



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 pricing 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/our-work/paid-parking-pilot-programme.



Franz Josef Glacier. Photo: Department of Conservation

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 because 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 / Piopiotahi, 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 for the Franz Josef car park



P Payment Information

YOU MUST PAY UPON ARRIVAL

Parking fees apply to all vehicles. 24 hours / 7 days a week

FEES

- Up to 20 minutes _____ Free
- Hourly Fee _____ \$5 per hour
- Daily Fee (till 11.59 PM) _____ \$20 per day

Payment can be made by using the **Parking Machine** or **Scanning the QR code.**



ENFORCEMENT APPLIES

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 for 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.

Annual permits

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

- **A local permit** – We will offer an annual permit for locals (based on Westland district council boundaries) for \$10 per year.
- **An 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 will allow unlimited access to the Franz Josef Glacier / Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere car park based on vehicle number plates.

Camping overnight 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>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. <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 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>

What you wanted	Proposed pricing strategy	Our thinking so far
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.	\$5 per hour is half the hourly rate charged for parking at Milford Sound / Piopiotahi, which is a similar site. \$5 per hour is consistent across all three sites and gives the user a choice around how long they will stay.
Prices should be cheaper/free in winter / during off-peak times.	Prices will be the same year round.	The value of the site remains throughout the year, and the glacier is possibly more spectacular in winter than it is in summer. The pilot aims to track parking demand and revenue in both peak and off-peak times.

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 the Department of Conservation (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.

Operators with a concession will be able to apply for a permit online to exempt them from parking fees at the pilot sites. 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, [more information is available here](#).

- 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 charging for DOC car parks will be widespread in 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 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 in 2026. This process will include further public consultation on the draft Bill as part of the select committee process.