

## Online moderated bulletin boards

AKA: *online discussion forums, online discussions, boards, etc*

### Overview of bulletin boards

Online qualitative research is less known in New Zealand, although it has been used successfully overseas (e.g. USA, Europe) for decades. After research into various qualitative online approaches, Karin began moderating discussion boards in 2005. This approach maximises the benefits of an online methodology while minimising the drawbacks. A summary of what discussion boards are and how they work appears below. Please let us know should you wish to discuss them in more depth or look at the other online qualitative options available.

### How does it work?

1. A discussion board is a secure online space for questions, answers and discussion. Participants are recruited in exactly the same way they are for focus groups and depths, using specialist qualitative recruitment agencies and screening procedures.
2. Our bulletin boards frequently operate with between 8-30 participants. The choice of board size depends on the research need. Larger boards can be compared to extended depth interviews while smaller boards more closely resemble focus groups in dynamics.
3. Boards are set up to operate for a certain time, usually three to seven days.
4. Participants are typically expected to log in every day for 10- 30 minutes to read and respond to questions and comments by the researcher and other participants (for smaller boards). Use of a seven day bulletin board provides us with one to three contact hours with **each participant**, depending on the project. Boards with senior management or healthcare professionals may be structured differently to maximise convenience for these very busy respondents.
5. New questions (usually two or three cluster or 5-7 simple ones) are posted on the website each day as a topic evolves. These questions have been approved by the client.
6. A discussion board is **not** an open-ended questionnaire that is put in front of respondents and then reeled back a week later (although there are projects where this is appropriate). It requires considerable moderator **interaction** with participants several times a day to truly take advantage of the medium.

### Key strengths of bulletin boards

1. **Convenience.** The physical location and schedules of participants, clients and researchers are almost irrelevant. All that is required is an internet-connected computer. Contributors can take part at times that suit them, without having to worry about travel or interference with work or family life. They can go online any time of the day for a few minutes each time, sit down for one long session, or anything in between – whatever they want, whenever they want. This aspect is particularly relevant for busy management and healthcare professionals – it can allow us to include people in the research who would not normally be able to participate without significant investment of time and cost.
2. **Balanced participation.** Even the most quiet and thoughtful people have the same opportunity to “speak” online. Assertive individuals with a lot to say have minimal impact on an online bulletin board, unlike in a face-to-face focus group where they can dominate the discussion even with skilled moderation. Board participants do not have to worry about being polite in terms of letting everyone have a turn – everyone has the same chance and ‘talks’ at the same volume. This protects minority opinions and those held by less assertive people as it’s not a race to speak.



3. **Reduced social inhibitions.** Without the immediate physical presence of others, people are more likely to be brutally honest about what they think and feel. They are less prone to holding back potentially embarrassing confidences or restraining themselves from saying something that might be controversial. This honesty is enhanced by the fact that participants are in a familiar, safe environment, e.g. at home. This also ensures that responses truly are the individual's own, uncoloured by what they've heard others say, until they have a chance to read other posts.
4. **More robust and reliable information.** Participants have much more time to think about concepts than in in-depth interviews or focus groups. We do not need to hope that the participants remember everything relevant during the hour or two of the interview or group, because they interact with us for a much longer period of time. We take advantage of the prompts of different times of day, different days of the week, various events and other triggers that cause people to think of relevant issues, and to react in different ways. A bulletin board exploration of a topic can be far more thorough, considered, and relevant than a traditional face-to-face approach.
5. **Deeper and more meaningful information.** Responses may be better thought out, more complete and more accurate. Bulletin boards contain a mix of 'off-the-cuff' remarks and carefully considered analyses and opinions. They allow time for ideas to digest and be bounced around family and friends. Traditional in-depth interviews and focus groups only capture immediate responses and give little indication about how ideas will age and opinions change.
6. **Better documentation.** Transcripts from bulletin boards are available immediately and are totally error-free – no breaks in the record of conversation where someone was mumbling, many people were talking at once or the background noise was too high to hear. In addition, the transcript identifies the source of each comment and observation, which allows us to analyse the progression of thoughts and beliefs in individuals over the life of a bulletin board.
7. **More information from each respondent.** Compared with focus groups, individuals have far more chance to be heard. Instead of 120-150 minutes being divided among 5-8 people in a traditional focus group, each online participant has the potential for virtually unlimited 'floor time'. This is especially useful when topics are lively and prompt much debate and discussion. It is also helpful for those participants who are not as comfortable about asserting themselves. Each participant contributes 1-3 hours.
8. **Transcript contains all communication.** Because respondents know that their intent can only be judged by the words they type, they generally try harder to ensure their words convey the right message. In face-to-face interactions, people use their tones of voice and facial expressions and so on to convey significant information, so they can be sloppy with their actual word choices – and when we work from transcripts of those interviews and groups much of that additional non-verbal information can be lost. A transcript from a bulletin board reflects the complete attempt of the person to communicate their meaning.
9. **Dynamic management of stimuli.** Concepts can evolve in response to the discussion, with revisions being submitted for further evaluation. This is especially useful for new product development or advertising/ communications evaluation.
10. **Improved viewing.** Clients and other researchers can easily and invisibly view the boards with passwords specific to them. Like respondents, they can log in any time is convenient for them and spend as little or as long as they like reading the posts. This is much less intrusive than video cameras, closed circuit viewing or one-way mirrors.
11. **Increased client involvement.** It is much easier in an online methodology for the facilitator/researcher to contact the client during the group to ask for clarification of a topic or direction if something unexpected comes up. Similarly, clients can ask additional questions of the facilitator/researcher and furnish new information or test material for the facilitator/researcher to post in response to what participants say on the board.



