

Roundabout

Magazine of the Transportation Group NZ

Issue 180 June 2024

180!

Welcome to issue number 180

(Apologies for the obscure darts reference)

In this edition:

- Conference photos
- New Fellows and Life Members
- A view from Japan
- Inclusive signage
- Dancing Axel

And much more...



Editorial



Daniel Newcombe
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I'm also pleased to note that Roundabout has reached it's 180th edition, which isn't a particularly auspicious milestone, unless you have played darts

I'm writing this editorial before attending our annual conference in Nelson, but if it is anything like out previous ones I know it will be a well-organised and enjoyable event, complete with lots of catching up with colleagues from around the country.

My role is solely focused within Auckland, so I rarely get to experience projects and planning from around the country, and the conference is a great opportunity to hear about the issues, learnings and challenges that others are dealing with.

I always come away from the conference with a renewed appreciation of all the great work happening across the country, occurring at a range of scales and dealing with often very localized issues.

I am particularly appreciative of the work underway to respond to and plan for climate change events – flood recovery, etc.

This shouldn't be seen as a one-off process, as I hope we all realise that climate events are going to increase in frequency and severity. Therefore our planning and investment necessarily has to have a different focus than just fixing an immediate transport issue.

I know we are all experiencing tough economic times and in some cases this has restricted the ability of Group members to be able to attend the conference.

I personally think that making and maintaining professional connections across the industry is a highly valuable resource for any organisation – even if it doesn't seem like these immediately generate new business opportunities or work.

I urge you all to continue to value and support the Group's conference and other networking events, as it really is these personal and professional connections which sustain our Group.

If you couldn't get to the conference – or even if you did – please keep attending local branch events, or think about presenting some of your own work at one of these events.

I'm also pleased to note that Roundabout has reached it's 180th edition, which isn't a particularly auspicious milestone, unless you have played darts – in which case you know it is maximum score. So this edition has positive vibes. In this day and age, I'll take any positivity I can get.

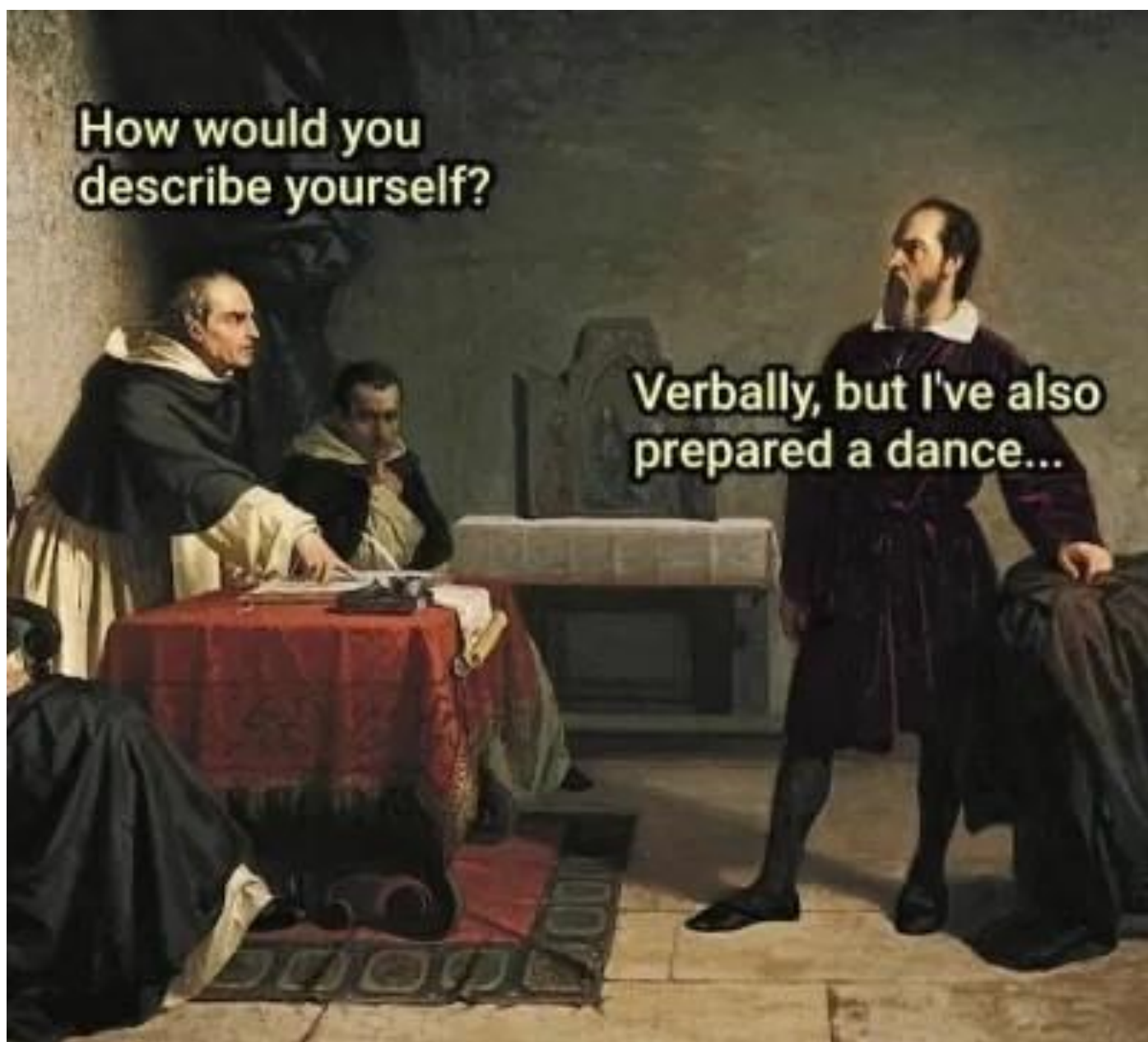
Keep an eye out in future editions for some of the award-winning papers from the conference. As they are every conference – guessing in advance – these are great and show some of the amazing work our members are doing.



**TRANSPORTATION
GROUP** NEW ZEALAND

Inside this issue:

Chair's Chat	4	Its time for women at the table	31
Bridget's Rant	9	"So where are you from?"	34
Conference photos	10	Hands free bus driving	36
BoP branch update	15	Te Huia update	43
New ENZ Fellows	16	Low traffic neighbourhoods	46
Reflections on transport in Japan	19	No more horn beeping!	48
Safe streets in Nelson	24	World's most expensive LRT	52
New Life Members	26	Re-using EV batteries	55
Inclusive signage	29	Dancing Axel	58
		Transport Advice for Dummies	68



Roundabout is the magazine of the Transportation Group NZ, published quarterly. It features topical articles and other relevant tidbits from the traffic engineering and transport planning world, as well as details on the latest happenings in the NZ transportation scene.

All contributions, including articles, letters to the editor, amusing traffic related images and anecdotes are welcome. Opinions expressed in Roundabout are not necessarily the opinion of the Transportation Group NZ or the editor, except the editorial of course.

here is no charge for publishing vacancies for transportation professionals, as this is considered an industry-supporting initiative.

Correspondence welcome, to editor Daniel Newcombe at:
daniel.newcombe@at.govt.nz

Roundabout is published around the 15th of March, June, September and December each year, and contributions are due by the 10th of each publication month.

A monthly Mini-Roundabout email update is circulated on the 15th of in-between months and contributions are due by the 12th of each month.

If somehow you have come to be reading Roundabout but aren't yet a member of the Transportation Group NZ, you are most welcome to join. Just fill in an application form, available from the Group website:
www.transportationgroup.nz

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John Lieswyn
National Committee
Chair
john@viastrada.nz

Chair's Chat

This Chair's Chat summarises Group activities since our last AGM in March 2023.

Key activities

Changing policies. With ongoing implications of the change of Government and policy direction, this is one of the most turbulent years in the Group's history. Your National Committee and several member volunteers worked hard to prepare a [submission](#) on the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport that your Chair presented in person to the Minister.

However the changes affecting many of our livelihoods are inescapable and for many of us very traumatic. Now more than ever, we need the strength of our collective to sustain us.

Our Central Branch Chair Peter Cockrem has led the development of a Principles document to help ground us, and we have also just embarked upon an ambitious project to prepare standalone Group Policies on various transport topics.

These evidence-based summaries are intended to support Group members with the preparation of submissions to all levels of government in coming years. Watch this space – we'll be recruiting Subject Matter Experts from across the Group to help write these policies.

The Group continues to actively advance the knowledge, planning and management of transport in New Zealand.

Special thanks to everyone who has volunteered time to help organise activities, contribute to peer review or judging, contribute time or writing to support our communications.

I'd especially like to thank Canterbury Branch member Grace Ryan for leading the organisation of a recent well-attended (200!) webinar on road and congestion pricing featuring Peter Nunns. The topic is supported in principle in the draft GPS and we are looking forward to action on this front.

Disability Internship. Our sponsorship of a student with an interest in a career in transport, who identifies as a disabled person, is doing good to promote inclusive outcomes in our work, and a more inclusive culture in our profession.

Our 2023/24 intern Tara Shepherd is studying a Bachelor of Applied Science at the University of Otago. During her internship Tara worked remotely from home in Westport under the guidance of our past chair Bridget Doran, visited Group members in Nelson, and wrote a research report: *Optimizing Sustainable Transportation During Emergency Management Situations and Coastal Disaster Mitigation*.

Climate change. After gathering momentum in 2023 in support of the Group's focus on responding to planetary crises, most obviously to climate change and the need to decarbonising the transport system, we are likely taking a big step backward with the new draft GPS.

The world is failing to take climate change seriously, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't do everything we can – small efforts add up and lessen the impact on future peoples, flora and fauna. We support Engineering New Zealand's programme, Engineering Climate Action, which exists to support engineers to take positive action to address climate change.

Following on from the recent publication of the [Climate Action Practice Note](#), the Engineering Climate Action Programme is focused on strengthening relationships with the relevant ENZ Technical Groups. ENZ is running a survey right now to compile the important work being

The Group continues to actively advance the knowledge, planning and management of transport in New Zealand.

undertaken in the Climate Action space, including resources developed, current challenges/barriers, and how ENZ can best support the groups to transition, mitigate and adapt to climate change. I encourage all of you to participate now: [Climate Action Survey](#)

National Committee

The National Committee currently includes:

- John Lieswyn (Chair and acting Membership Secretary)
- Mark Gregory (Vice Chair & Trips Database Bureau)
- Bridget Doran (Immediate Past Chair)
- Melanie Muirson (Treasurer)
- Craig Richards (Waikato/BOP Branch)
- Stephanie Wilcox (Membership Secretary)
- Lewis Thorwaldson (Auckland and Northland Branch)
- Peter Cockrem (Central Branch)
- Michael Town (Nelson/Marlborough Branch)
- Karishma Kumar (Canterbury and West Coast)
- Aaron Isaacs (Southern)
- Daniel Newcombe (Roundabout Editor, Awards Convener)
- Glen Koorey (Active Modes Infrastructure Group Liaison)
- Bevan Wilmshurst (Modelling User Group)
- Tony Brennand (Trips Database Bureau)
- Matthew Hoyle (Signals Network User Group)

The Treasurer's Report is available for review [HERE](#)



We acknowledge and thank those who stood down from the National Committee over the last 12 months:

- Matthew Hoyle (Auckland/Northland Branch)
- Clare Scott (Nelson Branch)
- Stacey Lloyd (Canterbury/West Coast Branch)

Membership and member achievements

The Group has 1,120 members, a slight reduction from 1,135 in April 2023 and 1,181 Members in April 2022. This includes 113 students, 391 MUGS members, 331 SNUGS members and 264 Safety Practitioners members. Currently, joining subgroups is unmonitored and free. We have changed the application form to encourage people to only sign up if they are active professionals in each of the speciality areas.

While we cannot shy away from the possibility that the Group needs to provide more value to membership to reverse this downward trend, it may also be a reflection of the plethora of transportation oriented groups.

Transportation professionals today have the choice of ITS-NZ (Intelligent Transportation Systems) and their sub-group Young Transport Professionals, PTAANZ (Public Transport), SAASTA (Safe and Sustainable Transport), TPS-NZ (Transportation Planning Society), CILT-NZ (Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport), ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers), REAAA (Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia) and of course Trafanz.

Over the past year I have convened three meetings with other group leaders in an effort to address the dilution of resources and duplication of services that this fragmentation is causing. The leaders have resolved to better coordinate our activities through periodic meetings and we are attempting to create a shared events calendar. I'd like to acknowledge the achievement of five of our members in becoming fellows of ENZ: Dr. Glen Koorey, Dr. Shane Turner, Emma Fisk, Julian Chisnall, & Dawn Inglis. Well done!

Subgroups

MUGS

The Modelling User Group continues to build and develop on the momentum and success over a number of years. The MUGS Chair (Bevan Wilmshurst) is very pleased to welcome new committee members and the enthusiasm and energy they've brought to our activities:

- Held successful, enjoyable, and well-reviewed 16th Annual Conference in Auckland
- Welcomed new, passionate, and enthusiastic committee members
- Continue to consider and support new initiatives including tweaks and updates to our Conference

- Three research projects: Cycle modelling, COVID office trip rates, Predicted vs. Actual Phase 2
- Working with the AITPM Transport Modelling Network on joint webinars

Safety Practitioners

Now in its second year, the Safety Practitioners Group continues to share best practice and support members in the preparation of useful and consistent safety audits. have hosted two successful events over the past year, one online and in person in Christchurch and the other fully online. The topics covered:

- Safer Streets for Safer Mobility: Reducing harm through speed management.
- Roundabouts are the solution for all intersections. Or are they?

Our group also supported a joint webinar with the ACRS NZ Chapter to give our members the opportunity to hear two of the presentations from the ACRS 2023 conference that was held in Cairns. Safety Practitioners and ACRS NZ collaborated in a call for applications for a \$1,500 TG travel costs grant to help a Group member attend ACRS 2024. The award went to University of Canterbury student member Yu Li, and she will be reporting back to the full Transportation Group on the highlights of the conference in due course.

SNUG

SNUG is preparing to update the signal auditor's guidebook in the coming year.

Finances

The Treasurers Report is [here](#). As of 5 June 2024, the overall group account has a \$13,765 positive variance (to end of April) when tracking against the budget.

We had expenses of \$73,695, for the financial year to date versus income of \$87,460. We are still under-budget for the year so far, but we expect to incur a small loss on the Conference this year. The income from membership subscriptions is just over \$6K per month - has been a slight increase in last month.

Engineering NZ support

Thanks to:

- Alison Acuzar (Policy Advisor),
- Bryony Lane (Programme Manager Engineering Climate Action)
- Gabriella Wilson (Engagement Coordinator),
- Jodi Caughley (General Manager Strategy),
- Luke Perry (Sponsorship),
- Richard Templer (Chief Executive),
- Robbie McDougall (Strategic Engagement Manager),

The Transportation Group currently has 1,120 members



*I look forward to
another great year of
comradery and
knowledge sharing
with you all*

- Tula Androustos (Membership Advisor) and
- the rest of the ENZ team who have and continue to assist us in advocacy to central government as well as the management and operation of the Transportation Group.

Submissions

In the previous year we submitted on both the previous and current Government draft GPS documents. See our [submissions page](#) for more information.

We continue to provide a voice and opportunity for Members to submit on policies of interest. As previously mentioned we are embarking upon the development of standalone, easily updated topical policies similar to the combined work by Engineers Australia's Transport Society [Policy and planning advice](#) (August 2023).

The intention is that these issues papers will be factual, concise, and help us create customised submissions quickly and consistently.

Conference 2025

It will be a delight to see so many of you in Nelson (despite the headwinds in our sector). Attendance this year is on par with previous conferences in our smaller cities.

Our [list of past conferences](#) shows a clear pattern: NI, NI, SI, NI, NI, SI (two in NI then one in SI). In terms of cities, it is usually Auckland, other NI city, Christchurch, other NI city, Auckland, and then other SI city.

Accordingly it will be ideal to hold the 2025 Conference in a larger North Island city. To get us closer to our traditional March timing, I propose that we aim for early May – just 11 months from now.

All of this depends upon finding the right group of conference committee members!

I look forward to another great year of comradery and knowledge sharing with you all.



