


OC251154

22 December 2025



Tēnā koe 

I refer to your email dated 10 December 2025, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“A copy of OC250164. Can't find it under proactive releases. Can I please be sent a copy.”

The document requested is released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons.

With regard to the information that has been withheld under section 9 of the Act, I am satisfied that the reasons for withholding the information at this time are not outweighed by public interest considerations that would make it desirable to make the information available.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on the Ministry's website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Nāku noa, nā



Tessa Ayson
Acting Manager, Regulatory Reform



12 March 2025

OC250164

Hon Chris Bishop

Action required by:

Minister of Transport

Friday, 21 March 2025

LAND TRANSPORT RULES REFORM PROGRAMME AND ENGAGEMENT DETAILS

Purpose

This briefing:

- Outlines key milestones for the land transport rules reform programme
- Proposes sharing an overview of the work with key stakeholders for their feedback
- Provides a draft speech to announce the work programme.

Key points

- You have agreed to a work programme to reform land transport rules through a series of rule changes over the next 18 months (OC241461 refers). This briefing outlines the timing of key milestones for this work, summarised in Annex One. We have also outlined some additional proposals on driver licencing reform
- The vehicle sector has expressed a strong interest in being engaged in this work and providing feedback on the scope. We want to test that proposals align with the sector's priorities. We have prepared a document to share with them in-confidence (see Annex Two) which summarises the work and timeframes. We seek your agreement to this approach.
- To make the most efficient use of Cabinet time, we recommend a single Cabinet paper in May 2025 which would seek approval to:
 - Release consultation material on mandating certain safety features in vehicle imports (including Automatic Emergency Brakes and Lane Keep Support Systems), delegated to Minister Meager
 - Delegate decision making to you to review and approve all other consultation material on the remaining rules projects set out in the paper.
- Since our last advice we recommend progressing several additions to the rules programme. These are focused on minor changes to improve licencing processes for heavy and special vehicles. Most of them were consulted on in 2019 and we expect all of them to have broad support from stakeholders.

- You requested a speech to announce key components of this work programme (provided in Annex Three). We do not consider there to be a risk announcing this work prior to receiving Cabinet approval, as much of it has been signalled in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and the Road Safety Objectives document.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- agree** to take a paper to Cabinet with Minister Meager in May 2025 outlining the rules reform programme and seeking agreement to:

 - release consultation material on mandating certain safety features in vehicle imports (note you have delegated leadership of this area to Minister Meager)
 - delegate decision making to you to review and approve all other consultation material on the remaining rules projects

Yes / No
- agree** for the Ministry of Transport and NZTA to share the rules reform programme summary in Annex Two and the high-level timeline in Annex One in confidence with the stakeholders listed, to seek feedback on the scope of the programme

Yes / No
- agree** to progress the following proposals which were publicly consulted on in 2019 (noting we will advise if further consultation is needed as work progresses):

 - simplifying the progression from Class 2 – 5 licences Yes / No
 - removing the rarely used Accelerated Licensing Process Yes / No
 - removing the requirements for special-type vehicle endorsements Yes / No
 - standardising speed thresholds for tractors and special-type vehicles Yes / No
 - simplifying the rules for tractors that can be driven on a Class 1 licence Yes / No
 - allowing automatic renewal of general licences for all endorsement holders Yes / No
- agree** to progress the following additional proposals which need be to be consulted on:

 - adjusting weight thresholds for class 1 and class 2 licences to better match licence classes to risk Yes / No
 - improving the heavy vehicle licencing pathway for immigrants Yes / No
- note** Minister Meager has been delegated “responsibility for vehicle regulatory settings relating to Warrant of Fitness/Certificate of Fitness inspections, and new entry requirements for vehicles into New Zealand”. We understand this to cover:

 - The review of WOF/COF frequency for vintage vehicles and motorhomes, but NOT the review of WOF frequency and scope for all other light vehicles

- Mandating safety features in vehicle imports (Automatic Emergency Brakes (AEB), Lane Keep Support (LKS) etc.), but NOT broader changes to import requirements

6 Indicate if you have a different view of what the delegation covers

7 refer this briefing to the Associate Minister of Transport.

