

Paid Parking Pilot

Phase 2 - Engagement Report

Version 1: Dolomite, Franz Josef engagement

Version 2: White Horse Hill Engagement added

November 2025



Punangairi Visitors Centre, Dolomite Point. Source: Ngāti Waewae and Department of Conservation



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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1 Executive Summary

This summer the Department of Conservation (DOC) is piloting paid carparking at three popular sites, including Dolomite Point, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill.

This report summarises Phase 2 engagement that occurred for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef between 7 August and 26 August 2025 and for White Horse Hill between 23 September and 22 October 2025. Feedback that was received between these dates is included within this report.

Phase 1 engagement helped shape the proposed pricing strategy with people requesting a free period, consideration for locals, exemptions from concessionaires during the pilot and a fair and reasonable price for both regular visitors and occasional visitors.

Phase 2 engagement activities included in-person meetings, public drop-in sessions and leaflets being emailed to stakeholders and previous submitters inviting feedback on the pricing strategy.

During the Phase 2 engagement, DOC heard from 104 submitters, in total, including Treaty Partners, community members, businesses, concessionaires and stakeholders.

Overall, the main feedback themes were:

- Opposition to paying for parking.
- That locals, volunteers, and school groups should be exempt from paid parking.
- Considerations of a free parking period. Suggestions to increase from 20 mins to 30 minutes or 2 hours.
- Suggestion to include the whole of the West Coast for the \$10/year local permit.
- Car parking revenue should be used in the location it was generated.
- Some support for paid parking from a number of key stakeholders and a few community members.
- Concern about flow on impacts for parking in other areas.
- Concern about the long-term condition and management of vehicles at the White Horse Hill car park.

The results of this engagement have contributed to the decision on the pricing for the paid parking pilot for Franz Josef and Dolomite Point and White Horse Hill.

Key changes to the pricing strategy from the latest feedback include:

- For the Franz Josef and Dolomite Point sites, residents in all three districts (Grey, Buller and Westland) are now eligible to purchase local permits for each of the sites.
- For all sites, parking payment exemptions can be sought for school groups or volunteers.

Implementation is planned in December for Dolomite Point, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill. Before implementation there will be further communication about when charging will begin, how to apply for the permits and how people can pay for parking.

2 Introduction

2.1 Paid parking project overview

DOC is planning a paid parking pilot at three high-use sites. This will help control parking pressures and increase financial support for some of New Zealand's most special cultural and natural areas.

Paid parking is a tool used globally to manage visitor numbers and contribute to the financial sustainability of popular natural sites.

The purpose of the DOC pilot is to:

- trial a way for visitors to contribute to costs at high-use sites
- improve visitor experience
- align with international best practices.

The pilot is funded by \$3.8 million from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL).

The pilot will be rolled out at three high-use visitor sites in the South Island:

- Punakaiki Pancake Rocks, Paparoa National Park
- Franz Josef Glacier, Westland Tai Poutini National Park
- White Horse Hill, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park

The pilot is planned to run from December 2025 until end of June 2026 for the three sites.

The decision to pilot paid parking was made by Minister of Conservation. That decision was announced in the November 2024 media release - [DOC to trial paid parking at high use sites: Media release 13 November 2024](#). The purpose of engagement is not asking for opinion on whether to have paid parking, it was to hear from the community and stakeholders about what would be a fair and reasonable pricing strategy.

A two-phase approach was taken to engagement: Phase 1 aimed to get initial views to assist in the development of the proposed pricing strategy and Phase 2 was to get feedback on the proposed pricing strategy. Once all submissions had been reviewed, and insights from market research had been incorporated, the pricing strategy was finalised.

2.2 Purpose of report

The purpose of this engagement report is to outline the approach taken during Phase 2 engagement on the proposed pricing strategy for Dolomite Point, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill's paid parking pilot, and to share the key themes that emerged through Treaty Partner, community, and stakeholder feedback.

2.3 Phase 1 Engagement Overview

Phase 1 Engagement occurred for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef between 26 May and 19 June 2025 and for White Horse Hill between 12 June and 11 July 2025. (White Horse Hill’s timeframes are different due to parking capacity considerations.) Feedback was received up until 24 July for all sites. A full engagement report on Phase 1 can be read online at this link - [Paid Parking Pilot Engagement Report](#).

Engagement activities included in-person meetings and leaflets being emailed to stakeholders to encourage submissions on the proposed plan for paid car parking.

DOC heard from 158 submitters including Treaty Partners, community members, businesses, concessionaires and stakeholders.

Overall, the main feedback themes have been:

- Opposition to paying for parking
- That locals need to be exempt from paid parking
- Considerations of a free parking period. Suggestions have ranged from 15 mins to 2 hours
- A few submitters supported paid parking
- And some have raised questions.

The results of this engagement were used in developing a proposed pricing strategy for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef.

Below is a table that shows how feedback influenced the proposed pricing strategy that was released in the leaflet for phase 2 engagement.

What people wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
<p>Free parking period for vehicles making drop-offs/pick-ups or staying a short time.</p> <p>There were different suggestions on the length of the free period.</p>	<p>Free period for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>This free period will be sufficient for private passenger drop-offs or pick-ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge.</p> <p>The duration of the free period also needs to provide for short stays without encouraging people to rush. We want to enable a positive visitor experience. Let us know if this works for you.</p>
<p>Different options for different needs.</p>	<p>The fee structure includes options for hourly rates and daily rates.</p> <p>It also includes permit options for regular users and concession-holding tourism operators.</p>	<p>Different options are provided for different user requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying hourly means people can be flexible in how long they stay. • The daily fee offers an affordable option for those walking longer tracks, such as the Alex Knob Track.

What people wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
		We are keen to hear if this price structure meets the needs of current users.
Locals should be exempt from parking charges.	<p>There is a short free period that allows people to do pick-ups and drop-offs.</p> <p>Locals can also purchase an annual permit for \$10, which allows unlimited access during that year. ('Locals' are residents in the Westland District.)</p> <p>Other regular visitors can buy an annual permit for \$60, which equates to \$1.15 per week.</p>	The cost of the local permit is set low to acknowledge the special relationship residents have with their whenua (landscape).
Different categories of vehicles (for example, campervans / motorcycles / cars) should have different rates.	All vehicles will be charged the same parking fee, although emergency vehicles will be exempt.	Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.
Prices need to be reasonable	The rate is \$5 per hour.	<p>\$5 per hour is half the hourly rate charged for parking at Milford Sound / Piopiotahi, which is a similar site.</p> <p>\$5 per hour is consistent across all three sites and gives the user a choice around how long they will stay.</p>
Prices should be cheaper/free in winter / during off-peak times.	Prices will be the same year round.	<p>The value of the site remains throughout the year, and the glacier is possibly more spectacular in winter than it is in summer.</p> <p>The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.</p>

3 Phase 2 engagement activities

The aim of the phase 2 engagement period was to allow Treaty Partners, stakeholders and those affected by the proposed paid parking pilot, the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed pricing.

Dolomite Point and Franz Josef proposed pricing was open for community feedback between 7 August and 26 August 2025. To gain these insights the following engagement methods were used:

- Media release: “[DOC releases pricing proposal for car parking](#)” (7 August 2025), and responses to media requests seeking clarification on the process and timing.
- Social media post on DOC’s Facebook page (8 August 2025), which received 799 reactions, 632 comments and 33 shares.
- Website content with further information on it: [Paid parking pilot programme: Our work](#)
- Leaflets for each site were distributed to inform key stakeholders and submitters from Phase 1 via email about the proposed pricing strategy. The leaflet is attached in Appendix A.
- Advertisements of the public drop-in sessions, website and feedback period were placed in the Hokitika Guardian and Westport Newspaper.
- Public drop-in sessions were held at Dolomite Point (14 August 3-6pm) and at Franz Josef (15 August 10:30am – 12:30pm).
- An email address was provided so people could provide their feedback or ask questions.
- Workshops were held with staff at the DOC district offices to understand local operational feedback.

To gain feedback on White Horse Hill’s proposed pricing, the following methods were used between 23 September and 22 October 2025:

- Media release: “[DOC pricing proposal for Aoraki car park](#)” (24 September 2025).
- Advertisements of the public drop-in sessions, website and feedback period were placed in the Otago Daily Times and the Press.
- Social media post on the Department of Conservation, Canterbury page (24 September 2025), this post received 10 reactions, 2 comments and 4 shares. It was shared with two local Facebook groups – Twizel Community and Aoraki/ Mount Cook Community pages.
- Leaflets for each site were distributed to inform key stakeholders and submitters from Phase 1 via email about the proposed pricing strategy. The leaflet is attached in Appendix A.
- Workshops were held with staff at the DOC district offices to understand local operational feedback.
- Drop-in session was held at the DOC office at Aoraki/Mt Cook on 29 September 2025 between 2pm and 3pm.

4 What DOC heard about the proposed pricing strategy

During the engagement period DOC heard from 104 submitters - 87 submitters between 7 August and 26 August 2025 for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef and 18 submissions between 23 September and 22 October for White Horse Hill. Four stakeholders who provided feedback about White Horse Hill had already provided feedback for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef, their additional feedback has been added to this report.

DOC has received the following email submission numbers:

- Treaty partner feedback
- Feedback from national stakeholders and special interest groups – 12 (plus 4 submitters who also put in a submission on White Horse Hill)
- Dolomite Point feedback – 39
- Franz Josef feedback - 4
- White Horse Hill feedback - 8
- General feedback regarding paid parking– 32
- Concessionaires asking about process – 4
- 1 was removed as more detailed correspondence was received from the submitter.

During the public drop-in sessions, 20 people attended the Dolomite Point session, 8 attended the Franz Josef session and 11 attended the White Horse Hill session.

All email submissions are tabled (with individual’s names and addresses redacted) in Appendix B. The general themes and drop-in session feedback are separated into the following 4 parts:

1. Feedback related to Dolomite Point.
2. Feedback related to Franz Josef.
3. Feedback related to White Horse Hill.
4. Feedback on paid parking generally that relates to all sites.

4.1 Dolomite Point

Summary of feedback themes

- Most of the feedback received about Dolomite Point reiterated that locals shouldn’t pay.
- Many people were opposed to the idea of paying for parking at all, noting that it risks people not stopping in the area and impacting local businesses and the community hub.
- Suggestions on a free parking period were made to increase it from 20 minutes; recommendations ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours.
- The \$10 permit for all people on the coast, shouldn't be restricted to one or 2 Districts.
- Volunteers and school groups should have free parking.
- Car parks that have been removed on the State Highway should be used for local short-term parking.
- Revenue should be used in the location it was generated.
- A few submitters were supportive and thought the charging was reasonable.

Drop-in session feedback

Feedback comments	DOC’s response
State Highway car parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waka Kotahi free parks were removed from the State Highway so people didn’t need to cross the road - but people coming from the south to access Pancake Rocks now have to cross the road 	The removal of parking spaces on SH6 at Punakaiki was initiated as part of the recent redevelopment of Dolomite Point - the Punangairi Visitor Experience Centre. As a part of this redevelopment, a traffic safety assessment in 2020 was completed which, in conjunction with the development of parking

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can we restore NZTA carpark across the road? Health & Safety goes beyond its reaches. - 40 km/h on State Highway and we have had no accident with the carparks, so no need to get rid of the carparks on the State Highway. - Speed limit previously 60 km now 40 km and free parks are gone. 	<p>facilities off the State Highway, recommended the removal of the on-road State Highway parking to improve safety. NZTA endorsed the recommendations of this assessment in 2022. The redevelopment project concluded in June 2025 with the removal of the parking spaces opposite the visitor centre.</p> <p>During the pilot period, monitoring of State Highway parking is planned and can be shared with NZTA. If behaviour changes create safety issues, these will be discussed with NZTA.</p>
<p>Opposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot this in a bigger population. - Visitor management issues at Dolomite Point are not like those at Franz or Mt Cook. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't trust the process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning of a privatisation of national parks. I want everyone to have access to the park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about maintaining free access to conservation land. 	<p>The three sites were chosen because they are busy locations, and also because they each have different challenges. For instance, the Dolomite Point location at Punakaiki is highly developed, with plenty of parking available, whereas White Horse Hill in Aoraki Mt Cook needs infrastructure development and faces significant visitor demand. Having different sites helps us identify key factors needed for a successful pilot programme.</p> <p>The engagement process has been clear and genuine. The first phase of feedback helped shape the pricing proposal, including many aspects that were requested by submitters: an initial free period, special consideration for locals, different options for visitors and initial pilot exemption for concessionaires who apply to DOC.</p> <p>There is no suggestion that New Zealand's national parks will be privatised. The government is committed to supporting conservation work, however due to financial constraints, different options are being explored to increase revenue. The car parking pilot is one of those options. In a separate initiative announced recently, the government outlined its intention to change legislation so it can charge access to four hugely popular tourism locations. This is not expected to occur until the summer of 2027-2028.</p> <p>There is no current plan to charge access to locations on the West Coast.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Object to use of camera observation - a bit like Big Brother' watching! - Objection to cameras spying on people in car park. - Opposition for paying for parking - Cost becomes a barrier; we want all children to have this experience at the national park. - Opposed to paid parking as this is virtually a charge to enter a national park. - Concern about impact on businesses from paid parking. - We already pay taxes. - Opposed and won't pay. - Object to any parks and access and parking charges. - People won't stop if they pay for parking. 	<p>The parking cameras are fixed and focus on a limited area to capture vehicle number plates entering and existing the carparks. Cameras are a cost-effective way to establish and manage paid parking. The parking hardware service provider is bound by privacy laws and the cameras are used for no other purpose other than capturing vehicle number plates.</p> <p>It is understandable that people don't want to pay for something that was previously free, however the reality is that DOC cannot undertake all its biodiversity and visitor network work without additional revenue.</p> <p>The hourly rate of \$5 is reasonable and doesn't restrict people visiting this special location. Locals can purchase a \$10 annual permit, which allows unlimited access. Concessionaires, school trips, community gatherings and volunteer groups can apply for a paid parking exemption. (Note the concessionaires' exemption is for the pilot period.)</p> <p>The Punakaiki Pancake Rocks attracts around half a million people per year. DOC manages and maintains the infrastructure to allow visitors to safely experience the Pancake Rocks. The Pancake Rocks attraction supports businesses in the area.</p> <p>Agreed, New Zealanders already pay taxes, however, the government is working with a constrained budget and has requested DOC to explore a range of options to reduce costs and increase revenue. New Zealanders hold dear their conservation lands and waters. So does DOC, which is why DOC wants continued investment to protect biodiversity and maintain the visitor network. To do those things, DOC needs more revenue. Paid car parking is a mechanism to do this.</p>
<p>Local's access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can volunteers have free access to the carparks? 	<p>DOC is grateful for the work of volunteers, who help greatly with biodiversity work and in the maintenance of the visitor network, including</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I want to have Franz access as well. - \$10 for Grey & Buller a good thing. - Won't pay \$10/year in principal as it should be free. - Post box holders should have free access. 	<p>Council residents to the Dolomite Point Site to be eligible for the \$10/year local permit and DOC has added Buller and Grey District to the Franz Josef site.</p>
<p>Money usage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ring- fence the funding generated for site and be transparent about its use. - Money should be invested back at Dolomite Point. - Now you have money there should be resources and support here for AF8 	<p>DOC has invested a lot of money on these sites, especially Dolomite Point and the road at Franz Josef. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.</p> <p>In relation to Civil Defence response, the feedback has been have passed on to the District Team.</p>
<p>Information provided to DOC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to Easter the visitor numbers start to drop off from 1 May. - Opening hours of the cafe are early breakfast and in summer dinner till 9pm. - Summer there is more of a need. Businesses need to survive through winter. - Visitor management issues not like Franz or Mt Cook - People come up from the south car park and go straight across the road to Pancake Rocks. 	<p>The duration of the pilot period has been set to obtain information on revenue and traffic behaviour in both the peak and off-peak seasons.</p> <p>The carpark will operate 24 hours a day.</p>
<p>Overflow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How about looking at a motor camp park-and-ride opportunity? - At summer both carparks were full. Cars parked all down the road. 	<p>A park-and-ride service is outside the scope of this project.</p> <p>Paid carparking provides tools to help manage visitor demand. Efficient management of visitor carparking that improves customer experience is a project objective.</p>
<p>Price</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore a parks pass for all national parks. - There should be a multi-day entry pass. - Why not charge campers \$40 /night 8pm - 7am. - Have \$5 for 2 hours so people can do the walk and have a coffee. 	<p>That is a useful idea, and one that DOC may explore if the pilot is successful and continues.</p> <p>Monitoring of parking fees will occur during the pilot.</p> <p>Traffic monitoring data shows that currently the majority of visitors to the Pancake Rocks spend less than an hour there. \$5 an hour was set as a fair and reasonable price.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parking behaviour will need to be monitored closely. 	<p>Monitoring of parking is planned during the pilot period.</p>
<p>Parking breaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send warning notices to locals before issuing a breach notice. - Make sure public knows it's not a Wilson style park i.e. no towing or clamping - Publicise breach notices and that there will be no towing and no clamping. - Issue warning notices for locals before issuing a breach. - Take a non-punitive approach to breaches, with a reminder within 24 hours. - What will happen to locals who just don't pay? Is chasing them for \$10 worth the adverse PR? 	<p>No towing or clamping will occur. If there are carparking breaches, a payment notice will be sent.</p> <p>The parking signs will have clear instructions, so people will know when they have overstayed. DOC's preferred supplier will manage the issuing of breach notices. It is difficult to differentiate between a local vehicle and a non-local vehicle. It is acknowledged that paid parking is a big change and breach notices may be issued while people get used to the new restrictions and payment requirements. A web-based appeal process to breach notices will be available and appeals will be initially managed collaboratively between DOC and DOC's preferred supplier.</p>
<p>Other comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should generate revenue at the airport and not here. - In Tasmania they pre-purchase a permit to access all parks. 	<p>Comments noted, thank you for your feedback.</p> <p>That is a useful idea, and one that DOC may explore if the pilot is successful and continues.</p>

Feedback from email submissions received

The table below outlines the key themes and feedback comments that supported those themes.

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Carparks on State Highway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My concern is the intention to remove the car parks opposite Punangairi. Fewer carparks is really foolish especially these ones. I often need to park here to deliver work to Punangairi and this will make the loading zone much more congested. Please leave those parks as is. - Those carparks on the left (heading north) could be turned into 5min (or 10min max) parking spots for those of us who only pop in briefly - The roadside parks that have been removed at Punakaiki (by criss-cross lines through 	<p>The removal of parking spaces on SH6 at Punakaiki was initiated as part of the recent redevelopment of Dolomite Point including the Punangairi Visitor Experience Centre. As a part of this redevelopment, a traffic safety assessment was completed in 2020 which, in conjunction with the development of parking facilities off the State Highway, recommended the removal of the on-road state highway parking to improve safety. NZTA endorsed the recommendations of this assessment in 2022. The redevelopment project concluded in June 2025 with the</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>them) is a waste of taxpayer space - at the very minimum these should be designated free for locals. Perhaps as simple as proof of being a local rate payer gets you a card to display in your window.</p>	<p>removal of the parking spaces opposite the visitor centre.</p>
<p>Oppose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free access for locals - This is a community hub - Locals contribute to conservation through: Trapping predators and remove invasive species, rescuing wildlife and cleaning up rubbish; maintaining penguin fences and plant native flora; monitoring the environment and assisting lost or injured tourists; responding to car accidents and hazards on the highway. - Shouldn't be discouraging NZers visiting these scenic spots. - Nzers have paid already to use these sites and all DOC administered areas by taxes and consequently funding. - Car parking fees are just an underhanded fee for visiting these sites and I believe contrary to existing regulations. - 'Legislation does allow us to charge'. If you go ahead and change the Acts then you need widespread consultation with the entire nation. - International visitors already pay through the IVL. - Paying will deter people from staying and spending money locally. - People won't visit as they regularly did. - The shops are going to lose business as people will not want to pay an extra \$5 or \$10 to stop in for a meal and/or coffee etc. They bought their businesses with no parking restriction around them, it seems unfair to put this on them now. - Some locals do not feel they should have to submit my car details or pay a yearly fee to park here. 	<p>DOC understand the concerns raised about paying for parking at this location. DOC is appreciative of all the efforts locals make to support conservation outcomes in the area. We cannot achieve conservation goals without this assistance. Locals clearly have a strong community feel, and their generosity to visitors is admirable.</p> <p>While this is acknowledged, DOC still needs to find ways to build the financial sustainability of popular natural sites. The purpose of the DOC pilot is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trial a way for visitors to contribute to costs at high-use sites • improve visitor experience • align with international best practices. <p>Legislation does allow DOC to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use DOC facilities, which include campsites, backcountry huts and car parks.</p> <p>In a separate initiative, which is not linked to the paid parking pilot, the government has proposed changes that would make it legal for DOC to charge international visitors access fees at four iconic tourism sites. The Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill will now be drafted and introduced to Parliament in 2026. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.</p> <p>It is understandable that people don't want to pay for something that was previously free, however the reality is that DOC cannot</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It should be free for all, maintaining our birthright and intention of the National Parks Act section 4 - freedom of access and entry to the public for the benefits of nature. - There should not be restrictions in areas where DOC now have a monopoly on the only parking available. - This is on a main highway which is a totally different situation to the likes of Franz Josef, Milford Sound etc, where it is a destination. - The northern carpark is a Local Reserve and has a long history of public access and this should continue for free. - Visitors will be reluctant to visit the site multiple times - for tidal Blowhole viewing, lunch, dinner, shopping, Experience Centre, walking the new track. - No consideration to financial implications of neighbouring businesses. 	<p>undertake all its biodiversity and visitor network work without additional revenue.</p> <p>The three sites were chosen because they are busy locations, and also because they each have different challenges. For instance, the Dolomite Point location at Punakaiki is highly developed, with plenty of parking available, whereas White Horse Hill in Aoraki Mt Cook needs infrastructure development and faces significant visitor demand. Having different sites helps us identify key factors needed for a successful programme.</p> <p>The northern carpark is a local purpose reserve gazetted for public utility – DOC is the administering body. The scope of powers an administering body can exercise include fixing charges for use of parking.</p> <p>The decision has been made to implement paid parking at 3 pilot sites and the engagement has been undertaken to inform the pricing strategy.</p> <p>If visitors want to make multiple visits to the sites, they can use the option of the daily fee which is capped at \$20.</p> <p>The Punakaiki Pancake Rocks attracts around half a million people per year. DOC manages and maintains the infrastructure to allow visitors to safely experience the Pancake Rocks. The Pancake Rocks attraction supports businesses in the area.</p>
<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support paid parking. - It would be good if longer stays were cheaper than short term parking. 	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The system devised for the trial is both reasonable and hopefully practical. - Local business relies on DOC's facilities and investment in the infrastructure, do they contribute to the facilities? 	
<p><u>Pricing Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buses should be paying more as they bring more people. - Maybe charge just the tour buses as they are high value tourists that generate a high proportion of the overload at peak times. Campervans rented from a hire company could also incur a fee for extra large car parks as alternative parks aren't available. Both these considerations would give cost effective income in a smaller rear area already available. This would also help with safety as 100% of bus parks are on the main state highway. - Should charge for entry to the Pancake Rocks and not parking fees. - It would also be good to have something for people who stay in the area for a few days and would like to split visiting the activities at Dolomite Point over more than one day. Would it be possible for a return visit within say a week to be charged at maybe half price? - Local permit at \$10 seems pointless. - \$10 annual permit for locals is good. - Should be looking at the Christchurch botanic garden charging of \$2 for the first hour and \$1.30 for subsequent hours. Shouldn't be benchmarking against Milford Sound. - Consider providing a free annual parking pass for residents within a 10–15 km radius of Punakaiki. - There is no free off-season or evening pricing. 	<p>One rate for all users provides simplicity to the parking fee structure and is planned for the pilot and will be reassessed at the conclusion of the pilot.</p> <p>\$60 for the annual regular visitors permit allows regular visitors unlimited access to the car parks in a particular site for a year. That is the equivalent of \$1.15 per week.</p> <p>\$5 an hour was set as a fair and reasonable price.</p> <p>\$5/hr is a fair and neutral price structure, users have freedom to choose to pay for what they use.</p> <p>Locals living within the Grey, Buller and Westland districts are able to apply for a \$10 annual permit, which is set at a low rate. Westland District has been added because of the feedback DOC have received.</p> <p>The duration of the pilot period has been set to obtain information on revenue and traffic behaviour in both the peak and off-peak seasons. The carpark will operate 24 hours a day.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is unreasonable not to tell the public that proceeds are not being spent in the region it is collected during consultation. <p><u>Free period</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 minutes free doesn't allow people to stop and support the retail operations and get the full experience. - Support for 2 hours free. - 20 minutes isn't enough when you have elderly that need to use the toilet. - Suggest 30 minutes to an hour should be free to allow you to stop and go to the toilet and visit the cafe. - 90 minutes free to allow people to do things in the area. - There is no logic to this - 20 minutes is exactly the right length so they rush their walk, they will not have time to go to the bathroom or get some food and also see the Pancake Rocks without a big rush. Or rushing back to make the 1 hour price-point. The whole experience will be a mad rush for many people. 	<p>DOC has invested a lot of money on these sites, especially Dolomite Point and the road at Franz Josef. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.</p> <p>This free period will be sufficient for private passenger drop-offs or pick-ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge. From the market research DOC knows that most stays at Dolomite Point are between 1 and 2 hours, if there was a longer free period then it wouldn't meet the objectives of the pilot to generate revenue to contribute towards improving visitor experience, conservation and biodiversity.</p>
<p>Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The local Experience Centre email list was used for your initial flier on 28th May 2025, for submissions closing on 19th June 2025. This consultation period was 17 working days, below the standard acceptable timeframe. Concern about the signage and 0800 number were also raised. - The pilot is funded by \$3.8 million from the International Visitor Conservation and 	<p>DOC acknowledge that these issues were raised through a formal complaint to DOC. The complaint was assessed by DOC's Director Monitoring and Insights. A finding from the complaint assessment is noted below:</p> <p><i>'Based on the information provided to me, I have not found any improper processes.</i></p> <p><i>I accept that there are different ways to notify people of pending change. While in this instance you don't agree with the engagement approach taken, I have not found anything improper in terms of the process that was undertaken.'</i></p> <p>Paid parking is a way for visitors to directly contribute towards the facilities they enjoy,</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Tourism Levy (IVL)' Tourists are not told that the IVL is being used for this. As per MBIE website: 'The IVL was introduced to help mitigate the conservation and tourism costs associated with international visitation and ensure this cost is not unduly borne by New Zealanders'. In fact these costs over the country will now be unduly borne by users of these 3 particular trial car parks, including New Zealand taxpayers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You say: 'Numbers dropped significantly during COVID but are now recovering towards pre-COVID levels'. Again, you cite no facts. According to a media quote from Ngati Waewae, Punakaiki Visitor Centre numbers were 30682 visitors in Jan 2020 and 20399 in Jan 2025, that is still 34% down, far from a recovery and I object to you using generalized statements that are factually incorrect. - From your own summary of feedback, charging was strongly opposed by submitters who believe in freedom of access and entry for the public. Yet you are still proceeding with the trial. It really begs the question of why you bother with submissions. There are many valid points 	<p>rather than the broad International Visitors Levy (IVL). It is also worth noting New Zealand's largest international visitor market, Australians, do not pay the IVL. As noted, the IVL was introduced to mitigate the costs associated with international visitation and to ensure the cost of maintaining assets is not unduly borne by New Zealand tax payers. The projects funded by the IVL are examples of how visitors contribute to the unique natural heritage they enjoy, and the infrastructure they use while they're here.</p> <p>The IVL does not fund all infrastructure that is used by international visitors, New Zealanders, or international visitors from places that are not required to pay the IVL (such as Australia). It is appropriate for DOC to explore other alternatives for maintaining such infrastructure at some of New Zealand's most popular visitor sites, and for the IVL to fund work that could result in a fair spread of costs across those who use that infrastructure.</p> <p>We will be evaluating the paid parking trial and using the results to understand what the fairest and most sustainable source of funds to manage the visitor infrastructure in those places is.</p> <p>Visitor number trends and forecast future trends are included within DOC's parking pricing strategy research. Interested parties should email PaidCarParking@doc.govt.nz for a copy of the research.</p> <p>Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot car parking charges at some of DOC's busiest visitor sites. This decision to pilot paid carparking was communicated in the November 2024 media release. DOC's recent engagement with local communities has covered parking</p>

