



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Ministry of Transport on Tackling Congestion in Auckland:
Auckland Road Pricing Evaluation Study**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 38 nationally organised societies. It has 32 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies. It also has a growing number of individual members. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

This submission has been written by the Public Issues Standing Committee of NCWNZ, the committee responsible for transport issues within the organization. The bulk of the comments are from NCWNZ members in Auckland branch, West Auckland discussion group and Manukau branch. Input has also been made by the Economics Standing Committee.

It is agreed that traffic congestion in Auckland impacts on the economy of the nation as a whole, as well as impacting on the health of Auckland residents and the Auckland environment.

NCWNZ has put forward many submissions over the years on transport including one on the Roothing Advisory Group final report: 'Road Reform the Way forward' in July 1997 and on the discussion document 'Better Transport Better Roads' in April 1999. In the latter NCWNZ was concerned at the concept of toll roads and private companies and considered that a commercial model of roading is unacceptable. We also agreed that, 'solutions to traffic problems for large urban situations must be dealt with as local needs dictate'.

Auckland branch has also made many submissions over the years on roading and transport issues to the local territorial authorities.

This present study is perceived as a potential local solution to a problem that has wider than local implications.

The study and its findings:

There was a lot to read and digest, much of which was repetitive. This amount of material made it difficult for a nationwide organization to précis and distribute to the wider membership. The quantity of information was too large to be used well in the time frame allowed for public response. We hope the Ministry notes this for other public consultation occasions.

Comments on the options.

1 Single Cordon

Auckland Branch members prefer this scheme as this would affect commuters from the outlying districts more than those within the cordon. As there is only one way around the Manukau Harbour, commuters travelling across the city eg Titirangi to Pakuranga, Titirangi to Mangere would also be affected, so it would be not only motorway traffic but all commuters outside the cordon which would feel the effects, whereas those within the cordon would not be charged.





Manukau branch considered that the single cordon scheme would be the most appropriate system of creating further income for roading, if a decision is made to go ahead with one of the proposed schemes.

2 Double Cordon

For commuters from the west there would be some relief as the outer cordon appears to be closer to the CBD.

People living within the inner city suburbs would be most disadvantaged financially.

3 Area Charge

This would affect only those entering the CBD. The relief of motorway traffic would not be as effective as commuters who exit to work in suburban districts would still be using part of the motorway.

4 Strategic Network

This would encourage motorists to use suburban roads to weave their way instead of entering the motorway. Although motorway way traffic might be reduced a little the danger to school children and residents of neighbourhood streets would be increased.

Residents of North Shore City seem to be the most disadvantaged with a \$6 Bridge charge.

NCWNZ would question the fact that this charge is double the \$3.00 suggested for the rest of the network.

5 Parking Levy

Manukau branch was adamant that parking levies are no solution to the problem.

In Auckland and West Auckland this scheme resulted in heated debate with strong disapproval. It was unclear if the levy would apply all day or only for those parking before 10 am. i.e. All day parking.

- a) Parking is expensive already and with an additional levy would be prohibitive.
- b) It could increase early morning traffic in Henderson, Takapuna and Manukau if workers were driven to work and collected at the end of the day.
- c) Retailers would be affected if it applies all day. At present shopping mall car parking is free. If a \$10 levy on every car is imposed patronage of shopping malls would be affected. Perhaps people would find another pastime than window shopping in which case retailers miss out on impulse buys. Henderson for example is being developed as a major civic centre with a central library and increased shopping. A \$10 parking levy would discourage the frequency of visits.
- d) If the parking levy is not confined to 6 am -10 am but is an all day charge it would affect voluntary workers in places such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Resource Centres etc.
If the levy is restricted to 6 am -10 am there could be an increase in glide time work hours which could increase traffic during the rest of the day.
- e) We do not have any knowledge of Wellington's Coupon Parking and would be interested to know the cost and effectiveness of the scheme in reducing traffic. We suspect that it is a scheme designed to reduce the competition for inner-city parking, in order to protect the rights of inner-city residents to parking in their community.

Comments on the concept of road pricing

- Funding transport in the Auckland Region by the use of any of the toll systems cited could not be undertaken without causing significant economic and social problems. None of these systems should be put in place until good alternative systems of transport are available.



- Due to housing developments in out-lying suburbs in West and South Auckland and on the North Shore, a large percentage of the Auckland Region's population have to travel to their work.
 - a) A large proportion of workers choose to travel by private transport as it is more economic to do so in respect of time taken.

eg, A member travelling from Grey Lynn to her worksite in Mt Roskill takes 10 to 20 minutes by car depending on the traffic flow. To travel by bus would involve two bus trips, one into the city and one out, consequent walking and waiting adding up to approximately one and a half hours if the buses are on time. If she had children it would involve longer child care arrangements and the consequent costs.
 - b) It is unrealistic for people to change their living arrangements every time a member of the household changes their job. A consequence of this is that many households have multiple vehicles.
 - c) A significant reduction in peak hour road use is noticed when there are school holidays. Parents wishing to be assured of their child's safety drop their children at school and students drive themselves to school and tertiary institutions. A suggestion has been that schools start at 9:30 am. Other strategies are the provision of school buses, and more walking buses.
 - d) Many working parents take their children to and from childcare and schools on their way to and from work. If working parents were required to use public transport there would be a significant rise in the numbers of children left at (primary) schools very early in the morning, and left waiting to be picked up late in the afternoon. There could be significant safety and staffing issues as a result of this.

