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Climate activists block Wellington motorway

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Protesters, believed to be climate activists, wearing high-viz vests are blocking the southbound lane of Wellington's Terrace Tunnel while police work to remove them. Photo: RNZ / Soumya Bhamidipati

Police have removed six protesters who blocked the southbound lane of the Wellington motorway in the Terrace tunnel, and traffic is flowing freely again.

The Restore Passenger Rail activists sat on the south-bound lane of the urban motorway this morning, causing traffic to back up to Ngauranga Gorge.

The protesters were taken away in a police van.

Police had asked Wellington motorists to detour via The Terrace off-ramp after protesters closed the southbound lane of the Terrace Tunnel motorway.

An RNZ reporter at the scene said at least six protesters wearing high-viz vests were sitting on the southbound lane while police worked to remove them.

The protesters unfurled a banner and handed out flyers to motorists calling for the restoration of passenger rail.

The flyer was headed 'Peaceful Disruption' and said the protesters were "sincerely sorry" for the disruption but saying climate change could not be ignored.



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P **Traffic banked up as police worked to clear the protesters from the motorway.**

Transport Minister Michael Wood said it was "totally unacceptable" for protesters to disrupt Wellington commuters.

The protest group wants the government to increase rail coverage to what it was in 2002.

But Wood said the government had put \$8.6 billion into rail since 2017, and introduced the first regional service in a decade.

He said the protesters should be building support for rail investment, instead of undermining their cause and frustrating the public.

Police are considering charges.

Police remove a protester from the Wellington motorway approaching the Terrace Tunnel who is believed to have superglued his hand to the road. Photo: RNZ / Soumya Bhamidipati