

Hon Michael Cullen,
Minister of Finance
Parliament House,
Wellington.

8 July, 2003

Dear Dr Cullen,

Future of TRANZRAIL

The Wellington Civic Trust has, since its inception in 1981, consistently involved itself in Wellington transport matters. The Trust has conducted seminars on transport and related matters. The Trust Board has been monitoring recent events and has written to all regional Mayors and local Members of Parliament on the matter of assuring the future of a viable, improved suburban passenger rail system. The Trust has also presented to the Wellington Regional Council on this matter.

The Trust takes the view that on the information available to it, the proposal put forward by Government provides the best means of meeting national rail transport requirements. We do not consider that this is a matter that can solely be left to business or narrowly-based sectoral interests to determine.

The social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Wellington and its environs is critically dependent on a viable, reliable suburban and regional passenger rail system. Thirty per cent of Wellington commuters use public transport and significant scope exists for increasing this figure through increased co-ordination and improved rail services. By way of comparison, only 10% of Auckland commuters use public transport.

There is no capacity in the regional transport infrastructure to absorb a total shift of rail commuters to the road transport system. The Trust believes therefore that whatever the outcome of the current bids for Tranzrail, provision must be made to safeguard Wellington's commuter service in order to ensure its continuation and development.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Editor of the Dominion Post.

Yours faithfully,

Di Buchan
Chair

For Information :
Hon Paul Swain,
Minister of Transport.

Hon Mark Burton,
Minister of State Owned Enterprises,