



Road funding

Your correspondent James Burnett is wrong to say there is sufficient money to build new roads now without having tolls.

Despite the fact that the Government is committing all of the fuel tax to transport, there remains a very long list of major projects that are not funded in the next 10-year forecast.

Such projects include the city-centre rail loop and airport link, the Waterview connection, the Auckland-Manukau eastern transport initiative, the Waikato Expressway, Tauranga strategic links, Transmission Gully and the Ngaurunga to airport link in Wellington, an additional Auckland harbour crossing, SH1 Picton to Kaikoura, and major safety upgrades across the state highway network.

These projects offer transport users major productivity, environmental and safety benefits but are having to be continually deferred because of lack of funds. The longer we wait, the more expensive they will be, and the benefits of earlier delivery will be forgone.

Provided the economic, social and environmental benefits justify the cost, it makes sense to employ tolls and prudent use of debt to advance their completion. In the end, road users will choose whether the benefits of using the road exceed the cost of any toll.

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