

MIN-4181 Meeting with Concrete NZ

9 May 2023

Provide information to support a meeting with Concrete NZ on the topic of trialling concrete paving on high volume roads.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Concrete NZ regularly meets with technical experts (including pavements and surfacing, and environmental sustainability specialists) from Waka Kotahi. Waka Kotahi will continue to communicate with the industry, including Concrete NZ.

The Safe and Sustainable Standards team at Waka Kotahi is currently developing emission tools to include lower carbon alternatives. For instance, its project emissions estimation tool (PEET) has been updated to version 3.0 and now has low carbon concrete options included. Work has also been commissioned to consider adding concrete pavements as an option to its life cycle assessment of pavements (LCAP) tool to understand the life cycle emissions across different pavement types. Waka Kotahi is also funding innovative research to investigate improved concrete recycling and low carbon concrete alternatives.

In February 2023 Concrete NZ expressed their interest in meeting with Waka Kotahi to update progress with their net zero carbon roadmap, their pan-industry sustainability report, and developments in the embodied carbon calculation space. A date for this meeting is yet to be set.

It is also worth noting that:

- Waka Kotahi does not preclude concrete for pavements and other uses, subject to the material complying with applicable standards and achieving the performance requirements and outcomes. Waka Kotahi is also unaware of any of our suppliers contacting us about building concrete pavement types.
- To date, there is not enough evidence to demonstrate that in New Zealand we have the capability and capacity for design, construction, and maintenance of concrete pavements.
- Waka Kotahi does not incentivise any material over another – rather, it focuses on achieving outcomes, performance standards and efficiency. While Waka Kotahi does not incentivise using concrete, it instead incentivises options which seek to reduce carbon. This encourages the roading industry (including suppliers) to seek out such opportunities, of which concrete may be one of many possibilities.
- Waka Kotahi is currently undertaking an update of the design guides for new and rehabilitated pavements. Part of this review will be examining the need for clearer guidance as to which types of pavement structures are most suitable for given road categories. Industry is working with Waka Kotahi collaboratively to develop the update, and a wider consultation will occur before the documents are finalised.