



Transport Accident Investigation Commission
Te Komihana Tirotiro Aitua Waka

Statement of Intent 2015 – 2019

May 2015

Prepared and published in accordance with
the provisions of the Crown Entities Act 2004

Transport Accident Investigation Commission
Statement of Intent 2015–2019

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28 May 2015

Hon Craig Foss MP
Associate Minister of Transport
Executive Wing
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Minister

We have the honour to present to you this Statement of Intent (SOI) for the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (Commission) for the period 2015-2019, prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

This SOI updates and supersedes the 2014-2018 SOI. It has been developed before the expiry of the previous SOI to recognise the significant increase in state funding of the Commission detailed in the 2015/2016 Estimates.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Cull'.

Helen Cull QC
Chief Commissioner

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Meares'.

Jane Meares
Commissioner

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Chief Commissioner's overview

This Statement of Intent has been prepared to update the Transport Accident Investigation Commission's medium-term undertakings from those set out a year ago. The update results from the welcome increased funding to the Commission's baseline from 2015-16. Although this new funding does not significantly alter the strategic intentions set out in last year's Statement of Intent, it makes possible additional investigators, Commissioner time, and front-line support services, which will allow the Commission to complete more cases and in a faster timeframe. This update reflects the Commission's commitment to improving service delivery and ensuring the extra funding is well spent through a careful change management process.

In addition, the funding enables the Commission to meet the Minister of Transport's three key strategic priorities for the transport system: supporting economic growth and productivity, delivering increasing value for money, and increasing safety and security. We welcome the Minister's expectations that we will manage our growth well, take the lead in driving safety outcomes in the sector, maintain readiness for a major accident, ensure our workforce planning and development is appropriate, and—most importantly—that high quality investigations continue to be delivered but in a more timely manner.

The Commission's statutory purpose is to determine the circumstances and causes of aviation, rail and marine accidents and incidents to avoid recurrences, and not to ascribe blame. This places the Commission in a unique position to influence and contribute to the safety of New Zealand's transport system. Commissioners and staff remain motivated by an inspirational goal of ensuring there are “no repeat accidents—ever!” and determined to ensure its future growth is well managed and successful in delivering the intended output contributing to this vision.



Helen Cull QC
Chief Commissioner

1. The Transport Accident Investigation Commission

1.1. The Commission

- 1.1.1. The Transport Accident Investigation Commission (the Commission) is a standing commission of inquiry. Its mandate is to undertake independent investigations into certain accidents and incidents in air, rail and maritime transport, and to report its findings and recommendations.
- 1.1.2. The Commission's enabling legislation is the Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990 (the Act). The Act gives the Commission powers and protections, and provides for accident investigation as a primary means of inquiry. The Commission is also supported by the general powers and processes of the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1908 including the use of submission and hearing processes and provisions to ensure natural justice is observed.
- 1.1.3. The Commission's mandate enables it to decide whether to open an inquiry into an aviation, marine or rail occurrence. The Commission must open an inquiry where the circumstances of an event are likely to have significant implications for transport safety, or the findings and recommendations are likely to lead to an increase in transport safety. The Commission considers a range of factors when deciding if this is the case in respect of an occurrence notified to it. These factors are set out in a "Logic Guide" used in the decision making process (and published on the Commission's website). The Act provides for the Minister of Transport to direct the Commission to open an inquiry under certain circumstances. The Commission determines how it conducts its inquiries and is independent in its deliberations.
- 1.1.4. The Commission is also an independent Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004. Although it operates independently of executive government and other government agencies, the Commission fosters no-surprises and collegial relationships with agencies in the transport sector (and in other sectors) consistent with the Commission's mandate.
- 1.1.5. The Commission, as part of its legislated function, has a role to play in New Zealand meeting its international treaty obligations for transport safety. The Commission is the primary means by which New Zealand fulfils international aviation and maritime obligations¹ to conduct independent safety- and prevention-focused investigations. These obligations require the Commission's inquiries to be separate from any investigations to determine blame or liability.
- 1.1.6. The Commission has usually had three members, although the Act allows up to five Commissioners to be appointed. The Government has indicated that it is considering increasing usual membership to four so that vacancies can be better managed as they occur. The members are also the Commission's board for the purposes of the Crown Entities Act 2004. Two of the appointed members are designated Chief Commissioner/Chairperson and Deputy Chief Commissioner/Deputy Chairperson respectively. The Commission is required under statute to employ a Chief Executive to operate the Crown Entity. The Chief Executive is not a member of the Commission. For the Commission to carry out its functions the Chief Executive employs staff in core roles (such as investigators), contracts specialist expertise as required, and ensures the efficient and effective management of the Commission as an independent Crown entity.

¹ Annex 13 to the charter of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Casualty Code of the International Maritime Organization.

1.2. Purpose

1.2.1. The Act prescribes the Commission's purpose. It is "to determine the circumstances and causes of accidents and incidents with a view to avoiding similar occurrences in the future, rather than to ascribe blame to any person"². The Commission achieves its purpose by:

- conducting independent inquiries supported by factual investigations
- making and publishing findings and recommendations
- helping overseas accident investigation organisations when needed.

The Commission generally directs its recommendations for remedying safety issues to the regulators because they have the most direct influential relationship with industry operators. Recommendations may also be directed to the Ministry of Transport where broader policy questions or regulatory performance issues are highlighted through an inquiry.