## Key limitations

The key limitations of bulletin boards revolve around two issues: internet access and the lack of face-to-face interaction and the resulting inability to assess non-verbal cues. The impact and importance of these issues need to be taken into account when considering online research.

1. **Internet access.** Obviously an online forum requires respondents to have access to the internet, ideally at home. Currently, just over 80% of households and around 89% of individuals in NZ have internet access, but there will be times that the target market will not have enough internet penetration to reasonably ensure a moderately representative online sample. Maori, Pacific, very elderly or very low SES populations may not be suitable for online research, although there are exceptions. Increasingly, “online” qualitative research is device agnostic – meaning it can be done on a tablet or smartphone, not just a computer. When all devices are taken into account, 97% of Asians, 93% of NZ Europeans, and 86% of Maori and Pacific people are internet users, according to 2013 results of the World Internet Project <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/projects/world-internet-project>. According to <https://nzdmi.co.nz/blog/new-zealand-mobile-trends/>, 95% of Kiwis go online every day, with 91% of them doing so for personal reasons. The internet has well and truly become mainstream.
2. **Lack of non-verbal cues.** Because of the medium, there is little in the way of body language or non-verbal expression and the researcher is unable to see what does exist. Although people will try to compensate through words, emoticons and special acronyms (LOL, etc) that have evolved through email, online communities and messaging, the lack of face-to-face interaction can sometimes be a critical limitation. A live web focus group or a live web interview may be a better online option for these instances. A bulletin board transcript is completely different from one taken from a focus group or depth interview – it’s like comparing a novel with a movie script. In the last few years, the better research platforms have incorporated more ability to use images, quantitative-type questions, and interactive exercises (projectives) to augment text-based communication.

## What is our bulletin board experience?

Karin has supervised and personally moderated hundreds of bulletin boards with thousands of people for a wide range of research topics, clients and respondents, including:

- Product/service evaluation (pharmaceutical, telecommunications, financial services, public sector, media, travel, retail, automotive, health, FMCG)
- New product development and refinement (technology, health & pharmaceutical, building/construction, financial services)
- Understanding consumer behaviours and the needs and drivers underlying them, as standalone research and as exploration to support quantitative segmentation (financial services, technology, health & wellbeing)
- Branding (retail, health & pharmaceutical, technology, media, insurance, education)
- Identifying and understanding diagnosis and treatment pathways and procedures, discovering opportunities to support patients and professionals (health & pharmaceutical, insurance)
- Exploring difficulties faced by patients in treatment compliance and disease management (health & pharmaceutical, insurance)
- Ad concept testing (pharmaceutical, public sector)
- Internal organisational research (insurance, public sector)
- Website evaluation (insurance, media, telecommunications)
- Exploration of what it means to be Kiwi; past, present and future cultural values and NZ’s place in the world (travel, public sector)

Other online methodologies that she offers include live webcam interviews and groups (via Zoom) and live text (chat) groups.



