



SH73/75 Christchurch to Akaroa speed review

Summary of community engagement

October 2021

1. Background

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is identifying roads where safer speed limits can make a big difference in saving lives, and where communities are calling for change.

Our road safety strategy ([Road to Zero](#)) has a vision of an Aotearoa where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads – Vision Zero.

Setting safe speed limits and improving road infrastructure are some of the ways we are making our transport system safer, along with partner agencies.

Between 2011–2020, 75 people were killed or suffered serious injuries in crashes on State Highway 73/75 between Christchurch and Akaroa, leaving families grieving and victims having to deal with potentially life-long injuries.

These deaths and serious injuries should not be accepted as a price we are willing to pay for getting around. Everyone who uses our roads should be able to get to where they're going safely, and to help achieve this we can set safer speed limits.

Through the speed review process, we are working with the community to gather and share information and making sure we understand your concerns.

2. What we did

We held five drop-in sessions in Halswell, Tai Tapu, Little River and Akaroa, asking people how they use the road and how they thought it could be made safer. We invited people to give feedback online using our interactive map, and spoke to residents, businesses and councils. We also gave police, emergency services, the AA and other road user groups representing freight, cyclists, walkers and motorcyclists the opportunity to share their views.

We had many useful conversations and received more than 800 pieces of feedback including:

- 261 email submissions
- 61 paper submissions
- 515 ideas, suggestions and comments on Social Pinpoint, our interactive online tool.¹

We appreciate the response from the community and thank all those who gave us their insights.



Pop-up sessions held at Te Hapua Halswell Centre (left) and Little River School (right).

¹ All the written comments that people put on the large-scale maps at our pop-up sessions were added to Social Pinpoint after the event.

3. What we heard

There were strong views about speeds on the road between Christchurch and Akaroa.

Half the submissions did not support changes to speeds while a third of the submissions were mixed - supporting lower speeds in some locations, but not in others. The remainder were fully supportive of reducing speeds.

“Please do not lower the speed here. All over Canterbury the speeds are being reduced, travel time will increase, and drivers will become frustrated and make dangerous overtaking manoeuvres on a windy road.”

“Just wanted to say that as a resident of this area, I totally support the lowering of the speed limit. There have been so many near misses on our road, especially on the corners when wet. I’m happy to drive slower for the sake of safer conditions.”

“The current speed limit of 100km/h from Christchurch to Little River with reduced speed in Halswell and Tai Tapu is appropriate... Speed from Little River to Akaroa is excessive, dangerous and far too high.”

Some key themes emerged from the feedback:

- People did not want to see ‘blanket’ speed reductions introduced however there was support for some sections of the corridor to be changed
- Most people wanted the 100km/h speed limit between Halswell and Little River retained
- Many people acknowledged the speed limit between Little River and Akaroa was not realistic or safe, saying the road was narrow, winding and has steep drop-offs
- Motorcyclists were unanimously opposed to lowering speeds, saying it would reduce the enjoyment and challenge of riding this route
- There were many comments about drivers not being able to safely access the highway from driveways or at intersections due to the speed of approaching traffic, poor visibility, and the lack of safe turning lanes
- Pedestrians and cyclists told us it was difficult to cross the highway due to increased traffic on the road in urban areas, the lack of pedestrian crossings in townships and the speed vehicles were travelling.



Cyclists on SH75 Halswell Road, near the Aidanfield Drive intersection.

- Some motorists said that speed was not the main cause of accidents, rather they saw driver behaviour as a major contributor – particularly frustration at slow vehicles that leads to dangerous overtaking. Many said that upskilling people to drive or ride to the conditions, and education about good behaviour behind the wheel, should be front of mind
- There was a great deal of concern about the condition of the road. Some people said it had deteriorated due to the frequent tour buses between Akaroa and Christchurch pre-COVID-19, and this was exacerbated by poor quality repairs and maintenance.
- Some people said that gritting at inappropriate times was a hazard for drivers on icy mornings
- A significant number of submissions identified the need for more passing lanes and slow vehicle bays with improved signage to encourage slow drivers and tourists to let other vehicles pass. Infrastructure such as side barriers and rumble strips were also suggested
- People said they wanted to see more policing and enforcement to prevent some motorcyclists from “ignoring speed limits” and using the road “as a private racetrack.”

Wairewa Rūnanga Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Waitaha suggested extending Little River’s 60km/h speed limit to include the entrance to the marae, to make it safer for people using roadside parking when attending large gatherings and events.