Drop-in session feedback

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Local permit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can a person buy a multiple permit for several vehicles? - \$10 annual fee per household, not per car (for locals who own multiple vehicles). Depends on which track we are doing, taking bikes or not as to which car we take. - How about a regional boundary for local permit? - Barrier is online, can I come into the Visitor Centre? - How easy is it to get local permit? - Can we have clear instructions on how to apply for \$10/yr and when. - Still prefer locals or even New Zealanders be free. This stops me from visiting Punakaiki for example if I have to pay per hour. - \$10 Still too much. Locals should be free. 	<p>The \$10/year annual permit is per vehicle only. A vehicle owner can apply for multiple vehicle annual permits at \$10 per year per vehicle.</p> <p>District boundaries are the preferred approach to piloting a \$10/year annual permit that acknowledges local use. Wider regional council boundaries may not be suitable in other locations if it was decided that carparking charges could occur at other sites. To recognise what DOC have heard and to allow for wider West Coast use, DOC have added Westland District Council residents to the Dolomite Point Site to be eligible for the \$10/year local permit and have added Buller and Grey Districts to the Franz Josef site.</p> <p>Information on how to obtain permits will be provided prior to implementation. If applying online is a barrier, please go to your local visitor centre for assistance with permit applications.</p> <p>The pricing analysis concluded \$60 per year to be a reasonable price for a regular user of the car park, based on a minimum of one 2 hour visit every other month (6 times per year). This frequency of visit was informed by listening to feedback from locals and looking at past DOC survey results. The proposed \$10 per year locals-only permit is considerably less than the \$60 reasonable fee. If used for six 2 hour visits, this would result in an equivalent fee of less than \$1 per hour. This fee does not represent the value of the site and is far below any fee identified in the market research.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic tourism is important. 	<p>Agreed. DOC is keen to encourage all visitors, both domestic and international, to enjoy the stunning nature experiences on offer. Research shows that when people have a positive experience in nature, they are more likely to support conservation goals. We believe a \$5 hourly parking charge to help support conservation is something most New Zealanders will be happy to pay.</p>
<p>Car park breaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First month issue breach warnings only to help inform locals and bed in process. 	<p>DOC will look at an initial period of bedding in the charges.</p>
<p>Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk to backpacking clients who are already dissatisfied with view of glacier- \$5 is too much. Question how comparable cost of land is at locations around the world – probably only \$2 - \$3/hour. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase daily fee to over \$20 to drive behaviour changes to shuttles as the existing shuttles cost \$15 return. 	<p>It is understandable that people don't want to pay for something that was previously free, however the reality is that DOC cannot undertake all its biodiversity and visitor network work without additional revenue.</p> <p>The hourly rate of \$5 is reasonable and doesn't restrict people visiting this special location. Locals can purchase a \$10 annual permit, which allows unlimited access, school trips, community gatherings and volunteer groups can apply for a paid parking exemption.</p> <p>Alternative transport options such as cycling and walking are available from the Franz Josef village. Cyclists and pedestrians don't have to pay parking charges.</p> <p>The pricing strategy identified \$20 to be a reasonable daily fee. We will monitor the impact of this fee on parking behaviour.</p>
<p>Use of Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where is the money going to be invested? Need for transparency. - Supportive if money is re-invested in the same place. 	<p>DOC has invested a lot of money at the pilot sites, especially Dolomite Point and the road at Franz Josef. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Concessionaires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a simple concessionaire process. Don't want to pay each time. Need a one-off fee. - Rates for customers from concessionaires goes out 2 years in advance, so want advance warning of any charges. - Need to contact broader concessionaires. Informing them about paid parking. - Easy admin for frequent concessionaires in future. - Non-concessionaires are heading up there after 6pm, will there be policing of that? - Resourcing into evenings, need compliance through to 8pm. - Check Transport Services Licence (TSL) Number from NZTA to carry passengers, to see what people are using the park without a concession. - Can vehicle access trends be flagged? - Check NZTA database for users having a TSL to capture people operating without a concession. 	<p>Concessionaires will be able to obtain their permits for the pilot period prior to implementation. This will be an online process.</p> <p>Thank you for your feedback, DOC will communicate with the broader concessionaires.</p> <p>The cameras will work 24 hours a day, so vehicles entering the car park will be logged. If a concessionaire's vehicle does not have an exemption, it will be considered incur an infringement fee.</p> <p>Throughout the pilot programme, traffic behaviour will be monitored to identify trends and issues.</p> <p>Thank you for your feedback.</p>
<p>Car parks along the access road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alex Knob carpark should be extended to make it a drop-off. - If you're planning to expand Alex Knob car park, then there will be issues. Think about closing Alex Knob carpark. - Wombat car park is always busy. More people park for free and it's harder for longer visitors to the park. - Remove the car park midway - Not clear if charging applies to wombat carpark. - Solution is to remove wombat carpark. - Carpark midway should also have charges as everyone will park there instead. 	<p>Thank you for the suggestion. Your recommendation will be forwarded to local Operations staff and the pricing team for consideration.</p> <p>At this stage there will be no charging at Wombat carpark This could change before planned implementation.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let people walk from main carpark. 	
<p>Walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedestrians and walkers need to keep to tracks- have clearer signage - No-one sees the walkway tracks sign - cars are blocking the view. - Risk of doing a track too quickly could increase risky behaviour. 	<p>Thank you for this information, it will be forwarded to DOC's communications and district operations staff for consideration.</p> <p>This behaviour was considered by the pricing team, hence the reasonable charges of \$5 per hour or \$20 per day.</p>
<p>Overflow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will overflow parking be managed? 	<p>Parking behaviour will be monitored as part of the pilot. If there are overflow problems, there are some possible operational improvements that can be made.</p>
<p>Overnight camping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will you stop overnighers? 	<p>Overnight camping is not permitted. Cameras will record entry and exit of each vehicle.</p>
<p>Other ways of generating revenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get a badge for access to all national parks when visitors arrive for \$150 each. 	<p>Thank you for the suggestion. This will be forwarded to the pricing team for future consideration.</p>
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will it operate? - Where will Cameras be? 	<p>The parking cameras are fixed and focus on a limited area to capture vehicle number plates entering and existing the carparks. Cameras are a cost-effective way to establish and manage paid parking.</p> <p>Details of the application process for annual permits, and parking exemptions, as well as information on breach processes, will be released once the pricing is finalised. Information will be available on the DOC website and will also be sent to all submitters.</p> <p>Cameras will be located at a place that enables them to record the entry and exit of each vehicle.</p>

Feedback from email submissions

The table below outlines the key themes and comments that supported those themes.

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Oppose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Zealanders shouldn't pay. - We pay high rates to the West Coast councils. This should cover access to local amenities. - Our children should be able to enjoy nature for no cost - Tourism is the lifeblood of the Franz township, and tourists are fickle. A cost to visit the Glacier is a reason for people not to visit, which will directly impact the small local businesses. This is especially true for domestic tourists, who are an important source of income for businesses over the quiet winter months. 	<p>It is understandable that people don't want to pay for something that was previously free, however the reality is that DOC cannot undertake all its biodiversity and visitor network work without additional revenue.</p> <p>Any school trips can apply for an exemption.</p> <p>The hourly rate of \$5 is reasonable and doesn't restrict people visiting this special location. We do not expect that a \$5 hourly charge for carparking will deter people from visiting Franz Josef Glacier.</p>
<p>Pricing strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I believe the concept of hourly fees for parking will increase risk behaviours in international tourists, with people trying to 'beat the clock' and do difficult tracks too quickly to avoid paying extra for parking. 	<p>This behaviour was considered by the pricing team, hence keeping the free period to 20 mins and the reasonable charges of \$5 per hour or \$20 per day.</p>
<p>Other carparks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to put a large carpark opposite the tiny one at the Alex Knob/Roberts Point tracks. This needs to be funded by the government if it wishes to obtain revenue from tourists and NZ tax payers. - Some are willing to donate time and money for the re-establishment of the Fox glacier carpark, perhaps the government could establish a <i>Give a little</i> page. 	<p>Thank you for the suggestion. Your recommendation will be forwarded to local operations staff.</p> <p>The Fox glacier carpark is out of scope for this project.</p>
<p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will there be a paid parking pilot programme at Fox Glacier too? It seems there isn't. This then this puts Franz at a 	<p>At this stage the pilot is for three high use sites – White Horse Hill Aoraki, Franz Josef and Dolomite Point at Punakaiki.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>slight disadvantage if we charge for parking at the Glacier and Fox doesn't. There should be parity.</p>	<p>The Fox glacier carpark is out of scope for this project. We do not expect that a \$5 hourly charge for carparking will deter people from visiting Franz Josef Glacier.</p>

4.3 White Horse Hill

Summary of feedback themes

- Opposition to paying for parking and concerns about multiday users and volunteers.
- Concern about flow on impacts for parking in other areas.
- Question about the potential to extend the local permit to the Waitaki District.
- Concern about the long-term condition and management of vehicles at the White Horse Hill car park.

Drop-in session feedback

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Concern about safety as a result of the paid parking pilot.</p> <p>Concern about other carparks being used instead such as the Tasman.</p>	<p>This will be monitored during the pilot period.</p> <p>To improve the current situation, temporary traffic management will be implemented on Hooker Valley and Tasman Valley roads, and the State Highway.</p>
<p>When does the pilot transfer into something else?</p>	<p>There will be an assessment at the end of the paid parking pilot that will determine if paid parking continues at White Horse Hill and if paid parking is extended to other sites.</p>
<p>Carpark space is not fully utilised. Can this be upgraded?</p>	<p>Improved signage and carpark flow is planned for as part of the pilot but the longer term capacity of the carpark is being investigated.</p>
<p>Businesses have a number of vehicles, can we add them ourselves?</p>	<p>Yes, concession holders will be invited to register to an online system, where concession details and vehicle details can be submitted. More information on this will be available in mid-November.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Payment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will be people know how long to pay for, might be better for people to pay when they leave? - Can you pay if you stay longer? - Rental vehicle default payments, what will happen there? - Is there a solid power connection? - Those who are going into a hut, do they pay for the hut and the carpark? - Will you accept We Pay? 	<p>The estimated time to complete an experience is available on the DOC website. Information signs are also on site.</p> <p>The parking system is free flow and does not include barrier arms. This requires carpark users to interact with a payment solution when they arrive that helps prevent forgotten payments at departure and helps with clearly understanding parking fees that apply to their stay.</p> <p>Active parking sessions can be extended. If you stay for longer than expected and your parking session expires, you can pay for another parking session.</p> <p>Paid parking breaches by rental vehicles will be followed up by DOC's paid parking provider Stellar. Stellar have a relationship and agreed methodology with some rental providers to collect breach fees.</p> <p>Power is provided by a solar and battery system.</p> <p>An electronic solution is proposed at Wyn Lodge and Tahr Lodge that allows users to exempt their vehicles from paid parking.</p> <p>Around 98% of payments are visa and mastercard, the paid parking system accept payments that all NZ retail outlets take. The hardware does not currently take We Pay.</p>
<p>Campground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we differentiate carpark users from campground? Those that have bookings could put in booking code but when tourists book they don't have a registration number yet. <p>Overflow issue with campground. Unplanned travellers turning up in the dark and come for the sunrise - can you capture number plates in the dark?</p>	<p>We will be monitoring the impacts on surrounding areas during the pilot period.</p> <p>Campground users must have a booking to stay in the campground. There will be some scenarios where paid campground users overspill into the carpark. The parking system allows for DOC rangers to manage these cases on an individual bases.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
Why not just add \$25 to the visitor levy?	Not all international visitors visit Aoraki. Additionally, the International visitors levy (IVL) does not fund all infrastructure that is used by international visitors, New Zealanders, or international visitors. Additionally, some international visitors are not required to pay the IVL (such as Australia). It is appropriate for DOC to explore other alternatives for maintaining such infrastructure at some of New Zealand's most popular visitor sites, and for the IVL to fund work that could result in a fair spread of costs across those who use that infrastructure.
Lake Ohau is outside of Mackenzie District Council and they spend time in Aoraki.	The Mackenzie District is the only district that will be included within the paid parking pilot for White Horse Hill.
How about camera and start charging at the start of Hooker Valley. Or at the start of the village.	At the moment only the carpark will require payment.
Prefer the money comes back to Aoraki.	DOC has invested a lot of money on these sites. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.
On the Hooker Valley Road get rid of the narrowing points on the road and have a free flowing 2 way traffic.	This is currently outside of the project scope of the paid parking pilot. These narrow points naturally slow traffic and improve road safety.
Longer term parking solution - Cradle Mountain put in park and ride. DOC has networks through the 'parks forum' where people share best practise and talk to paid access and park and ride. Parks across the world do different things.	Thank you for your feedback, we will pass your feedback onto the team looking at longer term improvements at Aoraki.

Feedback from email submissions

The table below outlines the key themes and comments that supported those themes.

Feedback comments	DOC's response
Opposition to paid parking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't want to pay to visit. - Locals should be all New Zealanders. - Costs too much for senior citizens and community card holders. 	We believe that the hourly rate of \$5 is reasonable. Locals within Mackenzie District boundaries can purchase a \$10 per vehicle per year permit, which allows unlimited access. For regular multi-day

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional costs for multiday hikers who also have to pay for huts. 	<p>users outside local district boundaries there is the option to buy a pass of \$60 for the year.</p> <p>Concessionaires, school trips, community gatherings and volunteer groups can apply for a paid parking exemption. (Note the concessionaires' exemption is for the pilot period.)</p>
<p>Congestion created in other areas.</p>	<p>We will be monitoring the impacts on surrounding areas during the pilot period.</p>
<p>This will negatively impact volunteers and multiday users of the park.</p>	<p>DOC is grateful for the work of volunteers, who help greatly with biodiversity work and in the maintenance of the visitor network, including huts and tracks. Individuals and groups may apply for a parking fee exemption to perform an activity such as volunteer work, a school trip or community meeting. The DOC project team is working on a user-friendly process to enable this and plan to provide more information before the pilot commences.</p> <p>For those regular multi-day users there is the option to buy a pass of \$60 per vehicle for the year and for Mackenzie District residents to purchase a local pass that costs \$10 per vehicle per year.</p>
<p>Question about how concessionaires get their parking exemption.</p>	<p>The parking fee exemption process will be an online application.</p> <p>The project team is currently working on the parking fee exemption process for concessionaires. DOC plans on sending process details to relevant concession holders, prior to the start of the paid parking pilot. You can expect to receive information in November.</p>
<p>Concern about people not knowing about the proposal.</p>	<p>After the Ministers announcement there was a media release in November 2024 since then we have included advertisements in newspapers and on the Department of Conservations Canterbury and National Facebook pages. The White Horse Hill Facebook post was also shared to the Twizel community and Aoraki Mount Cook Community Facebook</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
	<p>groups. We have also had the information on the DOC website and emailed the leaflet to stakeholder groups and held a public drop-in session at Aoraki on 29 September 2025 to obtain feedback on the proposed pricing.</p> <p>We will be communicating the changes on the DOC website so people are aware when they plan their trip and there will be signage provided at the site.</p>
<p>Extend the local pass to include North Otago as people live a few kilometres from Twizel aren't considered local.</p>	<p>The Mackenzie District is the only District that will be included within the paid parking pilot for White Horse Hill.</p>
<p>Question was raised about disabled carparks and if they are included and if there are disabled carparks large enough for a 8.2m long vehicle.</p>	<p>Currently all vehicles are required to pay at these sites, however at Dolomite Point there are some mobility carparks in the southern carpark that will not be charged.</p> <p>The carparks at White Horse Hill and Franz Josef are gravel car parks and currently have no delineation for mobility spaces. Any future carpark upgrades could allow for marked mobility spaces. This work is outside the current paid parking pilot scope and has been passed onto the DOC district operational teams.</p>

4.4 General feedback regarding paid parking

Summary of feedback themes

- Most of the feedback opposed paid parking, with the key arguments being that the land should be free for all to access, that it's greedy to ask for more money and that DOC needs to make better use of the funds it already has access to.

The table below outlines the key themes and comments from email submissions.

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>Oppose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand your need for additional funding to continue your excellent work, but to remove most if not all free casual parking options while we access the walks etc in National Park areas is totally unacceptable. 	<p>DOC understands the concerns raised about paying for parking.</p> <p>Paid parking is a tool used globally to manage visitor numbers and contribute to the financial sustainability of popular natural sites.</p> <p>The purpose of the DOC pilot is to:</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that DOC has a funding shortfall from the government due to policy decisions and that it is trying to make up the shortfall where it can. - Perhaps International visitors can afford or would reluctantly accept this paid parking, but for us kiwi nature lovers, who are trying to keep active and enjoy our stunning backyard, this really hurts and will force us to do quick time restricted walks in National Parks. - Serious concerns about the introduction of paid parking at sites such as Punakaiki and Aoraki/Mount Cook. - Oppose the adoption of a Wilson Parking-style model within our national parks. - Impact on everyday users: Locals and many New Zealanders rely heavily on DOC carparks. Introducing paid parking disproportionately disadvantages these frequent users. - Functional entry fee: Due to the absence of viable alternatives, paid parking would effectively serve as an entry fee for conservation land — a model that is inconsistent with the intent and provisions of the National Parks Act 1980, which guarantees freedom of access and entry. - Making access contingent on the ability to pay goes directly against the spirit of the National Parks Act and creates discrimination where access should be universal. - Financial inequity: Many New Zealanders are on limited incomes. - NZ taxpayers already contribute to funding DOC through taxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trial a way for visitors to contribute to costs at high-use sites • improve visitor experience • align with international best practices. <p>Legislation does allow DOC to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use DOC facilities, which include campsites, backcountry huts and car parks.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that paid parking is a big change and breach notices may be issued while people get used to the new restrictions and payment requirements. A web-based appeal process to breach notices will be available and appeals will be initially managed collaboratively between DOC and DOC's preferred supplier.</p> <p>As mentioned above, locals have the option of purchasing a \$10 annual permit which allows unlimited access.</p> <p>Regular visitors who are not locals can purchase a \$60 annual permit which allows unlimited access. These fees do not represent the value of the site and are far below any fees identified in the market research. In a separate initiative, which is not linked to the paid parking pilot, the government has proposed changes that would make it legal for DOC to charge international visitors access fees at four iconic tourism sites. The Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill will now be drafted and introduced to Parliament in 2026. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.</p> <p>Agreed, New Zealanders already pay taxes, however, the government is working with a constrained budget and has requested DOC to explore a range of</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>essential rest stops for responsible travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety concerns: If parking becomes too expensive, drivers may risk parking unsafely on roadsides, which could lead to accidents or congestion. - Recreational obligations: DOC has a statutory duty to foster outdoor recreation. Restricting access through fees — especially for brief and passive recreation — undermines this purpose. - Environmental consequences: Users may avoid designated areas and park elsewhere, leading to safety issues, roadside congestion, and environmental damage. - Local economies: Free access promotes longer visits and greater economic benefit to nearby towns. Paid parking could deter visitors — especially retirees, families, and budget-conscious travellers — at the expense of regional communities. - Please do not proceed with this until after the election. Please appeal to the government for more funding and hopefully voters will help DOC with this mission in the new year! - For European visitors, we are already the most expensive destination to get to. - Tourists already face multiple costs: fuel, DOC hut fees, tour fees, local accommodation, etc. Parking fees, even if modest, may stack up and influence decisions about visiting or staying longer. - By implementing paid parking, DOC is not listening to the overwhelming feedback and submissions it is receiving. 	<p>safety issues then NZTA and DOC can agree a course of action.</p> <p>DOC is keen to foster outdoor recreation. The more people have great nature experiences, the more they support conservation goals.</p> <p>The DOC paid parking team is developing a benefits realisation plan that includes gathering of data during the pilot. This data will help inform the decision on continuing paid parking.</p> <p>Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot the introduction of car parking charges at some busy sites. DOC is now engaging with local communities on parking pricing, when pricing applies and who prices apply to. Feedback from the engagement has fed into the development of the pricing strategy.</p> <p>DOC is listening to feedback – we have completed a two-stage engagement process which has shaped the final pricing.</p>
<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quite like the solutions proposed here and think \$10 per annum as a local is fine. Good compromise. Thanks for listening to the locals. 	<p>Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate your understanding.</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have travelled overseas and not been offended of having to pay to park my car/campervan to see sights as Gaints Causeway or Cliffs of Moher. If I have visitors coming to stay with me, and we visit Punakaiki in one car and have to pay maybe \$10 parking, I would prefer that to paying 4 entrance fees, if that was a future alternative. 	
<p>Pricing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should be 2 hours free, 20 minutes is not enough time - Local residents should not have to pay to enjoy their own public spaces, a \$10 "local permit" is still an unnecessary barrier. - Flat Fee Doesn't Reflect Vehicle Type or Usage. All vehicle types (cars, campervans, motorcycles) are charged the same \$5 per hour, which might feel unfair to motorcyclists or smaller/lighter vehicles. - No seasonal or Off-Peak Discounting. A flat rate year-round ignores seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers. Winter visits might feel less valuable or rushed compared to summer. 	<p>This free period will be sufficient for private passenger drop-offs or pick ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge.</p> <p>The pricing analysis concluded \$60 per year to be a reasonable price for a regular user of the car park, based on a minimum of one 2 hour visit every other month (6 times per year). This frequency of visit was informed by listening to feedback from locals and looking at past DOC survey results. The proposed \$10 per year locals only permit is considerably less than the \$60 reasonable fee. If used for six 2 hour visits, this would result in an equivalent fee of less than \$1 per hour. This fee does not represent the value of the site and is far below any fee identified in the market research.</p> <p>Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.</p> <p>The value of the site remains throughout the year. The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.</p>
<p>Enforcement, breaches and technology concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement via number plate cameras and fines may feel impersonal or 	<p>There will be monitoring of the pilot.</p> <p>DOC's preferred service provider will manage issuing of breach notices. A</p>

Feedback comments	DOC's response
<p>punitive, especially for international tourists unfamiliar with the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tech issues (e.g. errors in plate recognition or payment app glitches) could create bad experiences in a remote location. - Will users pay when they leave or do they have to guess when they arrive how long they intend staying, given that for many it will be their first visit to this site? They may think an hour will be sufficient, only to find that there is more to experience than they had anticipated and wish to stay longer but cannot, because they will get fined for overstaying their vehicle in the carpark. 	<p>breach notice is issued to a vehicle following identification of non-payment through a camera system that is then verified by a human operator. All breach notices can be appealed and an online system is provided to allow for this. Car park payment conditions will be clearly communicated at each site.</p> <p>There are multiple payment options that allow flexibility for visitors.</p> <p>Active parking sessions can be extended. If you stay for longer than expected and your parking session expires, you can pay for another parking session.</p>
<p>Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not believe that you should be charging anyone for car parking. However, if you do, charge an entry fee into the Pancake Rocks at Dolomite Point of \$5 per adult and do the same at the Hokitika Gorge. I do not believe that anyone would mind paying such a fee and it would be easy to have a small shelter for a DOC staff member to collect this. - If there is a budgeting crisis for DOC the answer is to cut the area controlled by the department and/or reduce staff numbers. Currently the department controls some 85% to 88% of the West Coast, affecting the viability of some district councils and putting pressure on rates. 	<p>Thank you for your feedback. DOC has been directed by the Minister for Conservation to undertake and pilot paid parking programme. The preferred parking solution is digital and ticketless and doesn't require the collection of parking fees by person.</p> <p>Comments noted, thank you for the suggestion.</p>

5 Treaty partners

Working with Treaty Partners creates greater opportunities for conservation and kaitiakitanga.

In conversations with Ngāti Waewae there was comfort with the draft pricing strategy for Punakaiki. We have shared initial information on Franz Josef with Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio; although to date DOC has had no feedback, we welcome further engagement to understand their perspectives.

As regards White Horse Hill in Aoraki, initial information has been shared with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnaka o Waihao and Te Rūnaka o Moeraki. DOC would like to work with mana whenua to get further insights on paid parking for White Horse Hill, given the significance of the site at Aoraki to mana whenua.

6 Feedback from national stakeholders and special interest groups

For the full feedback received from stakeholders please refer to Appendix B, a summary of feedback is provided below with a brief response to the feedback. There will be further correspondence with stakeholders as the parking strategy is confirmed and shared.

6.1 West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board - Dolomite Point and Franz Josef

The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board supports the draft pricing strategy for the trial period of paid parking at the above two locations on the West Coast. Once the pilot programme has concluded and a review has been done, we request a copy of the review report.

Response

Thank you for your feedback.

6.2 Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Waitaha me Aoraki – White Horse Hill

1. Objectives

The Board notes the Department of Conservation (DOC) response received on 13 October 2025 outlining the objectives of the paid pilot as “Efficient management of visitor car parking at busy sites that improves customer experience” and “Establishing a fair mechanism for visitors to help improve the financial sustainability of the visitor network”. It remains unclear how it will improve customer experience.

2. Timing

The timing of the pilot is not ideal given the closing of the Hooker bridge. The trial will be distorted from normal usage (demand lessened) as less people will want to come to the White Horse Hill carpark. We understand anecdotally that the Tasman tracks are already busier because of the closed swing bridge in the Hooker Valley - i.e. people will go elsewhere in the park if their planned walk is less accessible.

3. Exemptions

It is good to see that the users of the club lodges will not be charged, but it would be useful if the pilot had an objective to ensure that it works in practice - the consultation document does not make it clear how this will work in practice. We would also support parking exemptions for volunteers given that they are contributing to the upkeep of public lands.

4. Back country users

The fees for back country users on all-day or multi-day trips seem excessive. These groups make up a very small proportion of visitors and yet will be charged significantly.

5. Local charges

It would seem conceivable and more in keeping with DOC's statutory functions, while still achieving the direction to increase revenue, to extend the locals annual pass rate to all New Zealanders and all with whakapapa. We are aware this has worked effectively in other countries, such as Australia, where discounts for locals are broad and more generous. This can engender a sense of pride (and a nice sticker on your car) to be contributing. Charging New Zealanders a flat fee of \$10 per year would also meet the stated objectives of the proposed paid parking and reduce the displacement and or deterrent risks. Where has the \$60 annual rate for out of region New Zealanders come from? Are there some targets for revenue generation or how has that figure e note that the objectives do not include been chosen? [sic]

6. Displacement

We note that if the carpark is full, no amount of charging will discourage parking on the access road, and it will probably encourage it. By contrast, we are aware of successful park and ride suggestions elsewhere. We note that the objectives of the pilot include improving 'customer experience' and 'financial returns' but not preserving scenery and the parks natural state (as required under s4 National Parks Act 1980). Car-parking should be banned on the access road and large advisory real time electronic boards stationed warning people visiting the National Park when the car park is full and directing them to an alternative parking location.

7. Interaction with National Park visiting fees

The interaction with the planned legislative change to enable DOC to charge for access to National Parks is referenced in the consultation but not explained. Is it the case that visitors could pay for parking and to access the National Park? Can this interaction between proposed charging for access and proposed parking charges be explained in more detail?

8. Treaty obligations

DOC must ensure that this process and the outcomes comply with the obligations of section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 and gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This involves a partnership approach with iwi and hapū and active protection of Māori interests, including supporting iwi to reconnect with ancestral lands and considering their interests in conservation management decisions. The Board doubts that a proposal to charge Ngāi Tahu for accessing their ancestral maunga is likely to be consistent with these obligations. We note that to date that DOC has had no response from Ngāi Tahu and mana whenua rūnanga from its leaflet. To meet a partnership approach DOC staff should personally and directly approach Te Whakaariki and Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited.

9. Revenue generation

Further details of the likely revenue are required to fully appreciate the value of implementing a paid parking scheme.

Key questions that need to be addressed during the consultation include:

- How many parking spaces will be made available at White Horse Hill car park and how does this compare to the maximum number of cars that are currently accommodated in the car park when full?
- Will there now be more clearly marked parking and non-parking areas?
- How much revenue is the paid parking trial at Aoraki/Mount Cook expected to generate to DOC?
- Will these funds remain with the National Park to improve visitor experience or be used elsewhere in the conservation estate?
- How much will it cost to install (including signage, road markings etc.) and run the system at the White Horse Hill car park?
- In addition to the direct costs to the company running the scheme (Stellar) what additional costs does DOC see in terms of staff time linked to ranger engagement with parking issues?

Response

Thank you for your submission and your thoughts, a brief response to the questions raised is provided below:

Objectives – Customer experience will be improved through car park flow improvements and traffic management, while the collection of revenue from day-visitors will help to fund the servicing of facilities that visitors to White Horse Hill enjoy.

Timing – We are aware of disruptions caused by the closure of the Hooker Bridge. As it is a pilot, monitoring and assessment at the end of the trial will take these factors into account.

Exemptions – Volunteer or community groups can apply for an exemption to parking payment for the time the activity takes place. DOC will be communicating the implementation process of the pilot and will consider your feedback as they do this.

Back Country users – Mackenzie District residents can get a local permit for \$10 per vehicle for the year. Others will need to purchase an annual multiday \$60 per vehicle permit. Market research and pricing analysis concluded \$60 per year to be a reasonable price for a regular user of the car park, as the fee equates to less than three days of daily parking fees at \$25 per vehicle per day.

Local charges - The \$10 local permit offers a substantial discount for residents in the immediate area compared to other New Zealand residents. Further discounts for other New Zealand residents are not planned. Market research, including examples from New Zealand council car parks, nor did it identify practical ways to distinguish New Zealanders from other users considering the commercial parking technology we will be implementing. Parking charges are a mechanism for visitors, including New Zealanders to contribute to the facilities they use and support DOC's financial sustainability, enabling greater investment in conservation and the environment.

Displacement – Demand exceeding car park supply at White Horse Hill car park is a pre-existing issue that we agree that parking charges will not solve. To improve the current situation, temporary traffic management will be implemented on Hooker Valley and Tasman Valley roads, and the State Highway. Thank you for your ideas around a park and ride. Longer-term solutions are being investigated for Aoraki/Mt Cook, and we will provide an update in due course.

Interaction with national park visiting fees – Car parking charges are permitted by legislation and are not access charges. The paid parking pilot is separate from proposed access charges for international visitors at four major sites, which will be considered under the Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill, with public consultation planned in 2026. Implementation details for access charging are still being developed.

Treaty obligations – Thank you for your suggested approach for partnering with iwi, DOC takes their obligations under the Treaty seriously. DOC is working with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnaka o Waihao and Te Rūnaka o Moeraki on a number of initiatives occurring at Aoraki/Mt Cook.

Revenue generation

The responses to these questions have been matched with the question in italics and response beside each question.

- *How many parking spaces will be made available at White Horse Hill car park and how does this compare to the maximum number of cars that are currently accommodated in the car*

park when full? Approximately 275 spaces are available at the carpark which will not change during the plot.

- *Will there now be more clearly marked parking and non-parking areas?* There will be more signage to help car park flow and where people should park, but the carpark will remain unformed.
- *How much revenue is the paid parking trial at Aoraki/Mount Cook expected to generate to DOC?* It is expected that the paid parking project at White Horse Hill will generate \$550,000 in 7 months.
- *Will these funds remain with the National Park to improve visitor experience or be used elsewhere in the conservation estate?* DOC invests a lot of money at these sites. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.
- *How much will it cost to install (including signage, road markings etc.) and run the system at the White Horse Hill car park?* Contracts for the installation of signage and paid parking hardware have been awarded following a competitive tender process. The contract capital costs and ongoing operational costs are commercially sensitive and not being released publicly.
- *In addition to the direct costs to the company running the scheme (Stellar) what additional costs does DOC see in terms of staff time linked to ranger engagement with parking issues?* The project has made an allowance for additional staff during the pilot period, ranger training, temporary traffic management equipment, and variable messaging boards.

