

27 August 2021

Tom Taylor  
Reporter  
Wairarapa Times-Age  
tom.taylor@age.co.nz

REF: OIA-8585

Dear Tom

**Request made under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 03 August 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*I would like to request the following information under the Official Information Act 1982.*

*In a press release by NZTA on July 26, director of regional relationships Emma Speight said: "Between January 2010 and December 2019, four people lost their lives and 28 people were seriously injured on SH2 between Masterton and Featherston. The impact of these deaths and serious injuries is devastating.*

- 1. Could you please provide the cause or factors contributing to each of these four deaths and 28 injuries?*
- 2. Could you please provide details of the location, date, and time of each of these incidents?*

*The press release also states: "Motorcyclists are more likely to survive an impact with a flexible safety barrier than an impact with trees, poles or oncoming vehicles which the barrier will prevent them striking in a crash."*

- 3. Could you please indicate whether any New Zealand studies supported this conclusion?*
- 4. Could you please explain how NZTA adapted the 2009 study of Carlsson, A\*, considering the layout of SH2 between Masterton and Featherston, which is different from the layout of roads in the study?*

*[\*Carlsson, A. (2009). Evaluation of 2+1 roads with cable barrier. Final report. VTI rapport 636A 4 3 8].*

In responding to your request, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency must consider the privacy implications of releasing details around individual crashes. The overriding principle of protecting the privacy of those involved means that we are unable to release all details of the crashes cited as part of the proposals for the SH2 Wairarapa safety improvements project.

Therefore, I am withholding certain information that falls within the scope of your request under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

The information you have requested in question 1 of your request together with some summary tables are being provided in the attached spreadsheet (OIA-8585.xlsx). This information should be considered in conjunction with the caveats on the first tab of the spreadsheet.

**3. Could you please indicate whether any New Zealand studies supported this conclusion?**

A study of New Zealand motorcycle-barrier crash data from January 2001 to July 2013 shows of 20 motorcycle fatalities were sustained as a result of riders hitting a roadside or median barrier, just 3 involved flexible safety (wire rope) barriers, while 13 involved traditional steel 'W' beam barriers and 4 other barrier types. Over the same time period there were 97 motorcyclist fatalities from collisions with posts or poles, 70 from hitting traffic signs and 93 from crashing into unprotected trees.

You can find more information at the following link: [www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/road-engineering/road-safety-interventions/flexible-road-safety-barriers/](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/road-engineering/road-safety-interventions/flexible-road-safety-barriers/).

The key benefit of Wire Rope Safety Barriers (WRSB) is that they prevent motorcyclists from colliding with oncoming vehicles that have crossed the centreline.

**4. Could you please explain how NZTA adapted the 2009 study of Carlsson, A\*, considering the layout of SH2 between Masterton and Featherston, which is different from the layout of roads in the study?**

The Carlsson study included an evaluation of motorcyclist safety on roads retrofitted with WRSB. The study was used, alongside other evidence to support the decision to use WRSB on New Zealand Roads. The study found a 40-50% reduction in the risk of motorcyclists being killed since introducing flexible wire-rope safety barriers.

A further Monash study found that in Sweden, where there are more than 600km of flexible barriers on their roads. There is no record of motorcycles being 'sliced' by the barriers. This information was used to supplement local evidence in New Zealand by confirming the proven benefits of WRSB, showing that they saved many lives and prevented serious injuries overseas.

This information was also used to support why we install WRSB in New Zealand. Refer to the following report for more detail: - <https://nzta.govt.nz/assets/Roads-and-Rail/docs/Report-to-the-Minister-of-Transport-on-median-barriers.pdf>.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold part of this request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, please contact Mel Smalley, Manager Data Services, by email to [mel.smalley@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:mel.smalley@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Galina Mitchelhill**

Senior Manager, Research and Analytics