



WHITING MOYNE P/L

Strategic Road Safety Advisory Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 2021 REPORT on AUCKLAND 2018 ROAD SAFETY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017 Auckland faced a crisis on its roads: 64 people died, and 768 others were seriously injured - a 70% increase in death or serious injuries (DSI) since 2014. Between 2014 and 2017, road trauma increased at more than five times the rate of travel and more than three times the rate of the rest of New Zealand. On average, there was at least one DSI on Auckland's roads every day.

In late 2017 the Auckland Transport (AT) Board commissioned a Road Safety Business Improvement Review (BIR) to gain insight into Auckland's road safety performance and see how the organisation was performing. The BIR, authored by eminent Australian road safety consultancy, Whiting Moyne, found several shortfalls at local and central government levels.

The 2018 BIR identified 45 recommendations containing 74 actions for AT to pursue to improve road safety outcomes across the Auckland region. The AT Board accepted all of them and embarked on a series of actions to improve road safety in Auckland. Safety became AT's top priority; and with partners NZ Police, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Ministry of Transport (MoT), Auckland Council, Auckland Regional Public Health Services (ARPHS) and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi), Auckland became a Vision Zero region in 2019.

In early 2021, AT approached the author of the 2018 report, leading international safe system advisor Eric Howard, to review progress and to identify focus areas and recommendations which could help inform the next Vision Zero Action Plan.

On the road to safety in Auckland

Three years since the 2018 BIR, the road safety situation at AT is very different. The organisation has undergone a rethink and reset and established its commitment to pursue a strategy and actions to substantially improve road safety outcomes. AT has achieved highly positive results to date for its community in reducing DSI. This achievement cannot be underappreciated, and is receiving interest internationally.

AT has made a clear organisational commitment to road safety, establishing a new Directorate for Safety and carrying out many tasks not previously receiving attention but central to improving road safety performance.

AT teams (legal, road safety engineering, procurement, marketing, consultation and communications, and community transport) have collaborated to raise road safety public awareness, and the Safe System/Vision Zero principles continue to be embedded across the organisation. The case for building public acceptance of the "no trading off of safety" message so central to Vision Zero and so challenging for many motorised road users is well underway. The Safe System Assessment Framework (SSAF) has been adapted for use and increasingly applied, and direct AT funding of more than the recommended \$15m has been provided for infrastructure safety work annually, where AT's road safety programme 2020/21 is allocated over \$60m.

In September 2019 a Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan¹ for Tāmaki Makaurau was adopted, which is overseen by the Tāmaki Makaurau (TM) Road Safety Governance Group.

In June 2020 safe speed limits were rolled out across 600 local Auckland roads (10% of the AT network): Speeds in the city centre were lowered including a substantial adoption of 30 km/hr limits. An investigation for the second stage of safe speed changes has commenced comprising an additional 1,022km of road (13% of the AT network). These are substantial changes which are improving the safety of travel of all Aucklanders.

In addition to these and many other direct actions, AT continues to advocate (with limited success) for timely regulatory and policy reform to central government authorities.

Detailed assessment of the 2018 BIR recommendations (see Chapter 5 for recommendations with detailed analysis provided in Chapter 6) reveals that AT has been focused and fully committed to delivering on all recommendations adopted in 2018. Of 75 actions related to AT responsibilities, 28 have been substantially or completely implemented, 28 have achieved satisfactory progress and action continues, 18 are underway with unsatisfactory progress and one has not yet progressed from 2018.

Unfortunately, the situation in relation to recommendations reliant upon the national government agencies in Wellington is not as positive a picture. Of 45 actions related to the central government departments/agencies, five actions have been substantially implemented and 12 others have achieved satisfactory progress. While another 21 are underway, their progress is unsatisfactory. A further seven have not progressed from 2018.

See Chapter 7 for more detail

Summary of 2018 BIR actions/ Progress	AT (75)		Government agencies (45)	
Substantially/completely implemented	28	37.6%	5	11.1%
Satisfactory progress with action continuing	28	37.6%	12	26.7%
Underway with unsatisfactory progress	18	24.4%	21	46.7%
Not advanced from 2018	1	1.4%	7	14.5%

Road Safety – How are we tracking?

