

# Building Together

From pipeline to delivery



EVENT SUMMARY  
JUNE 2026

MinterEllisonRuddWatts

# Setting the scene

Scott Thompson, Partner and Division Co-Leader, MinterEllisonRuddWatts

MinterEllisonRuddWatts' Building Together 2026 again brought together politicians, sector leaders, and key industry participants to explore the opportunities, challenges and risks facing the construction and infrastructure sectors.

This year's event "From pipeline to delivery" focused on narrowing the gap between ambition and execution. What is coming and how can we make it happen?

We began by looking across the Tasman to Brisbane, a city building a legacy with its approach to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Closer to home, we heard from leaders at the forefront of some of New Zealand's largest construction and infrastructure projects, including large-scale renewable energy infrastructure. A cross-party conversation provided a political perspective of what effective delivery looks like. We also canvassed the role of listed property entities in driving the development pipeline, effective delivery models in social infrastructure, and how contractors are navigating current market dynamics. We finished by exploring the influence of current geopolitical disruption in shaping the world to come.

In an uncertain world, our people are key to moving projects "from pipeline to delivery". Building Together 2026 provided another opportunity for important collaboration as we strive together for sustained construction and infrastructure growth.





## Brisbane: A city building a legacy

Ruth Stokes, Chief Infrastructure and Planning Officer, Development Services, Economic Development Queensland

The lesson of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics is what a hard deadline can do for planning and completing infrastructure projects.

A major event such as this forces decisions, exposes interdependencies, and creates discipline around projects that might otherwise drift. It turns long-term infrastructure needs into immediate delivery choices. And when a deadline is treated as a legacy platform, the questions change entirely: how do venues and villages create lasting housing? How can transportation be upgraded for the long-term? The key focus becomes: how does each investment deliver more than one public outcome?

Queensland has also made the legacy bigger than Brisbane itself — shifting benefits across the state through regional venues, transport links and procurement opportunities.

At such a scale, the challenges faced are not limited to capital. Rather, the focus is on resourcing and capacity issues, sequencing, and long-term benefits. As Brisbane and Queensland as a whole have shown, a successful development on this scale requires sufficient consideration of resourcing, coordination between government and industry, policy certainty, and confidence in driving a project forward.

### Key takeaways from Brisbane

- Planning for multiple long-term public outcomes, beyond a large event, will ultimately be what creates a legacy.
- Private sector engagement is not a courtesy — it is a delivery lever; industry needs pipeline visibility, outcome clarity and early engagement.
- Apply a harder priority test: the question is not whether a project is desirable, but whether it unlocks growth and can be delivered with the market available.
- Fund the blockers, not the wish list — enabling infrastructure determines whether homes and precincts can proceed.
- Big events may come and go, but people still want to get home on time on a Wednesday.

# Delivering on a better future

PANEL: Amy Barrett, Head of Enterprise Strategy, Auckland Airport; Sandip Ranchhod, Chief Executive, Ferry Holdings Ltd; Graeme Sumner, Chief Executive, Lyttelton Port Company

FACILITATOR: Sarah Sinclair, Partner, MinterEllisonRuddWatts

The industry has observed a forced shift in infrastructure delivery in recent years, driven by the community's desire for efficiency and automation. Our panelists, who head three of New Zealand's most ambitious programmes, shared their experiences in navigating these demands to achieve the required outputs and bring about success in their respective fields.

## "Good" is more than on time and under budget

Maintaining live operations throughout the project is non-negotiable, and operationalising built assets is just as

important as delivering them. Keeping the outcome and the benefit of your project front of mind is essential. "Good" also includes consideration of whole of life, during the planning stage.

## Partnerships demand commercial empathy

Projects involve a diverse range of stakeholders. You must take the time to understand the context drivers of each and every party, not just their contractual obligations. These may include risk appetite, how they make money, and their decision making processes.

## Three challenges the sector must confront

- **Risk culture:** The habit of simply "backing ourselves" comes back to bite. Taking on risk overtly is not wrong, but it must be understood and mitigated.
- **Technical readiness:** The best transactions are preceded by a strong technical programme before going to market, allowing you to become match fit for market engagement during the project.
- **Cultural change:** Continuity of key people and otherwise careful change management is important.