NZMUGS NEW ZEALAND MODELLING USER GROUP

2024 CONFERENCE, 9-10 SEPTEMBER TE PAPA, WELLINGTON

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS AND SPONSORS

The NZMUGS Conference provides a great opportunity for customers, researchers, engineers, modellers and other practitioners in the transport planning and modelling fraternity to discuss current developments across a wide range of projects and interests.

To cover what NZMUGS perceives as a growing area of transport planning and modelling practice in New Zealand and Australia, we invite presentations in the following area:

When the political landscape shifts, do transport modellers/ planners/ engineers shift with it?

- Is our technical modelling/ planning/ analytical work changed by the political environment, or do we generate the same results and outputs?
- Do we deliver evidence or values?
- If not VKT, then what?
- Does/ should the principles/ values/beliefs of the transport community shift with the political landscape?
- Are we being overly concerned and effected by short-term desires? Are transport's long term visions and objectives sound and on course?
- When is a project still a good project?

Presentations and Posters

NZMUGS will accept presentations and posters that best illustrate the conference theme.

This year, three types of presentation slots are available:

- A standard slot of 15 minutes with 5 minutes to field questions from the audience
- Shorter "quick fire" presentations of 10 minutes with no questions from the audience
- Longer 25 minutes presentation with 5 minutes to field questions from the audience

The slightly longer 30 minute presentation slot is available for those with a particularly interesting or relevant presentation. If you are interested in a 30 minute presentation slot, please provide a detailed abstract to pitch it to us. "Quick fire" sessions are intended for young professionals and students to present to the industry in a non-threatening environment. As in previous years, there will be prizes for best presenter and best young presenter.

Please submit your conference presentation title and abstract (<300 words) summarising the content of the presentation and how it relates to the conference theme by **28 June 2024**. Please email all enquiries to Zoe Chen at zoe.chen@beca.com with the subject line: '2024 NZMUGS Conference'.

If you are interested in displaying a research poster (either supplementary to your presentation or standalone), please email Zoe Chen.

Sponsorship

We also invite interest in sponsorship and have different levels that will suit a variety of organizations. For these sponsorship opportunities, please contact Zoe Chen for further information with the subject line: '2024 NZMUGS Sponsorship'.



Photo competition—Trees

This edition looks at the amazing greenery that we see around our streets. Seen better trees, send images to: tgroundabout.editor@gmail.com





Bridget's Rant — Keep the faith!

In the beginning (of my career), in the early 2000s - when we sent faxes and took paper maps on site visits, and everyone trudged to the staffroom at 10:20am for instant coffee and a gingernut - reality television dawned.

One of the shows I recall was called Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire. The millionaire was a man (obviously) and the women were beauty pageant contestants (yawn) attempting to literally win his heart, as well as access to half of his material assets.

So, who wants to employ a transport engineer?

Plenty of people in this country, if they think about it for a second.

We have a huge infrastructure deficit, whichever branch of media or government department you listen to.

We have a cost of living crisis, affecting, amongst other things, people's ability to access what they need.



Bridget Doran
Former National Committee Chair
bdoranmrcagney.com



We have a climate crisis, which means we need to reduce emissions, adapt to increasing frequency of storms, and to retrofit our communities to be resilient.

Resilient to what? Not least to global political disruption that's increasingly inevitable as the foundation of society dissolves in rising seas, mutating

viruses, and rising migration to peaceful sanctuaries like New Zealand - which by the way is suffering housing and equality crises our forefathers unknowingly gifted us.

It's an uncertain world but one of opportunity! Engineers and transport professionals are needed, even if job advertisement frequency suggests otherwise.

So, we need to support each other.

This Transportation Group is a readymade audience for the game show, and we can all whoop and cheer one another on even if there's no millionaire employer waiting in the wings.

We can and we must support one another, the best ways we know how - by meeting, in-person and online; by engaging with branch and national events; by going to the effort to make those coffee (and gingernut) appointments and showing up, to talk about the good and prosperous future of our imaginations.

We must act like our country and planet need us because they do.

Keep the faith, faithful readers - I'm definitely cheering you on.

Times have changed.

A fax machine is to teenagers of today, what a slide rule was to me in 2001 - something from the olden days that my older colleagues got all wistful about on occasion, like some of us might do now, before launching into a rant about how we didn't have mobile phones neither, and we showed up to our classes at uni with pens and 1B8s and took notes because there was no other way to get the info down off the blackboard.

Chalk and cheese, those times and now - and yet, life seems increasingly competitive, as though we're living in a TV show of increasing hype and surrealism.

During some recent radio commentary on the economic downturn we're wading through, a journalist asserted that the current job cuts are "only being felt in Wellington" and therefore not on the minds of people elsewhere in the country.

Well, to quote an even earlier television show, "you might very well think that [job cuts are only being felt in Wellington]. I [a Hamiltonian] couldn't possibly comment."

So in this game of life it falls on all of us in transport to invite one another to play. Millionaires and marriage aren't top of mind - but employment and transport engineers are.

We must act like our country and planet need us because they do



Day One Conference photos





Above: Group Chair John Lieswyn with Nelson Mayor Nick Smith and Tasman Deputy Mayor Stuart Bryant





More photos, a list of award winners and a full conference wrap-up will be provided in the September edition of Roundabout. If you took any interesting photos you would like to share, please forward them to Daniel.newcombe@at.govt.nz



Walking tour photos





Ever wondered about all the other Engineering NZ Groups?

Group Type	Group Name	Acronym	Members
TIG	Electrical Engineering Group	EEG	359
TIG	Heavy Vehicle Engineers	HVE	109
TIG	IT Engineers Technical Group	IT	129
TIG	Mechanical Engineering Group	MEG	662
TIG	New Zealand Coastal Society	NZCS	445
TIG	New Zealand Hydropower Group	NZHG	208
TIG	New Zealand Society for Large Dams	NZSOLD	429
TIG	New Zealand Society for Safety Engineering	NZSSE	164
TIG	Railway Technical Society New Zealand	RTSA	254
TIG	Recreation Safety Engineering	RSE	21
TIG	Rivers Group	Rivers Group	401
TIG	Society of Construction Contract Practitioners	SCCP	85
TIG	Society of Fire Protection Engineers	SFPE	269
TIG	Technology Education New Zealand	TENZ	325
TIG	Temporary Works Forum	TWF	281
TIG	The Sustainability Society	TSS	366
CTS	New Zealand Geotechnical Society Inc	NZGS	3282
CTS	New Zealand Institution of Gas Engineers Inc	NZIGE	78
CTS	New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering Inc	NZSEE	1038
CTS	New Zealand Timber Design Society Inc	TDS	517
CTS	New Zealand Tunnelling Society	NZTS	150
CTS	Structural Engineering Society New Zealand Inc	SESOC	3456
SIG	Heritage Group	Heritage Group	111
SIG	Special Interest Group for Engineering General Practitioners	EGP SIG	369
SIG	Special Interest Group for Immigrant Engineers	SIGIE	1145
SIG	Rainbow Special Interest Group	RSIG	121



Bay of Plenty Branch update

The Bay of Plenty branch has been busy lately with speakers, webinars and social events.

Beca hosted a well attended presentation by Tauranga City Council on changes to the Tauranga CBD led by Shaun Geard and Emily McLean (TCC).

The changes are necessary to accommodate the amount of construction traffic in the City, but must be mindful of maintaining safe access for all modes whilst establishing a preferred future movement framework.



A temporary network of one way streets with protected cycleways and footpaths formed with the use of planters and artwork is being used to provide separation and safe access.

The presentation provided useful context and information on the changes.

Sian Marek and James Llewellyn presented a webinar on the Transport Planning Professionals qualification.

There was a lot of interest in this relevant topic and Sian provided great insight into her personal experience in achieving accreditation.

James and Sian encouraged many of us to progress our own personal development through the TPP.

Most recently we held a late autumn lawn bowls event (across NZ it was the coldest night of the year so far but still great weather for lawn bowls in Tauranga).

It was great to mix up our educational / professional events with a social function and some good and not so good lawn bowls skills.

Consensus is probably that we all have some time (and aging) to come before we take up lawn bowls more seriously.

We have another event in the BOP coming up soon, this time in Rotorua. Look out for invites to a webinar and in person option for a talk all about bike parking.

This will be hosted in Rotorua with talks from Kainga Ora and Tauranga City Council. Invites coming soon!

The coldest night of the year so far was still great weather for lawn bowls in Tauranga





Congratulations to our new ENZ Fellows

Fellowship is an honoured class of membership recognising highly experienced professionals who have made a huge impact on engineering in New Zealand.



Emma Fisk

FEEngNZ, CPEng, IntPE(NZ), CMEngNZ, MBA, MEngSt, BEng(Hons)

Emma Fisk is a highly experienced Civil Engineer, Design Manager and Programme Director. She is recognised for her outstanding engineering leadership of major infrastructure projects such as Te Tupu Ngātahi Supporting Growth and Pūhoi to Warkworth Motorway, which deliver significant benefits to the communities they serve.

Emma also invests her time in helping the next generation of engineers grow and develop, actively engaging with schools and the University of Auckland and mentoring many engineers across the wider industry. She is strongly committed to supporting women into the profession and engineering leadership roles.



Glen Koorey

FEEngNZ, PhD, MEng, BEng (Hons), BSc, CMEngNZ

For nearly 30 years, Glen has contributed to best practice in the transportation industry, through his research and technical expertise, industry and tertiary training, and professional and community service. This has particularly been the case in road safety and sustainable transport, where he has helped to develop and disseminate key industry knowledge and understanding in these areas to students, practitioners, clients, and the general public.

Glen's expertise has been recognised through various honours and awards, requests for expert advice and comment, appointments to significant committees and panels, and contributions to respected industry guidelines.



Julian Chisnall

FEEngNZ, CMEngNZ, IntPE (NZ)/APEC, AssocIES

Since 1988, Julian has been an innovative contributor to improving safety and saving lives on our road network as a "specialist generalist" and national subject matter expert in road safety hardware and road lighting. Julian has contributed to road safety engineering education and continues to enjoy solving the range of problems presented by an ever-changing sector, endeavouring to reach an

optimal compromise between competing demands. He is closely involved with the rapid adoption and development of new technologies in response to climate change and resilience challenges. In his current role he is also working to improve and change attitudes related to professional and social responsibility.



Kathleen (Dawn) Inglis

FEEngNZ, CMEngNZ

Dawn has over 35 years' experience managing and leading engineering programmes. She is a passionate engineer who has worked in the local government sector for most of her career. Dawn has demonstrated a long-term commitment to continuous learning and sharing this knowledge and experience. She is committed to supporting the engineering sector with the use of good quality data in decision making and improving activity management practice.

Dawn is currently the Group Manager Service Delivery with Waipā District Council where she supports her community to strive towards achieving their wellbeing outcomes.



Shane Turner

FEEngNZ, BEng(Hons), CPEng, MACRS, IntPE(NZ)

Dr Shane Turner has over 30 years' experience in road safety and transport engineering and research.

He has provided road safety advice to national, state and local government clients across several countries, including New Zealand, Australia, USA, Fiji and Indonesia. This includes strategy, safety analysis, guidance, training and policy advice.

Shane's honours include being appointed as an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the University of Canterbury, joining the editorial board of the USA Transport Research Record and the Australian Road Safety Journal and becoming an International Member on three TRB (USA) standing research committees.



September 2024 Annual Workshop

Tickets On Sale Now

Tickets to the SNUG September 2024 Annual Workshop in Christchurch are now on sale.

The SNUG workshop will be held on September 5th & 6th, with a tech tour and trade show on the afternoon of Wednesday 4th September. The venue this year is the Great Hall at The Arts Centre - [more details here](#)

[Tickets](#) are available now, with earlybird tickets are available until 14 August. Get in early and don't pay more than you have to! Even better, get in and purchase your tickets this financial year!!

Like last year, we also have the option of virtual attendance by Microsoft Teams. You need to acquire a **free** ticket through the online ticketing system. So please ensure you follow the booking link, and choose the free Virtual Delegate option. Your ticket will contain the required information to join the workshop remotely.

To see more details, and to book your tickets, please [click here](#). Since 2019, we have used Trybooking for our ticketing, which allows us to do multiple bookings at the same time, along with other ticketing options.

The SNUG workshop is a great opportunity to share what you've been doing with the signals community. **If you have something interesting to present, please contact** [Steve Wright](#) or [Alex Lumsdon](#) to show us all what you've been up to.

The annual SNUG workshop is a great chance to get together with other people who work in the signals industry. This includes contractors, consultants, designers, legislators, and RCA staff. Credit Card payment is the only method of payment for the SNUG workshop. Please have your credit card handy when you book.

[Get your tickets here](#)



Wheels in motion for Tairāwhiti book-a-bike project

Giving people the opportunity to use an electric bike to discover the benefits of other modes of transport is the aim of the E Peke pilot project.

“A growing number of these sorts of bike library projects here and around the world are proving successful in introducing people to cycling as a great way to get around,” project lead Haimona Ngata says.

“Waka Kotahi NZTA has been supporting a few trials elsewhere so we thought why not here in Tairāwhiti.”

The pilot started in February this year and ends in July. Each participant gets to use the e-bike for two weeks.

“The participants have been intrigued by e-bikes and wanted to give it a go but didn’t know where to start, or have been apprehensive about buying one straight away as they are relatively expensive,” Ngata said.

“This way, they’re able to ‘try before they buy’ and take an e-bike home for two weeks, free of charge.”

Among the local participants is Shane McClutchie, who lives in Tolaga Bay but works in Gisborne as security at the airport. He has a base in Childers Rd from which he drives to the airport and back.



He saw a pānui about the e-bike pilot programme and thought it would be a great way to find a different mode of transportation to get to his mahi.

“I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to see how an e-bike would fit into the bigger picture,” he said. He used the e-bike on the same route as his car, and it worked well.

“When you’re in the car you miss a lot of things, but on a bike, you feel more connected to the space around you. I got a sense of environment and got exercise.”

Over the space of two weeks of using the e-bike, he lost 2kg.

“It made me feel really good. I am contemplating getting my own one now,” he said.

Te Poho o Rāwiri Marae has been the base of operations and part of the pilot programme. A miniature road layout has been painted on the concrete there for tamariki from Te Kōhanga Reo o Te Tihi O Tītūrangi to take part in strider classes.



Strider bikes are used to learn how to steer and focus on balancing. Whaia Tītūrangi is also using e-bikes while doing conservation mahi around maunga Tītūrangi (Kaiti Hill).

“We proposed the use of e-mountain bikes for their kaimahi to do some of their critical work up and around the maunga,” Ngata said. “This feeds into the carbon reduction narrative by not using petrol-powered vehicles for certain environmental work.”

The allocated funding for the pilot programme ends in July.

“We’ve had such a great response we’re virtually fully booked until July, but come and visit the hub at the marae, try out the learn-to-ride circuit and put your name down to be on standby . . . you might get lucky.”

Ngata is looking to take a proposal to potential funders to grow the programme and keep it going for another six months to a year.

“One of the e-bike library participants was so blown away by the ease of using an e-bike that she went out and purchased her own e-bike after her rental period had ended,” he said.

Source NZ Herald

The participants have been intrigued by e-bikes and wanted to give it a go but have been apprehensive about buying one straight away as they are relatively expensive

An aerial night photograph of a bustling city intersection in Japan. The scene is filled with a massive crowd of pedestrians crossing the street. Several vehicles, including a white bus with the number 21015, a white car, and a green taxi, are visible on the road. The surrounding buildings are illuminated with vibrant neon lights. A prominent red Coca-Cola billboard is visible on one of the buildings, featuring the text 'Coca-Cola' and 'コカ・コーラを飲んで ハッピークリスマス。' (Drink Coca-Cola and be Happy Christmas). Other signs include '100MENS' and 'WINTER'. The overall atmosphere is one of a lively, modern urban environment.

Reflections of transport in Japan



Ian Clark
Director,
Flow Transportation
Specialists

Reflections of transport in Japan

My wife and I were fortunate to have spent two weeks in April travelling around Japan - our first trip to that country.

I provided some commentary on “Transport in Japan” in LinkedIn, as soon as I got back, and was amazed at the level of interest.

This led on to our esteemed Roundabout Editor contacting me and asking if I could translate my LinkedIn comments to an article for the Roundabout magazine, so here goes...

