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Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency  
Attention: Waitematā Harbour Connections  
[info@awhc.co.nz](mailto:info@awhc.co.nz)

## **SUBMISSION ON THE WAITEMATĀ HARBOUR CONNECTIONS**

1. The New Zealand Automobile Association (AA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the five scenarios the Waitematā Harbour Connections project team has issued for public consultation.
2. This submission has been developed by the AA's Transport Policy & Advocacy team with input from the AA's Northland and Auckland District Councils, which represent the interests of almost 400,000 AA Members who reside in the two regions. It has also been informed by the findings of a survey of over 9,000 Auckland AA Members, high level findings from which are attached at Appendix 1.
3. Given the AA's broad Membership, there are a range of different views and perspectives amongst AA Members and District Councillors on the optimal way forward on the Waitematā Harbour Connections. This submission presents the AA's overall position on the scenarios.

### **Executive summary**

4. The Auckland Harbour Bridge (the Harbour Bridge or the Bridge) performs a critical function in connecting hundreds of thousands of people north of Te Waitematā with the rest of Auckland and New Zealand. Due to a combination of very heavy demand, the age of the Bridge and its' inability to operate without restrictions in high winds, it is no longer able to perform this function with 100% reliability.
5. Congestion on the motorways at either end of the Bridge has been a major and growing problem for many years causing long delays for trips in both directions. There is likely to be widespread public expectation that an additional road crossing, combined with a light rail, walking and cycling crossing, will bring congestion down. However, as all scenarios are focused on crossing the harbour, and not on the challenges with congestion further up or down stream, none of them are capable of addressing this problem.
6. The key challenges and opportunities to be addressed with any future crossings are therefore:
  - striking the right balance between:
    - providing for travel demand to and from the city centre (approximately 40% of cross-harbour trips)
    - providing for travel demand to and from all other locations (approximately 60% of cross-harbour trips)
    - influencing travel demand and urban growth and
  - significantly improving the resilience of cross-harbour travel.

7. It is not possible to definitively conclude the best options for the project because critical information is missing, and the information that has been provided is very high-level. However, based on the available information the AA's preliminary preferred options are the road tunnel in Scenarios 1, 4 and 5 and the light rail, walking and cycling bridge in Scenario 5, for the reasons set out below.
8. By separating through traffic from city centre traffic between Akoranga Drive and Central Motorway Junction, a road tunnel would improve efficiency, provide more reliable travel times for general traffic and freight, and better provide for growth in vehicle trips than any of the other options.
9. The road tunnel is the only option which addresses the significant, specific and increasing resilience problem with the Harbour Bridge's ability to operate in high winds. It is also the only option which avoids unacceptable levels of disruption to the very busy Akoranga Drive to Onewa Road section of State Highway 1 (around 250,000 daily person trips) when work to raise this section to protect it against flooding and sea level rise is undertaken. The road tunnel would also have minimal adverse impacts on Te Waitematā and the southern side of the Harbour compared with the bridge options.
10. A road tunnel is more expensive to construct and would generate more carbon emissions during construction than the bridge options. However, these disadvantages are more than outweighed by the better overall outcomes a road tunnel would achieve compared with the bridge options.
11. Severe congestion is forecast for the Northern Motorway even with a road crossing, a light rail crossing and road pricing in place. It is therefore critical that the scope of the work be extended to include widening of the Northern Motorway between Constellation Drive and Northcote Road.
12. Eastern and western light rail tunnel options have more urban growth potential than light rail bridge options but this potential and the resulting patronage is not sufficient to achieve the scale of outcomes required for the much higher level of investment they would require. A light rail, walking and cycling bridge from Wynyard Point to Sulphur Beach, and then continuing on land to Takapuna via Akoranga Busway station, is the most direct and most efficient route, with the shortest travel times for users. Travel time will be critical to achieve mode shift to all three modes but particularly walking and cycling.
13. A light rail, walking and cycling bridge will cause more adverse impacts for Te Waitematā and on land on the southern side of the Harbour than tunnel crossings, but there is substantial scope to avoid or mitigate these impacts through sensitive design and construction methodology. A Wynyard alignment would also avoid the adverse impacts through St Mary's Bay that would occur with a connection to a bridge alignment alongside the Harbour Bridge.
14. Substantial and comprehensive public engagement is needed if the project is to successfully progress beyond the concept stage. This includes ensuring Aucklanders understand what the project will mean for congestion; clarity on the capacity the new connections and the Harbour Bridge will provide for all modes, and how they will work together; what this will mean for travel times; how many people are expected to use the new connections, and what this will mean in terms of the overall value for money for the required investment.
15. Early public consultation will also be needed on any preliminary thinking to toll both the new crossing and the Harbour Bridge – including any implications for the capacity of the final option. The public need to know what potential toll charges could be so they can understand how this could affect their ability to access both the new crossing and a reconfigured Bridge, and what this means for their support for the project.