# The energy transition: Powering New Zealand's future

Craig Brown, Country Manager – New Zealand, Mint Renewables

FACILITATOR: Nastasha Hood, Partner\*, MinterEllisonRuddWatts



## Partnerships and iwi

The strategic partnership between independent developer, Mint Renewables, and Ngāi Tahu reflects a shift in the way projects in New Zealand's renewable energy sector are coming together. This unique model aims to leverage Mint's technical expertise and experience (including that of shareholder Infratil) and Ngāi Tahu's strong local relationships. There is meaningful alignment in the partners' shared ambition to unlock sustainable, long-term growth and impact.

## Delivery

Technology often dictates the approach to risk allocation and contracting models. In wind or battery projects, split contract structures tend to prevail. Wrapped EPC models are more prevalent in large-scale solar projects.

The renewable energy boom has created some capacity constraints in the EPC market, as well

as competition with the wider infrastructure sector for civil and electrical contractors. Relationships and long-term strategic approaches to procurement, including awareness of the market and timing, are important to the success of projects.

## Challenges and opportunities

One main challenge for independent renewable energy developers is the small pool of potential offtakers. Co-locating generation projects with demand (whether existing or new, such as data centres) provides opportunities for shared costs and offtake.

Despite the significant reported pipeline of renewable energy projects, many will not be built. The opportunity lies in understanding the market, being disciplined as you work through the development process, and choosing the right projects to back.

\* subject to meeting the New Zealand Law Society's requirements

# A cross party conversation on infrastructure and construction outcomes

**PANEL:** Hon. Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister of Housing and Transport, and Minister responsible for RMA Reform; Hon. Kieran McNulty, Labour spokesperson for Housing, Infrastructure and Public Investment

**FACILITATOR:** Miriama Kamo, MC

Our Q&A session brought together Minister Chris Bishop and Hon. Kieran McNulty to discuss what effective delivery looks like in New Zealand's construction and infrastructure sector from a political perspective.

Much of the conversation looked to the future and the need for a clear, stable infrastructure pipeline and long-term investment plan, acknowledging sector and investor desire for certainty about where we are headed. There was a shared message from both sides that the stop-start cycle has gone on too long.

Minister Bishop emphasised the Government's efforts and progress in working to get the underlying system right. The conversation considered the need for better institutional settings,

independent assurance processes, optimising current networks and keeping costs down, to name a few.

Discussion also touched on bi-partisan agreement between the political parties, where Hon. McNulty acknowledged the genuine opportunity to identify areas where agreement can be reached, to pave the way for continuity of infrastructure even with a change of government.

Overall, there was consensus that we need to reach a point where there is confidence in the assessment, procurement, funding and delivery of the pipeline. The focus need not be on what has happened in the past, but how we fix and build a more standardised system moving forwards.





## Sustainable development pipeline: The role of listed property entities

**PANEL:** Clive Mackenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Kiwi Property; Scott Pritchard, Chief Executive Officer, Precinct Properties; Simon Woodhams, Chief Executive Officer, Property for Industry

**FACILITATOR:** Janine Stewart, Chair and Partner, MinterEllisonRuddWatts

What the “pipeline” looks like differs, depending on the industry and where an organisation is at in the delivery cycle.

New Zealand’s listed property entities are sitting on significant development opportunity — but delivering on that pipeline requires policy certainty, stable foreign investor confidence, and a construction sector that can balance risk allocation.

The Government was still seen as the lead on establishing and maintaining pipeline. Individual entities will not on their own move the dial, but together they might.

Stability of policy settings were seen as key to giving more confidence to foreign investors. The Investment Boost, seismic regulation reform, and fast-track consenting were all cited as genuine enablers — and the message was equally clear on the risk of dismantling them. Policy uncertainty directly impacts development processes and confidence as well as foreign investment. If the goal is to keep New Zealand’s private development pipeline moving, “consistency is key”.



# Delivery models

**PANEL:** Ross Copland, CEO, Southern Infrastructure; Todd Moyle, Chief Executive, Ngāi Tahu Holdings; Ian Purdy, Head of Property and Infrastructure Investment, Accident Compensation Corporation; Erana Sitterle, Manager Portfolio Investment, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

**FACILITATOR:** Sarah Sinclair, Partner, MinterEllisonRuddWatts

New Zealand faces a substantial and worsening infrastructure deficit, but the core constraint is not capital availability; it is the absence of certainty, coordination, and decision-making pace required to deploy it effectively.

Across sectors, there is strong appetite for both domestic and international private investment. However, inconsistent pipelines, unclear revenue pathways, and policy volatility – particularly where projects are delayed, re-scoped, or cancelled – are deterring commitment. The panel emphasised that investor confidence depends on stable settings, credible long-term planning, and a transparent line-of-sight between investment and returns.

