



## **An open letter calling for the Government to reconsider removal of the retest fees and price hikes that add barriers to driver licensing**

To the Government,

A driver's licence is essential for work, learning and training, but the recent change to Waka Kotahi's driver licencing fees **adds additional barriers** to an already inequitable and inaccessible system.

While the Government is representing these changes as making it cheaper for Kiwis to get their driver's licence, this is clear example of creative mathematics. In real terms, learner and restricted licence fees will increase, with the fee to sit a restricted test going up by \$32.77.

**These increases will hardest hit those who can least afford them**, prevent people from progressing through their licensing journey and have unforeseen consequences for the safety of our roads.

Over 70% of jobs in New Zealand require a license, yet only 5% of young people leave school with a Full New Zealand Driver's Licence. We estimate that 70,000 to 90,000 New Zealanders struggle to access the licensing system or are stalling – often for years – part way through their licensing journey.

Increasing fees will do nothing to change this; it will prevent progression through the system. It won't alleviate workforce shortages; it will only make it harder for young people to gain a licence and get a job.

There will be other impacts too. Community driving programmes who work hard to prepare their students to pass first time will now have to fund a 25% increase in their operational costs. VTNZ Testing Officers will be inundated with unprepared learner drivers who want to sit their restricted test and are 'giving it a go' as they have nothing to lose.

**We don't want to see increased fees – we want to see financial barriers removed** from the driver licensing system. Instead of removing resit fees, we urge you to better fund and support community providers of driver education and training, who support learners to become safe and skilled drivers, and to pass their tests on the first attempt.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendy Robertson".

Wendy Robertson on behalf of the Driving Change Network