



Fortnightly Report to the Minister for Auckland

For the period Monday 9 March to Sunday 22 March 2026

Date:	19 March 2026	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0029320

Ministers	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Simeon Brown Minister for Auckland	Note the contents of this briefing and discuss at the next officials meeting	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		✓

The following departments/agencies have contributed content
Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments

BRIEFING

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Purpose

To provide you with a fortnightly report for the Auckland Portfolio for the period Monday 9 March to Sunday 22 March 2026.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

Note the contents of this briefing and discuss at the next officials meeting.

Noted



Michael Quinn
Head of the Auckland Policy Office
19 / 03 / 2026

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Auckland
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1. Auckland Portfolio Priorities

Topic/ Contact person	Comment
Auckland City Centre	
Michael Quinn Head of the APO Privacy of natural persons	Auckland Council has provided the following information on the city centre rough sleep count. Daily count average 22 Wednesday (17 March 2026) - 20 Thursday - 20 Friday - 27 Saturday - 24 Sunday - 25 Monday - 22 Tuesday – 18 The previous daily average count was 23.
Auckland City and Regional Deal	
	No updates available for this report.
Auckland Transport CCO	
Karen Lyons Auckland Director MoT Privacy of natural persons	Auckland Council Transport and Infrastructure Delivery Committee (TIDC) Meeting 24 February 2026 <i>Time-of-Use Charging Project Update</i> Officials are working towards a Scheme Initiation Decision in December 2026, with a target of Ministerial approval for a final scheme in early 2028. TIDC will decide on shortlist options for further development at their 28 April 2026 Meeting. There are currently seven longlist options, including cordon and motorway options. They are currently being assessed for charge settings, congestion reduction and time saving benefits. Public transport alternatives, fairness and social impacts are also being considered. <i>City Rail Link Update</i> City Rail Link Limited, Auckland Transport and KiwiRail highlighted milestones achieved over the summer, including: - the completion of the Rail Network Rebuild; - progress made on the Henderson Station upgrade; - the first network-wide systems integration test and timetable dry-run;



	- the completion of all works in the Waitematā and Karanga-a-Hape precincts; and - the completion of train shipments and all 72 pre-existing units have been retrofitted for the City Rail Link. <i>Auckland Transport Update</i> Auckland Transport shared highlights, including that: - Anniversary weekend flood recovery is on track to be completed in the 2025/2026 year, a year ahead of plan and under budget. 204 of 216 major projects have now been completed. - Following the 21 January 2026 weather event that caused significant damage on Aotea/Great Barrier Island, and the north rural Auckland network, all priority routes have since been reopened or are operating under managed access. Major issues have been cleared, and temporary stabilisation is ongoing until permanent repairs can be completed. 121 buses have now been fitted with live CCTV, and 650 bus screens have been installed across the fleet. The remaining 400 screens are on track to be installed by July 2026. 592 people were killed or seriously injured on Tāmaki Makaurau roads in 2025, compared to 609 in the previous 12-month period. 89 per cent of these occurred on local roads. 6.8km of special vehicle lanes are now completed and a further 5.6km in progress, and three dynamic solutions are completed with one in progress, part of the broader network optimisation programme.
Law and Order	
	No updates available for this report.

2. General Auckland Updates

Topic/ Contact person	Comment
The economic contribution of Auckland's ethnic communities	
Andy Hill Director Auckland MBIE	A new report authored by economist Shamubeel Eaqub, <i>Economic Contribution of Ethnic Minority Communities to Auckland 2001–2023</i> , was formally launched on Friday, 13 March 2026 at the Waitakere Ethnic Board offices in Henderson. The event was attended by leaders from across Auckland's ethnic communities, local Members of Parliament, and representatives of partner agencies. The report was commissioned by the APO, MBIE, the Waitakere Ethnic Board, and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, and is publicly available on each organisations' websites. This updated analysis provides the most comprehensive picture to date of the economic role, contribution, and unrealised potential of
Privacy of natural persons	



