
SPEECH by Michael Lee Chairman ARC at the opening of the Manurewa Interchange by the Prime Minister Rt. Hon Helen Clark and the Mayor of Manukau City Sir Barry Curtis 20.7.06

I am very happy to be present at the opening of the Manurewa Transport Interchange especially after arriving here on a nearly full train. This interchange is another step forward in the development of passenger transport in the Auckland region, bringing us closer to our goal of building a world-class passenger transport network across our region.

Congratulations to Manukau City Council, ARTNL and ARTA and especially the project team and the workers who built this wonderful facility.

Interchange and integration. These two words sum up the significance of today.

Our future plans are set out up in the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy – These include high passenger transport usage, **integrated** or transferable ticketing, seamless integrated services between multiple operators buses and trains and ferries interconnecting town centres and transport hubs.

These **interconnected** corridors encourage strong economic growth around town centres, as has been demonstrated overseas encouraging urban intensification as opposed to urban sprawl.

The Manurewa Interchange promotes this integrated concept. We have buses and trains and private vehicles (through Park & Ride / Kiss & Ride) all at one place. We encourage commuters to use this excellent facility and help it prosper.

The opening of the Manurewa Interchange recognises the region's increasing support for public transport and integrated train and bus services and we are confident it has the potential to further increase patronage many times over.

To that end I am very pleased to say that more than five million passenger journeys were recorded on the region's rail network for the year ended 30 June 2006. This is the first time the 5 million mark has been exceeded. This is a 32.5% increase on the 3.8 million trips recorded the previous year.

It is interesting to note that of these journeys, 1.9 million were made on Western line services while **3.1 million** passenger journeys were recorded on the Southern lines.

This remarkable growth is a strong indication that investing in public transport infrastructure in Auckland is at last paying dividends it proves the adage "build it and they will come".

That being said we still have a long way to go and we intend to push on with the job:

- Over the next 10 years The ARC Group will spend \$1.6 billion on public transport (comprising both rates and ARH draw-downs) to help enable ARTA to implement Regional Land Transport Strategy recommendations.
- We have quadrupled our public transport spend over the last five years from \$35.7 million in 2001/02 to \$145 million for 2006/07.

But it is not just about funding and hardware vitally important as those two elements are. If we are to build a world-class public transport network and be able to operate it in a sustainable way, we need better cost controls, more rigorous service purchase procedures, sharper KPI's and better integration between bus and rail services to better ensure cost-effectiveness and value for money for tax payers and rate payers.

We have pressing deadlines looming around the Rugby World Cup in 2011 and there is lots to do. Interestingly the last time I was here was in November at the ceremony which turned the first sod. That was the same day the NZ Rugby Union's successful bid to host the Rugby World Cup was announced. Progress then has been remarkable.

Prime Minister, we are deeply appreciative of your government's commitment to transport infrastructure in the Auckland region and

we look forward to working with the government in building a world-class public transport system for the Auckland region.

Thank you

Michael Lee, Chairman of the Auckland Regional Council