



Press Release  
The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc  
PO Box 11 152  
Wellington  
29 August 2008

### **Obsession with roads leads transport policies astray**

Both major parties are letting their obsession with building new roads distract them from the real issues facing the transport sector, according to the Sustainable Energy Forum. Spokesperson Tim Jones says "In the argument that has erupted over the level of tolls that motorists would pay for new roads under National's transport policy, the most important question seems to have been lost: are new roads needed at all?"

"Recently, as fuel prices have risen to previously unknown levels, New Zealanders have shown that they are not as wedded to their cars as many people, and many politicians, claim," Mr Jones continued. "Vehicle counts have been down substantially on the Auckland Harbour Bridge and Wellington's Ngauranga motorway, while Auckland public transport numbers have risen 10% since 2007. Why build new roads for motorists who won't use them, tolls or no tolls?"

"Although oil prices have fallen a little recently, this is unlikely to last. The International Energy Agency is predicting a worsening oil supply crunch from 2010 onwards, which will drive fuel prices still higher. In addition, every car journey is worsening transport's already alarming contribution to New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions," Mr Jones said.

"So we think that National and Labour are barking up the wrong tree. Instead of competing with each other to promise the most roads, they should abandon their obsession with roading and focus instead on the real priorities for infrastructure: public transport, especially an expansion of urban rail systems; freight movement by rail and sea; making walking and cycling easier in our cities; and improving telecommunications so that more people can work from home.

"Expenditure in those areas will lead to meaningful change, rather than more public and private money going up in smoke," Mr Jones concluded.

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