## Selected examples from past online boards

*(names are fictitious, but the answers are verbatim)*

### Projective: brand animals

Sometimes we want to understand how people feel and experience brands, so one projective we sometimes use is to ask them to imagine that the companies become animals that capture who they are, to tell us what each company becomes and their reasons for their choice. We can do this online. A variety of respondent answers from boards follows – completely unedited except for taking out company names.

#### Aiden (12 different companies)

1. *Cockroach - everywhere in every house, whether you want them or not*
2. *Mole - slowly burrowing into the market*
3. *Peacock - loud, proud and vying for attention*
4. *Termite - very busy, building networks and large mounds everywhere*
5. *Whale - been around for a while and non threatening*
6. *Butterfly - very pretty but doesn't do much*
7. *Elephant - top of the chain, wandering along. eating everything in its wake.*
8. *Ferret - scurrying everywhere for information*
9. *Spider - weaving its web and slowly taking over*
10. *Dog - tried and true , always there if you need it*
11. *Parrot - new and exciting, learning all the time*
12. *Cat - always hanging around and expects loyalty*

#### Neha (10 different companies)

1. *Rhino - big bully, short sighted*
2. *Chimp - work in with others, innovative, imaginative*
3. *Mole - always there, but not really noticeable*
4. *Beetle - am aware of but don't think much of one way or the other*
5. *Dog - dependable*
6. *Rat - rushes about trying to get some of the action, but not very effective*
7. *Whale - the name reminds me of this also have heard it's slow*
8. *Donkey - dependable, but not very fast*
9. *Worm - small and insignificant*
10. *Aardvark - never seen one!*

#### Charles (7 different companies)

1. *this company is a magpie. Nothing but a pain in the but that has to have anything that is shiny.*
2. *this company is like a seagull. making lots of noise but not really doing a great deal different to the other birds on the block.*
3. *this company is like a sparrow, picking up the crumbs left behind by others.*
4. *i know nothing about them at all. cool name though.*
5. *this is like a pidgin. colourfull and looks good but still only just does what it needs to.*
6. *these guys are like those fish that hang around sharks. want to be with the big boys but are never going to be one.*
7. *never heard of the dont know what to say.*



### Joseph (8 different companies)

1. *10,000 lb Gorilla it and its parent has over the years attempted to squash flat all its competitors*
2. *a yappie puppy that attempts to run around every where doing every thing and winds up to very little just chasing its tail.*
3. *a donkey or an ass as it can not seem to do any thing right*
4. *a peacock very good at putting on a good display but of very little substance*
5. *Clydesdale Horse Big dependable and capable of doing lots of work.*
6. *a monkey runs around playing lots of tricks but can it put its head down and do the hard work*
7. *Maybe it is the name but I always think this as being Orca I do not know why.*
8. *like a feildmouse you haer very little from it but you can see the results*

### Eileen (9 different companies)

1. *A Hippotamus does have an exceedingly thick skin and is built very low to the ground too - 2 characteristics which would suggest a parallel with that irksome, very slow moving giant Xtra. Hippo carries such a massive burden, so much so that she's quite oblivious to the outside world. I heard a rumour out there in the jungle - they say she's an arrogant one and won't have anyone muddying her waters.*
2. *Suggests something like a giraffe. A very tall slender creature with a long upward slanting carriage. Usually kind and gentle but there is power there too if the need arises. Conjures up the image of a spaceship sitting dormant on the launch-pad only showing its hidden power at the final moment.*
3. *A small bear like that little polar bear they recently introduced to the world at the Berlin Zoo. Bears look so harmless and that little fellow probably was. X suggests cute and cuddly - hence that beautiful little bear.*
4. *A Bat. I picture an old haunted castle inhabited by vampires and scary old-bats(quite similar to one seen at Telecom it's alleged) flying about the place - they've been there for centuries and the wind whistles right through the place - Woo,woo,woo goes the wind. Sh! Sh!.... my wife says to me as my teeth start chattering uncontrollably.....*
5. *A Bird of Paradise. A splendid creature preening itself, a little over-zealously maybe - I don't know. Sure there is real beauty here but what's beneath the surface. A soul, some heart or just the mirage - an image of beauty.*
6. *Fawn - Picture a little fawn being chased by a huge hungry predator like a jaguar or one of those even bigger cats. It's the old David & Goliath number and the poor lil fawn has to use every move, and then some, to outwit the giant on his case. At the last minute he pulls out his slingshot which saves him...but only just.*
7. *Killer Whale - the power and grace of an Orca is the first thing that comes to mind as far as animals are concerned.*
8. *Starlings - thousands 'n thousands of them flying just above the delta moving like one giant wave above the fields of crops which also dance in the wind.*
9. *Tiger - something silent with great power yet he doesn't need to show off - everyone knows who's boss. Doesn't waste his money or time on marketing either - no need to. The point here is he delivers time after time. That's just the way it is - he's an inspiration!*



