

2020

SAFER JOURNEYS



DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
**HAVE YOUR SAY ON OUR NEXT
ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY**

AUGUST 2009

MINISTER'S FOREWORD

This discussion document and your response to it will form an important part of developing a safer road system for all New Zealanders. The feedback received from road users will be used to develop *Safer Journeys*, a road safety strategy for the next 10 years.

Road safety is a top transport priority for the government. The impact of a road crash goes beyond those directly involved, to their families, their colleagues, the health system and the wider community.

We have made some major gains in road safety – the road toll has more than halved since its peak in 1973, while at the same time kilometres travelled has more than doubled. But despite these gains, hundreds of New Zealanders are killed on our roads every year. In addition, nearly 2,900 people are seriously injured. We also know that each year approximately 13,000 New Zealanders suffer minor injuries as a result of road crashes. These statistics show we have more work to do.

The annual social cost of road trauma is estimated to be \$3.8 billion. *Safer Journeys* is a key part of our effort to significantly improve road safety.

Safer Journeys will set a vision for improving New Zealand's road safety and will move beyond just blaming drivers to set in place a system-wide approach to improving safety. We want safer roads, safer vehicles and safer speeds for all New Zealanders, as well as safer road use.

All New Zealanders have a responsibility for road safety and this discussion document reflects this. It draws on the areas that research has identified as major threats on our roads and suggests actions to combat them.

While, in total, more than 60 initiatives are outlined in this discussion document, it is not my intention as Minister of Transport to introduce anything like that number. The purpose of this document is to gather together all the possible interventions and have a public discussion about which are most important to adopt.

This is your roading system and I want to hear your ideas about how we can make it safer. Together, we must strike a balance that meets the expectations of road users who have widely differing views about how many road rules there should be and what constitutes a road safety initiative. We must also consider the resources available and the kinds of interventions that can make a real difference to the road toll.

I urge you to take this opportunity to share your views on how we can improve road safety in New Zealand.



Hon Steven Joyce
Minister of Transport



The government intends to release the new road safety strategy, *Safer Journeys*, in December 2009.

To help make decisions on *Safer Journeys* we want to hear what you think of the ideas in this discussion document.

Each section of this document asks a set of questions. Your responses to these questions are important and will help the government determine the best way to improve road safety. General comments are also welcome.

In developing this discussion document we have included the required regulatory impact statement elements for this stage of policy development.

You can make a submission by using the online submission form at www.saferjourneys.govt.nz. You can also email your submission to saferjourneys@transport.govt.nz

Alternatively, you can send your submission to:

Safer Journeys
Ministry of Transport
PO Box 3175
WELLINGTON 6140

**The deadline for submissions is
Friday 2 October 2009.**

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please note that submissions provided on the discussion document will be subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. This Act requires information to be made available on request unless there is good reason to withhold the information.

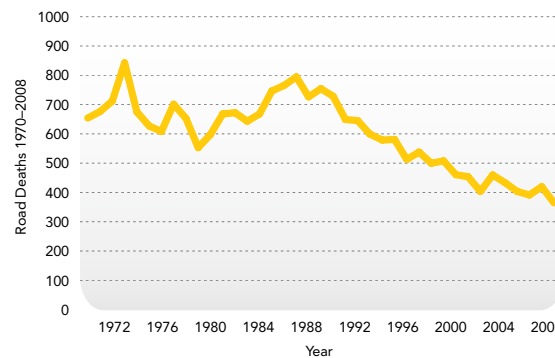
If you do not wish any material provided in your submission to be released, please specify the material that you wish to be withheld and the grounds (as set out in the Act) for withholding. The decision on whether to release the material under the terms of the Act rests with the Ministry of Transport. Any decision regarding withholding information is subject to appeal to the Ombudsman.



Over the past 35 years, New Zealand's road toll has dropped significantly. In 1973, 843 people died on New Zealand's roads. By 2002, this number had more than halved to 405 deaths. This halving in road deaths has occurred even though the number of vehicle kilometres travelled has more than doubled (see Figure 1).