Here are a few comments on transport related issues:

A quick comparison of populations (5 million in all of New Zealand v 37 million in Tokyo alone) sets the transport differences in context.

Clearly public transport does some heavy lifting, but the range is very impressive, from the famous Shinkansen (bullet trains) through to the various subway and local lines and then to the rural train services.

The bullet trains are amazingly regular and punctual. Osaka to Tokyo is 500km, travel time of around 2 and a half hours (giving an average speed 200 kph including four stops), with services leaving every few minutes. I saw one train leave one minute late – heads should roll!

Clearly, at our level of population we can only dream of that level of inter-regional public transport service.

By comparison, the Wellington to Auckland Overlander train, with one train every second day taking 11 hours to travel about 650km, is only an option for some people with a lot of time on their hands, and transport enthusiasts.

Talking of transport enthusiasts, a day trip to the Hakone – Gora area offers such a person a “multi modal transport extravaganza”, as you take in:

- A bullet train
- A local/suburban train
- A mountain railway
- A funicular railway or “cable car”, (see photo below). It’s not what I’d normally call a cable car, but I’m reminded that it’s very similar to the “Wellington cable car”

Despite the huge populations, we did not really encounter severe traffic congestion, obviously due to the extensive use of other transport modes.



The Editor said I was allowed to include the occasional photo of a shrine or temple!



[That’s enough now! Ed]

Above: The Gora to Sounzan “cable car”

Above: Miyajima Island, in the bay off Hiroshima

Right: Fushimi Inari Shrine, in Kyoto



- A cable car (or gondola, what they call a “ropeway”, see photo below), taking you over volcanic scenery that reminds you of something around Rotorua



- Then you go aboard a pirate ship for trip on Lake Ashi, from where you can see Mount Fuji on a fine day – we didn’t see it. As they (maybe) say, “You can’t beat Mount Fuji on a good day”.

The mountain railway is the Hakone-Tozan line, which traverses the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park.

This amazing route includes three switchbacks to allow the line to negotiate the trickiest topography, and the on line announcement tells you this is the second steepest railway in the world.

I tried to find out the steepest, but Wikipedia offers quite a few choices. Funicular railways or light railways don’t count! Photos do not capture the route adequately, but the [railway’s web site](#) includes a great video.

Back in Tokyo, some of the stations are absolutely vast. My wife and I managed to get lost within Shibuya station more than once, even though there are more signs in English than we could have reasonably expected.

Despite the huge populations in Tokyo, Osaka etc, we did not really encounter severe traffic congestion, obviously due to the extensive use of other transport modes.

There appears to be a reasonable level of cycling (Google gave me a range of 14-17% of trips in Tokyo).

Very few cyclists wear helmets, but many appear happy to hold an umbrella while they cycle, on the few wet days we were there.

I was interested in the fact that you pay to get off a bus (not when you get on) and cash is still accepted. I wasn’t sure if I could ask for change, and didn’t like to ask (via Google Translate).

The cycle time at many signalised intersections seems exceptionally long. Pedestrians get a fair go, with very long Barnes Dance phases - but there is then a long wait.

The ultimate Barnes Dance is at the famous Shibuya crossing in central Tokyo. The photo below does not really do the site justice - it is a mass of people.



Given the title of this magazine, it’s worth stating that I didn’t see a single roundabout in Japan.

But I did see plenty of cherry blossom, in a wide variety of settings, some of them picturesque, some poignant.



Given the title of this magazine, it’s worth stating that I didn’t see a single roundabout in Japan.

Below: The Shibuya Crossing, Tokyo

Left: Sounzan to Lake Ashi

Bottom: The Atomic Bomb Dome, Hiroshima – just about the only building to survive the blast



How many people can actually fit on a bus?

The team will be adjusting occupancy trackers on AT Mobile and information screens to better reflect the capacity levels that customers are comfortable with.

Think it must be pretty straightforward to know how many people can fit on a bus? Recently the Public Transport and Active Modes team within Auckland Transport (AT) undertook an experiment to find out.

Through February and March, as part of their roles the team closely monitored bus capacities as Aucklanders returned to work, school, and university.

While the team's data showed there was capacity available, AT's customers were telling them something different. There were instances of very full buses, and stories of people being left behind because there wasn't room.

So the team decided to test just how many people you can fit on a bus.

The team and colleagues from across AT grabbed their backpacks and queued up to fit into two buses on Halsey Street, with colleagues from one of AT's operators, Kinetic.

PT Growth Lead Fraser Barrons says AT's buses operate with seated and standing capacities for the number of adults, secondary students, and children on board.

"We were testing to see if the capacity of adults that we operate with is the same as how many adults can actually fit, and it's fair to say, with the number of people we could fit standing and one wheelchair, that the capacity numbers are optimistic."



There are lots of different types of buses across the AT fleet—diesel or electric, single or double decker—each with their own projected capacity.

"On an electric extra-large bus, the total adult capacity is 75, but we could fit 64," he says.

"On a diesel extra-large bus, the total adult capacity is 73, but we could fit 69."

"It wouldn't be a comfortable experience for customers, and it wasn't comfortable for us when the bus wasn't moving."

As a next step, the team will be adjusting occupancy trackers on AT Mobile and information screens to better reflect the capacity levels that customers are comfortable with and look into how this might change our planning assumptions.

Source: AT





Zero emission bus economics study released

The latest NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi research report is out now.

The research has developed a cost model that allows Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) and NZTA to weigh the costs and benefits of different bus technologies available for decarbonisation, and the cost and benefits of using those technologies to replace and retire diesel buses.

Reduced emissions from early retirement of diesel buses are far less than the emissions generated by constructing replacement zero emission buses.

Operations and maintenance costs, particularly energy costs, are the main factors affecting the total cost of ownership (TCO) for different bus technologies and are more significant than initial capital expenditure.

Battery electric buses are the lowest cost option for replacing existing diesel buses. This is because of the high cost of hydrogen in New Zealand at the time of the research and the importance of fuel costs in overall TCO.

[Research Report 718 – Zero emission bus economics study – April 2024 | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi \(nzta.govt.nz\)](#)

Reduced emissions from early retirement of diesel buses are far less than the emissions generated by constructing replacement zero emission buses.

Climate Action – the role of the engineer

Engineering NZ is planning to publish Practice Note 32: Climate Action – the role of the engineer.

This Practice Note outlines the roles, responsibilities and core competencies of engineers in mitigating, transitioning and adapting to climate change.

It is guided by ENZ's [Position Statement](#) on climate change. This Practice Note expands upon ENZ's interim guidance, [Climate Change Prac-](#)

[tice Guidance for Engineers](#) (2021).

The intention is that the recently released [Climate Action CPD module](#) supports and expands on the guidelines and recommendations set out in the Practice Note.

Keep an eye out for an announcement on Discover and if you have any questions, please get in touch with [Bryony Lane](#) (Programme Manager).

For everyone asking how the roads are





A network of safe streets for people in Nelson South

There was a short delay due to a shortage of green paint, but the construction stage of Nelson's latest Streets for People project is complete and now enters the trial phase.

This phase of the Streets for People project around Nelson Hospital is the follow up to phase one, the successful Innovating Streets project along Kawai Street South, completed in 2021.

This area of Nelson South was identified due to the high number of both drivers and active transport users and its proximity to schools.

It was the first stage in creating a safer transport connection between the Railway Reserve and Waimea Road and successfully reduced speeds on roads including Kawai Street South, Tipahi Street South and Tukuka Street.

Residents in the Franklyn Street area, which has similar transport needs to the area around Kawai Street South, were introduced to phase two in December 2022.

This was the start of the award-winning Innovating Streets project, which successfully reduced speeds on roads such as Kawai Street South, Tipahi Street and Tukuka Street.

This area of Nelson South was identified due to the high number of both drivers and active transport users and its proximity to schools. It was the first stage in creating a safer transport connection between the Railway Reserve and Waimea Road.

Stage two, which focused on streets around the hospital between Motueka Street and Hampden Street, started with a series of on-street resident meetings, multiple letter drops, and a hospital staff survey. Contractors started the physical work in February 2024.

The result is a raised crossing on Motueka Street, raised tables on Tipahi Street and Franklyn Street, and speed cushions along Kawai Street. Multiple planter boxes and bollards have also been installed on these streets, and the shared pathway on Tipahi Street has been widened.

"Streets for People aims to make it safer and easier for people to use active modes of transport and improve the livability of streets for residents," explains Acting Group Manager Infrastructure David Light.

"Council highlighted several project aims including a reduction in vehicle speeds, a reduction in the volume of traffic, cleaner air, a safer network for active travel and a more 'people-focused' neighbourhood."

The treatments have now been in place for several weeks and have begun to have an effect.

The first round of monitoring post construction was completed in early May and showed an immediate drop in speed. Pre-construction data showed that only 25% of vehicles on these streets traveled under 30kmh. Post-construction data shows that 64% of vehicles on Kawai Street and 46% of vehicles on Franklyn Street are now travelling under 30kmh.

The internationally accepted speed to greatly reduce the chances of a pedestrian being killed or seriously injured if struck by a vehicle is 30kmh. The death risk for a person driving at 50kmh is 80%; this drops to 10% when driving at 30kmph.

"I commend Council for recognising the need to prioritise safety and taking action to address it"





There has also been an increase in active transport along Tipahi Street with an additional 86 people walking, cycling or scooting along the new shared pathway in the morning.

Motueka Street has had a major shift in vehicle volumes at peak times. The 8am pre-construction count recorded 535 vehicles using the street in an hour. Post-construction, this has dropped to 387 vehicles. During peak traffic between 4pm and 5pm, pre-construction data showed 862 vehicles using the street. Post construction, this had dropped to 730 vehicles.

Simon Duffy lives on Kawai Street and has seen the project from concept to completion.

"I commend Council for recognising the need to prioritise safety and taking action to address it," says Simon.

"The positive impact of these improvements to Kawai St is evident, as residents and visitors can now navigate the street with more confidence and peace of mind. I hope this commitment to Streets for People and similar efforts are implemented throughout the city to create a safer road network for all."

The ethos behind the Streets for People programme was to make it quicker and easier for councils to trial changes. It means that Council can take the time to get feedback from residents and to trial low-cost, temporary changes before making them permanent.

"As Council has moved through the project we have been able to make quick changes in response to feedback from residents," says David.

"For instance, Council changed the tree in one of the planter boxes as residents didn't want a tree that would grow to be too large. Residents on Franklyn Street had concerns about the placement of some cycle separators, which were relocated. Planter boxes on Hampden Street have also been relocated following comments from residents."

All changes will be temporary for at least 12 months. If the changes are successful, they will become permanent. Streets for People is an NZTA Waka Kotahi funded project. The budget for Nelson South was \$1.4 million with Nelson City Council contributing \$140,000. This project is tracking under budget.

Source: Nelson City Council

This area of Nelson South was identified due to the high number of active transport users and its proximity to schools

Take the ENZ Climate Action Survey by July 1st

Following on from the recent publication of the [Climate Action Practice Note](#), the Engineering Climate Action Programme is focused on strengthening relationships with the relevant Engineering New Zealand Technical Groups.

We want to ensure we're across the important work being undertaken in the Climate Action space, including resources developed, current challenges/barriers, and how we can best support the groups to transition, mitigate and adapt to climate change.

We'd really appreciate Transportation Group members completing this [Climate Action Survey](#).

Please undertake the survey by 1st July.

To give you a taster, the survey questions are below:

- How widespread is climate mitigation, adaptation and transition integrated into your sector?
- Describe what climate risk looks like in your discipline?
- What are key things that engineers in your discipline should be considering when undertaking a project? (in relation to climate action)
- What do you think are the main challenges and/or barriers in your discipline to implementing climate action and sustainability?
- Alongside the Climate Action Practice Note and the Climate Action CPD module, what resources would be beneficial to support your climate action work?
- What resources, including case studies, have you developed for your discipline (or are in the process of developing)?
- Can any resources you've developed be applied to different engineering disciplines (if so, would you be happy for us to share these with the wider Engineering New Zealand membership)?
- What standards or guides are commonly used in your discipline for measurement of greenhouse gas emissions and climate vulnerability?



**TRANSPORTATION
GROUP** NEW ZEALAND

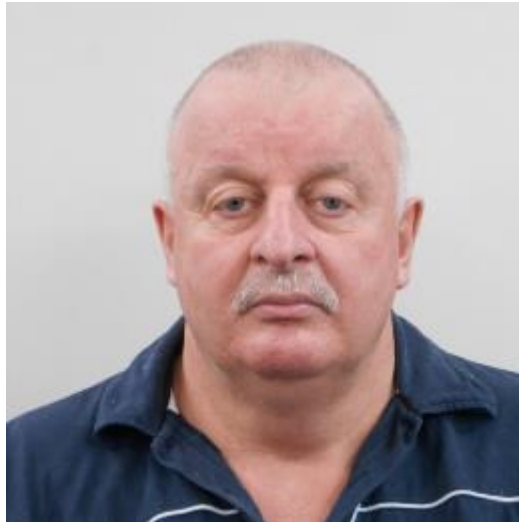


**ENGINEERING
NEW ZEALAND
TECHNICAL
GROUP**



Meet our new Transportation Group Life Members

Tony Brennand



Tony has been active in the New Zealand transport sector as a practising professional for over 40 years.

He has also supported the Australian sector. Tony's transport activities are numerous and include:

- Former National Committee Chair of the Transportation Group and current national committee member
- Former member of the Central branch of the Transportation committee
- Member of the NZMUGS national committee
- Founding Board member and current chairman of the Australasian Trips Data Bureau
- Former national committee member of the Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia
- Executive member of the Australasian Transport Research Forum

Tony has a passion for developing transport professionals. Tony was part the industry liaison group that set up the Transportation programme at Auckland and Canterbury Universities.

Tony has been a supervisor/mentor for students undertaking Masters and PhD transportation degrees.

He has been an exam supervisor for students sitting exams remote from Auckland and Canterbury universities.

Tony brought to Wellington and convened the 2003 ATRF conference. Tony is the CIHT champion for New Zealand and an active supporter of their programmes.

Tony has authored/co-authored over 40 conference and other refereed papers that represent innovative approaches to transportation based on his work experience.

Tony has served on many industry committees on technical issues.

Tony is recognised for his contribution to the NZ transport sector by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport as a Fellow.

Tony has been active in the Engineering NZ Transportation Group for over 35 years.

He is a former National Committee chairman and under his watch the Committee developed the group's first strategic plan.

Under Tony's leadership the group commissioned Malcolm Douglas to write the group's history which led to 'A wheel on each corner' and active in submission making including the LTMA 2003.

Tony served on the Central branch committee. Tony has served on the NZMUGS national committee and is a founding member and current chairman of the Trips Data Bureau Board.

Tony has actively encouraged the Transportation Group to support professional development and utilised his connections with various institutions to support the development of members of the Transportation Group.

Tony, as the CIHT champion for NZ, has acted as a referee to support Transportation Group members being chartered as transport planning professionals.

Tony has provided a liaison between the Transportation Group and other groups such as the ATRF and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport NZ.

Tony has a passion for transport research and is actively involved in the research activities of the NZMUGS and TDB subgroups.

Tony has been active in the Transportation Group for over 35 years. He is a former National Committee chairman and under his watch the Committee developed the Group's first strategic plan.



Meet our new Transportation Group Life Members

Julie Ballantyne



Throughout her career Julie has been active in both the transport sector and the Transportation Group, including NZ MUGS sub-group.

Julie has served in a range of task groups and committees and is a regular presenter at conferences.

Julie has supported NZ MUGS extensively in a range of roles both undertaking tasks at or outside the annual conference.

She remains a source of wisdom and guidance for the group as a whole or for individuals.

Julie has participated in and provided leadership to Christchurch branch activities of the Transportation Group.

Julie Ballantyne's career in transportation engineering spans more than three decades.

She is employed by Stantec and leads Stantec's Christchurch Transport Team.

She served a significant period of time in its predecessor organisation, Traffic Design Group Ltd, where she has held several senior roles.

This included leading the Christchurch office through the challenging time of the Canterbury earthquakes – rising to the challenge, building the local transport team, and responding with empathy and compassion to people's and family's circumstances.

Julie is based in Christchurch but has worked

extensively throughout New Zealand, the UK, and Hong Kong.