In 2020, Auckland recorded 37 deaths and 489 serious injuries occurred on local roads; a decrease of 42% and 36% respectively compared to 2017. This is commendable, but although much has been done much remains to be achieved.

The average number of road fatalities per 100,000 population in Auckland in 2020 was 2.15, compared to 3.9 in 2017. The New Zealand equivalent in 2020 was more than three times that number: 6.9 road fatalities per 100,000 people. Comparatively Auckland is faring much better than New Zealand, however measures to lift New Zealand’s overall performance will benefit Auckland, particularly in stronger deterrence of unsafe behaviours and measures to improve vehicle crash worthiness.

¹ Vision Zero for Tāmaki Makaurau, A Transport Safety strategy and Action Plan to 2030, Tāmaki Makaurau Road Safety Governance Group 2019.

NZ (2017-2020) mean annual fatalities comparisons	New Zealand 2017-2020 Mean rate	Norway 2017 -2019# Mean rate	Victoria 2017-2020* Mean rate	Auckland 2017-2020^ Mean rate	Melbourne 2018-2020* Mean rate
Fatalities / 100,000 population	7.10	2.0	3.66	2.92	2.14

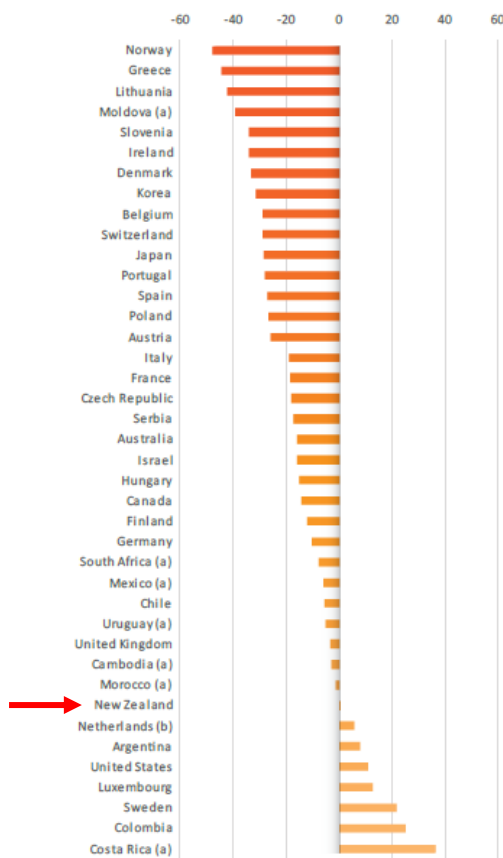
A whole of country DSI rate customarily exceeds the rate for a major urban area, as travel speeds are higher and infrastructure safety much more highly variable across a country compared to a City.

However from the Table above New Zealand’s DSI rate is 1.9 times the rate in Victoria Australia. Auckland’s DSI rate is 1.4 times the rate in Melbourne. New Zealand is underperforming in relative terms in its road safety delivery.

From another viewpoint, if New Zealand had delivered a rate of fatalities to match that of Victoria, Australia in 2020, (3.5 fatalities per 100,0000 population, a State with a similar population to New Zealand) then 145 less New Zealanders would have perished on New Zealand roads last year. Further, if New Zealand had delivered a rate of fatalities to match Norway’s in 2019, (2.0 fatalities per 100,0000 population, a country with a similar population to NZ) then 209 less New Zealanders would have perished on NZ roads.

These figures suggest many lives lost across New Zealand could have been avoided in the past 10 years. Importantly **the loss of between some 1240 and 2090 lives over the future ten-year period ahead could be avoided** if a greater effort to match good international practice is made by the central government, with support from local government agencies and their communities.

Percentage change in the number of road deaths, 2000 – 2013 vs 2013 - 2017²



Road safety has not received adequate attention and represents a lost opportunity over the past 10 or so years.

While New Zealand has traditionally led on many substantial global initiatives, across a range of fields, including Covid-19, climate change, corporate transparency and much more, effort to reduce DSI nationwide over the last ten years is poor compared to other developed countries.