The NZ Automobile Association (AA) supported lowering speed limits to encourage safe and consistent speeds from Christchurch to Akaroa, particularly given the nature of the road, the intensity of weekend and holiday travel and the high number of vehicles towing caravans and boats.

Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū | Banks Peninsula Community Board was supportive of lowering speeds in some sections, with safety outside Wairewa Marae and for children riding to school a priority but it did not support changes to speed limits in other areas.

The Ulysses Club did not agree with reducing speeds, saying that current limits were appropriate for skilled drivers or riders with the correct attitude to other road users and that recommended speed signage at corners was sufficient, along with more driver education for young road users.

Area	Community feedback
Halswell	Many people wanted to see consistency in speed limits along Curletts Road and Halswell Road, to Christchurch’s southern limit. They felt that 100km/h on Curletts Road was out of place and impacted access to the Canterbury Agricultural Park, while 80km/h on Halswell Road made it difficult for people to exit Aidanfield Drive, and 60km/h in Halswell township was unsafe for people trying to cross the highway to get to school, the library or shops.
Halswell to Tai Tapu	<p>There was strong opposition to lowering the 100km/h speed limit between Halswell and Tai Tapu. People said the highway was relatively straight, wide, in good condition, with overtaking opportunities and they considered it safe to drive at the current speed.</p> <p>There was, however, support to extend Halswell’s lower speed limit past the Old Tai Tapu Road intersection, as many people said this was a dangerous intersection due to the speed of passing traffic, low visibility and high use by cyclists.</p> <p>There was also significant support for dedicated overtaking lanes, turning and slow vehicle bays, improved signage for tourists and slow drivers, and road widening along this stretch together with increased police presence to enforce speed limits.</p>
Tai Tapu	People agreed with the current speed through Tai Tapu, but also said that it should be lower around the school in line with other rural schools. People also

Area	Community feedback
	found it difficult to adjust their speed from 100km/h to 50km/h at the township limit.
Tai Tapu to Little River	<p>The general feedback was the 100km/h speed limit should be retained. People commented that reducing speed and opportunities for drivers to overtake would increase frustration and lead to riskier overtaking manoeuvres and increased travel time.</p> <p>However, there was some support for a lower speed from Birdlings Flat through to Little River given the winding nature of the road and risk of ice in winter.</p> <p>Many people were in favour of other road improvements in particular passing lanes and turning lanes at the Birdlings Flat turnoff and Duck Pond Road intersection, as well as extending Little River's speed limit out past the Akaroa Hotel.</p>
Little River	<p>Most people felt that Little River's 60km/h speed limit was too high and recommended it be lowered to 50km/h, in-line with Tai Tapu. Comments said the township was often busy with parked, turning and through traffic, cyclists, and pedestrians visiting premises on both sides of the road, and the current speed limit was not safe.</p> <p>There was support for measures that would help to signal to drivers they were entering a township, with people suggesting flashing speed signs, a pedestrian crossing and covering the drain on the southern side of the road to increase parking opportunities and improve visual amenity.</p>
Cooptown	<p>There was widespread support for reducing speed between Little River and Cooptown (a distance of 1.8km) as people noted how busy the road was with parked cars and people crossing when events were held at Wairewa Marae. They were also concerned about the safety of school children riding their bikes to school when vehicles are passing at 100km/h and suggested extending Cooptown's 70km/h limit through to Little River.</p> <p>In Cooptown itself, people were generally accepting of the current speed limit.</p>
Cooptown to Duvauchelle	<p>We received many comments in support of lower speeds for this stretch with people saying the winding, steep and narrow nature of the hill road was not suitable for a 100km/h limit. They suggested between 60km/h and 80km/h as being more appropriate.</p> <p>Some people said that poor behaviour by some motorcyclists and unsafe passing due to frustration were the most common contributors to accidents, rather than speed. They were keen to see other improvements put in place such as side barriers over the hill, passing lanes, road widening, and slow vehicle bays with clearer signage.</p>
Duvauchelle	<p>There were mixed views on the 70km/h speed limit through Duvauchelle, with people concerned about speed citing the number of businesses and intersections accessing the highway, the safety of school children and poor visibility at the Seafield Road intersection. Others said the speed was appropriate through the township, saying it was not as busy as Little River.</p> <p>Several people recommended making the intersections safer at Pigeon Bay Road, Pipers Valley Road, Haywards Lane, Ngaio Point and Seafield Lane in particular.</p>
Duvauchelle to Akaroa	There was broad support for extending the lower speed limit from Duvauchelle through to Akaroa, due to the road condition and terrain. People said there have

been many accidents and “close calls” at the intersections with Long Bay Road and Takamatua Valley Road which could benefit from lower speeds and infrastructure such as turning lanes.



