

Speed management – addressing the highest risk parts of the network

Reason for this briefing	This briefing outlines the approach to speed management to address the highest risk parts of New Zealand's road network.
Action required	Confirm the approach to addressing the top 10 percent highest risk parts of the network over the next 10 years. If you agree, sign the attached letter to the Chair of the New Zealand Transport Agency Board confirming this policy intent.
Deadline	31 July 2019
Reason for deadline	Subject to your agreement, we recommend that once you have written to the New Zealand Transport Agency Board confirming the policy direction, we publish this briefing alongside the Road to Zero strategy consultation document and other associated materials. It is desirable to do this as soon as possible.

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	First contact
Brent Johnston	Manager, Mobility and Safety	022 066 4401	✓
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MINISTER'S COMMENTS:

Date:	25 July 2019	Briefing number:	OC190597
Attention:	Hon Phil Twyford (Minister of Transport) Hon Julie Anne Genter (Associate Minister of Transport)	Security level:	In-confidence

Minister of Transport's office actions

- Noted
 Seen
 Approved
- Needs change
 Referred to
- Withdrawn
 Not seen by Minister
 Overtaken by events

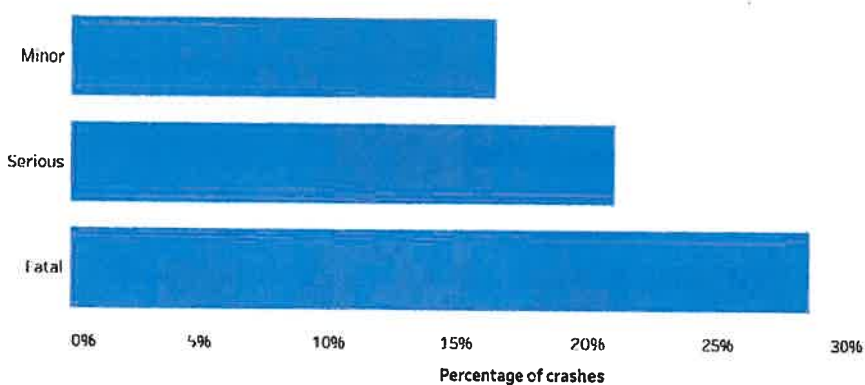
Purpose of this briefing

1. Released in June 2018, the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19 – 2027/28 (GPS 2018) establishes safety as one of four strategic priorities guiding transport investment and decision-making.
2. GPS 2018 specifically supports investment in State Highways and local roads to “accelerate the implementation of the new Speed Management Guide, focusing on treating the top 10 percent of the network which will result in the greatest reduction in death and serious injury as quickly as possible (such as reviewing speed limits and/or making engineering improvements to make a road safe for its current speed limit)”.
3. This briefing confirms the current approach, using speed management interventions, to address the highest risk parts of the road network over the next 10 years. Subject to your agreement to the approach outlined, we recommend you communicate this in writing to the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) Board.

Tackling unsafe speeds is a key part of improving road safety

4. Speed continues to be a major contributing factor to deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand roads. In the event of a crash, regardless of its cause, the speed of impact is the most important determinant of the severity of injuries sustained and the probability of death and serious injury.
5. There is strong evidence that a decrease in the mean travel speed on a road is associated with a decrease in the number of crashes, as well as the severity¹. At lower speeds, vehicles have shorter braking distances and people have more time to react and take action to avoid a crash. When crashes do occur, lower travel speeds mean the crash impact energy is lower, reducing the severity.
6. Of the crashes that do occur on New Zealand roads, the more serious the crash, the greater the likelihood that speed is a contributing factor. Between 2015 and 2017, speeding² was a factor in 29 percent of fatal crashes, 21 percent of serious injury crashes, and 16 percent of minor injury crashes.

Percentage of crashes with driving too fast for the conditions cited as a contributing factor (2015 - 2017)³



¹ [International Transport Forum's 2018 report on speed and crash risk.](#)

² Speeding in this data is defined as driving too fast for the conditions, which does not necessarily mean exceeding the posted speed limit.

³ Ministry of Transport website, *Contribution of speeding to crashes* statistics.

7. Tackling unsafe speeds has also been a focus in other jurisdictions that have made significant road safety gains in recent years. For example, in 2008, speed limits on a number of undivided rural roads in Sweden were reduced from 90 to 80 km/h. This led to a 41 percent reduction in fatalities on these roads during a two-and-half year period after the speed limits were reduced, and there was no significant change in the number of serious injuries⁴. Similarly, in July 2018, the speed limit on many undivided rural roads in France was reduced from 90 to 80 km/h. One year on, a provisional assessment of the impact of the speed limit reduction estimates there have been 206 fewer fatalities as a result of these changes⁵.