“If we had the same number of homicides annually in New Zealand as deaths from road crashes ... there would be an uproar. A road death can affect any one of us.” – 2021 BIR Interviewee

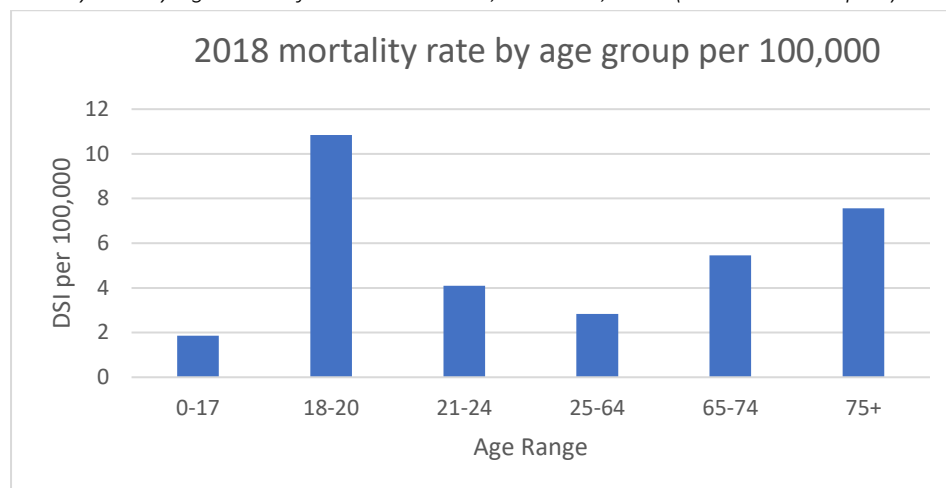
In addition, for New Zealand overall, the relatively high fatality rate for 18 to 20 year old’s, (14 per 100,000 in 2018), for 21 to 24 year old’s, (15 per 100,000 in 2018) and the 75+ age group (14 per 100,000 in 2018) are major concerns.

This may reflect undeveloped opportunities from strengthening graduated licensing settings, a relatively low solo licensing age, the quality of imported vehicles, inappropriately high speed limits on rural roads of poor safety quality and shortcomings in deterrence of speeding and drink and drug driving due to inadequate penalties and limited enforcement. It warrants serious review.

Turning back to Auckland’s road safety situation, the rate of fatalities by age group is substantially better for Auckland than for New Zealand across the age groups and mirrors Australian experience.

² Road Safety Annual Report, ITF-OECD 2019

Fatality rate by age cohort from road crashes, Auckland, 2018 (Auckland Transport)



Across Auckland in 2020, 43% of fatalities were drivers or passengers.

However, 27% were pedestrians, 22% were motorcyclists and 8% were cyclists, a total of 57% of fatalities being outside, (ie not protected by) a vehicle. Priority action to robustly tackle this issue are required. Lower travel speeds though lower limits and ‘anywhere, anytime’ effective (and much strengthened) enforcement of speed compliance will bring major benefits to these vulnerable road user groups.

Drink Driving in Auckland:

- From 2017 to 2019, drink driving (illegal blood alcohol content (BAC) levels) was involved in 26% of all fatalities in Auckland. Interestingly, the comparative figure for all of New Zealand is 21.8%, a better performance than in Auckland. Good practice is 15%.
- Only 30% of Auckland drivers had been stopped at an alcohol checkpoint in the past 12 months (completed in March 2020). This is a concerning reduction over time from a national high of 55% in 2013 and the lowest since 1995.
- The last three years (2018 – 2020), random breath tests have been delivered below the national road policing target in Auckland. Auckland is one of the worst performing districts in New Zealand in conducting agreed numbers of breath tests.