- Some members queried the need to make a profit from the exercise, and thought this was only worthwhile if profit was used to continue the work to improve the congestion, eg investing the money in public transport (good bus, ferry and rail services) and road improvements. It was suggested that currently a lot of money from vehicle registration, petrol tax, traffic fines, tax on vehicle insurance, court fines goes into the consolidated fund. If more of this revenue were used directly for transport the need to raise more money by congestion charging would not be an issue.

- Members outside Auckland approved the idea that drivers in Auckland pay for achieving some resolution of the problem of traffic congestion. There was also the suggestion that inducements for industry to move away from Auckland to where there was alternative access to international air traffic and port facilities, could be a move to relieve congestion and to improve the economy in other parts of the country.

Alternatives to road pricing

- If a percentage of commuters using cars were to change to using public transport, there would be relief of congestion. The difference in volume of traffic between school terms and holidays shows that removing a percentage of users has wide positive repercussions. As the price of petrol and diesel increases it will become much more cost effective to use public transport. However public transport will only be used if it provides a frequent reliable service.

We suggest that public transport could be improved by: -

- a) Providing adequate parking at feeding stations / termini in the suburbs. This has been proved successful overseas.
- b) Lower or no cost parking at feeding stations / termini.
- c) Termini located at supermarkets, malls, railway stations.
- d) Reliable timetables
- e) The provision of more designated bus lanes.



- f) Free phone calls at 'bus stops' for timetables and connections.
 - g) Seating at bus stops
 - h) Shelters at every second bus stop.
 - i) Smaller buses to feed main arterial routes, and at off peak times and within suburban areas.
 - j) School to start at 9:30am
 - k) More school buses.
 - l) Separate bike lanes.
 - m) Electrification of the rail corridor, double tracking, park and ride facilities, small buses moving around the suburban streets collecting rail passengers, co-ordination of bus, rail and ferry tickets and passes and frequent service on reliable trains and buses.
 - n) Consideration could be given to the Octopus pass system used in Hong Kong. A card can be purchased for several amounts and used by holding against a scanner even while still in a wallet or pocket. A deduction occurs at that point.
 - o) Practical approach to increasing the safe use of bicycles and scooters, these being able to use bus lanes. This may mean lanes on Harbour bridge, cycleways, scooters and bus lane, free cycle transport on ferries etc.
 - p) Better rail link system in Auckland area and to Onehunga, Airport and Manukau City.
 - q) No more large roads
 - r) Education
 - s) Parents/guardians taking children to school should not use cars but use the walking bus.
- Traffic Officers should be a separate entity to the police and be responsible for undertaking a full check on the driver and the vehicle when stopping cars for a traffic offence. This should assist towards getting non-registered drivers and/or vehicles off the road. Payment of traffic officers costs should come directly out of the income derived from the province they monitor.
 - Auckland members also suggested that improvement in driver behaviour could alleviate some aspects of congestion
 - a) Merge like a zip.
 - b) Keep intersections clear. If the roadway ahead is full, don't enter and clog up the intersection.
 - c) Use indicators to avoid confusion. The present use of indicators at roundabouts is often poorly done and confusing.
 - d) Pull over to the left when making a left turn, pull over to the centre strip when turning right to leave through traffic free to move.
 - e) Honour the bus lanes and no parking zones.
 - There is a need for better transparency in where the fuel taxes go. Auckland and West Auckland branches suggested that as one third of the population live in the Auckland Region, therefore one third of road funding should go to Auckland Region. Manukau branch also considered that income the government receives from the community which relates directly to the use of vehicles and traffic movement should be used in that particular area for the maintenance and building of roads in the area. Presently nobody knows how much goes into the government coffers from this revenue and it is about time that these funds were used only for the maintenance and building of the roading system province by province.
 - Public transport is too limited. To catch a bus to and from work takes up far more time than tackling the present road congestion. At present it is considerably more expensive to take a bus three stages return, than to drive your own car and park.
 - Roads are not efficient or wide enough to warrant a toll charge.



- The idea that new revenue gained could be used for transport maintenance and upgrading is un-realistic as the operational costs would swallow up all the revenue and even perhaps leave a deficit. More personnel to police the system would be an additional cost.

Conclusion

We acknowledge that action must be taken while also understanding that it may be years before anything is in place. However there is still opposition to additional pricing for Auckland road users, certainly until improved public transport is available as a reasonable alternative for those for whom it is suitable. Congestion charging succeeds in London as there are good alternative options in public transport. Good public transport is the key.

Members had many questions about the costs of setting up and maintaining any road pricing system.

NCWNZ thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this very important issue.

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