## Introduction

16. Getting the Waitematā Harbour Connections project right is fundamental to Auckland’s future. The new and improved connections will have permanent implications for the city’s strategic roading and public transport networks and its’ future growth.
17. The right decisions – that both address current problems and strike the right balance between providing for and influencing Auckland’s long term growth – will improve the city’s economic productivity, current and future Aucklanders’ access to economic and social opportunities, and environmental sustainability.
18. Waitematā Harbour Connections will be New Zealand’s largest, most complex and most expensive infrastructure project. These factors, and the range of potential outcomes the project could achieve, also makes it very much a critical project for the rest of the country.
19. The project has a long history and the AA supports advancing planning on new connections that will deliver the right long term outcomes for Auckland and NZ.
20. The key questions to answer are what decisions can be made now to determine “the way forward” based on the available information and evidence, and what decisions need to be carried forward for further work in the Detailed Business Case stage.
21. Deciding too much now with insufficient evidence will create substantial risks that the project will not achieve the best long term outcomes, value for money, and be set back again by further delays.
22. The AA has followed this approach with this submission. We have identified preliminary preferred options because, based on the very high-level of information provided with the scenarios, it is not possible to determine the options that will best achieve the project’s objectives and deliver the best long term outcomes for all modes. We have also set out what additional information is needed to make a decision on the final options.

## Context

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: 96% of respondents think Auckland needs a new Waitematā Harbour Crossing*

### *Population growth and urban development*

23. The Harbour Bridge, and any future Waitematā Harbour Crossing, is the key transport connection between Northland, north Auckland, and the rest of Auckland and beyond. Auckland and Northland have a population of just under 1.9 million, which is projected to grow to over 2.3 million people in the next 25 years<sup>1</sup>.
24. Closer to the project area, Auckland’s North Shore, including the Hibiscus Coast, is currently home to just over 300,000 people, about 18% of Auckland’s population. The area grew by 35,000 people between 2013 and 2020<sup>2</sup>, which was 16% of Auckland’s population growth over this period<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand, NZ.Stat Subnational population projections, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Between 2020 and June 2022 (the latest Statistics New Zealand population estimates at the time of writing), Auckland’s total population declined by just under 20,000 people, while the North Shore’s population declined by just under 10,000 people.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics New Zealand, NZ.Stat Subnational population estimates, 2022

25. Auckland's population is expected to increase by just over 420,000 people<sup>4</sup>, or 25%, over the next 25 years. Just over 35,000 of these additional people are expected to reside in the North Shore, which represents 12% growth, and 9% of Auckland's total population growth.
26. The lower North Shore is particularly relevant to decisions on the next Waitematā Harbour Crossing because it would be the first part of the North Shore to benefit from light rail. The area comprises two local board areas – Kaipatiki, which encompasses the area to the west of the Northern Motorway, and Devonport-Takapuna which encompasses the area to the east of the Northern Motorway. Information on the current population, proposed residential zoning and projected population growth of these areas is included later in this submission to inform the assessment of the scenarios.

### *Travel demand*

27. Before Covid hit, there was an average of 171,000 trips<sup>5</sup> over the Harbour Bridge every day, carrying an estimated 242,000 people – 205,000 in private vehicles and 37,000<sup>6</sup> on buses. Traffic was evenly distributed in both directions with 86,300 trips heading north and 84,700 south.
28. In the morning peak periods, approximately 31,000 people travelled southbound across the Harbour Bridge – around 20,000 by car and around 11,000 by bus.<sup>7</sup>
29. Trips across the Harbour Bridge have origins and destinations throughout Auckland, and beyond. While journeys to and from the city centre are the most common, they account for less than half of travel demand across the Harbour. Pre-Covid:
- Daily person trips over the Bridge in a southbound direction were split relatively evenly<sup>8</sup> between city centre bound journeys, which equated for 41% of all trips<sup>9</sup> and journeys further south, which equated for 37% of all trips. A further 14% of trips went west, and 8% exited at Shelley Beach – presumably bound for inner west locations.
  - Forty-five percent of the southbound morning peak person trips over the Harbour Bridge were bound for the city centre<sup>10</sup>, with the remaining 55% continuing on to other destinations.
30. Looking forward, weekday traffic across Auckland's Harbour Bridge is forecast to increase by 17% by 2046<sup>11</sup>.

### *Congestion*

31. Auckland's continually worsening congestion, and the significant adverse economic, social and environmental problems it causes, is well documented. The scale of the problem is such that it is also a drag on national economic productivity.
32. Cross-harbour congestion is not caused by the Harbour Bridge itself but by congestion on the motorway connections at either end (with the notable exception of incidents and weather events).

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics New Zealand, NZ.Stat Subnational population projections, 2021

<sup>5</sup> Auckland State Highway and Motorway Traffic Count Data 2020

<sup>6</sup> [AT Metro bus performance report 2019](#)

<sup>7</sup> Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Ministerial Briefing Note *Additional Waitematā Harbour Crossing Transport Modelling*, 2018

<sup>8</sup> Auckland State Highway and Motorway Traffic Count Data 2020

<sup>9</sup> Note that this includes the SH16 Port/ Stanley St exit and some of these journeys will be bound for Parnell and the Eastern Bays rather than the city centre.

