



Blue Skies Speed

Qualitative Exploration
February 2023



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Background

- Waka Kotahi's overall road safety strategy is to build a safe road system, in which it plans and designs for the likelihood that people won't always get things right, and that they are actually quite easily hurt when things go wrong. The vehicle, the road environment, the user and the speeds we drive at, all need to back each other up even when one of the system components fails.
- In a safe system, no-one should be killed or seriously injured because they have made a mistake.
- Safe Speed is a high priority for road safety in New Zealand. It is one of the four pillars of a safe system, it is one of the five top priorities for Waka Kotahi, and it is one of the five high priority objectives for the Road Policing programme.
- Unfortunately, a significant proportion of the driving population still likes to travel at speeds which are too fast for the conditions, on the open road and around town, posing risk to themselves and to others who share the roads with them.

The Challenge

- Over the years, Waka Kotahi has been addressing speed on two fronts, supporting enforcement while at the same time seeking to change the way we talk about speed. It has essentially been using four basic messages in the speed campaign to meet these two main objectives, something like:

shifting the conversation			
you'll crash	you'll be caught	you'll be hurt	it's unacceptable
supporting enforcement			

- In the past ads have often highlighted the consequences associated with travelling too fast – you might crash, you might kill innocent people. Although these approaches have been effective, many drivers appear to regard these outcomes as outside their experience, and so continue to drive at speeds they consider are safe enough, but which are faster than should be acceptable.
- Other approaches in the speed campaign have included social disapproval (*Principals, Numbers, Mistakes*), ridicule (*Manrol*), gratitude for not speeding (*Thank You*) and passenger pressure (*Invisible*).

Speed Executions To Date

- *Mistakes* (2014), one of the most impactful ads in the speed catalogue in recent years had an immediate effect in moving the public conversation about speed. Their reaction showed that we had tapped into the broad support of the silent majority, giving voice to a side of the debate that had been quiet for so long. By side stepping blame and inviting speeders to be part of the conversation, *Mistakes* gave people a legitimate reason to ask others to slow down – and to defend this position.
- All the later ads are the culmination of many messages over the years, from “Slow Down”, to “The faster you go the bigger the mess”, “Stay in Mantrol” and “Prepared to speed, prepare to kill”, in urban and rural environments, targeting various young drivers, male drivers, and communities. With *Thank You* we made the target audience more generic, bringing the conversation more around speed itself than the various players and protagonists, and with *In my Shoes* (2018) the topic of speed has been re-associated with the importance of enforcement. This has been carried on with ‘*Through my eyes*’ (2023).
- *Apprentice* (2020) and *Invisible* (2019) sought to apply more pressure from peers, onlookers, passengers, bystanders and potential victims.

Through my eyes

- The latest campaign 'Through my eyes' set the challenge to shift the acceptability of speeding amongst New Zealand drivers. They have a variety of 'reasons' and excuses for their speeding and don't believe they will be caught or have a crash. This campaign reminds drivers that there are consequences to ignoring the speed limit; whether that be Police enforcement or a potentially fatal crash.



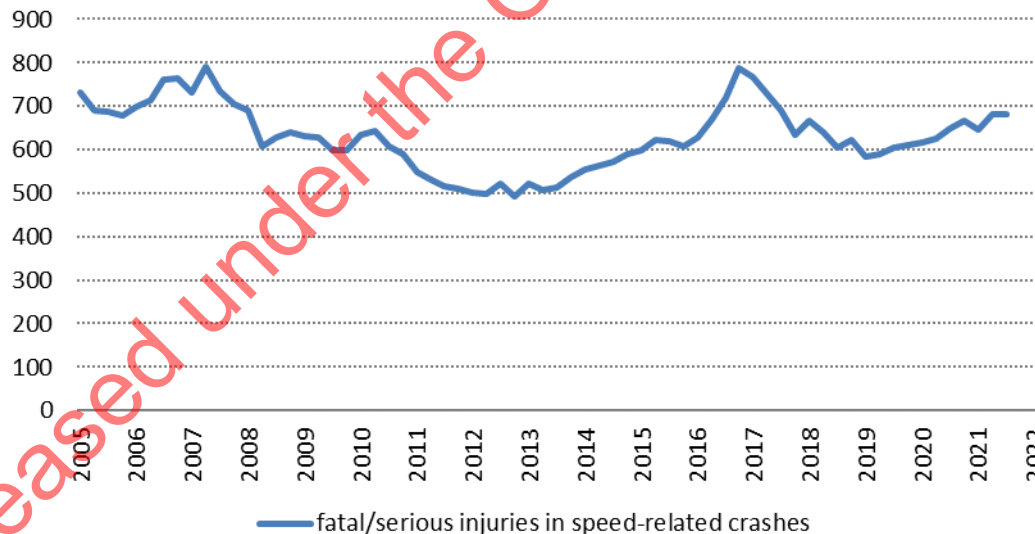
Recent Crash Data

Speed is often mistaken as a debate about ability or skill, and so messages are taken as a personal affront at the individual level. However the most skilled driver will still make mistakes or encounter circumstances where other people have made mistakes and a crash will result.