Julie is a competent transportation engineer with a broad range of skills and experience.

However, Julie is a well-respected expert in transportation modelling and has led model builds and rebuilds in many parts of New Zealand.

Julie has unique specific skills, she is very experienced in the development of regional 4-step models (models which predict travel by mode from land use inputs) – only a handful of people in NZ have this skill and knowledge.

As well as leading a diverse team of engineers, planners, analysts, designers, and managers, Julie mentors, trains, and develops individuals in the dark arts of transport modelling.

Combined with this Julie has fronted a commercially successful team, has a high degree of business acumen, and continues to deliver on projects and for clients.

Julie has a passion for the growing and development of younger transportation professionals.

She has nurtured and encouraged many by sharing her extensive knowledge, experience and words of support.

There are many in the ranks and leadership of the transportation modelling world who have benefited from her support.

As well as leading a diverse team of engineers, planners, analysts, designers, and managers, Julie mentors, trains, and develops individuals in the dark arts of transport modelling.



"Who ordered the Manhattan?"



Sydney commuters face ‘tough time’ as T3 line replacement plan looks to buses and e-scooters

Thousands of Sydney commuters will have their daily journey times more than doubled during the [closure of one of the city’s major train lines](#), even if the government manages to hire 160 replacement bus drivers in the next two months.

The department – which is already struggling with a chronic shortage of bus drivers across Sydney – will need about 100 additional buses and 200 dedicated drivers.

And the government may still trial e-scooters as an alternative for people affected by the 12 to 14-month shutdown of the T3 line during its conversion into a metro line that can operate driverless trains.

Transport for [New South Wales](#) recently released its plan to accommodate up to 60,000 daily commuters who will be disrupted when the rail line between Sydenham and Bankstown is shut down from July.

The [transport minister, Jo Haylen](#), said it would be an “inconvenient and difficult period for commuters in this part of Sydney”.

“We’re not going to sugarcoat this – communities along the T3 line are going to have a tough time,” she said.

“But there will be services available to them.”

The Inner West council is yet to make a decision on whether it will [agree to the government’s request to host Sydney’s second e-scooter trial](#) during the T3 shutdown in an attempt to mitigate the disruption.

TfNSW had proposed an e-scooter trial that would have linked 10 stations in the inner-west including Sydenham, Tempe, and Newtown so passengers could connect to other train lines. Council staff wanted to cut the trial zone to only connect Dulwich Hill, Marrickville and Tempe stations, citing concerns about residents’ safety.

The trains that run on the existing line carry more than 1,000 commuters each at peak times.

Haylen said other e-scooter trials – such as the one in Sydney’s Kogarah – had been a “real success” but it was ultimately a decision for the council.

Commuters have been promised trains that will run every four minutes during peak times when the new metro line opens in 2025, completing the Metro City and SouthWest line.

Until then, the government will run “high-frequency” replacement bus services with three dedicated routes through Sydney’s inner west and southwest.



TfNSW’s latest forecasts predict an all-stops bus service between Sydenham and Bankstown to take 58 minutes in the evening peak, compared with 24 minutes by train.

The department – which is already struggling with a chronic shortage of bus drivers across Sydney – will need about 100 additional buses and 200 dedicated drivers to run the T3 replacement services.

Transit Systems, the private bus operator the government hired to run the replacement services, is in charge of recruitment. Its chief executive officer, Daniela Fontana, said the company had hired 40 drivers so far.

Haylen conceded Sydney’s regular bus network was not operating at a “reliable level” because of the driver shortage.

But she said she was “confident” Transit Systems could find another 160 drivers to make up the shortfall required for the dedicated T3 line replacement services.

David Babineau, NSW division secretary at the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, was doubtful enough drivers could be found.

“We’re over 200 drivers short on the normal bus network across Sydney,” he said.

Babineau said the RTBU was “fundamentally opposed” to the metro conversion project and was “considering its options going forward”.

The opposition transport spokesperson, Natalie Ward, said TfNSW data released shows driver vacancies were up 10% compared with the previous month and had reached a five-month high.

“The government has had 18 months to plan this conversion and instead have spent time and money on reviews,” she said.

Source: The Guardian



Inclusive Signage Rolls Out at Waitematā (Britomart) Station



Auckland is the first in New Zealand to begin upgrading signage across its public transport network to include sign language.

As part of Auckland Transport's (AT) mission to enable and deliver an effective, efficient and safe transport system, changes to digital signage will be made recently at Waitematā (Britomart) train station to include New Zealand sign language.

AT facilitates the Public Transport Accessibility Group (PTAG), a regional advisory group representing sectors including the blind, deaf, youth, seniors, physically disabled, and neurodiverse communities.

"In consultation with PTAG, we recognised the need for changes to our facility's safety and directional messaging to include the deaf community, particularly in the event of a serious network disruption such as the need to evacuate a major station like Waitematā," says Teresa Burnett, General Manager Transport Safety, AT.

The group has been working on changes to basic safety facilitation messaging to include NZ sign language for the past six months and a suite of videos has been created for a range of potential disruptions, along with general station information, displayed for normal daily operation.

Plans to roll out the video in sign language across the ferry network are also well underway, and if received positively by the deaf and hearing-impaired community, will be extended across the remaining AT train and bus fleet.

"We are also working on te reo Māori translation of the video messaging, so it will be great to eventually have both of our official languages represented, along with English in the months ahead," says Burnett.

Using only English language-based messages is highly problematic, as a significant proportion of the deaf community struggles to read English easily.

The pilot aims to start addressing this gap for the community and AT is committed to keep improving accessibility on public transport for all.

Using only English language-based messages is highly problematic, as a significant proportion of the deaf community struggles to read English easily.





Morocco's proposed \$13 billion underwater tunnel to connect Europe to Africa by 2030s

An historic intercontinental rail link is aiming to link Europe to Morocco with an ambitious underwater tunnel.

The Moroccan National Company for Strait Studies (SNED) announced last week it is starting feasibility research on a revived 40-year-old train project that can connect Europe and Africa by 2030.

The project highlights a 28km underwater tunnel between Spain and Morocco that would reach down to depths of 475m and is targeted to be finished by the end of the decade.

Now, the project is still in its planning stage, where the developers are researching and confirming if it is indeed possible, both from a financial and logistical perspective.

Ideally, they want to finish and open the tunnel in six years to give way to the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the three countries involved in the project: Spain, Portugal, and Morocco.

If the tunnel gets the green light, it would be a high-speed train service that connects Spain's existing rail lines to Morocco's Al Boraq route. Essentially, it would connect Punta Paloma, west of Tarifa, with Malabata in northern Morocco, just east of Tangier.

Of course, it doesn't compare to an average Madrid to Casablanca flight, which takes about two hours, but the full train journey promises a great almost-six-hour adventure.

Albeit exciting, the 40-year-old project is still merely in its conceptualising phase, as the official costs are still unknown, but is roughly estimated at \$12 billion.

Government officials from the countries have expressed immense support and excitement since last year, with Spain's previous transport minister, Raquel Sanchez, sharing: "We are beginning a new stage in the revival of the fixed link project across the Strait of Gibraltar, which we launched in 1981, hand in hand."

Last July, the Spanish government also confirmed that a \$4 million EU feasibility funding was approved to study the train link. Now, the project may seem like a peek into the future, but it still has a few logistical challenges to conquer.

But above all that, the three countries see an opportunity for growth in the project.

Once completed the rail link could carry 12.8 million travellers between Europe and North Africa and open up enormous potential for intercontinental travels.

Source: NZ Herald

A 28km underwater tunnel between Spain and Morocco would reach depths of 475m





Councillor: It's time women were at the transport table

Transport planning is a man's world and it's time women were at the table, Auckland councillor Angela Dalton says.



In a passionate speech yesterday, Dalton spoke about the importance of women in decisions about transport at a meeting of male-dominated transport bosses and political colleagues.

Auckland Transport has a male chief executive, Dean Kimpton. Four other men and three women are on his executive team. The AT board comprises five men, including councillors Andy Baker and Chris Darby. The only woman on the board is Nicole Rosie, who is there as chief executive of the NZ Transport Agency in an oversight role with no voting rights.

The council's infrastructure and transport committee is chaired by John Watson with Christine Fletcher as the deputy.

"The transport system has been designed by men and then women need to fit into it. We need to be working together on it," the Manurewa-Papakura councillor said at the transport committee meeting.

"Women have a different life to men. We are more likely to walk, we are more likely to take public transport, we are more likely not to have access to a car... we have to spend so much time in a system that does not work for us," Dalton said.

She raised the issue of safety, citing a report by transport planners MRCagney on "*Equity in Auckland's Transport System*" which found women are more likely to consider personal security and the risk of harassment or attack when making travel choices.

Women were surveyed for the report on what changes to public transport would most improve their journeys.

Protected cycleways, more frequent and reliable services, longer operating hours, crime prevention measures - such as greater surveillance and street lights - and lower speed limits and more road crossings were raised, Dalton said.

She told a story of one of the first women elected to Christchurch City Council, who delivered the first public toilets with changing tables and a creche at the city's cathedral.

"It's not that they didn't want it or do it, they just didn't think of it. And that is why women need to be equally represented in the decisions and the plans we are making," said Dalton during an item on a 30-year transport plan for Auckland.

Stacey van der Putten, AT's director of public transport and active modes, agreed with Dalton's comments in the context of a 30-year plan, saying historically a lot of transport design has been done by men and there needs to be a bit more balance on big plans and decisions.

"What Angela said was true, in effect that women do have different perspectives on things, particularly when it comes to the safety aspects of moving about our city. By default we will contemplate certain things that a man wouldn't necessarily do, particularly when it comes to night safety," she said.

Night-time, said van der Putten, is a completely different ball game due to women being more vulnerable.

She said AT upgraded lighting in the rail corridor in 2020 but is now looking at what's known as the "first" and "last" leg where people walk up to and walk home from public transport.

"The psychological safety aspects are very complex and it's very individual to people and is something we need to improve with how we design things," van der Putten said.

She said social behaviour had fundamentally changed over the past couple of years, and it was essential to bring communities together - leaders, policing and schools - to devise local solutions.

Deputy mayor Desley Simpson said when it comes to having more women on transport bodies, people want the best person for the job.

"But there is no doubt there is a lot of academic science that a gender balance on a governance board delivers a better outcome," she said.

Mayor Wayne Brown said Dalton raised some good points.

"There are not many women in leadership positions in the transport sector. This is harder to rectify when so many men apply for these roles. I would like to speak with her further about what measures she sees we could be taking to improve the situation," said Brown, adding he supported Dalton being on a political reference group for the 30-year transport plan.

Source: NZ Herald



Women have different perspectives on things, particularly when it comes to the safety aspects of moving about our city.



Nominations sought for Golden Foot Walking Awards

Living Streets Aotearoa, the national walking advocacy organisation, is calling for nominations for the 2024 Golden Foot Walking Awards.

Did you know that previous winners of our Golden Foot Walking Awards have come from all walks of life? (Pun intended!).

The awards are a fabulous opportunity to recognise a person, organisation or business who has made a difference to walking in their local area.

You might know someone or a project that fits this description. If so, we need you to tell us about them!

Our biennial Golden Foot Walking Awards celebrate innovative walking projects, facilities and initiatives, and the people who created them.

They highlight best practice and reward ongoing commitment to walking for all ages and abilities.

It's easy to submit a nomination. We are here to provide help if you need it.

Nominations close on 17 June and the award ceremony will be in July. See:

<https://www.livingstreets.org.nz/goldenfoot>

Previous winners of our Golden Foot Walking Awards have come from all walks of life



Harbour bridge lights up for Road Safety Week



Vector Lights shone bright yellow for Road Safety Week, which aims to inspire communities to take action on road safety, making streets and communities safer. The event was supported by the Yellow Ribbon Road Safety Alliance.





“Where are you really from?” - How things change

What would you do to prepare our transport sector to leverage the strength of our increasing cultural diversity of NZ?

“Where are you really from?” Someone asked me.

In the 2010s I was the only Chinese person at the Transport Group Conference [Transportation Group New Zealand](#). Fast forward to 2024 there are 3x Jiangs (rare Chinese last name) at the conference in Nelson.

We enjoyed marking this occasion by sharing with our colleagues the meanings of our Chinese names, that our names didn’t come from a book and that our names are not the same characters in Chinese.

Our candid chats led to me reflecting on the cultural representation in our transport sector, especially at the leadership level, and that the increasing cultural diversity in NZ is apply pressure on the way we work with our communities.

What would you do to prepare our transport sector to leverage the strength of our increasing cultural diversity of NZ? I’m keen to hear your thoughts.

By [Jack Jiang](#)

Photo below shows Jack with [Weiwei Jiang](#) and [Cheryl Tianshu Jiang](#)





Ships in some UK port cities create more air pollution than cars

Ships calling at the UK's most-polluted ports produce more nitrogen oxides than all the cars registered in the same cities or regions, analysis has shown.

A report from Transport & Environment (T&E) said that ships were continuing to discharge huge quantities of air pollutants at ports, with Milford Haven, [Southampton](#) and Immingham topping the list for emissions of harmful sulphur oxides and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) as well as nitrogen oxides (NOx).

The NGO said the data underlined the urgent need for government action to ensure ships used cleaner fuels and that ports enforce more zero-emission technology such as shore-side electricity.

Shipping and ports representatives said the report used "flawed methodology" and disputed the comparisons, but said they supported moves to reduce pollution.

The report found that in the top 10 NOx-polluted ports, about 4,000 ships produced an estimated 1.75 times as much NOx as almost one million cars registered to the same areas.

Ships calling at Southampton, a [major cruise ship port](#), produced four times more NOx than cars in the city, T&E said. Southampton was also the worst for PM2.5, with cruise ships responsible for more than half the particulate pollution.

Jonathan Hood, the UK sustainable shipping manager at T&E, said: "The awful levels of pollution revealed in this analysis demonstrate how the UK's port cities are being choked by the harmful fumes caused by a shipping industry that, thanks to years of government inaction, has no impetus to change.

"The government has its last chance to chart a better course for the industry with the updated clean maritime plan and it must not waste this opportunity. We need to see a rapid switch away from filthy fossil fuels, and ports must set binding targets to implement zero-emission technologies. These must include shore side electricity, which would ensure ships can plug in at port and switch off their polluting engines."

A UK Chamber of Shipping spokesperson said the report did not take account of shore-side power now being used in Southampton by cruise ships, improving the air quality, but admitted that the UK was "behind the curve" and that more facilities should be installed.



The spokesperson added: "The industry supports the ambition to reduce emissions and is [investing billions worldwide to do so](#). A long-term plan, codesigned by industry and government, is the way to set out the clear roadmap for emissions reduction [and] unlock future investment."

Mark Simmonds, director of policy at the British Ports Association, said the industry's [net zero targets](#) would also improve air quality. But he said the report was "irresponsible" and "discredited" by not examining how emissions dispersed before affecting population centres.

"Air pollutant emissions have a very localised impact and comparing emissions from ships, which deliver 450m tonnes of goods a year including half our food and energy, to local car journeys is absurd. Emissions from ships are limited while at-berth when the main engines are turned off," Simmonds said.

Lord Deben, the former chairman of the government's Climate Change Committee, said it was "disheartening to see the staggering levels of emissions from ships around UK ports" and said the government should prioritise stricter emissions control measures. He said: "Without decisive action, the health impacts for residents and workers in port towns, not to mention economic costs, will continue to soar."

A Department for Transport spokesperson said the UK would be publishing an updated clean maritime plan for shipping as part of its 2050 net zero targets. The spokesperson said: "We've already invested over £200m to develop innovative technology that will decarbonise the industry [and] are currently looking at extending emission restrictions across our waters after their success in the North Sea."

Source: *Guardian*

Ships calling at Southampton, a major cruise ship port, produced four times more NOx than cars in the city.



Look, no hands! My trip on Seoul's self-driving bus

"One day all the buses in Seoul will be driverless,"



There is a moment on the A21 bus, at around midnight, when the man in the driver's seat presses a small red button on his dashboard.

He smiles, then lets go of the steering wheel and lifts his feet from the pedals. The vehicle continues to glide through the streets of South Korea's capital, Seoul, turning corners and stopping at traffic lights. No-one on board seems to notice.