1.3. Operating environment

1.3.1. The Commission is a small part of the New Zealand transport sector but has a significant role to play in advancing transport safety. Aviation, rail, and maritime transport systems allow the movement of people and freight within and beyond New Zealand, thus supporting tourism and trade. Safe transport systems are vital if New Zealand is to grow its domestic economy and participate in global markets.

1.3.2. The international connectedness of the transport system means that safety issues and their resolution can have widespread implications. International conventions are one way that safety systems and standards concerning vehicle design, training, and investigative standards (as examples), are applied across signatory nations.

1.3.3. Safer operation of the transport system results from the complex interaction of many factors. These factors include technology (such as the design and performance of vehicles), infrastructure, government policy and regulation, as well as human factors (people and their interactions with the environment). All these factors change and evolve, sometimes at a rapid pace.

1.3.4. Many state, commercial, and community entities share responsibility for transport safety. A challenge for all of these agencies, including the Commission, is to maintain an awareness of the changing operating environment and the implications for transport safety. The same holds true for individual users of the transport systems, whether they are transport professionals, recreational transport users, passengers or consignors of freight.

Key legislation and international treaties

1.3.5. The Commission is obligated to act through the provisions of its enabling legislation The Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990. Other key legislative influences on the Commission include the:

- Commission of Inquiries Act 1908
- Civil Aviation Act 1990
- Maritime Transport Act 1994
- Railways Act 2005
- Coroners Act 2006

² Section 4, Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990

- Crown Entities Act 2004

1.3.6. In addition to domestic legislation there are a number of international conventions that influence the Commission's functioning as an independent accident investigation organisation. The most relevant international conventions are the:

- Convention on International Civil Aviation
- Convention on the International Maritime Organisation
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
- The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
- Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

Key relationships

1.3.7. On a day to day, case by case basis the Commission engages with a number of key stakeholders, including:

- NZ Police – largely as first responders to accidents, as Coroners' agents, and occasionally investigating potential criminal liability.
- Coroners – Coroners are tasked with determining the circumstances and causes of death. In fatal accidents the Commission and coroners roles are distinct but with common concerns relating to evidence and witnesses.
- The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) – as the aviation regulator CAA has a statutory duty to notify the Commission of certain accidents and incidents, and to provide aviation related information on request. It may also conduct regulatory compliance or safety investigations, including health and safety compliance.
- Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) – as the maritime regulator MNZ has a statutory duty to notify the Commission of certain accidents and incidents, and to provide maritime related information on request. It may also conduct regulatory compliance or safety investigations, including health and safety compliance.
- New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) – as the rail regulator NZTA has a statutory duty to notify the Commission of certain accidents and incidents, and to provide rail related information on request. It also seeks regulatory compliance from licensed rail participants.
- The Ministry of Transport – as the government's principal advisor for transport policy, and as the Minister's monitor for Crown entity performance.
- Crown Law Office (CL) – as legal advisor to government agencies CL assists the Commission in areas of international law and the scope of the Commission's functions, particularly when the Commission is asked to assist other countries.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) – MFAT assists the Commission in enabling access to other jurisdictions where the Commission is asked to assist in other countries' accident investigations, or the Commission needs the assistance of other countries in its own investigations.
- Transport sector operators and participants (industry) – the Commission draws upon operators, industry organisations and professional groups as key sources of specialist expertise, experience and information.

1.3.8. Other countries – the Commission is often assisted by its peer organisations overseas by their providing expertise, information and learning opportunities. The Commission has regular engagement with colleagues from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, United States, Singapore, and Taiwan. It also assists other jurisdictions’ inquiries where New Zealand interests may be involved, or may help countries without a similar investigative capacity.

1.4. Organisation and operating model

1.4.1. The Commission operates from a national office in Wellington and is structured to facilitate inquiry and investigative processes while supporting the Commissioners’ independence. The Commission is a four-tiered organisation as illustrated in Figure 1 below. Employees fill core functional roles in the Commission. Additional expertise is bought in as required.

