

**Response: OIA2022.11**

8 April 2022

To Wade Gosper

Via FYI.org – [fyi-request-18806-9b0e7c0b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-18806-9b0e7c0b@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Wade

**Official information request for information on electrification**

I refer to your official information request of 7 March 2022, asking for the following information:

*I am writing to enquire whether there are any Reports or Studies into the Electrification of the NIMT north of Waikanae - both historic and recent that can be made available. I am particularly interested in any recent reports that may have been completed following the media release in July 2021 that the government wants to fast track plans for electrification to Levin.*

We have identified one report – as attached dated 31 May 2021. This is released in full under the OIA, with the only redactions completed under privacy grounds (removal of authors signatures).

We comment that the information in this high-level study is feeding into other work KiwiRail is currently undertaking - such as an indicative business case that considers further electrification, potential alternative technologies, and encouraging freight mode shift to rail in the decades ahead; and separate work around network improvements to support the business case that Greater Wellington Regional Council is currently working on around long distance commuter trains to Palmerston North and the Wairarapa.

So rather than electrification, there may be better economic options longer term.

Greater Wellington Regional Council is currently working on a business case for replacement commuter trains, with potential for them to be bi-modal. For those types of trains to operate there would need to be some infrastructure upgrades, including the further electrification of a small section of the line between Waikanae and Palmerston North.

We are currently in the early stages of looking at the feasibility of these required upgrades and there is no timeframe for further steps.

KiwiRail is exploring other options for low emissions freight ourselves, including tri-mode locomotive technology which only requires a partially electrified network to operate on. Tri-mode locomotives work by using the existing electric overhead infrastructure where it exists and then use energy storage (battery) in between electrified sections.

The locomotive has a small diesel engine to use to charge the batteries if required too. This exploration of locomotive technology is also in a preliminary stage

Please get in touch with any further questions.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling free-phone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Dave Allard  
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