6.3 Development West Coast (DWC) - Dolomite Point and Franz Josef

DWC is the regional economic development agency for the West Coast, with a mandate to foster sustainable economic growth while supporting the region's unique environmental and cultural values. We are also the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for the West Coast, responsible for both destination marketing and destination management across the Buller, Grey, and Westland districts. Tourism is a cornerstone of the West Coast economy, and DOC-managed sites such as Franz Josef Glacier and Punakaiki Pancake Rocks are nationally significant attractions that underpin visitor spending and employment.

DWC supports the introduction of car park charges at high-demand visitor sites provided they are implemented in a way that is equitable, regionally consistent, and demonstrably beneficial to local communities and conservation outcomes.

DWC urge DOC to:

1. Apply the local concession regionally to all West Coast residents.
2. Commit to reinvesting net revenue into tourism and conservation projects at or near the site

These changes will improve community buy-in, encourage compliance, and enhance both tourism sustainability and conservation gains on the West Coast.

Response

Thank you for your feedback. As a response to the feedback DOC have received for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef, DOC has added the three districts (Grey, Buller and Westland) to be eligible for the local parking permit.

DOC has invested a lot of money on these sites, especially Dolomite Point visitor offering, and the access road at Franz Josef. In terms of investing car park revenue in those regions, biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.

6.4 New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) - Dolomite Point and Franz Josef

Thank you for this additional information. NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) has no further feedback at this time.

NZTA notes that DOC is currently developing a monitoring plan for Dolomite Point and requests the opportunity to provide feedback on this plan prior to the start of the trial and that a copy of the final monitoring plan is provided to NZTA prior to the trial commencing. At this stage, NZTA's safety concerns relate to:

- poor compliance with the parking restrictions on the state highway, and that
- people will park on the state highway, particularly in unsafe locations, and not necessarily limited to the recently removed parking opposite the visitors centre, to avoid parking charges in the DOC carpark.

Response

Thank you for your feedback; parking behaviour will be monitored as part of the parking pilot.

6.5 New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) – White Horse Hill

NZTA and DOC have a memorandum of understanding for operations on the State Highway. temporary traffic management will be used when required to reduce the risk on the State Highway. And if required stopping paid parking is an option. Overall, with measures in place NZTA feel confident DOC can manage the impacts.

Response

Thank you for your feedback; parking behaviour will be monitored as part of the parking pilot.

6.6 Bus Coach Association – All sites

The Bus Coach Association (BCA) think the hour rates are reasonable. The BCA consider the annual permit prices are too low. The local one will likely cost DOC which is the opposite to what the Minister is trying to achieve. Assuming the trial is successful and expands to other locations, you may want to outsource admin of annual permits. You will need to build in the full cost of these annual permits whether you insource or outsource. We are currently set up to do this in the same way AA processes driver licencing and several other tasks for NZTA should you wish to discuss outsourcing after the trial.

We would really appreciate it if you could brief us on the parking permit details you will be sending to concessionaires operating under our concession. We have had sales to new members (new concession holders) as recently as this week, so we also want to help ensure you have the most up-to-date list when you mail out.

We would also like to understand the arrangement for new members/concession holders that join the concession after the trials start. One option is that we may be able to provide the permit along with the cards at the time of purchase. We would also be able to confirm intent to use any of the parking areas covered by the trial and ensure permits only go to those that need them.

Response

Thank you for your feedback, The local permit is a heavily discounted fee that acknowledges the value of the local community's hub, particularly at Punakaiki. DOC's contracted parking hardware and service provider's system allows for online application and payments of local and regular user permits. People can also apply for exemption from payment for activities such as volunteer work, school activities or a community meeting.

We will be back in touch with how implementation will work and make it easiest for your members. It will be all available online, so we think it will be a straightforward process.

6.7 Tourism Industry Aotearoa – All sites

TIA submitted on the earlier consultation process, and we are generally comfortable with DOC having modest charges for services provided.

In this latest consultation, we welcome the treatment of concessionaires and the recognition that the system needs to better reflect the interests of residents, particularly at Dolomite Point where the location of the carpark doubles as a community hub.

We have considered what we see as the key outstanding points from the consultation material provided (see Appendix B for more information). The key points are:

- Processes. The process for conducting the pilot is not sufficiently set out, other than bare bones of how it will work. Will it be all digital, how will people apply for the locals or regulars permits, has the provider been selected, etc.?
- Enforcement. How enforcement will be undertaken is not set out in detail. How will this work? When will fines be applied, what levels of fines, who will collect and what incentives are there on the provider?

We also are interested in the level of expected revenue that will be collected from the pilots and the plans for utilising this at site.

A wider interest we have lies in the concerns within communities around the paid parking pilots. For us, this is a social licence issue in that any community push-back may lessen support for tourism. As such, we are interested in DOC's ongoing response to the feedback it is receiving from communities.

Overall, we support the progress of the pilots, but many questions remain around how they will be conducted, and the implications for tourism operators and the host communities. Member feedback indicates overall support, but concern for sentiment of locals.

With respect to Aoraki Mount Cook, key features from the other locations are mapped over to this location, and we support this. In our consideration of the Aoraki Mount Cook pilot, and with input from TIA members in this location, there are specific points of feedback to provide:

1. Parking Capacity. The pilot will not solve the core issue that there is insufficient parking capacity compared to demand at peak periods. Over time we expect income generated from visitor parking will

be of importance to enable investment in longer term solutions. In the meantime, a charge at one place will likely mean some people will park where charging is not applied, such as on the Hooker Valley Road which could, perversely, lead to greater use of the road for parking compared to the carpark. DOC will need mitigation strategies to address these matters during the period of the pilot and consider longer term responses for the years ahead.

2. Use of Funds raised. It is TIA's understanding that funds raised by the pilots will be used at the places where it is collected, and we support this aspect of the paid parking programme. TIA seeks assurance that while funds raised may flow through DOC's financial system, the amount raised will be returned to the location for much needed investment, whether for the carpark system or other visitor facilities such as huts, tracks and information.

3. Interface with access charging. TIA notes that the government has announced plans to introduce access charges for international visitors at four sites, including Aoraki Mount Cook. While this is not ready for near-term implementation, it is important that the access charging is factored into the carparking pilot, particularly as more permanent solutions are put in place. As expressed earlier, TIA is concerned about the cumulative costs faced by travellers that can arise from multiple small charges. This is a question that will need to be examined from a system perspective, but it does appear that Aoraki Mount Cook will be a place where questions on dual charges will need to be addressed.

4. Interface with existing operators. TIA appreciates the complicated arrangements needed for this pilot given the physical layout and the need to work with commercial operators within the parking zone. TIA members have expressed this concern to us, along with observation that visitors may find it confusing. As such, TIA requests that DOC establish an active management plan for the peak period ahead to ensure the experiences of both operators and visitors are monitored and responded to in appropriate ways.

5. Enforcement. The consultation documents on the paid parking pilots have been largely silent on the penalty and enforcement approach that will be used, including level of fines, notification process and actions for non-payment. In our 26 August submission on the parking pilots at Dolomite Point and Franz Josef, we specifically raised this matter and sought clarification on how enforcement would be undertaken.

Response

Thank you for your feedback. DOC will be providing further information on the implementation of the pilot and will consider your feedback as they do this.

Processes – The paid parking hardware includes solar-powered licence plate recognition and pay stations. The cameras will capture the licence plates of vehicles on entry and exit of the carpark and reconcile the time in the carpark with the recorded payment for vehicle licence plates. Payment can be made through parking metres that accept cashless payments or through a web-based payment application.

Following a competitive tender process DOC have commissioned Stellar to provide parking hardware and associated services at all three pilot sites.

An online process for local and regular use permit application and payments is part of the parking service solution provided by Stellar. The online application process will be available before paid parking commences and the process will be communicated publicly.

Paid parking services provided by Stellar include the issuing of breach notices to vehicle owners who have not paid for their time within the carpark. A breach notice requires a payment (this has not been set) within a certain time period, and non-payment can result in a debt being referred to a debt collection agency.

Parking capacity – Demand exceeding car park supply at White Horse Hill car park is a pre-existing issue that we agree that parking charges will not solve. To improve the current situation, temporary traffic management will be implemented on Hooker Valley and Tasman Valley roads, and the State Highway. Longer-term solutions are being investigated for Aoraki/Mt Cook, and we will provide an update in due course.

Use of funds - DOC invests a lot of money at these sites. Biodiversity and visitor network projects exist throughout the country, and DOC will use this revenue where it is most needed.

Interface with access charging - Car parking charges are permitted by legislation and are not access charges. The paid parking pilot is separate from proposed access charges for international visitors at four major sites, which will be considered under the Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill, with public consultation planned in 2026. Implementation details for access charging are still being developed.

Interface with existing operators – Thank you for raising this, as part of the pilot we are proposing clearer signage and extra ranger’s onsite to assist and monitor during the pilot. This is an improvement compared to the existing carpark. The pilot includes clear signage on the paid parking extents and how to pay. The good thing about a pilot is that we can understand the issues that arise, and we can work through how we deal with them. There is a temporary traffic management plan ready to go for Hooker Valley Road and the state highway, if required.

Enforcement – Further information about enforcement and implementation will be provided ahead of the pilot starting, likely mid-November.

6.8 Federated Mountain Club - All sites

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc. (FMC) was founded in 1931 and advocates on behalf of over 22,000 New Zealanders, comprising 93 member clubs and associations, and over 1,000 individual supporters, who enjoy outdoor recreation in New Zealand’s front and backcountry. We also speak for the large number of other New Zealanders who enjoy our public lands for outdoor recreation.

Given that DOC has decided to implement these charges, the proposed fee structure appears to be reasonable.

As per our White Horse Hill submission, we stress the importance that conservation volunteers who need to use the car parks are issued with permits for their vehicles. There will need to be sufficient DOC resources allocated to ensure that the permit creation can be flexible and prompt to cater quickly for variations in volunteer vehicles and work dates. Volunteers donate their own time and expenditure in the pursuit of activities that support the Department, so should never have to pay car park charges as part of their volunteer mahi.

To implement these changes in a way that provides advance warning to regular and longer-term car park users require a well-considered communications plan, potentially involving

- DOC website updates to reference the charges from all tracks, huts and other information points where the carpark could be used
- Providing direct communications to national and regional stakeholders for dissemination to their user groups
- Identifying suitable social media platforms that could reach a wider audience

DOC Carpark Charges at White Horse Hill and Nationally

Given that DOC has decided to implement these charges, the proposed fee structure appears to be reasonable as a single site fee structure. However, we are concerned about the cumulative impact of carpark charges for frequent recreationalists and hunters across multiple sites (3 now, potentially more in the future). We submit that a national DOC carpark permit be established, providing access to all DOC carparks where access charges are in place. We suggest that if the July 2026 review concludes that carpark charging will continue and be expanded to other locations, then that would be an appropriate time to introduce a national DOC carpark permit.

White Horse Hill Considerations

This is a complex site given the widely varying demands on it, and the not always predictable flow on impacts of attempting to change parking behaviour. A few suggestions / comments:

1. A good base for a park and ride facility would be Mt Cook airport
2. The detailed arrangements for exemptions need to be worked through with the owners of Wyn Irwin Lodge (Canterbury Mountaineering Club), Tahr Lodge (NZDA South Canterbury), and Unwin Lodge (NZ Alpine Club) - by virtue of their location in the area they fall under the local and / or concessionaire categories, especially for where their regular staff / maintenance personnel are involved
3. It is unfortunate that a DOC ranger may have to spend significant time managing parking on White Horse Hill Road when there are so many other DOC core activities requiring ranger involvement. We would encourage a permanent way to discourage unsafe parking that does not involve constant on the ground supervision.

To implement these changes in a way that provides advance warning to regular and longer-term car park users require a well-considered communications plan, potentially involving

- DOC website updates to reference the charges from all tracks, huts and other information points where the carpark could be used
- Providing direct communications to national and regional stakeholders for dissemination to their user groups
- Identifying suitable social media platforms that could reach a wider audience

Response

Thank you for your submission. As a response to feedback, volunteer or community groups can apply for an exemption to parking for the time the activity takes place. DOC will be communicating the implementation process of the pilot in November and will consider your feedback as they do this. In relation to the questions about Aoraki/Mt Cook, thank you for your long-term parking suggestion. Demand exceeding car park supply at White Horse Hill car park is a pre-existing issue that we agree that parking charges will not solve. To improve the current situation, temporary traffic management will be implemented on Hooker Valley and Tasman Valley roads, and the State Highway. Thank you for your ideas around a park and ride. Longer-term solutions are being investigated for Aoraki/Mt Cook, and we will provide an update in due course.

More information will be discussed with the lodges regarding implementation and exemptions.

6.9 Canterbury Mountain Club – White Horse Hill

We believe we are positioned with a special and unique interest in Whitehouse car park and possess a uniquely stronger understanding of the dynamics of the campground, through the regular use of Wyn Irwin lodge (located approximately adjacent and accessed through Whitehorse campground), we are grateful that DOC has proposed exemption for our members traveling through the car park, and ask that DOC acknowledges our special and superior connection to the area.

We believe that paid parking within national parks requires a significant social licence, given the Kiwi principles of freedom of recreation in the hills, and your role as the Steward of Kwi-owned land rather than the owner. We believe that this social licence to charge at white horse car park and others has been granted primarily by two factors:

- The significant overcrowding if the car park,
- And Kiwis desire to support additional mechanisms for tourists to financially support docs stewardship over our national park.

Upon reflection, the CMC is strongly in favour of paid car parking, conditional on the following additional changes to the policy.

- **Intention to differentiate rates between kiwis and non-kiwis.** We understand some changes may be required to implement this system, we request DOC explicitly state its intention and desire to implement this where possible. We have already seen such differential pricing in our great walks pricing system.
- **Volunteers' exemption** for the purpose of conducting volunteer maintenance. We believe those who are contributing directly towards to upkeep and care of the land should not be disadvantaged by their efforts.
- **Off-season rate reductions.** Given that a significant aspect of your social licence to price car park parking infrastructure is based on the overuse of the carpark, we believe that off-season reductions in rates are appropriate to incentivise users to time their use of the park around quieter periods in the year. Our lived experience around the carpark leads us to believe that usage throughout the year varies.
- **Higher rates for buses and campervans** - Campervans are less likely to pay for accommodation or consume paid tourism infrastructure in the region, the heavier weight of the vehicles and larger size mean they also impart a larger burden upon tourism sites. Buses are less likely to support locally owned paid tourism infrastructure, weigh more, and carry a far larger number of occupants, which means they place a significantly higher burden upon the environment than a similarly priced car with minimal occupants. For these reasons, we believe it would be appropriate to significantly differentiate prices from regular car-based users.
- **Usage-based additional charges for concession operators.** Given that concession operators also impose a burden upon the parking area, we believe that additional charges should be applied to them. We believe that concessions allow a permit to operate in the park, but similarly to how concession operators still must pay fees to use huts, they should also pay to park in paid parking areas.
- **Opposition to winter traffic management.** Given the lower traffic numbers in winter, we do not believe that winter traffic management infrastructure is appropriate.

Given our strong connection to the area, large membership base (with a significant proportion of local residents), and position with a wider key stakeholder community (mountaineers and recreators), we believe our support would be a great help towards the implementation and ongoing success of the parking trial and future options to permanently implement such proposals.

Response

- Intention to differentiate rates between kiwis and non-kiwis – There is no plan to extend differential pricing to car parking, the only differentiation is for local residents (within the Mackenzie District for White Horse Hill) who can purchase an annual permit for \$10 per vehicle.
- Volunteers' exemption - Concessionaires, school trips, community gatherings and volunteer groups can apply for a paid parking exemption. (Note the concessionaires' exemption is for the pilot period.)
- Off-season rate reductions - The value of the site remains throughout the year. The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.
- Higher rates for buses and campervans - Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.
- Usage-based additional charges for concession operators- Concessionaires, school trips, community gatherings and volunteer groups can apply for a paid parking exemption. (Note the concessionaires' exemption is for the pilot period.)
- Opposition to winter traffic management – Thank you for your suggestion. Traffic Management on Hooker Valley Road is planned through the summer peak season and a decision is still to be made on the approach over the slower winter season.

6.10 Outdoor Access Commission – All sites

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

Herenga ā Nuku opposes charging New Zealand residents for access to any public conservation areas, including national parks. However, acknowledges that charging for incidental amenities on public conservation land, such as huts, campsites, and carparks, may be appropriate in some circumstances. Existing legislation stipulates free public access.

Herenga ā Nuku is concerned that charging for access at Punakaiki, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill is effectively charging for access to those areas. Most visitors to those sites will need to use those car parks, and thus paying for parking means they are paying to use the tracks that start at and around the car parks. While a small annual charge is proposed for some residents to use the car parks, Herenga ā Nuku is concerned that charging residents for access to public land may set a precedent that would impact other public access rights, whether at many other car parks managed by DOC or those provided by councils to esplanade reserves and esplanade strips and other public access areas.

With the various mountain passes separating the region from the rest of the South Island, we would like to see 'local' resident mean West Coasters rather than being divided by District. Ideally, this pass would be obtained simply and for free.

Herenga ā Nuku acknowledges that charging for parking at high-use, iconic sites where there are no other realistic options is the logical way to conduct a trial. However, we are concerned about effectively charging for access to the most popular areas and, if adopted, about the likelihood that visitors will be paying for parking all around the country, with costs mounting for visitors already paying the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy. Ideally, access to public conservation land would remain free, certain, enduring, and practical. That includes avoiding charging where the charge is effectively a charge for entry into that area of National Park through this trial.

While speculative, we have concerns for the future. We know that around 76% of visitors to Aotearoa New Zealand come for the landscapes and scenery. DOC will largely manage those landscapes. Looking beyond the proposed trial, if it were to be extended to dozens of popular sites, and if those international visitors averaged a two-hour stay and therefore incurred a \$10 charge to park at each of those sites, they might cover 50 sites during their OE to New Zealand, which would add up to \$500. We do not believe this is the direction of travel DOC is seeking. That approach could be better suited for those visitors through an annual DOC pass that would allow parking at all DOC car parks and, for example, include park and ride bus services that are being considered for congested sites. An example of this is the entrance pass system for US national parks with annual passes (US\$80) and various discounts – free for U16, those with permanent disabilities and volunteers, heavy discounts for 62+ seniors etc.

Should paid parking be introduced, there are two groups we would like to see exempt from paying. Firstly, many volunteers – from conservation community groups, trail maker groups and local communities with which we work — gain and contribute much from utilising public access. It is important that charges, either for access or related amenities and services, do not undermine the conservation, economic and social benefits derived by nature and local communities from volunteers working on public conservation land. Secondly, there is a custom of DOC supporting education on public conservation land, for example through rangers leading groups of school children or by providing free places in huts. We believe this principle should be extended to parking so that any group of school children, guides, scouts, or students etc can park for free.

Should the trial go ahead as outlined, we suggest that there may be a risk of visitors rushing, for example, running around the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Blowholes Walk or running for a glimpse of Franz Josef glacier within the free 20 minutes of parking, to avoid obtaining a permit or paying for parking. This could create a risk for those people and others in their way, and we believe it should be monitored.

To maintain social licence in offering the proposed parking service, we recommend that DOC work with the supplier to ensure that penalties are not issued automatically. Instead, reminders are issued, and or a reasonable time frame is allowed for parking to be paid via an app or similar, with clear information available.

Response

- Legislation does allow DOC to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use facilities, which include campsites, backcountry huts and car parks.
- DOC is grateful for the work of volunteers, who help greatly in the maintenance of the visitor network, including huts and tracks. Individuals and groups may apply for a parking fee exemption to perform an activity such as volunteer work, a school trip or community meeting. The DOC project team is working on a standard operating procedure to enable this process and will provide more information before the pilot commences.
- If further sites are to be assessed for paid parking, a parks pass is something that could be considered.
- Monitoring of each site will occur throughout the pilot.
- DOC's preferred service provider will manage issuing of breach notices. A breach notice is issued to a vehicle following identification of non-payment through a camera system that is then verified by a human operator. All breach notices can be appealed and an online system is provided to allow for this. Car park payment conditions will be clearly communicated at each site.

6.11 NZ Deer Stalkers, South Canterbury Branch – White Horse Hill

Regarding government policies that we perceive to affect our organisation and its activities and assets, that we have come to regard the submission process as a legal ‘have to do’ rather than any genuine concern and intent by the government and/or government appointed agencies, to have appropriate consideration and intent to act upon the views and evidence of the New Zealand electorate.

- New Zealanders shouldn’t have to pay
 - o We pay taxes already, New Zealanders are paying twice.
 - o A fee discourages people visiting and we want to encourage families and youth.
 - o It’s not a private enterprise.
- Proposed 'plan' does not address the overwhelming numbers of vehicles/tourists that clog up and foul the Park.
 - o Where is the management of numbers (of people & vehicles) and respect for the environment? (Try walking along tracks where toilet paper and worse litters the margins - and this is only what you can see).
 - o DoC appears to be ignoring the fact that they are trying to fit the Park to suit tourist numbers, not tourist numbers to fit for the benefit of the Park. The impact of this approach is clearly obvious - and negative. Over the course of time, we (SC NZDA) have noticed a decline in respect for the environment even in proximity to our lodge (adjacent to White Horse Hill carpark).
 - o This is a band aid and doesn’t address issues of infrastructure.
 - o Where will vehicles go when the carpark is full and deal with overflow?
 - o The Park and Ride system (proposed previously), or some such, should be instigated so that vehicle numbers and people numbers in the Park can be managed more effectively. It works in many places overseas, why not here? Revenue gained would more than compensate for costs.

Further concerns

- Lack of direct consultation with DoC. With DoC, information always comes after they have decided what they want to do, not before
- Consultation with Miles Anderson, local MP and James Meager, Minister for the South Island, on behalf of SC NZDA does not seem to have contributed to a better outcome
- Plan smacks of having been devised using Google Earth in an office somewhere, far removed from the reality of the site and without giving a wider perspective
- What notification has there been of this proposal to the public - prior to this plan being drawn up
- As physical, long standing and regular stakeholders in the Park, the continuing lack of prior consultation before plans such as this end up in the public arena, is unacceptable.

Response:

Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot car parking charges at some of DOC’s busiest visitor sites. This decision to pilot paid carparking was communicated in a [November 2024 media release](#). Throughout this year we have been engaging with stakeholders and the community about the proposed pricing strategy. We will continue to talk with NZDA around the implementation of the pilot. In terms of engagement with the public there has been two phases of engagement. Phase 1 engagement occurred for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef between 26 May and 19 June 2025 and for White Horse Hill between 12 June and 11 July 2025. (White Horse Hill’s timeframes are different due to parking capacity considerations). Feedback was received up until 24 July for all sites. A full engagement report on Phase 1 can be read online at this link - [Paid Parking Pilot Engagement Report](#). Phase 1 engagement activities have included:

- Meetings were held with Treaty Partners, businesses adjacent to the sites, DOC's quarterly Recreation Sector Forum, and the relevant Conservation Boards.
- Media release: "[DOC starts local conversation on paid parking pilots](#)" (28 May 2025), and responses to several media requests seeking clarification on the process and timing.
- Leaflets for each site were distributed to key stakeholders via email.
- An email address and the DOC 0800 number were provided so people could provide their feedback or ask questions.
- Workshops were held with the district offices to understand local operational information.

Phase 2 engagement activities for White Horse Hill have included:

- Media release: "[DOC pricing proposal for Aoraki car park](#)" (24 September 2025).
- Advertisements of the public drop-in sessions, website and feedback period were placed in the Otago Daily Times and the Press.
- Social media post on the Department of Conservation, Canterbury page (24 September 2025), this post received 10 reactions, 2 comments and 4 shares. It was shared with two local Facebook groups – Twizel Community and Aoraki/ Mount Cook Community pages.
- Leaflets for each site were distributed to inform key stakeholders and submitters from Phase 1 via email about the proposed pricing strategy. The leaflet is attached in Appendix A.
- Workshops were held with staff at the DOC district offices to understand local operational feedback.
- Drop-in session was held at the DOC office at Aoraki/Mt Cook on 29 September 2025 between 2pm and 3pm.

It is understood that New Zealanders already pay taxes, however, the government is working with a constrained budget and has requested DOC to explore a range of options to reduce costs and increase revenue. New Zealanders hold dear their conservation lands and waters. So does DOC, which is why parking charges are a mechanism for visitors, including New Zealanders to contribute to the facilities they use and support DOC's financial sustainability, enabling greater investment in conservation and the environment.

The White Horse Hill carpark is a busy place at certain times of the year. This will be monitored throughout the pilot period and there will be rangers in place to do this. There is also a temporary traffic management plan for Hooker Valley Road ready to go, should it be required.

Thank you for your ideas around a park and ride. Longer-term solutions are being investigated for Aoraki/Mt Cook, and we will provide an update in due course.

6.12 Rental Vehicle Association NZ Inc – All sites

The Rental Vehicle Association of NZ (RVA) completely understands the rationale for DOC parking charges at some sites in New Zealand's conservation estate and supports it. The proposed pricing demonstrates DOC's fairness in applying such a charge. However, the RVA has some questions about the proposal.

1. The fee for parking for one hour is very low. It would barely recover your costs let alone help with DOCs revenue. Recommend \$10 an hour for visitors, \$40 half day, \$70 full day. Great idea for locals and regular, non-commercial visitors with an annual permit though, it recognises the different relationships that individuals and communities have with the land. Again the pricing is fair if a little too reasonable.

2. How will DOC recover the inevitable lost parking revenue as a result of people not paying for parking? Whilst DOC is an Authority, the parking solution being run is a private one through a private parking company. It's not being administered by DOC. This means there is actually less leverage you have when trying to retrieve the fine. It is a civil matter, and one without much precedent either. What precedent there is, is very complex. If an Authority was administering the parking solution, there would be more leverage when retrieving fines, requiring statutory declarations on a rental operator's behalf to remove liability for the fine (the way it works with an authority issued parking infringement is different from a private one), and the formal passing on of renter details to the Authority in the event of parking not being paid and a fine being outstanding. The fine retrieval process is clearer and cleaner. It does however mean DOC would need to administer it all as opposed to a private parking company.

Response

Thank you for your feedback, DOC is balancing the need to keep charges reasonable for all parties while still achieving an objective to gather revenue from the carpark.

DOC's preferred service provider will manage issuing of breach notices. A breach notice is issued to a vehicle following identification of non-payment through a camera system that is then verified by a human operator. All breach notices can be appealed and an online system is provided to allow for this. Car park payment conditions will be clearly communicated at each site.

7 What happens next?

All feedback is being passed onto the project team and decision makers to confirm the pricing strategy for the pilot, with implementation planned for December 2025.

Appendix A – Phase 2 engagement leaflets



Pancake Rocks, Punakaiki. Photo: Nir Ketraru

We want your feedback

Proposed car park pricing for Dolomite Point, Punakaiki

We would like to thank those who provided feedback on the paid car park pilot concept during May and June 2025. We received over 150 submissions for the three relevant sites, which has helped shape our proposed pricing strategy.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is now seeking feedback on the proposed pricing strategy for the site at Dolomite Point, which includes one car park to the north and one to the south of the visitor precinct. We will also extend and upgrade the southern car park. When complete, there will be approximately 152 car parks available in total.

The car parks provide access to the Pancake Rocks, the key visitor attraction in Punakaiki. The introduction of car park charges will allow visitors to contribute to the facilities and nature they enjoy.

The pilot period is planned to begin in October 2025 and continue for 9 months until the end of June 2026, giving us information on both the peak and off-peak seasons.

Tell us what you think by 26 August 2025

We want to hear what you think about the proposed pricing strategy. Email your feedback to the project team at paidcarparking@doc.govt.nz or come along to our drop-in session.

Drop-in session on 14 August

Drop in to the Punangairi Visitor Centre **any time between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm on 14 August** to talk to the team and provide your feedback.

For more information, visit doc.govt.nz/paid-parking.



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What we heard during the first phase of engagement




- We received 158 submissions from Treaty partners, stakeholders, businesses, concessionaires and the community across the three sites (Dolomite Point/Punakaiki, Franz Josef/Waiau and White Horse Hill/Aoraki). Of those, 77 were focused specifically on Dolomite Point and 47 were about all three sites.
- Most people submitting on Dolomite Point wanted locals to be exempt from paying. We heard that Dolomite Point is the community hub, with the cafe and post boxes located there, which locals visit often.
- Many people were opposed to paid parking and wanted visitors to have free access.
- Concessionaires believed that they should have free parking, as they already pay Crown activity fees.
- Some people felt that there should be a free period, with suggestions ranging from 15 minutes to 2 hours. Ideas of a donation, a pass for locals or a discount code from the cafe were suggested.
- A few people supported the idea of car park charges, as this will be helpful for conservation.
- Most people who submitted on all three sites opposed car park charges and thought that we should fund conservation needs using the money we already have access to.

Proposed pricing strategy

The proposed pricing strategy was developed after considering information from stakeholders, reviewing all the submissions, doing market research and analysing how the car parks are currently used. The market research evaluated over 40 car parks around the world, including 16 sites in Aotearoa New Zealand. It showed that the average charge for car parking internationally is NZ\$6.40 per hour. The closest benchmark for this project was the car park in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, which charges \$10 per hour.

After reviewing the submissions, the charge for Dolomite Point was set at a lower rate than this.

The proposed pricing strategy aims to answer submitters' calls for an initial free period, special consideration for locals, a parking fee exemption for concessionaires during the period of the pilot, and a fair and reasonable price for both regular users and occasional visitors. The strategy aims to be simple and easy to understand and provides different fee options tailored to different users of the car parks.

FEES	
 Up to 20 minutes	Free
 Hourly Fee	\$5 per hour
 Daily Fee (Till 11.59 PM)	\$20 per day

Proposed pricing strategy for the Dolomite Point car park

Annual permit

We listened to the feedback from regular users of the site and have incorporated three annual permit options:

- **Local permit** – We will offer an annual permit for locals (based on Buller and Grey district council boundaries) for \$10 per year.
- **Annual permit** – Recognising that some regular users come from further afield, we will offer an annual permit to any private vehicle owner for \$60 per year.

