

## MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

<b>Subject</b>	Auckland Harbour Bridge – walking and cycling summer experiences update
<b>Date</b>	2 November 2022
<b>Briefing number</b>	BRI-2615

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Brett Gliddon	General Manager, Transport Services	s9(2)(a)	s9(2)(a)	✓

### Action taken by Office of the Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

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2 November 2022

**Hon Michael Wood – Minister of Transport**

## AUCKLAND HARBOUR BRIDGE – WALKING AND CYCLING SUMMER EXPERIENCES UPDATE

### Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with a progress update on the proposed walking and cycling experiences over the Auckland Harbour Bridge (AHB) and across the broader Auckland transport network during the summer of 2022/2023.
2. The experiences are on target to be delivered in late summer 2023 with the route and dates now confirmed.
3. You have previously received the following updated on the series:
  - a. MIN-3767 Auckland Harbour Bridge walking and cycling event – 8 December 2021
  - b. MIN-3781 Auckland Harbour Bridge walking and cycling trial decision – 21 December 2021
  - c. MIN-3790 NZUP funding for walking and cycling event – 21 January 2022

### Background

4. Cycling is now the fastest growing mode of transport in several cities and towns across New Zealand. Recent statistics show an uptake in the number of people buying e-bikes, with Aotearoa importing 65,000 e-bikes and e-scooters in 2019. This was a sharp increase from 23,000 e-bikes alone in 2017. With supply chains no longer impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, it is expected that these numbers will continue to increase annually.
5. The numbers of people interested in exploring their city on foot or by bike was evident in late August 2022, when over 8,000 people visited Ngā Hau Māngere, the new walking and cycling connection across the Manukau Harbour, in its first weekend of opening. Such a high number highlights the popularity of walking and cycling, the importance of providing options for how people get around.
6. There is a strong desire from Aucklanders for active mode access between the city and the North Shore. Walking and cycling are currently being considered as part of the Waitematā Harbour Connections project with recommendations to include how active modes will be catered for due in the middle of 2023.
7. In early 2021, you asked Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to investigate temporary trials for walking and cycling access across the Waitematā Harbour.
8. In August 2021, Waka Kotahi responded that the AHB was not designed for a walking and cycling function in its current form and that there were a range of complex issues that needed to be mitigated if a trial was to go ahead.
9. In October 2021, you requested Waka Kotahi to explore whether a walking and cycling opportunity on the AHB could occur over the quiet summer period, provided it could be done safely.

10. In December 2021, the Waka Kotahi Board endorsed a series of walking and cycling events for the AHB to commence from November 2022. The series of events was reconsidered by the Board in August 2022 in relation to the AHB judicial review paper and they directed management to continue organising the series; and to partner with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport to allow people to experience the wider walking and cycling and public transport network.

### Risk considerations

11. s9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED], with a major community and media focus at present on the state of the highway networks. We can mitigate this risk by focusing on the series as an equitable opportunity for the bridge to be open to all across Tāmaki Makaurau to enjoy.
12. There is a risk associated with the significant impact of the closure of the western clip-on lanes of the AHB on three consecutive weekends. This can be somewhat mitigated by a comprehensive communications, stakeholder and media plan to minimise network demand by promoting travel using the Western Ring Route as an alternative to State Highway 1, avoiding travel or using other alternative modes via bus or walking and cycling.
13. In addition, consecutive Sundays, 12, 19 and 26 March 2023 (following the Round the Bays event the previous Sunday, 5 March 2022) means travel demand management messaging can clearly discourage drivers from using the AHB on all Sundays for the month of March 2023, with the aim of suppressing traffic and reducing risk.
14. We have secured a contract with an event supplier, He Waka Eka Noa charitable trust. s9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] This event supplier has extensive knowledge in delivering large and high-risk events in a transport environment and this series' procurement has followed Waka Kotahi procurement rules and involved a closed tender from more than one supplier.

