

## Picton to Christchurch alternate route safer speeds consultation - public letter

To communities living along, and people using the Picton to Christchurch alternate route.

**The NZ Transport Agency welcomes feedback from the community on proposals to convert a range of emergency lower speed limits introduced on the Picton to Christchurch alternate state highway route (state highways 63, 6, 65 and 7) after the November 2016 earthquake to permanent limits.**

Lower speed limits were introduced on the alternate route last year, under emergency legislation.

Consultation also includes a proposal to lower the speed limit on a section of the Lower Buller Gorge that links to the alternate route. This road is not included in the current emergency rule.

While the proposed speed limits being consulted on will be permanent if implemented, the Transport Agency will continue to monitor the route once State Highway 1 (SH1) is restored, and if required, review speed limits again.

### Background

- The lower speed limits were brought in as part of a wide-ranging package of safety measures to manage the risks associated with the significant increase in traffic using the alternate route while SH1 remains closed for repair.
- Emergency speed limits can only legally be in place for six months, and as SH1 will not be fully restored until the end of the year, in order to keep the lower speed limits in place to maintain safety on the alternate route the law requires that these lower limits now be made permanent.
- The alternate route is challenging to drive and since the Kaikōura earthquake, the volume of vehicles travelling on some parts of this route has quadrupled, with significant increases in the number of heavy vehicles using the route.
- There are also a number of high-risk parts of the route – sections of open road that are narrow and windy, and at approaches to intersections and towns.
- Road safety engineers have fully reviewed speed limits on the route in recent months to ensure the proposed permanent limits are appropriate for travellers and the communities living along it. These are similar to the current emergency speed limits now in place.
- The Government is also investing \$60 million in upgrading parts of the route to make it safer and more resilient. This includes widening several sections of road, ongoing resealing work along the route, installing several new bailey bridges alongside existing one-way bridges, installing traffic signals on several one-way bridges, and using radars and webcams to measure traffic volumes and provide travel updates.

Information on the proposed changes, and a submission form are available on the Transport Agency website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/Picton-Christchurch-alternate-route-speed-limits](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/Picton-Christchurch-alternate-route-speed-limits)  
Feedback can be provided until 5pm, Wednesday 3 May 2017.



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