

Speed Management

At a Joint Council meeting of Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council in August 2024, the Nelson Tasman Speed Management Plan was adopted following extensive consultation.

In October 2024, the Setting of the Speed Limits Rule 2024 was released. This Rule requires Council to re-consult on most proposed speed limit changes before we can implement our Speed Management Plan. This consultation material must now include a Cost Benefit Disclosure Statement for each road being consulted on.

Consultation is not required for new variable 30km/h limits outside schools.

What are we consulting on now?

We are consulting on proposed speed reductions on our high-risk roads, base speed limit reductions on rural roads adjacent to schools, and McShane Road now.

This current consultation focuses on three types of roads we propose to change the speed limit for:

1. Reduction from 100km/h to 80km/h on the following high-risk roads: Moutere Highway/Main Road Lower Moutere, Motueka Valley Highway (from Dovedale Road to existing 80km/h at Alexander Bluff Road), Edwards Road, Neudorf Road, and Dovedale Road (from Motueka Valley Highway to Neudorf Road).
2. Base speed limit reduction adjacent to the following schools: Lower Moutere, Upper Moutere, Ngātimoti, Collingwood, Tasman, Tasman Bay Christian, Central Tākaka, Wakefield and Hope.
3. McShane Road

What are we not consulting on?

Consultation is not required for new variable 30km/h limits outside schools, which are required by the Setting of Speed Limits Rule.

Any changes to State Highway speeds will be undertaken by NZTA Waka Kotahi.

What will we be consulting on later in the year?

Later in 2025, we will consult on our other proposed speed limit changes including changes for

- rural residential roads,
- urban roads with no footpaths,
- winding and narrow unsealed roads
- other specific roads such as Abel Tasman Drive between Pōhara and Ligar Bay, Kaiteriteri-Sandy Bay Road, Aniseed Valley Road.

[Click here to read the Consultation Document and maps open in new window](#)

[Click here to provide feedbackopen in new window](#)

Why safe speeds?

Safe speeds are fundamental to improving safety, saving lives, and preventing debilitating injuries. Higher vehicle speeds increase the probability of a crash in several ways:

- By reducing the ability of a driver/vehicle to stop in time
- By reducing manoeuvrability to evade a problem
- By reducing the driver's field of vision
- By causing other drivers to misjudge gaps

Safe speeds are about achieving safe vehicle speeds that reflect the road's function, design, safety, and use. People and goods need to move efficiently around our transport network and we also need to see a reduction in deaths and serious injuries on the network. Other benefits gained from the implementation of appropriate vehicle speeds include enabling more active ways in how we get to where we need to go such as letting children walk or bike to school.

What's the link between speed and safety on our roads?

Irrespective of the cause of a crash, speed is the difference between someone being unharmed or being seriously injured or killed. A small change in speed makes a big difference especially when cyclists or pedestrians are involved.

More people die on our roads per head of population than in similar countries. The current speed limits may be too high in relation to the design and features of the road. Even when people are obeying the legal limit, they may not have enough time to respond when something unexpected happens.

Impact of crashes

Setting safe speed limits to what a human body can survive is important. Setting safe speed limits where people walking and cycling mix with vehicles, like in town centres and around schools is essential to reducing death and serious injury. The social cost of crashes is estimated at \$12.5 million per fatality and \$660,000 per serious injury. In Nelson Tasman, 73% of fatal and serious crashes in urban areas involved cyclists, pedestrians or motorcyclists between 2013-2022). The social cost of deaths and serious injuries has been \$429 million on our local roads over the past ten years. The internationally accepted speed to greatly reduce the chances of a pedestrian being killed or seriously injured is 30km/h.

Changing of Speed Limits

The way speed limits are set has changed. Limits are now set through the process set out in the Setting of Speed Limits rule rather than rather than a bylaw. Tasman District and Nelson City Councils adopted a Speed Management Plan in July 2024 which provides strategic direction to the speed limit changes over the next ten years.

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Myths and misconceptions

- **"Speed isn't a problem, bad drivers are"**

While poor driving behaviour has resulted in crashes, more are a result of mistakes. These mistakes shouldn't result in loss of life or serious injury, and the speed you are driving at could be the difference between life, death or serious injury.

- **"If speed limits are reduced, my travel time will increase and cost me more in fuel"**

Increases in travel time are generally less than expected, and fuel use generally reduces with reduced speed.

- **"It's the road not the speed limit that needs changing"**

Not all roads are created equal and people do make mistakes. It is unaffordable to upgrade our roads to improve their safety to match the current speed limit but we can adjust the speed limit as travelling the right speed for the road and conditions can be the difference between a correctable mistake and a fatal error.

- **"Modern cars are safer and better, so there's no need for us to drive slower"**

While modern cars have better safety equipment, our bodies don't, and they feel the force of a crash the same way, especially those outside the vehicle, walking or cycling. New Zealand's fleet is relatively old, and half the cars on the road today lack even basic safety features, like stability control or side airbags.

- **"Reducing speed limits is revenue gathering for the Police"**

Police do not retain any of the money from infringements; the money goes to the Government. Police would be delighted not to have to issue any infringements, as this would show everyone was driving safely and not putting themselves or others at risk.

- **"You just want to drop speed limits everywhere."**

No, we want to use local knowledge and data to make sure we've done everything we can to make our roads safer. This could mean road improvements and keeping the current speed limit, or it could mean lowering it. We want to make sure we have the right speeds on the right roads.

- **"Going a few kilometres faster or slower doesn't make any difference to safety"**

Actually, it does. Speed is the difference between a correctable mistake and a fatal error. Studies on 'survivable speeds' in crashes show a maximum speed of 30km/h equates to a survival rate of 90%, and is more than 99% for crashes at 20 km/h.

- **"It's overseas drivers that cause the problems, they don't know our roads and rules, locals know the roads well"**

New Zealand drivers crash at a much higher rate than our visitors. We do know that between 2015-19, **only 5.7 percent** of fatal and injury crashes involved an overseas driver (this doesn't mean an overseas driver was necessarily at fault, just that they were involved in a crash).

- **"It's mostly young and inexperienced drivers that we need to worry about"**

While it's true that young people are over-represented in crash statistics, almost half of serious crashes involve a driver aged 35 or more.

- **"Slow drivers are the problem because people get frustrated and take unnecessary risks"**

In 2022, 341 people were killed on our roads. Travelling too fast for the conditions contributed to the cause of about a third of all fatal crashes. On the other hand, slow driving is not significantly implicated as a cause in serious crashes.

State Highways

State Highways speed limits are managed by Waka Kotahi. For more information about State Highway speed changes

[Click here for information](#)