"One day all the buses in Seoul will be driverless," says Park Sang-uk, head of operations at SUM (Smart YoUr Mobility).

His company has spent the past four years developing the city's new self-driving night bus, which authorities say is the first of its kind anywhere in the world. These kinds of buses and cars are known as autonomous vehicles or AVs.

"There are fewer and fewer people who want to drive buses, especially at night," Mr Park says.

"This is the perfect solution to help fill that void."

The quiet night-time roads are also the ideal place to test the technology, which is still far from perfect.

There are some safety measures on board. For example, passengers have to be sitting down and must wear a seatbelt at all times.

There is also someone in the driver's seat, who can take control of the bus in case something goes wrong. Soon, Mr Park insists, there won't be any need for that.

The journey is mostly smooth. It took us past the glowing storefronts of the city centre and then into the capital's more dimly-lit residential neighbourhoods - stopping about 20 times on the way.

At first, looking at the steering wheel moving by itself, then seeing the bus ghost to the left and right accordingly, is enough to fill you with trepidation. But soon that feeling passes.

Having said that, there are a couple of times when the driver has to take the wheel and hit the brakes. These sudden jolts are a reminder that human drivers are on the road and the artificial intelligence (AI) controlling the bus is not prepared for every eventuality.

Most passengers were fairly relaxed though. "I was excited to try this," said one student on his way home from university. "The fact that it's a late-night bus also means it can reduce the burden on drivers."

"I had no idea this was a driverless bus!" said one woman who had just finished work. "You really wouldn't know."

Another student, visiting from the Netherlands, seemed a little less convinced: "I was a bit nervous getting onboard. Seeing the driver sitting there did reassure me a bit."

The US-based Society of Automotive Engineers categorises AVs from Level 1 to 5.

Level 1, the most basic, relates to vehicles with features such as cruise control, while Level 5 is a fully-automated vehicle that can operate under any conditions and in any situation. These do not currently exist.



"Self-driving should not replace human labour completely," says Yoo Jae-ho, Secretary-General of the Seoul City Bus Union. "Right now, I don't think that's even possible - it's too dangerous." "If self-driving technology is ready and it can be implemented one day, then it should come along with re-education and re-hiring support programmes for the bus drivers and maintenance workers."

South Korean authorities are planning to invest more

Seoul's new night bus is a Level 3 vehicle, which means that some human intervention is required in certain situations.

than \$1bn (£810m) in projects to develop autonomous driving technologies and build related infrastructure by 2027.

The most advanced AVs operating at the moment are in China and the United States, passengers can take a Level 4 taxi in Beijing, and parts of California and Arizona. These cars have no safety driver but must stick to certain roads and routes.

How far self-driving technology can actually advance is up for debate. Without a complete overhaul of how our cities function some experts doubt whether truly autonomous vehicular traffic is possible.

"The view that autonomous cars are our future is sheer science fiction", says Graham Currie, a professor of public transport at Monash University in Melbourne.

"It's nonsense, quite frankly. On the street we have dogs, we have children, we have weather, we have other vehicles. Technology hasn't sorted all of that out yet and it may never do."

According to Professor Currie, governments are especially interested in the possibilities of autonomous public transport because the majority of the cost of a bus route is the driver's salary. Naturally, this has led to some concern among bus drivers.

The trade union representing Seoul's 18,000 bus drivers told the BBC that the city government has never contacted them about its plans for an autonomous future.

China is also making strides when it comes to self-driving vehicles. Last week, the ride-hailing firm Didi announced a partnership with state-owned electric vehicle manufacturer GAC Aion to mass-produce a fleet of Level 4 robotaxis.

Tesla boss Elon Musk said earlier this month that his electric car maker would unveil its own robotaxi in August.

However, Professor Currie argues that investing in private AVs does little to address real transport problems faced by cities.

"I don't want to be negative. I do believe it's worth experimenting with new systems," he said. "But I find myself being sceptical".

"Having thousands of autonomous cars driving around a city, often empty, is only going to make make our roads more congested - not less."

Back on the A21, we reach the end of the line. The man behind the wheel, an ex-bus driver who's in his 60s, waves me goodbye. Before getting off I ask him what he thinks about the new technology.

"It's easy for me to say, but I think it's great," he laughs. "Driving a bus at night is a hard job - I don't think many people would miss doing this." *Source: BBC News*

"It's nonsense, quite frankly. On the street we have dogs, we have children, we have weather, we have other vehicles. Technology hasn't sorted all of that out yet and it may never do."



Auckland businesses get 'Fareshare'



Auckland Transport (AT) is expanding its Fareshare scheme which gives employers a way of subsidising a proportion of their staff's public transport travel costs.

Businesses are welcoming the opportunity to offer an alternative to costly city car parking to attract and retain staff, whilst also contributing to their sustainability targets.

AT has been trialling its Fareshare employer subsidy, and due to the trial's overwhelming success with employers and employees, AT is now offering it to any Auckland-based business with five employees or more.

Genesis Energy has been using the scheme since an office move from Greenlane to Wynyard Quarter in 2020.

"Having historic carparks was such a big issue, so we needed to help staff transition to the new Viaduct location without using their car.

[Wynyard Quarter] is an accessible office location and Fareshare has helped staff to investigate using public transport," says George Higgins-Smith, Fleet, Transport and Travel Manager at Genesis Energy.

Genesis Energy employees using Fareshare have already travelled more than one million kms on public transport, which equates to a significant reduction in CO₂ emission.

"We have calculated this milestone to equate to a reduction of close to 127 tonnes of CO₂ emission; equivalent to the amount of carbon sequestered by 27,029 Titoki trees per year^[1] and reducing environmental impact of GHG emissions released by 53 standard cars driven for a year in New Zealand^[2]," says Cathy Bebelman, Chief Scientist at AT.

Auckland Transport is investing in ways to make it easy, safe, and reliable to get around using public transport. This will reduce road congestion and travel times for those who must drive, as well as our impact on the environment.

"It's an attractive employee benefit scheme and affordable for any size business as you are only billed when the card is used. Subsidised public transport provided to staff via Fareshare is also exempt from fringe benefit tax^[3]," says Richard Harrison, General Manager Growth and Optimisation at AT.

GoSee Travel has also been trialling the scheme which kicked-off with employees attending an information session with AT's Travelwise advisors. They were able to learn how Fareshare works and what their best options are to get to and from work on public transport using the AT Travel Planner.

"Registering to Fareshare was simple, it took less than five minutes to verify and link my card. The discount is great; it makes getting to work much more affordable. I am more inclined to use public transport now and save more money getting the bus than driving my car into work," said one GoSee Travel employee.

The Fareshare scheme has options for five- or seven-days travel at a subsidised rate of 25, 50 or 75 percent loaded onto an AT HOP card for use on AT bus, train, and ferry services. The employee is charged the discounted rate, and the business is billed monthly for the additional agreed percentage of the fare.

"We would like to see more businesses offering Fareshare as an employee benefit, to get more people using public transport and at the same time, making a significant impact on the environment by reducing CO₂ emissions," adds Richard.

If you would like to know more about Fareshare visit [About Fareshare - public transport subsidy for employees \(at.govt.nz\)](#) or email fareshare@at.govt.nz.

^[1] Using average carbon sequestration of Titoki-NZ oak tree of 4.69 kgCO₂e/year/tree (adapted from the report of urban forest effects and values 2023-iree ecosystem analysis).

^[2] Using 2,410 kg CO₂e per car per year in NZ. Estimated by using the average distance of 9,631 km travelled by light passenger vehicles in NZ and weighted average emissions factor of car 0.250 kgCO₂e/km (MFE-2023 and MOT-2022).

^[3] It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that legislation is complied with. Public transport needs to be mainly for the purpose of travelling between home and work to be FBT exempt.

Businesses are welcoming the opportunity to offer an alternative to costly city car parking to attract and retain staff, whilst also contributing to their sustainability targets



“Build or maintain? NZ’s infrastructure asset value, investment, and depreciation, 1990–2022” - a report by Te Waihangā



The benefits that we experience from infrastructure today depend upon past decisions about how to plan, build, and maintain these assets.

Similarly, our current decisions will affect the quality and quantity of infrastructure services for future generations.

Maintaining and renewing existing assets might appear to have few short-term benefits but it is essential in the long term. On the other hand, building new infrastructure often seems more visible and important in the short term.

To help navigate these choices, we need a better understanding of the infrastructure we already have, how much we are investing in our infrastructure networks, and how fast they are wearing out or becoming obsolete.

This research provides the first comprehensive and consistent view of the financial value of New Zealand’s infrastructure assets, how much we are investing in our infrastructure, and how fast they are wearing out.

It also considers whether current rates of renewal investment are sufficient to keep up with depreciation.

Key findings

- **Around 60% of investment needs to go to renewing existing assets, not building more:** Between 2013 and 2022, depreciation

costs for infrastructure were equal to 58% of new capital investment. For every \$10 we spent on new infrastructure, almost \$6 of existing infrastructure wore out. If we want to maintain our existing infrastructure for future generations, that’s roughly how much we need to spend on renewal. That leaves \$4 out of every \$10 of investment available for new or improved infrastructure.

- **The value of our infrastructure assets is rising over time:** The inflation-adjusted value of New Zealand’s infrastructure assets rose from \$32,900 per person in 1990 to \$55,800 per person in 2022. In 2022, our infrastructure assets, excluding land, were valued at \$287 billion. 45% of this infrastructure is owned by central government, 26% is owned by local government, and 29% is commercially or privately owned.
- **Current investment rates signal likely future investment levels:** Between 2003 and 2022, infrastructure investment averaged 5.8% of GDP. We spent an average of 3.4% of GDP on horizontal infrastructure such as transport, electricity, water and telecommunications networks. We spent 4% on vertical infrastructure such as education, hospitals, social housing, and defence infrastructure. Sustaining higher investment would require us to increase taxes, rates, or user charges, while lower investment would require us to accept less or lower-quality infrastructure.

See the full report [here](#)

Around 60% of investment needs to go to renewing existing assets, not building more





Dad's plea over school runs: 'Number of near misses blows my mind'

A dad and surgeon is urging Gisborne's council to consider the safety of children who commute to school after witnessing too many "near misses".

The safety of school children proved a big talking point at the Regional Transport Hearings in Gisborne recently.

After the "Let's Talk Transport" consultation process, which included drafts of the Mode Shift Plan, Active Travel Strategy and Regional Transport Plans and Regional Public Transport plans, the council received over 300 submissions.

Cracked pathways, unsafe or nonexistent crossings, and lack of cycleways were among the issues raised.

Surgeon and father Roberto Sthory said at work he experienced first-hand the dangers of what can happen when safe crossings and pathways are not provided.

"We need something safer for our kids to cross," he said. "I drive Ormond Rd daily and it blows my mind the number of near misses I see."

"I find it unacceptable that any kid is at risk of being run over and I would like it dealt with at your end," he told the council's hearings committee.

He suggested logging trucks should not be able to cross the city during school hours.

"Why do we allow them to ruin all of our roads? Can we provide them separate routes?" he said.

Gisborne District Council director of community lifelines Tim Barry said he would like the science behind the risk of logging trucks to be considered before making any recommendations to alter routes or schedules.

"In my experience, I have seen great accountability with logging truck drivers," he said.

Te Wharau School principal Mark Harris said children travelling to school should be "a major safety consideration".

"No signed crossings on many roads

"A lot of our whānau use footpaths and accessways to get to school because transport can be a challenge.

He said he would like the science behind the risk of logging trucks before making any recommendations for safer routes.



"Some of our kids — from surrounding schools as well — have to cross major roadways to get to school."

He named De Lautour Rd, Rutene Rd and Wainui Rd and said, "there are no signed crossings on many of these roads".

Speaker Ian Allen also addressed safety during his presentation to free up the roads.

"Please take extra care when you consider who you're making these decisions for . . . our vulnerable are not often in a position to make submissions," he said.

Lyall Evans' submission echoed these safety concerns, as well as highlighting the health benefits of making roads more cycle- and walker-friendly.

"Oxygen is brought into the brain when kids exercise, which improves children's ability to concentrate in school," he said.

Nona Aston from Tairāwhiti Positive Ageing and former social worker Carolina Cortes also raised concerns about the accessibility of Gisborne's roads for vulnerable people.

"It's such a shame that the new surf club (Midway) doesn't connect with the board ramp along Midway, missing 20 metres of concrete pathway," Cortes said in her submission.

The lack of accessible pathways limited disabled people from moving around the city, she said.

"This demands more support from their families and community to help them move around.

Councillors offered a view from a disability scooter

"It limits them from living their life," she said.

Cortes submitted a video of her friend Josh, who is a wheelchair user.

"Most footpaths are rundown and access to the footpaths are steep, and really dangerous," he said.

Aston, who is elderly and uses a mobility scooter and disability walker as her main mode of transport, urged councillors to borrow her scooter to experience the "dangerous" state of Gisborne's pathways.

Councillors moved recommendations to escalate the priority of footpath renewals and investment into pedestrian and cycle links, as well as having slower speeds during school hours and high visibility crossings around Te Wharau School.

The council also moved the recommendation to update the Active Travel Strategy maps to reflect the infrastructure needs for safe commutes for Te Wharau School kids, and to include proposed locations for pedestrian crossings.

'If we want people to walk, provide safe footpaths'

Councillor Ani Pahuru-Huriwai said footpaths were a kaupapa coming through many submissions.

"They were all using the same language, about the same things . . . if we want people to walk, we have to provide safe footpaths," she said.

Source: TVNZ

"If we want people to walk, we have to provide safe footpaths"





Europe's longest hyperloop test track revives futuristic tube transport hype



A split in the hyperloop tube allows vehicles to change directions

Reluctance to be in a windowless tube could be overcome with "a capsule with a nice ceiling which might display stars or a nice sunny day"

The test track at the European Hyperloop Center in Veendam



The longest hyperloop test track in [Europe](#) has opened, raising faint hopes once more that the maglev meets vacuum tube transport technology could be the future.

Operators said the facility would help prove the hyperloop's feasibility, saying it could allow a 6,200-mile (10,000km) network of high-speed tubes to be in place around the continent by 2050.

As it stands, the European Hyperloop Center test bed in Veendam is not so much a loop as a 420-metre-long forked white pipe running alongside the railway and road that must still be used, for now, to transport people around this corner of the [Netherlands](#).

Made of 34 interconnected prefabricated 2.5-metre-wide steel cylinders, the partly EU-funded test pipe is somewhat shorter than the 2-mile track [envisaged in 2020](#), and allows speeds of only a fraction of the 620mph (1000km/h) that proponents believe the technology can achieve.

The fork in the Vandeem pipe will allow engineers to test what happens at a "lane switch" when a high-speed vehicle changes course. First tests will be carried out by the Dutch company Hardt [Hyperloop](#) in the coming weeks.

The centre's director, Sascha Lamme, said it was a "pivotal moment", telling Agence France-Presse: "You need this to create a network. The lane switch is a diverging part of the infrastructure, so one part goes for example to Paris, the other one heads off to Berlin."

The idea of the hyperloop was [floated by Elon Musk in 2013](#), who proposed a line linking San Francisco and Los Angeles, using magnets to propel shuttles along pipes in near-vacuum conditions, with the lack of friction and air resistance potentially allowing the vehicles to rival the speed of aeroplanes.

His fellow tycoon Richard Branson continued to put the hype in hyperloop with a Virgin-branded company testing a passenger capsule in the Nevada desert in 2020.

He sold up and the renamed Hyperloop One collapsed last year.

While past predictions for the hyperloop have appeared unduly bold, Lamme maintained a pan-European network could appear in a few decades.

"If you look at how highways were developed over time, it goes exponentially when the technology is ready. It should really be possible to get into a station in Amsterdam and travel to a city like Barcelona in two hours."

Supporters say the hyperloop offers potentially cleaner and quieter as well as quicker transport, although passengers may balk at the idea of travelling in a windowless pod hurtling through an airless tube.

Lamme suggested reluctance could be overcome with "a capsule with a nice ceiling which might display stars or a nice sunny day".

Europe's innovation may yet allow it to keep up with developments in China, which opened a one-mile test track for "low-vacuum pipeline magnetic levitation technology" in Shanxi province in 2022, according to state media.

Source: Guardian



Te Huia funding rolls on

The Te Huia train service will continue to receive funding from the New Zealand Transport Agency - albeit at a reduced level - enabling it to carry on with its five year trial.

