

➤ No such thing as a free road

"People concerned about having to pay tolls to drive Auckland's Western Ring sooner, need to consider the fact that there's no such thing as a free road", according to NZ Council for Infrastructure Development Chief Executive Stephen Selwood.

"It's quite simple really, you either pay for the road through taxes or pay in the time it takes to sit in endless traffic jams. But at the end of the day with tolls it's a constructive cost, you are getting an improvement for your money."

"It is not just congestion that makes delay on improvements costly. Delays caused by the lack of public funding often result in project cost overruns. Experience has proven that by the time a road is actually constructed the costs of building will have increased far in excess of the original amount that was budgeted for. This is a key reason why it takes so much longer to build roads in New Zealand."

"Clearly with the benefits a needed road provides, faster travel times, reduced fuel consumption and pollution resulting from shorter journey times, and safer more pleasant driving conditions – it makes much more sense to support tolling as a means to enjoying these benefits far sooner."

"Transit is putting forward a proposal that provides the best of both worlds. The value really lies in that it lets you choose: to pay for a faster trip, to choose to drive off peak for a lower cost, or trade off and choose not to pay for the toll but expect a longer travel time".

Mr Selwood welcomes Transit's announcement today which would see the wider community benefit too. "Funding new roads through tolling means that road users will pay for the service they want to receive and it will free up public funds for essential improvements to public transport and other public services"

(ends)

I Notes to editors

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NZ Council for Infrastructure Development

NZCID (www.nzcid.org.nz) is an authority at the forefront of infrastructure development issues. Our numerous members stem from sectors across New Zealand, including: equity owners, service providers, public sector agencies, major infrastructure users. Together we share a clear purpose: world class infrastructure for the benefit of all New Zealanders. A goal we are committed to achieving by:

- Raising awareness of the fact that infrastructure underpins our community's quality of life and that inadequate infrastructure holds back New Zealand's economic and social growth



- ↳ Generating valuable debate on the quality and level of infrastructure provision to meet New Zealanders' needs
- ↳ Encouraging the implementation of best practice infrastructure provision and management
- ↳ Identifying the condition of New Zealand's infrastructure and the challenges facing our infrastructure providers