Speeding:

- Inappropriate speed was a suspected factor in 51% of fatalities in Auckland in 2020.
- DSI Crashes for which speeding was a factor increased by 11% in Auckland from 2019 to 2020.
- In 2020, 44% of New Zealanders believe the chance of getting caught speeding was small (but up from 24% in 2016).
- Speed affects the severity of all crashes and it has exponential consequences for injury and fatality risks from crashes, even for small speed increases. A 4 km/hr higher mean travel speed in a 60 km/h speed limit can increase fatal crash outcomes by 25%³.
- Compliance with appropriately safe speed limits is essential to improve survivability in any crash. Behaviour change requires and usually relies upon effective deterrence. Effective

³ Monash University Enhanced Crash Investigation Study, 2020

deterrence requires a strong likelihood of being detected (sufficiently widespread with anywhere, anytime enforcement), rapid receipt of infringement notices/court charges, and a penalty that is unpleasantly severe for the recipient.

It is noted that for the year to date (to the end of April 2021), **road fatalities in Auckland were tracking at almost double the level at the same time last year, and at the same level as in 2017.** This is a concerning trend in early 2021 after the 2020 reductions, which would have reflected in part the impacts of Covid-19 on travel across Auckland.

What's the cost?

Each DSI on our roads destroys relationships, families, whanau and communities. The effects of road trauma fan out to consume health agencies, the justice system and everyone who relies on a safe and functioning transport system to carry out business and get around. The costs associated with DSI on our roads are personal, social and economic.

We cannot afford to be complacent. While Auckland is performing much better in relative terms than New Zealand overall, the issues impinging on national performance are also affecting (to a lesser but significant extent) the safety of the Auckland community

- The OECD/ITF produce annual data reports on each country's road crash performance.
- In 2018 figures the cost of road crashes in NZ was 1.8% of NZ's GDP.
- In 2020 New Zealand's GDP was \$322 billion. Using the same calculation, the annual economic cost of road crashes to NZ in 2020 is \$5.79 billion - a substantial sum.
- In 2018 New Zealand was ranked 32nd out of 36 OECD countries for road safety performance

Some of the factors influencing New Zealand's overall poor road safety performance are holding back Auckland's rate of progress and must be addressed, for the sake of the Auckland and the New Zealand Community.

Next steps for AT

AT's effort to improve road safety over the last three years is commendable and internationally recognised, but there is much more to do.

Improving linkage of Safe System approaches to broader sustainability priorities, where achievement of a safer transport network is linked to achieving other objectives for greater universal access, efficiency and environmental benefits should continue to be an objective within AT. AT is pursuing strengthening of active travel modes to meet demands for improved walking and cycling to benefit the community more broadly and improving support for 'place', including through its speed limit review and infrastructure safety actions.

A substantial challenge for AT is to not only maintain the DSI savings achieved but to improve stakeholder engagement and responses to improve comprehensive service delivery. AT also needs to continue to strengthen its internal processes and its commitment to safety policy, and its delivery both

within AT and by its road safety partners (especially at national level) to further improve performance in coming years.

Particular immediate and practical safety challenges are the provision of supports to change road user behaviour, especially with respect to speeding, drink driving and drug driving. An inability to enforce drink driving through adequate levels of breath testing of drivers and to deploy mobile camera technology on an adequate scale, both at levels that would approach good international practice, have heavily limited the potential road safety gains realised by the Auckland community. This situation has made the task of improving road safety outcomes much more difficult for Auckland, with enforcement, policy and regulatory decisions being the province of central government.

More support from NZ Police and central government is needed to meaningfully tackle these issues if further reductions in DSI are to be realised.

An important observation is that for New Zealand overall, sustained focused action as proposed in the initial Action Plan 2020 – 2022 prepared under the umbrella of the Road to Zero, New Zealand’s Road Safety Strategy for 2020 – 2030, is clearly essential. Is New Zealand able to meet this challenge? Will the opportunity to reverse the disappointment of the last decade of road safety performance be grasped? All New Zealand would benefit.

2021 BIR Recommendations

The 2021 BIR recommendations fall within five key focus areas:

[Lead AT to meet current and future road safety and related challenges](#)

With Board and CE leadership, AT needs to fully embrace and apply Safe System with linkage to broader transport outcomes, to achieve access, efficiency, green mobility and enhanced place outcomes. Effective monitoring and benchmarking arrangements and reporting on performance are vital.

