

Thriving Infrastructure project overview

What is this project about?

It is widely accepted that the infrastructure system in NZ is not thriving, and this is because of major systemic problems. We know that all people involved are feeling the pain in some way and want it to improve. How can we mobilise discovery and action that enable a thriving infrastructure sector?

The aim of the Thriving Infrastructure Project is to explore how we can unlock new pathways for creating a thriving infrastructure sector by connecting many people across multiple organisations to co-create and test new practices around a common purpose.

We have connected a diverse and growing community to collaboratively create missions that act as inspiring goals to achieve, and that lead to small scale experiments to test ideas for progress.

What is in scope

The Thriving Infrastructure project focuses on construction work within the infrastructure sector. This includes design, construction, commissioning, maintenance and demolition of infrastructure. Infrastructure is based on the [Te Waihanga Infrastructure NZ definition](#)

The scope of the project is set by the community of people involved, (not WorkSafe or MBIE Accord for Construction), organising themselves around issues that feel enduring and relevant (we call these 'missions').

How does it create change?

These missions inspire the community members to run small scale experiments. These experiments have a twofold role: They create space in the system for newness to occur, and gradually build evidence and confidence that the cohort is on the right track to make progress. The community is currently experimenting with:

- procurement and tendering processes with a focus of how to achieve broader outcomes that are positive for the community, economy and environment.
- trialing how to unlock knowledge and share lessons rather than making the same mistakes through discovering what knowledge platforms exist, how they are used, what makes them successful.
- engaging with projects to understand the principles of effective community engagement including Iwi, for the life of a project.

The point of difference

This project is building a community that is diverse and de-centralized. It enables community members to be connected, to think big and take small iterative supported steps to innovate, test and play a direct role in working towards a thriving infrastructure sector.

It is based on [mission-orientated innovation](#), a method that harnesses the power and wisdom of many, to create the changes we wish to see in our system.

Who is supporting it?

The project is funded and governed by both the MBIE Accord for Construction and WorkSafe New Zealand. A key principle is that the work is defined and owned by those who are involved (not a centralised government framing). WorkSafe are invested in this because it is expected a thriving infrastructure sector will deliver better health and safety outcomes.

Many participating organisations have advocated with their peers, colleagues and other businesses to be involved, as they feel the issues being discussed, and the way they are being developed, empower businesses to solve systemic challenges in ways that make sense to them.

The project is aligned with Te Waihanga NZ Infrastructure Commission, Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa strategy for a thriving infrastructure.

Who is involved?

People from procurement to those building our infrastructure. This project connects a group of people who have not previously worked together, from regions across the motu, who hold roles at varying levels in civil construction, local government, central government, aggregate supply, energy, tunnelling, industry training providers and advocates, training advisory and business development for Māori and Pasifika.

What is expected of a community member?

Many people involved spend about 2 hours a week, sometimes more sometimes less. This includes a fortnightly online 45-minute session to connect, share and learn with people working on the same mission. We also offer a TEAM channel for safe and secure sharing and podcasts for busy people on the go. We will host a one-day workshop in September 2023 to reconnect and share back progress on experiments and how learning is applied to business. We are continuously how to keep people connected, supporting and learning from each other.

Our journey to date

In early 2023 we completed a discovery exercise exploring issues in the way we manage infrastructure in NZ. This helped us build a picture of how everyone is suffering, for different reasons, and that there are many areas we can all join in to help improve the way our infrastructure system operates, to make it thrive.

We used this understanding to form a learning cohort and host a workshop, as an initial test to see how if we bring people together, how we might create some 'missions', inspiring visions of the future that we wish to work towards, one that:

- Small and medium-sized New Zealand businesses thrive
- People in the workforce are happy, healthy and secure
- Local communities have power, resource and say over key infrastructure decisions
- Positive social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes are prioritized from the start
- People across the sector learn with and from each other and share resources, risks and rewards

- People across the sector have a shared and long-term vision we can commit to now

We are also working in support of Wellington City Council and Whanganui District Council on projects they have formed and resourced to share back the learnings with the community.

As of October 2023, we have held three workshops and now have a community of 70 people who come together to connect, share and learn. This provides our community access to subject matter expertise and conduits to other businesses and organisations. We currently have eight active experiments. See our website [Thriving Infrastructure NZ \(framer.ai\)](https://www.framer.ai/thriving-infrastructure-nz) for more information including how people are connected, articles showing the value of this project and podcasts.

This community is hands on, 'get your boots dirty' testing ways to make NZ Infrastructure thrive. By connecting, sharing and learning members of the community are applying what they are learning to their businesses and starting conversations with their wider network. We are coming together again early December 2023 and continue to expand our community with subject matter experts and key decision makers who can help us think big and start small.

We continue to explore ways of collaborating, sharing learnings and building a community of Infrastructure changemakers. Please contact us if you would like to be part of this community.

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