

## **Wgtn City Council extraordinary meeting on transport plans 20 April 2011**

**Oral submission in support of public transport given to the Wellington City Council extraordinary meeting on 20/4/2011 by Kay Weir, editor *Pacific Ecologist*, magazine of The Pacific Institute of Resource Management, Wellington. – [www.pacificecologist.org](http://www.pacificecologist.org) [www.pirm.org.nz](http://www.pirm.org.nz)**

Transport plans for Wellington regionally and New Zealand nationally at this particular time in history are security and sustainability issues which need to address new realities. Our car use had relied on cheap, plentiful supplies of petrol. But we cannot continue to think of oil supplies as plentiful and cheap anymore. They are finite and prices are rising and will continue to rise until they are too expensive for most people to afford. Alternatives proposed like electric cars are an expensive pipe dream, with many problems not addressed, and which most people will not be able to afford. Biofuel plantations planted in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, like Brazil's biofuels now in NZ, help continue car use, and are a human rights atrocity as well as an ecological disaster, as will be industrial-scale biofuels plantations in New Zealand.\*Wellingtonians should be concerned about this. It is therefore public transport, rather than options to increase private car use, which needs greatly increased funding, to increase community resilience in our time of dwindling oil resources.

As Wellington City Council is under pressure to approve more roads, flyovers, motorways, and to receive substantial funding for this, we have to ask some questions. Do the NZ Transport Agency's plans address the new realities of our time? Do they address the depletion of oil and its consequences of making fuel too expensive for most people to afford? Has the NZ Transport Agency done any analysis on the consequences of peak oil which the NZ government has acknowledged in a recent study? Has Wellington City Council done a study on oil depletion and its affects on car use?

Surely it would be a strategic mistake to invest in subsidising road traffic through building flyovers/ more roads and motorways, as this will encourage car use and increase finite fossil fuel use and also increase our transport emissions, thus adding instead of decreasing our contributions to global warming. (Note: NZ has to make big cuts up to 90pc of emissions 2050, and there will be pressure internationally on NZ to do this.)

At this stage it's vital is to avoid ruling out the light rail option, which the council has been considering, by committing to the road project (Basin Reserve grade separation, tunnel duplication ; Ruahine Rd 4-lane project). This will increase traffic and draw patronage away from a future light rail route. I understand there's a feasibility study which has to be seen by the council before it approves the transport plan. It's important the council is not pushed into approving the Transport Agency's plans until this study has been examined.

We also recommend that both the NZ Transport Agency and Wellington City Council does some analysis on the consequences of peak oil on car use, and our climate change obligations and the consequence of encouraging car use via unwise roading projects.

**Wellington City Council Extraordinary meeting, transport section 20/4/2011 Oral submission given by Kay Weir, editor *Pacific Ecologist*, magazine of The Pacific Institute of Resource Management, Wellington. – [www.pacificecologist.org](http://www.pacificecologist.org) [www.pirm.org.nz](http://www.pirm.org.nz)**