## Brand values and emotional relationship

We needed to understand the ideal brand values and relationship with the company for a new service. After thorough discussion of the service, we asked respondents to imagine that the ideal company for this service held a launch party for Auckland and had sent them an invitation – which they were asked to describe. Following are two of the responses exactly as given.

### Linda

*“The invitation is shaped like a stop sign, green in colour with yellow writing, giving the impression of eco-friendly. It attracts your attention straight away. The name of the company is in large letters and seems to be a brighter yellow than the rest of the invitation so it stands out in your mind - not to be forgotten. The invitation invites you to come and join their business family function so you feel as if a friend has sent you an invitation.*

*The occasion is not an upmarket cocktail part, nor a fancy dress, but a more down to earth affair with easy to listen music playing in the background, food and drinks being served and a generally relaxing atmosphere. The owner, partners and staff are all dressed in casual trousers or skirts, dark green, with pale yellow casual shirts - they are casually dressed so making people feel at ease and more comfortable in the surroundings. It is not a formal, starchy function, so everyone enjoys themselves, but there are a few speeches to launch the company and its new products. However, after the speeches the guests are asked to offer any opinion or ask questions so you feel as if you are contributing also.*

*As the function is held early evening it is easy for people to get away from their workplace and the function is out of the city area but there is plenty of parking once they arrive. To show off some of the new technology there is a splendid sound and light show put on for entertainment - this done well is quite spectacular. Some exciting handouts are given to everyone as they leave, with a small gift and information relating to the company services and commitments to their customers.*

*It is a most enjoyable relaxed atmosphere and the staff and management make everyone feel very welcome. There are no airs and graces where management sit at a top table or only speak with the managers of other companies, it is down to earth - good old kiwi style. It differs from other functions as most are either cocktail parties, early morning breakfasts, etc. and are really only an excuse for a party or get together or shareholder meeting, this function gives you a more relaxed setting to contribute as well as enjoy.”*

### Andy

*“The invitation would be in a green box and when you open it, it pops out at you like a jack in the box, it would be detachable, clear plastic, again green, and credit card sized. Something that you'd want to keep. It delivers a punch!*

*The wording would jump out (like the words when watching batman "kapow"), very eye-catching.*

*Venue would be in some random location. There would be a range of activities, broad enough for everyone to participate should they choose to... to link up them being able to provide a range of services. Would be late afternoon. Fancy dress too.*

*The owners/managers are going to be there, where anyone can talk to them but some to be disguised (ie Richard Branson in his show pretending to be the cab driver) to provide some effect.*

*Fun, fun, fun!!.”*





## Complicated topics

Exploratory qualitative research often requires that we ask people about complex topics that require them to think deeply and reply with significant detail. Decision-making processes and customer journeys are some topics that fall into this category. Online boards can be an ideal way to capture these and two typical answers are presented below exactly as they were written.

### Question: How would you describe the NZ healthcare system to someone totally new to it?

#### John

*The health care system is multi tiered. There are General practitioners, who are the primary care and a dual system of public and private hospitals. on top of all this are Specialists. day to day illnesses are normally treated by GPs who can charge anything from \$30 upwards. The public system is free but only to residents. all others have to pay. The private system is all pay pay pay for even the slightest thing. Payment is made normally at the time of treatment with GPs and Private and for non residents in the public system. Health or Travel Insurance takes care of the private or public non resident or for specialist treatment. Specialist treatment for the public system is free this includes MRI and CT scans. however sometimes in non urgent cases this can be a long wait unless it is urgent or life threatening.*

*For accidental injuries are normally free for residents and non residents alike under the Accident Compensation commission. Free treatment for non residents under this system is not popular with residents who have to pay a levy to ACC while visitors should be covered by their own travel insurance. For long term chronic illnesses treatment is free and can include residential care however recent Governments have tried to push this on to relatives often at great hardship to the families.*