Government's role is pivotal. Central and local government must shift from process-heavy, risk-averse decision-making to outcome-focused delivery. Excessive reliance on business cases, peer reviews, and prolonged consultation is slowing

progress and increasing costs. Decision paralysis poses the risk of significant economic and social burden, especially in high-growth regions and underfunded sectors such as health, water, and transport.

Practical opportunities exist to unlock delivery, including standardised procurement models, long-term leasing structures, asset recycling, and better integration of consenting and planning functions. Key enablers include improving coordination across agencies and setting processes to allow faster, more confident decisions.

Culturally, the sector must rebuild trust in professional expertise and demonstrate greater willingness to take informed risks. Strong leadership, particularly from Government as a client, is essential to reset expectations and align stakeholders.



# Views from the market: The contractor's perspective

PANEL: Dan Boshier, Director – NZ, Icon; Sarah Drinkwater, National Commercial Manager, Fletcher Construction; Brett Russell, Managing Director, Dominion Constructors

FACILITATOR: Vimal Nair, Partner, MinterEllisonRuddWatts



This panel brought together leading contractors to share their experience navigating a construction market in transition.

## Market conditions

Despite a period of contraction over the past two years, optimism was a defining theme of the panellists' discussion. Secured future workloads and improving productivity have provided a degree of stability in the construction market. The project pipelines remain promising, giving the market confidence to press forward despite the challenges posed by a reduced labour pool.

## Pipeline and procurement uncertainty

A central theme was the difficulty of planning around an unfunded and

unpredictable project pipeline. Contractors are finding it increasingly difficult to retain talent and manage resources effectively when pipeline timing remains uncertain. The public sector's procurement landscape is fragmented and inconsistent, with no single, coherent interface for the market. There is a need for consents and funding commitments to translate into actual construction, rather than project deferrals.

## Risk allocation and contract practice

Balanced, well-drafted contracts lead to better pricing and fewer disputes. Heavily amended contracts that skew risk onto contractors are a key driver of inflated costs and

adversarial relationships. Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) was highlighted as a valuable procurement mechanism, provided it is not used simply to transfer design risk. An open-book approach and clearer delivery model selection lead to better outcomes for all parties involved.

## Looking ahead

Looking ahead, greater bipartisan commitment to a long-term infrastructure pipeline, and a more consistent, partnership-oriented approach to procurement that enables contractors to price work fairly and deliver successfully is required to weather the current market conditions.

# The shape of the world to come

Dr Paul G. Buchanan, Director, 36<sup>th</sup> Parallel Assessments

We are living through a structural shift in how the international system is organised and how power is exercised within it. For businesses and their legal advisers, the rules that once provided a stable backdrop for commercial decision-making are under active challenge, and the actors reshaping outcomes are no longer only the ones you expect.

## From balance to uncertainty

The international system has moved through three phases: a bipolar world of two nuclear superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union); a unipolar moment of American dominance; and now an emerging multipolar order, as China, India, and Russia rebuilt their capabilities while the United States was otherwise occupied. Alongside nation states, technology conglomerates and their supply chain

adjacents now sit as actors of genuine consequence.

The result is a poly-centric network of global actors, clustering around shared interests and often competing where their ambitions conflict.

## Rules are being broken

In times of systemic transition, norm violations and challenges to the existing order are defining features. We are in the early phase of a post-liberal order, with support for democracy falling from roughly 80% to around 50% globally. The risks of this are only enhanced through the lingering institutional lag affecting complex organisations.

In particular, domestic inertia is plaguing global businesses as something truly drastic would have to occur for many to alter their ways of

doing things. Even a global pandemic only prompted 20-40% of businesses to change.

## Hedging as strategy

The solution is hedging. Not covering all bets, however building genuine adaptability. Tactically, that means solving problems as they arise. Strategically, it means planning at least five years ahead for a world with few binding rules and new actors continuously emerging. This uncertainty means that stress-testing contracts and supply chains and treating geopolitical volatility as a core operational variable is essential.

The future is uncertain, and this uncertainty provides opportunity.

The preparation starts now.



# Contact

Building Together | From pipeline to delivery was hosted by the MinterEllisonRuddWatts

[Construction and Infrastructure Division.](#)

Our sector-leading, specialist team has the largest dedicated offering in New Zealand.

We are involved in all aspects of construction and infrastructure projects across the country, both in the private and public sectors.



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