	Auckland's ethnic minority communities, defined as Asian, Continental European, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African communities. These communities now make up 42% of Auckland's population, underscoring their centrality to the city's identity and economic future. The report estimates that ethnic minority communities contributed \$50 billion to Auckland's GDP in 2023, representing one-third of the regional economy. While this contribution is substantial, it remains below their population share, reflecting a set of structural barriers that limit the full utilisation of skills and qualifications. Crucially, the report identifies \$23 billion in unrealised annual economic potential - a gain that could be unlocked if current income, employment and entrepreneurship gaps were closed. The report identifies several key findings. First, Auckland's ethnic minority communities are young, fast-growing and highly educated. Many groups have higher rates of tertiary qualification than the Auckland average, and they disproportionately occupy prime working-age cohorts. This demographic profile represents a major long-term economic asset for the city. Second, ethnic minority communities show high labour-force participation and employment rates, with sustained improvements over the past two decades. They contribute strongly across sectors such as hospitality, ICT, logistics, business services, health and professional industries. However, the report highlights persistent disparities: Middle Eastern and African communities experience higher unemployment, and several groups face limited progression into managerial and leadership roles, despite strong qualifications. Third, incomes remain significantly lower for most ethnic minority groups, even after accounting for education, occupation, experience and location. The report identifies a notable "unexplained" income gap, strongly suggesting systemic barriers such as non-recognition of overseas qualifications, weaker access to professional networks, and discrimination in hiring and promotion. Fourth, ethnic entrepreneurship is growing but uneven, with many communities concentrated in lower-margin sectors due to barriers such as restricted access to capital, market information and networks. Nonetheless, there are promising signs of diversification, particularly into construction, health care and professional services. The report concludes that Auckland is uniquely positioned to lead national progress. Its scale, diversity, and deep labour market mean improvements made here can deliver benefits across the country. To unlock the estimated \$23 billion in potential value, the report calls for action in five areas: improving recognition of overseas qualifications; strengthening leadership pathways; supporting access to capital and business networks; promoting inclusive hiring; and investing in acculturation as a two-way process.
Auckland Transport News	
Karen Lyons Auckland Director	The New Zealand Herald reported on the busiest roads in Auckland, based on February 2025 data, when congestion peaked in the last year. The roads were across Auckland, but the top three most



MoT	congested were Ti Rakau Drive (from Harris Road to Pakuranga Road), Gillies Avenue (from Greenlane West to Khyber Pass Road), and Manukau Road / Broadway (from Owens Road to Parnell Road). Morning peak speeds dropped as low as 8km/h on parts of the network, including Manukau Road. The City Rail Link timetabling and service provision was also a topic of reporting, particularly from Greater Auckland. This included claims that what is proposed could be worse than the current status quo. Testing in January 2026 identified a timetabling issue, allowing Auckland Transport to prepare an update ahead of April 2026 testing. This update is expected to mitigate concerns about congestion in the peak period.
Privacy of natural persons	
Auckland Project Updates	
Karen Lyons Auckland Director MoT Privacy of natural persons	Confidential advice to Government
Kathryn King Regional Manager System Design, Auckland and Northland NZTA Privacy of natural persons	



Confidential advice to Government



	Confidential advice to Government
Confidential advice to Government	
Andy Hill Director Auckland MBIE	Confidential advice to Government
Privacy of natural persons	



Confidential advice to Government

3. Ministerial items on hand

3.1 Upcoming significant meetings

Date	Meeting Info
24 March 2026, Tuesday at 6:00 - 9:00 pm	BusinessNZ CEO Dinner
26 March 2026, Thursday at 4:00 - 6:00 pm	City Centre Safety Stakeholder Meeting
27 March 2026, Friday at 12:00 - 2:00 pm	Project Auckland lunch

3.2 Other Ministerial engagements related to Auckland

Date	Minister	Meeting Info
Friday 27 March 7:00 am - 8:15 am	Hon. Tama Potaka	Hon. Tama Potaka will be joining Auckland Council for a Community Warden Walk along in the city centre, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development officials will be supporting the Minister for this engagement.

