

Candidates voice their views on our roading

Whangarei residents will be able to watch a repeat screening tonight of Elections 10 on Channel North television.

Elections 10 is a six-episode series, which screens Thursday nights at 7pm, and a again on Fridays at the same time.

Elections 10 is a joint venture with the Northern Advocate and will cover key local issues in the Whangarei district, ask people on the street what they think, and tell people about their voting wards. Whangarei's mayoral candidates have also been invited to sit in the Elections 10 hot seat, and answer six questions. Tonight the mayoral candidates are asked "What is the single biggest roading issue facing Whangarei and what are you going to do about it?"

Terry Burkhardt
The biggest roading challenge to Whangarei at the moment is the second bridge over the harbour. At \$31 million this is an expense that we cannot afford unless tight on actual times. While council is struggling to fund fixing the sewage, we have no problems finding \$34 million to put a bridge over the harbour. This spending is not appropriate at this time. The second problem with our roading is that the Whangarei council, through its rates capping policy, has to run a hold-and-maintain policy which basically means passing the debt on to the future generations.

Vince Cocurullo
Whangarei's single biggest roading challenge at the present moment is traffic flow and volumes of it. Most people who come to Whangarei come here as destination shoppers, so they drive to the place where they want to go, so they park the car so they can see the shop and they stop there. To me a harbour crossing is not a solution. Correcting our problem down at the Town Basin with putting proper roundabouts in place will actually get our traffic flow moving and get this city humming again back to a heart.

Morris Cutforth
Well the roading in Northland is getting more and more difficult and there are bottlenecks and stuff like that. Yet when we compare it with a city like Auckland it's absolutely nothing. The second thing is that I think we should be getting further and further away from the use of vehicles. So I think walking and cycling tracks should be developed in and around, particularly Whangarei, so that people can walk to work and cycle to work.

Don Hedges
Well I think there's not one single roading challenge, but there's probably several, because Whangarei's in a narrow valley and north-south traffic stop over from Auckland to the Bay of Islands and further north and all the tourism. So they've got the main

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highway situation that, well, it's being upgraded now, and we've got to carry on with that. And then there's the local scene of people trying to access businesses and their residences and the traffic lights in town are really shocking.

Paul Jeeves
Whangarei's single biggest roading challenge for me would be the flow of traffic. How do we solve it? Solving it is a very tricky one because we have to take into consideration strategic businesses and strategic community services such as the police and other businesses, the fire department and things like that. And if we turn it into too many one way systems or roundabouts we could impact on critical services. I think we certainly need to look at some of the infrastructure we have in place already and utilising that, such as the third bridge across the Hatea River which is currently a car park.

Isoipo Samu
It's getting ourselves on the map in Wellington to say our roads are terrible up here and being smart about how we market that down to Wellington because of the subsidy that comes with it. At the same time I think we've got to look at our contracting in terms of how often have we seen contractors come in and rip up the road and two weeks later they've come back. Now I'm always driving past these places thinking 'are we paying for that twice?' and so if that is the case then we need to re-look at that and make sure the ratepayer's not paying twice for work that should have taken once over to complete.

Stan Semenoff
Well our one biggest one is in the city and we have solved it regardless of who gets in as mayor. I've got it all signed off. For example the second stage of the Kamo bypass is all approved, Spedding Rd's approved, the four lanes through town are approved. Porowini Ave, which I bought the land back in my early years of mayor — \$169,000 was a good buy then — that's in.

The harbour bridge. Once those are in place the inner ring road of the CBD that has been required for many years will fade away. The problem will end within a couple of years. Warren Slater: The roading in our city, I don't believe, is as big an issue as is being made out. I believe we have got more pressing problems, like the sewage and other infrastructure that need to be focused on. Personally I don't believe we need an extra harbour crossing yet. I think that's just actually looking after the wants of some people. I think we've got to go out to the community and ask the community where they think the problems are.

If anybody can tell us what the problems are in our town or city it's the people that live here. They are the ones. I've talked to many people from Onerahi and they don't believe there are traffic issues getting into our town. We have got a bridge sitting there not being used. It could be used with cones in the morning and night, change the cones like they did on the Auckland Harbour Bridge. Simon Vallings: Whangarei's single biggest roading challenge is congestion around the start and the end of the working day. I think the way to solve that is to have more of a ring road system with people being channelled around the outside. I think a ferry going across from the Heads to Marsden Pt would help. Opening up of the old bridge that is currently used for car parking would certainly help a little bit. And I think we don't need so many people travelling through to go to school to necessarily go through the CBD.



Terry Burkhardt



Don Hedges



Stan Semenoff



Vince Cocurullo



Paul Jeeves



Warren Slater



Morris Cutforth



Isoipo Samu



Simon Vallings

CORRECTION

In yesterday's Elections 10 story, mayoral candidate Mita Kayal Ruri was left out of the list of responses to the question: What is the single biggest roading issue facing Whangarei and what are you going to do about it?

He said: "I was asked that question not so long ago there and I made a statement there. Just looking and trying to use pure common sense, there are what we would say danger spots on the roads there, and I seriously would look at pot holes and certain repair jobs that need to be repaired because they would be at the top of the list there and could be detrimental to motorcyclists."

"I've heard of a few people I know of who have hit roading pot holes, so I myself there would get an elite contract group there that will target the most serious part of the roading, because I believe money could be spent in other areas that need that funding, more so especially the youth."