*Non urgent surgery normally takes quite a long time to receive unless covered by medical insurance where the treatment is virtually immediate. It irks people who cannot afford health insurance that the Surgeons who would operate on them seem to be too busy with doing their more lucrative private practice.*

#### Barbara

*In New Zealand we have a rather complicated system of health care. Some services are free, some you have to pay for yourself. Some things like accidents are covered by a form of Government insurance called ACC.*

*Firstly if you want total cover for all events and private health care you have to personally insure yourself through an insurance company. Depending on your age and health needs this can be extremely expensive, but in certain cases well worthwhile if you need specialist surgery or treatment. In general without insurance this is how the NZ health system works.*

*For emergency care, ie heart attack, or accident or serious illness if you are admitted to hospital it is free at a public hospital. Care in those hospitals appears to vary depending on locality.*

*For non urgent (elective surgery) waiting times can be quite extensive depending again on location. For general medical needs you have to register with a doctor GP and you pay per visit. Depending on your income there is a graduated cost per visit. (certain people are eligible for discounts, ie pensioners, people on low income, children etc). Compared to the UK doctors visits are very costly. You also have to pay for your prescription medicine when you pick it up from the chemist. Some medicine is subsidised some is not.*

*There are certain local community services which offer very low cost medical health checks.. you need to find out where they are. Certain screenings of cervical, blood pressure, general health checks are available at these places sometimes for free.*



*If you choose, sometimes you can speed up treatment times by electing to pay privately for services for instance. If you would like to have an Xray quickly rather than wait to be on the hospital waiting list, or if you would like to have a cataract operation, by paying for these services yourself or through your insurance waiting times for surgery can be fast tracked.*

*Last in New Zealand if you are working and have an accident and are unable to work, the Accident Compensation Corporation will review your personal circumstances and if you qualify, once you have used your sickness pay from work, if you qualify you can receive up to 80% of your salary for a certain period of time. This comes about because you pay a tax on your wages called ACC levy. Everyone is entitled to ACC but as I said it is reviewed on a one to one basis.*





## Controversial topics

Honest (and potentially unpleasant) opinions can appear in an online board more easily than a focus group or even an interview – and we need to explore and understand these views, even if we disagree with them.

### Question: how well do you think the NZ healthcare system works?

#### Dave

*On the whole I think it works reasonably well. If you have an emergency you will be taken care of promptly and effectively. However, I do know that a sector of our Community, do not follow procedure and use the Hospital as their first port of call rather than get treatment from their local Medical Centre.*

*I am also aware that Hospitals are unable to turn anyone down in an emergency and some overseas visitors turn up for treatment without any apparent plans to pay.*

*I think our Health system is better than parts of Europe and the US but I do believe they do the overseas visitor thing better than we do. We all know that if you travel you need Travel Insurance. If you are in the US it is the first thing you are asked, second is your Credit Card.*

*I believe we are known overseas as a soft touch. Effort will be made to get payment (in the case of Hospitals, after the event) but I think a lot of incoming travellers know that they will receive treatment, often for existing conditions, and payment can be ignored or avoided.*

*As to Private Medical Insurance. Everyone should do their best to have cover, especially the 22 -40 year olds. As the chances of having to claim are not great for this age group the premium is more reasonable. It should cover elective surgery as emergency is covered by Public Health. Why would you want to wait for a diagnostic tumour scan or a non-accident joint replacement.*

*I believe that Private Health Insurance is a great back-up to the Emergency Public Health system however I am concerned at what appears to be a Specialist benefit. The Private Insurance companies pay the Specialists who are often the shareholders of the Private Hospital Centres and then recover from the Premium holder, you and I.*

*I am not convinced that there is any meaningful competition and that Policy Holders feel they can't not have cover and therefore pay.*

*I do think there is not the uniformity of service in a Public Hospital compared with the Private sector. In my experience the Private Hospital / Specialists Centre are always very customer focused. They appear well trained and probably have a higher to Patient ratio.*

*Whilst Public Hospital staff are generally good there seems to be always a minority with bureaucratic and impatient attitudes. Perhaps they reflect a part of their customer base.*

#### Liz

*I did not want to mention in my comment but you have alluded to it well. Recent experience with public hospital systems amazed me at the very arrogant attitude of some ethnic groups using the public health system. There appeared to be a very high proportion of them needing attention but the visitors gave no respect to staff or rules such as non smoking in hosp grounds.*

*There does not need to be different rules for different ethnic groups such as allowing 6 or 7 people to join the patient in a pre operative assessment.*



## Blue sky questions

Below are all the replies to a very “big” question asked on a board in 2008. It shows the range of opinions, the depth to which they can be expressed, and also the interaction between moderator and participants (reinforcement of their efforts, requests for clarification or more information, etc).