It's a decision that will gladden the hearts of Te Huia supporters.

A reduction in the percentage of NZTA's share of net costs may also appease service critics somewhat.

But it will mean higher costs for local councils during tight financial times meaning service cuts can't be ruled out.

NZTA's board met recently to consider the fate of its Te Huia funding beyond June this year after a review of two years service, and the decision was announced in late May.

Approximately \$12.2 million is being committed by NZTA from the 2024-27 National Land Transport Fund for the remaining two years of the 5-year trial.

But this represents a progressive reduction of the share that NZTA funds for the operation of the service from 75% of net costs to 60%, meaning a theoretical reduction of almost \$2 million over the rest of the trial.

Agency chief executive Nicole Rosie said in a statement that funding pressure for land transport and a new draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS), which outlines new priorities for NZTA, means on-going co-investment in these services had to be carefully considered.

"The draft GPS continues to prioritise effective public transport to provide commuters with more choice and to help to reduce travel times, congestion, and emissions.

"There is a need to link ongoing investment to service and commercial performance to make sure taxpayers' money is being used in the best way," Rosie said.

"Performance for Te Huia as a start-up public transport service has been generally encouraging. While the service has gradually built patronage, Te Huia has not achieved all of the targets set out in the original business case.

"Our decision to progressively reduce the level of our co-investment aligns with the draft-GPS, takes into account current funding pressures and recognises the performance of the trial to date."

Waikato Regional Council runs Te Huia and they would need to determine the operational impacts of NZTA's decision.

It recognises that Te Huia is well on track to achieving the targets set by the NZTA and gives us the certainty we need to continue planning for inter-regional passenger rail connecting New Zealand's fastest growing city and largest city



"We do not need to be cheaper than the bus - we are a superior service".

"They will need to take some time to work through the impact of the board's decision on the service and their local co-investment share. NZTA will work closely with them and continue to support Te Huia for the remainder of the trial," Rosie said.

The new co-investment arrangements for Te Huia come into effect from 1 July.

The 75% decreasing to 60% funding rate for Te Huia from NZTA compares to a standard 51% for most public transport services across the country.

Next financial year for Te Huia the percentage will go to 70% and then to 60% for the following year until the end of the trial in 2026.

The progressive change from 75% to 60% equates to a reduction of approximately \$1.98m over two years based on the estimated cost to run the service till the end of the trial, NZTA's statement said.

This means the local share of the co-investment will need to increase by the same amount to maintain the same level of service, it added.

It is expected that the funding assistance rate for any further operation of the Te Huia service beyond the 5-year trial will be at the standard 51%.

Waikato Regional Council, which operates Te Huia, welcomed the NZTA decision.

"It recognises that Te Huia is well on track to achieving the targets set by the NZTA and gives us the certainty we need to continue planning for inter-regional passenger rail connecting New Zealand's fastest growing city and largest city," said Future Proof public transport sub-committee chairperson Angela Strange in a statement.

The regional council currently covers 21.2% of net costs and Waikato District Council 3.3%.

Waikato Regional Council will now need to con-

sider options for providing the regional share - this were to be discussed through long term plan deliberations which began in late May.

In an interview recently, Strange said she couldn't comment on the potential for service cuts, saying "all the options will be looked at".

Staff would present those options to the deliberations.

She noted fares were going up 20% from July and a review of pricing was being carried out as well.

Te Huia supporter and city economic development committee chairperson Ewan Wilson said he was delighted "because I always felt completing the trial was just common sense".

"It gives the users of Te Huia the chance to continue to show their support."

He would support fare increases to help meet any reductions in NZTA's contributions, adding "we do not need to be cheaper than the bus - we are a superior service".

However, Wilson ruled out the city council - which contributed millions to a new station at Rotokauri - from chipping in funding.

"We are in such financial stress that we just do not have the capacity."

Leading Te Huia critic Don Good - the chief executive of the Waikato Chamber of Commerce who's called the service a "luxury" - said he wasn't disappointed at NZTA's decision.

But Good said he'd rather see the money spent on the likes of health and education, claiming Te Huia's patronage came from a relatively narrow selection of the population.

"It always struck the chamber as being reasonably elitist."

Source: *Stuff*



I made a huge mistake challenging Death to a pillow fight...

I was not prepared for the reaper cushions.



TfNSW release Road User Space Allocation Policy review



Transport
for NSW

The Road User Space Allocation Policy is a Transport for NSW released in 2021 that applies to the planning, design, scheme approval, building, management or operation of roads in NSW.

A review of the policy was undertaken in late 2023 to evaluate how it had been implemented since its publication and to provide recommendations on strengthening the policy as part of road space allocation decisions.

The aim of the policy is to ensure TfNSW can deliver on the safe and equitable allocation of space on roads and streets. A supporting Road User Space Allocation Procedure was also developed in late 2021.

The policy was developed to support the NSW Movement and Place Framework and operationalise the consideration of movement and place outcomes. The policy aims to ensure physical and temporal road space is allocated safely and equitably to support the movement of people and goods and place objectives.

The policy and procedure applies to roads in urban areas in regional and metropolitan NSW except for motorways.

By implementing the policy, TfNSW ensures the allocation of road user space:

- is a deliberate exercise that considers the place, function and movement requirements of roads
- achieves the strategic intent and outcomes as set out in statewide, metropolitan and regional strategies and plans
- achieves the movement and place vision of a corridor or network
- considers the limited amount of space available to accommodate competing user needs
- can be adjusted to respond to specific circumstances.

These objectives can be achieved by:

- Physical allocation: The physical road user infrastructure of the road, such as kerbs, medians, lane delineation and surface treatments. This includes both permanent and temporary treatments
- Temporal allocation: Optimising how space is allocated throughout the day, week or year. This includes the dynamic control of space, access, level of priority, speed and kerbside use through signage, signals, and other technology.

TfNSW regularly reviews its policies and procedures to monitor compliance and understand the impacts. It also reviews its corporate policies to ensure they are still current and reflect the objectives of the organisation and the Government.

A review of the policy was undertaken in late 2023, with the purpose of the review was to provide recommendations on:

- What is needed to consistently deliver better road space allocation outcomes?
- How can road user space allocation be better considered and assured in major projects, and road network operations?
- What is required to ensure internal practices support better road space allocation for our communities?
- Whether the Road User Space Allocation Policy (and/or the supporting Road User Space Allocation Procedure) needs to be strengthened and how?

The Minister for Transport, Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads have since endorsed the review and its 11 recommendations, with the aim of strengthening the policy as part of road space allocation decisions by TfNSW. TfNSW will report back to the Ministers on progress of the recommendations.

The review found the implementation of the policy has been limited by a wide range of barriers. While acknowledging there are limitations on what can be achieved through a single corporate policy, a total of 11 actionable recommendations were identified which respond to the key findings.

The recommendations apply to many areas of TfNSW including governance, processes, legislation, funding and guidance. The key recommendations of the review include:

- Updating the policy and supporting procedure
- Staff training and capability development
- Performance indicators and tools to support the policy
- Stronger alignment between the policy and assurance reviews
- Review and revise organisation and governance arrangements to embed the policy
- Review technical guidance, standards and warrants relating to road space allocation
- Review existing programs in terms of alignment to the policy.

For further information, please refer to the full [RUSA Implementation Review Report \(PDF, 1.56 MB\)](#)

[Road User Space Allocation Policy \[2021 version - currently being updated\] \(PDF, 430KB\)](#)

[Road User Space Allocation Procedure \[2021 version - currently being updated\] \(PDF, 1.65 MB\)](#)

The aim of the policy is to ensure TfNSW can deliver on the safe and equitable allocation of space on roads and streets.



UK report finds low-traffic neighbourhoods work and are popular

Downing Street had hoped that the study would bolster their arguments against LTNs, but it largely points the other way.



An official study of low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) ordered by UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak amid efforts to stop them being built has instead concluded they are generally popular and effective and the report was initially buried, the Guardian has learned.

The long-delayed review by Department for Transport (DfT) officials [was commissioned](#) by the prime minister last July, as Sunak sought to capitalise on controversy about the schemes by promising drivers he was “on their side”.

Downing Street had hoped that the study would bolster their arguments against LTNs, which are mainly installed by Labour-run councils, but it largely points the other way.

The report, which applies only to England as transport is devolved, had been scheduled for publication in January. However, after its findings emerged, government advisers asked that it be permanently shelved, the Guardian was told.

One government source disputed this, saying the report would be published soon, and it was “categorically not the case” that it had been suppressed.

A copy of the report seen by the Guardian said that polling carried out inside four sample LTNs for the DfT found that overall, twice as many local people supported them as opposed them.

A review of evidence of their effectiveness said that although formal studies were limited, they did not support the contention of opponents that

LTNs simply displaced traffic to other streets rather than easing overall congestion.

“The available evidence from the UK indicates that LTNs are effective in achieving outcomes of reducing traffic volumes within their zones while adverse impacts on boundary roads appear to be limited,” it read.

The study also seems to dispel the argument that LTNs are deeply unpopular. Surveys of 1,800-plus residents in four sample schemes, in London, Birmingham, Wigan and York, found an average of 45% support and 21% opposition.

In each of the schemes, the percentage of people backing the LTNs was between 19 points and 31 points higher than the percentage opposed. In a sign that the controversy about the schemes might be largely generated by politicians and the media, 58% of people did not even know they lived in an LTN.

The report is another blow to Sunak in his attempt to attract votes by blocking schemes that encourage active travel, [set out in September](#) in a “plan for drivers”, promising a clampdown on LTNs, bus lanes and 20mph speed limits, and moves to prevent councils from fining people for infractions.

As part of the latter policy, it is understood that the DfT plans to launch a consultation on denying councils access to centrally held data from automatic number-plate recognition cameras if it is felt that they are enforcing road rules too vigorously.



In January, [the Guardian revealed](#) that the plan for drivers was guided in part by government worries about so-called 15-minute cities, an urban planning concept that has become the focus of conspiracy theories.

LTNs are modal filters, a common traffic management tool used for decades that stops motor vehicles from using smaller, residential streets as cut-throughs, using camera-enforced signs or physical barriers but allowing full access for pedestrians and bikes.

They became controversial after a large number were installed at speed, many in London, during the Covid lockdowns of 2020, in an attempt to help people travel around more safely and easily on bike or foot.

The DfT report, which covers only schemes installed from 2020 onwards, noted that where there had been problems, for example with emergency services, this tended to be when schemes had been rushed through or were new, and the issues tended to ease over time.

While the Met police and one ambulance service reported initial problems, overall “LTNs do not adversely affect response times for emergency vehicles”, the report said.

Critics of LTNs argue that they benefit people living inside them largely by pushing traffic on to nearby roads. However, the DfT said this did not seem to be the case.

“There are tensions between evidence and perceptions,” the report said. “There appears to be limited evidence of adverse impacts on boundary roads, but residents are more likely than not to think that schemes have added traffic congestion and queues to these nearby roads.”

The report found some evidence of the schemes encouraging people to walk and cycle, as well as interim findings that LTNs tended to lead to a reduction in road danger and street crime, while saying more research was needed.

It did note mixed findings among people with disabilities. Some said LTNs had made their journeys longer, while others said the opposite.

A wider survey of councils found that of 42 LTNs where the local authority responded, an average of 31,000 penalty charge notices had been issued.

However, this varied greatly, ranging from 170,000 in one LTN to 83 in another.

A DfT spokesperson said: “We are clear that many local authorities have not put local residents first when implementing low-traffic neighbourhoods.

We are backing motorists and will produce new guidance focused on the importance of securing strong local support.”

Source: *Guardian*

Surveys found an average of 45% support and 21% opposition





Cambodian prime minister bans musical vehicle horns to deter dancing

He said such dancing affected public order and posed a traffic hazard that was a threat to life and limb.



The Cambodian prime minister, Hun Manet, has ordered a ban on musical vehicle horns after videos posted on social media showed people dancing on roads and roadsides as passing lorries blasted rhythmic little tunes.

Hun Manet, who last year took over from his father, Hun Sen – who led Cambodia for 38 years, called on the ministry of public works and transportation and police across the country to immediately take action against any vehicle whose normal horn has been replaced by a tune-playing one by ripping it out and restoring the standard honking type.

He said the measure has already been implemented by provincial authorities, but he wanted to announce it publicly to make sure it was enforced nationwide.

He commented on his Facebook page on Monday that recent social media posts had shown “inappropriate activity committed by some people, especially youth and children, dancing on the roadside to the musical sounds from trucks’ horns”.

Hun Manet said such dancing affected public order and posed a traffic hazard that was a threat to life and limb, not least of all to the dancers themselves.

One video shows three young people dancing in the middle of a road while a large trailer truck coming their way lays down a beat.

Source: Guardian





Passenger numbers on the Elizabeth Line far exceed expectations



[Since its opening two years ago](#), passengers on the [Elizabeth Line](#) have made over 350 million journeys.

Passenger numbers are already above what was expected by 2030, with 150 million passenger journeys, and a more than 50% increase in 2023/24 when there were 210 million journeys. The forecast for the 2024/25 financial year is for 226 million passenger journeys.

Journeys on the line are increasing faster than any other line in the UK and added an estimated £42bn to the UK economy.

The largest increase in the number of journeys has been between Reading and Hayes & Harlington with an 80 per cent increase, while demand for travel to Heathrow terminals has increased by 64 per cent [since through-running was introduced](#) in November 2022.

The line has also driven regeneration, with a direct impact on the building of 55,000 new homes, the potential for 15,000 more new homes and 8,000 jobs. There has been a six per cent increase in new homes in Abbey Wood, whilst Southall and Hayes & Harlington in West London have seen an increase in social housing developments.



Between 2015 and 2022, 60 per cent of employment growth in greater London was within 1 km of Elizabeth line stations.

All 41 stations on the Elizabeth line have step-free access from street to platform, with all central section stations being fully accessible from street to train with staff available if manual assistance is required.

To allow quick boarding, the fifth carriage of each train has four dedicated wheelchair spaces close to the doors, and there are also ten multi-use spaces on each train for buggies, luggage, and cycles.

Source: RailAdvent

60% of employment growth in greater London is within 1km of Elizabeth line stations.



World's coolest 30 streets for 2024 named by Time Out

Time Out also notes how some of the world's busiest streets have changed for the better in recent years - with many becoming "more walkable and pleasant places to spend our time."



What makes a street "cool?" Is it a plethora of restaurants, bars, cafes you can spend hours dipping in and out of?

Is it independent stores, selling wares you won't find anywhere else? Or is it just a general vibe, a friendly warmth that's hard to pin down, but which you know when you feel it?

Time Out reckons it's all of the above - the global media company's put together its list of the "coolest streets in the world right now", factoring in each street's food offerings, drink options, cultural delights, nightlife and overall sense of community.

To produce the 2024 lineup, the global listings guide's network of editors and writers chipped in to make the case for their favorite streets in their respective cities.

Claiming the top spot is buzzy High Street in Melbourne, with local Time Out Melbourne editor Leah Glynn praising the road's "epic restaurants, hidden bars, live music venues and boutique shops" and what Glynn called a "warm sense of community spirit that means everyone feels welcome."

It's not the first time a Melbourne-based street's graced Time Out's list, with Gertrude Street and Smith Street featuring in past iterations of the rankings.

Melbourne's omnipresence led Glynn to suggest "Melburnians are spoiled for choice when it comes to well-trodden thoroughfares that deliver on food, culture and fun."

Melbourne's High Street is located in the south-east of the coastal Australian city and criss-crosses the suburbs of Northcote, Thornbury and Preston.

Time Out praises the street's "unique, something-for-everyone local businesses" from Casa Nata, which sells delicious Portuguese custard tarts to 1800 Lasagne - a restaurant born out of the pandemic that's now a thriving pasta spot with outdoor seating.

High Street's also great for bar hopping, suggests Time Out, highlighting "intimate and exclusive" rooftop bar Gigi Rooftop and buzzing dance spot Francesca's Bar.

Marco Finanzio, the founder and managing director of Gigi Rooftop, told CNN Travel he first opened a spot on High Street 14 years ago, and back then was "dreaming of the area becoming an iconic destination." Finanzio said he and his team "dearly love our street and community."