<sup>10</sup> Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Ministerial Briefing Note *Additional Waitematā Harbour Crossing Transport Modelling*, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

33. At peak times, the motorway connections to the Bridge are at full capacity resulting in long delays for trips in both directions<sup>12</sup>.

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Just over three-quarters of respondents consider peak period congestion on or around the Harbour Bridge is a major problem*

34. The Northern Busway has played a hugely successful role in enabling many more people to cross the Harbour for trips to and from the city centre at peak times. Bus trips (pre-Covid) account for 37%<sup>13</sup> of peak travel and 18%<sup>14</sup> of all travel over the Bridge. However, this has not been enough to address cross-harbour congestion. This is to a large extent because the majority of cross-harbour travel by private vehicles does not begin or end in the city centre.
35. Waka Kotahi has noted that the road connections on either side of the Bridge cannot carry any more private vehicle trips in the peak periods – meaning any growth in vehicle trips will increase the extent and duration of peak period congestion (peak spreading)<sup>15</sup>.

#### *Implications for future connections*

36. Additional cross-harbour road capacity could help to provide for growth in travel by private vehicles, but cannot address congestion without substantial improvements to the motorways on both sides of the Harbour.
37. A light rail connection between the North Shore and the city centre, and potentially connecting into one or two other potential light rail lines on the city side, will improve access to high quality public transport and catalyse urban development opportunities on the northern side. However, given the widely dispersed nature of cross-harbour travel demand, a light rail connection is also unlikely to make a material difference to congestion.
38. Both of these points are consistent with 2018 Waka Kotahi Waitemata Harbour Crossing advice to the Minister of Transport. This found that, even with new road and light rail crossings and congestion pricing in place, severe congestion would continue to be experienced on the Northern Motorway between Northcote Road and Constellation Drive. The advice noted that "this reinforces the need to consider a road...[crossing], together with the widening of [this section of] State Highway 1 as an integrated project."
39. The key challenges and opportunities to be addressed with any future crossings are therefore:
- striking the right balance between:
    - providing for travel demand to and from the city centre (approximately 40% of cross-harbour trips)
    - providing for travel demand to and from all other locations (approximately 60% of cross-harbour trips)
    - influencing travel demand and urban growth
  - significantly improving the resilience of cross-harbour travel.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Auckland State Highway and Motorway Traffic Count Data 2020 and [AT Metro bus performance report 2019](#)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Ministerial Briefing Note *Additional Waitematā Harbour Crossing Transport Modelling*, 2018

## Assessing the options against project objectives and outcomes

### Cost

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Just under half of respondents think project costs should be minimised.*

40. The preferred options need to deliver the best overall long term outcomes for Auckland and NZ and avoid repeating the mistakes made with the Harbour Bridge.
41. The cost of each option needs to be balanced against the benefits it will provide. The new connections will deliver intergenerational benefits over many decades. The costs, including affordability and how the project is financed and funded (along with any implications for the construction timeframe) need to be considered from an intergenerational perspective too.

### Resilience

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Four out of five respondents think it is important that the new Crossing minimises disruption from adverse weather conditions*

42. All scenarios will address current flooding and sea level issues between Akoranga Drive and the Bridge.
43. As all scenarios also provide some road capacity in a separate structure to the Auckland Harbour Bridge, they will also address the increasing pressure on the Bridge and enable the transport network to recover more quickly from incidents – though it seems likely this could vary considerably between different scenarios.
44. The key point of difference between the scenarios is their varying ability to operate without restrictions and even to stay open during high wind events. This matters because the frequency and severity of high wind events (and resulting restrictions, lane and Bridge closures) have been increasing in recent years and would seem likely to continue doing so as the effects of Climate Change continue to increase.

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Two thirds of respondents consider closures of the Harbour Bridge due to weather is a major problem and this increases to 81% of respondents who cross the Bridge daily or most days*

45. Scenario 2, which includes a bridge on the same alignment as the Harbour Bridge, appears unlikely to offer any additional resilience, unless the new bridge was enclosed. Scenario 3, which includes a bridge from Central Motorway Junction, crosses the same part of the Harbour and has the same northern landing point as the Harbour Bridge. It would therefore be susceptible to the same or similar wind risks, so is similarly unlikely to be any more resilient, unless it was enclosed.
46. The road tunnel (included in scenarios 1, 4 and 5) is the only option capable of delivering the critical outcome of reliable year-round cross-harbour travel for general traffic and freight due to its' ability to continue to operate without restrictions during high wind conditions.

47. Resilience against weather events does not appear to be a significant factor for light rail, walking and cycling options and has not been highlighted by the project team as a problem associated with bridge options for these modes. Light rail vehicles are much longer and heavier than trucks and private motor vehicles while a walking and cycling connection would presumably be covered to provide protection from the elements.