### **Question: What are some of the most important issues you think Auckland faces now and going ahead into the next 5-10 years?**

*Don't worry about creating the ultimate list of everything - just maybe the 3-5 or so you think are most important, with a brief explanation of what each issue is (in case I don't know!) and why you consider it important for Auckland.*

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#### **Michelle**

I think important issues are housing and housing prices. The fact that it is harder and harder to buy a house in Auckland. I feel Crime is an issue that is important and is increasing day by day, or I dont know if it is increasing or if it is just what we know about is increasing.

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#### **Karin**

Thanks, Michelle. Anything else besides housing/house prices and crime that you think are issues for Auckland?

I understand what you mean about not knowing if crime is really increasing or that reporting and coverage is increasing... :-)

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#### **Michelle**

Having a chance to think about it, I also think we have issues with traffic which goes hand in hand with environmental issues for example pollution, I dont remember having to breath so many fumes when I was a kid and recycling, we do not have programs for recycling plastic supermarket bags other than taking them to a select few supermarkets and I imagine the same would apply to a lot of what goes into land fill. The temporary recycling program for eco bulbs was great for a short time.

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#### **Karin**

Thanks! There is a lot to think about, isn't there?

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#### **Lucy**

Transport obviously.

Infill housing and leaky homes. I believe that half the reason we have so much crime, especially youth crime is that the councils are now allowing developers to build houses on anything less than 400-500 sq metres where you can basically hold hands with your neighbours. Children have nowhere to play in their backyards as they don't have one and therefore go out onto the streets and cause havoc, graffiti, gangs, drinking etc.

Dare I say it, too many immigrants and are they skilled enough to not be a burden on society in the future. You only have to look at South Auckland to see these problems going on.

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#### **Karin**

Please feel free to express whatever opinions you hold. I'm not going to censor it unless you get outright abusive, which you certainly haven't. This is also why it's a one-to-one forum, to allow people greater comfort to say what they really think without worrying about whether it's going to be taken the wrong way.



Can you clarify a bit more why transport is an issue? I know it probably seems obvious, but everyone will see it differently and what's obvious to one person isn't to another - and I don't want to risk putting words in your mouth, so to speak! ;-)

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**Lucy**

Transport from the Rodney area is an absolute shocker. The new bus lane has done very little to ease congestion, especially for those who need to take their cars to work in Auckland city as they are required to use their cars during the day to go to meetings, run errands etc.

South of the bridge has the option of the train which is a great idea, but obviously this is not on the North side of the bridge.

And the new bus lane. Apparently those buses which pay to use it are able to and those which do not pay are not allowed to use it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Whats the go with that. Surely a bus lane should be for all buses, whether they are taking people to work, school children on trips, tourists around our beautiful country. The idea was to get the buses off the motorways, so why are all buses not allowed to use it. This defeats the idea of the bus lane to me.....

Hope that clarifys it more for you. I am a passionate person when I get going....

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**Karin**

Hey, tell me anything you want!!! I'll read every word, I promise. Passionate people with a lot to say are generally interesting - and certainly far more useful when doing research...

Thanks for the additional details. I had no idea that's how the bus lanes worked. Where did you find that out?

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**Lucy**

I found that out from my husband who is GM for a tourism company that carries about 15,000 passengers around NZ each year and they are not allowed to use the bus lanes. At present they have 20 coaches on the road so seems a bit silly that not all buses/coaches can use this bus lane.....

So the service we give to visitors to NZ who are bringing income into NZ is to sit in a motorway queue when there is a bus lane that they could be using.

He also believes that the bus lane should be opened up to people who have three or more people in a car as this would help the congestion. Just a thought.

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**Karin**

Hmmm, a carpool lane. I've often wondered why we don't have those, too. They work successfully in other parts of the world, or at least seem to! :-)

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**Brent**

Transport - again outdated. In my lifetime the idea of 'rapid rail' has been discussed - with still no definite



planning.