- **Concessionaires permit** – During the pilot, commercial tourism operators that hold a valid concession will be able to apply for a parking fee exemption.

All permits will allow unlimited access to the Dolomite Point car park based on vehicle number plates.

Camping in the car park is not allowed.

How the feedback influenced the proposed pricing strategy

What you wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
<p>Free parking period for vehicles making drop-offs/pick-ups or staying a short time.</p> <p>There were different suggestions on the length of the free period.</p>	<p>A free period for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>This period of time will be sufficient for drop-offs or pick-ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge.</p> <p>This time period is based on traffic monitoring data – if it were longer, it could encourage people to rush their walk to the Pancake Rocks.</p>
<p>Different options for different needs.</p>	<p>The fee structure includes an hourly rate and a daily rate.</p> <p>It also includes permit options for regular users and concessionaires.</p>	<p>Different options are provided for different user requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying hourly means people can be flexible in how long they stay. • The daily fee offers an affordable option for people wanting to spend a full day. <p>We are keen to hear if this price structure meets the needs of current users.</p>
<p>Locals should be exempt from parking charges.</p>	<p>There is a short free period that allows people to pick up their post or a coffee.</p> <p>Locals can also purchase an annual pass for \$10, which allows unlimited access during that year. ('Locals' are residents within the Buller and Grey Districts.)</p> <p>Other regular visitors can buy an annual pass for \$60, which equates to \$1.15 per week.</p>	<p>The cost of the local permit is set low to acknowledge the value of Punakaiki as a community hub.</p>
<p>Different categories of vehicles (for example, buses/motorcycles/cars) should have different rates.</p>	<p>All vehicles will be charged the same parking fee, although emergency vehicles will be exempt.</p>	<p>Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.</p>
<p>Prices need to be reasonable.</p>	<p>The rate is \$5 per hour.</p>	<p>\$5 per hour is half the hourly rate charged for parking at Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, which is a similar site.</p> <p>\$5 per hour is consistent across all three sites and gives the user a choice around how long they will stay.</p>
<p>Prices should be cheaper/free in winter/during off-peak times.</p>	<p>Prices will be the same year round.</p>	<p>The value of the site remains throughout the year.</p> <p>The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.</p>

Project timeline

Action	Date
Undertake initial stakeholder engagement	Complete
Draft pricing strategy	Complete
Update stakeholders on proposed pricing strategy	August (current)
Seek stakeholder feedback on proposed pricing strategy	August (current)
Finalise Dolomite Point paid car park pricing and advise stakeholders	September
Implement paid parking	October 2025
Seek stakeholder feedback during paid parking pilot	Time to be confirmed
Assess pilot and decide if paid parking will continue at the three pilot sites and be introduced at other busy DOC sites	July 2026

Frequently asked questions

- **Why is DOC doing this?**

Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot the introduction of car parking charges at some busy sites. DOC is now engaging with local communities on the best way to achieve this.

- **Who will be enforcing the charges?**

Cameras will record the number plates of vehicles as they enter and exit the car parks. The company providing paid parking hardware will issue breach notices to vehicles for non-payment.

- **Will concessionaires need to pay?**

Concession-holding tourism operators will be able to apply for a parking fee exemption during the pilot, allowing DOC time to assess how parking and the coming access charges at some sites align with Crown activity fees. The application process will require operators to provide evidence of a concession. We will provide more information soon on the permit application process.

- **I operate a commercial transport or tourism business that visits the car park. How do I get a concession permit?**

Commercial tourism operators without a concession must apply for a permit from DOC. For more information, visit doc.govt.nz/other-permissions-activities.

- **Is the trial potentially going to be expanded to include Great Walk car parks?**

Once the pilot is completed and the outcomes have been reviewed, a decision will be made around if car parking charges should be extended to other busy sites. However, we do not anticipate that charging for DOC car parks will be widespread in the future. This would only extend to DOC's busiest tourist sites, where it would support managing tourism pressures.

- **Is it legal to charge for access to public conservation land?**

Legislation does allow us to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use our facilities, which include campsites, backcountry huts and car parks. Facility charges are not access charges.

In a separate initiative, which is not linked to the paid parking pilot, the Government has proposed changes that would make it legal for DOC to charge international visitors access fees at four iconic tourism sites. The Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill will now be drafted and introduced to Parliament in 2026. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.



Cars and campervans parked at Franz Josef. Photo: Department of Conservation

We want your feedback

Proposed car park pricing for Franz Josef / Waiau

We would like to thank those who provided feedback on the paid car park pilot concept during May and June 2025. We received over 150 submissions for the three relevant sites, which has helped shape our proposed pricing strategy.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is now seeking feedback on the proposed parking strategy for the site at Franz Josef. The car park is at the beginning of the popular Franz Josef Glacier / Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere Walk, which is a popular visitor attraction. The introduction of car park charges will allow visitors to contribute to the facilities and nature they enjoy.

The pilot period is planned to begin in October 2025 and will continue for 9 months until the end of June 2026, giving us information on both the peak and off-peak seasons.

Tell us what you think by 26 August 2025

We want to hear what you think about the proposed pricing strategy. Email your feedback to the project team at paidcarparking@doc.govt.nz or come along to our drop-in session.

Drop-in session on 15 August

Drop in to the St John Room at the Franz Josef Clinic **any time between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm on 15 August** to talk to the team and provide your feedback.

For more information, visit doc.govt.nz/paid-parking.



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What we heard during the first phase of engagement

- We received 158 submissions from Treaty partners, stakeholders, businesses, concessionaires and the community across the three sites (Dolomite Point/Punakaiki, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill/Aoraki). Of those, 19 were for Franz Josef and 47 were about all three sites.
- Most people submitting on Franz Josef understood the need to charge for parking but wanted locals to be exempt. They told us that the national park is their backyard and is used for daily or weekly recreational activities, particularly by young people.
- Many people were opposed to paid parking, particularly concessionaires, as they already pay Crown activity fees.
- Some people suggested that there should be a free period for pick-ups and drop-offs.
- A few people supported the idea of car park charges, as this will be helpful for conservation.
- Most people who submitted on all three sites opposed car park charges and thought that we should fund conservation needs using the money we already have access to.

Proposed pricing strategy

The proposed pricing strategy was developed after considering information from stakeholders, reviewing all the submissions, doing market research and analysing how the car parks are currently used. The market research evaluated over 40 car parks around the world, including 16 sites in Aotearoa New Zealand. It showed that the average charge for car parking internationally is NZ\$6.40 per hour. The closest benchmark for this project was the car park in Milford Sound/Piopiotaahi, which charges \$10 per hour. **After reviewing the submissions, the charge for Franz Josef was set at a lower rate than this.**

The proposed pricing strategy aims to answer submitters' calls for an initial free period, special consideration for locals, a parking fee exemption for concessionaires during the period of the pilot, and a fair and reasonable price for users. The strategy aims to be simple and easy to understand and provides different fee options tailored to the different users of the car park.

FEES	
 Up to 20 minutes	Free
 Hourly Fee	\$5 per hour
 Daily Fee (Till 11.59 PM)	\$20 per day

Proposed pricing strategy for the Franz Josef car park

Annual permit

We listened to the feedback from regular users of the site and have incorporated three annual permit options:

- **Local permit** – We will offer an annual permit for locals (based on Westland District Council boundaries) for \$10 per year.
- **Annual permit** – Recognising that some regular users come from further afield, we will offer an annual permit to any private vehicle owner for \$60 per year.

- **Concessionaires permit** – During the pilot, commercial tourism operators that hold a valid concession will be able to apply for a parking fee exemption.

All permits will allow unlimited access to the Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere car park based on vehicle number plates.

Camping in the car park is not allowed.

How the feedback influenced the proposed pricing strategy

What you wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
<p>Free parking period for vehicles making drop-offs/pick-ups or staying a short time.</p> <p>There were different suggestions on the length of the free period.</p>	<p>A free period for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>This period of time will be sufficient for drop-offs or pick-ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge.</p> <p>The duration of the free period needs to provide for short stays without encouraging people to rush. We want to enable a positive visitor experience.</p> <p>Let us know if this works for you.</p>
<p>Different options for different needs.</p>	<p>The fee structure includes an hourly rate and a daily rate.</p> <p>It also includes permit options for regular users and concessionaires.</p>	<p>Different options are provided for different user requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying hourly means people can be flexible in how long they stay. • The daily fee offers an affordable option for those walking longer tracks, such as Alex Knob Track. <p>We are keen to hear if this price structure meets the needs of current users.</p>
<p>Locals should be exempt from parking charges – for example, if there are school trips to Franz Josef.</p>	<p>There is a short free period that allows people to do pick-ups and drop-offs.</p> <p>Locals can also purchase an annual pass for \$10, which allows unlimited access during that year. ('Locals' are residents in the Westland District.)</p> <p>Other regular visitors can buy an annual pass for \$60, which equates to \$1.15 per week.</p>	<p>The cost of the local permit is set low to acknowledge the special relationship residents have with their whenua (landscape).</p>
<p>Different categories of vehicles (for example, buses/motorcycles/cars) should have different rates.</p>	<p>All vehicles will be charged the same parking fee, although emergency vehicles will be exempt.</p>	<p>Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.</p>
<p>Prices need to be reasonable.</p>	<p>The rate is \$5 per hour.</p>	<p>\$5 per hour is half the hourly rate charged for parking at Milford Sound/Piopiota, which is a similar site.</p> <p>\$5 per hour is consistent across all three sites and gives the user a choice around how long they will stay.</p>
<p>Prices should be cheaper/free in winter/during off-peak times.</p>	<p>Prices will be the same year round.</p>	<p>The value of the site remains throughout the year, and the glacier is possibly more spectacular in winter than it is in summer.</p> <p>The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.</p>

Project timeline

Action	Date
Undertake initial stakeholder engagement	Complete
Draft pricing strategy	Complete
Update stakeholders on proposed pricing strategy	August (current)
Seek stakeholder feedback on proposed pricing strategy	August (current)
Finalise Franz Josef paid car park pricing and advise stakeholders	September
Implement paid parking	October 2025
Seek stakeholder feedback during paid parking pilot	Time to be confirmed
Assess pilot and decide if paid parking services will continue at the three pilot sites and be introduced at other busy DOC sites	July 2026

Frequently asked questions

- **Why is DOC doing this?**

Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot the introduction of car parking charges at some busy sites. DOC is now engaging with local communities on the best way to achieve this.

- **Who will be enforcing the charges?**

Cameras will record the number plates of vehicles as they enter and exit the car parks. The company providing paid parking hardware will issue breach notices to vehicles for non-payment.

- **Will concessionaires need to pay?**

Concession-holding tourism operators will be able to apply for a parking fee exemption during the pilot, allowing DOC time to assess how parking and the coming access charges at some sites align with Crown activity fees. The application process will require operators to provide evidence of a concession. We will provide more information soon on the permit application process.

- **I operate a commercial transport or tourism business that visits the car park. How do I get a concession permit?**

Commercial tourism operators without a concession must apply for a permit from DOC. For more information, visit doc.govt.nz/other-permissions-activities.

- **Is the trial potentially going to be expanded to include Great Walk car parks?**

Once the pilot is completed and the outcomes have been reviewed, a decision will be made around if car parking charges should be extended to other busy sites. However, we do not anticipate that charging for DOC car parks will be widespread in the future. This would only extend to DOC's busiest tourist sites, where it would support managing tourism pressures.

- **Is it legal to charge for access to public conservation land?**

Legislation does allow us to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use our facilities, which include campsites, backcountry huts and car parks. Facility charges are not access charges.

In a separate initiative, which is not linked to the paid parking pilot, the Government has proposed changes that would make it legal for DOC to charge international visitors access fees at four iconic tourism sites. The Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill will now be drafted and introduced to Parliament in 2026. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.



Cars and campervans parked at White Horse Hill. Photo: DOC

We want your feedback

Proposed car park pricing for White Horse Hill, Aoraki / Mount Cook

We would like to thank those who provided initial feedback on the paid car park pilot concept during June and July 2025. We received over 150 submissions for the three relevant sites, which has helped shape our proposed pricing strategy.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is now seeking feedback on the proposed pricing strategy for the site at White Horse Hill in Aoraki / Mount Cook National Park. This car park provides access to several popular day and overnight walks and facilities, such as Hooker Valley Track, Kea Point Track, and Mueller and Hooker Huts. The White Horse Hill Campground next to the car park is DOC's most visited campground.

The introduction of car park charges will allow visitors to contribute to the facilities and nature they enjoy.

The pilot period is planned to begin in December 2025 and will continue until the end of June 2026, giving us information on both the peak and off-peak seasons.

Tell us what you think by 22 October 2025

We want to hear what you think about the proposed pricing strategy. Email your feedback to the project team at paidcarparking@doc.govt.nz or come along to our drop-in session.

Drop-in session on 29 September

Drop in to talk to the team at DOC's Aoraki / Mount Cook Office, 66 Bowen Drive, Aoraki, anytime from 2 pm to 3 pm and provide your feedback.

For more information, visit doc.govt.nz/paid-parking.



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What we heard during the first phase of engagement

- We received 158 submissions from Treaty partners, stakeholders, businesses, concessionaires and the community across the three sites (Dolomite Point/Punakaiki, Franz Josef/Waiiau and White Horse Hill/Aoraki). Of those, 7 were on White Horse Hill and 47 were about all three sites.
- Most people submitting on White Horse Hill were stakeholder groups who would like free parking for drop-offs and pick-ups and for locals to be exempt.
- Stakeholders also identified the need for considering longer term stays for those hunting or doing multi-day hikes, with the suggestion of a permit.
- Safety concerns were raised around people parking on the access road to avoid parking fees, and it was acknowledged that this is already an issue on Hooker Valley Road.
- Most people who submitted on all three sites opposed car park charges and thought that we should fund conservation needs using the money DOC already has access to.

Proposed pricing strategy

The proposed pricing strategy was developed after considering information from stakeholders, reviewing all the submissions, doing market research and analysing how the car parks are currently used. The market research included a variety of topics, including fee structures and techniques,




both nationally and internationally. It evaluated over 40 car parks around the world, including 16 sites in Aotearoa New Zealand. The market research helped us understand typical rates and fee structures for paid parking at similar sites, and one finding was that the average hourly charge for car parking internationally is NZ\$6.40 per hour. The closest benchmark for this project was the car park in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, which charges \$10 per hour.

After reviewing all the research and the submissions, the charge for White Horse Hill was set at a lower rate than Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

The proposed pricing strategy aims to answer submitters' calls for:

- an initial free period
- special consideration for locals
- a parking fee exemption for concessionaires during the period of the pilot
- a fair and reasonable price for both regular users and occasional visitors.

The strategy aims to be simple and easy to understand and provides different fee options tailored to the different users of the car park.

FEES	
 Up to 20 minutes	Free
 Hourly Fee	\$5 per hour
 Daily Fee (Till 11.59 PM)	\$25 per day

Proposed pricing strategy for the White Horse Hill car park

Annual permit

We listened to the feedback from regular users of the site and have incorporated three annual permit options:

- **Local permit** – We will offer an annual permit for locals (based on Mackenzie District Council boundaries) for \$10 per year.
- **Annual permit** – Recognising that some regular users come from further afield, we will offer an annual permit to any private vehicle owner for \$60 per year.

- **Concessionaires permit** – During the pilot, commercial tourism operators who hold a valid concession will be able to apply for a parking fee exemption.

All permits are per vehicle per year. They will allow unlimited access to the White Horse Hill car park based on vehicle number plates.

Camping overnight in the car park using a permit is not allowed.

How the feedback influenced the proposed pricing strategy

What you wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
<p>Free parking period for vehicles making drop-offs/ pick-ups or staying a short time.</p> <p>There were different suggestions on the length of the free period.</p>	<p>A free period for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>This free period will be sufficient for private passenger drop-offs or pick-ups and will allow visitors to get out of the car and stretch their legs without incurring a charge.</p> <p>The duration of the free period also needs to provide for short stays without encouraging people to rush. We want to enable a positive visitor experience.</p> <p>Let us know if this works for you.</p>
<p>Different options for different needs.</p>	<p>The fee structure includes an hourly rate and a daily rate.</p> <p>It also includes permit options for regular users and concession-holding tourism operators.</p>	<p>Different options are provided for different user requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying hourly means people can be flexible in how long they stay. • The daily fee offers an affordable option for those walking longer tracks. <p>We are keen to hear if this price structure meets the needs of current users.</p>
<p>Locals should be exempt from parking charges.</p>	<p>There is a short free period that allows people to do pick-ups and drop-offs.</p> <p>Locals can also purchase an annual pass for \$10, which allows unlimited access during that year. ('Locals' are residents in the Mackenzie District.)</p> <p>Other regular visitors can buy an annual pass for \$60.</p>	<p>The cost of the local permit is set low to acknowledge the special relationship residents have with their whenua (landscape).</p>
<p>Multi-day pass for hunters and trampers who are frequent visitors.</p>	<p>Recognising that some regular users come from further afield, we will offer an annual permit to any private vehicle owner for \$60 per year.</p>	<p>The annual permit allows users to visit an unlimited number of times while still helping to improve the visitor experience and biodiversity.</p> <p>The annual permit allows for vehicles to be parked overnight. No camping is permitted.</p>
<p>Different categories of vehicles (for example, campervans/ motorcycles/ cars) should have different rates.</p>	<p>All vehicles will be charged the same parking fee, although emergency vehicles will be exempt.</p>	<p>Each vehicle will be charged the same to keep the process simple.</p>
<p>Prices need to be reasonable.</p>	<p>The rate is \$5 per hour.</p>	<p>\$5 per hour is half the hourly rate charged for parking at Milford Sound/Piopirotahi, which is a similar site.</p> <p>\$5 per hour is consistent across all three sites and gives the user a choice around how long they will stay.</p>
<p>Prices should be cheaper/free in winter/during off-peak times.</p>	<p>Prices will be the same year round.</p>	<p>The value of the site remains throughout the year.</p> <p>The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.</p>

Proposed infrastructure changes

Short-term improvements

The attached concept layout (on the last page) shows minor signage and upgrades in the existing White Horse Hill car park. These upgrades aim to improve the flow of traffic within the car park and help visitors safely find a parking space. DOC ranger and compliance staff will be available on site during busy times to help with parking.

The layout also shows the indicative locations of parking pay stations and cameras that will record the entry and exit times of vehicles. Paid parking starts at the existing White Horse Hill car park entrance.

Hooker Valley Road impacts

Parking demand exceeds the existing capacity of White Horse Hill car park during the summer season, so vehicles often park along Hooker Valley Road, creating congestion. This diminishes the overall visitor experience due to pedestrian safety issues.

The introduction of paid parking at the existing White Horse Hill car park is expected to change parking behaviour. Vehicles may start parking on Hooker Valley Road earlier to avoid parking fees, leading to more people following this behaviour. To manage variable demand and unknown behaviours, DOC is proposing to put temporary traffic management in place on Hooker Valley Road operated by DOC rangers. This will include reduced speed limits and boards with messaging about parking availability and traffic issues.

Longer term improvements

DOC is aware that the White Horse Hill car park is often over capacity, with vehicles parking along Hooker Valley Road during peak periods. We acknowledge that running a paid parking pilot this coming summer will not immediately solve this issue. We will use this pilot opportunity to investigate a range of options designed to improve the long-term car parking experience, such as:

- managing travel demand, including providing improved real-time visitor information and marketing
- maximising the capacity of the existing car park
- identifying possible locations for park-and-ride solutions
- making operational improvements to restrict parking.

Additional details on longer term options and DOC's preferred approach will be provided in the future. The delivery of these options is dependent on available funding and investment priorities.

Project timeline

Action	Date
Undertake initial stakeholder engagement for all three sites	Complete
Finalise pricing strategy for Punakaiki and Franz Josef	Complete
Advise stakeholders of pricing decision for Punakaiki and Franz Josef	September 2025
Seek stakeholder feedback on proposed pricing strategy for White Horse Hill	October 2025
Finalise paid car park pricing and advise stakeholders at White Horse Hill	November 2025
Implement paid parking	December 2025
Seek stakeholder feedback during paid parking pilot	Time to be confirmed
Assess pilot and decide if paid parking services will continue at the three pilot sites and be introduced at other busy DOC sites	July 2026

Frequently asked questions

- **Why is DOC doing this?**

Last year, the Minister of Conservation directed DOC to pilot the introduction of car parking charges at some busy sites. DOC is now engaging with local communities on the best way to achieve this.

- **Who will be enforcing the charges?**

Cameras will record the number plates of vehicles as they enter and exit the car parks. The company providing paid parking hardware will issue breach notices to vehicles for non-payment.

- **Will concessionaires need to pay?**

DOC is currently designing the exemption process with its preferred hardware supplier. In November, we will invite commercial operators with a valid concession for one of the three paid parking sites to register for a permit system where they will be able to get a parking exemption for their vehicles. If any concession holders do not receive this information by the start of the trial, they should contact us at paidparking@doc.govt.nz.

- **I operate a commercial transport or tourism business that visits the car park. How do I get a concession parking permit?**

DOC plans to send out parking permit details to all current concession holders with a concession at one of the three paid parking sites prior to the start of the trial in mid-December. For other business operators, a paid car parking permit page containing the necessary details will be set up on the DOC website in November 2025.

Commercial tourism operators without a concession can apply for a permit from DOC – for more information, visit doc.govt.nz/other-permissions-activities.

- **Will campground users have to pay for parking?**

No. A number plate recognition camera located on pay station 2 will identify overnight stays in the campground. Paid campground users will be exempt from paying parking fees.

- **Will Wyn Irwin Lodge and Thar Lodge users have to pay for parking?**

No. An electronic kiosk is planned to be installed in the huts to allow users to enter their vehicle number plate and be exempt from parking fees.

- **Is the trial potentially going to be expanded to include Great Walk car parks?**

Once the pilot is completed and the outcomes have been reviewed, a decision will be made around whether car parking charges should be extended to other busy sites. However, we do not anticipate that charging for DOC car parks will be widespread in the future.

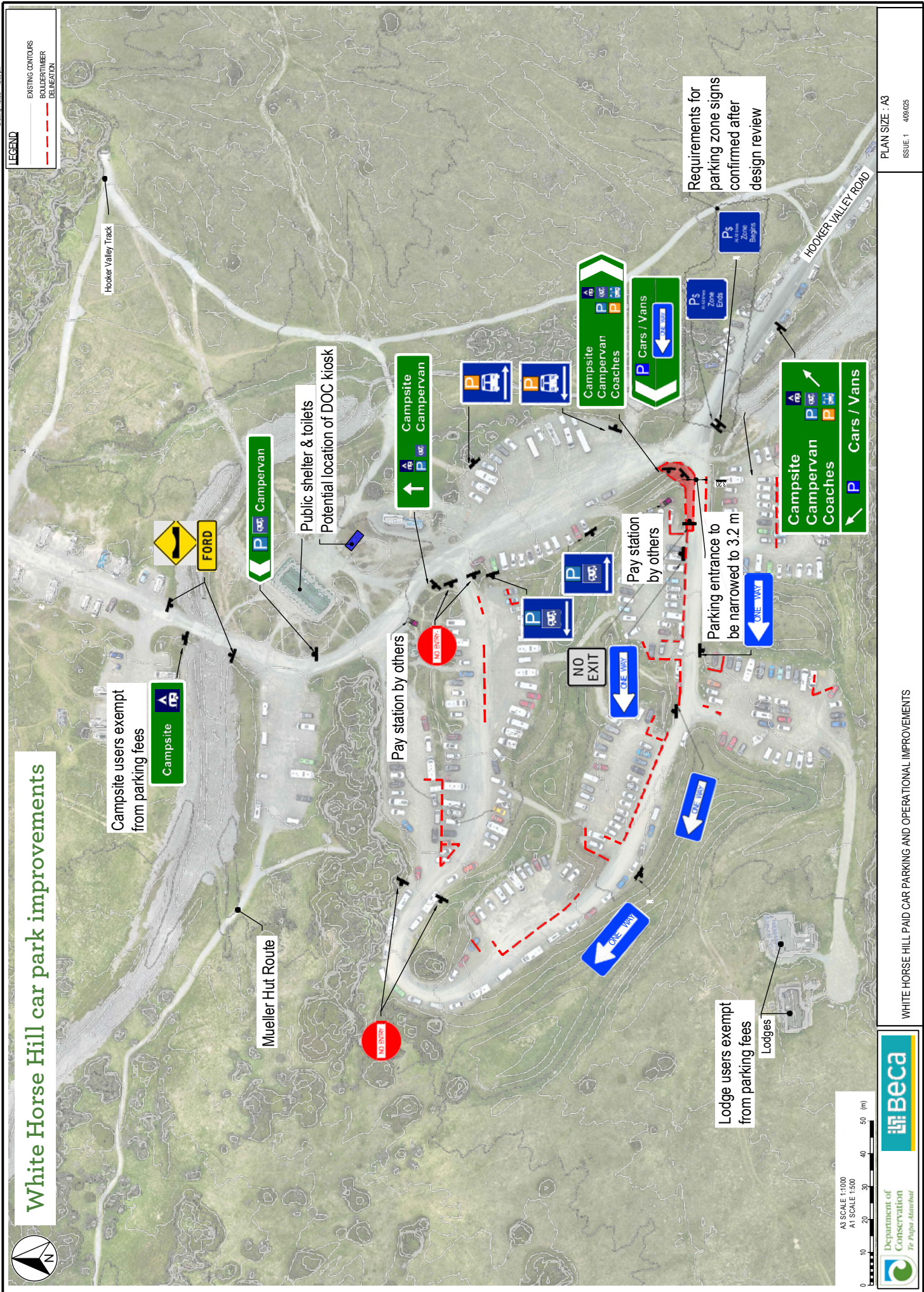
Is it legal to charge for access to conservation land?

Legislation does allow us to charge users fair and reasonable fees to use our facilities, which includes campsites, huts and car parks. Facility charges are not access charges.

In a separate initiative, which is not linked to the paid parking pilot, the Government has proposed changes that would make it legal for DOC to charge international visitors access fees at four iconic tourism sites. The Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill will now be drafted and introduced to Parliament during this term. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.



Overflow parking on Hooker Valley Road. Photo: DOC



White Horse Hill car park improvements

LEGEND

- EXISTING CONTOURS
- BOLDER/TIMBER
- DELIMITATION

Campsite users exempt from parking fees



Mueller Hut Route

Public shelter & toilets
Potential location of DOC kiosk

Pay station by others



NO EXIT



Pay station by others

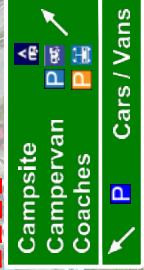
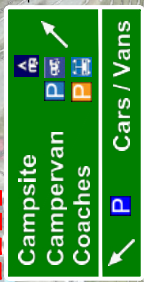
Lodge users exempt from parking fees

Lodges

Parking entrance to be narrowed to 3.2 m.



Requirements for parking zone signs confirmed after design review



Appendix B – Submissions received

Appendix B – Submissions Received

The table below contains the feedback received from the 25 July 2025 for the paid parking pilot. The proposed pricing strategy was released on 7 August 2025 and submissions closed for Dolomite Point and Franz Josef 5pm 26 August 2025. White Horse Hill feedback was received between 23 September to 22 October 2025. Please note names, addresses and complaints have been redacted to protect the privacy of submitters.

Submitter number	Feedback
25 July to 6 August – prior to Pricing Strategy Release	
1	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I was absolutely astounded to read your plans to implement paid car parking at some tourist hot spots in the South Island.</p> <p>I understand your need for additional funding to continue your excellent work, but to remove most if not all free casual parking options whilst we access the walks etc in National Park areas is totally unacceptable. Perhaps International visitors can afford or would reluctantly accept this paid parking, but for us kiwi nature lovers, who are trying to keep active and enjoy our stunning backyard, this really hurts and will force us to do quick time restricted walks in National Parks????????!!!!!!</p> <p>Lets get sensible and knock this poor idea on the head and find some cleverer ways to find extra funds needed. Makes me wonder.... hospitals are underfunded too, are they going to put in parking meters in their carparks too. No they arent that silly.</p> <p>Exceclent chat, look forward to hearing that there will be a change of direction on this.</p> <p>Regards</p>
2	<p>Would I stop....prob not.....or if I did it would be super quick, no sit down and have lunch or coffee there</p> <p>As Kiwis we pay enough, why can't we enjoy our local activities for free</p> <p>Regards</p>

3	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>I am also the Franz Josef Community Development Officer and in my role I would like to share updates on this topic with our wider community and through our website www.franz.org.nz.</p> <p>Are you able to email me at work on office@franz.org.nz all info and posters in jpeg and pdf format you have on this topic, including the scheduled drop in session? Also able to include office@franz.org.nz on your emailing list on this topic please? Kind Regards,</p>
4	<p>I am writing further to my previous submission about the introduction of paid parking at the Punakaiki visitor area. I may have already mentioned some of this in my earlier submission, so apologies if I am repeating some points. Our community is spread across more than 50 kilometres of State Highway 6. Punakaiki is the only central location where people can gather. We have no community centre, no RSA, no school, no church, no hall. There is nowhere else for locals to meet, talk, support each other, and stay connected. Punakaiki is a vital community hub—not by design, but by necessity. The recent development of the visitor centre has been a lifeline. It offers the only reliable space where isolated residents can gather to check on one another, have conversations, organise activities, and feel some sense of community. It plays a critical role in maintaining the mental wellbeing of many people living in this rugged and often unforgiving environment. The unique aspect to this community and this centre though is access. On most occasions, we have to drive. The State highway is too dangerous to walk, with trucks and tourist vehicles, the distances are too great to walk. There are zero public transport options. Basically we have no other way to get to this vital heart of our community other than to take our cars, and for this reason, being able to drive and park there without financial penalty is even more vital. Introducing paid parking now threatens to take this away. For many local residents, particularly those on low or fixed incomes, even a small parking fee is a serious barrier. People will stop coming—not by choice, but because they can't afford to. And when that happens, the consequences for our community's mental health and social cohesion will be real. This is not just about convenience. This is about a basic human right: the right to connect, the right to belong, and the right to support one another without financial barriers. No community in Aotearoa should be forced into total isolation because of where they live. It's also important to acknowledge the massive contribution local residents already make to this environment—</p>

	<p>voluntarily and consistently. We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trap predators and remove invasive species Rescue wildlife and clean up rubbish Maintain penguin fences and plant native flora Monitor the environment and assist lost or injured tourists Respond to car accidents and hazards on the highway <p>We are stewards of this place, and we do it not for reward, but because we care deeply. Yet now we may have to pay simply to exist in the one place that serves as our town square.</p> <p>This is unfair, short-sighted, and has the potential to be deeply damaging to some members of the community. We have tried for decades to secure funding and support for a marae or community hall. We've been close multiple times, only to lose support again and again. The visitor area at Punakaiki is all we have.</p> <p>We are respectfully asking DOC to introduce a local exemption system or free parking permits for permanent residents of the Punakaiki area and surrounding communities. This is not an unreasonable request—it is a necessary one.</p> <p>Please recognise that this is more than a policy issue. It is about mental health. It is about inclusion. And it is about human dignity.</p> <p>I urge DOC to stand by the people who are a part of this place and who act as kaitiaki to this whenua.</p> <p>Ngā mihi nui,</p>
5	<p>Tēnā koe,</p> <p>Thank you for your continued engagement and for providing an update on the paid parking pilot programme.</p> <p>While I appreciate DOC's efforts to consult with stakeholders, I continue to hold serious concerns about the introduction of paid parking at sites such as Punakaiki and Aoraki/Mount Cook. In particular, I strongly advocate for the continued provision of at least two hours of free parking, and I oppose the adoption of a Wilson Parking-style model within our national parks.</p> <p>Key concerns include:</p> <p>Impact on everyday users: Locals and many New Zealanders rely heavily on DOC carparks. Introducing paid parking disproportionately disadvantages these frequent users.</p>

Functional entry fee: Due to the absence of viable alternatives, paid parking would effectively serve as an entry fee for conservation land — a model that is inconsistent with the intent and provisions of the National Parks Act 1980, which guarantees freedom of access and entry.