Yes / No



Paul O'Connell
Deputy Chief Executive, Sector Strategy
Ministry of Transport
12 / 03 / 2025

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister of Transport
..... / /

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Seen by Minister

Not seen by Minister

Overtaken by events

Comments

Contacts

Name	Telephone	First contact
Katrina Quickenden, Manager, Regulatory Reform (MOT)	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Jacob Ennis, Principal Adviser, Regulatory Reform (MOT)		

RULES REFORM PROGRAMME DETAILS AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

- 1 At your direction we are progressing a major overhaul of land transport rules (OC241461 refers). The objectives of this work are to reduce regulatory compliance costs, improve consumer choice in the vehicle market, digitise and modernise government services, and improve the safety and quality of our vehicle fleet. Key elements of this were signalled in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and the Road Safety Objectives document.
- 2 The intention is for a rolling series of announcements of consultation and rule changes over the next 18 months. A timeframe is included in Annex One which reflects your earlier agreement on timing and has been agreed by NZTA.
- 3 We will provide you with options and advice for each rule change prior to drafting consultation material. At this stage the descriptions of the proposed changes are preliminary. Our advice on these may change as we evaluate the evidence and engage with stakeholders.
- 4 Subsequent advice on specific proposals will include advice on implementation timeframes, noting some of the changes will require substantial implementation programmes and associated funding decisions. At this stage, the proposals are not fully costed or funded. NZTA advise that a review of funding options and regulatory fee settings may be required to ensure a sustainable regulatory funding path and full delivery of the programme.
- 5 Minister Meager has been delegated “responsibility for vehicle regulatory settings relating to Warrant of Fitness/Certificate of Fitness inspections, and new entry requirements for vehicles into New Zealand”. We understand the intention is for this to cover:
 - 5.1 The review of WOF/COF frequency for vintage vehicles and motorhomes, but NOT the review of WOF frequency and scope for all other light vehicles.
 - 5.2 Mandating safety features in vehicle imports (Automatic Emergency Brakes (AEB), Lane Keep Support (LKS) etc.), but NOT broader changes to import requirements.
 - 5.3 Minister Meager has also been given responsibility for progressing primary legislation relating to this rule programme as part of the Regulatory Systems Transport Amendment (RSTA) Bill. This includes legislation on digital licences and e-servicing.
- 6 Please let us know if you have a different view of what the delegation is intended to cover.

We propose to share details of the work programme with the vehicle sector

- 7 At your meeting with the vehicle sector on 25 February 2025 stakeholders expressed an interest in being consulted on the scope and timing of the rules reform programme. They helped us to design the rules programme and Minister Brown previously agreed to share details with them.
- 8 We have prepared a summary of the work programme in Annex Two which we recommend sharing in-confidence with the members of your quarterly vehicle sector group, including:

- 8.1 Motor Trade Association (MTA) – representing business that fix, inspect, fuel, buy and sell vehicles
 - 8.2 Motor Industry Association (MIA) – businesses in vehicle import and distribution
 - 8.3 Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) – businesses involve in vehicle import, especially used vehicles from Japan
 - 8.4 Automotive Association (AA) – vehicle owners and various vehicle businesses.
 - 8.5 National Road Carriers (NRC) – road freight
 - 8.6 Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting NZ (TNZ) – road freight
 - 8.7 NZ Trucking Association (NTA) – road freight.
- 9 After sharing the work programme officials would meet with this group to identify any gaps or misunderstandings. We would then advise you on options for changes to the programme if required.
- 10 The following parts of the programme may be contentious with some members of the group:
- 10.1 **Reviewing the WOF/COF frequency and scope for light vehicles:** While a review of settings is generally supported, organisations like MTA and AA would like to see increased frequency of inspections for vehicles above a certain age, due to safety concerns. However, our intention is to consider a decrease in inspection frequency for modern vehicles (alongside better managing risks by inspecting additional high-risk areas). We plan to confirm we are reviewing WOF/COF settings, including frequency, but that decisions have not been made on specific options.
 - 10.2 **The extended timeframe for work on an overhaul of the Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule:** The sector would like to enable larger trucks and heavier axle loads on our roads to support productivity and reduce emissions (including better enabling zero and low emission heavy vehicles). We are supportive of this to the extent the network can support such vehicles safely and efficiently. However, there is substantial analytical work required to understand the effect of larger vehicles and heavier axle loads on the road network. For example, safety risks, road maintenance and construction costs, and the corresponding Road User Charges (RUC) settings. This leads to the work programme progressing along a slower timeframe than other proposals.