[Build AT and partner capability to deliver outcomes](#)

AT needs to substantially ramp up investment in partnership activities and training to ensure sector capability. Clear positions on key policy and regulatory matters, coordinated policy development across AT and 360° advocacy are critically important.

[Deliver critical outcomes - Fresh initiatives](#)

Detailed recommendations to substantially improve deterrence of drink driving and speeding and to support increased drug driving deterrence from 2022 are outlined. A focused programme to improve pedestrian and other vulnerable road user safety and accelerate the proposed lower speed limits programme are further important initiatives.

[Pursue regulatory and policy reform nationally](#)

Pursuing significant regulatory reform and policy reform at national level is recommended covering road safety fines, penalties, improved vehicle standards, a zero BAC limit for heavy vehicle and public transport drivers, alcohol treatment programmes, review and extension of the alcohol interlock program, upgraded graduated licencing requirements and development of a further substantial source of safety funding.

Deliver critical outcomes - Strengthen existing programmes

Opportunities to deliver critical outcomes through strengthening existing programmes including bus operations, safety in maintenance and renewals, more comprehensive safety program management, safe fleet practices, utilising combined workplace health and safety and road safety approaches to reduce DSI, and building awareness of harm flowing from low level speeding, are recommended.

There are 31 recommended action points associated with these 5 focus areas. *For the complete 31 recommendations please see full Chapter 5.*

Top 10 Recommendations

The highest priority individual recommendations in terms of importance and urgency, within the 31 identified, in order, are to:

1. Substantially improve deterrence of drink driving
2. Substantially improve deterrence of speeding
3. Pursue significant road safety regulatory reform at national level
4. Deliver improved pedestrian (and other VRU) safety across the arterial and other roads in the network
5. Advocate for and advise on policy reform at national level
6. Lower travel speeds across higher risk sections of the Auckland network
7. Expand safer urban infrastructure treatment programmes in association with safer speed limits introductions to continue to lower DSI
8. AT to substantially ramp up investment in/resourcing of capabilities for informed road safety partnership activities with local Auckland partners, plus other stakeholders and national partners
9. With Board and CE leadership, AT to continue to work to genuinely embed the Vision Zero and Safe System principles in all they do to achieve a 65% reduction in DSI by 2030 and zero DSI by 2050 for their community
10. Ensure Health and Safety responsibilities cover transport network operating risks.

AT's commitment to road safety over the last three years has been nothing short of magnificent, and Auckland is well on the way to achieving world-leading results in this space. But for Auckland, (and particularly New Zealand which is lagging good practice road safety levels) to reach its full potential, to continue its journey on behalf of its community and remain an exemplar road safety performer – the following actions (which expand upon the recommendations above) need to be taken by road safety partners, and government agencies:

- Increase drink driving deterrence to good international practice levels

- Enforce speed compliance in Auckland and New Zealand, with increased mobile covert camera hours in urban centres to achieve “anywhere, anytime” deterrence
- Pursue regulatory reform at national level to seek higher fines for speeding and drink driving, stronger license sanctions, a review of the demerit point system and authorising the allocation of demerit points for all speed camera detected offences
- Introduce permanent 30km/hr speed limits on non-arterial roads/streets in the vicinity of schools and marae and for locations on arterial roads, utilise time based electronic signage
- Introduce 30km/hr limits for all residential streets as soon as possible, review (with Waka Kotahi) and reduce current speed limits on the network to reduce likely fatal outcomes from head on, intersection, run off-road and pedestrian crashes. Seek acceptable change in the current national by-law process to speed up the length in time for the process for introducing all required changes to limits in Auckland to a maximum 3 year period.
- Seek policy reform (drugs, vehicle safety, zero blood alcohol content for commercial vehicles, review work related licences, extend requirements for alcohol interlock conditions, strengthen graduated licensing system, establish an hypothecated road safety fund)
- Accelerate the safer urban infrastructure treatment programmes in association with safer speed limits programme for Auckland
- Strengthen capabilities and partnerships between local and national partners
- Promote sustainable safety and ensure occupational/workplace health and safety approaches are aligned with responsibilities for safe road network.