Financial inequity: Many New Zealanders are on limited incomes. Making access contingent on the ability to pay goes directly against the spirit of the National Parks Act and creates discrimination where access should be universal.

Road safety and practicality: NZ roads can be challenging. DOC carparks serve not just as destinations but also as essential rest stops for responsible travel.

Double-charging: New Zealanders contribute a lot of tax to support DOC, and tourists pay \$100 IVL for these types of facilities. Parking charges represent an additional financial burden without added value.

Recreational obligations: DOC has a statutory duty to foster outdoor recreation. Restricting access through fees — especially for brief and passive recreation — undermines this purpose.

Additionally:

Legal implications: Section 4 of the National Parks Act affirms the need to maintain parks in their natural state and uphold the public's right of entry. Monetising access through paid parking risks breaching these principles.

Precedent and normalisation: Implementing paid parking at pilot sites risks setting a precedent, potentially leading to widespread commercialisation across conservation land and gradual erosion of public access.

Commercial outsourcing: Adopting private-sector models shifts DOC's function from that of kaitiaki to landlord, placing revenue interests ahead of conservation and recreation.

Environmental consequences: Users may avoid designated areas and park elsewhere, leading to safety issues, roadside congestion, and environmental damage.

Local economies: Free access promotes longer visits and greater economic benefit to nearby towns. Paid parking could deter visitors — especially retirees, families, and budget-conscious travellers — at the expense of regional communities.

Visitors may park on SH6, creating dangerous conditions to avoid paying for parking.

Ngā mihi nui,

6	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I support paid parking at Punakaiki.</p> <p>It would be good if longer parking was cheaper than short term parking. \$5 for up to 4 hours</p> <p>\$8 for 8 hours</p> <p>\$10 over night etc</p> <p>Thanks,</p>
7	<p>Tēnā koe PaidParkingTeam and all,</p> <p>Thank you, for thanking me, for my feedback in the "engagement process". Actually there's more... Because notably missing in return, is that there is no reference to my suggestion wrt an associated bidding process for management positions consistent with the likes of the market driven supply and demand financial principles that were advanced by the Team in support of paid parking as a means of allocating scarce environmental resources / Taonga.</p> <p>Your letter claims that my input has helped "us develop a proposed pricing strategy that we believe will work for the local community and stakeholders as well as the Department of Conservation". Questionably, the order of supposed beneficiaries is backwards with respect to who this 'proposed' strategy might benefit. A different domain of course: but the principal stands; that in food labeling, so as to avoid deceptive packaging, constituents are to be listed in descending order.</p> <p>As pointed out in my email of 17 June, (which has also gone unaddressed), "Surely it could not escape management that having stated that visitors are "important to the visitor economy", it is basic economics that the visitor spending that the Department would be collecting for parking, would come partly at the expense of discretionary spending that is at present going to the likes of local hospitality and small tour businesses." Then trickling on down to the local community. No advantages have yet been advanced for the scheme providing direct benefit to any entity other than the Department, yet the Team appears to pushing on through with the 'proposal' regardless of potential negative effects.</p>

The existence of a "Paid Carparking Team" that does not meaningfully respond or actually 'engage' with 'stakeholder' concerns, would leave the Department prone to perceptions that decisions had already been made. And that completion of an 'engagement process' in which people could 'have your say' was merely a box ticking milestone item in implementation of a fait accompli.

1. As explained, in obtaining support from this stakeholder, my proposal would have required consideration from those whose positions would be at stake; so who above your level(s) have my communications been raised with and when?

The claim made (DOC media release 13 November 2024) was of there being a "goal of reducing pressure and generating revenue at our popular sites".

2. Please provide documentation relating to that goal and alternative means of achieving it.

Without the existence of an 'off ramp', a purported consultation phase might seem to be less than a genuine opportunity to have options explored, possibly resulting in low response rates from stakeholders.

3. How many responses have been received from each of the different classes of stakeholders, for Franz Josef / Waiau, and in total?

It now appears that the scheme is intended to go ahead regardless of the input from stakeholder(s).

4. With money already allocated and not even response to feedback, the 3 sites were destined to be proceeding

whatever came out of the process?

5. Perhaps however, there are the likes of decision trees, network diagrams, Gantt charts, consultation reports, contracts and other documentation that demonstrate that there was genuine prospect of the project being halted or major changes made as a result of consultation?

6. How many stakeholders are estimated to have been made aware of the first stage of 'consultation'?

It would be cynical to be asking for feedback if plans and commitments were already in train. If the 3 pilot projects are destined to be going ahead, it would in fact be the stakeholders for the next tranche of sites who should at this stage have been provided with opportunity for feedback. Because what if they were then to turn out to comprehensively reject the concept? In that case it would be wrong to have wasted resources on a pilot project.

7. Alternatively, following this precedent, budgets and plans may be made, then again feedback called for (and disregarded), so that further stakeholders might likewise be destined to be left with 'opportunity' merely for a having their 'say' after commitments are already in place and all that remains is input on how high the fees are to be set?

The website mentions that a fund of \$3.8m is involved.

8. How much of this is budgeted to be spent on upgrading carparks?

It is stated "We can't just keep building bigger car parks – it doesn't solve the issue or uphold these outstanding areas. We have to modernise and innovate". Agreed!

9. So instead of unimaginatively opting to "pave paradise and put up a parking lot"; to increase capacity, prices, and revenue; an alternative could instead be introducing shuttles?

Rather than diverting visitor spending away from the local communities, operation of shuttle services would potentially provide an increase in benefits to the local economy with minimal requirements of space at trailheads and sensitive sites.

	<p>10. What consideration has been given to shuttles instead of paid parking?</p> <p>11. A shuttle alternative might however have been recognized as reducing the fees that DOC currently expects to be retaining from the rollout of paid carparking ventures?</p> <p>12. Please provide documentation for financial/economic investigations into car parking fees and alternative schemes, along with the grounds for approval of the current 'pilot project'.</p> <p>13. With time running short and an absence of meaningful engagement to date: please indicate who the Paid Carparking Team consists of, reports to, and contact details.</p> <p>Without adequate clarification, exploration of alternatives, and philosophical consistency (e.g. opening competitive bids for senior management positions); regretfully, I would find myself to be in opposition to the imposition of paid parking at any sites on public land. Sincerely,</p>
8	<p>Kia ora Paid Car Parking Team, Thank you for your below email, it is much appreciated. Please be kindly advised that FMC, as the only national NGO representing recreationists, considers itself an affected party and would like to receive the pilot design and proposed pricing strategies for Punakaiki, Franz Josef, and White Horse Hill so that we can review and submit on them per your below timings. You will be aware that we recently submitted feedback on the paid parking pilot project at White Horse Hill car park at Aoraki/Mount Cook. Please would you confirm that FMC will receive such information per the below timings for all three locations?</p> <p>Ngā mihi</p>

9	<p>Kia ora koutou,</p> <p>Now I see the paid parking pilot has progressed further, I am just touching base on behalf of the CMC wishing to understand better how the paid parking system would work at White Horse Hill from a practical perspective for the Wyn Irwin (and subsequently Tahr) lodges.</p> <p>The CMC Wyn Irwin Lodge is currently accessed via the White Horse Hill carpark. The CMC has over 400 members who at present are able to buy a night's stay online and drive up to the lodge at any time (currently parking free of charge). I understand talking to our lodge warden Cam Mulvey that DOC have been designing a system with a number plate reader gate. This system would presumably be 'pay by plate' on departure.</p> <p>I am interested to understand for the club more about the design and intended implementation of this parking system, specifically whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -members accessing the lodge would also have to pay for the parking in this system (via the gate); -whether a separate access may be provided for members (still free of charge) to the lodge; or -whether technology has advanced and there is a way for the gate system to distinguish between members & others and access would be via the same gate still. <p>-The CMC has a strong preference to be able to access the lodge without paying for parking.</p> <p>It would also be valuable to get a steer on whether you think the pilot is likely to become a permanent solution or at this stage is only guaranteed as a trial period. I appreciate you may not be able to advise on this just yet.</p> <p>Thanks in advance for your guidance.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>CMC President</p>
10	<p>To Whom it may concern,</p> <p>Regarding DOC exploring paid parking at tourist locations within the various National Parks. What happened to friendly welcoming New Zealand not just for tourist's but locals as well, it is a disgrace Our National Parks and Wild places belong to all New Zealander's not just those who can afford to pay to park.</p> <p>The National parks act 1980 states free public access and now after forming 38 years ago you would like to charge the</p>

	<p>public for accessing these National parks by charging for parking unless you intend on having viable alternatives that are free. If the aim is to discourage the public from using the national Parks then you are going about it the right way.</p> <p>We often travel around NZ and visit various National Parks, if we would need to pay to park then we certainly would not stop at these beautiful locations this country is known for.</p> <p>Implementing parking fees to our National Parks is the easiest, quickest way for you to exploit the public to fund the over spending on projects you have undertaken, eg building oversized Visitor Centres.</p> <p>You are funding the project by \$3.8 million from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourist Levy from Foreign Visitor's and then you want to force them to pay again for their parking, do you not think they have paid enough already to visit our beautiful country and it's National parks, and maybe that \$3.8 million of their money could go to better use for them to enjoy instead of funding your project that wants to charge them again, shame on you.</p> <p>If this is the way you are going then the least you could do is have 2hr free parking, do the right thing and put people first.</p> <p>From an unhappy Marlborough resident</p>
11	Emailed to advise us that they forwarded our update email on to members of their community group.

12	<p>Hi there</p> <p>I live and have an accommodation business near Barrytown. I also have Woofers (Willing workers on Organic farms). I regularly take my woofers to Punakaiki to walk the loop track and also recommend this track to my guests. Having a charge for parking would dissuade me from taking woofers to the site and myself going to the shops and I can see that having a parking charge will adversely affect the shops and DOC centre at Punakaiki. At the very least I think you should provide free parking for the shop owners and staff and free short term parking for locals popping in to get their mail or something quickly from the shop.</p> <p>I would agree with a small charge for Tourists. A charge is also unfair for locals as we already pay taxes to support DOC and under Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 we should be guaranteed free public access to National Parks. Charging for parking seems like a backhanded way of doing this and may see people parking unsafely along the roadside, causing congestion and risking accidents. Punakaiki is also a safe rest stop for people travelling. A charge may lead to greater congestion at other rest stops and environmental damage from people defecating where there are no toilets. I also feel that a parking charge runs counter to the Conservation Act where DOC is tasked with fostering outdoor recreation not creating barriers to this.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p>
<p>Received after the pricing strategy was released from 7 August 2025</p>	
13	<p><i>Removed as further more fulsome correspondence recorded in #57</i></p>

14	Thanks you for the update. No further feedback from me for this stage of the consultation process.
15	This should not go ahead doc is already funded we the tax payer have already paid for these parking this is just rude.
16	<p>Sending Love and Light</p> <p>Whilst I understand that a lot of work has been done in the Punakaiki area to upgrade the DoC centre there, this is of most concern to tourists. I do not believe that locals are that likely to visit the new exhibits, but they may still wish to access the Pancake rocks, on a drive by to Greymouth etc. For this reason I believe that there should be free parking for Buller and Grey District residents.</p> <p>The new exhibition should be a pay to see approach too.</p> <p>Locals should have free access to their natural environment, paying rates as they do so. I live in Karamea, where our rates offer little in return! We do not get rubbish collections, water, flood protection or many other services that residents of Westport receive, yet our rates are still as high!</p> <p>Do not slap us with paid parking as well, because it will mean that we no longer stop to view the area :-)</p> <p>Nga mihi</p>
17	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I would like to register my objection to paid parking at any DOC sites for NZ taxpayers and residents.</p> <p>I understand that DOC has a funding shortfall from the government due to policy decisions and that it is trying to make up the shortfall where it can.</p> <p>The reason for my objection is because NZ taxpayers already contribute to funding DOC through taxes. For any NZ residents and taxpayers, being charged for parking is effectively a charge for accessing the National Parks, which are mean to be free at the point of use. Taxpayers are effectively going to be charged doubly if they access these places, because the first contribution is via taxes.</p>

	<p>Charging for parking indiscriminately will end up discouraging Kiwis from accessing these amazing spaces, which they have a right to access as a part of their right to access public land. It will particularly impact the lower income families and individuals for whom parking fees would be an additional burden, resulting in a lower likelihood of access to these spaces by Kiwis who have a right to access them.</p> <p>Funding needs to be demanded from the government. If the 2026 election results in a change in government, DOC must raise the issue of funding again with new government and review these parking charges.</p> <p>Please do not proceed with this until after the election. Please appeal to the government for more funding and hopefully voters will help DOC with this mission in the new year!</p> <p>Kind regards,</p>
18	<p>I, Ashleigh Reid, a local West Coaster, object to paid parking for local residents at Punakaiki. Busses should be paying more for the pax seats whether the seats are full or not.</p> <p>Why are you discouraging Kiwi's from visiting our own scenic spots?</p> <p>Are you going to raise employment by hiring parking enforcers for these particular areas? Or will it be a digital service where people are obsolete.</p> <p>If you want continued support from your local residents, abolish the paid parking for local residents. We shouldn't be punished for the BS tourists taking advantage of our beautiful country.</p> <p>Ultimately, this is a total money grab scheme unless something is implemented for local residents. Which would be unsurprising for the humans in power in this day and age.</p> <p>We have lost faith in you DOC and we hate this idea.</p> <p>Sort it out ya greedy pigs.</p>
19	<p>Good Afternoon</p> <p>I am opposed to the paid parking strategy at Punakaiki. I fail to see how this will 'improve visitor experience'. We do not have to slavishly follow 'international best practices.'</p> <p>An annual pass of \$10 for locals seems pointless. The bureaucratic time involved in 'policing' the paid parking will, in my opinion, outweigh any benefits.</p> <p>Regards</p>
20	<p>I actually quite like the solutions proposed here and think \$10 per annum as a local is fine. Good compromise. Thanks for listening to the locals.</p>

21	Charging locals to park, when our rates paid for the roads and our taxes paid for the car parks is a real sore point. don't do it.
22	<p>Hi</p> <p>Will there be a paid parking pilot programme at Fox Glacier too? It seems there isn't. This then this puts Franz at a slight disadvantage if we charge for parking at the Glacier and Fox doesn't. There should be parity.</p> <p>I am not opposed to paid parking per se but do think there should be parity with Fox as it can affect perceptions of the two glacier towns.</p>

23

Kia ora,

I am very disappointed by DOC's plan to introduce paid parking at National Parks and other DOC sites. Public access to these spaces is a core part of our national identity, and this proposal undermines that.

Locals should not be charged to visit their own public lands – the \$10 permit should be free. The proposed 20 minutes of free parking is far too short; at least two hours free would allow people to enjoy a walk, take photos, and use facilities without feeling rushed.

By removing roadside parking, DOC has created a monopoly on spaces, leaving visitors no choice but to pay. These fees will unfairly impact New Zealanders, including retirees, families, and those on low incomes, and risk discouraging visits. The National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access, and parking charges feel like an entry fee in disguise.

We already fund DOC through taxes, and international visitors also pay the \$100 International Visitor Levy. Many popular car parks also serve as important rest stops for drivers – charging for them could push people into unsafe roadside parking.

I urge DOC to protect public access, support local communities, and keep our National Parks open, safe, and welcoming. Say no to commercialising public access.

Ngā mihi,

24

Hi there,

I am deeply concerned and frankly disheartened by DOC's decision to press ahead with paid parking at National Parks and other DOC sites. These places belong to all New Zealanders, and introducing charges feels like a step away from our tradition of open, free access to nature.

Local residents should not have to pay to enjoy their own public spaces, a \$10 "local permit" is still an unnecessary barrier. Offering just 20 minutes of free parking is also unreasonable; a fair allowance would be at least two hours, giving people time to walk, take in the scenery, and use the facilities without feeling rushed.

By eliminating roadside parking, DOC has removed choice and created a monopoly over car parks. This will particularly disadvantage retirees, families, and those on tighter budgets, discouraging visits. Charging for access also goes against the intent of the National Parks Act 1980, which guarantees free public access.

New Zealanders already fund DOC through taxes, while overseas visitors also pay the \$100 International Visitor Levy. Charging again for parking is unfair double-dipping. These car parks also function as essential rest stops, fees could push people into unsafe roadside parking instead.

Please reconsider this plan. Our National Parks should remain welcoming, accessible, and safe for everyone, not treated like commercial car parks.

Thanks.

25

Points I would like to make:

Locals should not have to pay for a parking permit we are already being rated to the hilt and over taxed this should be free.

20 mins free is no where sufficient if you want people to stop and support your retail operations as well as get the full experience of one of New Zealand's most beautiful pieces of scenery

Isn't that what you are heavily promoting in your tourism campaigning stop and see the wonders of NZ oops sorry we've just added an extra \$100 + onto your kiwi experience

DOC is not in charge of this type of rip off and it should have been discussed openly with everyone, as it affects any traveller wanting to see their own country

Overseas visitors already get charged fees called an International Visit Levy, how much more are we going to rip out of tourism

Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access, this is not free access, why have laws if they can be this easily squashed

Is DOC going to make the public pay for the gross overspending on the Dolomite Point Build because if you charge parking you will lose visitors into the centre, coffee, shop and the Spiritual presentation.

It may be common to charge for this type of thing overseas but there are millions of visitors to these destinations unlike ours which are only thousands and it would be really nice to keep them

Coming to New Zealand because we all know it's getting more expensive by the day and there are countries just as nice as ours and a lot cheaper.

Where the taxes that we fund DOC with go ?

STOP THE MONEY GRAB FROM EVERYONE YOU ARE GRINDING THE COUNTRY INTO THE GROUND, SOON NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO TRAVEL, IS THIS THE BEST YOU CAN COME UP WITH TAX UPON TAX UPON TAX

26	<p>I am a local and totally object to parking fees at the Punakaiki site. _____ Taking away the parks opposite the centre is a major hassle for me and others who need to bring in heavy boxes of work.</p> <p>Also I believe making people pay for parking will deter them from staying and spending money on local businesses, including DOC. Make it free for everyone , this is after all a national park not a big city.</p>
27	<p>What's the deal with short-term visitors like myself. It's either;</p> <p>Stopping to use the toilet on the way to Westport. Or</p> <p>Stopping in to get annual hut passes, book huts, whatever. Roughly averaging 5min per visit.</p> <p>I've had an inspiration. Those carparks on the left (heading north) could be turned into 5min (or 10min max) parking spots for those of us who only pop in briefly.</p>
28	<p>I am writing to express my concern about the proposed fees for parking at Punakaiki. I am an 81 year old Greymouth resident formerly a long time resident of Barrytown. I frequently take visitors to do the blowhole walk and at least once per month take two older friends to Punakaiki for lunch. I would not qualify now as a resident . While I can still walk a fair distance I do not think I could do the walk in the time allowed in the new fee structure. My friends are both very limited mobility wise and so getting them into the cafe for lunch plus eating time would mean we would have to pay parking fees. My friends are third generation Coasters. I am a new resident-- 50 years. My late husband was part of the local Alpine Cliff Rescue team and took part in rescues and preparedness exercises around the blow holes ie contributed in non financial ways. I accept the need for DOC to raise funds. My husband was the Chair of the Conservation Board for years before he died. I do not believe that the impact on local businesses and local residents has been fully appreciated and would ask for this initiative to be revisited with more consideration for local points of view.</p>
29	<p>We support 2 hours of free car parking before paid car parking becomes compulsory.</p> <p>Regards</p>

30	<p>I strongly disagree with paid parking at Punakaiki. Why not charge an entry fee to visit the pancake rocks and leave parking free. \$10 entry to pancake rocks that's the attraction not the car park Thankyou</p>
31	<p>"We write to express our concern at this proposal for charges to be made to park in New Zealand National Parks. We are part owners of a family bach _____, Punakaiki, and object strongly that this charge is being discussed. Noting that the recent change to the proposal that gives locals a concession permit, does not help the local businesses in any way.</p> <p>It is also worth a mention that when the new Visitor's Centre was proposed, the community planning meetings were repeatedly told that there would be NO Café creating opposition for the local café/s - (just a kitchen to allow for catering to meetings held on site). This seems to have been forgotten and a café is operational to the public —hence our scepticism that the boundaries set on any future proposals in our area will not be kept.</p> <p>The local businesses rely on the tourist season to see them through the leaner winter months, and we believe a charge to stop for a coffee / use toilet facilities etc will deter many (20-minutes free parking will not resolve this!). Should this plan be progressed we believe it will create congestion as people will choose to park just that little bit further away — pedestrians will be walking/crossing the road as they make their way to the shopping outlets/blowholes.</p> <p>The removal of the roadside parks seems illogical —wasn't the reduction in speed and the central island installations designed to keep pedestrians safe?</p> <p>We have travelled to other countries throughout the world and appreciate that charges are made to many/most tourist attractions —surely New Zealand's iconic attractions can remain free, making our country a place on everyone's bucket list to visit - and the money earned on the existing charge at the border be managed to cover any costs that DOC feels are at present not being met! It would seem that DOC is trying to get two bites of the cherry here! Just recently an international visitor levy was brought in —we believed this was to cover maintenance expenses that also covered these popular visitor spots. It is worth remembering that 25% of New Zealand's Conservation land is here in the Te Tai Poutini/West Coast region = this equates to 19,000 square kilometres of a total 23,000 square kilometres. No rates are paid on that land! Our Councils have to manage their finances to fit this small pool of rateable land, surely DOC can be expected to do the same! "</p>

32	<p>Good afternoon I would like to apply for a concessionaires parking fee exemption at Dolomite Point, Punakaiki please.</p>
33	<p>This is ridiculous. As an inbound tour operator who carries clients by coach throughout NZ, I strongly object to what is just another form of entry fee. For European visitors, we are already the most expensive destination to get too. STOP robbing them blind, with the visitor levy, GST on every dollar they spend and now this absurd 'parking fee" And the Entry fee to major attractions is just another form of robbery...why can't you lot see you are killing the Golden Goose with your greed!! Enough is enough..they will stop coming, and by the time you realise it is happening, it will be too late....and then you will sit and cry and try and figure out what happened.. This BS is just taking the mickey, and as someone who travels the world on a regular basis, I can tell you this is not normal !!</p>

34

Submission opposing paid parking via DOC implementing paid parking

National Parks are treasures and treasured. I worked for a few years in Punakaiki and throughout the years I had many people commenting how much they appreciated the FREE access. This allowed locals to return visit over and over and tourists appreciating it.

Any charges for parking are too high. I am submitting this to oppose paid parking to access National Parks.

However, if there is a fee, and at a minimum, there should be 2 hours free for the following reasons. Subsequently the fee should not exceed what for example Nelson Council charges for parking per hour.

- New Zealanders have already paid tax and should not be discouraged from visiting National Parks via DOC implementing paid parking.
- In DOC's own research on this topic, it shows that 86 per cent of submitters opposed or strongly opposed charging everyone, "Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land, Summary of submissions July 2025", page 24.
- In terms of initial submissions on paid parking, only 7.59% were supportive of DOC's concept.
- By implementing paid parking, DOC is not listening to the overwhelming feedback and submissions it is receiving.
- 20 minutes free is not sufficient; we feel the minimum free time should be 2 hours to allow visitors to enjoy the National Park
- Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access. This is a quasi-national park entry fee because DOC has a monopoly on carparks. Proceeding with paid parking will open DOC up to a legal challenge in this regard.
- Locals should not have to pay \$10 for a permit — this should be free and extended to all New Zealanders.
- A key PSG goal to connect with the \$46m of taxpayer money spent on the Experience Centre project was to increase the average length of stay from 40 minutes to 2 hours, which would drive broader regional benefits. This supports our submission for the first 2 hours free.

35

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on DOC's proposed pricing plan.

I am writing to express my opposition to the introduction of paid parking and entry fees at New Zealand's national parks. This proposal represents a major shift in the Department's role — from protecting public access to becoming a commercial operator. I urge DOC to reconsider this direction.

Key concerns:

Public access is a right, not a privilege: Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access to national parks. Introducing parking fees, and potentially entry fees, effectively undermines this principle.

DOC's growing monopoly on parking: Roadside parks have been removed in many locations, leaving DOC-controlled parking as the only option. Introducing charges under these conditions amounts to a monopoly — and without regulation, fees could increase at any time.

Unfair impact on New Zealanders: Kiwis already fund DOC through taxes. Many out-of-town visitors, including retirees, families, and those on lower incomes, will be disproportionately affected by these new charges. Parking should not become a barrier to enjoying our public land.

International visitors already pay: The \$100 International Visitor Levy was introduced in part to cover infrastructure like DOC facilities. Adding parking fees on top is excessive and risks harming New Zealand's appeal as a destination.

Public consultation has been limited: With only 7.59% of submissions in favour, it is disappointing that DOC is still pushing ahead with this plan. This does not reflect broad public support and signals a lack of genuine consultation.

Safety concerns: If parking becomes too expensive, drivers may risk parking unsafely on roadsides, which could lead to accidents or congestion.

I appreciate the challenges DOC faces in funding and maintaining our conservation estate, but introducing user-pays models in this way is not the solution. It creates barriers and moves DOC away from its mission of protecting and enabling access to our natural heritage.

I support DOC to:

Rethink the plan for paid parking and park entry

Provide free parking at all DOC car parks

Commit to meaningful public consultation on any future changes

Explore more equitable alternatives for funding, such as increasing international levies or central government support

Continue providing free access to visitor attractions and parks so that Kiwis and visitors are not discouraged to get out into nature

Please continue doing your fantastic work and keep our national parks, car parks and natural attractions free, open, and accessible to all.

Kind regards

36

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our strong concerns regarding the Department of Conservation's (DOC) proposal to implement paid parking at National Parks.

New Zealanders already contribute to the upkeep of these parks through their taxes, and introducing parking fees would discourage them from visiting, which goes against the principle of free public access guaranteed by Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980.

We also want to highlight that DOC's own research, specifically "Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land, Summary of submissions July 2025" (page 24), shows that a significant majority (86%) of submitters opposed or strongly opposed charging everyone. Furthermore, only 7.59% of initial submissions supported the paid parking concept. This indicates that implementing paid parking would mean DOC is not considering the overwhelming feedback from the public.

Regarding the proposed 20 minutes of free parking, we believe this is insufficient for visitors to fully enjoy the National Park. We recommend a minimum of two hours of free parking. This aligns with a key goal of the \$46 million Experience Centre project, which aims to increase the average length of stay from 40 minutes to two hours, thereby driving broader regional benefits.

Finally, we believe that local permits should be free and extended to all New Zealanders, rather than requiring locals to pay a \$10 fee. Given DOC's monopoly on carparks, proceeding with paid parking could also lead to legal challenges, as it essentially acts as a quasi-national park entry fee.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Sincerely,

37

Hello and thank you for your time.

New Zealand is already an expensive destination for both locals and overseas visitors. International tourists are charged a \$100 International Visitor Levy (IVL), intended to fund facilities and infrastructure. On top of this, DOC is now proposing to charge for car parking and even entry to some national parks. This risks making New Zealand unattractive to visitors while penalising locals who already fund DOC through taxes.

Concerns with the Proposal

Undermining free public access – Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access. Paid parking is effectively a quasi-entry fee and contradicts that principle.

Excessive costs – \$20 per day or \$5 per hour is unreasonable. With DOC controlling all car parks, there is no competition and no limit on future price increases.

Unrealistic time limits – The proposed 20 minutes free is insufficient. Even a quick toilet stop, photo, or short walk takes longer. Local businesses support at least 2 hours free parking, which is a more realistic standard.

Equity issues – Out-of-town visitors, families, retirees, and the unemployed will be unfairly burdened. This discourages New Zealanders from visiting their own national parks.

Safety risks – DOC car parks are essential rest stops. Charging fees will push drivers towards unsafe roadside parking.