Housing - shortages, and urban sprawl

Racial issues - this includes the next one - poverty - all the poor people are grouped together, and keep together for support.

Poverty - a second-class society is emerging

Infrastructure - Auckland still has a band-aid mentality - building a transport system and health system which is far too small to cope with the growth of the city

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### **Christine**

Without a doubt TRAFFIC CONGESTION, spaghetti junction has turned into Vermicelli junction with no end to the traffic congestion. Sometimes I am on the motorway at at 10.30am in the morning City Bound and it is still bumper to bumper. Old enough to remember "Car Less Days" I don't think that is the answer. What is? not sure, I don't use the public transport system as I am a Sales Rep on the road across Auckland. If I wasn't I still don't think I would use the Public Transport system - too unreliable, impractical( sometimes having to catch 2 buses to get to 1 destination) and the time delay.

Auckland City needs Tourism to keep our economy going, do we do enough to promote it? I think we could be doing more within New Zealand and overseas.

The City Centre needs a face lift making it more of a destination of choice for people. Queen Street and the surrounding area doesn't attract people from the "burbs" to visit.

Changing the mix of shops along Queen Street may help. Haven't visited for many years but last time I was there seemed to be filled with discount shops all selling similar products.

Smith & Caughey was the only old faithful I recognised.

Services - Ensuring that they always have enough electricity for the City. Power Cuts shouldn't happen. Loss of revenue for the city and its retailers was high

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### **Karin**

I also worry about the services like electricity!

And since you've named traffic congestion as an issue, you'll be pleased at the subject of the rest of the research as it will give you a chance to talk about a proposed method of addressing it. :-)

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### **Jerry**

Transport

With the growing population there is an ever increasing number of cars on the road.

Public Transport

With higher running costs more people will be pushed into using public transport. The public transport will need to be safe, reliable and more user friendly (my wife used to take the bus to work from our old house in Manukau and had to change busses twice on the trip)

Crime

The incidents of serious crime seem to be on the rise. this will only get worse with more and more people in the area.

Housing

With more people comes more pressure on housing and housing affordability. Add to this the pressure interest rates put on people and the issues compound.

Water and Waste water charges

I recall 6 or so years ago our household water rates were approx \$150 per year. At present we are paying approx \$150 every 3 months.



**Karin**

I think the issues you've raised are ones that many other people are concerned about, too. Have the water rates really gone up that much?

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**James**

New motor way links that speed up traveling time between west and south auckland areas and the north shore with out going in towards town or through built up areas such as school and shopping mall zones. More reliable public transport as in trans and busses that run durring the night time as well as day time.as for some pepole to get home from work in the early hours of the morning that cant afford the cost of taxis everyday.,so instead they use there own cars or rely on work mates,. better power supply as the power stations are getting close to there limets as to the groth of new housing and the amount of pepole in auckland,and the lack of heavy rain to keep the daims up to a save level,. more government insentevs for pepole to install solar power water heating and the use of lpg which is cleaner buring then petrol or desiels for house hold heating and the running of normail every day family cars.,and rain water catch tanks for watering gardens and supplying toliest and washing machine.

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**Karin**

Thanks for a really well-thought out answer. You've made some excellent points. :-)

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**Brenda**

1. Crime including grafitti
2. Accessing funding for essential services such as schools, hospitals
3. Traffic congestion
4. Helping first home buyers to buy a house. (prob more a government issue??)
5. Keeping young people occupied and employed so that they are less inclined to get into or cause trouble

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**Karin**

Can you please just give a teensy more detail about how these affect you and Aucklanders generally? I know some of it seems obvious and that my question is a bit silly, but I've often found that what one person assumes is the obvious reason isn't what another meant at all! I'd rather come across as a bit thick now and make sure that I understand what you mean than pretend I know and get it wrong. Thanks! :-)

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**Brenda**

1. Would help make Auckland a safer and more pleasant place to live. Our family would feel safer, and our son could live more freely instead of being restricted constantly by us as parents worried about what could happen at any given moment. For example we live right on a beautiful park space and we can't let our son go there on his own out of fears for his safety. Playgrounds free of graffiti are clean feeling and pleasant and would be utilised more. Our son would grow up knowing that people respect other peoples property or community property, thereby providing good modelling for his behaviour.
2. Schools and hospitals need ample funding to perform what they exist for to a high standard. Helps prevent further problems and expense in the future. Also helps out families who don't have a lot of money but need to access these services despite this. Takes fundraising pressure off families who may have other significant stresses in their lives/families. For me personally, I would know that there would be nothing hindering my sons education or access to quality healthcare if he needed it.
3. Covered pretty fully already. Basically would balance out the city, remove pressure from



overloaded roads and increase public transport useage. A potential win/win. For me, would mean I had a happier & less stressed husband who could have more freedom of choice as to where he worked, without concern for traffic jams and congestion.