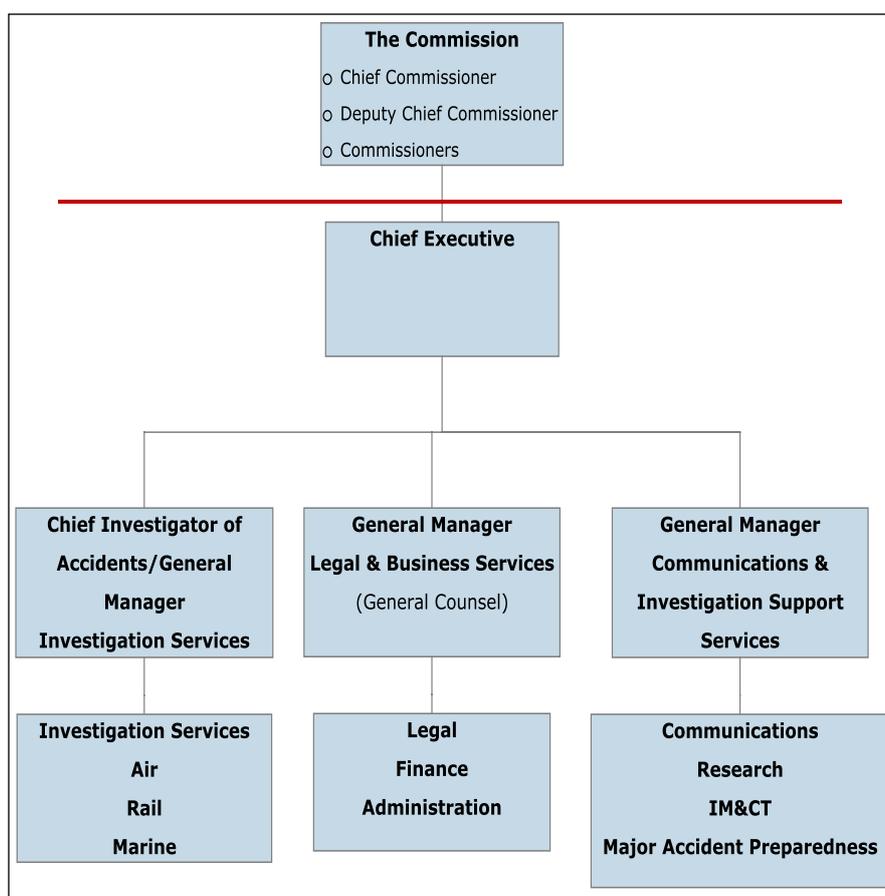


Figure 1: Organisational structure

2. Strategy

2.1. Strategic framework

2.1.1. The Commission uses two frameworks to guide the development of its strategic intentions. The frameworks are variants of the balanced scorecard approach: strategy mapping³ and

³ Kaplan, R.S & Norton, D.P. (2004), “Strategy Maps Converting intangible assets into tangible outcomes”, Harvard Business Press.

the performance prism⁴. These frameworks focus the Commission’s attention on the most salient aspects of its strategic direction, and how to achieve its strategic objectives. Especially relevant to the Commission are a focus on non-financial aspects of organisational performance (an element of the strategy map) and reflection upon stakeholder wants and needs (performance prism).

2.1.2. The Commission’s strategy map is presented in Figure 2 below. It has been updated from the map presented in the 2014-2018 Statement of Intent to cover a five year time-frame until 2019. 2015 is Year 2 (Y2).

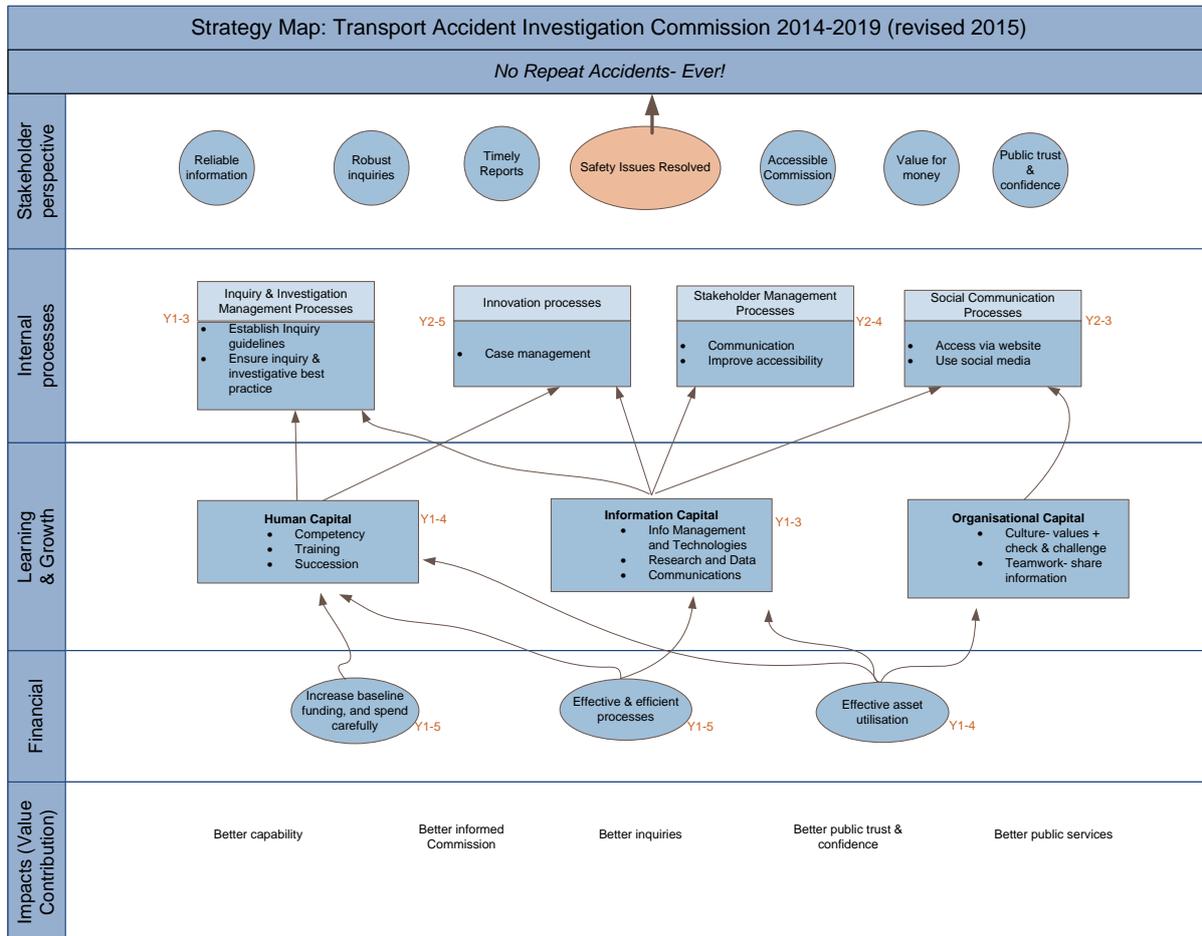


Figure 2: The Commission's strategy map

⁴ Bourne, M. & Bourne, P. (2011), “Handbook of Corporate Performance Management”, John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

2.1.3. The Commission maintains its line of sight with its vision, mission and values.

Aspirational vision

2.1.4. The Commission's strategic direction is focused on achieving a specific outcome expressed as a visionary statement:

No repeat accidents—ever!

