



10 July 2024


Wairarapa Times-Age


REF: OIA-15562

Dear 

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 5 June 2024 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *A copy of the independent safety audit undertaken on behalf of NZTA of safety improvements to the Remutaka Hill Road, SH2, this year. The audit is referenced in an NZTA press release dated June 01 2024, and followed the introduction of safety improvements to the Hill Road from March this year.*
- *Copies of any email or postal correspondence from users of the Hill Road to NZTA providing their feedback on the efficacy or performance of the Hill Road following the introduction of the recent safety improvements, which included slow vehicle lanes.*

I have numbered each part of your request for convenience and will answer each part in turn.

1. ***A copy of the independent safety audit undertaken on behalf of NZTA of safety improvements to the Remutaka Hill Road, SH2, this year. The audit is referenced in an NZTA press release dated June 01 2024, and followed the introduction of safety improvements to the Hill Road from March this year.***

The following document falls within the scope of your request and is enclosed:

- OIA-15562 Attachment 1 - Safe System Audit Report SH2 Remutaka SVB PC

Certain information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. This section allows for the withholding of information to protect the privacy of natural persons.

2. ***Copies of any email or postal correspondence from users of the Hill Road to NZTA providing their feedback on the efficacy or performance of the Hill Road following the introduction of the recent safety improvements, which included slow vehicle lanes.***

The following document falls within the scope of your request and is enclosed:

- OIA-15562 Attachment 2 - Remutaka Hill Safety correspondence - NZTA SAP CRMS

Certain information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

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.

NZTA based the decision to change the passing lanes to slow vehicle bays on the need to encourage people to drive safely and courteously when travelling over State Highway 2 (SH2) Remutaka Hill. A number of the passing lanes were also too short and had merges located on curves which can encourage merging at high speed and unsafe driving behaviour as drivers rush to complete an overtaking manoeuvre. For the 10-year period between 2014 and 2023, there have been 382 crashes on Remutaka Hill with 34 people losing their lives or sustaining serious injuries. Crashes on the hill have regularly resulted in SH2 being closed to traffic, which has caused significant disruption to road users. Slow vehicle bays not only enable slower vehicles to pull over and let others pass, but they are more appropriate for challenging road environments such as the Remutaka Hill.

Following feedback from the public on the Remutaka Hill slow vehicle bays and our own safety review, NZTA has determined some further changes are needed.

The audit recommended we make some changes to improve traffic flow and safety. As a result, we are installing extra signs that clearly direct slow drivers to keep left and that better indicate the length of the slow vehicle bays. We will also rename them as slow vehicle lanes, which more accurately reflects their intended use.

New road markings will also improve the lanes' entry and exit points and will provide better visual directions for drivers. This will also assist slower drivers to use the full length of the slow vehicle lane to allow other vehicles to pass safely.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold this information. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

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

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, please contact Andrew Knackstedt, Senior Manager, Media by email to andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Emma Speight

Director Regional Relationships, Greater Wellington and Top of the South