Since 2002 progress has slowed with annual road deaths fluctuating between a high of 461 and a low of 366. In the 12 months to mid-July 2009 there have been 392 road deaths.

Figure 1: Number of road deaths 1970-2008



Similarly, since the 1970s the number of road injuries has reduced by over a quarter, declining from 20,791 in 1970 to 15,108 in 2008.

Are we on course to achieve the 2010 road safety targets?

The current *Road Safety to 2010* strategy has targets to reduce road deaths to no more than 300 and serious injuries to no more than 2,200 by 2010. Figures 2 and 3 compare our actual performance over the period 2001–2008 against a target line which shows where we need to be to achieve the 2010 targets.

Figure 2: Rolling 12-month road toll compared to 2010 target line

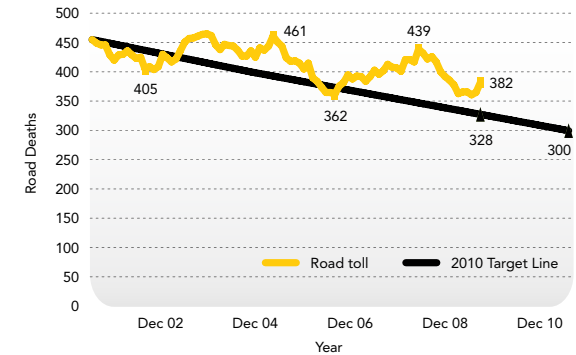
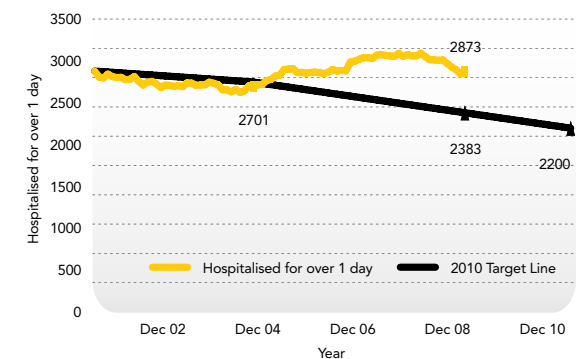


Figure 3: Number of serious injuries compared to 2010 target line



These graphs show we are well behind the 2010 targets. In particular, the number of serious injuries (as measured by the number of hospitalisations of more than one day) has increased from 2,701 in 2004 to 2,873 in 2008. This is a six percent increase.

If we were meeting the 2010 targets, then around 200 fewer New Zealanders would have lost their lives and 1,500 fewer people would have been seriously injured over the last eight years.

How do we compare internationally?

Compared to other OECD countries, New Zealanders have a relatively high rate of road fatalities per head of population (see Figure 4). Based on 2007 results, we have a road fatality rate of 10 deaths per 100,000 population. This compares with 7.7 deaths per 100,000

population for Australia. Our fatality rate is double that of the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

New Zealand is a highly motorised country. Comparatively, more of our travel is by car than in many other countries.

Compared to the other highly motorised countries in Figure 4, our performance is the poorest. We have a road fatality rate of 10.1 deaths per billion vehicle kilometres. This compares with 8.8 deaths for the United States and 7.9 deaths per billion vehicle kilometres for Australia.

The strongest performer, Sweden, has 5.9 deaths per billion vehicle kilometres travelled¹.

What does the future hold?

There are several key challenges that could continue to affect the potential for road safety gains to be made to 2020 and beyond. These can be summarised briefly as:

Demographic

An aging population – the number of people aged 65 years and older is expected to increase by approximately 52 percent between 2008 and 2020. With an aging population we expect to see some increase in the number of deaths and serious injuries because older road users are more physically vulnerable to injury.