2.1.5. This overarching goal reflects the Commission's statutory purpose and task.

2.1.6. In addition, the Commission is mindful of its business model as an independent Crown Entity. The Commission is obliged to operate effectively and efficiently. It must provide value as a state sector organisation in terms of the service it provides (contributing to a safer transport system), and making the best use of the resources available to it (being a better public service). Careful change management processes and oversight in relation to the new funding and resources it will bring will be a major focus over the four years.

Mission

Safer transport through investigation, learning and influence

2.1.7. The Commission's mission statement focuses attention on what it is seeking to achieve in terms of its vision and how that might be realised.

Values

2.1.8. To help drive performance in achieving its statutory purpose and fulfilling its corporate obligations the Commission adopted the International Framework for Court Excellence values. These values guide the Commission's actions and behaviours. The values are:

- Fairness
- Impartiality
- Independence
- Competence
- Integrity
- Accessibility
- Timeliness
- Certainty

Relationship to Minister of Transport's priorities for the transport sector

2.1.9. The relationship of the Commission's output and impact to the Minister of Transport's priorities and desired outcomes for the transport sector is described in Figure 3.

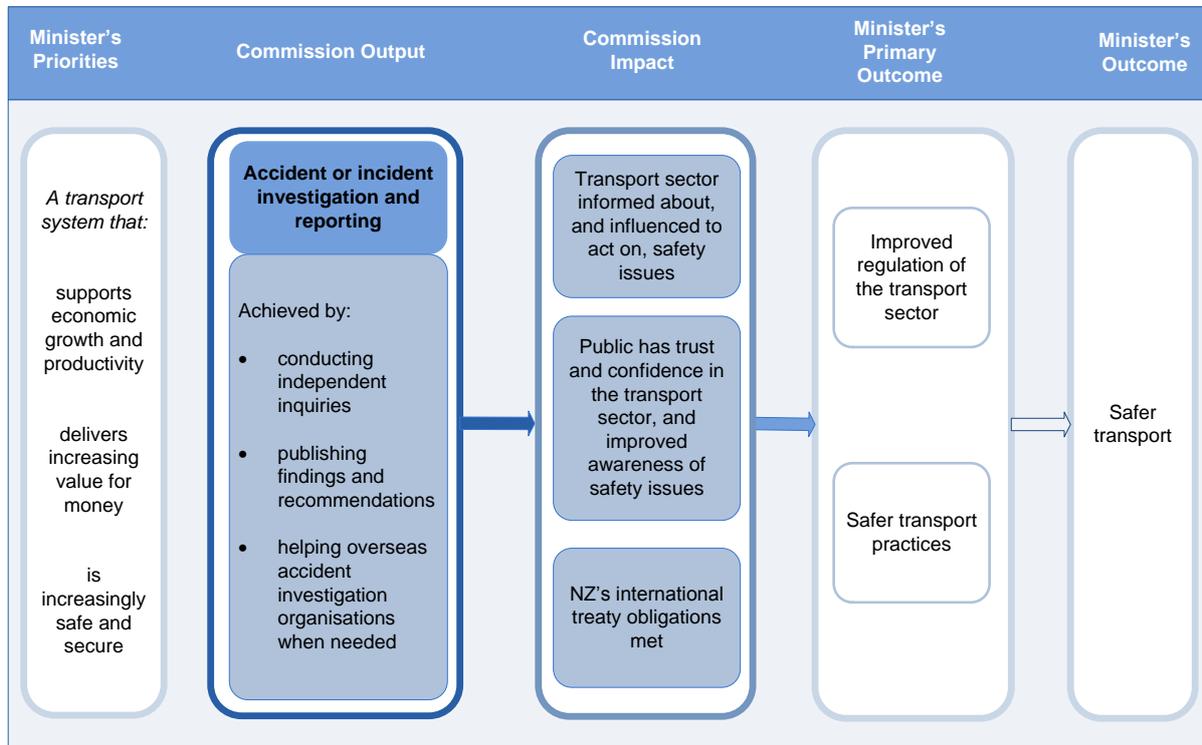


Figure 3: Relationship of the Commission's output to ministerial priorities, desired impacts and outcomes for transport

3. Strategic intentions

3.1. Strategic objectives and their impacts

3.1.1. The Commission’s overarching aspirational goal is for there to be *No repeat accidents—ever!* so supporting the Minister’s desired outcome of safer transport. The Commission seeks to pursue this goal by working to ensure safety issues are properly identified and resolved. The Commission has set five strategic objectives to ensure it contributes to a safer transport system and meets its statutory obligations.