GPS 2018 prioritises the top 10 percent highest risk roads

8. As noted above, GPS 2018 sets out an expectation for road controlling authorities (RCAs) to focus on treating the top 10 percent of the network that will result in the greatest reduction in death and serious injury as quickly as possible. Minister Genter has also confirmed her expectation that the NZTA gives appropriate priority to speed management reviews where there is strong community support for change.
9. New Zealand has around 94,000 km of road network. There are approximately 11,000 km of State Highway network (for which the NZTA is the RCA) and 83,000 km of local roads (managed by local RCAs).
10. The State Highway network accounts for a significant share of the top 10 percent highest risk roads. In part, this is due to the high volumes of traffic carried on these roads. While the State Highway network accounts for 12 percent of the entire road network, it carries approximately half of the traffic.

The Government has ruled out wholesale speed reductions in favour of a measured, risk-based approach

11. Speed management does not just involve lowering speed limits. Rather, it is about matching the speed limit to the design, use, form and function of the road, and the risk posed to the road user. Roads can be engineered up to support existing or higher travel speeds. In some cases where there is not a strong case for investment, it may be appropriate to reduce the speed limit to reflect the safe and appropriate speed for the road.
12. Unless set otherwise, the default speed limits on New Zealand roads are 100 km/h on rural or open roads and 50 km/h for roads within a designated urban area. This has led to a misalignment between speed limits and the recommended safe and appropriate speeds on significant portions of the road network. According to the NZTA's analysis, 87 percent of New Zealand's roads do not have a safe and appropriate speed limit. This analysis is based on the NZTA's MegaMaps tool, which identifies the highest risk parts of the network based on previous crash history, current speed limits and the nature of the road.
13. The NZTA confirms it is taking an incremental, risk-based approach to speed management, targeting the areas of the network that pose the greatest risk to road users. Speed management reviews should be focused where there is the greatest need (ie, the highest risk areas or where the community has identified a major concern).
14. Under this risk-based approach, speed management reviews build on the findings of earlier speed reviews and the input of communities affected by speed management treatments. The

⁴ [International Transport Forum's 2018 report on speed and crash risk](#). In Sweden, between 2008 and 2011, speed limits were changed across the system, and not all changes resulted in the same reduction in fatalities.

⁵ Cerema (2019). *Reduction of the maximum authorised speed to 80 km/h – Evaluation – Elements at 12 months*.

draft Road to Zero Strategy includes a proposal to make this process more efficient and transparent.

The *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme will support speed management planning and accountability in the medium term

15. The *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme, under the draft Road to Zero Strategy, is developing a proposal for a new regulatory framework for speed management. This proposed framework would require the NZTA to develop a National Speed Management Plan and to support local RCAs to develop Regional Speed Management Plans. An independent committee would review the NZTA's National Plan to provide greater transparency and accountability around speed management treatments.
16. This planning process is intended to align with regional and national land transport planning processes to bring together speed management, infrastructure planning and investment decisions. Where a speed management intervention is required, RCAs will be clear about where there will be an engineering upgrade and where there will be a speed limit adjustment.
17. Once this process is established, the National Speed Management Plan would set out the NZTA's upcoming plans for speed management reviews and treatments on the State Highway network. The Regional Speed Management Plans would set out the upcoming plans for speed management reviews and treatments on local roads. These plans would be public documents and, alongside Land Transport Plans, would provide a clear indication of the upcoming investment and speed management decisions across the road network.
18. In the interim, it is desirable for Ministers and the public to have transparency around the approach the NZTA will take regarding speed management reviews, both in its capacity as RCA for State Highways and in its role in supporting local RCAs with speed management decisions.
19. We suggest you send a letter of expectations to the NZTA Board confirming this approach to addressing the highest risk parts of the network (refer **Appendix 1**). This approach is further outlined below.

The NZTA will follow an incremental, risk-based approach to speed management

The NZTA is currently progressing 40 speed management reviews across the State Highway network

20. The NZTA is currently undertaking speed reviews across 600 km of the State Highway network (or 0.6 percent of the total road network).
21. The NZTA's first phase of reviews includes 40 speed management reviews made up of 44 State Highway corridors. Of these 44 corridors, 38 include parts of the top 10 percent highest risk areas of the network, and all corridors have been identified by local communities as requiring review.
22. In parallel, the NZTA is continuing to develop speed management plans at a regional level. The approach and scale at which future State Highway network reviews and regional plans are rolled out will be informed by learnings from the first phase of reviews and in collaboration with local Councils.
23. The Ministry acknowledges that effective speed management relies on RCAs having sufficient capacity and capability to carry out thorough speed management reviews. In light of this, the Ministry considers it likely that a similar portion of the highest risk parts of the road network will have speed management reviews on an annual basis over 10 years.

24. A speed management review involves:
 - 24.1. a technical assessment of the road, including consideration of previous crash history, average travel speeds, number of vehicles a day on the road, the surrounding environment and land use, and other activity on the road
 - 24.2. engagement with affected communities, councils and other stakeholders to obtain feedback and local knowledge on the road and its use to inform the review and where speed limit change points might be most appropriate
 - 24.3. formal consultation.
25. A speed management review can result in the following recommendations:
 - 25.1. an engineering upgrade to support safe travel at existing speed limits
 - 25.2. a change to existing speed limits (an increase or decrease)
 - 25.3. no change to the road or speed limit.

