

# WORRY FREE WHEELS WITH cityhop

WHILE PETROL PRICES CLIMB AND MORE PEOPLE LOOK AT THE OPTIONS OF GETTING TO AND FROM WORK, THERE IS THE ISSUE OF WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE AT WORK AND NEED TO GO SOMEWHERE.

Public transport can help with the 9 and 5 grind, but those eight hours in between?

What happens if you need to rescue a sick child from school, or if you are called out to a business meeting? Public transport may not be such an attractive option then, not being available on demand, but there is a solution – *Cityhop*.

*Cityhop* is like a rental car company... well, no, its more like a communal car share... well no, it's kind of a combination of both.

Look, here's how it works – you see if you can describe it: *Cityhop* has a network of locations - growing by the day and centred on the Auckland CBD.

At these locations are readily identifiable *Cityhop* cars - either Daihatsu Sirions or Mitsubishi I-cars - fully fuelled,



fully insured, clean, tidy and ready to go with the keys inside.

You, as a registered 'City Hopper', call to confirm that a *Cityhop* car is available at your nearest location, and then you take your *Cityhop* swipe card, hop down to 'your' car, access it via the card and drive away to do whatever you need to do.





When you've done what it is you need to do, you just return 'your' *Cityhop* car to its car park and make your way back to the office, the bus stop or train station to home if you've timed it right.

Ok, these cars aren't free. There is an annual fee to be a City Hopper and its \$75 - think of it as club membership. After that, *Cityhop* cars are charged on an hourly rate of \$15 per hour.

If, however, you plan to use a *Cityhop* car for more than 10 hours a month, that fee is \$13.50 per hour.

Now, if you do your sums, you'll probably find the annual fee and the hire costs considerably less than car ownership, especially given that *Cityhop* pays for registration, insurance, tyres, periodic maintenance, grooming and fuel.

Put simply, *Cityhop* gives you all the benefits of car ownership without the hassles.

There are special rates for special situations and you can find out about those when you join *Cityhop*.

We're not dodging issues, but there's still a bit to tell, so you'll excuse us hopping past a few points.

As far as parking in the inner city goes, *Cityhop* cars have designated parking spaces in the CBD notably in the Downtown, Victoria St and Civic parking buildings among others and there are *Cityhop* locations in Freemans Bay, Parnell and Newmarket.

Someone's bound to ask, so we'll tell you, yes the cars are third party insured for drivers over 21, but there is a standard \$1000 excess - \$1250 for drivers under 21. *Cityhop* can reduce the \$1000 excess to \$250, for \$100 a year or \$8.30 a month.

So where did the *Cityhop* concept come from?

It's not an original idea which Aotearoa can take the credit for.

Car share schemes are very successful in Europe and the US, where Lee Iacocca and the former head of Hertz have really pushed the idea along.

A US car share company – Zipcar - estimates that it is

responsible for taking 32,000 cars off the road since 2000. Lee Iacocca and the former head of Hertz bought into one of the largest car sharing companies a few years back.

Streetcar in the United Kingdom began three years ago and today has over 10,000 members, 250 car and 150 spaces. In Australia, Go Get and Flexicar have received state government funding to get off the ground.

In New Zealand, the *Cityhop* concept is the result of a cooperative idea between former Auckland City Councilor Victoria Carter and Jucy Rentals' Tim and Chris Alpe. "We tend to follow the rest of the world with trends. If Americans, whom we think of as large car consumers can car share, surely we can start to adapt our thinking," she says.

"The cooperative between *Cityhop* and Jucy Rentals works well," says Victoria, "as we can draw off the Jucy Rentals fleet if we need to as the *Cityhop* idea takes off." And is it taking off? In the last few months, the *Cityhop* fleet has grown from 5 to 20 cars. What's more, the concept is due to expand into Wellington and Christchurch very soon.

For us JAJA's though, *Cityhop* looks set to expand out from the CBD and into the suburbs very soon.

Many professional businesses have warmed to the *Cityhop* concept, with car parking spaces being re-designated as cityhop spots as the traditional company car goes by the wayside to make room for worry-free *Cityhop* wheels. Wellington also has a *Cityhop* site for example, and there will be more to come as users warm to the idea.

Currently, *Cityhop* is being utilised by individuals and corporates alike with Victoria encouraging larger corporates to implement *Cityhop* into work travel plans or into employment contracts.

"We aren't saying get rid of your car," says Victoria.

"We're saying perhaps there is a better way for you to get to work and when you need a car – consider *Cityhop* to get about."