"This acknowledgment is a wonderful achievement for so many local businesses who have worked tirelessly to serve locals, navigate a pandemic and battle rising costs to create a vibrant street that has come out on top of the world," he added.

Ben Mathieson, of Francesca's Bar, said it's really "special that everyone now knows how cool our street is."

"My neighbours are all independent locally owned businesses, you won't find any big corporate brands, a great mix of hospo, live music,



retail, health and wellness and all the traders have each other backs," Matheison told CNN Travel. Mathieson also shouted out the Melburnians who "make the street cool as much as we do."

"We don't exist without the awesome locals," he said.

Coming in at number two on Time Out's 2024 list is Hollywood Road in Hong Kong, home to incredible restaurants including Michelin-starred Tate Dining Room, as well as cultural site Man Mo Temple and the Mid-Levels Escalators, the world's longest outdoor covered escalator system.

Meanwhile, the number three spot is claimed by East Eleventh in Austin, Texas - lauded by Time Out for packing a lot into a short quarter-mile.

On East Eleventh, Vintage Bookstore & Wine Bar gets a shout out as the ideal spot to grab a drink and dive into a new read, while Kenny Dorham's Backyard is the perfect place to see live music in "a makeshift venue that feels like a permanent house party," according to Time Out.

Time Out also notes how some of the world's busiest streets have changed for the better in recent years - with many becoming "more walkable and pleasant places to spend our time."

"Outdoor drinking and dining, at one point a temporary measure, has become a staple on many of the streets on our hotlist," said Time Out, adding

this walkability has been "bolstered by green initiatives like pedestrianization and low-traffic avenues." Consell de Cent in Barcelona, Spain, which is number 10 on Time Out's list, banned cars in 2023.

For each street on its list, Time Out has recommended a range of fun things to do - from yoga at Ardha Bikram Yoga on Guatemala Street in Buenos Aires (number four) and drinking natural wines at hole-in-the-wall bar Small Shifting Space on Jalan Petaling in Kuala Lumpur (number six) to enjoying cream soda floats at Guutara Coffee on Chazawa-dori in Tokyo (number nine).

Time Out says the goal of the list is to celebrate "the avenues, thoroughfares, backstreets and boulevards where local life really thrives."

The full top 30 can be seen at [Time Out's web-site](#).

Time Out's top 10 coolest streets in 2024:

1. High Street, Melbourne
2. Hollywood Road, Hong Kong
3. East Eleventh, Austin, Texas
4. Guatemala Street, Buenos Aires, Argentina
5. Commerical Drive, Vancouver, Canada
6. Jalan Petaling, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7. Rua da Boavista, Lisbon, Portugal
8. Arnaldo Quintela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
9. Chazawa-dori, Tokyo, Japan
10. Consell de Cent, Barcelona, Spain

*Walkability has been
"bolstered by green
initiatives like
pedestrianization and
low-traffic avenues*





‘The cheap option’? Why the Gold Coast may be on track to build the most expensive light rail in the world

On opening in 2014, the Gold Coast light rail was an immediate success. Public transport patronage jumped by 32% in the first three years.



Light rail is as much a fixture of the [Gold Coast](#) as bikinis or boogie boards; the attractive yellow vehicles trundling up and down the coast suit the place so well it feels as if they’ve been there much longer than their decade in service.

As in Queensland’s second city, light rail has sprung up in Canberra, the Sydney CBD, Parramatta and Adelaide. Similar “trackless trams” are soon opening in Perth and Brisbane. One of the only places there aren’t plans is Melbourne, home to the world’s largest tram network.

Around the country, there has been a [proclaimed renaissance in light rail](#).

On opening in 2014, [the Gold Coast light rail was an immediate success](#). Public transport patronage jumped by 32% in the first three years, even before stage two opened in 2017.

At the [2018 Commonwealth Games](#), the G:link zipped 100,000 passengers a day around the glitter strip in its distinctive yellow carriages.

“Since the year 2000 almost 200 cities [around the world] have introduced new tramways and I can confidently say Gold Coast light rail has been one of the most successful,” said the GoldLinQ chair, [John Witheriff, in 2021](#), after 10 years of operation. [GoldLinQ is the private consortium](#) contracted to finance, design, build, operate and maintain the network for 18 years.

Transport planners are attracted to light rail because, without the need for tunnelling, it’s cheaper and more deliverable. All you need is a wide road.

Urban planners like it because it can unlock higher-density, high-amenity developments – without the traffic jams. And politicians like it because it can be done on a lower budget. Until it can’t.

Last month the Queensland transport minister, Bart Mellish, released a [preliminary business case](#) that estimated stage four of the 40km G:link network could cost up to seven times more than stage one, for the same length of track.

The business plan estimated the 13km stretch of track will cost between \$3.13bn and \$7.6bn. If it does hit the top cost estimate, the project may be the most expensive light rail project of its type, per kilometre, on the planet.

As one transport expert said: “Queenslanders should ask why we’re expecting to pay Ferrari prices for a Subaru.”

Alon Levy, co-lead of the transportation and land use program at New York University’s Marron Institute, [has spent years studying why](#) some countries are able to build transport infrastructure cheaply and others aren’t.

Though the preliminary business case of the expansion of Gold Coast light rail includes few details, Levy estimates that the project may ultimately cost as much as 10 times more than comparable European infrastructure.

The middle cost estimate for the next stage of the light rail, of \$343m a kilometre or \$4.5bn in total, would be expensive in Europe even for a fully underground subway with all the trimmings, according to Levy’s estimates.



At this middle cost, the final stage of the Gold Coast light rail would also be the most expensive comparable Australian project ever designed, 20% more costly than the Sydney CBD and south-east light rail schemes, the current record-holder. It would be up to 11 times as expensive as Canberra's first light rail line stage (completed 2019), which is 1km shorter.

Transport economist Neil Douglas pointed to Auckland's proposed underground light rail system as an example of the sort of project that runs off the rails. It was costed at NZ\$1bn for each of its 24 kilometres, before it was cancelled, he says.

Douglas has evaluated and peer reviewed transport projects across Australia and agrees the Gold Coast project's estimated costs are high. He says "construction costs are now ludicrous".

"It defies the point of it, because light rail used to be regarded as the cheap option for rail," he says. Levy says there is an endemic problem in what he calls "the peripheral Anglosphere".

"We're seeing the same things in Australia, Canada, and to the extent that there's enough data there, New Zealand is just a steady increase in costs," they say.

"Often, it's just a matter of shared institutional factors."

Those include, Levy says, a lack of contracting transparency, over-engineering, politicisation, poor allocation of cost risk – and above all, contracting out to the private sector.

Scott Elaurant, a transport planner and 35-year veteran of the industry, says the most efficient place he ever worked is the Queensland department of main roads in the 1980s.

The state government had a steady supply of work planned years or decades in advance, with economies of scale, zero profit margin, and extremely low borrowing and insurance costs to manage risk. It contracted out discrete technical tasks to private firms, but routine tasks like project management were done in-house.

But in the 80s, governments started hiring private firms to do project management. The thinking was that the government was slow and old-fashioned and if the entrepreneurial private sector was given the job it could do things better, cheaper, faster. The idea was much less popular in mainland Europe.

Elaurant says the idea was simply wrong.

"This desire to have just simple competition on lowest fixed lump sum price was based on the delusion that the private sector is better at managing risk than government," Elaurant says. "I've worked on both sides; I have no ideological preference. But I have seen no evidence of that in my entire career."

Contracting can also mean hollowing out. Many transport engineers, planners and economists spoken to for this story said the public sector bureaucracy no longer has the skills to complete infrastructure projects in-house.

That means governments have little choice but to hire a private expert firm to act as "lead contractor" – responsible for the entire job, not just a small part of it. The lead contractor then sub-contracts to the same specialist firms the department once did.

Dependence on private sector contractors [can create its own problems](#). The federal Labor government has ordered the commonwealth bureaucracy [to set targets for banishing their use in core](#)

Many transport engineers, planners and economists said the public sector bureaucracy no longer has the skills to complete infrastructure projects in-house.





[business](#), bringing skills and knowledge back in house.

Melbourne Law School senior fellow Kiri Parr says small government can also prove to be less-informed government as well.

If the government is managing a project at arm's length, it is likely to have less information about the infrastructure than the lead contractor, she says. The contractor is in a position to exploit that to its advantage.

Parr says the "very few, very large contractors who can deliver these very large projects", are largely concerned about commercial risk: "Can I make money on the project?"

"One way or another, the government agency pays the bills."

Gold Coast-based Griffith University transport researcher Prof Matt Burke says the cost of fixing up utilities – like water piping or power lines – was adding so much complexity and cost to Australian transport projects that many sector academics believe it's time to consider not upgrading the utilities, even if it means passengers will be delayed by flooding in the future.

Canberra's light rail line – which bucked the trend and delivered under-budget – is known to have been stingy about funding utilities upgrades.

Burke also wants a more healthy contracting environment, with more players.

Projects are now so complex and expensive, he says, only a handful of companies can afford to bear the weight of risk in order to bid for them, driving prices up more. In Queensland, there are just two companies the government can pick from, CPB and Thiess John Holland.

"It's not the same as a truly competitive market with five infrastructure bidders competing in one space," he says.

"We don't have a market like that. Market concentration is a real problem."

Levy argues the upper cost estimate in the Gold Coast preliminary business case – intended to prevent cost overruns – virtually guarantees it. Contractors will aim their bids at the publicised figure. "7.6 guarantees 7.6."

Levy says if Australia wants to get better at building public transport, it needs governments to hire many people with the technical skills to build it. In France, for example, the Parisian public transport agencies employ thousands of engineers, project managers, economist and other experts – and contract them out to smaller regional centres for their own projects at low cost.

"If Queensland is too small for this, it's OK to set up a system in which New South Wales does it and other states pay at-cost to New South Wales," Levy says.

Several transport experts said Australia should hire foreign experts to work as project managers, who are likely to be trained in more efficient processes. A spokesperson for the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads said the central \$4.5bn figure "represents a preliminary cost estimate only and the final cost would be subject to completion of the detailed business case", while the range of cost estimates published – from \$3.13bn to \$7.6bn – allows for "unknown risks, which will be further clarified and updated in the detailed business case".

The detailed business case is due for completion in late 2025. The spokesperson said the major differences of stage three compared with previous, cheaper sections of the light rail include "the length, two major creek crossings and bridge works, alignment within an international airport, and the width of the Gold Coast Highway corridor.

"Finally, costs increase over time. This can be seen in the comparison between stage one and three. The stage two alignment did not travel through as much urban corridor compared to stage one and three so its cost is not comparable."

Elaurant says that the answer is not to give up on public transport. Without good cost control, he argues, Queenslanders will lose faith in rail transport. That means projects like high speed rail, or improved suburban rail, may lie forever out of reach.

"We can build a light rail system with the capacity of a six-lane freeway for about two-thirds the price of the six-lane freeway. And yet we still get a lot of six-lane freeways. So obviously people are making decisions on things other than price," Elaurant says.

Source: Guardian

Elaurant says that the answer is not to give up on public transport.



End-of-life EV batteries to recharge EVs

Counties Energy has launched its “berm battery” energy storage system using 18 repurposed Nissan Leaf batteries for recharging EVs.

The berm battery’s journey to become New Zealand’s first second-life battery system follows a comprehensive planning and certification process which began in 2020 and included two years of testing, also featuring in a ‘real world’ environment. It was commissioned in October 2023.

The low voltage berm battery system is based at a strategic state highway location at Mercer, Waikato.

Electricity taken from the network at lower demand periods is stored by the berm battery to use for higher demand EV power charging.

Working with Australian battery energy storage developer Relectrify and its CellSwitch technology, the ReVolve system stores 240kWh of energy or around 10 times the storage capacity of a typical home battery storage unit.

The Pukekohe-based company says it is excited to launch this high-powered EV charging solution for drivers, offering extremely fast and convenient charging to keep EV drivers on the move with an innovative sustainable solution.

The innovative project epitomises the future of energy and “flexible infrastructure” at work right now in New Zealand, says Counties Energy chief group strategy and transformation officer Moonis Vegdani.

“By making the connections between the network and berm battery storage we are able to meet high demand loads such as EV charging and, at the same time, reduce stress on the network, smooth the network load, decrease connection times and avoid or defer costly infrastructure upgrades,” he says.

Additional benefits to EV drivers include faster charging and resiliency, Vegdani says.

EV drivers can now charge their vehicles at a faster charge rate – previously this was 120kW, due to network constraint at the local transformer – now with the support of the battery this can be up to 180kW, says Counties Energy.

The berm battery can also run EV chargers in a power outage or grid emergency.

The project demonstrates sustainable driving technology and how battery energy solutions can manage peak demand electricity usage cost effec-



tively, ultimately benefiting the company, local electricity consumers, EV drivers and the environment, says Counties Energy.

“This initiative showcases how our CellSwitch technology can help reimagine the lifecycle of EV batteries to revolutionise energy storage and distribution,” says Relectrify partnerships vice president Juergen Barth.

The project is an example of Counties Energy’s distributed systems operator (DSO) strategy as it works sustainably towards decarbonisation and reimagining New Zealand’s energy future.

By unlocking smart meter data, real time network information, usage and generation data enables the company to actively orchestrate energy, creating “flex and stretch” in their network to allow for customers’ changing needs.

“We’re huge supporters of promoting electric vehicle usage within our region and beyond with our EV charging platform OpenLoop, while also investigating how we prepare for the future of electricity distribution using smarter energy technologies,” says Vegdani.

“These projects achieve both outcomes, and we’re grateful to EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) and the fund (low emission vehicles contestable fund) for supporting us in our vision to deliver enhanced energy solutions to our community.”

Counties Energy installed two high-power EV chargers at Mercer Service Centre on the Waikato Expressway in October 2022.

Together with the new 240kWh second-life EV battery system (commissioned in 2023) it now optimises the use of electricity capacity and demand on the electricity network during peak power usage times, the company says.

Source: *EVs&Beyond*

By making the connections between the network and berm battery storage we are able to meet high demand loads such as EV charging and, at the same time, reduce stress on the network



EVs are usually safer for their occupants – but not necessarily for everyone else

Public opinion about EV crash safety often hinges on a few high-profile fire incidents. Those safety concerns are arguably misplaced.



The [future of automobiles is electric](#), but many people worry about the safety of today's electric vehicles.

Public opinion about EV crash safety often hinges on a few [high-profile fire incidents](#). Those safety concerns are arguably misplaced, and the actual safety of EVs is more nuanced.

I've [researched vehicle safety](#) for more than two decades, focusing on the biomechanics of impact injuries in motor vehicle crashes. Here's my take on how well the current crop of EVs protects people:

EVs and internal combustion vehicles undergo the same crash-testing procedures to evaluate

their crashworthiness and occupant protection.

In the USA these tests are conducted by the National Highway Safety Administration's [New Car Assessment Program](#) and the [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#).

These analyses use crash test dummies representing midsize male and small female occupants to evaluate the risk of injuries.

The tests can evaluate fire hazard either caused by [thermal runaway – when lithium-ion batteries experience rapid uncontrollable heating – in ruptured EV batteries](#) or gas tank leaks of internal combustion vehicles.





None of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety crash tests of EVs have sparked any fires. New Car Assessment Program crash test reports yield comparable findings.

While real-world data analysis on [vehicle fires involving EVs](#) is limited, it appears that media and social media scrutiny of EV fire hazard is blown out of proportion.

What stands out about EV safety is that crash test results, field injury data and injury claims from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety all reveal that EVs are superior to their internal combustion counterparts in protecting their occupants.

This EV advantage boils down to a blend of physics and cutting-edge technologies.

Thanks to their hefty battery packs positioned at the base of the car, EVs tend to [carry considerably more weight](#) and enjoy lower centers of gravity than conventional vehicles.

This setup drastically reduces the likelihood of rollover accidents, which have a [high rate of fatalities](#).

Moreover, crash dynamics dictate that in a collision between two vehicles, the heavier one holds a distinct advantage because it doesn't slow down as abruptly, a factor strongly linked to occupant injury risks.

On the technology side, most EVs represent newer models equipped with state-of-the-art safety systems, from advanced energy-absorbing materials to [cutting-edge crash avoidance systems](#) and upgraded seat-belt and air-bag setups. These features collectively bolster occupant protection.