“Control” is one of the key facets of speeding behaviour. People like to be in control of their driving world, and for drivers it is a demonstration of their skill and expertise. Loss of that ability to control their world is one of the core fears of our target audience.

In general, many drivers don't see speeding as dangerous, nor a serious offence.

However, driving fast increases both the likelihood of a crash, and the severity of that crash.

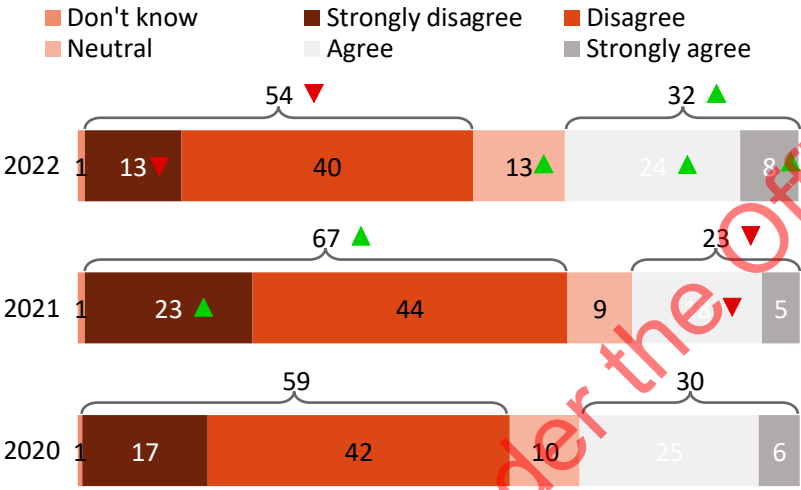


Need for more insight

- For those who don't buy the idea that speed and crash likelihood are linked, or that speed determines the severity of a crash, there is a need to understand their reasons – rarity (it's never happened to me), confidence (a good driver won't crash, or a good driver could escape the situation), other factors (stop just blaming speed).
- Their perception is that the consequences of speeding are trivial. The magnitude of the offence looks trivial – sometimes 4 or 8 km/h when the limit is 100 km/h. It's hard to take the enforcement seriously when there's widespread knowledge that you can safely travel 10 km/h over the limit. And the penalties are trivial – a \$30 fine for speeds up to 10 km/h over the limit is less than a parking ticket.
- Unlike most road safety problems, changing people's speed behaviour faces the major challenge of confronting fun, instant gratification, efficiency and mastery. The people we most want to influence are those who are already wedded to the pleasurable alternatives, so we will need compelling reasons for them to think about changing.

One in three New Zealanders believe there is not much chance of a crash if you are careful when you speed. This has doubled since 2015

- Attitudes towards speeding and enforcement (% among Total NZ)
- If you are careful when you speed, there is not much chance of a crash



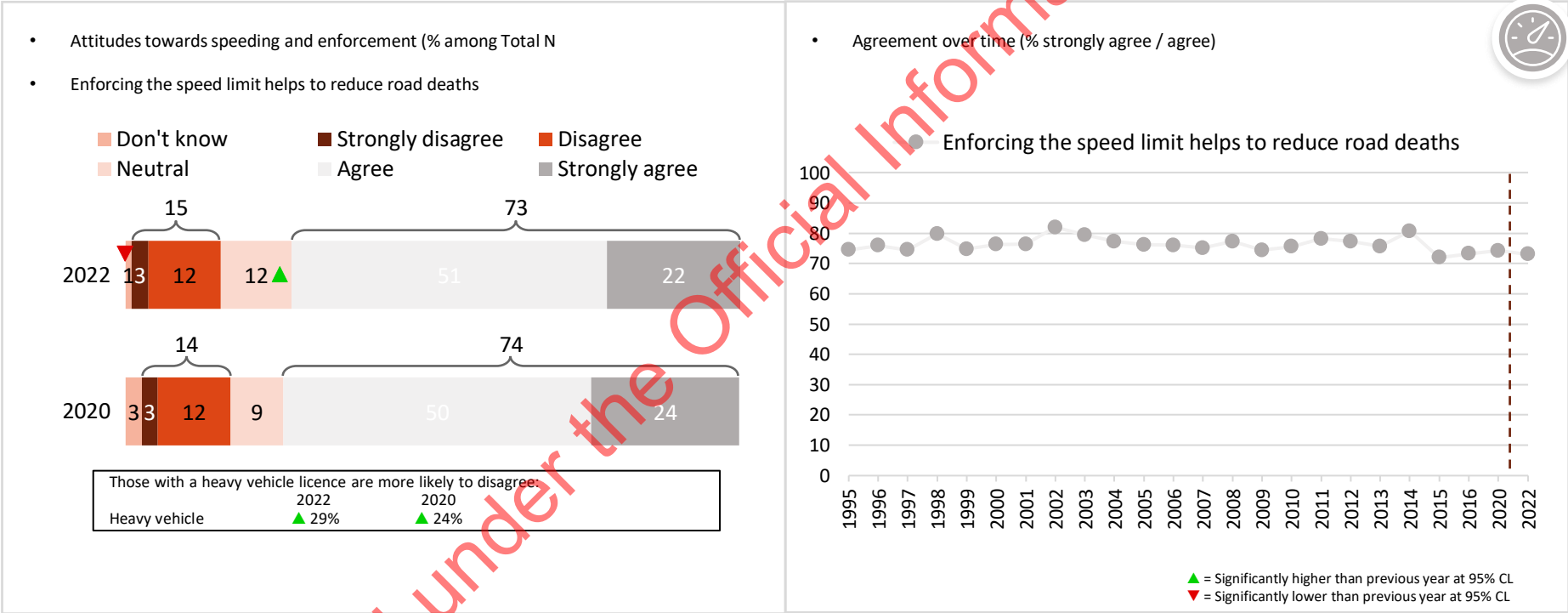
- Agreement over time (% strongly agree / agree)



