



St Andrew's
on The Terrace

Hato Anaru i te Parehua
Founded 1840

Submission on Draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024-34

In keeping with our long tradition of commenting on significant public issues, the members of St Andrew's on The Terrace, Wellington, are concerned about the lack of priority given to addressing climate change in the draft government policy statement on land transport 2024-34.

From both a national and international perspective, we consider climate change to be the biggest threat to human health and well-being and to the future of our planet. We believe that Aotearoa/New Zealand must do its part to mitigate risk and create long term sustainability for the health of humankind and the planet.

Therefore, we are deeply concerned at the deletion of climate change from the strategic priorities in the draft transport policy statement on land transport 2024-34 (GPS 2024). Transport is second largest emissions source for New Zealand behind agriculture. The proposals to prioritise road transport over other, low-emission modes will likely lead us to overshoot our climate targets and make us less resilient to the increasing impact of climate change events.

Aotearoa NZ urgently needs transport policy that will reduce emissions rapidly. With 18% of New Zealand's emissions coming from transport, GPS 2024 does nothing to reduce the environmental burden on our country and its people and indeed adds a financial burden in the form of offshore obligations (\$60NZD or more per tonne of CO₂) which will be required to meet our NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) in line with the Paris Agreement. Has this been factored into the financial calculations?

As written, GPS 2024 rejects the considerable economic benefits of turning our transport system into a modern, safe, accessible and low carbon system. This will cost New Zealanders time and money, both directly and indirectly, now and into the future. It will lead to increased emissions, the loss of green spaces (through road construction, distanced neighbourhoods and high density parking lots), an increased reliance on private vehicles and continued significant health impacts from vehicle emissions.

More roads lead to more traffic, increased congestion, and less efficient travel. The most effective way to reduce congestion and travel time is to enable 'mode shift' - investing in public and walking and cycling transport options to provide people with alternatives to their car. Public transport provides a more sustainable and lower cost way to move large numbers of people around.

We reaffirm our concerns about an urgent need for changes in central and local governance as outlined in our submission to the Climate Commission in 2021. Planning for transport is a good example of this. Long-term thinking and planning are critical as difficult decisions need to be made regarding infrastructure, city planning and transport links. This requires an agreed approach across political parties. While there will be different nuances depending on which party or parties are elected every three years, a stop/start approach does not work. We urge New Zealand Parliament to work across parties to create a long-term durable transport plan that takes the threat of climate change seriously.

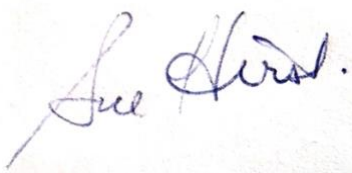
St Andrew's on The Terrace has for many decades participated in public prophetic debate – i.e. discussion about difficult and long-term societal issues and challenges – from a progressive theological perspective. Our theology, as demonstrated by our beliefs and values, reflects that our deep concern with the spiritual health of society. Care for each other and the planet are essential to that theology. Particular features of St Andrew's values and beliefs are the importance of community and the sharing and re-use of resources. From our perspective, how we use natural resources is critical spiritually, for social justice reasons and ultimately for the survival of humankind.

Humanity is facing an existential crisis. If the world is unable to achieve the change required to stop runaway emission levels, population growth and resource overuse, then human survival will be in question.

The change needs to happen on many levels.

- Political parties and governments need to have a longer-term focus, to be more respectful and constructive and work together to address the challenges we face.
- The definition of a healthy economy needs to change significantly – we need to stop 'growing' and 'developing' the economy and focus more on sustainability.
- Our sense of being world citizens, acting in concert with others, needs to grow to enable effective international action to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

We strongly urge the Government to reconsider the strategic priorities of the GPS 2024 and to put climate change at the front and centre of all decisions made.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Hirst". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Sue Hirst
Convenor
St Andrew's on the Terrace Parish Council