#### *Growth opportunities*

48. All light rail, walking and cycling scenarios include Takapuna as the major destination. Takapuna is one of Auckland's 10 metropolitan centres. Metropolitan centres are expected to undergo significant growth in the future and have been zoned for the highest intensity of development in Auckland, apart from the city centre. Takapuna<sup>16</sup> has a population of just under 10,000 and is expected to grow by 5,700 people in the next 25 years<sup>17</sup>.
49. When the Eastern Busway is extended to Botany in 2027/28, Takapuna will be only one of two metropolitan centres not served by rapid transit (the other being Westgate). This is likely to inhibit Takapuna's potential for high intensity development.
50. An eastern cross-harbour light rail tunnel alignment (included in scenario 1) would connect Wynyard to Takapuna and Akoranga Busway station, via the Devonport peninsula (presumably with stops at Belmont and Hauraki).
51. The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board area accounts for 3% of Auckland's population and is expected to account for 2.5% of Auckland's total population growth over the next 25 years<sup>18</sup>. An eastern cross-harbour tunnel alignment would serve much but not all of this area.
52. Under Unitary Plan Change 78 most of the Devonport peninsula is expected to be rezoned for reasonably high intensity residential development (development of up to three stories including detached dwellings, terrace housing and low-rise apartments), and most of Takapuna zoned for high intensity terraced housing and apartment buildings.
53. A western cross-harbour light rail alignment (included in Scenario 3) would connect Wynyard Quarter to Takapuna via the Kaipatiki town centres of Birkenhead (Highbury), Northcote and Akoranga Busway station.
54. The Kaipatiki Local Board area accounts for 5% of Auckland's population and is expected to account for 1% of Auckland's total population growth over the next 25 years<sup>19</sup>. A western cross-harbour tunnel alignment would serve much but not all this area.
55. Under Unitary Plan Change 78, most of the residential areas in Kaipatiki are expected to be zoned for reasonably high intensity residential development. Town centres, including Birkenhead and Northcote, are expected to be zoned for high intensity terraced housing and apartment buildings.
56. Further upzoning and additional uplift from light rail would clearly facilitate further population growth and intensification along either an eastern or western light rail tunnel alignment. However, when considered alongside current population, projected growth and travel demands, neither alignment has sufficient growth potential to achieve the scale of outcomes required for the level of investment.

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<sup>16</sup> As defined by Statistics New Zealand's statistical areas 'Takapuna West', 'Takapuna Central' and 'Takapuna South'

<sup>17</sup> Statistics New Zealand, NZ.Stat Subnational population projections, 2021

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

57. We further note AT's advice<sup>20</sup> to its' Board that "alignments away from the Busway corridor are challenging in terms of the North Shore's topography and dispersed centres, making it harder to identify a sufficiently populous route to justify the expense of a new tunnel."
58. A bridge alignment from Wynyard Point to Takapuna via Akoranga Busway station (included in Scenario 5) would connect Takapuna to rapid transit, stimulate further intensification at all three locations and provide opportunities for extending light rail on the North Shore when more growth does occur. This option provides the best match between potential growth outcomes and investment.

### *Efficiency*

59. Congestion on both sides of the harbour is a major problem and there is significant projected growth in long term demand for cross-harbour travel. None of the options address congestion but, by creating a bypass for through traffic from Akoranga to Central Motorway Junction, the road tunnel option (in scenarios 1, 4 and 5) will improve efficiency and provide more reliable travel times for general traffic and freight.
60. The most direct light rail, walking and cycling alignment from the city centre across the Harbour will be the most efficient as cross-harbour travel time will be critical for mode shift. An alignment through Wynyard Point to Akoranga Busway Station and then on to Takapuna (included in scenario 5) is more direct than a tunnel on a western or eastern alignment (in Scenarios 1 and 3), or bridge options which go around St Mary's Bay (included Scenarios 2 and 4).

### *Protect and enhance Te Waitematā*

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Four out of five respondents think it is important that the Waitematā Harbour is protected and enhanced as part of the construction of the new crossing*

61. Tunnel options would have much less impact on Te Waitematā seabed than the bridge options and do not require coastal reclamation on the northern side.

### *Carbon emissions during construction*

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Half of respondents think it is important that carbon emissions are minimised as part of construction of the new crossing*

62. Tunnel options will generate significantly more emissions during construction than bridges, but tunnels also have longer lifespans before needing replacement. As the crossings will be in place for many decades, it will be important to calculate carbon emissions on a whole-of-life basis.

<sup>20</sup> <https://at.govt.nz/media/1991307/waitemata-harbour-connections-open-board-auckland-transport.pdf>



### *Disruption to address sea level rise*

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: Four out of five respondents think it is important that disruption to motorway users is minimised during construction of the new crossing*

63. Akoranga Drive to Onewa Road is one of busiest sections of State Highway 1 carrying almost 250,000 people in private vehicles and on buses, as well as significant freight volumes every day. There are no practical alternative routes for most trips beginning or ending in the southern part of the North Shore.
64. Minimising disruption of this section when work is undertaken to address flooding and sea level rise, and during construction required for any crossing options, is crucial. The road tunnel (included in Scenarios 1, 4 and 5) is the only option which enables this work to be carried out with minimal disruption.

### *Impacts on land on the southern side of the Harbour*

65. Tunnels would have fewer permanent impacts on the southern side of Te Waitematā and provide opportunities to reallocate existing road space for public use.

