

9 February 2024



REF: OIA-14359

Dear 

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

Thank you for your letter of 20 December 2023 regarding safety work on State Highway 1C in Hamilton on raised safety platforms at the roundabout of Lincoln Street / Norton Road / Rifle Range Road. You have requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) conducted fair and objective research on the potential negative impacts and damage caused by raised platforms?*
2. *Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) genuinely consulted with the people of Hamilton to determine if this project will improve their well-being or help our city's roads function better?*
3. *Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) estimated the cost of removing all these raised platforms once it is widely understood that they are causing damage and dysfunction?*
4. *Who at New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) approved this project and are they going to be personally liable for the cost of restoring these roads to their former functionality (once "Raised Safety Platforms" are no longer considered trendy)?*
5. *Will New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) accept liability for any vehicle damage and increased maintenance cost resulting from the installation of these raised platforms?*
6. *Does New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) accept that this project is being rushed through with an insulting lack of community consultation and a reckless lack of assessment on the wider impacts to Hamilton residents/travellers?*
7. *How much is each raised platform expected to cost and what is the source of that funding?*
8. *Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) consulted with, and/or received objections from, emergency service providers regarding the negative impacts of these raised platforms?*
9. *What other options were considered by New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists safely crossing Rifle Range Road?*

I will answer each of your questions in turn.

**1. Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) conducted fair and objective research on the potential negative impacts and damage caused by raised platforms?**

The New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) reviewed case studies overseas on the use of raised safety platforms (RSPs). Findings suggest that there is no tangible evidence that RSPs are causing operational or safety problems for any road user group. The approaches of RSPs are designed to have a smoother departure gradient, ensuring vehicles are not affected while traversing over them. A traffic assessment for impact to traffic flows was planned to be completed during the construction period. However, NZTA paused work in the week of 18 December 2023 on all state highway safety platform projects which are not currently in construction, including the Norton Road roundabout, to await the new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS), expected in mid-2024.

**2. Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) genuinely consulted with the people of Hamilton to determine if this project will improve their well-being or help our city's roads function better?**

In 2020, the State Highway 1 Lincoln Street / Norton Road / Rifle Range Road Roundabout was identified as a site for safety improvements. The intersection was identified due to the increasing trend of crashes and with several schools in the vicinity.

The project was formally approved to progress to design and construction in January 2022. The project was developed in consultation with Hamilton City Council (HCC) staff and elected members. This included initial concept design workshops with HCC staff and key stakeholders, along with a meeting with HCC elected members in August 2022 to discuss proposed changes to the state highway network in the western area of Hamilton City.

In June 2023, NZTA sent out communications via letter to inform key stakeholders and selected residents on Rifle Range Road and Harold Lane (directly impacted by the proposed works) of the upcoming works for the 2023-24 summer season.

In early December 2023, the HCC Network and Systems Operation team were advised of the final works programme.

**3. Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) estimated the cost of removing all these raised platforms once it is widely understood that they are causing damage and dysfunction?**

No cost estimate for removal of the raised platforms has been completed.

**4. Who at New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) approved this project and are they going to be personally liable for the cost of restoring these roads to their former functionality (once "Raised Safety Platforms" are no longer considered trendy)?**

This project aligned with the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) 2021 which set the priorities, objectives, long-term, medium-term, and short-term results, as well as ranges of funding for activity classes to guide decision makers on where and how to prioritise investment.

As noted in the response to question 1, NZTA paused work on all state highway safety platforms which are not already in construction as of 18 December 2023. This includes the roundabout in question.

NZTA employees are not personally liable for national road project costs.

**5. Will New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) accept liability for any vehicle damage and increased maintenance cost resulting from the installation of these raised platforms?**

NZTA has a duty of care to take reasonable care when maintaining the state highway network to prevent foreseeable incidents on the state highway network. NZTA does not accept that it has strict liability for any and every defect on the state highway network. Liability for any alleged damage to a vehicle would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

As mentioned in our response to question 1, RSPs are designed to have a smoother departure gradient, ensuring vehicles travelling at an appropriate speed are not affected while traversing over them. If considered appropriate in the circumstances, advisory signage may be installed at the platform to alert drivers to the conditions, for example if the RSP is associated with a pedestrian crossing.

**6. Does New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) accept that this project is being rushed through with an insulting lack of community consultation and a reckless lack of assessment on the wider impacts to Hamilton residents/travellers?**

I refer you to the response to question 2 above.

**7. How much is each raised platform expected to cost and what is the source of that funding?**

Construction costs for the overall scope of SH1 Lincoln Street / Norton Road/ Rifle Range Road roundabout improvement works is \$895,007 and is publicly available on the GETS platform here: [www.gets.govt.nz/NZTAHNO/ExternalTenderDetails.htm?id=28241258](http://www.gets.govt.nz/NZTAHNO/ExternalTenderDetails.htm?id=28241258). The funding source was the Road to Zero activity class within the National Land Transport Fund.

**8. Has New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) consulted with, and/or received objections from, emergency service providers regarding the negative impacts of these raised platforms?**

No objections were received from letters sent to emergency services during our engagement with them in June 2023.

**9. What other options were considered by New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists safely crossing Rifle Range Road?**

Rifle Range Road is not a State Highway. The pedestrian crossing solution was developed in consultation with Hamilton City Council.

Other options considered during the initial assessment included kerb buildouts, signs and marking delineations.

In line with Waka Kotahi policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with Waka Kotahi, please contact the Ministerial Services team, by email to [official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kinvig', with a long, sweeping underline.

**Mark Kinvig**  
National Manager, Infrastructure Delivery