

Owhanake overstayers untouchable

Auckland Transport says it cannot enforce the 48-hour time limit in Matiatia's Owhanake car park. The unpaved parking area is currently free of charge, and *Gulf News*, the local board and AT have received reports of vehicles remaining in the area for weeks and months on end. The transport company says it has not ticketed such vehicles as "for a vehicle to be deemed abandoned, our policy is that it must have an expired warrant and registration".

"Auckland Transport's parking officers can only enforce parking limits if signage, or road markings, are correct and have an approved resolution. This is currently being processed."

The transport company says that when enforcement begins, warnings will be issued before vehicles are ticketed.

"As far as the car park is concerned - we do not enforce here as more signage needs to be done. Once this has been completed, we will start enforcement with warnings for a week."

When *Gulf News* questioned AT about a white van used as a taxi during the busy summer months, which has remained in the unpaved car park for weeks, a representative said, "This particular vehicle has both a WOF and registration that are current. If this car park was enforceable at the moment, the owner of the vehicle would have been issued infringement notices. When signage is complete, the car park will be enforced for the period of two days - which our wardens will establish by a chalk mark on the vehicle's tyre."

Local board chairperson Cath Handley says she has also contacted Auckland Transport about overstayers in the parking area and is waiting for a response. She says current works should improve the entrance to the parking area and help to get people safely onto the bus once the new network is implemented.

"People with luggage will be able to wait in the new bus shelter there and catch the bus to and from the ferry terminal." • *Sophie Boladeras*



Lynn Waldegrave and Hana Blackmore.
Photo Sophie Boladeras

Bus users tell AT to hop off

Next week Waiheke will have a new bus network, but some users think planners have taken a wrong turn. During the public consultation period in March and April 2018, 927 feedback forms were received by Auckland Transport on possible route options and the direction of the new bus network.

"I live on Ostend Road and like hundreds of other residents our decades-old service has been cut completely," Hana Blackmore addressed the board.

"When I complained, noting that we bought this section precisely because it was on the bus route and we could be resilient, even in our old age when we could no longer drive, AT responded with a letter of such insensitivity and outright ignorance that I was truly shocked." The response letter dated 19 September read: "From Sunday 13 October, your nearest bus stops will be on Belgium Street. Subject to where you live on Wharf Road/Ostend Road, the Belgium Street bus stops will be approximately 700 metres from your home, or a nine-minute walk."

For some Waiheke residents changes to the bus routes and timetables mean having to walk in the dark on roads without footpaths. For the elderly, those with luggage or prams and the mobility impaired these changes can represent significant challenges.

"All too often it's a tick-box situation where under the law you are meant to come up with a public consultation - but AT should and must be prepared to change it," councillor Mike Lee said.

Local board chairperson Cath Handley says although there was great participation in the consultation process "there are undoubtedly casualties".

"The Wharf Road route is a change that wasn't specifically consulted on and yet it has happened - so that is an issue we have to deal with with AT. People didn't have an opportunity to give feedback on it."

"They never consulted on cutting any routes," says Hana.

"It came as a complete shock. I responded to everything and commented on all the proposals. They never proposed cutting any bus routes. Every question was formulated to suit a pre-ordained plan."

Ms Handley says she believes AT is open to "hearing these teething issues but they are still going to go live on the date. They have expressed that these things take a while to settle and there are public meetings about the network at the moment".

Another concern expressed with regards to the new network is the loss of the Wellington Street loop after 7pm and Ms Handley says she has sent a query to AT about it. • *Sophie Boladeras*



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