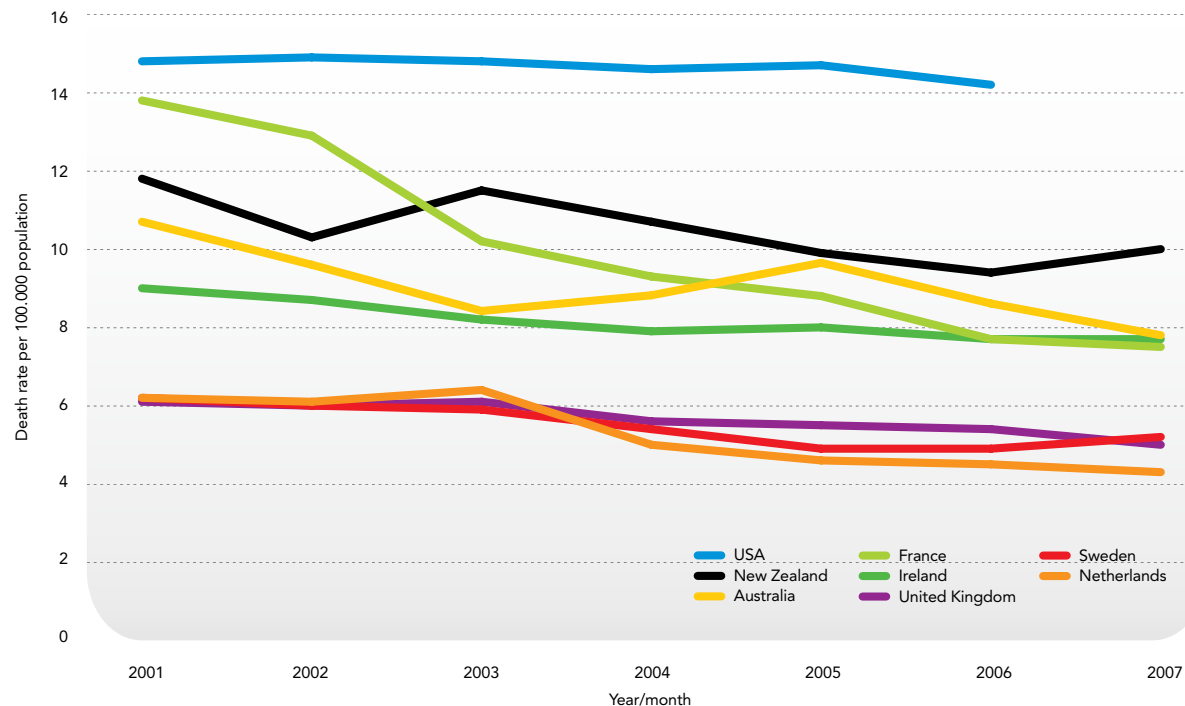
Population growth and increasing demand for transport – the total number of kilometres travelled by vehicles is predicted to increase by over 40 percent by 2040. These changes will place more stress on the transport system, particularly in Auckland where most of the population increase is expected.

Changes in ethnic make-up of the population – population projections show that by 2020 New Zealand will have an increasing proportion of Maori, Pacific and Asian people. This suggests we may need to tailor the road safety effort more to meet the needs of New Zealand's different communities.

Economic

A rapidly growing amount of freight – freight is predicted to double by 2040 and most of it is likely to continue to be transported by road. This means that increasing freight productivity will be important to reduce the impact of more trucks on the road. Crashes involving trucks are usually more serious than those involving lighter vehicles because of their greater size and weight.

Figure 4: Road deaths per 100,000 population



¹ The Netherlands has 7.7 deaths, United Kingdom 6.3, France 8.5. Results for Ireland were not available.

Growing international demand for oil – it is predicted that demand for liquid fuels will grow by 32 percent by 2030². If this is reflected in rising fuel prices then the way people choose to travel may also change.

Impacts of the current global economic recession – this could have several impacts. It could mean there is less movement of people and freight, which would reduce exposure to risk on the roads. On the other hand, it could mean there may be less public money available for road safety, and people may defer vehicle maintenance or hang on to their older (and generally less safe) cars for longer.

Technological

New technology – this could affect the way we deliver road safety messages. For example, we could make greater use of the internet and mobile phones to deliver road safety messages to the widest possible audience. New technology could also provide options for enhancing the safety of vehicles.

New illegal drugs that affect safe road use – it is impossible to predict what new challenges may arise for road safety in the future as new drugs emerge. The ability to test for these drugs and enforce against their use will be an area for ongoing research and policy development.

