
RMA FAST TRACK INFRASTRUCTURE DELAYS COST MOTORISTS

Delays by Local Government are preventing competition and savings being passed onto motorists

Gull New Zealand says delays and a lack of consistency in how councils process resource consents are preventing service stations, as an 'essential service', from being built, which results in costly delays and prevents competitive fuel prices being passed onto New Zealand motorists.

While the Government has recently announced an RMA fast-track process for key infrastructure projects, Gull are facing ongoing bureaucratic roadblocks, red tape and delays on several new site builds in the Wellington region and elsewhere.

Karl Mischewski, Property and Capital Manager Gull New Zealand, says these delays are costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue, increased costs for Gull and it may just be the tip of the iceberg.

"Is it right that the New Zealand public are paying the price? RMA delays are preventing any new competition and the benefit of lower fuel prices from being delivered to New Zealand motorists at a time when everyone needs less pain at the pump. We know that the message to fast track infrastructure isn't filtering through to local government, who appear to lack a focus on getting New Zealand moving again."

Mischewski says that a good example is the Kapiti Coast District Council who did a sudden U-turn after initially agreeing to work constructively with Gull on a shared transport and fuel hub over more than 6 months.

"We don't think the Kapiti Council understands commercial business and the adverse effect of time delay and cost that they're about face decision to fully publicly notify the consent application has to the local and regional economy. It is clear the people of the Kapiti Coast want competitively priced fuel given only two submissions were opposed and these weren't from the local community."

Mischewski adds that this is representative of what businesses are up against with an RMA system that is highly inconsistent, inefficient, expensive and paralysed by a bureaucratic lack of confidence to apply commercial common sense.

"There is a clear lack of understanding at the Council officer level of how unmanned service stations operate, which is resulting in significant cost and delays to bringing Gull to the Wellington region. Ironically, even when technical expert assessments confirm any potential effects under the RMA would be more than minor, Council officers seem unable to accept this".

"Gull is part of the New Zealand economy and workforce that wants to rebuild, and certainty is essential. RMA statutory timeframes need to be enforced otherwise obtaining resource consents in New Zealand is increasingly like a box of chocolates – you never know what you're going to get and increasingly, many leave a bitter taste in your mouth."