3.1.2. The Commission’s five strategic objectives and their intended impacts are:

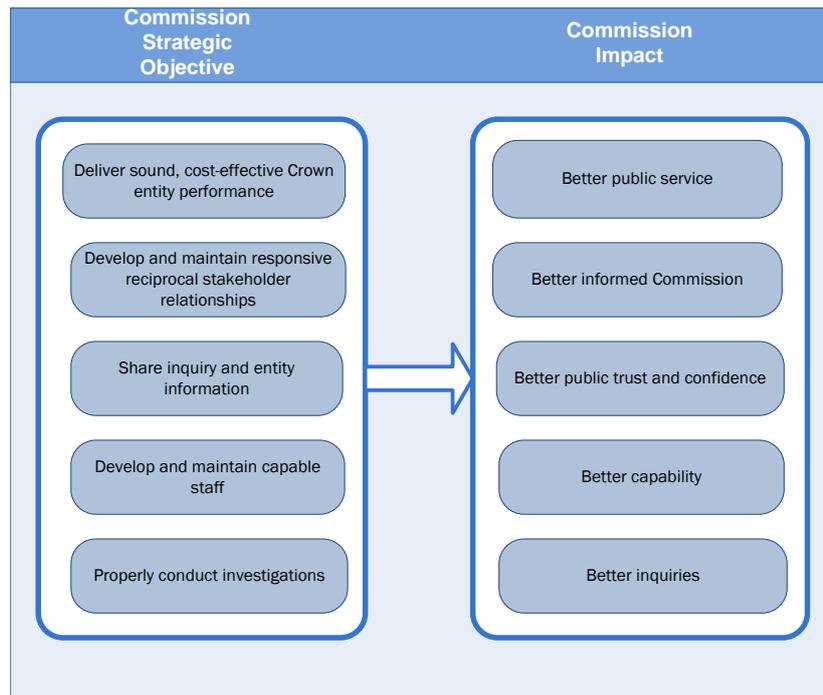


Figure 4: The Commission's five strategic objectives and their impacts

3.2. No repeat accidents – ever!

3.2.1. The Commission has been working with the regulators since 2013-2014 to confirm data sources and reliability for four indicators of whether the Commission’s work is contributing to its desired outcome of preventing recurrences. These indicators relate to safety issues which have featured in Commission inquiries over recent years. In each case the regulators have been cooperative; however data availability or quality concerns have been identified meaning that only one is operational so far. This continuing work has had the unexpected benefit of focusing attention on the general issue of the limited data availability or data quality for safety-related analysis, particularly in the aviation and marine modes.

Table 1: Outcome measures

Main measures: Outcome		
Indicator	Target 2015-19	Current 2012-15
The incidence of aircraft involved in pilot training nearly colliding or colliding with other aircraft.	Incidence trend (per pilot training flying hour) declines.	Actual collision data was identified for the Inquiry into Civil Flying Training Safety completed in 2012-13. Work with CAA has confirmed an ongoing data set will be available. Relevant notifications will need manual inspection to determine whether a qualifying event has occurred. However, the main impediment remains potential under-reporting of flying hours and the consistent identification of training hours to provide a reliable denominator for calculating rates. CAA is increasing its collection efforts.
The incidence of rail safety occurrences involving trains or rail maintenance vehicles where visible mapped or computed GPS positions at train control could have helped avoid a conflict or track warrant breach.	Incidence trend (per million km travelled) declines.	Work with NZTA has identified that a suitable ongoing data set relating to a category of “signal passed at danger (red)” is available. Reporting will commence from the 2014-2015 Annual Report.
The incidence of recreational boating accidents involving serious injury or loss of life where a lack of demonstrated knowledge by the skipper appears to have been a factor.	Incidence trend declines.	Maritime New Zealand has instituted a project to review available information on recreational boating fatalities, to see if information from the reports can form a data set that supports exploring factors in and causes of recreational boating fatalities. Where possible, this dataset will include information on skipper qualifications. A date has not been set for the project’s completion. In addition, Maritime New Zealand will work as part of the Safer Boating Forum to come up with a data collection plan to improve the available information on recreational boating incidents and accidents.
The incidence of the presence of performance impairing substances in persons performing safety critical tasks in the aviation, marine and rail transport modes.	Incidence baseline is established.	Work with the transport sector regulators has established that a baseline cannot be established due to a lack of suitable data. This measure will be reconsidered once the outcomes of current Ministry of Transport policy work triggered by the Commission’s inquiry into the Carterton hot air balloon tragedy are known.

- 3.2.2. Impact measures are included in the current Statement of Performance expectations. These measure stakeholder perceptions and agencies' responses to safety issues and recommendations

3.3. Deliver sound, cost effective Crown entity performance

- 3.3.1. The Commission, Chief Executive and management team are determined to ensure that the long-term 43% baseline funding increase received from 2015/16 is efficiently and effectively realised with the increased staffing, Commissioner time, and supporting equipment and services resulting from it. A Change Programme Board comprising Commission management and a Ministry of Transport senior official has been established to co-ordinate the range of interdependent projects required. The Commission board will also be monitoring implementation, with an initial focus on risk management shifting to ensuring the expected productivity and timeliness gains can be achieved as intended.
- 3.3.2. The Commission had been participating in a formal international benchmarking programme pilot led by a peer international agency. However the programme has not been continued beyond the pilot as yet. The Commission has put formal benchmarking on hold due to the lack of continuing international programme, and its focus on the Change Programme. Nevertheless, the Commission continues to informally benchmark its practice and performance against its international peers, and will continue its support for an international benchmarking system.
- 3.3.3. The Commission is continuously seeking efficiencies to meet cost pressures and to improve service delivery where possible. It has joined several all-of-government purchasing contracts and taken advantage of specialists drawn from other agencies on short term assignments when these have been beneficial. It will continue to pursue such opportunities.