Motorcycles

Increase in motorcycling – the recent increase in motorcycle and moped registrations is predicted to continue for the foreseeable future. This is a problem because we are also seeing a rapid increase in motorcycle injuries.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IF WE CONTINUE AS WE ARE?

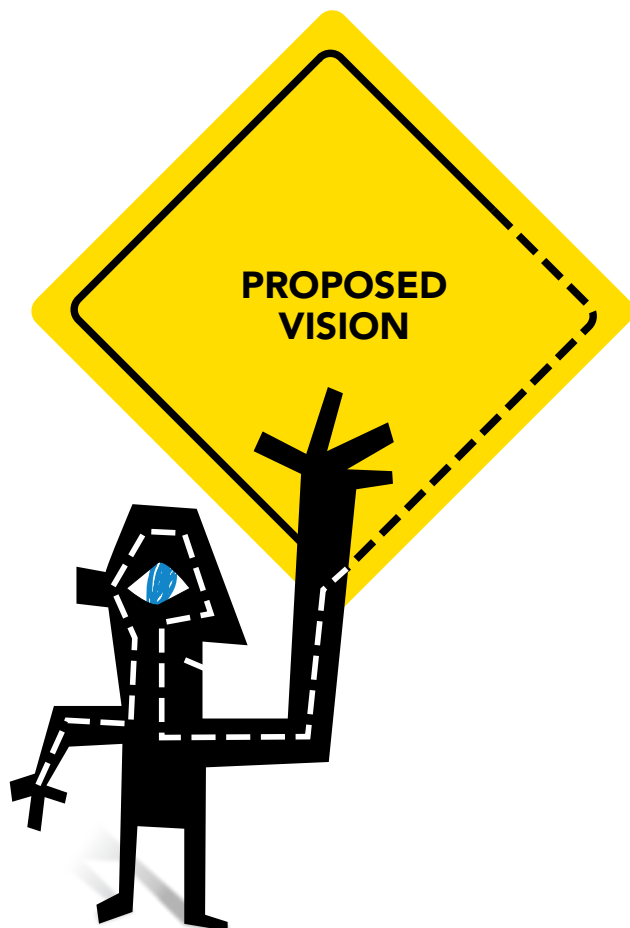
Progress in reducing road trauma has stalled in recent years, and this shows that we need a new approach to road safety. If we continue with our current approach, and rely on our existing set of road safety initiatives, it is estimated³ that in 2020 around 400 people will lose their lives and more than 3,000 people will be seriously injured.

This is about the same level of serious road trauma as now, which means our progress in reducing deaths and serious injuries will continue to stall. Essentially, the safety gains we are getting from our road safety efforts are being continuously offset by increases in road use that come with population and economic growth.

The challenge for the 2020 strategy is to provide a new approach to reducing road safety risks. This approach must support New Zealand's economic goals while delivering a substantial and sustained reduction in deaths and injuries.

2 International Energy Outlook 2009

3 These predictions incorporate expected growth in traffic (Vehicle Kilometres Travelled-VKT) as the primary variable. There are many other potential variables that could affect this estimate but these have not been included due to the high degree of uncertainty surrounding their possible impacts.



The vision proposed for the new road safety strategy is:

VISION

A safe road system that is increasingly free of road deaths and serious injuries

This vision acknowledges that while we could never prevent all road crashes from happening, we could prevent many. Ultimately we could significantly reduce the likelihood of crashes resulting in death and serious injury.

This vision also focuses on reducing the number of serious injuries. Too many New Zealanders die in road crashes each year, but roughly six to seven times as many people are seriously injured. These injuries greatly reduce the quality of peoples' lives and the contribution they make to their communities and to the economy.

WHY DO WE NEED A VISION FOR ROAD SAFETY?

New Zealand does not currently have a vision for road safety. Instead, policy direction is provided through the *Road Safety to 2010* strategy's targets of reducing road trauma to no more than 300 deaths and 4,500 hospitalisations by 2010. Having no vision is a weakness because:

- by themselves, targets can create a perception that the government is comfortable with a certain level of serious road trauma
- there is no clear statement of what New Zealand is ultimately aiming to achieve.

