

**TO:** Gisborne District Council

**SUBMISSION:** Draft Regional Land Transport Plan

**NAME:** NZ Kiwifruit Growers Inc (NZKGI)

**AUTHOR:** Sarah Cameron, Senior Policy Analyst

**ADDRESS:** PO Box 4246, Mount Maunganui South, 3149

### **1. The kiwifruit industry in New Zealand**

The kiwifruit industry is a major contributor to regional New Zealand returning \$2 billion directly to rural communities in 2019/20. There are ~3000 growers, 14,000ha of orchards, 10,000 permanent employees and up to 25,000 jobs during the peak season. Approximately 80% of New Zealand's kiwifruit crop is grown in the Bay of Plenty and the industry is expected to grow its global sales to \$4.5 billion by 2025 which is an increase from \$3.1 billion in 2018/19.

### **2. Kiwifruit in Gisborne**

Gisborne's kiwifruit production returned \$57 million to local communities in 2019/20. 50% of fruit is trucked to the Bay of Plenty where it is packed, stored and shipped via the Port of Tauranga. The remainder is shipped via Gisborne Port. Zespri's Annual Plan 2020<sup>1</sup> showed that there were 267 producing hectares of SunGold (including organic), and 44 hectares of Hayward (green) however a further ~100 hectares has been developed since then.

### **3. Safety**

The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) states that a crash is more likely to occur in the region than any other with rural roads being one of the safety risk areas. As 85% of the regions roads are rural and 53% unsealed, NZKGI supports additional investment in sealing rural roads due to rural infrastructure suffering through historical under investment in maintenance

The RLTP states that a crash is more likely to occur in Gisborne region than any other with rural roads being one of the safety risk areas. The condition and maintenance of roads, the presence of unsealed roads and the narrowness of the road being safety risk factors.

NZKGI supports the priority investments areas proposed and in particular the improvement of rural roads.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zespri.com/content/dam/zespri/nz/annual-reports/Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>

#### 4. Reliability and Resilience

The kiwifruit industry relies heavily on the two state highway corridors that connect to the region from the Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay. To ensure business continuity in the event the Port of Tauranga is closed (earthquake, fruit fly etc) fruit will be shipped via Gisborne Port (a few hundred thousand trays are currently sent from there). This port is considered the alternative to Tauranga as it is not possible to load charter ships from the Port of Auckland and Napier Port is congested with apple exports. Eastland Port (owner of Gisborne Port) has now commissioned a cool store at the port that could be used as a buffer store in a crisis.

Delays on the network result in reduced economic efficiency and lead to economic loss. The kiwifruit industry is a high growth industry that increases growth and production year on year resulting in increased truck movements.

NZKGI supports the prioritisation of the Waioeka Gorge Corridor work by improving resilience and safety, eastland port access and the bridge upgrade programme. Maintaining safe and reliable connections to Eastland Port and to Hawke’s Bay and Bay of Plenty remain critical to supporting the region’s economy

#### 5. Climate Change

A [Climate Change Projections and Impacts for Tairāwhiti and Hawke's Bay](#) report found that areas of the transport system are at risk from sea level rise or will need upgrading to cope with more extreme weather events. It is predicted that there will be an increase in areas that require repairs or replacement following more intense storms.

Table one: Gisborne region infrastructure exposed to flood hazard from 0-1.5m sea level rise

| Transport Infrastructure exposed to flood hazard |       |
|--|-------|
| Roads (km)                                       | 370.8 |
| Railway (km)                                     | 17.6  |
| Airports (#) – Gisborne Airport                  | 1     |
| Cycle lanes (km)                                 | 29.2  |

A report by Local Government NZ [Vulnerable: The quantum of local government infrastructure exposed to sea level rise](#) set out a number of recommendations for councils to address climate change impacts:

- Highlight exposed infrastructure for council members and public consideration
- Improve coordination with stakeholders to prioritise “lifeline” roads and associated infrastructure
- Perform research and analysis to determine options for priority roads
- Engage with both central government and private businesses to address alternatives and costs; and
- Ensure planned levels of service and suitability of location are included in long-term planning.

NZKGI submits that while climate change is considered in the RLTP, solutions to mitigate the repercussions are missing. NZKGI supports an aggressive and coordinated approach to address the recommendations to ensure the ongoing connectivity of the roading network.

## **6. Conclusion**

NZKGI supports a resilient network that is safe and appropriate for the volume and type of traffic now and into the future and submits that a progressive approach is required to meet the impacts of climate change and growth demands.