Table 2: Measures for strategic intention "deliver sound, cost-effective Crown entity Performance"

Objective	Measure	Target for financial year end			
		2016	2017	2018	2019
Continuously improve operating efficiency.	Change programme successfully applies increased funding for intended purposes and effect.	Change programme finalized, including target metrics to assess progress in this and out years. Recruitment and training of additional staff. Maintenance and execution of change management programme, including appropriate project management components (such as risk and progress monitoring).	Recruitment and training of additional staff. Maintenance and execution of change management programme, including appropriate project management components (such as risk and progress monitoring).	Post-implementation review assesses programme successes, challenges, and learnings; including commentary on productivity changes and expectations, and any remedial management actions required.	Update on post-implementation review. Change management programme closed out.
	Evaluate all-of-government and shared services opportunities as they arise, and implement if appropriate.	To be reported /implemented 30 June.	To be reported /implemented 30 June.	To be reported /implemented 30 June.	To be reported /implemented 30 June.

3.4. Develop and maintain responsive, reciprocal stakeholder relationships

3.4.1. A project to review the amount and quality of contact stakeholders received in relation to an individual inquiry commenced towards late 2014-2015 with the short-term assistance of a transport sector secondee. A dedicated communications advisor position will be re-established with the funding increase and this role will complete design and delivery of a formal stakeholder contact programme as part of their responsibilities.

Table 3: Measure for strategic intention “develop and maintain responsive, reciprocal stakeholder relationships”

Objective	Measure	Target for financial year end			
		2016	2017	2018	2019
Develop and maintain inquiry stakeholder programme.	Inquiry stakeholder contact programme developed and implemented.	Development completed. Implementation commenced.	Implementation reported against targets established by the programme.	Review programme implementation, target achievement, and revise either as may be appropriate	Business as usual. Report against programme targets.

3.5. Share inquiry and entity information

3.5.1. Knowing what is going on in the wider social, political, technological and policy environments, locally and internationally, is critical to a well-informed commission. Many government and industry information systems are data rich, but not necessarily accessible or analysed. The Commission has a one-person research function to support investigation and corporate needs. A key external research product is the Commission’s Watch List which was first published in 2014/15. The Watch List is designed to focus attention on the Commission’s key safety concerns to which it believes the transport sector has paid insufficient attention.

Table 4: Measure for strategic intention “share inquiry and entity information”

Objective	Measure	Target for financial year end			
		2016	2017	2018	2019
Communicate more about what the Commission does, learns, and recommends to help improve transport safety.	Watch List updated at least annually.	Reviewed and published by 30 June.			
	Website provides accessible and comprehensive past and current inquiry and corporate information, including provision for user subscription to notifications of relevant content changes.	Annual positive growth in website visits and online subscribers to website publishing notifications.	Annual positive growth in website visits and online subscribers to website publishing notifications.	Annual positive growth in website visits and online subscribers to website publishing notifications.	Annual positive growth in website visits and online subscribers to website publishing notifications.

3.6. Develop and retain capable staff

- 3.6.1. The effectiveness of the Commission’s operating model depends on investigators having the right skills and experience. Transport industry participants will have trust and confidence in investigations only when they are conducted by people with significant experience in the relevant mode. Concurrent with new investigator recruitment the Commission is reviewing its investigator training programme. This will ensure currency is achieved and maintained by new and experienced staff in generally accepted investigation practice and competency in other core role requirements.
- 3.6.2. The work force plan developed in 2014/15 to support succession planning and continuing operations helped make the business case for a staffing increase, and has fed into a range of human resource management projects including the development of new job descriptions and a performance management framework to align individual’s priorities and contributions with organisational, team and individual goals.

Table 5: Measure for strategic intention “develop and retain capable staff”

Objective	Measure	Target for financial year end			
		2016	2017	2018	2019
Acquire, develop, and retain strategic skills	Number of fully trained investigators / Total investigators (excluding Chief Investigator).	9/13	11/15	13/15	15/15
Develop and maintain a workforce plan	Workforce plan developed (Targets in out-years will flow from, and be developed in conjunction with, the developed plan.)	Revised performance management system finalized and operational.	Implementation against finalized deliverables.	Implementation against finalized deliverables.	Implementation against finalized deliverables.

3.7. Properly conduct investigations and inquiries

- 3.7.1. The Commission achieves improvement in transport safety only by maintaining investigative standards. Findings and recommendations emerging from inquiry processes must be robust and credible, and provide confidence as to their veracity. Reports must be independent, evidence-based, useable, and timely.
- 3.7.2. Investigations are conducted according to international standards and operating procedures, and recommendations are based on analysis of the evidence and findings. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) maintains an assessment inventory to assess a State's compliance and preparedness to deliver safety-focused investigations in accordance with Annex 13 to the ICAO convention. New Zealand's compliance is to be reviewed in 2015/16, and the Commission will periodically conduct a self-assessment using the same criteria applied to all modes it investigates with appropriate adjustments.
- 3.7.3. The Commission is also commencing two projects to review and codify existing policies, guidelines and tools designed in respect of both investigation best practice and inquiry protocols.

