



Research and Monitoring

Evaluating 110km/h speed limits on high quality roads

Background

Motorists can now travel up to 110km/h on two of New Zealand's best roads, namely the Cambridge section of the SH1 Waikato Expressway and the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road.

The speed limit is only increased on stretches of road built to a standard where the higher speed limit is deemed both safe and appropriate. This includes having standards such as two lanes in each direction, a median barrier, no significant curves, and no direct access to neighbouring properties. The 110km/h speed limit helps to explain that not all roads are equal and that it is safer to travel faster on some roads than others.

Evaluation of 110km/h speed limit

There is a need to evaluate the outcomes where the speed limit has changed to 110km/h at the initial two sites.

The main aim of this independent research is to examine the changes to driver speed, lane distribution and travel time where speed limits have changed to 110km/h. In addition, the research will determine drivers' attitudes towards speed and safety, and environmental impacts following the speed limit change.

Method for evaluation

The research will be carried out for roads where the speed limit has increased to 110km/h, and at similar control sites.

THE KEY MEASURES FOR THE RESEARCH

Spot speed: Vehicle speed, by type and by lane, will be measured within the 110km/h speed limit section. Both overall speed and free speed (at least four seconds headway) will be calculated so that the overall effect of the speed limit on actual travel speed can be determined, as well as the effects on those who are free to choose their own speed and are not limited by other vehicles. Upstream and downstream of the 110km/h length, vehicle speed will be measured to determine any 'halo' effects from the higher speed limit. The vehicle speed on some off-ramps approaching intersections will also be measured.

Travel time: The time it takes vehicles to travel through the area will be measured, to estimate the productivity benefits of the new speed limit.

Lane occupancy: The proportion of traffic, by type, travelling in each lane will be determined, to understand how traffic patterns may change.

Crashes: Over the longer-term, the change in safety performance of the 110km/h speed limit sections will be assessed in comparison with the change in safety performance at similar control sites.

Motorist perceptions: A survey of motorists will be carried out to ask about speed, travel time and perceptions of safety following implementation of the 110km/h speed limit, as well as perceived overall value of it, and speed limit preference for this type of road.

Overall economic performance will also be determined, to assess the overall value of a higher speed limit.

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More information and frequently asked questions can be found at:
www.nzta.govt.nz/110speedlimit

Data Collection

Baseline data collection for the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road and Cambridge section of the SH1 Waikato Expressway, along with control sites, was recorded during October 2017.

Follow-up data was collected at one month and three months; and will also be collected at eight months and one year following the introduction of the 110km/h speed limit.

Evaluation Perception Survey

The evaluation is now at the 'motorist perception' stage. This means that some people who have driven on the Cambridge section of the SH1 Waikato Expressway and the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road will receive a letter inviting them to participate in a survey which asks questions about the new speed limit on the road.

Selecting People for the Survey

EVALUATION PERCEPTION SURVEY

In order to select people for the survey the following process was used:

1. Cameras were placed on the Cambridge section of the SH1 Waikato Expressway and the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road to capture the registration plates of passing vehicles only. This was carried out by Mackie Research on behalf of the Transport Agency. The cameras were present for a 48 hour period during the month of March 2018. There were some signs set up in the area at the time, notifying motorists that this was underway.
2. The vehicle registration plates captured by the cameras were sent securely to the Transport Agency.
3. Transport Agency staff then matched those vehicle registration plates to records in the Motor Vehicle Register (MVR). Following this, all vehicles that are registered as a 'business' or 'other' were removed from the sample, along with those having 'confidential' status or that have 'opted-out'.
4. The Transport Agency are sending letters to a random sub-sample of registered persons inviting them to take part in an online survey. More information about the survey will be sent to those invited to take part.

RECEIVING A LETTER

People who receive a letter from the Transport Agency asking them to take part in the anonymous survey have two options:

1. Take part in the survey. We are keen to hear people's thoughts about the 110km/h speed limit. All those who take part will be entered into the draw to win one of five \$100 Prezzy Cards*.
2. Don't take part. The survey is voluntary; people can simply ignore the letter.

The results of the survey will be added to a larger evaluation of the national 110km/h project which will be presented to the National Road Safety Committee and the Associate Minister for Transport, Julie Anne Genter. This report will help the Transport Agency to understand the effects of implementing a 110km/h speed limit, and will help inform any future projects where speed management is being considered.

OPTING-OUT - IF PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART

People who drove on the Cambridge section of the SH1 Waikato Expressway and the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road during March 2018 who don't want to take part in the survey can request that their vehicle registration plate is removed from the sample. To remove a vehicle registration plate from the '110 Evaluation Project' call the Contact Centre on 0800 108 809.

Alternatively, people can simply choose to ignore the letter if they receive one.

* Terms and conditions apply. The information requested in this survey is being collected by the NZ Transport Agency for the purposes of evaluating the 110km/h speed limit on the Cambridge section of SH1 Waikato Expressway and the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road. The provision of name, email address or phone number, is voluntary, but if you do not provide them then you will not be entered into the prize draw. Your name, email address or phone number will only be used for the purpose of the prize draw. The survey is being administered by Mackie Research, on behalf of the Transport Agency, using the survey software system Survey Monkey. Any personal information you submit as part of this survey will be stored and processed by Mackie Research on the Transport Agency's behalf, in accordance with the Privacy Policy. **Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/110speedlimit for full terms and conditions.**