3.3 Upcoming significant media and announcements

Timing	Announcement
None	



3.4 Upcoming briefings and aide memoire

Title	Date to Minister	Action for Minister	Key contact	Summary of paper/comment
BRIEFING-REQ-0029515 Project Auckland Lunch	23 March 2026		Andy Hill Privacy of natural persons	To provide a draft speech and Q&A for the event To provide background information for the event

3.5 Upcoming Cabinet papers

Title	Committee	Expected committee date	Key contact	Summary of paper/comment
None				

3.6 Official Information Act requests (Ministerial and Departmental for consultation)

Due to Minister's office	Statutory due date to requester	Ref	Requester	Organisation	Summary of request
None					

3.7 Ministerial correspondence

Due to Minister's office	Ref	Correspondent	Organisation	Summary of Correspondence
None				

3.8 Proactive release

Date	Title	Comment
23 February 2026	BRIEFING-REQ-0026972 Proactive release of Auckland Briefings 12 Nov - 31 Dec 2025	Requesting your approval to proactively release, with appropriate redactions of briefings from 12 Nov to 31 Dec 2025. MBIE will release the information on the date your office will advise.
13 March 2026	Proactive release of briefing titles for February 2026	MBIE provided your office with the list of briefing titles for review



3.9 Fast-Track Approvals- Auckland

Project Name	Unique Ref No.	Applicant Organisation	Date Received	Due Date to send Comments
Drury Managed Fill	FTAA-2602-1169	Scarbro Environmental Limited	6 March 2026	7 April 2026

4. Auckland dashboard

Transport environmental scan																																																								
Karen Lyons Auckland Director MoT Privacy of natural persons	Public transport patronage update For the fortnight 16 February – 1 March 2026, public transport patronage totalled 3.99 million boardings across the city’s public transport network. 92% of boardings in January 2026 were considered to be on-time, ahead of the 89% target. The financial year-to-date patronage total of 50.2 million was behind the 52.2 million target. Patronage increased by 4% for this fortnight compared to the same period last year. Patronage increased across all modes, with bus, train and ferry patronage increasing by 4%, 6%, and 13% respectively. Public transport patronage for the year to 31 January 2026 is 88.7 million boardings, which is a decrease from the previous year’s total of 89.4 million boardings. Across all modes, rail patronage saw the largest annual decrease of 4%, whereas bus patronage has had the smallest annual decrease, at less than 1%. At 88.7 million boardings, current annual patronage reaches 94% of Auckland Transport’s latest SOI target of 94 million annual public transport boardings for 2025/26. This also represents 86% of the pre-pandemic 12-month public transport patronage level in the year to December 2019 of 103.2 million boardings. <table><tr><th colspan="3">PT fortnightly patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>16 February – 01 March 2026</th><th>16 February – 01 March 2025</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>3,181,317</td><td>3,065,555</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>661,327</td><td>626,147</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>146,832</td><td>130,478</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>3,989,476</td><td>3,822,180</td></tr></table> Data: AT Metro daily patronage report. <table><tr><th colspan="3">PT monthly patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>January 2026</th><th>January 2025</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>4,737,467</td><td>4,711,802</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>380,995</td><td>377,451</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>512,494</td><td>525,333</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>5,630,956</td><td>5,614,586</td></tr></table> Data: AT Metro monthly patronage report. <table><tr><th colspan="3">PT annual patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>Year to January 31 2026</th><th>Year to January 31 2025</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>70,196,815</td><td>70,198,537</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>13,591,049</td><td>14,186,510</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>4,910,000</td><td>4,987,311</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>88,697,864</td><td>89,372,358</td></tr></table> Data: AT Metro monthly patronage report. NB: Rail and ferry data includes replacement services.		PT fortnightly patronage			Mode	16 February – 01 March 2026	16 February – 01 March 2025	Bus	3,181,317	3,065,555	Rail	661,327	626,147	Ferry	146,832	130,478	Total	3,989,476	3,822,180	PT monthly patronage			Mode	January 2026	January 2025	Bus	4,737,467	4,711,802	Rail	380,995	377,451	Ferry	512,494	525,333	Total	5,630,956	5,614,586	PT annual patronage			Mode	Year to January 31 2026	Year to January 31 2025	Bus	70,196,815	70,198,537	Rail	13,591,049	14,186,510	Ferry	4,910,000	4,987,311	Total	88,697,864	89,372,358
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Auckland housing update

