Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is often discussed as the future of transport, however there is no one clear definition of what it means. Depending on the agent, and the audience, it can be described as applications which aid modal and journey choice, a transport service such as Uber, or to denote a wider vision of shared mobility. But these services and concepts already exist, and may have done so for decades in different cities. So what is it and why is it different?

As we transition to a MaaS future, an agreed-upon definition will be vital in informing the understanding, application and success of the MaaS concept.

As transport professionals we have a responsibility to guide the role of MaaS to achieve the best outcomes. How can we best use the concepts of MaaS to promote sustainable travel, improve efficiency and increase accessibility for sectors of the community while also recognising, and addressing any downsides? For example, disruptive ride-hailing technologies such as Uber may replace bus usage. If we do not provide guidance, MaaS could result in an increase in overall vehicle kilometres travelled and congestion. What is the role of transport professionals in managing this transition?

The focus of this discussion will be on how we may want to define MaaS in the New Zealand context and how we can create an operational and regulatory environment in which the opportunities for MaaS can be harnessed to ensure we can achieve a sustainable and efficient transport system for the future.