

Name: Councillor Ann Court

Date: April 2024

Northland Road Safety Meeting

Minutes attached

Disability Action Group

No meeting this period.

Te Puawaitanga

The fields are in – Whoopie!

The field specialist team have stolonized the fields – which is an expression I had never heard of before. I quick google search tells me 'Stolonizing is the process of taking the stolon of the turfgrass plant (basically a seedling with roots) which is a reproductive structure and spreading them over the surface of direct much like seeding.



Liquor Licensing

144 Applications processes to date this year with March accounting for 63 at the time of submitting this report. Total time MTD 29.25 hours.

Draft Regional Land Transport Plan

I attended four of the drop-in sessions. Opononi, Kaikohe, Kaitaia and Kerikeri. Public turnout numbers were really low. Less than 20 in total. We need to think about a new way to do this moving forward.

I zoomed in to the two online sessions. Again, public participation was low.

Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport

I have co-written a submission with Tracey Risetto on behalf of the Northland Branch of the Automobile Association focusing solely on the Brynderwyns. Our submission is seeking the elevation of the project, to be recognized in the final GPS as the highest risk and time critical infrastructure RON project we are facing as a Country.

Yes, all other RONs matter to the regions impacted but no other RON is facing the same level of risk (and potential catastrophic failure) as the Brynderwyns are.

Our submission supports the ministers recent announcement “My message is this (alternative route) is the number one priority going forward.”

Re the GPS funding review:

I have plagiarized these words from another submission because I think they articulate beautifully what I have been saying for years around the funding model.

“The existing land transport funding system is based on a user pays model in which fuel taxes and road user charges were intended to be sufficient to maintain and improve the road network, without any need for central government to either contribute further funding or be involved in investment decisions.

This model served New Zealand well for many years, but in recent decades has been modified to provide for a greater level of central government strategic direction, primarily through the GPS mechanism. This was introduced to address what was seen as a failure of the original funding model to respond to new transport system needs, particularly where these require investment in major new infrastructure and/or alternatives to private vehicle use.

Successive governments have used the GPS to direct funding to purposes that they have seen as of highest priority, whether to construction of new motorways, or to investment in public transport, walking and cycling facilities and the rail network. This has placed demands on the funding system that it was not designed to meet. Changes in policy direction magnify these demands as new governments seek to implement their own agendas while the system is at the same time facing funding commitments reflecting previous strategic priorities. The resulting revenue shortfalls have been met through ad hoc injections of Crown funding and loans. This situation is not sustainable

New Zealand Automobile Association

The Northland Branch of the Automobile Association won 'District of the Year' award at the National conference in Napier 7-10 March. I didn't realize we were in the running so this came as a complete surprize. The judges said.

The Northland District Council's recent title comes on the back of its consistently strong, well-researched and evidence-based advocacy across many of the AA's key transport advocacy platforms and election calls. It was particularly strong in bringing attention to road safety, road maintenance and resilience.

The council has also shown itself to be adept in taking national issues and crafting them into strong local campaigns, making use of its expertise and views to often set the agenda.

Councillors led programmes that have brought licencing schemes to isolated and disadvantaged communities though schools, workplaces and other community organisations. Another long-running campaign undertaken by the council aimed to get police breath screening rates up. Driving under the influence is a major factor in the region having the country's highest road toll per head of population. Frequent discussions with the local Road Policing Manager, and advocacy based around OIA data has seen a significant increase in roadside alcohol testing. In the period July to December 2023, more tests were undertaken than in the previous four financial years.

They've had success with their long-time advocacy efforts on the Brynderwyns project – a key route for Northland and the wider region. This is a result of targeting and harnessing local government support alongside taking their messages and calls to action directly to local MPs and ministers.

The council has also set the standard for fostering strong relationships with local media. This has increased the effectiveness of their proactive advocacy and has made them a sought out voice by media to comment on transport issues raised by others.

The council itself is diverse and very well connected within the community and has members on a key transport-related forums or committees and regularly prepares thorough research based written submissions.



We were outgunned in the debate by the incredibly talented Havelock North High School Team. Who in our defence went on to win the regional finals the next day.

The March meeting was a combined Auckland / Northland meeting which was held in Mangawhai Monday 18 March.

Road Controlling Authorities Forum

I will be joining Nick Leggat (CEO Infrastructure NZ) at the next forum to speak to transport challenges facing us as we head into 2024/25. The transport minister will also be speaking to the forum. Travel times clash with the April Te Koukou Transport Committee Meeting so apologies in advance for my absence if I don't make it back from Wellington in time.

