

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON TRANSPORT

Western Harbour Crossing Tolls

Introduction

This paper informs Members of the new statutory toll levels of the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) with effect from 31 July 2005. It also informs Members that the WHC will continue to offer the existing concessionary tolls to all categories of vehicles. Hence, *the actual toll levels will remain unchanged* and users will not be affected by the exercise.

Background

2. The Western Harbour Crossing Ordinance (Cap. 436) (the Ordinance) provides for a specified toll adjustment mechanism in respect of WHC. Under the Ordinance, the franchisee may effect toll increases on six specified dates (1 January 2001, 1 January 2005, 1 January 2009, 1 January 2013, 1 January 2017 and 1 January 2021). However, if the franchisee's actual net revenue in any year (that is not a year ending immediately before the specified dates) falls short of the minimum estimated net revenue for that year specified in Schedule 5 to the Ordinance, the franchisee may advance the toll increase. The maximum levels of increase in respect of different categories of vehicles are specified in Schedule 2 to the Ordinance.

3. Since the operation of WHC in 1997, the franchisee's net revenue has consistently fallen short of the specified levels. Hence, under the Ordinance, the franchisee would have been entitled to advance all the six rounds of toll increase by now. To date, the franchisee has raised its statutory tolls thrice in December 2000, July 2002 and February 2004 respectively. However, concessionary tolls are offered to all vehicle classes except single-decked and double-decked buses. The concessions have essentially maintained the tolls at the 2000 statutory levels.

4. The last toll increase of WHC was made on the basis of its 2000/01 Net Revenue Statement (NRS). The Administration gazetted the new statutory tolls on 13 February 2004. While the tolls were to take effect on 24 February 2004, the franchisee offered concessionary tolls for all vehicles from the same date

so that the then prevailing toll levels were maintained. Subsequently, due to financial considerations, the franchisee reduced the concessions for all types of vehicles except taxis and additional axles on 4 July 2004. A summary of the historical changes in WHC's toll levels is at **Annex A**.

5. The franchisee of WHC submitted its 2001/02 NRS in August 2002. As required under the specified toll adjustment mechanism, we carefully examined the NRS of WHC and noted that the franchisee's net revenue of \$299 million was lower than the minimum net revenue of \$713 million for that year specified in Schedule 5 to the Ordinance. While the franchisee may effect a toll increase under the law, we have repeatedly urged it to have due regard to the prevailing economic conditions and public interest in devising its tolling strategy.

Present Position

6. The franchisee recently notified the Administration its decision to exercise its right to a statutory toll increase on the basis of its 2001/02 NRS and to effect the new toll levels (at **Annex B**) on 31 July 2005. At the same time, the franchisee will continue to offer concessions for all types of vehicles so that the current toll levels would be maintained and users will not be affected.

7. The franchisee has complied with the requirements under the Ordinance to effect the statutory toll increase. We have nevertheless reminded the franchisee that they should explain clearly to the public the difference between gazetting the new statutory toll levels and maintaining the concessions, which will make the actual toll levels for all vehicles unchanged.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
July 2005

Annex A**Historical Toll Levels of WHC**

	30 April 1997		3 December 2000		31 July 2002		16 February 2003		24 February 2004		4 July 2004	
	Statutory	Conces- sionary	Statutory	Conces- sionary	Statutory	Conces- sionary	Statutory	Conces- sionary	Statutory	Conces- sionary	Statutory	Conces- sionary
Motorcycles	\$15	\$15	\$20	\$20	\$25	\$20	\$25	\$20	\$30	\$20	\$30	\$22
Private cars	\$30	\$30	\$40	\$35	\$50	\$35	\$50	\$37	\$60	\$37	\$60	\$40
Taxis	\$30	\$30	\$40	\$35	\$50	\$35	\$50	\$35	\$60	\$35	\$60	\$35
Light buses	\$40	\$40	\$50	\$45	\$60	\$45	\$60	\$47	\$70	\$47	\$70	\$50
Light goods vehicles	\$45	\$45	\$60	\$50	\$75	\$50	\$75	\$50	\$90	\$50	\$90	\$55
Medium goods vehicles	\$65	\$65	\$85	\$70	\$105	\$70	\$105	\$70	\$125	\$70	\$125	\$80
Heavy goods vehicles	\$95	\$95	\$125	\$100	\$155	\$100	\$155	\$100	\$185	\$100	\$185	\$110
Single-decked buses	\$40	\$40	\$50	\$50	\$60	\$50	\$60	\$60	\$70	\$60	\$70	\$70
Double-decked buses	\$55	\$55	\$70	\$70	\$85	\$70	\$85	\$85	\$100	\$85	\$100	\$100
Additional axle	\$30	\$30	\$40	\$30	\$50	\$30	\$50	\$30	\$60	\$30	\$60	\$30

Annex B**Existing and New Statutory Tolls of WHC**

	Existing Tolls		New Tolls		Actual Increase
	Statutory	Concessionary	Statutory	Concessionary	
Motorcycles	\$30	\$22	\$35	\$22	\$0
Private cars	\$60	\$40	\$70	\$40	\$0
Taxis	\$60	\$35	\$70	\$35	\$0
Light buses	\$70	\$50	\$80	\$50	\$0
Light goods vehicles	\$90	\$55	\$105	\$55	\$0
Medium goods vehicles	\$125	\$80	\$145	\$80	\$0
Heavy goods vehicles	\$185	\$110	\$215	\$110	\$0
Single-decked buses	\$70	\$70	\$80	\$70	\$0
Double-decked buses	\$100	\$100	\$115	\$100	\$0
Additional axle	\$60	\$30	\$70	\$30	\$0