

16 February 2023

Out of Scope

REF: OIA-11852

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

Thank you for your email of 11 January 2023 requesting information regarding the speed review decision on State Highway 2 Featherston to Masterton under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). On 18 January 2023, you refined your request to the following:

1. *How and why NZTA arrived at its preferred option of reducing speed limits on this road*
2. *What other possible solutions were explored, if any*
3. *Why these other possible solutions were not given the same level of consideration as speed reductions*
4. *What internal processes were used and what internal discussions were held in consideration of public submissions, especially submissions that were not in favour of the speed reductions*
5. *What methodology NZTA used (if any) to apply statistical weighting to public submissions in consideration of whether or not it should proceed with its preferred option of reducing speed limits on SH2 despite a multitude of public submissions that were not in favour of this proposal*
6. *any documentation and records of internal discussions held that are relevant to its ultimate decision to reduce speed limits on this road despite profound public backlash against the proposal. I also want NZTA to release detailed documentation and records of internal discussions held that are relevant to any alternative options explored for reducing the road death toll on SH2 between Featherston and Masterton, and why these options were rejected (or simply not considered at all) in favour of reducing the speed limit.*

I will respond to each of your questions in turn as follows:

1. **How and why NZTA arrived at its preferred option of reducing speed limits on this road**
2. **What other possible solutions were explored, if any**
3. **Why these other possible solutions were not given the same level of consideration as speed reductions**

The following response addresses the three questions above.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency reviews speed limits across state highways as part of the Road to Zero Infrastructure and Speed Management Programme, which informs the New Zealand Road Safety Strategy 2020-30, Road to Zero. The strategy aims to achieve a 40 percent reduction in deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand's roads by 2030.

In this instance, it is reported that there were 488 reported crashes on SH2 between Masterton and Featherston from January 2010 to December 2019. As such, Waka Kotahi is reviewing speed limits on this section of SH2 to make it safer for all road users.

Improving safety on New Zealand's roads is a priority for us. Making sure speeds are safe is one of the quickest and most effective ways we can prevent deaths and serious injuries. That's because the state highway network is over 11,000 kilometres long and covers some challenging terrain. It has many intersections and crashes are spread widely across the country. Even when speed doesn't cause the crash, it's what will most likely determine whether anyone is killed, injured, or harmed.

Speed management is just one part of our investment programme to make New Zealand's most dangerous roads safer. In addition to the speed limit changes, we are undertaking the other solutions which you have asked about, as part of a broad safety package for the entire road corridor.

To make SH2 between Masterton to Featherston safer, we have planned three new roundabouts at high-risk intersections along the corridor:

- SH2 and Ngaumutawa Road (improving safe access onto the heavy traffic bypass)
- SH2 and Norfolk/Cornwall Roads SH2 and
- Wiltons / East Taratahi Roads.

The project will also deliver central median wire-rope barriers, a safe turnaround area near the Clareville Saddlery / Hughes Line, and improved line marking and road surfacing along an 8.6km long stretch of SH2. There will also be safety barriers installed and making changes to improve safety for people walking and on bikes.

Other initiatives include working with the NZ Police, increasing investment in both road maintenance and safety, and applying the safe system approach to ensure infrastructure and speed work together to improve safety. We know there are other changes people want to see. Lowering speeds doesn't mean we can't make other changes, but it is one of the best things we can do now to prevent deaths and serious injuries on these roads.

#### **4. What internal processes were used and what internal discussions were held in consideration of public submissions, especially submissions that were not in favour of the speed reductions**

Reviewing speed limits involves a number of steps, including technical assessments and consultation. A technical assessment determines what a safe and appropriate speed for the road should be, and if it is out of step with current speed limits. During the assessment on SH2, we looked at the previous crash history, the average speed people are travelling, the number of cars and trucks using the road each day, what is happening around the road in terms of housing, urban development, businesses, and other activity on the road.

The result of the technical assessment was used as a basis to inform our first engagement with public and key stakeholders in December 2019. In parallel, the team received and reviewed the speed

management feasibility report. The purpose of the report is to provide design considerations and undertake a high-level constructability check prior to public consultation.

The project team then created a speed review document to progress to the formal consultation. Once the consultation approval paper was approved we then consulted with the public. Upon receiving public feedback, the team considered if there was anything that we had not considered in making the roads safer.

The National Manager for Programme and Standards then sought an approval from the Director of Land Transport to approve the new speed limits. In doing so, the Speed Management Panel provided its recommendations to the Director of Land Transport for consideration. Once the new speed limits were approved by the Director, these were legalised by entering the new speed limits into the National Speed Limit register.

**5. What methodology NZTA used (if any) to apply statistical weighting to public submissions in consideration of whether or not it should proceed with its preferred option of reducing speed limits on SH2 despite a multitude of public submissions that were not in favour of this proposal**

Waka Kotahi does not apply a statistical weighting to public submissions. The consultation for proposed speed limit changes is not a vote; it is about seeking valuable local and community input so that we can consider wider factors and context in our decisions. During the proposed speed limits consultation, Waka Kotahi showed the proposed new speeds and asked the public this question "Are there any factors that we should consider when making our decision regarding the proposed speed changes on SH2?" This approach allows us to consider any external factors and concerns experienced by the local community when deciding the safe and appropriate speed limits on this stretch of highway.