Afoa Malolo

Director – Auckland

HUD

Privacy of natural persons

House price index and median house price (REINZ)

- The House Price Index (HPI) fell 0.6% in January 2026 and is down 2.6% since January 2025.
- Sales volumes totalled 989 sales in January 2026, down 1.2% compared to January 2025.
- The median house price was \$950,000 in January 2026, down 5.9% over the month, but up 1.1% compared to January 2025

HUD commentary:

Over the past 12 months, house prices in Auckland have fallen, a combination of reduced demand from investors and high listings.

We are expecting this trend to remain for much of this year, with uncertainty over the economy impacting on buyer demand. A rise in interest rates towards the end of the year might also act to depress the market further.

Sales volumes have risen slightly in 2026 compared to 2025, although January is traditionally a low volume month so large declines in sales volumes compared to December and the previous January are not unexpected.

New dwelling building consents (Stats NZ)

- 1,029 new dwellings were consented in January 2026, comprising mostly townhouses, flats and units.
- New dwelling consents are up 18.7% compared to January 2025.
- 15,779 new dwellings have been consented annually since January 2025, an increase of 13.3% compared to the previous year.

HUD commentary:

Over the last year building intentions (through dwelling consents) have remained stable in Auckland, with considerable monthly variation.

However, January consent issuance was significantly higher than January 2025 and overall optimism seems to be rising. We note that a consent is only an intent to build in the following 24 months.

We expect modest growth in construction activity in line with the broader economic recovery, with the low rate of net migration and abundant housing for sale constraining the demand for new builds. Uncertainty remains -

activity could contract if the demand for housing does not lift as expected, or the economic recovery stalls, with rising inflation amplifying this risk.

Dwelling completions and new land parcels (Auckland Council)

- 812 dwellings received Code Compliance Certificates (CCCs) in December 2025, down 20.3% compared to December 2024.
- 14,441 dwellings received CCCs annually since December 2024, a 15.9% decrease compared to the previous year.
- 1,192 new residential land parcels (under 5,000m²) were created in January 2026, up 36.7% compared to January 2025.



	HUD commentary: Annual CCC issuance has decreased over the past few months due to the decline in building intentions over 2023. As existing projects are being completed faster than new projects are coming online, construction activity is falling. This trend is expected to continue over the short-term. Rental price index (Stats NZ) • Rental Price Index (flow measure) increased 1.5% in January 2026 but is down 0.7% annually. HUD commentary: After a period of negative rental inflation (rents falling) during much of 2025, rental inflation has increased but Auckland still started the year 0.7% down compared to the same time last year. Rents rose 1.5% in January. However, on a monthly basis, changes in rent prices can be volatile due to seasonality. In the short term, we expect rental inflation to remain low overall through to at least mid2026, constrained by low migration, high stock and levels of recent dwelling completions and, to a lesser extent, weak wage growth. This is particularly prevalent in Auckland, which acts as the primary inward migration hub. Stats NZ have resumed publication of their rent price index (RPI), so we have reverted to this measure and not using HUD RPI.
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