



Pancake Rocks, Punakaiki. Photo: Nir Kettraru

# 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](mailto: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](https://doc.govt.nz/paid-parking).



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

## 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"> <li>• Paying hourly means people can be flexible in how long they stay.</li> <li>• The daily fee offers an affordable option for people wanting to spend a full day.</li> </ul> <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
<b>Update stakeholders on proposed pricing strategy</b>	<b>August (current)</b>
<b>Seek stakeholder feedback on proposed pricing strategy</b>	<b>August (current)</b>
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](https://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.