### **Preliminary preferred crossing options**

66. There is insufficient information to definitively conclude the best options for the project. To do so requires robust evidence to assess how the various scenario components would work together to meet, shape and manage current and long term cross-harbour travel demand and urban growth, and what this would mean for travel times and mode shift.
67. The consultation material and discussions between the AA and Waka Kotahi did not provide any information on the distribution of traffic lanes between the new connections and on the Harbour Bridge and how they would work together to provide for cross-harbour travel demand.
68. The material also highlighted engineering and staging complexity as a challenge with three of the five scenarios. Before determining the preferred options it will be important to ensure that they are technically feasible.
69. While it is not possible to determine the best options with certainty at this point, enough information has been provided to identify the crossing options in Scenario 5 as a preliminary preference:
  - a road tunnel for State Highway traffic between Central Motorway Junction and Akoranga Drive
  - a light rail, walking and cycling connection on a bridge across the harbour from Wynyard Point to Sulphur Beach and then following the current State Highway alignment before connecting into Takapuna via Akoranga Busway station.

**Preliminary preferred option (Scenario 5) assessed against project objectives and outcomes**

Project objectives and outcomes	Assessment of Scenario 5
<b>Cost</b>	While more expensive to construct and operate than bridge-only scenarios, a road tunnel and a light rail, walking and cycling bridge from Wynyard Point is likely to achieve the best overall long term outcomes.
<b>Resilience</b>	<p>It is essential that the new road crossing is able to operate with minimal or no restrictions during increasingly frequent and severe weather events given the extent of demand for cross-harbour travel. A tunnel is the only option which addresses this significant and specific resilience problem with cross-harbour road travel.</p> <p>The project team has not identified weather-related resilience as an issue associated with a light rail, walking and cycling bridge option. We assume this is because light rail vehicles are much longer and heavier than trucks and private motor vehicles, and the walking and cycling connection would be covered to provide protection from the elements.</p>
<b>Growth</b>	Western and eastern light rail tunnel alignments lack sufficient growth potential to achieve the scale of outcomes required for the level of investment. A Wynyard Point alignment would connect one of Auckland's last two remaining metropolitan centres (the other being Westgate) to rapid transit, stimulate further intensification at Wynyard Quarter and around Akoranga Busway station, and provide opportunities for extending light rail on the North Shore when more growth does occur. This option provides the best match between potential growth outcomes and investment.
<b>Efficiency</b>	<p>None of the road crossing options will address congestion but, by separating through traffic from city centre traffic at Akoranga Drive, a road tunnel would improve efficiency and provide more reliable travel times for general traffic and freight.</p> <p>A light rail, walking and cycling connection from Wynyard Point to Takapuna, via Akoranga station, running on a bridge across the harbour is the most direct and most efficient route, with the shortest travel times for users. Travel time will be critical to achieve mode shift to all three modes but particularly walking and cycling.</p>
<b>Protect and enhance Te Waitematā</b>	<p>A road tunnel would have substantially less adverse impacts on Te Waitematā than bridge options.</p> <p>A light rail, walking and cycling bridge crossing from Wynyard Quarter to Takapuna will have more adverse impacts on Te Waitemata than a light rail tunnel, but there is substantial scope to avoid or mitigate these impacts through sensitive design and construction methodology.</p>
<b>Carbon emissions during construction</b>	The combination of a road tunnel and a light rail, walking and cycling Bridge crossing from Wynyard Point to Takapuna will generate more carbon emissions during construction than bridge-only scenarios. However, this combination is likely to achieve the best overall long term outcomes. Emissions should be calculated on a whole-of-life basis, which could reduce the difference between the road tunnel and bridge options.
<b>Minimising disruption in addressing sea level rise</b>	The road tunnel is the only option which enables State Highway 1 traffic to be moved before raising the Akoranga Drive to Onewa Road section. This sequencing is crucial to avoid unacceptable disruption with attendant economic, social and environmental costs.
<b>Impacts on land on southern side of Harbour</b>	A road tunnel would cause substantially fewer adverse impacts on the southern side of the Harbour than bridge options. A light rail, walking and cycling bridge crossing from Wynyard Point to Takapuna will have adverse impacts on land on the southern side of the Harbour but there is substantial scope to avoid or mitigate these impacts through sensitive design and construction methodology. A Wynyard alignment would also avoid adverse impacts from the Bridge options which go through St Marys Bay.

70. Severe congestion on the Northern Motorway is forecast to occur even with a road crossing, a light rail crossing and road pricing in place. Therefore to achieve the best long term outcomes, it is also critical that the scope of the road crossing be extended to include widening of the Northern Motorway between Constellation Drive and Northcote Road.

## Public engagement

71. For the project to be successful, feedback on scenarios for Waitematā Harbour Connections needs to be the first step in a comprehensive public engagement process as the project progresses from concepts towards construction.
72. There is likely to be widespread public expectation that an additional road crossing, combined with a light rail, walking and cycling crossing, will bring congestion down.