Funding already exists – DOC is taxpayer-funded, and international visitors already contribute through the IVL and GST. Adding parking fees is simply double-charging.

A shift in philosophy – DOC's role should be to encourage and facilitate access to nature, not to operate as a commercial car park business.

Alternatives and Recommendations

Maintain free car parking at all DOC car parks. This aligns with the National Parks Act and ensures fair access for everyone.

If DOC refuses to guarantee free parking, then at the very least there should be a minimum of 2 hours free parking at all sites.

Install donation points and voluntary contribution systems, which allow people to give by choice and encourage goodwill.

Direct more of the IVL and GST revenue already collected from visitors into car park and facility maintenance.

Conclusion

This proposal oversteps the mark. Charging for car parking at national parks will discourage visitors, shift DOC away from its founding principles, and create unnecessary barriers to access. I strongly oppose paid parking at national parks and urge DOC to maintain free parking for all.

Thank you for considering my submission.

38

Subject Paid Parking.

We feel any charges for parking are too high, and at a minimum, there should be 2 hours free for the following reasons. New Zealanders have already paid tax and should not be discouraged from visiting National Parks via DOC implementing paid parking.

In DOC's own research on this topic, it shows that 86 per cent of submitters opposed or strongly opposed charging everyone, "Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land, Summary of submissions July 2025", page 24.

In terms of initial submissions on paid parking, only 7.59% were supportive of DOC's concept.

By implementing paid parking, DOC is not listening to the overwhelming feedback and submissions it is receiving. 20 minutes free is not sufficient; we feel the minimum free time should be 2 hours to allow visitors to enjoy the National Park

Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access. This is a quasi-national park entry fee because DOC has a monopoly on carparks. Proceeding with paid parking will open DOC up to a legal challenge in this regard.

Locals should not have to pay \$10 for a permit — this should be free and extended to all New Zealanders.

A key PSG goal to connect with the \$46m of taxpayer money spent on the Experience Centre project was to increase the average length of stay from 40 minutes to 2 hours, which would drive broader regional benefits. This supports our submission for the first 2 hours free.

Regards

39	<p>Hey there, My name is _____ and I am the Field Manager for a company called Backroads. Our Concession Number is _____ We are a Concessionaire in New Zealand and I recently heard about a trial paid parking system in Franz Josef Glacier parking lot. I understand that nothing has been solidified, but concessionaires will be able to have free parking after submitting their license plate numbers. Would this be the correct email address to submit those license plate numbers to? Thanks so much!</p>
40	<p>Good afternoon, Please see below some feedback for the proposed parking payment fees for the Franz Josef Glacier valley. I popped into the drop in session in Franz but wished to follow up in writing. I am opposed to the parking fees for New Zealanders, and especially the fees for locals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ National Parks should not cost for NZers to visit - The cost of living is extremely high. We are a family of four on a single income and visiting the Franz valley is a free activity we enjoy often. There should be no cost for our young children to enjoy nature. - We pay high cost rates to the west coast councils. This should cover access to local amenities. - Tourism is the lifeblood of the Franz township, and tourists are fickle. A cost to visit the Glacier is a reason for people not to visit, which will directly impact the small local businesses. This is especially true for domestic tourists, who are an important source of income for businesses over the quiet winter months. - I believe the concept of hourly fees for parking will increase risk behaviours in international tourists, with people trying to 'beat the clock' and do difficult tracks too quickly to avoid paying extra for parking <p>Thank you for gathering feedback for this proposal. I do hope you take this feedback into account. Regards,</p>
41	<p>Hi, Just wondering if any rates are paid to local councils at these sites, if so by whom. Cheers</p>

42	<p>Hi</p> <p>I am a West Coaster born and bred who has often been to the Glaciers and Punakaiki as well as to the Hokitika Gorge. I do not believe that you should be charging anyone for car parking. However I do believe that you should charge an entry fee into the Pancake Rocks at Dolomite Point of \$5 per adult and do the same at the Hokitika Gorge.</p> <p>I do not believe that anyone would mind paying such a fee and it would be easy to have a small shelter for a DOC staff member to collect this.</p> <p>Franz Josef is receding so much (which I have noticed over many years) I cannot see this parking fee being very helpful as it does not have the visitor numbers it once had. Even I don't bother to make the walk up to the Glacier face anymore as there is not much to see as there once was.</p> <p>Hope this feedback from a West Coaster is helpful.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p>
43	<p>I am a resident of Hokitika and I visit both Punakaiki and Franz Josef with friends and family to show them around.</p> <p>DOC do a great job in maintaining all facilities at both sites.</p> <p>I fully agree with charging for parking at both sites. Other places in the world have charged for parking and visiting the outdoors for many years and I think it is time New Zealand starts charging for the facilities we have.</p>
44	<p>I frequently visit the blowholes on king tides with my granddaughters for an afternoon out and an ice cream. We will never visit again if we have to pay for parking. The taxpayers have already put in many millions for the visitors center and this is the last straw.</p> <p>Disappointed</p>
45	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I feel it's wrong to charge for parking at Punakaiki/ Pancake rocks, it is the only place available to park to view the pancake rocks, a natural beauty of nz.</p> <p>Nga mihi,</p>

46

I am in NZ as a WHV holder.

I am opposed to paid car parking because:

I have already paid \$100 IVL which I was told is a contribution to conservation

NZ is very expensive and with paid car parking plus your other new access charging I will not be able to afford to go to many conservation areas. Already I am telling my friends and family at home that NZ is too expensive.

There is no public transport so I already have to hire a car and paying for parking as well makes it unaffordable to go to the West Coast.

In my country National Parks are free so everyone can enjoy nature, no matter their income.

It would suggest 2 hours free so I can see the area in that time.

47

- Public Access to Conservation Land Feels Restricted

While DOC states the fee is for facilities (not access), some users may perceive it as paying to access public conservation land, which can feel like a breach of New Zealand's free and open access tradition.

The subtle difference between "facility use" and "land access" can be confusing or frustrating for visitors.

- Flat Fee Doesn't Reflect Vehicle Type or Usage

All vehicle types (cars, campervans, motorcycles) are charged the same \$5 per hour, which:

Might feel unfair to motorcyclists or smaller/lighter vehicles.

- Locals Still Have to Pay (Even If Only \$10)

Some Westland residents argue any charge at all is unreasonable given their historical, cultural, and recreational ties to the area.

For example, students or young people who recreate often may see the \$10 annual fee as symbolic of eroding free local access.

- No Seasonal or Off-Peak Discounting

A flat rate year-round ignores seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers.

Winter visits might feel less valuable or rushed compared to summer.

Locals who visit mainly off-peak see no pricing benefit, which feels inequitable.

- Enforcement and Technology Concerns

Enforcement via number plate cameras and fines may feel impersonal or punitive, especially for international tourists unfamiliar with the system.

Tech issues (e.g. errors in plate recognition or payment app glitches) could create bad experiences in a remote location.

- Adds to Cumulative Cost for Visitors

Tourists already face multiple costs: fuel, DOC hut fees, tour fees, local accommodation, etc.

Parking fees, even if modest, may stack up and influence decisions about visiting or staying longer.

48

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We are locals in the Punakaiki area, living in _____, Barrytown.

We feel strongly that we should not be expected to pay a cent toward parking in the Punakaiki area around the Pancake Rocks, which is the only place we can go locally for lunch, coffee, or a bite to eat with friends. It is 11 mins up the road by car versus 25mins to Greymouth.

The roadside parks that have been removed at Punakaiki (by criss cross lines through them) is a waste of taxpayer space - at the very minimum these should be designated free for locals. Perhaps as simple as local rate payers proof of paying gets you a card to display in your window.

We need at bare minimum 2 hours of free parking for all locals in order to relax and enjoy our local cafes and the Pancake Rocks environment. 20 mins is not enough! (Where will people who work in this area park and will you ensure they can have free parking?)

We chose to live here for this rugged beauty and slower pace of life where we have the freedom to enjoy our environment. Our National Park areas are stunning and we believe parking should continue to be free for everyone to enjoy.

International tourists pay levies at the border - there should not be restrictions in areas where DOC now have a monopoly on the only parking available.

Regards,

49	<p>I'm all for overseas non New Zealanders to pay for parking at Tourist spots - though stay free for genuine New Zealanders whilst checking out there Country.</p> <p>When overseas we have to pay to see a particular famous site, relic etc, its just part of the travel expenses.</p> <p>As long as they make it a reasonable charge, \$5 or \$10 maximum for a days parking, put it up too high and everyone loses.</p> <p>Cheers</p>
50	<p>Hi,my view on proposed parking at Punakaiki.we live Waimangaroa, and when traveling to grey,this is our rest,toilet and stretch spot,as I regularly have elderly or very young with me.10min parking for toilet ok if fit and strong,but if elderly with attached urine bag...no where near enough.it takes me 10 mins just to get her to the loo...let alone the time spent in it.</p> <p>Also..I consider this my back yard...and object to having to pay to let an adhd kid out for a run...he not interested in the rocks...just needs a hoot round the track.</p> <p>This has been our tradition for 20 years...but if you make me pay,it makes an already expensive trip even more so...it's not just tourists who enjoy the walk,but if you are a low income family looking for something cheap to do on a Sunday...boom,that's gone too.</p>
51	<p>Good afternoon, We would like to apply for a parking fee exemption for Explore West Coast. Please let me know if there is anything else we need to do. Thank you</p>

52

DOC paid carparking pricing submission

The Rental Vehicle Association of NZ (RVA) completely understands the rationale for DOC parking charges at some sites in New Zealand's conservation estate and supports it. The proposed pricing demonstrates DOC's fairness in applying such a charge. However, the RVA has some questions about the proposal.

1. The fee for parking for one hour is very low. It would barely recover your costs let alone help with DOCs revenue. Recommend \$10 an hour for visitors, \$40 half day, \$70 full day. Great idea for locals and regular, non-commercial visitors with an annual pass though, it recognises the different relationships that individuals and communities have with the land. Again the pricing is fair if a little too reasonable.

2. How will DOC recover the inevitable lost parking revenue as a result of people not paying for parking? Whilst DOC is an Authority, the parking solution being run is a private one through a private parking company. It's not being administered by DOC. This means there is actually less leverage you have when trying to retrieve the fine. It is a civil matter, and one without much precedent either. What precedent there is, is very complex. If an Authority was administering the parking solution, there would be more leverage when retrieving fines, requiring statutory declarations on a rental operator's behalf to remove liability for the fine (the way it works with an authority issued parking infringement is different from a private one), and the formal passing on of renter details to the Authority in the event of parking not being paid and a fine being outstanding. The fine retrieval process is clearer and cleaner. It does however mean DOC would need to administer it all as opposed to a private parking company. Which could be problematic from a commercial perspective.

Please note that a renter, i.e. the person who parked the car in a DOC carpark (or any carpark) is responsible for the parking fee – it is their contract. It has nothing to do with the car (cars cannot make contracts) and nothing to do with the rental operator, other than the fact that they own the car. All the rental operator can do (and they don't have to, but we encourage it in good faith) is pass on the details of the renter to the private parking company to retrieve the money. If the individual is overseas, this is nigh on impossible. Billing a credit card seldom works as either the card has been cancelled (very common with overseas tourists) or the renter will just ask the bank to reverse the charge because they didn't agree to it (this happens all the time). If an authority was retrieving the fine, your chances of success will be much improved. Although not 100%

guaranteed, not paying is a more serious matter. That said, the RVA is trying to work on a solution with the parking companies that makes it easier to retrieve overdue fines. However, there is a perception in international forums (like Reddit) that people do not have to pay for parking in NZ in private car parks. This may well impact DOC going forward if you go down the private carparking pathway. Problem is you probably don't have a choice. Of course, the easiest solution is to install hard barriers into all the proposed car parks, which would mean people would have to pay their parking before they could leave. Geofencing doesn't work well with compliance. Physical fencing does. Again however, this is expensive.

53

So to confirm as it stands at present those that have a concession....may have to pay twice - until exemption application is available.

I will advise all my driver / guides what is needed and make sure we have change readily available in all vehicles if this is the case.

Plus just to note if all our vehicles are booked out on certain dates we hire vehicles also to keep up with demand over busy season. This would mean a different licence plate which wont be on my exemption of course. We would have to use and apply for an on the day exemption.

If it was me it would be easier for paid parking team to go on concession ID...not licence plate....less paperwork for all.

Going forward my tour prices have already been quoted for up to 2026-2027 season to travel agents so unable to include new charges. Hopefully exemption application will come through soon :-)

Thanks again

54	I would like to suggest that you investigate whether a system like that in use for parking at Nelson airport could be instituted at Punakaiki..??
55	<p>Points I would like to make:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locals should not have to pay for a parking permit we are already being rated to the hilt and over taxed this should be free. 2. 20 mins free is no where sufficient if you want people to stop and support your retail operations as well as get the full experience of one of New Zealand's most beautiful pieces of scenery 3. Isn't that what you are heavily promoting in your tourism campaigning stop and see the wonders of NZ oops sorry we've just added an extra \$100 + onto your kiwi experience 4. DOC is not in charge of this type of rip off and it should have been discussed openly with everyone, as it affects any traveller wanting to see their own country 5. Overseas visitors already get charged fees called an International Visit Levy, how much more are we going to rip out of tourism 6. Section 4 of the National parks act 1980 guarantees free public access, this is not free access, why have laws if they can be this easily squashed 7. Is DOC going to make the public pay for the gross overspending on the Dolomite Point Build because if you charge parking you will lose visitors into the centre, coffee, shop and the Spiritual presentation. 8. It may be common to, charge for this type of thing overseas but there are millions of visitors to these destinations unlike ours which are only thousands and it would be really nice to keep them Coming to New Zealand because we all know its getting more expensive by the day and there are countries just as nice as ours and a lot cheaper. 9. Where the taxes that we fund DOC with go ? <p>STOP THE MONEY GRAB FROM EVERYONE YOU ARE GRINDING THE COUNTRY INTO THE GROUND, SOON NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO TRAVEL, IS THIS THE BEST YOU CAN COME UP WITH TAX UPON TAX UPON TAX</p>

56

I Oppose Paid Parking at any of these Sites ,Im a 70 year old Kiwi Citizen paid Taxes All my Working career since I was 13, I Lived at_____ Barrytown Then Reefton for many Years ,Worked Underground at Mt Davey where I Lost 3 Workmates I Now Reside Up in the Northern Buller I've Been Stopping in At the Punakiki Site Regularly for over 50 years and I will continue to stop there till I Stop Breathing Air & I Will Refuse to Pay as I've Paid my Way in more ways than one .”End Off “ I think NZ Citizens Should be Exempt we pay Taxes on Taxes ,Furthermore N.Z Pensioners Definitely Deserve The Respect & Be Exempted from this DOC Tax ,Kind Regards _____“Waitaha Decendant “ Look forward to your Response on this Matter !

57

Phase 2 Submission: Pricing Strategy

Thankyou for responding to our phase 1 consultation feedback.

In terms of phase 2 feedback, the points we make below are not made to address member concerns, but rather to provide food for thought.

We think the hour rates indicated are reasonable. While the signage is clear, the more common response to change is negative. You might be able to soften this by having signage/imagery in close proximity to the meters showing some of the great work you do and reminding visitors that the fees paid go back into maintaining the conservation estate.

We consider the annual pass prices are too low. The local one will likely cost DoC, the opposite of what the Minister is trying to achieve. Having signalled price on these, it might be hard to increase them now. However, you might want to capture this as a learning from the trial. Price should be set on the basis of actual fee plus a postage/handling/printing cost. That cost for us currently (when issuing our concession cards) is around \$25-30.

The max daily metered fee is \$20 so at \$10 for a local pass and \$60 for an annual private vehicle pass that equates to ½ day and 3 days of maximum daily rate. As a comparative example, with our light concession card, you need to buy 67.5 days of parking before it makes financial sense to buy an annual pass.

Assuming the trial is successful and expands to other locations, you may want to outsource admin of annual passes. You will need to build in the full cost of these annual passes whether you insource or outsource. We are currently set up to do this in the same way AA processes driver licencing and several other tasks for NZTA should you wish to discuss outsourcing after the trial.

Examples could be something like a local annual pass at \$5 plus \$25 handling postage. Tied to plate number supplied which is printed on the card along with the applicable locality and must be displayed on the passenger side of the vehicle dash. You may also feed the plate number into you plate recognition database noting it would need to be locality linked (an issue that will become more obvious with scaling up).

We wish you all the best and would ask to be kept advised of go live date.

In the lead up to go live, we will be gathering a list of plate numbers for member vehicles likely to use the three trial parks over the 2025/26 concession year.

As mentioned last Friday, if you want that plate data in any particular format (or need it by location), please let us know asap so we can collect this from current concession holders and package it for you appropriately.

We will also need to know when you need this data file by and who should be updated as new concession cards are sold, and new plate numbers need to be provided to the Department.

Kind regards,

SUBMISSION ON DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (DOC) PROPOSED CAR PARK CHARGING – FRANZ JOSEF AND PUNAKAIKI

1. Introduction

Development West Coast (DWC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Department of Conservation's proposal to introduce car park charges at Franz Josef and Punakaiki.

DWC is the regional economic development agency for the West Coast, with a mandate to foster sustainable economic growth while supporting the region's unique environmental and cultural values. We are also the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for the West Coast, responsible for both destination marketing and destination management across the Buller, Grey, and Westland districts. Tourism is a cornerstone of the West Coast economy, and DOC-managed sites such as Franz Josef Glacier and Punakaiki Pancake Rocks are nationally significant attractions that underpin visitor spending and employment.

2. Regional Application of Local Concession

We acknowledge and support the principle of providing a low-cost annual pass for local residents to ensure accessibility to these sites. However, the proposed application of the concession by district (e.g., Westland residents for Franz Josef, Buller residents for Punakaiki) risks creating inequities and undermining community buy-in.

We recommend that:

§ The \$10 per annum "local" concession be applied regionally across the entire West Coast (Buller, Grey, and Westland Districts).

Reasoning:

§ West Coast residents often travel between districts for leisure, recreation, and to host visiting friends and family.

§ A regional concession recognises the shared identity and interconnected nature of our communities, as well as the shared responsibility for the stewardship of these sites.

§ A regional approach would help reduce perceptions of unfairness, improve compliance, and increase public acceptance of the scheme.

3. Reinvestment of Revenue Locally

We understand the need for DOC to generate revenue to manage high-visitor sites. However, DWC believes strong community and stakeholder support will be enhanced if there is a clear and transparent commitment to reinvest profits into the sites from which they are generated, or into nearby conservation areas.

We recommend that:

§ All net revenue collected at Franz Josef be reinvested into tourism, conservation, and biodiversity projects in the Franz Josef / South Westland area.

§ All net revenue collected at Punakaiki be reinvested into tourism, conservation, and biodiversity projects in the Punakaiki / Paparoa area.

§ Priority reinvestment should include visitor infrastructure upgrades, track and facility maintenance, improved visitor experiences, and enhanced conservation outcomes.

Reasoning:

This approach will:

§ Ensure visitors and locals see tangible benefits from the charges.

§ Strengthen the link between revenue collection and site preservation.

§ Support both tourism resilience and conservation outcomes in line with DOC's statutory purposes.

4. Conclusion

DWC supports the introduction of car park charges at high-demand visitor sites provided they are implemented in a way that is equitable, regionally consistent, and demonstrably beneficial to local communities and conservation outcomes.

We urge DOC to:

1. Apply the local concession regionally to all West Coast residents.

2. Commit to reinvesting net revenue into tourism and conservation projects at or near the site of collection.

These changes will improve community buy-in, encourage compliance, and enhance both tourism sustainability and conservation gains on the West Coast.

Yours faithfully

59	<p>Tena koutou</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed pricing strategy at Dolomite Point. Overall I feel the system you have devised for this trial is both reasonable and hopefully practical.</p> <p>I wonder about the Annual Permit though and whether there will be much uptake on this. It could perhaps be a little lower.</p> <p>It would also be good to have something for people who stay in the area for a few days and would like to split visiting the activities at Dolomite Point over more than one day. Would it be possible for a return visit within say a week to be charged at maybe half price?</p> <p>And if a car is left overnight while someone is for example on a walk and camping out (possible more likely at Franz than here) that would be \$40??</p> <p>Regards</p>
60	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>Please could you consider 2-hours of free parking at Pancake Rocks?</p> <p>Thanks</p>

61

I wish to oppose the \$5 an hour car parking at Punakaiki. I understand that I can get a \$10 annual pass as a resident of Greymouth which is good.

At the moment the proposed free time is only 20 minutes. I did a test a couple of weeks ago. We parked up I went and had a quick look at the craft store and then went to get icecreams at the genera store. There were no other customers at the counter when I ordered the icecreams. I then left and went back to my vehicle.

All up it was 30 minutes from parking to leaving. If there were other customers or if I had purchased something at the other shop this would have added to this time.

I feel at least an hour of free parking is required. As a local who stops off there on the way to Westport return quite often 20 minutes will not be enough.

I feel that the shops are going to lose business as people will not want to pay an extra \$5 or \$10 to stop in for a meal and/or coffee etc. They bought their businesses with no parking restriction around them, it seems unfair to put this on them now.

This is on a main highway which is a totally different situation to the likes of Franz Josef, Milford Sound etc where it is a destination.

Regads

62

This is my submission, that I strongly disagree with using car parking fees as a form of entry fee to Punakaiki and other high use DOC administered national treasures. Car parking fees are just an underhanded fee for visiting these sites and I believe contrary to existing regulations. Nzers have paid already to use these sites and all DOC administered areas by taxes and consequently funding. Overseas visitors pay a levy to cover their use. This is double dipping. The Punakaiki car park for the last 3 months has averaged 10 cars and 2 campervan daily at mid day peak times. Never more than 13 vehicles. That quantity could have parked for free in the ltsa car parks across the road that have just been removed for use by ltsa. I recognise the existing carpark from October to February can get pretty full at peak times. But would also say only 30% between 11 to 3pm and outside that time there is no issue with parking. The average visit would be between 1 to 1.5 hours to allow for a toilet break, driver rest break and rock walk. If u want to combine some food it would add an hour on top taking into account greymouth is 30 minutes away and Westport 45 minutes so it's a logical position with next to no alternative for food. There are no petrol stations for 90 minutes between these centres for food or toilets. If in peak season with tourists buses all arriving between 11 and 2, a toilet break can take 30 minutes or more due the numbers concentrated at this time so u would need a minimum of 30 minutes free parking to cover just a toilet break. I would pass or stop at Punakaiki 4 times a week and is our local meeting point for community meeting of concern , open mic music nights or a place to eat. These community event's are nearly always in the evening with empty car parks which would now incur a fee. It is the main location within that 90 miles where there is no alternative road, no other alternative parking areas due cliff and sea choke point. If visitor numbers are now too high maybe removing the DOC new building to a different location would reduce visitor time to push people thru where what local businesses need is people staying longer. Local businesses will be indirectly effected by the proposed fee but budget travellers won't linger for food or rest if parking has a fee. Businesses with their staff parking will be an issue. Another solution to visitors is to promote off season travel in this area as winter weather on the coast is reliably pleasant and stable 90% of the time. All of this doesn't change that we have paid for the free use of this area as mandated and any fee is only another money making tax on top of taxes already paid. I have photographic proof which is date stamped on car park usage taken many times in various days at peak times if u needed proof of occupancy . The cost of administration of taking the fee for the small percentage of full occupancy would not be cost effective unless it covers times when parking isn't an issue. This isn't user pays. As stated the previously available ltsa parks covered private visitors. Maybe charge just the tour buses as they are high value tourists that generate a high proportion of the overload at peak times. Campervans rented from a hire company could also incur a fee for extra large car parks as alternative parks arnt available. Both these considerations would give cost effective income in a smaller rear area already available. This would also help with safety as 100% of bus parks are on the main state highway. In effect, charging local and any New Zealander for parking is wrong and worth this submission strongly objecting to it. Regards

63

Locals should not have to pay \$10 for a permit — this should be free.

- 20 minutes free is not sufficient

Local businesses support 2 hours free parking

- DOC facilitated the removal of roadside parks — Doc should stick to looking after the environs not parking

- Out-of-town Kiwis will be stung by fees. This includes retired, unemployed and families etc.

- This marks a major shift in DOC's philosophy and operations

- DOC should be encouraging visits, not discouraging them with fees

- Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access. This is a quasi National Park entry fee

- DOC car parks serve as essential rest stops — fees may push drivers to unsafe roadside parking

- We already fund DOC through taxes

- Overseas visitors pay the \$100 International Visitor Levy + GST

Please find the above my reasons why paid parking at Punakaiki SHOULD NOT go ahead - visitors should pay to walk around the Pancake Rocks Walkway NOT for parking.

Parking should be free for locals and all NZ citizens

64	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I fully support parking charges at Punakaiki, with the free parking window for locals, and a \$10 p.a. pass for Coasters.</p> <p>I can't believe the adjacent cafe is complaining about the charges. Their whole business relies on DoC's facilities and investment in the infrastructure. How much do they contribute to these facilities??</p> <p>This is currently the only option for DoC to gain some user pays funds from overseas tourists.</p>
65	<p>I oppose Paid Parking at National Parks including Dolomite Point/ Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki.</p> <p>This is a lazy way of collecting revenue from people going to see the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki. This unfairly penalises locals who frequent the local retailers/businesses at Dolomite Point. DOC already receives funding from taxes paid by New Zealand citizens. A tourism levy is already paid by international tourists.</p> <p>If any parking fee is introduced then at a minimum, two hours' parking should be free.</p>
66	<p>Kia ora</p> <p>This email is to formally record our opposition to parking fees being applied to commercial tourism/business areas at Punakaiki. We strongly object to NZ residents being required to pay for parking when visiting this area. Being local people from nearby Rapahoe, we frequently visit Punakaiki regularly and we believe this cost is unwarranted.</p> <p>Thank you Nga mihi</p>

67	<p>Submission against Paid Car Parking at the Pancake Rocks and the Franz Josef Glacier - Locals can apply for an annual \$10 pass. However, Westland DC residents are not eligible for Punakaiki and Grey/Buller DC residents are not eligible for Franz and all other Kiwis have to pay everywhere.</p> <p>DOC have come up with \$5 per hour initially. This is still effectively an entry fee for Kiwis to these National Parks which opposes the intention of The National Parks Act, giving freedom of access and entry to the public to our own land for the benefits of nature.</p> <p>2 hours free parking would be more reasonable to allow time for bathrooms, walks, food, retail.</p> <p>Keep access to our heritage free for us all, as it was intended!!!!</p>
68	<p>We live near Punakaiki and am against the proposed charges for parking at the Pancake Ricks site, both for foreign visitors (who have paid their tourist tax) and kiwis (who have (mostly) paid for DOC through taxes).</p> <p>The visitor center was built with money from taxes, but gifted to the local hapu. Surely DOC should have a rent- free presence in it?</p>
69	<p>This is my submission on the plan for paid car parking.</p> <p>I oppose the proposal for paid car parking at Punakaiki and Franz Josef. These features should be available to all, free of charge. Should the levy not raise adequate funds, no doubt the cost would increase. Also, it may well turn off visitors who are suffering in the current cost of living issue. If there is a budgeting crisis for the Department of Conservation the answer is to cut the area controlled by the department and/or reduce staff numbers. Currently the department controls some 85% to 88% of the West Coast, affecting the viability of some district councils and putting pressure on rates.</p> <p>I appreciate the opportunity to offer my view on the proposal.</p>

70

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to register my opposition to the paid car parking proposed to DOC land and especially at Punakaiki. There has not been sufficient public discussion on this.

This will unfairly affect New Zealanders especially retired, unemployed and families. DOC have facilitated the removal of existing car parking forcing people to use the paid car parks. The new Punakaiki visitor centre was built on Conservation land at great expense and cost to the public, extensive cost over runs and then gifted to a private entity.

This is in contravention of the National parks act

The current government is trying to change the Conservation act without sufficient consultation/agreement with New Zealanders developing a distrust of integrity.

Regards

71

We write to express in the strongest possible way our opposition to the proposal to institute paid car parking at Punakaiki. We live part of the year at our home in _____ (owned by our family for over 60 years), and the rest of the year in _____. Even in _____ with our severe traffic problems there are still areas of free parking.

Over the last several years the businesses at Punakaiki have had to weather the problems caused by the Covid pandemic and the development of the new Visitor Centre. Now it seems you are trying to penalise these businesses again by removing free carparking facilities. It is incomprehensible that all of the free parking on the State Highway, where we and others have parked safely for years, has been removed. This effectively pushes everyone into a commercial pay park. It is an underhand way of charging for visitors to go to the Blowholes and Pancake Rocks but has the effect of punishing the café, the gift shop and the Visitor Centre and its café. I might mention that in the many meetings that we attended to keep up with the progress on that Visitor Centre it was clearly stated that it would not be in competition with existing businesses. There would not be a café included, merely kitchen facilities that could be used when special functions were held. I wish I had recorded these meetings because what we have now is a fully functioning café.

It is a ridiculous situation where we may have to pay to visit the Centre which was paid for by the taxpayer. DOC should be glad to welcome visitors to our beautiful part of the country. Remember that a huge percentage of the land on the Coast is owned or controlled by DOC which pays no rates. We can see that there are places, like the Glaciers, where parking could be charged, but this would not affect any businesses. At Punakaiki the situation is quite different and the impact would be severe.

We urge you to abandon this plan.

72

Hi there

I would like to submit my disapproval of the proposed parking fees regarding Punakaiki Pancake Rocks Carpark. I'm a local, and do not feel I should have to submit my car details or pay a yearly fee to park here. When I have friends or family visit, it's nice to be able to take them down to to tour the area and lunch at the cafe. We would absolutely skip this if we had to pay for parking here. Every person I've spoken to about this has been opposed to the idea also. I think it's important to hear everyone out on this. Yes, we are getting more and more visitors to the area, but I think it's slightly greedy to capitalize on this. The cafe brings so much to the community and it would be a shame to see them suffer because of this.

Thank you

73

As ratepayers, we are writing to express our concerns about the potential introduction of paid parking at the Punakaiki car park and to request that free parking be preserved for local residents.