### Health and safety

15. The health and safety of attendees and the security of the bridge asset remain the highest priority for all parties involved. Plans are well underway with respect to how these are best managed with the approach to the route, timing, fencing and ticketing all being developed in a way which manages these risks to ensure successful delivery of a walking and cycling opportunity across the AHB.

### Route

16. The proposed route is to use the two western clip-on lanes, with access from the Curran St on-ramp and the Stafford Rd off-ramp.
17. The route is 2.5 kilometres from point to point, which at an average walking speed is a 30–40-minutes or 10-15 minute by bike.
18. There are good landing points at each end for managing entry and exit movements, along with ticketing to control the number of people entering and exiting the bridge and the number of people on the bridge at any given time.
19. Using the western clip-ons rather than the eastern clip-ons and the proposed entry and exit points, allows for greater connectivity at each end for people to arrive at the bridge using active and public transport modes across the wider Auckland transport network. It also allows for a 'full loop' of the

city, which would not be possible if the eastern clip-ons were used due to safety considerations on the northern side of the bridge.

*Figure 1 Western Clip-on Route*



### **Dates**

20. The proposed dates are 12, 19 and 26 March 2023 (Sunday) with a weather postponement date of Sunday, 1 April 2023.
21. These dates have been determined for a number of reasons including the time it takes to secure resources in a very busy event period over summer and cost efficiencies of holding the experiences outside of the peak months of January and February.

### **Timing**

22. The two northbound lanes of the bridge will close from 11pm on the Saturday night before the event until 11pm on the Sunday. Closing the two northbound lanes of the bridge from the night before allows time to pack in the required fencing which is a significant undertaking. A full day closure of the two northbound lanes of the bridge allows us to maximise the number of people who can experience the bridge.
23. The experiences would run from 08:00 – 17:00 (last entry) to allow time for the set up and pack down of the temporary traffic management and fencing required.

## Fencing

24. The edge protection on the bridge is not in line with current standards to protect people on foot and on bikes. The structure is designed for vehicles, not walking and cycling as set out below:
  - a. current height is 1.2 metre
  - b. there are gaps in the barrier greater than 100 milimetre
  - c. the current barrier is very climbable and would not comply with standard balcony/ swimming pool fencing requirements.
25. The current fencing/ barriers on the bridge are designed to keep vehicles from leaving the bridge. Therefore, extensive fencing is required to cover the length of the route and minimise the risk of people entering traffic or climbing the external railing.
26. Fencing with a height of 1.8metre will be used for the length of the route.
27. Previous events held on the AHB, such as the Auckland Marathon, have always had a minimum age, which reduced the risk. However, that particular approach is not in line with the intent of these events, which is for open access for people of all ages to walk, cycle or scooter across the bridge.

## Ticketing

28. The AHB is not designed for use by people outside of vehicles, so a careful ticketing strategy is being designed.
29. An assessment undertaken by our bridge structural engineers confirms that the maximum number of people per bridge span at any one time is 250 to stop the harmonic motion of the clip-on as seen in previous protests (this work is still subject to refinement, and we will have further advice later in the year).
30. This allows for an estimated 20,000 people to use the bridge per day with approximately 250 people on a span at any one time.
31. A ticketing system will allow the public to select a preferred timeslot, mode of access (walking or cycling), north or south access point and indicate any accessibility needs.
32. Investigations are also being made into the possibility of balloting tickets regionally across the city (north, south, east and west) to ensure equal access to all.
33. Within our health and safety framework, which applies to both the safety of people and the structure, we will continue to monitor and use 'out ticketing' to ensure safety and correct numbers on the bridge throughout all events. However, we have discretion on the day to assist non-ticket holders' access to the bridge should capacity allow. For example, people who do not have a ticket, but want to take part, or those arriving earlier or later than their allocated slot, or via a different mode to what is indicated on their ticket.
34. Further work is being undertaken to investigate a 'returning tickets lane' to allow attendees, who may wish to spend several hours of the day on the other side of the harbour from which they accessed to return to their starting location. This will allow people from the North Shore to head to the city for a day shopping, enjoy lunch or provide the opportunity to explore their city and vice versa for those who access the bridge from the central city.