*Auckland AA Member survey finding: 90% of respondents think the new crossing should improve peak period congestion, including 65% who say it's crucial*

73. Reducing congestion is not and cannot be a project objective unless its' scope extends beyond the Harbour itself to encompass the motorway connections on either side (and reducing congestion does not feature in the consultation material). However, this is in marked contrast with the government's announcement heralding the start of consultation on the scenarios - "New congestion busting harbour crossing options unveiled".
74. It is essential that Aucklanders are made aware that no additional road crossing options could effectively address congestion without substantial motorway improvements on both sides of the Harbour – which is currently outside the scope of the project.
75. In a more general sense, the very high level of information provided so far – brief descriptions, indicative alignments and high-level assessments of scenarios, is insufficient to enable people to understand what each option would actually mean for cross-harbour travel.
76. The public will rightly want to know what capacity will be provided for all modes in the new connections and on the Harbour Bridge, and how they will work together. They will want to understand what the project will mean for travel time across the Harbour, how many people are expected to use new connections to take light rail and walk and cycle across the Harbour, and what this will mean in terms of value for money for the very significant investment required. They will also want to understand the preferred options' potential impacts on Te Waitematā and the southern side of the Harbour and the extent to which these, along with how major traffic disruption will be mitigated and avoided.
77. The public will also need to be consulted on how the project will be financed and funded – who is expected to pay, how much and when.
78. Previous work on Waitematā Harbour Crossings has proposed that both a new crossing and the Harbour Bridge be tolled to offset some of the construction costs and has also canvassed tolling for demand management. If tolling is intended to influence demand, and therefore potentially the amount of additional capacity provided in a new crossing, the public needs to be able to express an early view on this and the likely range of toll charges before a decision is made on the capacity of the final option.

79. If tolling is intended to help pay for the crossing, it will also be important to be up front about this at an early stage, including the likely range of toll charges. People will need this information to express an informed view on what this will mean for their ability to access both the new crossing and a reconfigured Bridge, and what this means for their support for the project.

**Final comments**

80. The AA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Waitematā Harbour Connections project. We would be very happy to discuss our submission and survey results with you, should it be useful.

Yours sincerely,

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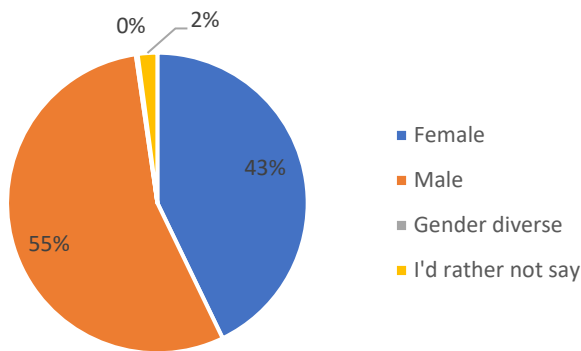
E: [geard@aa.co.nz](mailto:geard@aa.co.nz)  
M: 027 2812 069

**AA Member Survey: Waitematā Harbour Connections**  
 April 2023  
 9,180 unique completed responses from Auckland AA Members

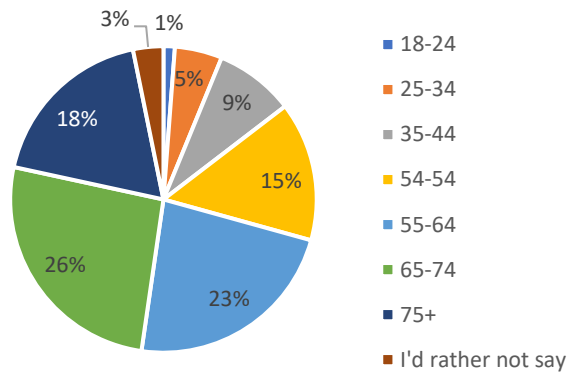
**High-level results**

*Survey sample:*

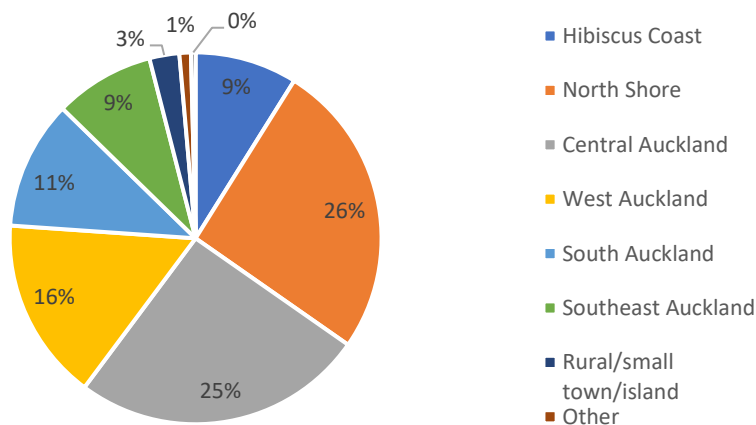
Which gender do you identify with?



How old are you?



