

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Aligned with Our Values

At Rock the Vote NZ, we advocate for equitable and sustainable solutions to Auckland's congestion issues:

- **Invest in Public Transport:** Prioritize the development of reliable, frequent, and affordable public transport options, including the expansion of bus and rail networks, to provide viable alternatives to private car use.
- **Promote Flexible Work Arrangements:** Encourage businesses to adopt flexible working hours and remote work policies to reduce peak-hour traffic volumes.
- **Enhance Active Transport Infrastructure:** Develop safe and accessible walking and cycling paths to encourage non-motorized modes of transport.
- **Implement Smart Traffic Management:** Utilize technology to optimize traffic flow through adaptive traffic signals and real-time traffic monitoring systems.

CONGESTION CHARGES

Rock the Vote Stands Firm Against Auckland's Proposed Congestion Charge



Auckland's traffic congestion is undeniably a pressing issue, with reports indicating it could cost the city up to \$2.6 billion annually by 2026 due to lost productivity and increased emissions. In response, the government has introduced the Land Transport Management (Time-of-Use Charging) Amendment Bill, aiming to implement congestion pricing during peak hours to alleviate traffic woes.

While the intent to address congestion is commendable, Rock the Vote NZ firmly opposes this proposal. We believe that the congestion charge is an impractical solution that disproportionately affects lower-income Aucklanders and fails to address the root causes of our traffic problems.

Why the Congestion Charge Falls Short

Disproportionate Impact on Lower-Income Residents: The proposed charge does not account for the financial strain it places on those who cannot afford to live close to their workplaces and lack viable public transport alternatives. For instance, commuters like Tamsyn Parker from Kumeū already endure 90-minute drives to the CBD, with limited options to adjust their schedules or routes.

Insufficient Public Transport Infrastructure: Implementing a congestion charge without first enhancing public transport options is premature. Many areas in Auckland suffer from infrequent and unreliable bus services, making it challenging for residents to switch from private vehicles to public transport.

Potential for Revenue Misallocation: While the bill suggests that revenue from the congestion charge will fund transport improvements, there is skepticism about whether these funds will be effectively utilized to benefit those most affected by the charge.

Conclusion

While addressing Auckland's congestion is imperative, implementing a congestion charge without first ensuring equitable and practical alternatives is not the solution. Rock the Vote NZ remains committed to advocating for policies that prioritize accessibility, equity, and sustainability. We urge policymakers to consider more holistic approaches that address the underlying issues contributing to our city's traffic challenges.

For more information on our stance and initiatives, visit www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH Aligned with Our Values

Rock the Vote NZ advocates for inclusive and democratic stewardship of the Waitākere Ranges. We propose:

- **Enhanced Consultation:** Strengthening existing consultation mechanisms with tangata whenua to ensure their voices are heard without establishing co-governance structures that may dilute public accountability.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities, environmental groups, and recreational users in decision-making processes to reflect a diverse range of interests and values.
- **Transparent Governance:** Ensuring that any management structures are subject to public oversight, with clear mandates and accountability to the broader Auckland community.
- **Balanced Access and Conservation:** Developing strategies that protect the ecological integrity of the Ranges while maintaining reasonable public access for recreation and enjoyment.



WAITAKERE RANGES

Rock the Vote Opposes Proposed Co-Governance of Waitākere Ranges

Auckland Council, the Crown, and Te Kawerau ā Maki are proposing a formal agreement—the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Deed of Acknowledgement—to guide the protection of Te Wao Nui a Tiriwa. This deed aims to recognize the deep cultural, spiritual, and historical connection tangata whenua have to the land and support the long-term stewardship of its natural and cultural values.

While acknowledging the importance of involving tangata whenua in the care of the Waitākere Ranges, Rock the Vote NZ is concerned that the proposed co-governance structure may lead to disproportionate influence over public land management. The establishment of a joint committee with equal representation from tangata whenua and Auckland Council/the Crown could potentially grant veto power to iwi representatives, raising questions about democratic accountability and transparency.