Table 6: Measures for strategic intention "properly conduct inquiries"

Objective	Measure	Target for financial year end			
		2016	2017	2018	2019
Develop and maintain inquiry and investigation best practice	Review against ICAO standards every two years	Self & external review		Self review	
	Complete reviews of investigation and inquiry guidelines	Reviews completed	Remedial codification completed	Maintenance	Maintenance
	Successful judicial review of a Commission inquiry process or decision	0	0	0	0
	Successful challenge to an Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner, or Human Rights Commission of an administrative decision or action	0	0	0	0

4. Organisational health and capability

- 4.1.1. To carry out its task, the Commission relies on functional expertise, effective information management and communications technologies (IM&CT), and strong business intelligence and analytical capability.
- 4.1.2. Despite the large relative increase in funding, the Commission will remain a small organisation of about 26 full time equivalent staff members and a few part time contract staff. Each person employed is generally a single point of specific expertise. In this regard each corporate staff member is generally the sole professional in their field who must also be prepared to work as a generalist. It is therefore important the Commission invests in its professional staff to ensure professional currency is maintained, and the ability to work across the organisation enhanced.

4.2. People

Organisational culture and good employer initiatives

- 4.2.1. The Commission operates a flexible and comprehensive people capability strategic plan, designed to enable and encourage high performance. It has developed an overarching workforce plan to ensure it retains a focus on maintaining appropriate capability well into the future. The workforce plan, and projects falling under it, forms part of the strategic objectives discussed above.
- 4.2.2. In preparation for the increased number of staff, the Commission recently reviewed its employment practices. As a result, the Commission has updated several of its employment policies and practices. These updated policies and practices will better enable the Commission to attract and retain the highly skilled staff it needs, as well manage the expected increase in retirements in the next few years. Ensuring that age-related factors are properly addressed in workforce planning and management is a priority given the Commission's ageing work force.
- 4.2.3. The Commission has an equal employment opportunities practice based on the philosophy of inclusion with the expectation that all employees are treated fairly and with respect. The organisation values diversity and is committed to offering equal employment opportunities to Māori, Pasifika, and all ethnic or minority groups, women, and people with disabilities.
- 4.2.4. As a smaller organisation the Commission requires flexibility in the workforce to quickly respond to operational needs. It offers staff flexible working hours and part-time employment as a means of achieving this flexibility, as well as supporting work-life balance.
- 4.2.5. The Commission remains committed to promoting a safe, healthy and balanced lifestyle for employees, and is committed to supporting health and safety requirements. At the time of writing, the Commission was rewriting its health and safety policy.

Recruitment, training and development

- 4.2.6. The Commission's people are its key asset. To be credible, key roles in the Commission's inquiry system must be relevant to the industry and task; therefore, the Commission recruits professional staff with mode-specific skills, and contracts additional expertise when required. The Commission is an equal employment opportunities employer and the recruitment process reflects its openness to diversity. All employment processes, including recruitment, are founded on the Commission's values, especially those of fairness, impartiality, and integrity.

- 4.2.7. Investigator training and development is comprehensive and on-going. While employed with the Commission, investigators must complete annual courses, including specialist accident investigator training at entry and advanced levels. Investigators undertake accident investigation training at Cranfield University in the United Kingdom, as suitable accident investigation training is unavailable in New Zealand. The Cranfield qualifications are recognised internationally and mean investigators are capable of working alongside their international peers. This is important for seamless engagement should New Zealand ever need international assistance in investigating a catastrophic transport event, and ensure general regard for the technical components of the Commission's work.
- 4.2.8. Non investigator professional staff members are also supported to maintain and develop their professional competencies. Legal, financial, research and general management professional tertiary training is supported with an emphasis on strengthening the operations of the inquiry system and organisational performance against Commission strategy and external expectations.

4.3. Information communication technology and management systems

- 4.3.1. Over recent years the Commission has introduced a new information management system and, as detailed above, it is seeking to improve its access to and use of data from elsewhere in the sector. At the same time, the Commission faces the issues of all public sector agencies in ensuring its information technology systems remain secure, including ensuring the legal protections given to inquiry and private personal information are preserved, and information generally is managed in accordance with requirements including the Public Records Act 2005. Meanwhile new technologies from social media to small screen devices and applications present challenges and opportunities to accident investigation and corporate reputations. This includes information technology related 'better public sector' objectives such as "digital by default" service provision. The Commission intends to draw these different strands together in a new integrated IM&CT strategy themed "Digital diligence, dialogue and dexterity" to ensure its IM&CT tools and priorities align with the overarching strategy within the resources available.

4.4. Business intelligence and analytical capability

- 4.4.1. As discussed earlier, the Commission has been developing a small research function to support properly conducted inquiries and to ensure inquiry and organisational information is shared and accessible. Establishment of this function was completed in 2014-15, and the priority for 2015-16 will be to move the research function to a business-as-usual footing.

