despite the fact that vast quantities of taxpayer's money is being spend on upgrading the existing corridors for freight rail and port management strategies.

As the team's Strategist & Political Engagement Lead and author, Katrina Ramage says:

"We only have to look at the amount that is being spent on New Zealand's port strategy, and the knock-on impact that has on our existing rail network. It would be ludicrous to investigate these factors without considering passenger rail in the mix. Our greatest concern is that New Zealand makes short-sighted decisions in terms of rail, which will create an even greater list of mistakes that our future generations have to inherit and then try to fix. It's just not fair for real people."

In terms of how the *Making Rail Work* team is approaching this campaign, Katrina continues:

"We do not have placards or petitions; we are not going to buy tents and camp outside your office. We recognise that there is pressure on government funding and capacity, so we have put our heads together to come up with some solutions that might help us work together to overcome these obstacles sooner."

"We are consummate global professionals with a lot to offer. We expect little and just want to share the burden with government so that our tamariki and rangatahi can be proud of all of us, especially at a time when global challenges are eroding hope for future generations. We have to show them how to challenge positively and engage responsibly when they see gaps or oversights in society."

The next stage of the *Making Rail Work* campaign is to design and propose a co-operative model that would allow all Kiwis an opportunity to become owner-members in intercity rail infrastructure in New Zealand's Golden Triangle. This will be done collaboratively, and all Kiwis are invited to be part of the design process, which will then be presented to central government officials.

Making Rail Work intends to launch its co-operative plan in October 2022, following a series of consultations with relevant stakeholders and tangata whenua.

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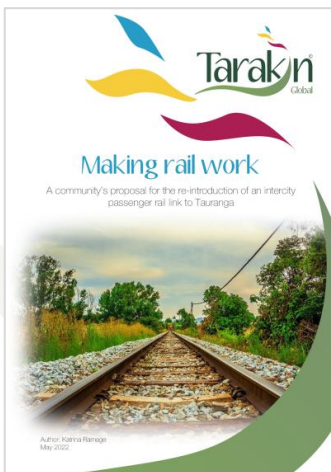
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Notes to editors



To download a copy of the *Making Rail Work* report, please click [here](#) or visit www.TarakinGlobal.com

You can view the full All-Party Parliamentary Meeting by clicking [here](#). You are able to quote from the recording, but we ask that you verify quotes with the relevant MP prior to reporting publicly as they may wish to expand on their responses.

In the interest of ensuring that the *Making Rail Work* team continues to have a positive relationship with our country's decision makers, we ask that media outlets respect our desire to report on this subject responsibly.

Images

We have been given permission to use the images in the report as a community group. This privilege has not been extended to all media outlets. Please ensure that you have the relevant permissions prior to publication or use.

Social media platforms

Please join the following social media groups if you would like to be kept up to date with future announcements or if you would like to be notified about opportunities to engage directly in the discussion, or to join the team. We also invite our community to use these platforms to share links about information that might be relevant to our work:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/makingrailwork

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/making-rail-work