

27 May 2015

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Dear Greg

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 16 April 2015 asking ‘... why cyclists are excluded from using the Arras Tunnel and the road surface of the Mt Victoria Tunnel. Please include any risk assessment and traffic modelling relating to cyclists riding alongside motor vehicles in these tunnels.’

Cyclists have always been prohibited from cycling through the Mt Victoria Tunnel and Terrace Tunnel under the New Zealand Transport Agency (Wellington Tunnels) Bylaw 2014 available at: <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2014-au5312>. The bylaw was recently revised to include the Arras Tunnel. The bylaw was extended to Arras Tunnel for road safety and tunnel safety reasons.

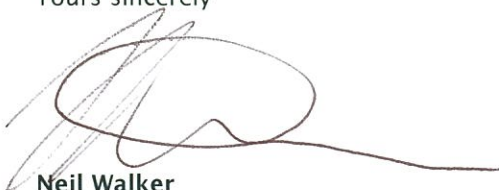
From a road safety perspective, there are significant safety concerns around the likelihood that cyclists would change lanes in order to turn right into Taranaki Street. When this is combined with the traffic changing lanes, it presents a danger to any cyclist. There is a high risk of death or serious injury in a crash involving a cyclist and a car at speeds greater than 30km/h. This is why the bylaw was extended to Arras Tunnel. Provision has been made for cyclists to use the shared cycle/pedestrian path, which was provided in Memorial Park above, and which connects to the cycle path in Buckle Street and Arthur Street.

From a tunnel safety perspective, driving in a tunnel presents additional challenges to motorists. Research has shown that some drivers can become disorientated in tunnels and this presents an additional safety risk to cyclists.

Most of the same reasoning applies in the Mt Victoria Tunnel. While there is no lane-changing, there are issues of narrow lane widths (which cannot safely accommodate both cyclists and vehicles) and most cyclists are unlikely to be able to travel at the same speed as the vehicle traffic. There is a separate shared path for cyclists.

There were no formal risk assessments or traffic modelling carried out in making the decision to prohibit cycling in the Arras Tunnel and the Mt Victoria Tunnel.

Yours sincerely



Neil Walker
Acting Highway Manager – Central
For Chief Executive