Unfortunately, EVs also present numerous safety challenges.

While the inherent weightiness of EVs offers a natural advantage in protecting occupants, it also means that [other vehicles bear the burden](#) of absorbing more crash energy in collisions with heavier EVs.

This dilemma is central to the concept of "[crash compatibility](#)," a well-established field of safety research.

Consider a scenario in which a small sedan collides with a heavy truck. The occupants in the sedan always face higher injury risks.

Crash compatibility studies measure vehicle "[aggressivity](#)" by the level of harm inflicted on other vehicles, and heavier models [are almost always deemed more aggressive](#).

In addition, the increased energy associated with impacts from heavier EVs, particularly electric pickups, poses [significant challenges for highway guardrails](#).

Moreover, EVs – especially those operating silently at low speeds – pose [increased risks to pedestrians, bicyclists and others](#) who may not hear the EVs approach.

While EVs offer safety advancements for their own occupants, it's crucial to acknowledge and tackle the safety concerns they pose for others on the road.

I believe that technological advancements will serve as the primary catalyst for overcoming the safety hurdles faced by EVs.

Lightweight materials, [more powerful sensing technologies and safety algorithms](#), improved seat belts and better air bags will play pivotal roles in addressing these challenges.

Moreover, the tight connection between EVs and rapidly evolving computing capabilities is likely to foster the development of new safety technologies.

[Jingwen Hu](#), Research Professor of Mechanical Engineering, [University of Michigan](#)
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EVs are superior to their internal combustion counterparts in protecting their occupants.





More Conference dinner photos will follow in the September edition. Until then, enjoy the full glory of Axel Downard-Wilke dancing with Jeanette Ward.







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Roundabout of the Month



Ok, its not a roundabout but you do end up going around and around. Group member Ian Appleton photographed this bridge to nowhere in Taipei. If you have any other interesting images to share, send them to Daniel.newcombe@at.govt.nz





Active Modes Infrastructure Group (AMIG) Update

The online AMIG meetings for 2024 have continued with the latest one held on May 2nd; here's some of the things discussed there:

- Some new **active mode signs** have now been gazetted for use by RCAs (for more info, see <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2024-au1214>). You can now place a MERGING or CROSSING sign underneath a standard cycle warning sign, and you can also inform people that pedestrians and cycles can still use a route that is no exit for other road users.



- With the new government pushing to remove (or restrict) the use of raised crossings, there is the interesting question of what are other ways that you could improve the **conspicuity of flush crossings** and slow down traffic? Some discussion identified several possible alternative interventions, including flashing studs, active speed indicators, high-friction or coloured surfaces, kerb build-outs, median islands, narrowed lane markings, chicanes, and rumble strips – more suggestions welcome! Some new practice notes will be developed in response to the policy shift.
- We've previously mentioned the development of some new guidance on **accessible cycling infrastructure** for the CNG. The draft guidance note was finally published a couple of months ago (see <https://nzta.govt.nz/resources/accessible-cycling-infrastructure/>). It is intended to inform the planning, design, and auditing of streets and cycle facilities to achieve accessibility by people of all needs and abilities, using a variety of different cycles and other wheeled devices. The guide provides lots of practical examples of how certain design details can be major barriers for some people who would otherwise like to ride on cycle facilities.
- Another guideline recently launched is the CCNZ **Practice Note for Temporary Traffic Management of Vulnerable Road Users** (i.e. people walking, cycling, wheeling, etc). The document is a modular graphics-rich guide, with practical advice for people at all stages of the TTM planning and implementation process. See <https://civilcontractors.co.nz/ttm-practice-note/21279/> for more details.



- Sign consistency nationally is a desirable thing for ease of comprehension. I presented some examples of “interesting” cycle advisory and warning signage observed on a recent ride along the Alps2Ocean Trail. Some signs were unique; others applied approved signs to new situations.

While it could be said that most signs observed conveyed the message that was intended, some introduced potential risks of misunderstanding and many signs showed inappropriate use of supplementary signage.



- One of the challenges of active modes is in being able to provide comparable monitoring and reporting on **walking and cycling usage** as with other modes. Various technology solutions are starting to appear, but it is still a challenge to get good data collection that captures information like different modes used, direction of travel, time and location, and mobility aid usage. NZTA staff Darren Fidler and Roy Pryor spoke to AMIG about these challenges and sought some feedback on how get these capabilities when considering the future needs of active mode counts.
- The **Pedestrian Network Guidance (PNG)** has been gradually built up over the past few years with various new sections. The latest content added to it cover Maintenance & Renewals, Streets and Public Realm, and Supporting Infrastructure such as wayfinding, lighting, fencing, and street furniture. The guidance on pedestrian crossing selection has also been updated with a revised selection flowchart.



- Other topics discussed at the latest AMIG meeting included progress on traffic filtering signage needs, and the coming GPS, NLTP, and SH Investment Programme. Detailed minutes about all these topics can be found on the AMIG website: <https://nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/active-modes-infrastructure-group/>

The next AMIG meeting is July 4th (online). Contact Wayne Newman (wayne@cresmere.co.nz), Gerry Dance (Gerry.Dance@nzta.govt.nz) or myself if you have any interesting projects or issues that you'd like to present at AMIG – all ideas welcome!

Glen Koorey (Trptn Group AMIG rep), ViaStrada
(glen@viastrada.nz, ph.027-739-6905)



City Rail Link update



In many ways the hill was CRL's 'Everest' – a mountain of a job completed successfully with larger-than-life high-tech machines and wonderful innovation.

Work that began with hand-held spades in the ground four years ago came full circle recently with City Rail Link (CRL) celebrating the end of work to shift one massive pile of dirt and then replace it with another at the project's Maungawhau Station site.

Removing a large sloping hill in Eden Terrace cleared the way for construction of the southern tunnel portal connecting CRL with the new station and the North Auckland/Western rail line.

The hill has now been restored and most of the heavy construction hidden underground.

"In many ways the hill was CRL's 'Everest' – a mountain of a job completed successfully with larger-than-life high-tech machines and wonderful innovation that demonstrate the huge size of CRL's work and all the complexities and challenges that come with that," says City Rail Link's Chief Executive, Dr Sean Sweeney.

"This was building for Auckland's future on a grand scale – all the materials we used can be measured by the tens of thousands.

After an historic colonial cottage perched above the hill was safely relocated, the first spades of dirt were removed from the hill at an official sod turning ceremony in February 2020.

Spades quickly gave way to heavy machinery – in the months that followed more than 130,000 cubic metres (130,000m³) of material was carved away by CRL's main contractor, Link Alliance.

In the hill's place a line of 71 concrete piles between 42 metres and 8 metres long were driven deep into the ground to anchor a sweeping curved retaining wall 127 metres long and 25 metres high – a buttress of concrete and steel to support CRL's southern portal and the streets above it.

One of the most celebrated 'visitors' to the portal was Dame Whina Cooper, the project's tunnel boring machine. From there it launched its two underground drives into the heart of Auckland's midtown to excavate the rail tunnels.

Cut and cover tunnel construction was completed last October, clearing the way for the next massive programme of work – restoring the hill. On average a convoy of 45 trucks a day transported backfill spoil from quarries in south-east Auckland to the Maungawhau site. Measured monthly, the amount of spoil was the equivalent of 13,000 cars, or 100 blue whales.

Link Alliance Project Director Francois Dudouit acknowledged the hard work of the 200 workers who worked for four years in the tunnel portal area.

"The area has been transformed, reshaped and filled back in again. Much of this extraordinary achievement is hidden from view as 85,000 tonnes of dirt now cover the complex and significant structures built below. I am proud of the teams involved in achieving this enormous milestone," Mr Dudouit says.

Mr Dudouit says each layer of backfill was carefully compacted to ensure the restored hill was safe and secure for future use. Compaction has prepared the restored hill for future use by Eke Panuku, Auckland Council's urban regeneration organisation. A street above the hill will also be re-aligned back to its original shape.

See the timelapse video [here](#)



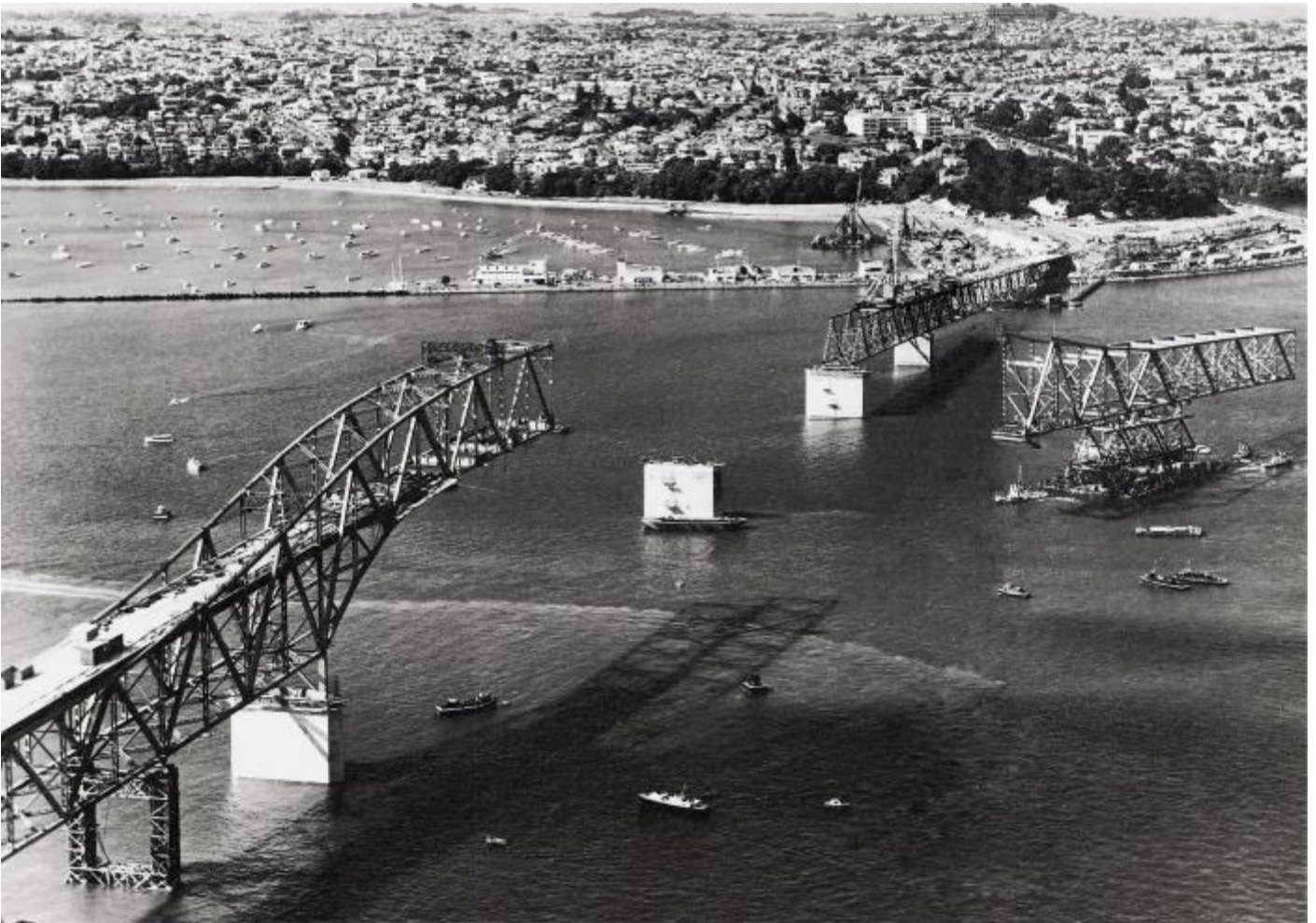
Elsewhere along the route, Te Waihorotiu Station is expected to become New Zealand's busiest train station.

Located in the heart of Auckland's midtown, the underground station has been built below Albert Street with three public entrances at Wellesley and Victoria Streets.

Take a [360° tour](#) showcasing construction progress. These shots were taken during April 2024.



Auckland Harbour Bridge turns 65





Here is a bar graph of how much door I've painted





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Quick Animal Facts:



Elephants can do whatever the hell they want

THEN

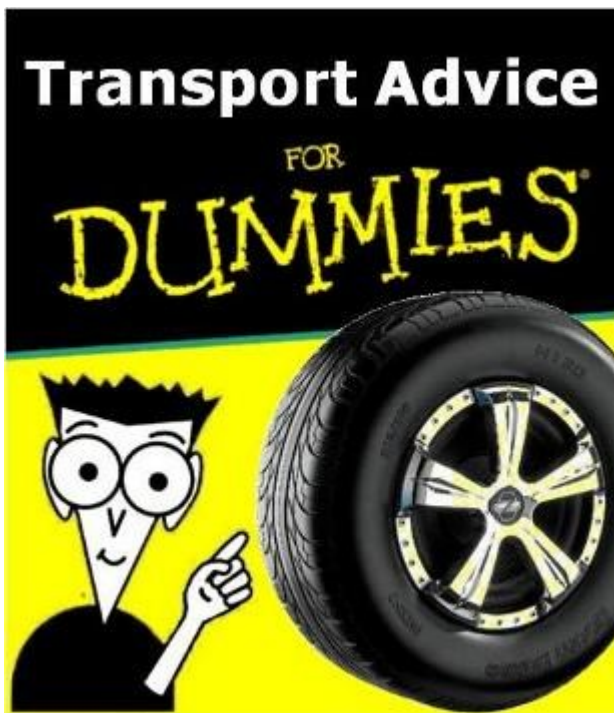


NOW



WELL PLAYED HORSE, WELL PLAYED!

featured on iFunny.com



A tongue-in-cheek column on transport matters by The Transport Guy. The contents do not represent the views of the Transportation Group, or anyone else for that matter. Follow the advice at your own risk. If you have a question for The Transport Guy, no matter how stupid, email it to transportfordummies@gmail.com and he'll do his best to answer.

Dear Transport Guy

How great was that conference, eh?! I vaguely remember lots of 'networking' and a few tours of Nelson (if anyone finds my phone, let me know). Another great time and lots of learning about all the important stuff that got talked about during those boring times between the networking. Great times.

Anyway, if anyone finds my phone, hit me up.

Glen, Kaiapoi

Dear Germ

It's so good you enjoyed the conference. The whole point of these events is to bring our members together to talk, share ideas and enjoy each others' company.

The networking events are a great way for people to relax and lose their phones, You left yours on top of the Uber after visiting that weird intersection with the funny sign. Yeah, that one.

The Transport Guy

**Dear Transport Guy**

I see Auckland is trying to implement congestion charging or road pricing or time of use charging or whatever it is called these days. This comes up all the time. Everyone agrees that making people pay more directly for the impact of them driving at congested times is logical, but on-one has the guts to actually follow through on it.

All the places around the world that road pricing has been done (apart from those places in semi-dictatorships) all have carve-outs for rich or entitled people, so the pain is mainly felt by the poorer drivers who have less money and fewer options to change the way they drive.

And if the regime tries to hit the wealthy or entitled too, those groups fight it through the courts (look how long it's taken Manhattan to get to this point).

With the gaping divide between Auckland and Wellington governments, I just can't see how the upcoming road pricing stuff will be anything other than a gravy train for transport consultants.

Simon, Auckland

Dear Simian

You are right about some of those things. Various road pricing options have been looked at before, but things are different now.

Think about it. People no longer go to bars to meet people, they rely on apps to connect them with future partners (*swipe right, swipe left*) and we no longer watch TV at 6pm every day to find out what is happening in the world. We let algorithms and social media feed us tiny bites of entertainment or events—that's our 'news' now.

We blindly trust our phones to find the quickest driving route across town, knowing that it often sends us through alleyways and paper roads. So it will be far easier to implement road pricing now than ever before. We just make it an app and require it to be used or your non-use will be highlighted on social media.

This is a lot more effective than fines or regulations. Make it the Tinder of driving: "Swipe right to pay \$5 and drive to work. Swipe left to save money and travel a different way or time."

The most ironic thing here is that this brave new world of app-based, social media-aligned technology will be led by one of Auckland's oldest and least tech-savvy mayors.



The Transport Guy

Kids explain traffic engineering



“Road cones are good because they show we are fixing something, and we have lots of things we need to fix.”