



22 October 2019

Speed limit changes confusing and costly

Confusing and costly is how the Road Transport Forum (RTF) sees Auckland Transport's decisions to lower speed limits on Auckland's rural roads and city streets, says chief executive Nick Leggett.

"Everyone wants to see safer roads and we support road safety interventions where all options are well considered and make a difference," Leggett says. "But what has been announced today is a vast array of speed limits that will have motorists traversing the affected 700 kilometres of Auckland roads in confusion, and will add costs to all New Zealanders for goods that travel on those roads.

"We believe Auckland Transport (AT) is using reduced speed limits as a proxy for lack of investment in road infrastructure, because all their money is tied up with rail projects – extending the city rail and the controversial light-rail to the airport.

"Very little, if any, consideration has been given to the commercial road user, that is trades people and road freight, and the economic impact these reduced speeds will have, especially on major arterials into and out of the central business district (CBD) and connections to major freight generators, both intra-city and inter-city.

"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. What happens in Auckland affects the whole of New Zealand.

"It is disappointing to see that even though Auckland businesses have explained the additional time and costs that will be incurred by these speed changes, they are shot down and told they are wrong. We believe the businesses know their own business better than anyone else. In road freight they are logistics whizzes, so they know full well what every little change makes to time travelled and subsequent cost. You have to wonder what point there is in getting involved in alleged democratic processes if knowledgeable, qualified people are going to be ignored.

"The carpet-bombing approach in the speed setting shows a lack of strategy by AT and a lack of understanding of how New Zealand's vital road network operates to drive our economy.

"We believe these decisions will drive perverse behaviour – shifting traffic to alternate routes and just moving congestion to another area. Drivers in Auckland

are already frustrated by the mess the central city is in to accommodate a new rail link; these decisions will add to their frustration.

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

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.