## Costs

35. Costs are still being confirmed as more details about the operational aspects of the series is determined. It is still expected to be delivered within the budget indicated as available to the event management supplier of \$700,000. More detailed costings will be confirmed by the end of 2022.



36. The cost is based on the production of three experiences and roughly includes producer costs, ticketing, a barrier system, traffic management, security, accommodation works, operational support, cleaning, health and safety, ticketing, pedestrian fencing, signage, event management and traffic management-related marketing.

### State Highway network impacts

37. Lane closures of the bridge results in increased travel times throughout Auckland as the bridge is a critical part of the transport network. Weekends are often busy and reducing the capacity of the bridge over weekends creates an impact on the network.
38. This can be somewhat mitigated by a comprehensive communications, stakeholder and media plan to minimise network demand by promoting travel (where possible) using the Western Ring Route as an alternative to State Highway 1, travel via public transport and activating the walking and cycling network to get people to and from the entry points.
39. Waka Kotahi will use real time travel information on the day to manage potential delays across the entire network.
40. The Traffic Impact Assessment indicates that congestion will occur across the motorway network from 10am with each hour the western clip-ons are closed increasing its severity – see appendix.
41. To manage congestion, a demand suppression of 15 percent will be required in the northbound direction and 8 percent in the southbound direction if impacts are to be equitable between northbound and southbound directions.
42. Closure of the western clip-on results in more variability and higher uncertainty around how the northbound impacts will be distributed between the SH1 (southern), city centre and SH16 eastbound directions of travel. This is due to the complexity of the traffic management plan required, the closure of the Curran St on-ramp and the proximity of the central motorway junction, which is a pivotal point for journeys across the Auckland region.
43. Once the closure is in place, it will not be possible for the bridge to be reopened and the closure will remain in place as per the above times.

### Partnership work

44. We are investigating partnership opportunities with Auckland Transport to promote how public transport and the walking and cycling network on either side of the Waitematā Harbour can help get people to and from the events as well as support people to continue moving around the region.
45. Eke Panuku is exploring how they can promote the experiences in their focus areas, particularly those that are on the wider cycle network (Henderson, Mangere etc).
46. Conversations are beginning in late October to understand if and how our mana whenua partners would like to be involved in these experiences.

### Branding and communications

47. Subject to the support of co-branding with our partners, these opportunities will be branded as **“An opportunity to walk, scoot or cycle across Auckland, celebrating the growing walking and cycling network, in collaboration with Auckland Transport and Auckland Council”**.
48. A press release to announce the series has been provided for you as Attachment 1. Alternatively, Waka Kotahi will announce the experiences later in the year.

49. Tickets will be made available in early February 2023, in line with marketing best practice for these types of events. This allows time for a good uptake of tickets and also marks the start of the campaign to suppress demand on the event dates.
50. Traffic suppression communications will include media relations, radio and targeted media and social media advertising. Key messages will advise people to change mode, consider their need to travel, change their time of travel or expect significant delays noting that even the normal alternate route of SH16/ SH18 will be congested.

#### Next steps

51. Waka Kotahi will continue planning for the delivery of these walking and cycling opportunities and our event manager will shortly be locking in suppliers.
52. To ensure that suppliers can deliver the resources needed to support the delivery of these opportunities, our event management supplier will need to begin locking in bookings by 11 November 2022. After this date, it may no longer be viable for resources to be available, and costs may no longer be feasible within the allocated budget. Any cancellation after this date is likely to incur significant expense and could be in the range of 50 percent, increasing the closer to the event dates cancellation occurs.

#### It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the contents of this briefing.
2. **Advise** if you will lead this event series announcement via the attached press release. Yes / No



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**Brett Gliddon**

General Manager, Transport Services

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**Hon Michael Wood, Minister of Transport**

Date: 2022

## Appendix: Sunday demand curves of the Auckland Harbour Bridge