RFS: Current

- Total mobility needs on the footpath outside the Veterinary Clinic Kerikeri Road. This story made the newspaper. Current status – unresolved
- Give way to pedestrian signage. I am advised this will feature as a district promotional campaign. Current status – pending
- Waterfront Road Houhora Slip. Upgraded to Phase 3 Emergency Works.
- Footpath engineering standards and guidelines. Currently sitting with the Head of Infrastructure Strategy. Current status – WIP
- BOI Walkway. Concern has been raised that where the route uses the existing carriageway there has been no safety audit or engineering assessment. Current status – unresolved

- Ranfurly Street Moerewa. Seeking traffic calming measures. Current status unresolved
- Whangaroa Village. Road maintenance. Current status – in the planning

Voluntary Community Work

I assisted again this year with the Hospice Northland Charity Golf Tournament. What an amazing event, amazing people and an altogether amazing day.

Northland Forward Together and Zone One: Whangarei

Section 17a Review received and discussed on the Northland Transportation Alliance. This matter will come to full Council in due course.

Speed Limits

Cabinet has now agreed on the direction of travel for the new Land Transport Rule. This new rule will reverse the previous governments blanket speed reductions on state highways and urban roads as well as permanent speed limits outside schools.

The Minister said ‘Lower speed limits were the number one issue people raised with him’ and that ‘The new rules will ensure that when speed limits are set, economic impacts, including travel times will be taken into account.

Did You Know

In 2021 (the latest available statistics) NZ had 4.5m vehicles. This equates to 889 vehicles per 1,000 people – one of the highest rates of vehicle ownership in the world.

- 91% (4,095,000) of motor vehicles in the fleet are light passenger and commercial vehicles (e.g., cars, vans, utes, SUV’s, buses and camper vans up to 3500kg).

**Forum Meeting Minutes
Friday 08 March 2024**

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAMBERS Level 1- 36 WATER ST

FORUM PLANNING MEETING FOR ROAD SAFETY RISKS/PRIORITIES

1. **Welcome & H & S briefing**
2. **Apologies – Cr Ann Court, Tracey Rissetto**

‘Are we targeting the risks?’ What Are They?

3. **Key Discussion Issues/Presentations:**
 - a. **Drug Impaired Hospitalised Drivers – Dr Rachael Mason – NZ Police**

Rachael’s presentation isn’t available to share, but everything she covered is in this article:



Do crashed drivers
need more drug testir

Deaths and serious injuries are happening far too frequently on NZ roads. Drugs and alcohol play a large role in these incidences.

Rachael’s work looked at retesting existing 550 driver blood samples for drugs and alcohol - this can happen if it’s not a fatal crash (blood samples cannot be retested if the person is deceased).

When someone crashes – police order the initial test (alcohol/drugs/both) – so there are many samples that may have been tested for alcohol only.

The study also considered whether it’d be worth establishing a larger drug testing panel – the study looked at 228 drugs, instead of the standard 40.

Of retests – 47% came back positive for a drug of interest – THC, Meth and Codeine (at the time of the study available over the counter, which is no longer the case – although this may change)

Rachael showed the forum a venn diagram of multi-substance use – showing the crossover of different drug and alcohol combinations found in the study.

Of the 550 drivers, 320 had only been tested for alcohol – and 60% of these had an enforceable level of BAC.

When tested for the larger drug panel the findings were not significant - we don’t need to extend the current panel, but we do need to be doing more testing for drugs. With police, we’re looking at building robust legislation, and education to push for more drug testing.

Roadside drug testing is not yet available in NZ, so instead we look at how the person presents when stopped by an officer. Police can act by doing divided attention tasks and looking at what their eyes are doing. Validating and having roadside testing – looking at how we can deploy it for roadside. Compulsory Impairment Testing (CIT) – if someone fails, blood testing requested. New legislation marks levels of tolerance, for infringement vs charge.

Oral fluid testing will likely also have 2 levels of tolerance. Clear expectations are essential – roadside is a screen, and not evidential. Blood or secondary saliva testing would be sent on to ESR.

Form for hospital bloods has changed, and when crashed driver is ticked then they are tested for both alcohol and drugs IF the test for alcohol is negative. If alcohol is present, they won't test for drugs – there's no added benefit to test for drugs if the person is liable for an alcohol charge.

Question from John - what's the issue with roadside testing? Rachael explained that it's not very sensitive – so you can get false positives. Drugs that are tested for are limited at roadside, and we need to make sure we're testing for the right substances. Eg in Victoria = cocaine is an issue, while we don't see a high incidence here. We know THC and Meth are our two problem drugs, so testing needs to be robust and sensitive – and needs to be defensible in court.