We are currently exploring funding options for the analysis required to progress this work, including the NZTA research fund. We plan to provide you with advice on this in late 2025. We have not included this project in the timeline in Annex One as the dates of key milestones are uncertain.
 - 10.3 **Excluding work on logbooks and work hours from the programme:** The freight sector would like a review of these settings to enable greater flexibility, but we are unclear on the case for change. Current rules already enable flexibility by allowing ‘alternative fatigue management schemes’ to vary requirements. Different schemes are being trialled through this provision with some promising results.

- 10.4 At this stage we have not recommended prioritising any legislative change, but we will explore this further with the sector if they raise it.

We recommend seeking Cabinet approval to consult on all rule changes

- 11 We recommend taking a paper to Cabinet in May 2025 which seeks approval to:
- 11.1 The overall work programme.
 - 11.2 Release consultation material in June-July 2025 on mandating certain safety features in vehicle imports (including AEB and LKS). This will affect heavy and light vehicles. As Minister Meager is leading this rule change the paper may be jointly submitted.
 - 11.3 Delegate decision making to you to review and approve all other consultation material on the remaining nine rule change projects.
- 12 This approach would avoid several papers to Cabinet. The Ministry of Regulation supports the approach so long as we provide you with a Regulatory Impact Assessment for each consultation document. We will also need to seek approval from the Cabinet Office for this approach. Alternatively you would need to take the consultation material to Cabinet for approval for each rule change.

Since our last advice we recommend additions to the programme

- 13 In 2019 NZTA consulted on changes to driver licencing requirements. There was general support for these proposals, which include
- 13.1 **Simplifying the progression from Class 2 – 5 licences:** Removing some unnecessary licence classes, reducing wait times, and strengthening practical tests and courses. Overall making it easier for people to progress through licence classes.
 - 13.2 **Removing the Accelerated Licensing Process:** This process was developed to enable fast track of progression through licence classes. However, it has not had the expected benefits and in 2019 only 1 person was enrolled. The proposal above to simplify class progression will further reduce the need for this process.
 - 13.3 **Removing the requirements for special-type vehicle endorsements:** These endorsements apply to forklifts, bulldozers, combine harvesters and other vehicles that rarely drive on roads. To get an endorsement you must complete an approved course, have an eyesight test, and pay a fee. They are typically used in occupational settings and the workplace risk is effectively managed through the Health & Safety at Work Act. The endorsements add unnecessary cost to the sector and NZTA.
 - 13.4 **Standardising speed thresholds for tractors and special-type vehicles:** This would allow all tractors and certain other special vehicles to drive at 40 km/h up from the current limit of 30 km/h. Evidence indicates this is likely to reduce road safety risk, as it would decrease the speed difference between these vehicles and other road users.