This does not mean that targets are not important. It simply recognises that visions and targets play different roles. A vision would state New Zealand's aspiration or long-term goal for road safety. A set of targets would outline how much progress we aim to achieve towards realising the vision over, say, a ten year period.

We know from the world's best road safety performers that having a bold vision is a key part of improving road safety. For example, Sweden and the Netherlands have made significant gains in road safety since focusing their efforts around a bold vision.

To do its job well a vision needs to:

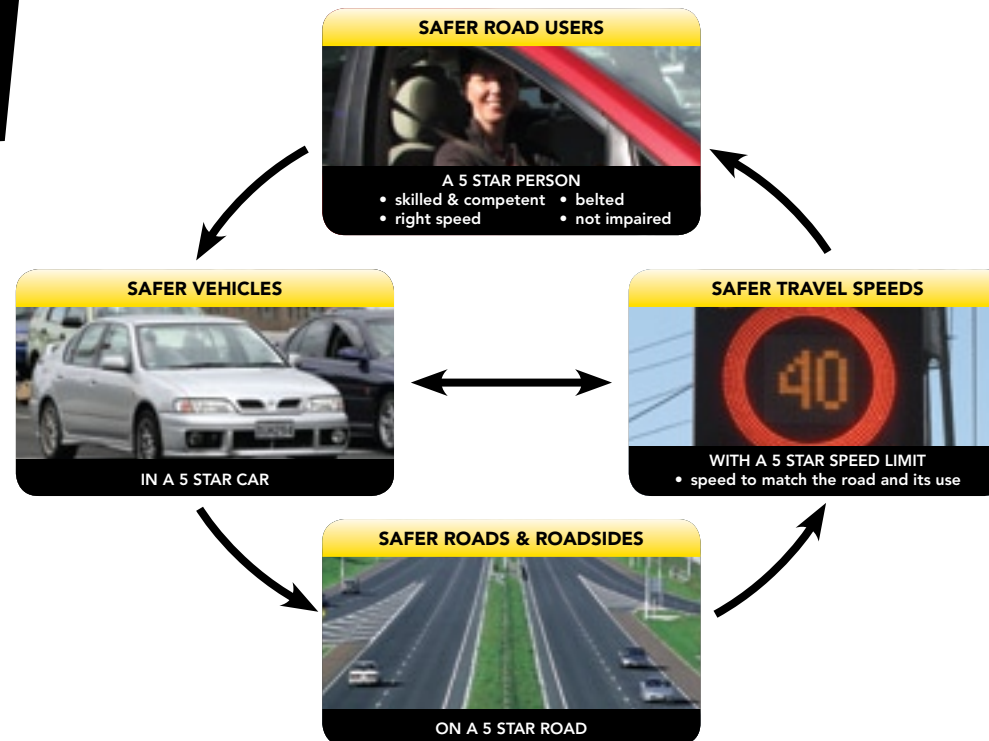
- be inspirational and challenging, yet still credible
- resonate with all New Zealanders
- be clearly stated and easily understood.



To advance the vision over the period 2010–2020 we propose that New Zealand use a system-wide approach to road safety. With this approach we would be challenged to move beyond our tendency to see ‘fixing the driver or user’ as the solution. Instead, we would focus on improving all the parts of the road system that impact on safety (ie the road, the vehicle, the travel speed and the road user).

This approach acknowledges that serious road trauma rarely has a single cause. Crashes tend to occur when a range of factors come together at one point in time.

A SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH



The aim of a safe system is to reduce the likelihood of various crash factors coming together to cause a crash.

As can be seen from the safe system diagram, with a safe system we would be moving towards having five-star road users, in five-star vehicles, travelling on five-star roads at five-star speeds. This will take some time to achieve, but by continually making gains in these four areas we will see sustained improvements in road safety.

This approach acknowledges that we all make mistakes. It does this by deliberately creating a system that will progressively reduce the chance of mistakes resulting in crashes. But when crashes do happen, the safe system will have measures in place that significantly reduce the chance of death and serious injury (through safer roads, speeds and vehicles).