Why did drug testing get halted? In Aussie it's a screen, and not evidential – and that's where we had issues too. Nowhere is it evidential, and our legislation is currently not fit for purpose – we're updating it. Once that's sorted, we can look again at suitable OFT devices.

Cost of testing is an issue – preventing further testing and subsequent prosecution for people who are over the limit for both alcohol and drugs.

Effects of prescription drugs – people don't have a good level of understanding of how much these can effect / impair. If you're on a course of heavy painkillers, you may not be fit to drive. Most of the drugs on the current panel are prescription meds - sedative class, opioids.

Everyone deserves to be safe on our roads – part of this is ensuring both enforcement and education is available.

b. The Evolving Safety Issue of Cars – Frank Lundberg – First Choice WOF Consulting

Frank introduced himself, explaining that he started in road safety running a testing station in Dargaville. He then moved on to the AA, doing pre purchase inspections, then on to NZTA, then to First Choice WOF consulting. He's worked closely with the police, and been involved in giving presentations to schools and Lions Group.

During his career, Frank has seen the evolution of lap and diagonal belts, R1 – single retractable seatbelt, and then to legislation around airbags for new cars coming in – secondary restraint system.

He stressed the need for educating people about not having their feet on the dashboard – we're all aware of the terrible consequences.

Frank's previous role was to assess WOF inspectors, to make sure they can do an inspection to the standard required by NZTA. He would investigate complaints made, or poor performing inspecting orgs. This required him to stay up to date with industry best practice and relevant legislation.

Lots of complaints come in – often people will buy a car and then it's not WOF compliant. Sometimes when a review happens non-compliance will lead to a complaint from the inspector. There's a shortage of vehicle inspectors.

Frank stressed the importance of compliance – eg frayed seatbelt didn't hold during a crash and led to a death. It's still happening, Frank regularly sees WOFs given where seatbelts not up to standard.

Frank then took the forum through several examples of WOF failures, including corrosion damage and brake issues. He pointed out that people rely on WOF to give assurance their brakes are working properly.

Following Frank's presentation the forum had a wider discussion around WOFs. Cars pre 2000 only get 6 months at a time. This legislation is in place to encourage older vehicles off the road, but it's not being updated – we have cars over 20 years old that are still being warranted for a year at a time. Child locks on cars no longer have to be checked as part of a warrant.

c. Waka Kotahi Safety Improvement Updates – Waka Kotahi

Rochelle Pethybridge presented on infrastructure updates:

Kaeo bridge – opened to two way traffic two months ahead of schedule. Final works due to be completed in April 2024.

Brynderwyns closed until 13 May, open briefly for Easter. 3 alternate routes – SH12 / 14 – for all heavy vehicles, and 2 local routes – restrictions on HPVs, safety restrictions on Cove Rd for trucks and trailers. Making cuts into the hill, not to widen road but to make it stable for future/ easier if further incidences.

Mangamuka Gorge – open date late 2024, works on schedule.

North Auckland recovery – Dome Valley and SH16 – keeping corridor open, free of potential falling debris.

SH1 Loop Rd – onto retaining walls and piling, should be open mid 2025.

SH1 Whangārei to Wellsford safety improvements progressing on track.

Made the most of the drier weather to complete Northland maintenance programme. Doing our best, working with contractors to minimise disruption as much as we can. Especially for detour routes – significant time and funding has gone into improving the detour routes ahead of the Brynderwyns closure.

Speed management – work underway to develop a new rule from the Ministry of Transport. Most recent changes consulted on are being implemented. Speed reviews on 12/14 will be looked at after the Brynderwyns are reopened.

d. Police Update – NZ Police Inspector Anne-Marie Fitchett

Inspector Fitchett provided a robust review of the fatal crashes that have occurred in 2024. Please see her presentation for all information:



Northland Road
Safety Forum Present

e. Northland Death and Serious Injury Local Road Analysis 2023 – Nicole Cauly – Northland Transportation Alliance

Nicole presented a review of last year's crash data. Please see her presentation for all information:



2023 Northland DSI
Analysis.pdf

f. Road Safety Week – Ashley Johnston – Northland Road Safety Trust

Road Safety Awareness Week is coming up, running 20-26 May. The theme this year is the same as 2023: Road Safety Heroes.

We'll be running child restraint checkpoints, a helmet competition, social media campaign and a relay event. Businesses are being invited to sponsor child seats.

We've established a working group to organise events for the week which includes representatives from ACC, Police, Bike Northland, SADD, Northland Road Safety Trust and the Northland Transportation Alliance.

4. General Business – Round Table Updates

Round table updates were cut due to time restraints.

Meeting closed just after 12pm.

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2024 Meeting dates: Friday 21st June and Friday 18th October.