- 13.5 **Simplifying the rules for tractors that can be driven on a Class 1 licence:** This would remove the regulatory differences between agricultural and non-agricultural tractors. There is no evidence they pose different risks.
- 13.6 **Allowing automatic renewal of general licences for all endorsement holders:** When someone receives an endorsement their general driver licence is renewed at the same time in some cases but not in others. This means some (e.g. bus drivers) must have their licence renewed separately. We propose a change so that when a new endorsement is received the licence is renewed in all cases.
- 14 Many of these issues were raised by the sector as small but important changes. We recommend progressing them this year. If they are progressed by an Order in Council, we do not need to consult on them again, otherwise we would look to consult again in mid-2025. We may be able to progress these in November with the Graduated Driver Licencing System (GDLS) changes. We will provide further advice on the legislative vehicle later this year.
- 15 We also recommend progressing two other licencing changes which have been requested by the sector. These will need to be consulted on:
- 15.1 **Adjusting weight thresholds for Class 1 and Class 2 licences to better match licence class to risk:** Class 1 licence holders can drive vehicles (and tow trailers) up to 6,000 kg. Zero and low emission versions of these vehicles are heavier and modern vehicle design has reduced the risk of heavier vehicles. We propose considering a rule change to enable heavier vehicles to be driven without needing a higher licence class, as the elevated safety risks are minimal. The Director of Land Transport recently issued a 2-year exemption enabling this for a limited group. This work will also propose rule adjustments to driver licence classes where the Director has issued an exemption.
- 15.2 **Improving the heavy vehicle licencing pathway for immigrants:** Legislation requires overseas heavy vehicle licence holders from certain countries to sit both a theory and practical test to convert to Class 2-5 licences. Frequently, their employers also put these drivers on training courses approved by NZTA. The course and the tests cover the same test material and doing both may be unnecessary. Giving the option to do either the course or the tests could reduce costs to the sector and NZTA.

Next steps

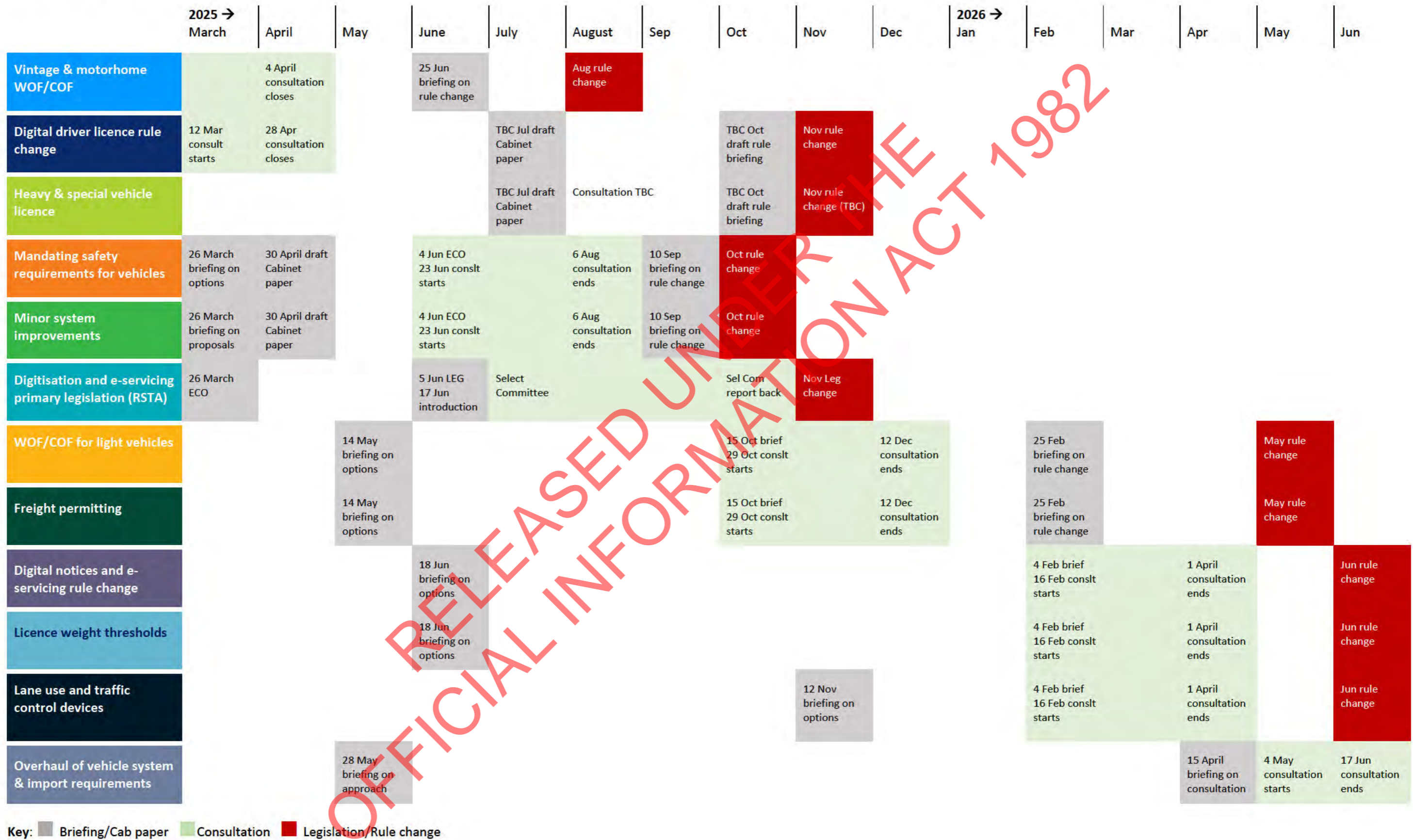
- 16 Following your approval we will share the work programme overview document in-confidence with key stakeholders. We recommend doing this in the week of 24 March 2025 to allow time to inform a Cabinet paper in May 2025.

