



Response to staff Memo following Halswell Residents Association's request for endorsement of Vision Zero

8 June 2017

1. Key points

- a. As evidenced by the stubbornly high crash and casualty rates in Christchurch, "Safe Systems" is not yielding improvements in road safety.
- b. A focus by Council on the role of central government agencies has allowed it to avoid responsibility for the non-infrastructure areas of road safety that it can influence.
- c. Vision Zero provides a holistic approach to road safety that is missing from Safe Systems.

2. Background

- a. The following discussion relates primarily to a Christchurch City Council Memo "Vision Zero road safety initiative" (Ryan Rolston) to Halswell – Hornby – Riccarton Community Board, dated 28 December 2017 [sic] and received by the Board at its February 2017 meeting.
- b. This Memo was prepared in response to our delegation to Community Board on 8 November 2016. In this delegation, we advanced a case for Community Board to endorse Vision Zero. We see Vision Zero as a systematic and comprehensive framework for looking at road safety.
- c. Because safety concerns underlie many people's reluctance to adopt active modes of transport, a community with fewer deaths and injuries on the road will also be a more sustainable and liveable community. We want Halswell to be such a community.
- d. Vision Zero would fit well Council's "Safer Christchurch Strategy 2016-2021", of which Priority Area Four *Enhancing Safety on Our Roads* includes a multi-agency approach to road safety.

3. The staff Memo contains two key arguments, which we will rebut:

- a. "Vision Zero is essentially already adopted within New Zealand albeit under different branding ["Safe Systems"]. Therefore it is not necessary for Council to adopt Vision Zero as this would not alter its current approach to road safety, being already aligned with the safe system principles."
- b. "Further, two of the key elements of the safe system, being safe vehicles and to a lesser extent safe drivers, are not under the direct influence of Councils, which is why the adoption of Vision Zero is more appropriate at a national level."

4. Firstly, the rates of casualties and of crashes in Christchurch are among the worst in the country, and are not decreasing.

- a. Data from the Ministry of Transport:

Year	City	Crashes/10,000 population	Casualties/10,000 population
2015	Christchurch	22	28
	Wellington	14	17
	Auckland	20	24
2014	Christchurch	23	28
	Wellington	16	18
	Auckland	17	22
2013	Christchurch	23	28
	Wellington	16	19
	Auckland	19	23

- b. The Safe Systems approach has been the basis of road safety for some years. We argue that the focus on Safe Systems is not delivering the improvement in road safety that our community needs.
    - c. As outlined in our initial Delegation to Community Board, we do not find any level of road fatalities acceptable, and, as just stated, Christchurch's statistics are among the worst in the country.
5. Safe Systems is not a comprehensive road safety programme
  - a. Vision Zero (<http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com/>) has a triangulated approach involving infrastructure, vehicle technology, enforcement, and education and training.
  - b. Safe Systems, as adopted in New Zealand (<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/road-engineering/safety/safe-system/>), focuses primarily on infrastructure.
  - c. Our Association strongly supports a comprehensive programme to improving the safety of our transport system: this is Vision Zero, not Safe Systems.
  - d. We will now look at two components of a comprehensive programme that Safe Systems ignores; enforcement, and education and training.
6. Council largely ignores enforcement
  - a. The Memo essentially argues that enforcement is delegated by central government to agencies such as the New Zealand Police.
  - b. From a manpower perspective, this is true. However, councils must play their part. For example, drunk drivers are not safe drivers, and councils control the granting of liquor licences.
  - c. Enforcement also includes providing evidence for Police to carry out enforcement activities. As identified in the Memo, many accidents occur at intersections, and we also know that red-light running contributes to accidents at intersections. We were astonished to learn earlier this year that there are no red-light cameras at any Christchurch intersection.

Although there is CCTV coverage of virtually every signalised intersection, the resolution of this coverage does not meet legal standards.

- d. Because Council is not accountable for enforcement, it has not prioritised the enforcement aspect of road safety. Vision Zero would change this.
7. Council and NZTA are working well in a partnership to improve intersection safety.
- a. Ironically, this is being carried out as a side-benefit of Council's Major Cycle Route programme. We strongly support this programme, and acknowledge the large amount of money that Council has allocated.
  - b. Substantial improvements to a number of critical intersections in our area will occur as part of the MCR programme, such as Lyttelton Street – Milton Street, Hoon Hay Road – Milton Street, and Sparks Road – Hendersons Road.
  - c. Importantly, the separated cycling infrastructure fundamental to the MCR programme will make a major contribution to cyclist safety (Cripton et al. 2014), and one reason that Christchurch's road safety rate compares poorly with other large cities is our high rate of walking and biking.
8. Council contributes little to education
- a. Road safety education at a national level in New Zealand is mostly carried out by NZ Police and NZTA, with a minor contribution from ACC. As with enforcement, the Memo essentially argues that education is delegated by central government to these agencies
  - b. Key messages relating to speeding and drunk-driving obviously need to have a national focus. However, Councils must also play their part. This is primarily in educating people to use the transport infrastructure safely in their area.
  - c. From the Draft Annual Plan, the only contribution in 2017/18 to road safety education that we could find comes from:
    - i. #37274 Road safety at schools \$311,000
    - ii. #37285 Safe routes to school \$96,000
  - d. As with the enforcement question covered in paragraph 6d, education is not prioritised by Council as a contribution to road safety. Again, Vision Zero would change this.
9. The Memo argues that two key components of road safety, safe vehicles and safe drivers, are not under Council control so that any request for implementation of Vision Zero should be done nationally.
- a. This is a re-hash of an argument local communities get all the time. Wherever there are responsibilities split between agencies, each agency will send a local community off to the other agency. Some examples:
    - i. "Our hands are tied by NZTA when it comes to setting speed limits"; and "It is the Road Controlling Authority that sets local speed limits, not NZTA".
    - ii. "Council cannot improve the safety of this intersection, because it involves a state highway"; and "NZTA cannot improve the safety of this intersection, because it also involves a local road".

- iii. “Councils are restricted in the way they deal with resource consent applications by the legislation”; and “Councils are avoiding making decisions under the powers granted by the legislation”.
    - iv. “Councils are not required by the legislation to make public liquor licence applications”; and “Councils are entitled under the legislation to make liquor licence applications public”.
  - b. As outlined above, each agency needs to make its contribution. In this case, City Council has important contributions to make and endorsing Vision Zero would help Council to prioritise.
10. We respectfully request that Community Board accept our request to endorse Vision Zero. For members who stood under The People’s Choice platform at the last local body election, such an endorsement would be consistent with the promises made by The People’s Choice campaign.

### **Literature**

Cripton PA et al. (2015) Severity of urban cycling injuries and the relationship with personal, trip, route and crash characteristics: analyses using four severity metrics. *BMJ Open* 5:e006654

### **Websites**

- “Safe systems” as applied in New Zealand: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/road-engineering/safety/safe-system/> (accessed 7 June 2017)
- Official New Zealand road crash data: <http://www.transport.govt.nz/research/roadtoll/> (accessed 6 June 2017)
- The “Vision Zero Initiative” as defined by Business Sweden: <http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com/> (accessed 7 June 2017)