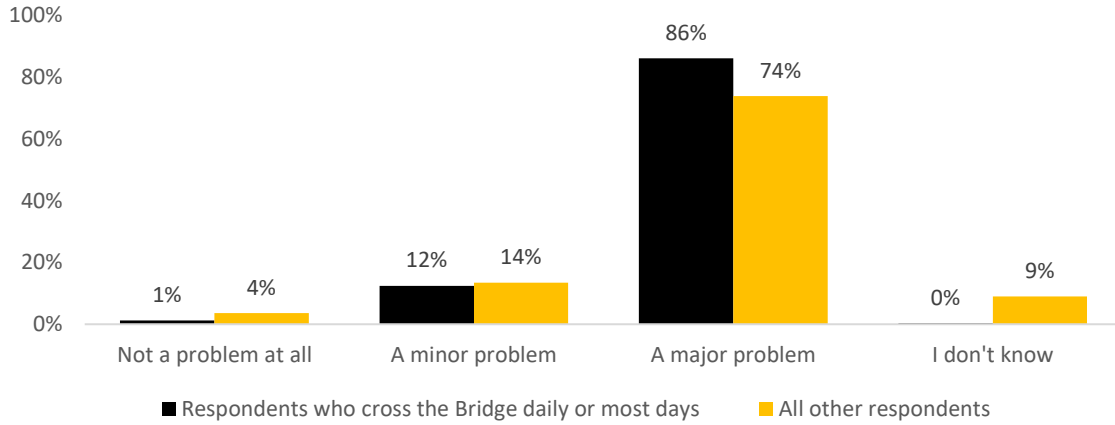
Which of the following best describes where you live?



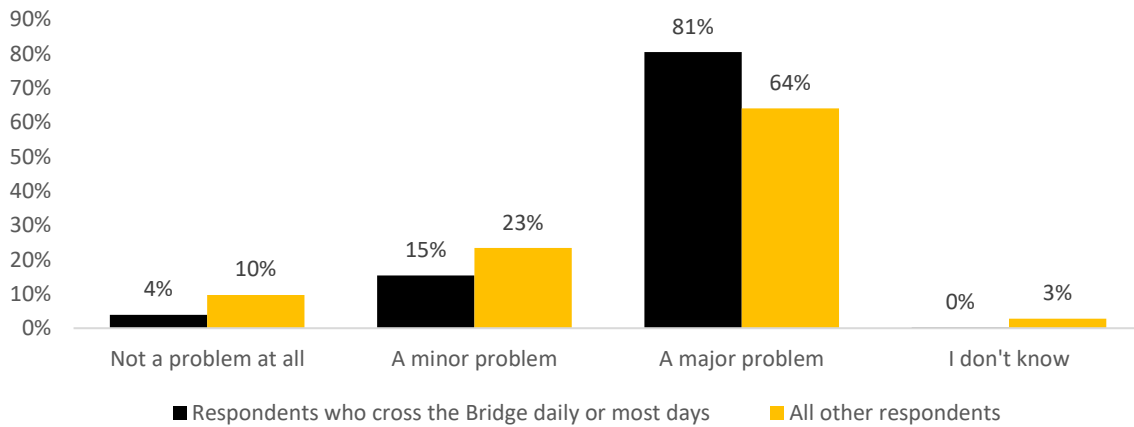
41% regularly commute by private vehicle during peak periods	11% regularly commute by public transport during peak periods	3% regularly commute by bike during peak periods
51% have used public transport in the last 12 months	21% have ridden a bike on the road in the last 12 months	
37% are retired	24% have one or more children living with them	26% consider themselves environmentalists

**Results:**

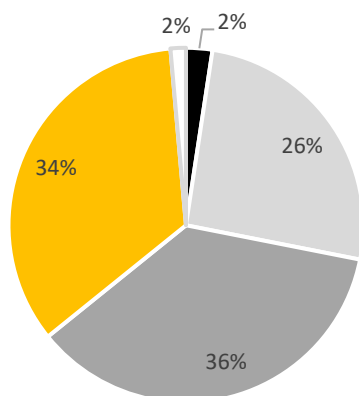
**How much of a problem is peak period congestion on/around the Harbour Bridge?**