ANNEX ONE – OVERVIEW OF PROPOSALS AND INDICATIVE TIMELINE OF KEY MILESTONES BY QUARTER

The diagram below summarises each workstream and outlines the time between when consultation starts, and the rule is in place for each change. The more detailed diagram on the next page outlines specific dates and milestones.



Rules reform work programme - detailed timeline



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Key: Briefing/Cab paper Consultation Legislation/Rule change

ANNEX TWO – PROGRAMME SUMMARY FOR SHARING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

We propose to share the document below in-confidence with representatives from the following stakeholder organisations (this is the same group as your quarterly vehicle sector meetings):

- Motor Trade Association
- Motor Industry Association
- Imported Motor Vehicle Association
- Automotive Association
- National Road Carriers
- Iā Ara Aotearoa Transporting NZ
- NZ Truck Association.

We also propose to share the high-level timeline in Annex One above (not the detailed timeline).

DRAFT RULES REFORM WORK PROGRAMME

This programme of work has been developed based on the priorities you and other transport sector stakeholders identified including through a series of meetings and submissions sent to the Ministry and NZTA in 2024. We thank you for your engagement and input and are excited to share the resulting work programme with you for your feedback.

We have bundled up the issues you and others raised into workstreams. We have found a place for most of the suggestions we heard from you and others. If you do not see something you raised, it may still be included in the work. Please let us know if something important is missing and we will be able to either point you to where it is included, find a way to add it in, or explain why it has not been prioritised at this time.

Some items have been excluded from the immediate work programme because:

- They require substantial analytical work and/or reform of primary legislation and cannot be completed alongside the substantial/longer-term work already included in the work programme (e.g. a major overhaul of the Transport Service Licence regime).
- We evaluated them to be a lower priority for the sector, had not previously scoped the work, or did not have immediate resource available to progress it (e.g. work on logbooks and rest times). We will look at these for the next round of reforms. If you feel we have left out something critical, please let us know.
- The issue did not relate to transport rules, particularly if not a part of the transport portfolio (e.g. immigration settings and Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 issues).

What follows is a list of rule reform proposals organised under the following focus areas:

- Updating vehicle inspection requirements
- Modernising and digitising transport services and licencing

- Growing road freight productivity
- Overhaul of vehicle system and import requirements and ongoing regulatory stewardship changes.

Updating vehicle inspection requirements

New Zealand's vehicle inspection system is not as effectively targeted to risk as it could be. We check some things too often and other high-risk issues insufficiently or not at all. A rebalancing of inspection frequency with improvements to testing could make the system more fit-for-purpose and lower some compliance costs. Two projects are proposed:

Reduce vintage and motorhome inspection frequency

- Consultation: Started in February 2025 and closes 4 April 2025
- Scope: Review of frequency of inspections for vintage/veteran vehicles and privately owned heavy motorhomes.

Reviewing Warrant of Fitness requirements for light vehicles and Certificate of Fitness requirements for light rental vehicles

- Consultation: October/November 2025.
- Scope: Review of what gets inspected and frequency of inspections for light vehicles and when WOF v COF applies.