While we understand the appeal of charging tourists visiting attractions like the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes, it feels deeply unfair that local ratepayers, who already contribute to the upkeep of the region through rates paid to the Grey District & Buller District, would face additional parking fees as a consequence of tourism.

We understand the proposed \$10 annual fee for local residents in Grey & Buller regions, but this remains unfair to those living in the immediate Punakaiki area, who lack access to alternative infrastructure or resources available to residents of Westport or Greymouth. As ratepayers contributing to facilities in these towns, located 40–50 km away, we rarely benefit from them due to our distance.

Therefore, we urge you to consider providing a free annual parking pass for residents within a 10–15 km radius of Punakaiki.

Our isolated community relies heavily on the car park as a vital hub, and even a modest fee could exacerbate our isolation and divert limited funds from supporting local businesses, which already struggle during the winter months.

The Punakaiki car park is a vital hub for our community. Residents regularly use this area to meet at local cafes for business discussions, social gatherings, or to support the vibrant local economy. This car park fosters a strong sense of community, serving as a central meeting point for locals to connect and engage. Introducing paid parking would be detrimental, particularly for residents who cannot afford additional costs. It risks eroding the sense of community that makes Punakaiki special.

We respectfully request that DOC implement a policy ensuring free parking for local residents.

Thank you for considering the needs of local residents and ratepayers. We trust you will prioritize the community's wellbeing and preserve the accessibility of this essential local hub.

Sincerely,

74	<p>Totally opposed to charging for parking at Franz Josef glacier carpark.</p> <p>They also need to put a large carpark opposite the tiny one at the alex knob/Roberts point tracks.</p> <p>This needs to be funded by the government if it wishes to obtain revenue from tourists and NZ tax payers.</p> <p>By all means reduce or redirect funding from the D.O.C if necessary.</p> <p>I am also willing to donate time and money for the re-establishment of the Fox glacier carpark , perhaps the government could establish a give a little page!</p>
75	<p>I support paid car parking for high use natural attractions, i.e. punakaiki, Hokitika gorge and other places of interest. I support the charge to be for all people, NZers and international visitors. I have travelled overseas and not been offended of having to pay to park my car/campervan to see sights as Gaints Causeway or Cliffs of Moher. If I have visitors coming to stay with me, and we visit Punakaiki in one car and have to pay maybe \$10 parking, I would prefer that to paying 4 entrance fees, if that was a future alternative.</p>

76

Tēnā koe,

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc. (FMC) was founded in 1931 and advocates on behalf of over 22,000 New Zealanders, comprising 93 member clubs and associations, and over 1,000 individual supporters, who enjoy outdoor recreation in New Zealand's front and backcountry. We also speak for the large number of other New Zealanders who enjoy our public lands for outdoor recreation.

FMC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Department of Conservation's (DOC) proposals received 7 August 2025 to trial car parking charges at Dolomite Point, Punakaiki and Franz Josef, West Coast, as a precursor to considering extending this initiative to other locations. Given that DOC has decided to implement these charges, the proposed fee structure appears to be reasonable.

The pilot projects will provide information on the extent to which the charging is revenue positive or not, taking into account the capital cost, and the ongoing operational costs, including resources for permit management and parking fee debt recovery.

As per our White Horse Hill submission, we stress the importance that conservation volunteers who need to use the car parks are issued with permits for their vehicles. There will need to be sufficient DOC resources allocated to ensure that the permit creation can be flexible and prompt to cater quickly for variations in volunteer vehicles and work dates. Volunteers donate their own time and expenditure in the pursuit of activities that support the Department, so should never have to pay car park charges as part of their volunteer mahi.

To implement these changes in a way that provides advance warning to regular and longer term car park users requires a well considered communications plan, potentially involving

- DOC website updates to reference the charges from all tracks, huts and other information points where the carpark could be used
- Providing direct communications to national and regional stakeholders for dissemination to their user groups
- Identifying suitable social media platforms that could reach a wider audience

Nga mihi,

77	<p>I disagree with the 'proposed' paid parking for Punakaiki. I believe it will deter tourists from stopping, or only stopping for a short time and it will impact on local businesses. Also I disagree that New Zealanders should pay to visit a National Park. We pay taxes and our taxes paid for the new Information/Doc building.</p> <p>If the paid parking does go ahead, I think 2hrs free parking would be reasonable for people to do the walk, look around and have lunch, which puts money into the community. And Secondly, if the paid parking goes ahead and 2hrs is not acceptable, I think at least 1hr free parking would be fair, as 20mins does not allow anyone to do the actual walk for free, so basically they are paying from the minute they arrive. Many towns in the South Island give 1hr free parking before charging. I believe Nelson and Oamaru are just 2 of these towns and even in Dunedin you can still find free parking.</p> <p>Overall, I vote for free parking in Punakaiki.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
78	<p>Kia ora koutou</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed pricing strategy for carparking at Dolomite Point.</p> <p>I attended the recent drop-in session at Punangairi and want to provide the comments I made there as written feedback.</p> <p>I really appreciate that DOC has listened to the feedback provided to date and has endeavoured to incorporate that in the pricing strategy, specifically with the offering of a local permit for Buller and Grey district residents.</p> <p>While I am supportive of this idea I think it fails to acknowledge the Punakaiki community sufficiently.</p> <p>I say this because people in and around Punakaiki are great supporters of conservation work through DOC and through other initiatives as well.</p> <p>This is not an exhaustive list but is what is top of mind for me: we maintain traplines including traps on conservation land such as the Truman Track plus many people have traps around their homes in addition to the traplines; we have</p>

people who hunt goats; we carry out working bees on the penguin fences north of Punakaiki, during the Westland Petrel/taiko fledgling season we have volunteers out every night for two months checking the highway, the beaches and accommodation for any downed birds which we then take to DOC.

We are great ambassadors for the environment and recreation around Punakaiki. We encourage visitors to visit the DOC Visitor Centre, to go to Punangairi and make the most of the fantastic opportunities the new building offers.

The social history and environmental tales told in the paid exhibition at Punangairi were all created with the help of locals – some provided help in the form of expertise, such as geology, caving; others generously shared their personal stories which are told in the exhibition, lent artefacts for display, created exhibition pieces such as the rata ladder, helped with the filming of sea caves off the Pancake Rocks and more.

We also support DOC with Civil Defence. DOC is the only government entity with a presence between Westport and Greymouth so, in the case of an AF8 or other disaster, the Visitors Centre is likely to be a hub for emergency support. For some time now DOC has not been able to provide support for Punakaiki Civil Defence because of staffing issues so locals have stepped up and carry that function along with the other Civil Defence voluntary functions within the community.

I also don't think it should be forgotten that while DOC managed the redevelopment of Dolomite Point there was, at times, considerable disruption for locals over several years, for example, the post boxes – a crucial service for us in Punakaiki – were moved three times, we also had to put up with all the irritations a long-term construction site brings. To the best of my knowledge there was very little complaint and many of us patiently explained to endless questions/comments from visitors [both domestic and international] what was happening and what a bonus it would eventually be for Punakaki.

For all these reasons I believe the Punakaiki community deserves acknowledgement of the essential role it plays in conservation and also the help and hospitality Punakaiki people extend to the many visitors who pass through each year drawn to all the Paparoa National Park has to offer.

What I propose is that the NZ Post Community Mail Boxes are used to define the Punakaiki community and all those who have a Community Mail Box in the building in the northern carpark are given an access card for the trial rather than having to pay \$10. I think this would go a long way to making the community feel valued for their efforts.

	<p>For your information there are 120 mail boxes at Punakaiki. NZ Post holds the list of box holders.</p> <p>Ngā mihi</p>
79	<p>Good evening,</p> <p>I am writing to submit my feedback on the Proposed Pricing for the Paid Parking Pilot at Franz Josef Glacier Valley.</p> <p>After talking with fellow Franz Josef residents, I believe there should not be any charges to park at the Glacier Valley car park. New Zealand is becoming an increasingly expensive country, both to visit and to live in. Visitors are already charged with the IVL when they enter the country. As for us locals, especially self employed ones, everything is expensive enough as it is (food, rates, services). Please let us enjoy nature for free.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p>

80

Dear Sir/madam

I am led to believe you are charging on with your plan to charge visitors who stop off at beautiful Punakaiki at the entrance to the Panacke Rocks. Im very disappointed to hear this.

We love stopping there quite a few times per year, and walking around the pancake rocks and blowholes and you also now have an awesome lsite to spend time afterwards and a cafe etc. And now one is going to be under time pressure to move fast and get out of there before the parking expires. Is this really the experience you want people to have in a National Park.?????? And what a shame after such a large investment in building the spectacular new Visitor centre which we are now encouraged to enjoy, but make it quick or pay more for parking!???

Extremely Ironic especially when the lsite was paid for by us.....the tax payer.

I would expect you would at the very least offer 90 minutes free so people can take some time to enjoy the scenery and the facilities in the village.

I really hope common sense applies here, and alternative means of funding are sought.

Regards,

81

Please find my submission below, opposing the Paid Car Parking Pilot proposed access charging strategy:

I am opposed to any type of charging for access to National Parks, including car parking, particularly at Dolomite Point. It should be free for all, maintaining our birthright and intention of the National Parks Act section 4 - freedom of access and entry to the public for the benefits of nature. Parking charges are effectively an access fee for the Paparoa National Park, given the lack of other options.

DOC has no mandate to start charging the public to access its own land. The northern carpark is a Local Reserve and has a long history of public access and this should continue for free.

The 'Dolomite Point leaflet stage2_1 says the pricing strategy was developed after: considering information from stakeholders (note - overwhelming opposition), reviewing all the submissions (note - overwhelming opposition). In addition, from the results of your own consultation on 'Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land' - 86% opposed access charging for all. doing market research. DOC have refused my request to release this research prior to closing of submissions, but quote from it in deciding on their non-transparent pricing strategy and analysing how the car parks are currently used - again no research data is given and I have asked for this also.

DOC's promise to the tax-paying public who funded the new Punakaiki Experience Centre was to encourage visitors to stay longer, so I ask for a minimum of 2 hours free parking so DOC can fulfill this promise. DOC's proposed pricing strategy discourages visitors from staying longer.

A. Feedback from your document 'Dolomite Point leaflet stage2_1' received by email 7 Aug 2025

Feedback from section 1 'Proposed car park pricing for Dolomite Point, Punakaiki'.
You say it is 'so visitors can contribute to the facilities they enjoy'.

There has been no information to the public on where this revenue will be spent. It has now been confirmed in response to an OIA that the revenue spend 'may occur locally or elsewhere' ie it will go into the National pot and may not be used to contribute to facilities that payer has enjoyed. That needs to be made publicly known, it was conveniently left out in any public information. People are more likely to support an initiative that will be spent in their

area and this was assumed.

NZers already contribute via tax and gst, on land that is owned by the nation.

Visitors contribute already via the IVL; gst; businesses they support; soon to be access charges and parking at Milford Sound.

Tax payers also contributed \$45M+ to the new Experience Centre which the government then donated and now it costs \$39 per adult to enter. If you needed more money at this location then it made no sense to spend so much money on the Experience Centre. There was no evidence during that whole process that DOC was spending money with constraint or ensuring a good return to the tax payer.

You say in the first section that 'this car park provides access to the Pancake Rocks'.

It is not legal currently to charge for access to the Pancake Rocks - National Parks Act 1980 section 4, yet you are proceeding to do this anyway by your own argument of charging in this car park.

You have had NZTA remove all of the roadside car parks for 'safety' as per the new development. The public was not told when the roadside park decision was made that you would subsequently be charging for the car park. This is a 40km/h zone, by your safety logic there should be zero roadside parking anywhere in the country apart from perhaps the few 30km/h zones, so no parking in towns and city normal 50km/h zones, SH open road areas, 80km/h areas. Your safety reasoning makes no sense and is just another way to ensure you have a government sponsored monopoly on the car park. While you say this was decided earlier as part of the redevelopment you refused to re-assess this when asked earlier this year, or advocate for retaining the parks.

2. Feedback to 'Drop-in session 14 August'

DOC refused to attend a public meeting to explain in person to the local community. The same mail-out email list that you were allowed to use to provide your information was refused to be used by locals to advertise the public meeting.

3. Feedback on 'what we heard during the first phase of engagement'

- You asked for feedback, and received 158 submissions, of which over 90% were opposed to charging of some nature, yet you have still proceeded. Your report actually says: only 'a few people' supported car park charges. It makes submitters feel that there is little point in bothering, and makes it less likely they will submit on the pricing strategy.

· Despite DOC having Communications staff, there was little effort made to engage the rest of the Coast, or the rest on NZ who will be affected after the trial as you roll this policy out over the country.

· You say feedback for the free period ranged from 15 minutes to 2 hours. You have chosen 20 minutes - a mere 5 minute concession on the minimum anyone suggested. 2 hours free would be a more reasonable time for the public to visit and enjoy Dolomite Point.

4. Feedback on 'Proposed pricing strategy'

You are quoting 'market research' on 40 car parks around the world, you have not provided any further factual information or a copy of the research. My request for release of this information prior to submissions closing has been refused. Are these 40 car parks Urban parking buildings or comparable nature area sites? Have you cherry-picked high charging places to suit your argument? Are these in countries that do or do not have other access charges/IVL's, do these places have public transport alternatives etc. I would argue that it is not necessarily relevant what is charged overseas, due to exchange rates, history of their land and legalities in other countries, and the ability to cherry-pick results. I could equally find 40 car parks around the world that have no charges such as Noosa Heads, Port Douglas for Great Barrier Reef parking, Daintree National Park etc. You are already fond of quoting USA and Australia as beacons of access charging that we should copy, but on in-depth analysis this is not accurate (as outlined in a later section).

The Christchurch Botanical Gardens could be a more relevant comparable site of a location that does have charging for accessing nature - it is a 1-2 hour visit, in the South Island of New Zealand, priced to allow for a turnover of spaces, but not too much to prevent too many people from visiting. It is \$2 first hour, \$1.30 subsequent hours. Benchmarking to Milford Sound is unreasonable - it is 100% destination UNESCO World Heritage site. Contrary to Dolomite Point and Franz Josef, all the money gathered stays in that area, it is not an open market comparison. I can equally choose many more sites that have zero access fees as my benchmark like Hokitika Gorge, Castle Hill etc.

Writing in bold as if you are doing us a huge favour charging lower than Milford Sound for your non-transparent overseas comparisons is unreasonable.

- Where is your International Standard 'Willingness to Pay' research? Full statistical analysis?

- Where is your recent survey of International Visitors and finding out what impact it will have on visitor numbers on top of the IVL and now Access Charging at other sites? What proportion of visitors will no longer come to New Zealand? You say that visitors are happy to contribute, yet there is no survey of this.
- What impact will it have on the important Youth and Backpacker market - which has not rebounded with COVID recovery - in media: Working Holiday Visa Applications are 50% down on pre-covid. Are we pricing ourselves out of this market that tends to go to rural locations e.g West Coast ? Is this deliberate play by the government to move towards a certain demographic of visitors?
- Where is your research on perceived affordability to holiday here?
- Where is your survey of New Zealand taxpayers regarding ability to pay and if it will impact their recreation? At what price point will Kiwis not bother to stop - what percentage of visitors at what price drop off? At what point of charging do so many not stop that it defeats the purpose?
- Where is your research on the impact on DOC's social licence to operate?
- Where is your research on whether access fees disproportionately impact on low-income people?
- Where is your impact research in terms of people double-parking, parking along the State Highway and in the village instead and impacting locals?
- Where is your research on the health and wellbeing benefits of conservation in New Zealand and the impact of nature on human health and how this may decline with access charges?

It seems you have chosen Milford Sound as your benchmark, and cherry-picked some overseas locations and that's it. Rudimentary research has been applied.

5. Feedback on 'The Proposed pricing strategy for the Dolomite Point car park'

While it is welcomed that you are charging some West Coast locals a reduced rate, they should not have to pay anything. You have drawn your boundaries so that people in Westland DC (i.e. Hokitika) still have to pay for Punakaiki and Grey/Buller locals still have to pay at Franz Josef. It is inefficient that these locals still have to find proof of residence, presumably provide their number plate, find a DOC office, update DOC anytime they change cars, remember to do this every year and pay.

6. Feedback on 'How the feedback influenced the proposed pricing strategy'

Overwhelming feedback was in favour of not charging.
Your most immediate commercial neighbours strongly opposed paid car parking, and are the most affected, the

current owners have been your neighbours for 26 years, and there having been commercial businesses there long before the formation of DOC or the Paparoa National Park. You cannot be described as being reasonable and friendly neighbours.

The free period is too short. You say: “The duration of the free period also needs to provide for short stays without encouraging people to rush their walk to the Pancake Rocks. We want to enable a positive visitor experience.” There is no logic to this - 20 minutes is exactly the right length so they rush their walk, they will not have time to go to the bathroom or get some food and also see the Pancake Rocks without a big rush. Or rushing back to make the 1 hour price-point. The whole experience will be a mad rush for many people.

I repeat - comparing Milford Sound, which is a significant UNESCO World Heritage destination, to this roadside stop is not reasonable.

There is no free off-season or evening pricing.

- Outside of peak summer school holidays there are sufficient car park spaces. For example right now Aug 2025 the car park is very empty all day, and has been for months. You are still going to proceed with this trial until end of June 2026 and are not proposing seasonal or evening rates. This has a huge negative impact on the neighbouring businesses, and is totally unnecessary. You are giving zero consideration to these businesses who pay tax and contribute widely to the community, employment, donations, trap-lines and volunteer work etc. It is absolutely unacceptable to be severely financially impacted by our own Government. Punakaiki is a different situation than your other sites.

- You say the value of the site is the same year-round. The fact that there are other businesses at Dolomite Point adds to the value of your site, offering a variety of food, toilets, seating areas and retail options. Yet they are getting unfair treatment by the government. This is an extremely seasonal location, there is zero need to manage visitor numbers in shoulder seasons/winter, yet paid parking will reduce numbers even more.

Visitors will be reluctant to visit the site multiple times - for tidal Blowhole viewing, lunch, dinner, shopping, Experience Centre, walking the new track.

It can be read in multiple places that DOC’s intention for the new Experience Centre is to help encourage longer visits - this paid parking initiative is totally contrary to that. It encourages people to be wary of how much they are paying for parking, and likely rush back to their car.

You have given no concern to equity concerns and ability to pay.

7. Feedback on Timeline

The local Experience Centre email list was used for your initial flier on 28th May 2025, for submissions closing on 19th June 2025. This consultation period was 17 working days, below the standard acceptable timeframe. Confusion

ensued as to whether you were accepting submissions after this date or not. For a Government Department with taxpayer funded dedicated legal and Communications staff, and a team just for this initiative, this is poor.

8. Feedback on FAQ's

You say it is for managing tourism pressures, however you have also been reported in media as saying it 'will not affect visitor numbers' - you seem confused at your own reasons for doing this. There are other ways of managing visitor pressures than access fees. You have also finally, recently confirmed (not publicly) that the proceeds will not be specifically allocated locally but towards biodiversity initiatives anywhere in the country. Yet you also claim that International visitors are happy to contribute to the areas they visit, not citing any actual survey on this. It is unreasonable not to tell the public that proceeds are not being spent in the region it is collected during consultation.

'Legislation does allow us to charge' - yet you also say 'this car park is for access to the Pancake Rocks' - by your own analysis you are NOT allowed to charge the general public for National Park access currently. If you go ahead and change the Acts then you need widespread consultation with the entire nation.

B Feedback on Paid Parking Engagement Report - Phase 1

To avoid duplication, this is only new feedback not already covered already in Section A

The pilot is funded by \$3.8 million from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL)' Tourists are not told that the IVL is being used for this. As per MBIE website: 'The IVL was introduced to help mitigate the conservation and tourism costs associated with international visitation and ensure this cost is not unduly borne by New Zealanders'.

In fact these costs over the country will now be unduly borne by users of these 3 particular trial car parks, including New Zealand taxpayers.

You say: 'Numbers dropped significantly during COVID but are now recovering towards pre-COVID levels'. Again, you cite no facts. According to a media quote from Ngati Waewae, Punakaiki Visitor Centre numbers were 30682 visitors in Jan 2020 and 20399 in Jan 2025, that is still 34% down, far from a recovery and I object to you using generalized statements that are factually incorrect.

1. Feedback to Engagement Activities

Engagement Activities are exaggerated in the document.

Meetings with 'Businesses adjacent to the sites', were extremely limited. The Cafe Operator was granted 15 minutes and felt he was not listened to (as per newspaper article).

- Contrary to your statements about the 0800 number: When the DOC 0800 number was phoned the operator had not heard of Paid Car Parking and all that eventuated was being told to email as phone submissions were not accepted. 0800 number is unmanned at weekends. Saying that the 0800 number was available for submissions is incorrect.
- Only an effort to connect with locals in the immediate vicinity was made, not the wider West Coast who are big users of the car park - this was left to locals with no tax-payer funded Communications Staff or expertise to try and engage further.
- Signage in the Car Park was asked for by the adjacent neighbour so actual users could be made aware of the proposed charging and provide feedback - this was not an initiative of DOC, and if they were genuinely interested in consultation and feedback it would have been an obvious thing to do.
- Signage provided by DOC in the park was very small, had no dates and very little information.
 - o Locals were notified of the paid parking trial on 28 May
 - o The parking signage was asked for on 3rd June.
 - o The small sign was finally erected on the Friday 14 June
 - o DOC were notified on the morning of Mon 16 June that the email address on the sign did not match the leaflet
 - o The incorrect email address was made active at around 2pm on Mon 16 June
 - o Submissions closed on 19 June (17 working days from 28 May)
- DOC saying that the email address was down for only 12 hours is factually incorrect, it was at least 72 hours. I object to DOC under-stating their failures.
- This gave car park users only 3 days until close of submissions on 19 June. The fact you accepted late submissions was widely unknown. This meant signage for users was only there for 3 mid-week days in the middle of winter, capturing very few users and again showing a lack of effort to consult the public. This lack of communication is a poor effort for a department with Communications staff.

2. Feedback to Dolomite Point feedback themes

From your own summary of feedback, charging was strongly opposed by submitters who believe in freedom of access

and entry for the public. Yet you are still proceeding with the trial. It really begs the question of why you bother with submissions.

There are many valid points from submitters opposing paid car parking, they speak for themselves without me going through them individually.

The only concession you have given is the bureaucratically inefficient method of charging locals \$10 for an annual pass. This can cause resentment from other tax-paying Kiwis who do have to pay.

C. Other:

DOC have repeatedly said that we should charge because Access Charging is widely used overseas.

We have a National Parks Act which prohibits this (apart from concessions)
DOC are making sweeping statements (which unfortunately a proportion of the public tends to believe when it comes from a government department) but don't back this up with facts.

From Information on DOC's website:

- o Only 27% of NP's in USA charge
- o Queensland does not charge
- o Victoria does not charge
- o Only 5% of NP's charge in NSW
- o Only 16% in SA charge
- o Only 31% in WA charge
- o Tasmania charges (annual pass available)

From online searches. Access is free in many developed country due to the benefits received from access to nature and the Great Outdoors.

Japan currently only has an optional charge for Mt Fuji

For example Spain, France, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Scotland, Finland, England do not charge National Park entry fees. Freedom to roam is widely the norm.

Some countries that charge have vastly better public transport meaning car parking is much less used. In NZ public transport is poor so car parking is essential for most visitors.

While I do not agree with any access charging. The other 2 sites at Franz Josef Glacier and Aoraki Mt Cook are UNESCO World Heritage areas. You are charging the same fee at Franz Josef Glacier as Dolomite Point. If Dolomite Point is not worthy of being a UNESCO World Heritage site, less people will bother to stop at them if they have to pay. At what point of access charging does the reduction in numbers mean that charging is too detrimental to pursue.

No consideration to financial implications of neighbouring businesses.

From your 'Summary of submissions: Exploring charging for access to some public conservation land'.
'The majority of submitters opposed charging everyone for access (86 percent). Most of these submitters opposed charging for everyone because they viewed an access charge as a restriction of their basic right, as New Zealanders, to access PCL (rather than viewing an access charge as a way of funding the upkeep, development, and maintenance of visitor and recreational infrastructure). Many noted that they already contribute to PCL costs through taxes, and that access charges would create a financial barrier, disproportionately affecting poorer communities. Many hunters and conservation volunteers said that access charging would impact on their contributions to positive conservation outcomes. Many submitters, especially conservation groups, said that access to PCL is important for people's connection to nature, health, education, and environmental protection.'

This car parking is an access charge and you are doing it despite overwhelming public opposition and it being against the Acts which give freedom of access as a right to the public. It is unclear why you had stakeholder consultation.

Due to the long length of this submission if you wish for any further consultation or clarification please let me know.

Regards,

Tēnā koutou

Introduction

1. Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

2. Our purpose derives from s3 of the Walking Access Act 2008 to provide the New Zealand public with free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors (including around the coast and lakes, along rivers, and to public resources) so that the public can enjoy the outdoors.

3. Our submission opposes charging New Zealand residents for access to any public conservation areas, including national parks.

4. However, we acknowledge that charging for incidental amenities on public conservation land, such as huts, campsites, and carparks, may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Existing legislation stipulates free public access

5. As noted in the first consultation document, the Conservation Act 1987, National Parks Act 1980 and Reserves Act 1977 do not allow charging for access.

6. Further, the purpose of the Walking Access Act 2008 (Section 3) is to provide the New Zealand public with free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors (including around the coast and lakes, along rivers, and to public resources) so that the public can enjoy the outdoors.

7. Similarly, the first of the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) Walking Access Principles (2022) is that there should be free, certain, enduring, and practical walking access to public conservation land.

8. Barriers to accessing conservation land can include limited transport, financial obstacles, or a lack of nearby public conservation land. These barriers do not affect all communities equally. Lack of access to nature can create a barrier to the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature. 9. In many cases, an access charge will limit the freedom of some New Zealand residents to access

conservation land because they cannot afford the charge. Access to the outdoors, including public conservation, is one of the few outdoor recreation resources universally available to everyone, regardless of financial circumstances.

The value of free access

10. Herenga ā Nuku is concerned that charging for access at Punakaiki, Franz Josef and White Horse Hill is effectively charging for access to those areas. Most visitors to those sites will need to use those car parks, and thus paying for parking means they are paying to use the tracks that start at and around the car parks.

11. While a small annual charge is proposed for some residents to use the car parks, Herenga ā Nuku is concerned that charging residents for access to public land may set a precedent that would impact other

public access rights, whether at many other car parks managed by DOC or those provided by councils to esplanade reserves and esplanade strips and other public access areas.

12. Hokitika residents (Westland District) are probably much more likely to visit Punakaiki than Franz Josef, so if visiting the glaciers or visiting Punakaiki, the reduced annual parking charge for locals should be available for all West Coast residents. With the various mountain passes separating the region from the rest of the South Island, we would like to see 'local' resident mean West Coasters rather than being divided by District. Ideally, this pass would be obtained simply and for free.

13. Herenga ā Nuku acknowledges that charging for parking at high-use, iconic sites where there are no other realistic options is the logical way to conduct a trial. However, we are concerned about effectively charging for access to the most popular areas and, if adopted, about the likelihood that visitors will be paying for parking all around the country, with costs mounting for visitors already paying the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy. Ideally, access to public conservation land would remain free, certain, enduring, and practical. That includes avoiding charging where the charge is effectively a charge for entry into that area of National Park through this trial.

14. While speculative, we have concerns for the future. We know that around 76% of visitors to Aotearoa New Zealand come for the landscapes and scenery. DOC will largely manage those landscapes. Looking beyond the proposed trial, if it were to be extended to dozens of popular sites, and if those international visitors averaged a two-hour stay and therefore incurred a \$10 charge to park at each of those sites, they might cover 50 sites during their OE to New Zealand, which would add up to \$500. We do not believe this is the direction of travel DOC is seeking. That approach could be better suited for those visitors through an annual DOC pass that would allow parking at all DOC car parks and, for example, include park and ride bus services that are being considered for congested sites. An example of this is the entrance pass system for US national parks with annual passes (US\$80) and various discounts – free for U16, those with permanent disabilities and volunteers, heavy discounts for 62+ seniors etc.

15. Free public access to land is the cornerstone of a sustainable network of local, regional, and national trails where people can explore the land and engage with nature. Public access is important in New Zealand's health, wellbeing, recreation, active transport, and environment. We acknowledge that there will be many alternative public access areas to those that will effectively be behind the parking paywall, but paying to access the best is contrary to all that New Zealanders hold dear.

16. Should paid parking be introduced, there are two groups we would like to see exempt from paying. Firstly, we know that many volunteers – from conservation community groups, trail maker groups and local communities with which we work — gain and contribute much from utilising public access. It is important that charges, either for access or related amenities and services, do not undermine the conservation,

	<p>economic and social benefits derived by nature and local communities from volunteers working on public conservation land. It would be counterintuitive to charge these residents for access to land when they are performing a service. These groups may or may not be affected by the trial, but this must be kept in mind during the trial and any further rollout of paid parking. Secondly, there is a custom of DOC supporting education on public conservation land, for example through rangers leading groups of school children or by providing free places in huts. We believe this principle should be extended to parking so that any group of school children, guides, scouts, or students etc can park for free.</p> <p>17. Should the trial go ahead as outlined, we suggest that there may be a risk of visitors rushing, for example, running around the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Blowholes Walk or running for a glimpse of Franz Josef glacier within the free 20 minutes of parking, to avoid obtaining a pass or paying for parking. This could create a risk for those people and others in their way, and we believe it should be monitored.</p> <p>18. To maintain social licence in offering the proposed parking service, we recommend that DOC work with the supplier to ensure that penalties are not issued automatically. Instead, reminders are issued, and or a reasonable time frame is allowed for parking to be paid via an app or similar, with clear information available. If you require more details or would like to discuss any of the above points further, my contact details are</p>
83	<p>The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board supports the draft pricing strategy for the trial period of paid parking at the above two locations on the West Coast.</p> <p>A copy of the review report of this pilot is requested following the conclusion of the pilot project and its review.</p> <p>Ngā mihi,</p>

84

Dear Department of Conservation,

I'm writing to provide feedback on your proposed parking charges, and to strongly urge DOC to reconsider key aspects of the current proposal.