▲ = Significantly higher than previous year at 95% CL
▼ = Significantly lower than previous year at 95% CL

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Three in four New Zealanders agree that enforcing the speed limit helps to reduce road deaths. A minority disagree at 15%.



The majority of road users broadly recognised the risks of speeding and supported enforcement of the speed limit. However, crash statistics suggest that many do not put their understanding of speed risk into practice

What has worked and what could we do next?

Speed advertisements which have performed best, in terms of audience cut-through, relevance and message takeout, have featured:

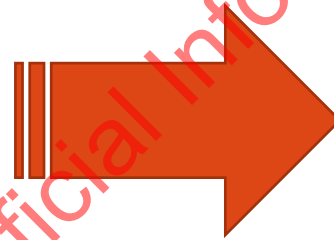
- some aspect of enforcement, such as a speed camera, a cop talking to the crash victims, losing a licence
- a story, such as leaving the kids at the farm gate, Mum and Dad coming from “that way”
- using the audience’s language – I know these roads, it’s only a little bit over, just a simple mistake
- shock or surprise, such as a crash, but without making the crash the feature of the ad which distracts the audience into analysing the crash instead of thinking about the driver’s wrong behaviour
- an emotional tug, often using children (“she was only 4”, “tell it to his kids”, “the last thing Nicky heard ...”, “But who gets hurt Daddy?”, kids at the farm gate, child sad at losing a parent at a street corner in *Consequences* or on the highway in *Understand*), but also friends or family being present at the scene as in *Spot the Difference* and *Ten Minutes*.

From last concept
test - Attitudes to
Driving & Previous
studies



What is great about driving

- Independence
- Freedom
- Being a lone wolf
- Being able to do whatever I want
- Having no one who can tell me what to do
- Doing my own thing
- My own space
- Just enjoy sensation of driving fast
- Great roads in New Zealand that let you drive fast
- Getting myself somewhere on my own terms and in my own time frame



CONTROL & EGO
My Limits
My zone

Their biggest driving frustration

- Being held up
- Slow drivers
- People doing the limit
- The fast lane is for speeding not for driving the limit
- People sitting in the passing lane
- Time wasters
- 30, 40 & 50K speeds
- Traffic
- Other people in general
- On ramp lights



REGULATED
*Others' Limits
imposed on me*

“We are selfish about where we are going and how quickly we can get there”

The 'road law'

The road law is norms and common usage law – we all do it. Speeding and for lots the speed limit itself, sits here.

- Slow down 'to my limit' – what I want to do
- Suggested and variable speeds/rules
- Tolerances – i.e. in GPS and from some Police – they can judge the context – a chance to explain.
- "Fast lane"
- "The road law is contextual"

vs

'The law'

The law is there to regulate society and keep us all safe, through our compliance.

- Black and white rules – we can't break.
"Stick to what I'm told".
- Don't drink and drive
- Stop at red lights (categorical)
- Speed cameras (absolute)
- School zones - limit
- Seat belts & child seats
- "The law is drawing a line in the sand"

Humans (ourselves and the Police who are human too) have a tolerance for 'grey area', whereas cameras don't. Need to shift the belief that enforcement of speeding is open to interpretation and the speed limit is a guideline to the enforcement of speeding and the speed limit is black and white.

- There is no Police discretion or tolerance - anymore.
- The speed limit is not a suggestion it is a safety measure
- Enforcement is about protecting our safety not revenue collecting/hitting quotas based on individual attitudes

"I've been pulled over several times. It depends on which Officer you get, some of them are alright, they let you get away with it"

Previous Qualitative Research

- In 2017, Qualitative research with some of those who do not entirely buy our messages gave a few insights into their grumpiness and frustrations, prior to two of the recent speed advertising executions (*Thank You* and *In my Shoes*). Their concerns included:
 - an over-focus on speed as the main cause for crashes, with “speeders” being held overly responsible for road safety
 - adjusting your speed to the conditions can mean up or down, a skilled driver can drive faster in good conditions
 - slow drivers, not driving “at” the maximum speed limit, setting the travelling speed for other motorists, not targeted by “slow cameras”
 - speed limits are a poor means of addressing inadequate infrastructure or the absence of proper driver education, they are set for the weakest link
 - cars are much safer but speed limits have not kept pace with changing times, although accepting that our roads and safety systems are still quite backward.