

**NCWNZ Oral Submission to the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee
On the Land Transport Management Amendment Bill (46-1), 15 Nov 2012**

Committee Present

David Bennett (N) (Chair)

Jami-Lee Ross (N) (Deputy Chair)

Chris Auchinvole (N)

Ian Lees Galloway (L)

Andrew Little (L)

Simon O'Connor (N)

Julie Anne Genter (G)

Scott Simpson (N)

Good morning. I am Wendy Zemanek and my colleague is Helen Reilly. We are both members of the Parliamentary Watch Committee.

In 1991, NCWNZ passed a resolution noting with concern the reclassification of state highways and asked the Minister of Transport for 50% at least of fuel taxes to be returned to Transit New Zealand for the maintenance of state highways and former state highways. So we have a history of support for that procedure.

In 1998, there was a resolution that we should urge the Minister of Transport to reject any proposal to commercialise the New Zealand roading system. This concern is still apparent, in a number of the responses we received to the current Amendment Bill.

Our membership was asked to state the best possible method or combination of methods for the funding of land transport. There was a keen awareness of population increase and that consequentially there will be an ever-increasing number of vehicles on the roads.

Overall, a carbon tax was supported, so that in effect, it would be 'user pays'; large vehicles which emit high amounts of greenhouse gases would pay more than small, energy-efficient vehicles.

Some members supported road tolls, especially for new structures such as bridges and tunnels, in particular on new roads – provided that there were alternative routes for those not wishing to pay tolls - or not able to afford them.

Overall statement

With regard to the current bill, NCW applauds the intent – to streamline and simplify the current inconsistencies and ambiguities in the purpose and decision-making criteria. However, considerable concern was expressed about the costs involved. One of our branches pointed out that no public land transport anywhere in the world is funded entirely from patronage – all systems require subsidies.

Members agreed that fuel taxes should be the main revenue source for the building of New Zealand roads. Some members supported road tolls, in particular on new roads, provided that alternative roads are available for those not wishing – or not financially able - to pay tolls.

We understand that the cost of toll collection absorbs most of the income received and the remainder is usually used to contribute to the cost of road construction. This does not appear to be a successful financial model for the future.

Other Options

A suggestion was made that 'congestion charging' could be considered for vehicles entering the Central Business District of the largest cities – Auckland in particular. Income from this charge

could then be utilised for subsidies to public transport. This occurs in places such as London, with a tax on cars entering the CBD. In Singapore, traffic numbers in the CBD have been reduced by 13% (270,000 to 234,000) and carpooling has increased, which has also made it easier to find a parking place. On motorways in California, there's a high occupancy lane for cars with more than one person aboard, which has resulted in a reduction in the number of vehicles on the roads.

Our Papakura Franklin Branch referred to the existence of interest or stakeholder groups which are represented at Regional Land Transport committees. Although they do not have a vote, they make a valuable contribution to debate and they express concerns about issues that affect their members.

NCW strongly supports the general public making submissions on the funding of public transport and the way roads are operated. The public's experience of road conditions and driver behaviour in their own area, can be extremely useful.

Recently there has been an uproar in Wellington, because a number of pedestrians have been hit by buses in Willis Street, after changes to the 'expected' conditions. This happened despite publicity about the changes.

Adequate and regular public transport is essential! In Wellington light rail has been mooted, but it is hard to imagine where it might be sited, with the roads often filled with traffic already and pedestrians taking up the footpaths.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to our submission.

Report

There were no questions.

The submitters previous to NCW were from the NZ Automobile Association

The AA supports some of the ideas in the Bill such as: the checks and balances it proposes, and the retention of the regional fuel tax for Auckland. However, the AA feels strongly that the consultation processes as outlined in the Bill are inadequate.

Its specific concerns about the Bill are:

- * how debts will be funded
- * the lack of privacy involved in the use of a credit card
- * the lack of consultation for either local government or road users
- * the fact that there is no provision in the Bill for consulting the NZAA, which has 1.25 million members, at either regional or national level.

Question: Jami-Lee Ross asked about the degree of consultation NZAA currently has.

Answer: NZAA is no longer represented at either the local or the national level of the NZ Transport Agency.

Clarification by the AA representatives: Road users and local government officers have different concerns. Parking, for example, is a local matter, which may not necessarily concern road users.