Furthermore, proposals to restrict public access to significant portions of the regional park—up to 35%—by closing or limiting access to 19 tracks, could undermine the public's ability to enjoy and connect with this treasured landscape.

Conclusion

The Waitākere Ranges are a shared taonga, and their management should reflect the collective interests of all Aucklanders. While recognizing the significance of tangata whenua connections to the land, we believe that any governance changes must uphold democratic principles and ensure equitable access and participation for all.

We encourage our supporters and the wider community to participate in the public consultation process, open until April 28, 2025, and share their views on the proposed Deed of Acknowledgement. Stay informed and engaged by visiting our website: www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Aligned with Our Values

Rock the Vote NZ advocates for solutions that uphold free speech while promoting social cohesion:

- **Education and Dialogue:** Implement educational programs that encourage understanding and respect among diverse communities.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster open dialogues between different groups to address concerns and build mutual respect.
- **Strengthening Existing Laws:** Ensure effective enforcement of current laws addressing hate-motivated crimes without introducing new legislation that may infringe upon free speech.

HATE SPEECH

Rock the Vote NZ Opposes Proposed Hate Speech Legislation

The New Zealand government is considering changes to hate speech laws, aiming to expand protections beyond race and ethnicity to include religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability. While the intent is to foster inclusivity and protect vulnerable communities, Rock the Vote NZ firmly opposes these proposals due to concerns over free speech and the potential for subjective enforcement.

Pier Law

Concerns Over the Proposed Legislation

Subjectivity in Defining 'Hate': The term 'hate' is inherently subjective. What one individual perceives as hate speech, another might see as a legitimate expression of opinion. This ambiguity risks criminalizing individuals for expressing dissenting views, leading to a chilling effect on free speech.

Existing Legal Protections: New Zealand's current legal framework already addresses hate speech through the Human Rights Act 1993, which prohibits inciting racial disharmony. Additionally, the Sentencing Act 2002 allows courts to consider hate motivation as an aggravating factor during sentencing. These provisions provide mechanisms to address hate-motivated offenses without infringing on free expression.

Potential for Overreach: Expanding hate speech laws could lead to overreach, where individuals are penalized for expressing unpopular or controversial opinions. This not only threatens democratic discourse but also sets a precedent for further restrictions on civil liberties.

Conclusion

While the goal of protecting vulnerable communities is commendable, introducing new hate speech laws poses significant risks to freedom of expression. Rock the Vote NZ believes in addressing hate and discrimination through education, dialogue, and the robust application of existing laws, rather than through legislation that could suppress legitimate discourse.

For more information on our stance and initiatives, visit www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.



OUR APPROACH

Aligned with Our Values

Rock the Vote NZ advocates for solutions that respect individual choice and promote public health:

- **Public Education:** Implement comprehensive dental health education programs to inform citizens about oral hygiene practices and the use of fluoride-containing products.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Provide fluoride treatments and dental care services to communities and individuals at higher risk of dental decay, ensuring resources are directed where they are most needed.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage local decision-making by involving communities in discussions and decisions about water fluoridation, ensuring that policies reflect the preferences and needs of residents.

ROCK IT!

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCK THE VOTE NZ



MANDATORY WATER FLUORIDATION

Where we stand

The New Zealand government has mandated the addition of fluoride to public water supplies through the Health (Fluoridation of Drinking Water) Amendment Act 2021. This legislation empowers the Director-General of Health to direct local authorities to fluoridate their water supplies, with directives already issued to 14 local authorities covering 19 water supplies .

While proponents argue that water fluoridation is a safe and effective measure to reduce tooth decay, Rock the Vote NZ raises concerns about the implications of this policy.