**How much of a problem are closures of the Harbour Bridge in response to weather?**

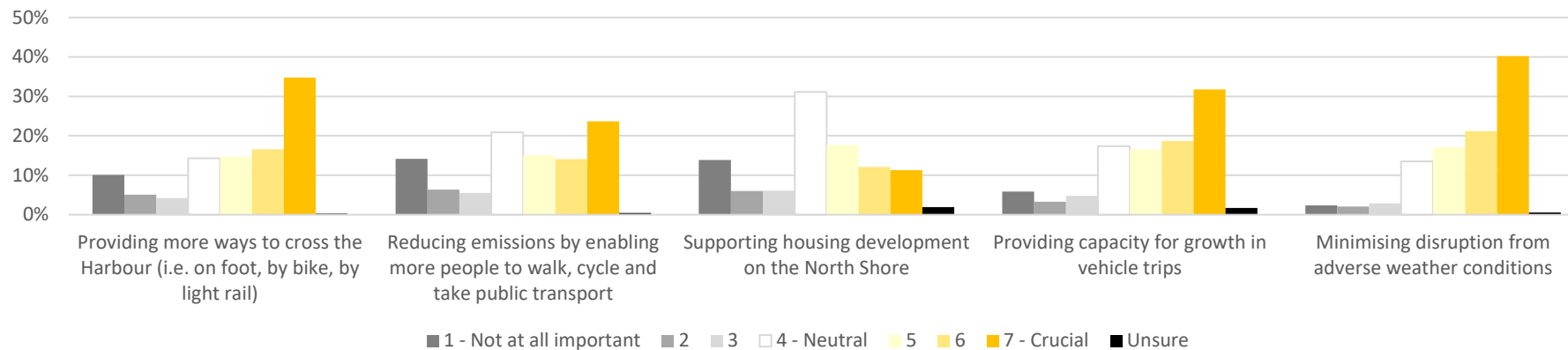


**Which of the following best describes your views on the importance of an additional Waitematā Harbour Crossing?**

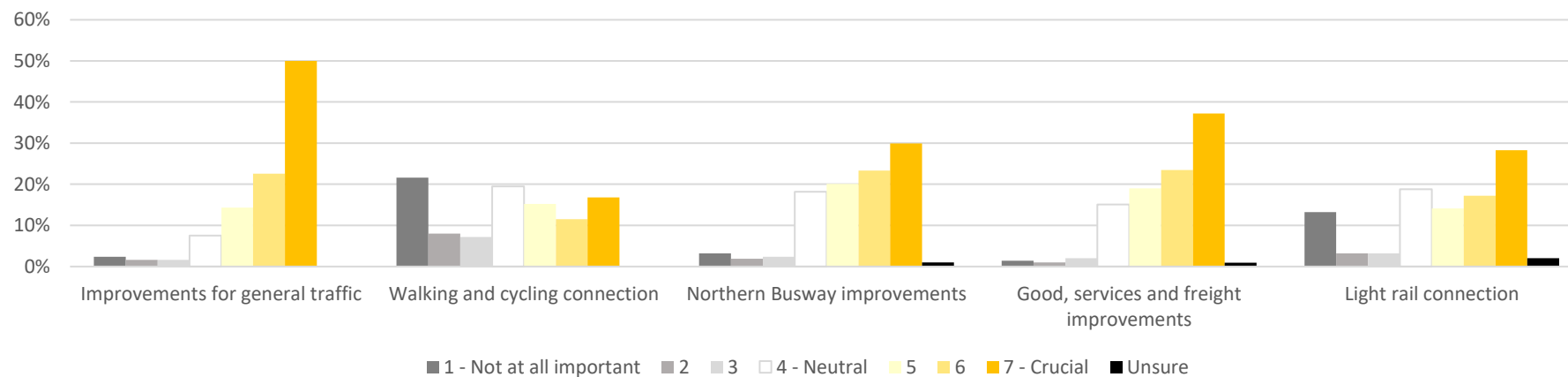


- Auckland doesn't need another harbour crossing
- It makes sense to plan it now, but there are way more important transport priorities for Auckland
- Planning and construction should be sped up, it is one of the most important transport projects for Auckland
- It should be built as soon as possible, it is the top priority transport project for Auckland
- I don't know

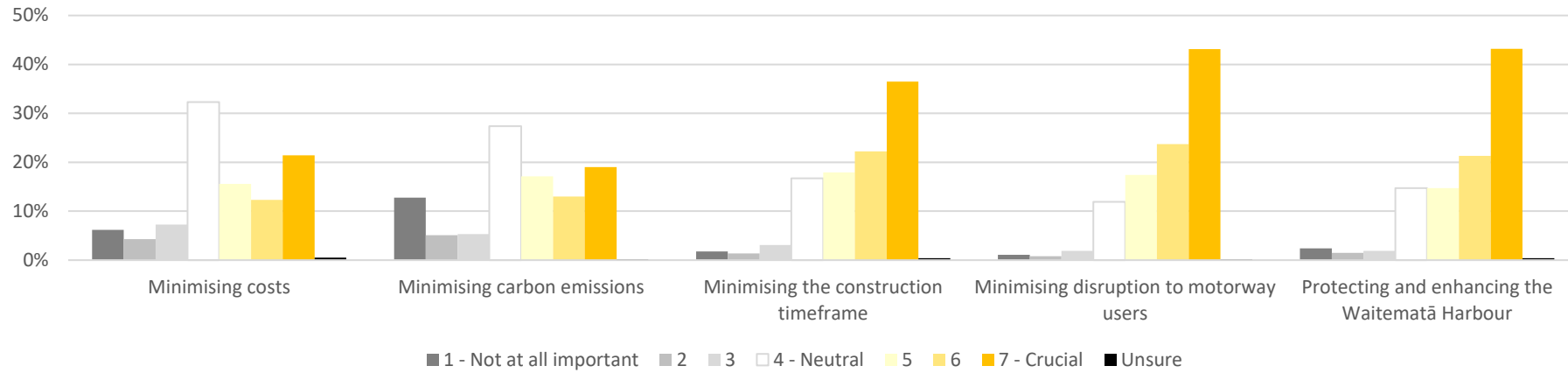
## How important are the following things that a new Waitematā Harbour Crossing could support or deliver?



## When thinking about a new Waitematā Harbour Crossing, how important are the following elements to you?



### How important are the following matters, associated with the construction of a new Waitematā Harbour Crossing?



### How important is it for the new crossing to improve traffic congestion for peak period trips across the Waitematā Harbour?