4. Would get people off the rental treadmill and investing in their future. Less struggle and more financial and emotional security. Hard to see friend's struggling to get set up financially, working hard, making sacrifices but not getting far financially. Anything that would make it easier for them would make me happier.

5. Bored and restless youth with no sense of purpose or belonging can pose enormous problems in society relating to graffiti and crime. Makes people fearful, mistrustful and unhappy. Petty crime can lead to more serious crime if left unchecked. Youth need early intervention and help to get on the right track for the betterment of all of society, themselves included. I would feel safer and more content knowing that my environment, family and personal space is secure.

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**Jeannette**

Power (we need to find economical alternatives to the national grid, preferably solar).

Roading (we need to reduce traffic)

Air Quality (we need to reduce people concentration in the city to improve the air quality)

Entertainment ( we need more free entertainment spaces -with trees! -, children's playground's, areas for impromptu sports - neighbourhood sports, family/friends sports, concerts)

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**Karin**

Thanks for checking back on this question, Jeannette... I was worried you were so angry at the proposal that you weren't going to talk to me any more!! And remember, I'm just the messenger. ;-)

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**Garth**

Motorway Congestion: I travel each day from Albany to Penrose (my choice admittedly) and the congestion is a concern.

Lack of Identity: Despite local government attempts Auckland does still not have a "heart"...it appears to comprise dozens of suburbs each doing their own thing. The concern for me is that there is no unity and therefore no sense of pulling together when we really need to - like compromising when a big "opportunity" like hosting Rugby Cup / Soccer Cup / Americas Cup etc comes along.

Cost of Housing in Auckland: Enough conflict already in respect of whether or not more land should be available for housing. Everyone voices an opinion as to whether making more land available pushes prices down but nothing gets done.

Fishing Resources: more resource needs to be put into policing our shores. Pillaging of the shellfish stocks will result in nothing left for our children's children.

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**Karin**

Hi Garth - thanks for starting! You do have quite a commute, don't you? Thanks for the very thoughtful answer. :-)

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**Josephine P**

Lack of a good public transport system.



Lack of planning for our road infrastructure.

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**Felicia**

TRANSPORT: I am so glad that Auckland is finally having some of the public transport issues addressed and actioned. The double tracking of the western rail route is well underway and will be fantastic when that is completed, as the schedule should be able to have more trips. There is also rumours that the rail line will be reinstated for public travel to Helensville. Having more park'n'ride areas I believe is essential for people to be able to feel like using public transport. One of the good things I've noticed is the cycle lockers by some train stations - my husband often rides and trains to or from work so we are aware of cycle-friendly areas.

Personally I would love to see more of the one-ticket-any-service across the public transport network, so you could purchase your ticket to the final destination at the start point of your journey, even if you need to change from bus to train to ferry etc.

It will be great to have the motorway connection out west (western ring route) completed also for those who need to use private or work vehicles.

Cycle friendly options should be high priority for all areas also.

RECREATIONAL SPACES: As Auckland population is growing, preserving the green spaces and beauty of the region is essential for free access for the public. I love that we have so many outdoor things to choose to do in the area including bush walks, beach access etc. I hope that ARC will continue to protect the open spaces and obtain large chunks of land when possible - like Piha's Stedfast Park - so they can continue to be available for our young and old alike to utilise.

WATER & OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE: With so many people expected to join the Auckland region, I believe we should be taking regionwide approaches to such things as solar installation, water tanks for grey water etc. Rather than just individual councils taking that on. Its a worry to think that the structures in place may not be expanding at the rate of population growth to cope with all the extra usage. It makes sense to me that all new buildings should either have compulsory solar and water tanks fitted, and there be big incentives to those wanting to retro-fit their homes with these things.

Karin Curran

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