

# Auckland harbour bridge opens

30 May 1959

1959

(MCH, 2016)



New Zealand's best-known bridge opened after four years of construction.

The need for better transport links between Auckland city and the North Shore had long been the subject of inquiry and agitation. The Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority was set up in 1950 to raise funds and organise construction. The bridge's 'coat hanger' design, with lattice girders on the 243-m span, allowed ships to pass beneath.

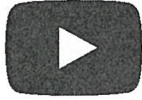
Building the bridge involved clever cantilevering of the steel girders, and staff working 33 m below sea level preparing the foundations of the reinforced concrete piers. The bridge is 1017 m long, and used 5670 tonnes of steel, 17,160 cubic m of concrete and 6800 litres of paint.

Originally, the bridge had only four lanes, but this quickly proved inadequate. In September 1969 the 'Nippon clip-ons' – two lanes on each side, pre-fabricated in Japan – were added. At the time, this was pioneering technology, but 15 years later fatigue was discovered in the splice joints and several thousand had to be replaced. Trucks were charged on the bridge until 1984.

Watch a film about the addition of the 'Nippon clip-ons' to the Auckland harbour bridge (Archives New Zealand YouTube):

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### Harbour Bridge Clips From 1961 + 1968



Read more on NZHistory

1959 - key events – The 1950s

Auckland Harbour Bridge – 100 New Zealand Places

External links

The Nippon clip-ons (Te Ara)

Building the bridge (Auckland Libraries)

Suzy's World: Harbour bridge (Tree Hut)

Auckland city communications (1966 encyclopaedia)

Auckland's 'coat-hanger' bridge - roadside stories (YouTube)

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