Modernising and digitising transport services and licencing

Our transport regulatory system involves too many paper notices, stickers, and licences. We are looking to enable digital alternatives to most official documents, stickers, licences, etc. We are also wanting to improve our driver licencing system. Three projects are proposed:

Enable digital documents, e-servicing, and other service improvements

- Consultation: January/February 2026 for the Rules, with enabling primary legislation planned for 2025
- Scope:
 - Enabling digital labels for WoF/CoF, Transport Service Licence, alternative fuel certificate, certificate of loading (note the RUC label digitisation is progressing separately as part of the transition to RUC work programme)
 - Improving NZTA customer service by enabling more flexibility in legislation governing temporary licences, including enabling digital formats and longer validity periods (e.g. for RUC licences) and online theory tests
 - Enabling better e-servicing of transport related notices (e.g. infringements) to be sent to emails, text, to the NZTA App instead of to physical addresses

- Improving identity requirements for driver licencing services to include new forms of identification.

Enable a digital driver licence

- Consultation: March 2025
- Scope: Enabling a digital driver licence that can be used as well as or instead of a physical licence.

Improve driver licensing

- Consultation: Completed in 2019, may need to be consulted on again in mid 2025.
- Scope:
 - Simplifying the progression from Class 2 – 5 licences
 - Reviewing the Accelerated Licensing Process
 - Reviewing the requirements for special-type vehicle endorsements
 - Standardising speed thresholds for tractors and special-type vehicles
 - Simplifying the rules for tractors that can be driven on a Class 1 licence
 - Considering automatic renewal of general licences for some endorsement holders.

Note a separate review of the Graduated Driver Licencing System is underway covering a range of other improvements.

Growing road freight productivity

Freight drives economic productivity in New Zealand. It is subject to many outdated rules and regulations which often fail to target regulatory effort to risk and have become obstacles to technology change. Three projects are proposed:

Freight permitting reform

- Consultation: October 2025
- Scope:
 - 50MAX permitting reform including reviewing the requirement for a permit to operate a 50MAX vehicle up to 50 tonnes
 - Reviewing the requirement to display an H plate
 - Consider enabling over-dimension vehicles to operate on toll roads and Auckland Motorways
 - Reviewing permitting approach to enable rental stock to be delivered “just in time”
 - Reviewing settings for enabling HPMV vehicles to carry over-dimension loads.

Licence weight thresholds and immigrant driver settings

- Consultation: February 2026
- Scope:
 - Review and consider adjusting the weight threshold between Class 1 and Class 2 licences – to better match licence classes to risk.
 - Review the heavy vehicle licencing pathway for immigrants.

Comprehensive review of the Vehicle Dimension and Mass Rule

- Consultation: March 2027. This timeframe is due to the complexity of assessing the road maintenance issues associated with greater vehicle weights and alternative configurations. This will have an impact on RUC and driver licensing settings and future NZTA decision making on roading design.
- Scope:
 - Review vehicle weight settings to better enable more productive trucks and low emission heavy vehicles
 - Review maximum vehicle width and height
 - Consider enabling 6X2 prime movers to operate at gross mass limits up to 50 tonnes
 - Review HPMV proforma permit requirement for vehicle recovery licence holders
 - Review of load pilots licences
 - Improve pilot vehicle rooftop signs.

Overhaul of vehicle system and import requirements

New Zealand aligns most of its regulation with other jurisdictions and we have limited influence over the international vehicle market. We could look to reduce complexity through greater and/or more automatic recognition of standards in these jurisdictions. This could include refocusing our import requirements on the areas of highest impact. These potential changes could also be a starting point in overhauling the regulatory framework, consolidating rules and ensuring the system is agile and well adapted for the future.

Mandating modern vehicle safety features

- Consultation: June 2025
- Scope: This aims to improve the safety and quality of the vehicle fleet over time by mandating certain features. This may initially include AEB, LKS, ESC (for heavy vehicles) and AVAS.

