

I am writing to apply for the 2019 New Zealand Study Tour Award. My name is Christopher Wong, a Graduate Transport Engineer in WSP's Sydney office. Below follows my address of the selection criteria.

**1. Outline the knowledge you will focus on acquiring from attending the conference.**

“The Changing Face of Transport in NZ.” This topic resonates with me as it speaks to the forward-looking nature of our profession. It also reminds me of the reason I am in this industry – as transport professionals, the systems and plans we implement today can promote economic growth while decreasing congestion and improving safety along our transport system and within our cities long into the future. Given the long-term implications and costly implementation that transport planning solutions typically have, it is important that we understand the best practices in the industry such that we can make the decisions that benefit the community the most.

This conference will allow me to learn about these best practices by hearing from leaders in their field. In particular, I would love to learn more about the four broad topics: Engagement & People, Road Safety, Mobility & Growth, and Public Transport & Road Space Allocation.

- **Engagement and People**

For me, urban and transport planning should focus on providing accessibility and connectivity between people and liveable communities. It is important to remember transport systems are designed for people to use, and we should consider the end users in design and implementation. Increasingly in the industry, I've seen a renewed focus on considering customer experience research, for example, in the design of metro networks. I think it is very important to consult community early in the design process as it becomes increasingly difficult to address potential concerns as a project progresses.

In order to understand this better, I would like to attend the presentations “Are we talking reality here?” and “Putting people first.” I believe these presentations will allow me to understand best practices on how we can fully integrate customer and community focus into both our designs and implementation.

- **Road Safety**

Safety is paramount on all transport projects. The plenary session “Auckland: the case for Vision Zero” speaks strongly to me as I firmly believe no death should be acceptable. I'm interested in this presentation to learn about the integration of this approach to road safety through Auckland Transport and how this can be applied to other governing bodies across the world.

Unfortunately, I also understand that there are limited resources available to make roads safer, so it is important that we implement the most beneficial and cost-effective strategies. I am interested in the presentations “Understanding vulnerable road user crash risk” and “Why drivers crash close to home” as they provide an understanding of at risk users and high-risk areas of a road network. Identifying these areas and users may help direct funding and decision making to where it is needed most.

- **Mobility and Growth**

Another area I would like to focus on acquiring knowledge in is mobility and growth. As urban population density continues to increase, it becomes increasingly important to have resilient transport systems that service the needs of the community well into the future.

I would like to attend the presentations “Accommodating growth on urban networks” and “Getting transit oriented development right” because I think these issues are very prevalent in Sydney. It is important that our transport networks have the capacity to service our people and their economic growth. Doing so can be difficult, and these presentations will provide me with examples from leading case studies that can potentially be implemented in Sydney or any urban environment.

### **Public Transport and Road Space Allocation**

The last area I would like to focus on at the IPENZ conference is public transport and road space allocation. Public transport such as buses can add more capacity to a road network by allowing more people to travel in each vehicle. This provides benefits to traffic congestion and reduces environmental impacts. Increasingly, urban cities are seeking ways to shift mode share away from private vehicles and onto public transport.

I believe the presentations “Improving PT reliability on Auckland’s motorways” and “Rapid transit network planning” will help me better understand some of the strategies used to shift commuter mindsets and make public transport more appealing.

Through various morning teas, lunches and dinners, the conference will also provide me the opportunity to network and speak with established professionals working in both the public and private sector. This will allow me to build my knowledge base through their perspectives, while giving me a chance to share mine.

## **2. Outline the potential application of this knowledge to your current role**

As a Graduate Transport Engineer at WSP, I have been privileged to work on a variety of transport projects that have involved planning and modelling new intersection layouts and road alignments, sometimes with new road space allocations. Invariably, the projects have been focused on either improving safety, public and active transport usage, pedestrian connectivity or traffic flow.

The knowledge I will focus on attaining at the conference will intersect directly with the work that I do. Hearing from and speaking to experienced professionals in my topics of interest will help shape my knowledge and insight as a transport engineer. In particular, I believe the topics ‘people and engagement’ and ‘road safety’ will help me reaffirm the priorities of transport engineering. This will allow me to better implement this thinking in my career by hearing from best practice examples of how to integrate safety and user-oriented thinking into the design and operation of transport systems.

Moving forward in my career, as transport continues to evolve, I believe the role of urban mobility and public transport will become even more important. Implementing urban transport options such as metro and light rail systems often require redefining mode share priorities and reallocating road space. This can be especially difficult in strongly built up areas, such as Sydney. Acquiring knowledge in how rapid transit networks are implemented in various cities through leading case studies will help me understand how I can produce better outcomes for the community at large.

Moreover, attending the conference will give me the chance to meet with professionals of diverse backgrounds and experiences, allowing me to build a network with which to sound ideas and garner opinions from. This is invaluable and will help shape my knowledge of global transport issues. Naturally, this knowledge will serve as a catalyst in the workplace, where I can start conversations and provide thought leadership on certain topics, provoking more thinking and better solutions for end users.

### **3. Outline how you will enhance the AITPM/IPENZ relationship while at the conference**

I hope to enhance the strong IPENZ/AITPM relationship by doing a number of things both during and after the conference. During the conference, I will raise awareness of AITPM and the upcoming conference in Adelaide through meeting and talking with IPENZ members. I will encourage them to attend as it will be a wonderful opportunity for them to exchange knowledge and information, much like the IPENZ TG conference will be for me. I will also raise awareness of the AITPM podcast, which will provide them another avenue of connecting with AITPM. During the conference, I will also effectively use social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter. This will promote the strong relationship between the two organisations on a broader scale, such as to prospective members of both organisations.

After the conference, I am committed to promoting the IPENZ/AITPM relationship to AITPM members by writing an article for the AITPM newsletter. In the article, I will include a summary of my learnings, numerous pictures, and a brief statement on the benefits of the strong relationship between our organisations. After the conference, I am also committed to presenting at a NSW technical forum. I suspect many members may be unfamiliar with IPENZ, especially newer members. Through my strong public speaking skills, I will present some of the more technical aspects of knowledge I obtained at the conference. The presentation will be a good chance to raise awareness of our strong relationship, while also promoting the 2020 IPENZ TG conference as an opportunity for AITPM members to exchange knowledge.

I hope my address of the selection criteria has given you confidence in my strong desire to learn and exchange information as a keen transport professional, and that it has also shown my commitment to enhancing the strong two-way relationship between AITPM and IPENZ.

Thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards,

Christopher Wong