4.5. Measures of organisational health and capability

4.5.1. The Commission's measures of organisational health and capability are given in Table 7.

Table 7: Measures of organisational health and capability

Staff are capable			
Measure	Target 2015-19		Current 2014-15
Average number of training hours per annum	Investigation staff: 1000 hours/annum (100 hours per investigator/annum)		557 hours
	Non-Investigation staff: 200-400 hours /annum 40 hours per person per annum + 1 tertiary based programme (negotiated)		469 hours
Organisational capability is maintained and strengthened			
Measure	Target 2015-19		Current 2014-15
% distribution of years employed post qualification (investigation staff)	1-5 years	20%	50%
	6-10 years	60%	40%
	10+ years	20%	10%

5. Risk management

5.1.1. The Commission's key strategic risks are linked to organisational capability and specifically work force availability and competency. The Commission's key risks are:

- loss of reputation and credibility
- an ageing work force
- scarcity of affordable sector expertise
- maintaining competency for conducting independent inquiries into rare catastrophic events
- failure to realise benefits from the increased funding.

5.1.2. Management of these risks is discussed below.

Loss of reputation and credibility

5.1.3. A reputation for high-quality, independent investigations, fairness, strong research and analysis, and rigorous testing of claims and assertions are key to the Commission's credibility as a high performing public sector organisation. Lapses in performance in any of these aspects can erode public trust and confidence in the Commission's ability to make an effective contribution to making transport safer.

5.1.4. This risk is managed by:

- staff working to relevant professional standards of practice with managers assessing performance against the standards as part of the Commission's performance management system
- cultivating a culture of "check and challenge" throughout the organisation where staff are encouraged to speak up
- management displaying proactive leadership of the organisation's values
- implementing the plan to develop inquiry protocols redevelop investigation policies, guidelines and tools to provide clarity of process and requisite standards of inquiry
- implementing the plan to strengthen informed investigations supported by research by embedding the research function within the organisation
- Commissioners exercising robust governance, including testing investigation team input to their inquiries.

Ageing work force

- 5.1.5. The Commission's workforce demographic is weighted towards an older cohort with over half of the staff aged 55 years old or more. This group largely comprises the mature, seasoned accident investigators whose skills and experience in accident investigation are key organisational assets that are hard, expensive and take time to replace. Resignations or retirements of these experienced staff members anticipated over the next four years will create a capability gap.
- 5.1.6. This risk is managed by:
- new investigator positions
 - implementing a workforce plan with a view to managing succession in key roles.

Scarcity of affordable sector expertise

- 5.1.7. Filling a vacant investigator position can be difficult. Trained and experienced accident investigators are a scarce resource globally, and investigation agencies tend to hold on to their expertise. Two factors in particular contribute to this situation: training in accident investigation is a medium- to long-term endeavour for the organisation and the individual, and it is expensive because of its specialist nature; and because accidents are by their nature rare events, only a small number of investigators are experienced in large-scale, catastrophic events. When an investigator vacancy occurs it can impact on organisational productivity and knowledge base, until replaced and the replacement becomes fully trained and effective.
- 5.1.8. This risk is managed by:
- increasing investigator numbers
 - growing expertise through programmed training and development
 - retaining expertise through supporting base professional expertise, professional memberships, and opportunities for practical experience through inter-agency assistance programmes.

Maintaining competency for conducting independent inquiries into rare catastrophic events

5.1.9. Major catastrophic transport system failures are rare events. The Commission's day-to-day work provides opportunity to hone practical investigative skills, but exposure to substantive events is rare. This means effective oversight and administration of an integrated accident investigation response is rarely tested. The Commission does undertake desk-top exercises and scenario testing from time to time as resources allow. However, to be effective it needs to operate a risk management programme for preparedness of a major catastrophic event.

5.1.10. This risk is managed by:

- assigning responsibility to a General Manager for developing and monitoring a major accident response and business continuity preparedness programme organised around principles of building and maintaining organisational resilience
- development and maintenance of policies, guidelines and tools
- desk-top planning exercises, and participation in other agencies exercises
- scenario testing of plans and processes
- providing opportunities for participation in larger-scale investigations overseas
- participating in across government initiatives, such as the Ministry of Transport-coordinated Transport Response Team and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet or Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management initiatives
- including relevant professional development content for appropriate staff members
- developing and implementing a risk management programme for ensuring preparedness for a major catastrophic event is developed and maintained.

Failure to realise benefits from the increased funding

5.1.11. A loss of experienced personnel before new investigators are recruited and fully trained would impede progress towards improving service delivery, especially timeliness.

5.1.12. The major costs for the Commission are labour costs and IT costs. Unexpected movements in either of these areas would adversely affect the ability to meet expected outcomes within budget. A particular risk is if the Commission has to recruit from international markets rather than domestically.

5.1.13. This risk is managed by:

- disciplined project management
- close monitoring of major cost factors
- working with industry to access specialist networks.

6. Relationship with the Ministers of Transport

- 6.1. The Commission maintains a “no surprises” relationship with the Minister of Transport and Associate Minister of Transport consistent with its statutory independence. Standard elements of the relationship include the:
- receipt of an annual letter of expectations from the Minister, Statement of Intent and Statement of Performance Expectations preparation, and reporting to the Minister every four months against the Statement of Performance Expectations and annually through the Minister to Parliament against the Statement of Intent and the Statement of Performance Expectations
 - meetings of the Chief Commissioner with the Associate Minister every three months or as required
 - briefings to the Ministers about significant recent or forthcoming activity.

TAIC Statement of Intent 2015–2019

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