Acknowledging human error does not mean that road users have no responsibility. A safe system relies on safe road use. This requires responsible users who comply with the road rules and are unimpaired by alcohol, drugs, fatigue or distraction. It also requires them to actively take steps to increase safety, such as driving to the conditions.

The safe system builds on, but goes beyond, the previous 2010 strategy’s approach of the three Es: education, engineering and enforcement. It focuses on the outcomes we need to achieve (ie safer roads and roadsides, safer vehicles, safer speeds and safer road use). At the same time it is open to how we might achieve them. It can use a wider range of measures in addition to education, engineering and enforcement, such as the use of economic incentives (eg vehicle scrappage schemes) and safety-conscious land use and transport planning decisions.

The most significant message of a safe system is that everybody is responsible for improving road safety. It requires road users, road authorities, planners, policy makers, enforcers and vehicle manufacturers and importers to all work together.



WHAT SHOULD OUR PRIORITIES BE?

To move towards a safer system the new strategy needs to consider where the system needs improvements. Our research shows five major areas of concern and five areas where we could do much better. We also need to focus on three areas that are either current or emerging. These are the proposed priority areas:

These 13 priorities are discussed in the following sections. A number of possible initiatives are discussed in each section and all aim to make the system safer. In total, over 60 initiatives are suggested but not all of them would be implemented. This is partly due to resource constraints but, more importantly, to the fact that the initiatives will not all have the same level of effectiveness.

HIGH CONCERN

- Reducing alcohol/drug impaired driving
- Increasing the safety of young drivers
- Safer roads and roadsides
- Safer speeds
- Increasing the safety of motor-cycling

MEDIUM CONCERN

- Improving the safety of the light vehicle fleet
- Safer walking and cycling
- Improving the safety of heavy vehicles
- Reducing the impact of fatigue
- Addressing distraction

AREAS FOR CONTINUED FOCUS AND EMERGING ISSUES

- Increasing the level of restraint use
- Reducing the impact of high-risk drivers
- Increasing the safety of older New Zealanders

Some will achieve a greater reduction in road deaths and serious injuries than others. Many of the initiatives have not been fully developed so it is difficult to know their likely costs and benefits.

This is why we want to hear your ideas. We want to have a debate about which ones we should focus on.

The final strategy will set out the initiatives that will be advanced over the next decade. Each of these initiatives will then be included in one of the three three-year action plans that will be released over the term of the strategy. The action plans will also provide greater detail on how the strategy will be implemented and who is accountable for each initiative.

At the end of this document we ask you to submit your preferred package of initiatives. We also ask about the role of education and advertising (as education is a core activity that affects most priority areas).

WHY HAVE PRIORITIES OF DIFFERENT RANK?

All of the priority areas require attention over the period 2010–2020. However, high concern priorities represent areas:

- where we are likely to make the most improvement in road safety over the period 2010–2020
- that could make the largest contribution to reducing the costs imposed on the economy by road deaths and injuries (eg reducing the days of productivity lost to the workforce, or reducing health sector costs, including reducing ACC costs)
- where a significant change in policy direction, or effort, would be required over the period 2010–2020 if New Zealand is to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in road deaths and serious injuries.

HOW WILL WE ENSURE THAT ALL NEW ZEALANDERS BENEFIT?

Currently, New Zealand's road system delivers significantly better road safety outcomes for some population groups, regions and methods of transport than others. For example, Maori are almost twice as likely to die or be seriously injured in road crashes than other ethnic populations, with Maori children and young people being particularly affected.

Similarly, the crash risk per vehicle kilometre travelled in Gisborne and Northland is around twice as high as in Auckland and Wellington, and nearly twice that of Nelson/Marlborough.

For *Safer Journeys* to be successful it must reduce road trauma across all population groups and regions. All of the initiatives suggested in this document are intended to improve the welfare and well-being of **all** New Zealanders.

To achieve this, we propose having specific priorities for groups such as young drivers, older New Zealanders, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. It is also intended that when the 2020 initiatives are implemented they be targeted, or tailored, to respond to the differing needs of New Zealand's communities.

DISCUSSION POINT

Do you think we have identified the right priority areas? If not, what would you change?