Overhaul of import requirements and vehicle regulatory system

- Consultation: May 2026 (on high level proposals)
- Scope:

- Type approval and harmonisation with/automatic recognition of international standards and/or requirements
- Overhaul of vehicle regulatory system with the aim of making our regulatory approach more agile and enabling. This may include shifting away from prescriptive rules and towards more performance-based regulation, removing and consolidating large numbers of rules, and limiting the focus/scope of the regulatory system.
- This work programme may include multiple smaller changes, including reviewing lighting requirements, vehicle definitions e.g. trailers, and light vehicle brake rules.

Minor system improvements

We will progress consultation on various minor proposals. For example:

- Allow for integral trail brake control units on medium trailers
- Remove requirements that an enduro or trial motorcycle may only be used on the road with an anti-locking braking system for the purposes of sanctioned competition
- Remove unintended movement restrictions on mobile cranes
- Add compliance with an approved standard as an alternative method of compliance for indirect steering systems.

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ANNEX THREE: DRAFT SPEECH

- Our approach to regulating land transport costs us more money than it needs to, creates an undue compliance burden, and reduces consumer choice.
- Today, I will outline a series of reforms to the system I want to see. These reforms are about taking a more common-sense approach to how we regulate. It's about replacing outdated rules that are holding us back with ones that are more relevant and more efficient. And in the progress unlocking greater productivity on our roading network and in our vehicle sector.
- I kicked this work off at the start of this year with proposals to reduce WOF and COF frequency for vintage cars, vintage motorcycles and motorhomes.
- I want to carry this approach forward to a wider range of rules and regulations for land transport.

Vehicle imports

- I will start with vehicle imports.
- Around one out of every five dollars we spend on imports goes on vehicles and fuel. Per capita, we own more cars than almost everyone else – there are around six vehicles in New Zealand for every five licensed drivers.
- All our vehicle requirements are adopted from the major overseas markets, but the process to do so is slow and cumbersome. Our import regulations are always out-of-date, and we pour a lot of resource into manual processes for reviewing, drafting and adopting each rule.
- We no longer manufacture light vehicles here – New Zealand hasn't had a major vehicle manufacturing industry since the 1980s – but we regulate our vehicle imports as if we still do.
- I want to see a system where we are a faster follower of new international standards, and we make it as simple and efficient as possible for vehicle importers to bring in new technologies.
- Today there are more connected and automated features in vehicles, greater reliance on cameras and sensors rather than mirrors, and other features that improve safety.
- Low-emissions technology is driving major change in the market. We need to be better positioned for these changes.
- Because making new rules takes time, large parts of our transport system rely on special exemptions to patch up gaps in regulations. This causes uncertainty in the vehicle sector and is clumsy to administer. It's also not fair for people trying to get new products to market, who are faced with unnecessary uncertainty.
- Regulating this right, matters. We shouldn't blindly accept international practices. But at the same time we need to recognise we're a technology taker with limited market influence. We need to focus our efforts on the areas where we can make a difference.

Raising the quality of the fleet

- One area we can make a difference is in preventing New Zealand from being a dumping ground for low quality and less safe vehicles. I want to explore a progressive phasing in of mandated safety features that will improve the quality of our vehicle fleet and make the roads safer for everyone.
- Automatic emergency braking and lane keep support systems are good examples of the type of features that can make a real improvement to road safety. They're proven technologies that can help reduce some of the most common types of crashes in New Zealand. Put simply, these features save lives. They're already mandatory in our major vehicle source markets, including Australia.
- I've directed the Ministry of Transport and NZTA to prioritise the review of our vehicle import settings. We will be looking closely at our vehicle markets and international partners, especially Australia and Japan, to align with them. We will phase in any new features to minimise costs for motorists and uncertainty for vehicle importers.
- This is an important short-term measure, but it's just the start. To position New Zealand for new technological change, we need to improve not just individual land transport rules but the way regulate. At the moment, it can take up to 18 months to change a rule, even when the cost-benefit analysis shows it's a no-brainer. The process is also resource intense and highly prescriptive. The excess of ongoing changes is confusing for the vehicle industry.
- I want us to be a lot more agile and responsive in the way the system regulates. That's why I've also asked the Ministry of Transport and NZTA to carry out a major overhaul of the vehicle regulatory system, working closely with the vehicle industry.

