

Welcome to the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the NZ AA Northland Council. It is with pleasure I bring to you my report as Chair for the 2023-24 year.

My final words in last year's report referred to the Council's quest for a **safe and efficient transport infrastructure** for Northland. After 10 major weather events, including a cyclone, during the year this quest has been severely tested. Working with other Northland transport bodies and utilising the Election Calls this council has been part of the conversation for improved resilience. Cr Cocurullo in his role as WDC Mayor and chair of the Northland Mayoral Forum has been a vocal leader in the call for a resilient transport network. The coalition agreement committing to a four-lane highway alternative route to the Brynderwyns is a great outcome for Northland.

Our councillors continue to be involved in various Northland transport groups; Northland Road Safety Forum, Northland Freight Group and Northland Regional Transport Committee. Regular meetings with the Northland Transport Alliance and NZTA result in the building of good relationships and provide a forum to bring member concerns to the operational teams. Cr Williamson presented to the Road Safety Forum on AA Research Foundation work with myself presenting to the Regional Transport Committee on NZAA research capability and commitment to be an advocate on behalf of road users.

Cr Waitohi, Cr Johnston and Cr Lambeth have worked this year on improving the opportunity and pass rates for driver licencing in the Far North and Kaipara. What excellent results they have achieved; 100% pass rate for full licences in the Far North licencing pilot, 147 practical driver licences in Kaipara – previous zero.

The council continues to be supportive of all initiatives to improve driver behaviour in Northland, including continuance on last years' breath testing campaign. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of tests being undertaken in Northland. The number of tests undertaken from July – December 23 was greater than in each of the previous 4 years.

The Northern Transport pull out gave the council another opportunity to advocate for safer driveable roading infrastructure. The final message being *It's not just up to authorities to keep the roads safe – it's everyone's responsibility. Driving is the most dangerous thing many people do each day. Driving to the conditions, seat belts fastened, and no distractions or impairments will keep you and your whanau safer.*

Northland local roading authorities feedback that our council's submissions are thoroughly researched. Thank you to Cr Westgate for his work compiling and presenting our submissions.

Congratulations to Cr Winger on his appointment as NZAA President at the 2023 National Conference. We have had a change in councillors this year, with the departure of Cr Worley and the arrival of Cr Court. Cr Court brings to the council her innate knowledge of Northland's transport infrastructure and current role with the Regional Transport Committee. A thank you to Cr Johnston for her support as vice chair this year; ably arranging our guest speakers, standing in to chair the August meeting, working on the agendas and being a new mum.

During this past year Ellie Ball was appointed the Council's minute taker and has become an integral part of our team. Ellie's taking of the minutes has enabled Northland's District Manager, Ursula, to be more involved in the council discussions. Ursula has continued her work on being in the community, educating older drivers on the process on relicensing, undertaking short surveys for the council and utilising the tools in the centre to assist our members and advocate for safer driving around road works. Thank you, Ursula, for your fantastic work this past year.

The Motoring Affairs team continues to be amazing in their support and sharing of information. A special mention must be made of Tim, Matt, Martin, Sarah and Dylan who always seem to be available when we are needing their expertise. In November we hosted the NZAA board, a great opportunity to show the passion we all have for Northland and the work we do on behalf of our members.

It has been an honour to represent Northland as a National Councillor at NZAA. With such a great group of councillors doing fantastic advocacy work there has been no shortage of opportunities to promote our district. And bring on 2028 when we will be hosting the national conference (fingers crossed).

The council's annual award nomination to NZAA certainly supports the many areas we have covered, had success with, and continue to advocate for. With a new central government and Northland MP's watch this space, there is a new sheriff in town! Northland needs to have a ***safe, resilient, and efficient transport infrastructure.***

Tracey Risetto

Chair NZAA Northland Council

17<sup>th</sup> February 2024