Vehicles towing boats or caravans are a common sight on State Highway 75.

4. Some responses to feedback

- **Highway infrastructure** – we know from other routes that infrastructure such as barriers, rumble strips and wide centrelines help to make the road safer and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in crashes. A range of safety features for SH75 are currently being investigated (as part of SIP – Speed and Infrastructure Programme) however project scope, funding and timing is still to be confirmed. Feedback from the community requesting passing lanes on SH73/75 will be given to the SIP team.
- **Passing lanes** – the Waka Kotahi speed programme includes some road infrastructure improvements that fit low-cost/low-risk funding criteria (under \$2m). This includes minor improvements to road shoulders, as well as signs and lines which help to create a safer speed environment. Opportunities for passing could be considered in future – but not right now – as part of this speed review. Waka Kotahi has a Speed and Infrastructure Programme (SIP) which prioritises more significant (over \$2m) highway safety infrastructure improvements (such as median safety barrier and rumble strips) across the country. The SIP programme complements our speed programme and ensures investment in infrastructure matches the benefits right across the country. It could be that passing opportunities are considered on SH75 from Tai Tapu to Akaroa, however given its relatively low traffic volume and for the reasons outlined below, the likelihood of funding being secured is low. Furthermore, if the proposed lower speeds are in place on SH75, most traffic on the road, including cars towing boats and horse floats etc. are more likely to be traveling at the average speed. Therefore, drivers will feel less of a need to overtake. The feedback we received from the community requesting passing lanes on SH75 will be given to the SIP team.
- **Highway maintenance** – we have heard concerns about the condition of the road, and we will be undertaking nearly 30km of road surfacing renewals between Christchurch and Akaroa over the next three years. Where people have identified specific sections of road that need attention, we have passed the details to our Maintenance and Operations team.
- **Driver education** – encouraging people to make good choices is a key focus for Waka Kotahi under our Road to Zero road safety strategy. Our Community Road Safety Fund supports

community-based road safety initiatives to fund projects such as SADD (Students Against Dangerous Driving). Together with NZ Police, ACC and the community, Waka Kotahi supports education and advertising campaigns targeting high risk groups as well as driver training and education programmes include DRIVE and BikeReady, and our motorcyclist safety campaign 'Respect every Ride'. Actions to improve people's skills and behaviour and to deter risk-taking behaviour - such as wearing seatbelts, not drinking and driving, and not being distracted while travelling at safe speeds - are critical to our success, but alone they will not fix the problem. Everyone has a role to play to keep ourselves and others safe.

- **Crash data** – we received comments and questions about the causes of crashes on this road. Our CAS (Crash Analysis System) data is complex and can be misinterpreted, so experienced and qualified Waka Kotahi staff have provided a detailed response. A key trend worth noting is that inappropriate speed is in the top five contributing factors for crashes on this corridor, with loss of control the second highest, which is often attributed to speed. In addition, the highest percentage of crashes take place when drivers lose control on straights and bends, followed by rear-ending other vehicles. Most crashes – particularly fatal and serious crashes – occur in sections with higher speed limits.
[Crash causes and speed response \[PDF, 2 MB\]](#)
- **Crash causes** – there are five focus areas we are working on to tackle crash causes. Given New Zealand's death rate per 100,000 is more than twice the rate of the world's best performing countries and is costing the country over \$4 billion every year, setting safer speeds is the quickest and most important safety measure we can take. Even the best drivers, on familiar roads, can make mistakes and when they do, it's the speed at impact that will most likely determine whether anyone is killed, injured, or walks away unharmed.

5. What happens next?

Changing speed limits is a legal process and there are steps to follow under the Speed Management Guide and the Setting of Speed Limits Rule.

We've read and considered all the feedback you've provided during this engagement phase and we're using these insights, along with our technical assessment of the road, to propose safe and appropriate speeds for this route. The next step will be to formally consult with the community on proposed safer speed limits, likely to be in October/November 2021.

Consultation will give people an opportunity to let us know if there are any other factors we should consider when making our decision.

You can find out more about this speed review, and subscribe to updates at:

www.nzta.govt.nz/chchtoakaroa