Vehicle inspections

- Vehicle import regulations allow us to set standards for vehicles entering the market. We then rely on WOF and COF inspections to ensure those vehicles continue to meet that standard.
- New Zealand has one of the more stringent vehicle inspection regimes in the world. The safety features in our vehicles have come leaps and bounds since 2014. Modern vehicles are far more reliable than they were when I was a kid.
- However, our vehicle inspection system hasn't kept pace with technological change. This means vehicle inspections aren't always targeting the risks presented by new technology.
- We probably check some things too often and we don't check new features enough or at all – such as making sure the intelligent cameras and radar are working properly.
- Let's be smarter about how we do this. We need to look at what we inspect and how often to ensure we're targeting our effort to the actual level of risk.
- In 2014 the WoF frequency was reduced from six-month to annual inspections for vehicles registered after 2000. This change saved the economy \$1.8 billion overall. There is a trade-off here with safety, and we do need to look at the effect on crashes.
- But I want to review the frequency of inspections and consider whether a 12-month inspection is really necessary, or if there are better ways to manage risk.

- This might include, for example, looking at how we inspect onboard diagnostics for errors with important safety features.
- Any reduction in inspection frequency might mean we need people to be more proactive about checking the condition of high-risk areas like tyres and lights.
- I've asked the Ministry of Transport and NZTA to review the vehicle inspection scheme, with a focus on safety risks. I want them to come up with a set of proposals that reduce the costs and hassle of vehicle inspections while maintaining safety outcomes.

Enabling more productive freight

- How we regulate heavy vehicles in this country is another problem area I'm keen to sort out. While the road freight sector is a key contributor to economic productivity in New Zealand it's subject to many outdated regulations that often fail to target risk. These regulations are hindering technology change that will make the sector more productive.
- It's time we look at whether the regulatory settings for freight vehicles are fit for-purpose. I want to see how we can reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on freight operators and remove duplication and inefficiencies in our compliance regime.
- I want to better enable low emission heavy vehicles to operate on our roads. Battery technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over the last few years. There are now electric trucks capable of making the trip from Auckland to Wellington with a 49-tonne load with minimal charging stops. Electric busses are similarly capable.
- However, because these vehicles are heavier than their diesel counterparts, they face additional regulatory burdens, despite being highly advanced with excellent safety features. I want the regulations to keep pace so we can take full advantage of new technology and make the heavy vehicle freight sector and public transport more productive.
- Longer term, I'd like to explore whether the size and weight settings for all heavy vehicles can be improved. Heavier vehicles do increase maintenance costs on our roads, and all these costs can't be allowed to fall on the taxpayer. But giving greater choice to customers will boost productivity and reduce emissions intensity.

Digitisation of transport services

- Lastly, I want to talk about an area that will make a real difference for efficiency in our land transport system – digitisation. Why is it that in the year 2025, I have to apply for my vehicle registration, get a physical bit of card in the mail and put it on my car? Surely, we have the technology to automate and digitise this. And same for every other document and sticker our vehicles need.
- I've heard of those in the rental car industry with staff employed full time dealing with stacks of infringement letters each week for every toll and speeding ticket issued to their customers. For every individual infringement letter, they must manually input the data into their system. Again, surely we already have the tools to automate this process.
- We need to scale up the tools we have and move much quicker into the digital space. By removing duplication and unnecessary resource, digitisation will save us money as well as being much more convenient.

- The Government is moving this work forward with a digital driver licence announced last year by my predecessor and by Digitising Government Minister Judith Collins. [Upcoming announcement planned on this, so this point may need to change.]
- This is an important step towards digitising services to improve outcomes for the public when they interact with government.

Conclusion

- The approach to reform I have outlined today will ensure the way we regulate the transport system keeps up with change.
- It strikes at the heart of inefficiency – things that we do simply because we’ve always done it that way. For this Government, that’s not good enough.
- Removing the things we’re doing that are no longer relevant and that have no real benefit, and instead focusing on what will drive our economy forward? That’s a no-brainer.
- More details about this ambitious programme of reform will be rolled out in the coming months.
- Thank you for your time today.

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