Concerns Over Mandatory Fluoridation

- **Individual Autonomy:** The addition of fluoride to public water supplies removes the individual's right to choose whether to consume fluoridated water, potentially infringing upon personal freedoms.
- **Centralized Decision-Making:** Transferring the authority to mandate fluoridation from local councils to a central government figure diminishes local governance and community input in decisions that directly affect residents.
- **Scientific Debate:** While many health organizations endorse water fluoridation, some studies and experts question its efficacy and safety, suggesting that the scientific consensus may not be as clear-cut as presented.

Conclusion

While addressing dental health is important, mandatory water fluoridation raises significant concerns about individual rights and local autonomy. Rock the Vote NZ believes in empowering individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their health, advocating for approaches that respect personal choice and democratic processes.

For more information on our stance and initiatives, visit www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.

OUR APPROACH

Rock the Vote NZ advocates for inclusive policies that promote unity and equal opportunity:

- **Enhanced Civic Engagement:** Implement programs that encourage participation from all communities in local governance, ensuring diverse voices are heard without segregating representation.
- **Education and Empowerment:** Invest in educational initiatives that empower individuals from all backgrounds to engage actively in the political process.
- **Transparent Appointment Processes:** Ensure that appointments to advisory boards and committees are based on merit and open to all, fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility.

MAORI COUNCIL SEATS

Why we are concerned

The proposal to introduce dedicated Māori seats in local councils across New Zealand has sparked significant debate. While intended to enhance Māori representation, Rock the Vote NZ firmly opposes this initiative, viewing it as a divisive measure that undermines the principles of equal representation and democratic fairness.

Concerns Over the Proposal

- **Equality in Representation:** Establishing council seats based solely on ethnicity challenges the foundational democratic principle that all citizens should have equal representation regardless of their background.
- **Community Division:** Creating separate electoral pathways based on race risks fostering division rather than unity within our diverse communities.
- **Precedent for Future Policies:** Implementing race-based seats may set a precedent for further policies that differentiate citizens based on ethnicity, potentially leading to a fragmented society.

Conclusion

While acknowledging the importance of Māori perspectives in local governance, Rock the Vote NZ believes that creating separate council seats based on ethnicity is not the appropriate path forward. We support initiatives that promote inclusivity and equal participation for all New Zealanders, fostering a cohesive and united society.

For more information on our stance and initiatives, visit www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.



OUR APPROACH

Rock the Vote NZ advocates for solutions that uphold democratic principles while recognizing the unique status of Māori as tangata whenua:

- **Inclusive Consultation:** Ensure that Māori voices are heard through robust consultation processes within existing democratic frameworks, without establishing separate governance structures.
- **Building:** Invest in initiatives that empower Māori communities through education, economic development, and social services, promoting self-determination within the broader national context.
- **Transparent Decision-Making:** Maintain clear and accountable governance structures where all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, have equal opportunities to participate and influence decisions.



CO-GOVERNANCE

Rock the Vote NZ Stands Against The Principle

Recent proposals to expand co-governance arrangements in New Zealand have sparked significant debate. These arrangements involve shared decision-making authority between the Crown and Māori representatives over public resources and services. While proponents argue that co-governance honours the Treaty of Waitangi and promotes inclusivity, Rock the Vote NZ firmly opposes these proposals, viewing them as unworkable and contrary to democratic principles.

Concerns Over Co-Governance

Democratic Integrity: Co-governance structures often grant decision-making power to unelected Māori representatives, which can undermine the principle of equal representation in a democratic society.

Public Accountability: Shared governance can blur lines of accountability, making it challenging for citizens to hold decision-makers responsible for their actions.

Potential for Division: Institutionalizing separate governance structures based on ethnicity may foster division rather than unity, contradicting the goal of a cohesive national identity.

Conclusion

While acknowledging the importance of honoring the Treaty of Waitangi and addressing historical injustices, Rock the Vote NZ believes that co-governance proposals, as currently framed, are unworkable and risk undermining democratic integrity. We support approaches that promote unity, equal representation, and accountability within a single, inclusive governance system.

For more information on our stance and initiatives, visit www.rockthevotenz.org.nz.