While several submissions did include factors that were taken into consideration when proposing the new permanent speed limits, a proportion of the submissions expressed only general opinion, either in support of or not supporting the proposed changes. These included general comments regarding driver behaviour, enforcement, and traffic slowing measures.

Our consideration and responses to these comments are recorded in the consultation summary, which is available on the Waka Kotahi website here (page 8 – 14):

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-wairarapa-highway-improvements/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-consultation-summary-January-2023.pdf>

**6. any documentation and records of internal discussions held that are relevant to its ultimate decision to reduce speed limits on this road despite profound public backlash against the proposal. I also want NZTA to release detailed documentation and records of internal discussions held that are relevant to any alternative options explored for reducing the road death toll on SH2 between Featherston and Masterton, and why these options were rejected (or simply not considered at all) in favour of reducing the speed limit.**

There are 14 documents that fall within the scope of your request. We are releasing 11 documents and I am refusing to release three other documents under section 18(d) of the Act, as these three documents are publicly available on our website. These documents are detailed in the document schedule appended to this letter.

Personal information, such as contact phone numbers and third parties' names, has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. Information that is not relevant to SH2 Featherston to Masterton has been marked out of scope in the document. This section allows for the withholding of information to protect the privacy of natural persons. 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 certain information and partially refuse this request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

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 emailing at [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 horizontal flourish underneath.

**Mark Kinvig**

National Manager, Infrastructure and Delivery

## OIA-11852 Document Schedule

REF	Document name	Date	Description
1.	All Technical Assessments	14 June 2019	Released in-part  Third parties' names are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
2.	SH2 Masterton to Featherston Speed Review and Safety Improvements Community Engagement summary	January 2020	Refused in full under section 18(d) of the Act.  The document is publicly available at: <a href="https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-masterton-to-featherston-speed-review/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-engagement-summary-January-2021.pdf">https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-masterton-to-featherston-speed-review/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-engagement-summary-January-2021.pdf</a>
3.	C20200710Y SH2 Masterton to Featherston	10 July 2020	Released in full  Death and Serious Injuries statistics on SH2 from 2010 to 2019.
4.	Internal review form – Site ID 3.4.004 SH2 Masterton to Featherston Internal Review Form	27 July 2020	Released in-part  Third parties' names and personal DDI and cell phone numbers are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
5.	Consultation Approval Paper SH2 Masterton to Featherston – endorsement to go to consultation	March 2021	Released in full
6.	SH2 Masterton to Featherston Speed Review – Feasibility Assessment Meeting No. 1	13 July 2021	Released in full
7.	Speed Management Feasibility Assessment SH2 Masterton to Featherston	3 September 2021	Released in-part  Third party's name is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
8.	SH2 – Masterton to Featherston Speed Review – Direction following consultation feedback	19 November 2021	Released in full
9.	Assessment Panel comments - SH2 Masterton to Featherston (002)	2 December 2022	Released in full
10.	SMP Panel Meeting Minutes 2022 12 06	6 December 2022	Released in full
11.	SMP Panel Meeting Minutes 2022 12 16	16 December 2022	Released in full



REF	Document name	Date	Description
12.	Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2022 – Director approval sought for speed limits changes on State Highway 2 in the Wairarapa	14 December 2022	<p>Released in full</p> <p>Information that are not relevant to SH2 Featherston to Masterton has been marked out of scope in the document.</p> <p>This document contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- memo from Waka Kotahi Speed Management Panel to Kane Patena to approve the speed limits.</li> <li>- a proposed letter for signature to National Manager, Programme and Standards, Land Transport Rule Setting of Speed Limits 2022,</li> <li>- Waka Kotahi Speed Management Assessment Panel – Terms of Reference,</li> <li>- Letter of 18 November 2022 from National Manager Programme Standards seeking approval from the Director,</li> <li>- SH2: Masterton to Featherston – Speed Limit Review (2020).</li> </ul>
13.	Masterton to Featherston Speed Review and Infrastructure Consultation Feedback		<p>Refused under section 18(d) of the Act.</p> <p>The document is publicly available here:  <a href="https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-wairarapa-highway-improvements/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-feedback-submissions-January-2023.pdf">https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-wairarapa-highway-improvements/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-feedback-submissions-January-2023.pdf</a></p>
14.	SH2 Masterton to Featherston Speed Review	13 January 2023	<p>Refused under section 18(d) of the Act.</p> <p>The document is publicly available here:  <a href="https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-wairarapa-highway-improvements/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-consultation-summary-January-2023.pdf">https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/projects/sh2-wairarapa-highway-improvements/SH2-Masterton-to-Featherston-speed-review-consultation-summary-January-2023.pdf</a></p>