# The fall and rise of public transport

Public Transport patronage is flagging in our main urban centres in the post-Covid environment. The inflationary environment and half price fares across Aotearoa have meant cost recovery rates have collapsed at a time when local and central funding faces a squeeze. On the other hand, most recent transport business cases have a heavy public transport component with mode shift to public transport a key target. This may mean a new dawn in Public Transport is approaching to meet the demands of a carbon-constrained world. This is certainly the intention of local authorities like Auckland Transport who have set ambitious targets for mode shift to lift public transport patronage alongside the decarbonisation of the bus fleet.

Digital technology and on-demand systems showed great promise to deliver alternative public transport modes and assist public transport patronage - through the delivery of ridesharing and carpooling solutions. These services have got enormous backing from the private sector - but have got limited patronage traction for pooling. They have failed as public transport modes so far and also yielded little in terms of shareholder value.

The presentation will cover:

* Low and high side estimates for the uptake of public transport in large urban centres, and what the consequences are for these scenarios
* International successes and failures to stimulate mode shift towards public transport
* The pros and cons of new digital solutions to stimulate public transport; how this being trialed and implemented in New Zealand, and elsewhere.

Public transport must rise for any successful decarbonisation strategy but the mechanism isn’t yet apparent. But there are straws in the wind and changing attitude towards public transport that suggests that the first rays of the new dawn are upon us. These fundamentals will be examined in the presentation and there will be a discussion of the likely outcomes.