

Creating a new path towards Safe System

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Safe Roads has been set up to deliver against the NZ Transport Agency's commitments to the Safer Journey's Strategy 2010-2020. The overall vision of the Strategy is for 'a safe road system increasingly free of death and serious injury'. As part of the alliance formed for this purpose, a number of high risk state highway intersections, and high and high-medium collective risk state highway corridors were selected by the Transport Agency to deliver Safe System performing roads. This was identified in the Safer Journeys: Delivering Safe Roads and Roadsides (National Programme Business Case) (2014).

We have adopted Safe System for the roads and roadsides segments, tailored to our network. But what should this look like? We have had to confront the challenging question of what a generic high speed, rural, undivided corridor should physically look like, how it should operate and what level of intervention we should be targeting in practice, using, for example, traffic volume and road classification to help us. Changes in the Investment Assessment Framework now allow for predictive tools to be utilised, which supports the Safe System approach and allows us to be more proactive than reactive.

Because this programme focusses on "retrofitting" safety, we have continually had to adapt and improvise to deliver the best designs we can, within the existing thresholds and constraints, e.g., BCRs greater than one and physical conditions, while also looking to reduce the costs of delivering major safety benefits.

Tremendous gains can be realised where we are successful. Safe Roads will learn from its experiences and continue to seek practical ways to move cost-efficiently towards Safe System design and operation.