The NZTA is also supporting local RCAs to address high risk parts of the local road network

26. The NZTA has also begun working more closely with local government at a regional level to address the highest risk parts of the local road network. The NZTA has initially prioritised the Auckland, Waikato and Canterbury regions. The NZTA intends to roll out this regional approach to speed management planning across the country over the next two years.
27. The proposed changes to the regulatory framework being developed through the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme aim to further enable, formalise and streamline this regional approach to speed management.

A measured, risk-based approach to speed management

28. Over the next 10 years, the NZTA will be taking an incremental, risk-based approach to further speed management changes and its ongoing collaboration with local RCAs. Rolling out the regional approach to speed management planning across the country over the next two years will deliver a measured progression of speed reviews on the top 10 percent highest risk roads.
29. These reviews will continue to build on the findings from speed management reviews in earlier years. The NZTA and local RCAs will have regard to the effectiveness of previous changes, including the impact on average travel times and safety outcomes. The NZTA and local RCAs will continue to consider both engineering upgrades and speed limit changes as part of their speed management reviews and engage closely with communities affected by a potential speed management treatment.
30. In the medium to long term, the speed management planning process under development would ensure Speed Management Plans provide the public with a clear indication of the upcoming speed management reviews and treatments across the network. The development of these documents would continue to provide opportunity for public input into the speed management process. Once established, the independent committee would provide greater transparency and accountability around speed management planning.
31. In the interim, the NZTA will be transparent about its proposed speed management reviews for the State Highway network, and where it intends to work collaboratively with local authorities to address the highest risk areas of the local road network.

32. In prioritising its speed management decisions, the NZTA will continue to be guided by priorities set out in Road Safety Strategies, Government Policy Statements on Land Transport and the Speed Management Guide.
33. This measured approach will reinforce the need to improve safety outcomes on our highest risk roads, ensuring speed management interventions are effective and targeted appropriately.

Recommendations

34. The recommendations are that you:
- (a) **agree** to the approach to addressing the top 10 percent highest risk parts of the road network Yes/~~No~~
 - (b) **agree** to sign the attached letter to Sir Brian Roche, Chair of the New Zealand Transport Agency Board, confirming the Government’s policy intent of the speed management priority outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19 – 2027/28 Yes/~~No~~
 - (c) **agree** to the Ministry of Transport proactively releasing this briefing by publishing it on the Ministry’s website alongside the Road to Zero Strategy consultation document and associated material. Yes/~~No~~



Brent Johnston
Manager, Mobility and Safety
Ministry of Transport

MINISTERS’ SIGNATURES:



Hon Phil Twyford
Minister of Transport
 DATE: 6.8.19

Hon Julie Anne Genter
Associate Minister of Transport
 DATE:

Appendix 1 – Letter of expectations to the New Zealand Transport Agency Board



MP for Te Atatu

Minister for Economic Development

Minister of Transport

Minister for Urban Development

08 AUG 2019

Sir Brian Roche
Chair, New Zealand Transport Agency Board
Private Bag 6995
Wellington 6141

Dear Sir Brian,

Confirmation of the Government's priorities for speed management

We are writing to you to confirm the policy intent of this Government's priorities for speed management as set out in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19–2027/28 (GPS 2018).

GPS 2018 sets out an expectation for the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and local road controlling authorities (RCAs) to focus on treating the top 10 percent of the network which will result in the greatest reduction in death and serious injury as quickly as possible.

We understand that the NZTA is progressing work on 40 speed management reviews, including 38 State Highway corridors that have been identified as part of the top 10 percent highest risk parts of the network. We also note the NZTA is rolling out a regional approach to speed management planning across the country over the next two years. We commend the NZTA for making progress in these areas.

We are writing to confirm the policy intent of this speed management priority set out in GPS 2018 is for:

- an incremental, risk-based approach to be taken to speed management over the next 10 years, targeting the areas of the network that pose the greatest risk to road users
- both engineering upgrades and speed limit reductions to be considered when a speed management review finds that a treatment is required
- the NZTA to assess the effectiveness of earlier speed management reviews to inform future reviews
- the NZTA to continue to be guided by priorities and expectations set out in the Road Safety Strategy, GPS 2018 (and future Government Policy Statements on Land Transport) and the Speed Management Guide
- the NZTA to set out its medium-term plan for speed management changes to the State Highway network in a National Speed Management Plan once the proposed regulatory framework is in place
- in the interim, the NZTA will be transparent about its speed management plans

- the NZTA to support local road controlling authorities to develop Regional Speed Management Plans to address the highest risk parts of the local road network.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large 'P' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

Hon Phil Twyford
Minister of Transport

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large loop at the start, followed by 'Julie Anne' and 'Genter'.

Hon Julie Anne Genter
Associate Minister of Transport