



18 October 2019

Speed limit changes death by a thousand cuts

Where's the strategy, including analysis of economic impacts, for all the speed limit changes being proposed on roads around New Zealand, says Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett.

"We are experiencing death by a thousand cuts – on our roads and subsequently, on our back pockets," Leggett says.

"The Government is pushing proposals to lower speed limits on main highways all around the country in a piecemeal fashion, with no consideration of the impact on moving all our domestic and export food and goods, about 93 percent of which is transported by road.

"Those impacts are time and money. If it takes longer, it costs more. And those additional costs filter down to the household budget being stretched even further, at a time when there is very little give.

"The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is wearing down industry groups and interested locals with the sheer volume of individual submissions required on varying speed limit changes up and down the country. There doesn't seem to be any over-arching strategy that links all these changes.

"While the Government has rightly focused on some aspects of road safety, they don't seem to connect the importance of the roads themselves, to the safety of the people using them.

"In the South Island, local residents are petitioning the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to scrap proposed lower speed limits on State Highway 6, from Nelson to Blenheim. NZTA cites accident numbers to say the road is unsafe and is proposing reducing the speed from 100 km/h to 80 km/h. If approved, the entire length of SH6 between the two towns, about 110 kilometres, would be not more than 80km/h at any point. NZTA says the 'technical assessment of the state of the road' was the reason behind the proposed reduced speed limit.

"If the roads are not 'technically' safe, the Government should be spending some money on making them safe. It is the 93,000 kilometres of roading in New Zealand that drives our economy and connects us to each other.

"For road freight movements in that Blenheim-Nelson area, this proposal will extend truck travelling time by 20 minutes each way, per truck. That means where companies can now do three round-trips a day per truck, they will have to reduce that to two to stay within legal driving time limits.

“That’s a lot of export goods going to Nelson port and a lot of fresh food waiting for the next day, or the day after.

“Not fixing roads and lowering speed limits to accommodate not fixing roads is a folly.

“This Government would have you believe that less trucks on the road is a good thing. It’s not. It’s less jobs. It’s decline not growth. It’s the inconvenience of not having what you want when you want it. And eventually it impacts us all with higher prices for essentials like food.”

For more information contact:

**Josie Vidal, RTF manager communications & government relations
Mob: 022 092 9353**

About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Associations NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate 16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 26,600 people (3.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports about 70% of New Zealand’s land-based freight measured on a tonne/kilometre basis.