While it's appreciated that DOC has agreed to offer a local permit for \$10, this still places an unnecessary burden on locals who already contribute to DOC's funding through taxes. A local permit should be free of charge — anything else feels like double-dipping. I am particularly concerned about the proposed 20 minutes of free parking. This is far too short for most experiences at DOC sites — especially locations like Pancake Rocks, where a leisurely walk, photography, and a toilet break can take over an hour.

Local businesses support a minimum of two hours of free parking, and I fully support this. It is a fair and reasonable ask that would ensure both locals and visitors can enjoy these public spaces without feeling rushed or penalised. It is also concerning that DOC has facilitated a monopoly by asking NZTA to remove roadside parking, leaving visitors with no free alternative and vulnerable to any future price increases. These car parks also serve as important rest stops — introducing fees could lead to unsafe roadside parking as visitors try to avoid charges.

Additionally, DOC's approach disproportionately impacts out-of-town Kiwis — including retirees, families, and those on lower incomes — who may not qualify for a local permit but still wish to enjoy our shared public lands. Charging for car parking is a significant philosophical shift for DOC. There has been no meaningful public consultation at a national level, and many feel this decision has been made without the transparency or input it deserves.

New Zealanders fund DOC through taxes, and international visitors already contribute through the \$100 International Visitor Levy and GST. Introducing car park fees feels excessive and counters DOC's mission of encouraging people to connect with nature. DOC often references examples from overseas to justify fees, but many national parks abroad offer free parking. We should not benchmark against the worst examples but instead lead with a model that promotes accessibility and fairness.

Finally, Section 4 of the National Parks Act 1980 guarantees free public access. This proposal feels like a de facto entry fee and risks undermining that principle.

I urge DOC to:

Provide at least two hours of free parking at all sites

Make the local permit completely free

Reverse efforts to remove alternative roadside parking

Undertake genuine public consultation before introducing any fees

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback. I hope DOC will reconsider this approach and prioritise access, safety, and fairness for all New Zealanders.

Kind regards,

85

Kia ora

Feedback on Piloting Paid Parking at Dolomite Point and Franz Josef

Tourism Industry Aotearoa welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Department of Conservation's pilot for paid parking at Dolomite Point and Franz Josef. TIA submitted on the earlier consultation process, and we are generally comfortable with DOC having modest charges for services provided. In this latest consultation, we welcome the treatment of concessionaires and the recognition that the system needs to better reflect the interests of residents, particularly at Dolomite Point where the location of the carpark doubles as a community hub.

We have considered what we see as the key outstanding points from the consultation material provided (refer Attachment 1). The key points are:

- Processes. The process for conducting the pilot is not sufficiently set out, other than bare bones of how it will work. Will it be all digital, how will people apply for the locals or regulars passes, has the provider been selected, etc.?
- Enforcement. How enforcement will be undertaken is not set out in detail. How will this work? When will fines be applied, what levels of fines, who will collect and what incentives are there on the provider?

We also are interested in the level of expected revenue that will be collected from the pilots and the plans for utilising this at site.

A wider interest we have lies in the concerns within communities around the paid parking pilots. For us, this is a social licence issue in that any community push-back may lessen support for tourism. As such, we are interested in DOC's ongoing response to the feedback it is receiving from communities.

Overall, we support the progress of the pilots, but many questions remain around how they will be conducted, and the implications for tourism operators and the host communities.

Member feedback indicates overall support, but concern for sentiment of locals.

We would be very happy to engage with you on the points we raise in this submission. If so, please contact Bruce Bassett on 021 609 674 or bruce.bassett@tia.org.nz.

Ngā mihi,

86

Thank you for this additional information. NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) have no further feedback at this time.

We note that you the Department of Conservation are currently developing a monitoring plan for Dolomite Point and request the opportunity to provide feedback on this plan prior to the start of the trial and that a copy of the final monitoring plan is provided to NZTA prior to the trial commencing. At this stage, NZTA's safety concerns relate to poor compliance with the parking restrictions on the state highway and that people will park on the state highway, particularly in unsafe locations, and not necessarily limited to the recently removed parking opposite the visitors centre, to avoid parking charges in the DOC carpark. The monitoring plan should note that NZTA do not undertake parking enforcement and if there is poor compliance with the existing on-road parking restrictions, the Department of Conservation will need to determine the appropriate mechanisms for recording and/or enforcement of these restrictions throughout the trial period to allow for appropriate assessment of the impacts of the paid parking trial. If parking behaviour during the trial results in unsafe operational conditions on the state highway network, NZTA will require the Department of Conservation to undertake changes to the trial to either manage the unsafe behaviour or prevent this behaviour from occurring.

Regards,

87

The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board supports the draft pricing strategy for the trial period of paid parking at the above two locations on the West Coast. A copy of the review report of this pilot is requested following the conclusion of the pilot project and its review.

Received
between 23
September and
20 October

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NZTA and DOC have a memorandum of understanding for operations on State Highway. DOC should apply for revised TTM for all their activities at Mt Cook in one go.

Overall, NZTA was supportive and I feel confident we can get a plan together and DOC can manage it.

89

Good afternoon,

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to change for car parking at Whitehorse area Mt Cook.

As a New Zealand citizen I don't believe we should have to pay to visit land that belongs to the citizens of New Zealand of which the Department of Conservation is currently a caretaker of. I do not want to pay to visit my home peak, to walk tracks funded by my taxes and the so called rewild yourself push the department and other organisations are pushing. If paid car parking goes ahead I will personally be boycotting the area and will recommend others do the same, or I will find alternative car parking.

This leads me to point out another issue, in that making people pay to park will create congestion in other areas nearby as people choose to park outside the carpark area and walk further.

Paid car parking will also be a detriment to multiday users of the National Park, and volunteers who help in search and rescue and other conservation efforts in the area.

In summary, I am OPPOSED to paid car parking at Whitehorse area Mt Cook.

Yours sincerely

90	<p>Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on pricing. Our comments on the previous locations are also valid for White Horse Hill, Aoraki/Mount Cook. We are supportive of rates noting the costs for local parking will exceed the associated revenue gathered.</p> <p>We would really appreciate it if you could brief us on the parking permit details you will be sending to concessionaires operating under our concession. We have had sales to new members (new concession holders) as recently as this week, so we also want to help ensure you have the most up-to-date list when you mail out.</p> <p>We would also like to understand the arrangement for new members/concession holders that join the concession after the trials start. One option is that we may be able to provide the permit along with the cards at the time of purchase. We would also be able to confirm intent to use any of the parking areas covered by the trial and ensure permits only go to those that need them.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p>
91	<p>Kia ora team,</p> <p>I am writing to obtain some information about applying for a concessionaire parking fee exemption to the parking fees that will be imposed in the trial commencing December to June. Specifically, we will be affected by Hooker Valley Track Aoraki Mt Cook, and maybe also Franz Josef - depending on location, where we have tracks in our concession. Could you let me know what I will need to do for this please?</p> <p>Ngā mihi,</p>
92	<p>Hi there</p> <p>I have just read the article about paid parking at some DOC sites.</p> <p>I think this is totally wrong!</p> <p>Particularly as you state " locals" get it cheaper than our of district users.</p> <p>I consider a " Local" is any New Zealander.</p> <p>Shame on you.</p> <p>Secondly have you considered the cost to senior citizens and community card holders..</p> <p>Just because other countries do it , you don't have to be a sheep and follow the mob</p> <p>Life is expensive enough without you throwing further expense to the pot.</p>

92a	<p>Hi there</p> <p>Just contacting you again I posted this on my local discussion page on FB No one seems to know about it and are not pleased about it. Perhaps you need to make this plan better known before anything is changed. Or is the plan to have it fly under the radar. Regards</p> <p>"Terrible to charge locals or anyone really. It's not like you will stay there too long, unless they happen to be climbing Mt Cook. Imagine how much they will have to pay.....It's not like in the middle of Dunedin, and there's something to be doing there..... it's no wonder people sit at home looking at their screens all day. A family of 5 or 6 will have paid enough to get there in the first place and I hope they brought a cut lunch and thermos of tea."</p> <p>"Charge the tourists, but not us kiwis. Why should we pay to park in our own national park? The place is usually packed with overseas visitors, guarantee if doc did a head count of kiwis versus tourists the majority would be tourists."</p> <p>"Greedy fckers"</p>
93	<p>Feedback about DOC website</p> <p>Comments : Until it hit the media that request for comments were closed, I had not seen this until today: https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2025-media-releases/doc-pricing-proposal-for-aoraki-car-park/ That's awesome! I think if you are going to do that, then let's roll it out across the entire country, including for public parks and every site in Auckland as well! Sarcasm aside, I'm actually a mixture of disappointed, and pissed off. The easiest way to play into this prisoner's dilemma of a game (I guess?) is to push my voice instead towards encouraging Auckland Council to charge out of town New Zealanders fees at more attractions now as well I guess? Oh, and what if you want to do a multi day hike that starts there - do I now need to pay for multi days of parking to do it as well? Sounds easier if my family and overseas friends avoid this destination now if it has turned into this... Multi (2) day hike - let's go with bunks at roughly \$\$40-\$\$50/night x 3, and then add in parking \$\$25 x 2 days. What a fun \$\$400 weekend to do a 2 day hike!?! And that's not including food or gear, even at a budget level.</p> <p>Email :</p>

94	<p>Kia ora thanks for contacting the Department today,</p> <p>You left me with two questions to sort answers to -</p> <p>How to register for the drop-in session for the Proposed car park pricing for White Horse Hill, Aoraki / Mount Cook How to apply for a parking exemption during pilot - as a concessionaire. answer to question 1</p> <p>Drop-in session on 29 September Drop in to talk to the team at DOC's Aoraki/Mount Cook Office, 66 Bowen Drive, Aoraki, anytime from 2pm to 3pm and provide your feedback. answer for question 2 - to come from the paid parking team at doc.</p>
95	<p>I have just read your article and am absolutely shocked. For a reasonable day out for a family of 5 would cost \$25 an hour and if its 4 hour walk or to enjoy the view maybe 5 that will cost me \$125 let alone the cost of the petrol to get there. Maybe for foreigners they would see this as appropriate as part of their tours but for a day drive I think it will mean most NZ'ders will no longer visit Mt Cook! Maybe a donation of \$10 per car as most people will respect that these places require maintenance and so forth would be more realistic.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>Pam</p>
96	<p>hi,</p> <p>You are obviously trying to include domestic tourists - the only discounts seem to be for people resident in the McKenzie. I dislike this approach.</p> <p>I have been a member of the NZAlpine Club for over 40 years. I'm a life member of Queenstown Climbing Club. I am a big user of the National Parks, including Mt Cook. I've climbed Mt Cook and many other mountains nearby.</p> <p>I think a National Parks Pass could be introduced, that allows NZers who wish to regularly visit National Parks, free parking etc. In the USA they have (or had) a Golden Eagle Pass. Something like this may be more palatable to kiwis.</p> <p>Thanks</p>

97	<p>I think it is a good idea to charge visitors for parking but I see a few major challenges, starting with Mt Cook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You are limiting yourself to one parking spot. This will make visitors park elsewhere in the village and surroundings. - You are also limiting the \$10 annual pass locals to a few local districts. I live in north Otago just a few kilometers from Twizel. Will you charge me as a visitor? Why not make the \$10 annual pass to all locals? - You are encouraging more helicopter flights from Glentanner, which is already very noisy compared to a few years back. As a local I was recently in both Aoraki and the West Coast and the amount of helicopters and noise pollution while I was walking the trails was non-stop compared to a few years ago. This is not only affecting us but also it is affecting wildlife. Can you do something about it rather than adding "no drone signs for helicopter use"? National parks should not allow so much helicopter use, this is damaging the experience (I already decided not to go to these places until it is quieter), the wildlife (recently released there) and the environment. <p>Thank you for considering my input.</p>
98	<p>Feedback about DOC website</p> <p>Comments : Your Contact-Us web-page is very selective on what subjects you seek feedback for. What about "Feedback on parking-fees" ? I'm sure people have opinions on that!</p>
99	<p>We will be travelling Picton,Nelson ,Collingwood,Murchison,Westport,Greymouth,Franz,Haast,Wanaka,Omarama,Tekapo,Mt Cook, could be Geraldine or Timaru,Ashburton,Christchurch,Akaroa,Kaikoura , Blenheim and back to Picton.</p> <p>Some thoughts around having to pay for parking as a disable driver ,is we are limited to be able to park away (free) and walk to attractions,. An able body can make that decision and avoid having to pay by parking in free space that normally is some distance away.</p> <p>We note some sites are being trailed for paid parking, thus the inquiry, if disable persons with the appropriate card are exempt.</p>

One other problem we experience with most disable parks are not big enough to accommodate a road legal vehicle. Most often around 5/6 m in length. Some authorities take exception if you go over the lines.

How ever We have had added to one councils by laws that if a disable person cannot find or the parks are in use by another disable vehicle, they are in use...they can park for free in a time restricted council car park.

This idea is not mine but got it from Sydney council when over in Aussie.

Hope we can use DOC sites for free with latitude on length... Our motor home is 8.2m road legal length is around 12 m plus or minus

One Supermarket has also allowed us to park in truck/bus bay

Thank you in advance

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The statement below has fronted numerous submissions over several years from SC NZDA regarding proposals such as this

Statement

We feel the necessity to stress on this, and any future submissions regarding government policies that we perceive to affect our organisation and it's activities and assets, that we have come to regard the submission process as a legal 'have to do' rather than any genuine concern and intent by the government and/or government appointed agencies, to have appropriate consideration and intent to act upon the views and evidence of the New Zealand electorate.

Main issues are :

NZers should not have to pay - at all. No discussion.

We all pay taxes already. Canvassing random people and outdoor interest groups locally supports this - a fee would discourage them from visiting and that is a desirable outcome; we want to encourage our families and younger people. It's not a private enterprise. Why should NZers pay twice ? - it has been pounted out to us numerous times that this plan is proposing just that

Proposed 'plan' does not address the overwhelming numbers of vehicles/tourists that clog up and foul the Park.

Nowhere in the proposal are the issues we have raised (with MPS etc) addressed

Where is the management of numbers (of people & vehicles) and respect for the environment? (Try walking along tracks where toilet paper and worse litters the margins - and this is only what you can see). DoC appears to be ignoring the fact that they are trying to fit the Park to suit tourist numbers, not tourist numbers to fit for the benefit of the Park. The impact of this approach is clearly obvious - and negative. Over the course of time, we (SC NZDA) have noticed a decline in respect for the environment even in proximity to our lodge (adjacent to White Horse Hill carpark).

The Parking Pilot is a 'bandaid' - its does not address issues of infrastructure whatsoever

Where else are vehicles to go if they cannot access White Horse Hill carpark because it is full ? The plan will do nothing to decrease congestion along the road to the carpark.

How is this proposal going to address the 'overflow' problem as per the photo on page 5 in your Paid Parking Pilot info?

Where is the management plan for the vehicles, and type thereof, that will continue to park randomly in ever increasing numbers ? And the type of vehicle - campervans should only be allowed to stay in Park if they have on board full toilet facilities (at least). There is not even a dump station in the National Park, as far as we know, so that in itself encourages the spread of flith

The Park and Ride system (proposed previously), or some such, should be instigated so that vehicle numbers and people numbers in the Park can be managed more effectively. It works in many places overseas, why not here? Revenue gained would more than compensate for costs.

Further, we resent

* Lack of direct consultation with DoC. With DoC, information always comes after they have decided what they want to do, not before

* Consultation with Miles Anderson, local MP and James Meager, Minister for the South Island , on behalf of SC NZDA

	<p>does not seem to have contributed to a better outcome</p> <p>* Plan smacks of having been devised using Google Earth in an office somewhere, far removed from the reality of the site and without giving a wider perspective</p> <p>* What notification has there been of this proposal to the public - prior to this plan being drawn up</p> <p>Thankfully, NZ Police have responded to public opinion/concerns by changing plans to reduce rural Police numbers - if they can listen to the electorate, why can't DoC et al</p> <p>As physical, long standing and regular stakeholders in the Park, the continuing lack of prior consultation before plans such as this end up in the public arena, is unacceptable.</p> <p>Regards</p>
101	<p>Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc. Feedback on DOC's Proposed Car Park Pricing at White Horse Hill Tēnā koe, Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc. (FMC) was founded in 1931 and advocates on behalf of over 22,000 New Zealanders, comprising 93 member clubs and associations, and over 1,000 individual supporters, who enjoy outdoor recreation in New Zealand's front and backcountry. We also speak for the large number of other New Zealanders who enjoy our public lands for outdoor recreation.</p> <p>FMC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Department of Conservation's (DOC) proposal received 23 September 2025 to trial car parking charges at White Horse Hill carpark, Aoraki / Mt Cook. We note that many of the "DOC Considerations" in our earlier submission on carpark charging at this location dated 11 July 2025 have been acknowledged in this latest proposal.</p> <p>DOC Carpark Charges at White Horse Hill and Nationally Given that DOC has decided to implement these charges, the proposed fee structure appears to be reasonable as a single site fee structure.</p> <p>However, we are concerned about the cumulative impact of carpark charges for frequent recreationalists and hunters across multiple sites (3 now, potentially more in the future). We submit that a national DOC carpark permit be established, providing access to all DOC carparks</p>

where access charges are in place.

We suggest that if the July 2026 review concludes that carpark charging will continue and be expanded to other locations, then that would be an appropriate time to introduce a national DOC carpark permit.

DOC Carpark Charges and Conservation Volunteers

As per our previous carpark charging submissions, we stress the importance that conservation volunteers who need to use the car parks are issued with permits for their vehicles.

There will need to be sufficient local DOC resources available to ensure that the permit creation can be flexible and prompt to cater quickly for variations in volunteer vehicles and work dates.

Volunteers donate their own time and expenditure in the pursuit of activities that support the Department, so should never have to pay car park charges as part of their volunteer mahi.

White Horse Hill Considerations

This is a complex site given the widely varying demands on it, and the not always predictable flow on impacts of attempting to change parking behaviour.

A few suggestions / comments:

1. A good base for a park and ride facility would be Mt Cook airport
2. The detailed arrangements for exemptions need to be worked through with the owners of Wyn Irwin Lodge (Canterbury Mountaineering Club), Tahr Lodge (NZDA South Canterbury), and Unwin Lodge (NZ Alpine Club) - by virtue of their location in the area they fall under the local and / or concessionaire categories, especially for where their regular staff / maintenance personnel are involved
3. It is unfortunate that a DOC ranger may have to spend significant time managing parking on White Horse Hill Road when there are so many other DOC core activities requiring ranger involvement. We would encourage a permanent way to discourage unsafe parking that does not involve constant on the ground supervision.

Implementation and Notification

To implement these changes in a way that provides advance warning to regular and longer term car park users requires a well considered communications plan, potentially involving

- DOC website updates to reference the charges from all tracks, huts and other information points where the carpark could be used
- Providing direct communications to national and regional stakeholders for dissemination

to their user groups

- Identifying suitable social media platforms that could reach a wider audience

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PROPOSED PRICING FOR CAR PARKING AT WHITE HORSE HILL, AORAKI/MOUNT COOK

Following receipt of the leaflet outlining the Proposed Pricing for Car Parking at White Horse Hill, Aoraki/Mount Cook on 25 September 2025, the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board (the Board) provides the following feedback:

1. Objectives

The Board notes the Department of Conservation (DOC) response received on 13 October 2025 outlining the objectives of the paid pilot as “Efficient management of visitor car parking at busy sites that improves customer experience” and “Establishing a fair mechanism for visitors to help improve the financial sustainability of the visitor network”. It remains unclear how it will improve customer experience.

If the paid parking is intended as a deterrent to visitation, then this could be seen as inconsistent with one of DOC’s core functions: “to foster the use of natural and historic resources for recreation”.

No doubt there is a problem to address, given crowding in the area, but it is not clear how this proposal will address it. Or will success be demonstrated if there are fewer cars in the car park?

What other options for managing the pressures have been considered?

If the paid parking is intended to deter visitors from Aoraki/Mount Cook and distribute them to other less-visited parts of the country, as has been part of New Zealand’s tourism strategy for some time, then how will this be measured?

2. Timing

The timing of the pilot is not ideal given the closing of the Hooker bridge. The trial will be distorted from normal usage (demand lessened) as less people will want to come to the White Horse Hill carpark. We understand anecdotally that the Tasman tracks are already busier because of the closed swing bridge in the Hooker Valley - i.e. people will go elsewhere in the park if their planned walk is less accessible.

3. Exemptions

It is good to see that the users of the club lodges will not be charged, but it would be useful if the pilot had an objective to ensure that it works in practice - the consultation document does not make

it clear how this will work in practice. We would also support parking exemptions for volunteers given that they are contributing to the upkeep of public lands.

CACB-Paid Parking Pilot-AMCNP-Proposed Pricing Strategy

DOC-10484584

4. Back country users

The fees for back country users on all-day or multi-day trips seem excessive. These groups make up a very small proportion of visitors and yet will be charged significantly.

5. Local charges

It would seem conceivable and more in keeping with DOC's statutory functions, while still achieving the direction to increase revenue, to extend the locals annual pass rate to all New Zealanders and all with whakapapa. We are aware this has worked effectively in other countries, such as Australia, where discounts for locals are broad and more generous. This can engender a sense of pride (and a nice sticker on your car) to be contributing. Charging New Zealanders a flat fee of \$10 per year would also meet the stated objectives of the proposed paid parking and reduce the displacement and or deterrent risks. Where has the \$60 annual rate for out of region New Zealanders come from? Are there some targets for revenue generation or how has that figure e note that the objectives do not include been chosen?

6. Displacement

We note that if the carpark is full, no amount of charging will discourage parking on the access road, and it will probably encourage it. By contrast, we are aware of successful park and ride suggestions elsewhere. For example, Zion National Park in the USA began operating shuttles as early as 2000 and have been extremely successful in reducing traffic, protecting vegetation and restoring tranquillity to the National Park. We note that the objectives of the pilot include improving 'customer experience' and 'financial returns' but not preserving scenery and the parks natural state (as required under s4 National Parks Act 1980). Car-parking should be banned on the access road and large advisory real time electronic boards stationed warning people visiting the National Park when the car park is full and directing them to an alternative parking location.

7. Interaction with National Park visiting fees

The interaction with the planned legislative change to enable DOC to charge for access to National Parks is referenced in the consultation but not explained. Is it the case that visitors could pay for parking and to access the National Park? Can this interaction between proposed charging for access and proposed parking charges be explained in more detail?

8. Treaty obligations

DOC must ensure that this process and the outcomes comply with the obligations of section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 and gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This involves a partnership approach with iwi and hapū and active protection of Māori interests, including supporting iwi to reconnect with ancestral lands and considering their interests in conservation management decisions. The Board doubts that a proposal to charge Ngāi Tahu for accessing their ancestral maunga is likely to be consistent with these obligations. We note that to date that DOC has had no response from Ngāi Tahu and manawhenua rūnanga from its leaflet. To meet a partnership approach DOC staff should personally and directly approach Te Whakaariki and Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited.

CACB-Paid Parking Pilot-AMCNP-Proposed Pricing Strategy

DOC-10484584

9. Revenue generation

Further details of the likely revenue are required to fully appreciate the value of implementing a paid parking scheme. Key questions that need to be addressed during the consultation include: -

How many parking spaces will be made available at White Horse Hill car park and how does this compare to the maximum number of cars that are currently accommodated in the car park when full? - - - -

Ngā mihi

Will there now be more clearly marked parking and non-parking areas?

How much revenue is the paid parking trial at Aoraki/Mount Cook expected to generate to DOC?

Will these funds remain with the National Park to improve visitor experience or be used elsewhere in the conservation estate?

How much will it cost to install (including signage, road markings etc.) and run the system at the White Horse Hill car park?

In addition to the direct costs to the company running the scheme (Stellar) what additional costs does DOC see in terms of staff time linked to ranger engagement with parking issues?

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Feedback on Paid Parking at Aoraki Mount Cook

Tourism Industry Aotearoa welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Department of Conservation's pilot for paid parking at Aoraki Mount Cook.

TIA submitted on the earlier consultation process for paid parking pilots at Dolomite Point and Franz Josef.

We are pleased that key points raised have been addressed in the final conditions of the

pilot, particularly the exemption for concessionaires, the level of the parking rates and arrangements for locals. We retain concerns around potential cumulative costs on visitors in New Zealand and ensuring the funds raised will be utilised at the place it is collected. We request that DOC continues to factor these points into all its work in generating and utilising funding from tourism activities.

With respect to Aoraki Mount Cook, key features from the other locations are mapped over to this location, and we support this.

In our consideration of the Aoraki Mount Cook pilot, and with input from TIA members in this location, there are specific points of feedback to provide:

1. Parking Capacity. The pilot will not solve the core issue that there is insufficient parking capacity compared to demand at peak periods. Over time we expect income generated from visitor parking will be of importance to enable investment in longer term solutions. In the meantime, a charge at one place will likely mean some people will park where charging is not applied, such as on the Hooker Valley Road which could, perversely, lead to greater use of the road for parking compared to the carpark. DOC will need mitigation strategies to address these matters during the period of the pilot and consider longer term responses for the years ahead.

2. Use of Funds raised. It is TIA's understanding that funds raised by the pilots will be used at the places where it is collected, and we support this aspect of the paid parking programme. TIA seeks assurance that while funds raised may flow through DOC's financial system, the amount raised will be returned to the location for much needed investment, whether for the carpark system or other visitor facilities such as huts, tracks and information.

3. Interface with access charging. TIA notes that the government has announced plans to introduce access charges for international visitors at four sites, including Aoraki Mount Cook. While this is not ready for near-term implementation, it is important that the access charging is factored into the carparking pilot, particularly as more permanent solutions are put in place. As expressed earlier, TIA is concerned about the cumulative costs faced by travellers that can arise from multiple small charges. This is a question that will need to be examined from a system perspective, but it does appear that Aoraki Mount Cook will be a place where questions on dual charges will need to be addressed.

4. Interface with existing operators. TIA appreciates the complicated arrangements needed for this pilot given the physical layout and the need to work with commercial

operators within the parking zone. TIA members have expressed this concern to us, along with observation that visitors may find it confusing. As such, TIA requests that DOC establish an active management plan for the peak period ahead to ensure the experiences of both operators and visitors are monitored and responded to in appropriate ways.

5. Enforcement. The consultation documents on the paid parking pilots have been largely silent on the penalty and enforcement approach that will be used, including level of fines, notification process and actions for non-payment. In our 26 August submission on the parking pilots at Dolomite Point and Franz Josef, we specifically raised this matter and sought clarification on how enforcement would be undertaken¹.

We would appreciate DOC responding to the questions raised, and also that the Department makes it clear in the documentation material for all three pilots on how this aspect will work in practice. This is a tricky part of the tourism system as rental vehicle operators attest as they need to play a role to get infringements to their customers, many of whom will have left the country by the time the infringement comes through. As always, TIA supports the application of the law, but we are interested that processes are conducted in such a way that overall visitor satisfaction is not unduly impacted.

Overall, we support the progress of the paid parking pilots and hope that our submissions have been of assistance. Also, we hope that our connecting you with experienced staff from Auckland International Airport Limited has been useful for refining the pilots.

In this submission, we raise some points that are specific to Aoraki Mount Cook and we would appreciate your response to the matters raised.

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We the Canterbury Mountaineering Club believe we are positioned with a special and unique interest in Whitehouse car park and possess a uniquely stronger understanding of the dynamics of the campground, through the regular use of Wyn Irwin lodge (located approximately adjacent and accessed through Whitehorse campground), we are grateful that DOC has proposed exemption for our members traveling through the car park, and ask that DOC acknowledges our special and superior connection to the area.

We believe that paid parking within national parks requires a significant social licence, given the Kiwi principles of freedom of recreation in the hills, and your role as the Steward of Kwi-owned land rather than the owner. We believe that this social licence to charge at white horse car park and others has been granted primarily by two factors:

The significant overcrowding if the car park,
And Kiwis desire to support additional mechanisms for tourists to financially support docs stewardship over our national park.

Upon reflection, the CMC is strongly in favour of paid car parking, conditional on the following additional changes to the policy.

Intention to differentiate rates between kiwis and non-kiwis. We understand some changes may be required to implement this system, we request DOC explicitly state its intention and desire to implement this where possible. We have already seen such differential pricing in our great walks pricing system.

Volunteers' exemption for the purpose of conducting volunteer maintenance. We believe those who are contributing directly towards to upkeep and care of the land should not be disadvantaged by their efforts.

Off-season rate reductions. Given that a significant aspect of your social licence to price car park parking infrastructure is based on the overuse of the carpark, we believe that off-season reductions in rates are appropriate to incentivise users to time their use of the park around quieter periods in the year. Our lived experience around the carpark leads us to believe that usage throughout the year varies.

Higher rates for buses and campervans - Campervans are less likely to pay for accommodation or consume paid tourism infrastructure in the region, the heavier weight of the vehicles and larger size mean they also impart a larger burden upon tourism sites. Buses are less likely to support locally owned paid tourism infrastructure, weigh more, and carry a far larger number of occupants, which means they place a significantly higher burden upon the environment than a similarly priced car with minimal occupants. For these reasons, we believe it would be appropriate to significantly differentiate prices from regular car-based users.

Usage-based additional charges for concession operators. Given that concession operators also impose a burden upon the parking area, we believe that additional charges should be applied to them. We believe that concessions allow a permit to operate in the park, but similarly to how concession operators still must pay fees to use huts, they should also pay to park in paid parking areas.

Opposition to winter traffic management. Given the lower traffic numbers in winter, we do not believe that winter traffic management infrastructure is appropriate.

Given our strong connection to the area, large membership base (with a significant proportion of local residents), and

position with a wider key stakeholder community (mountaineers and recreators), we believe our support would be a great help towards the implementation and ongoing success of the parking trial and future options to permanently implement such proposals.