



## Tourist rip-off horror stories under scrutiny

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is tackling horror stories that are tarnishing New Zealand's image overseas.

Working in partnership with Tourism NZ and the Ministry of Tourism, the Agency is helping to tighten up on low-end tour operators - untrained drivers in inadequate buses - who are ripping off tourists.

Tour operators working with cruise ships are also being pushed to raise their standards.

The NZTA's Southern Transport Relationships Manager Dennis Robertson says the Agency's work is part of a coordinated effort to raise the bar for tourism operators.

'We're making sure tour buses and their drivers meet all the legal requirements, encouraging operators to aspire to higher standards, and ensuring that tourists have a positive, safe experience in New Zealand.'

Initiatives include targeting specific tour operators and holding seminars where vehicle standards officers and transport advisors can educate the industry about legal requirements and good



practice. While NZTA staff check driver licences and bus safety, tourism staff have an eye out for cleanliness and comfort.

Dennis says a single bad experience can have a flow-on effect for the tourism industry.

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Choose the right car



*Wishing you all a safe holiday and happy trails.*



Chief Executive Geoff Dangerfield.

## Board checks Auckland issues

The NZTA board met in Auckland in November as part of its approach to meet regularly in different parts of the country to see first-hand the range of transport issues facing our regions.

The Auckland visit enabled board members to familiarise themselves with not only this region's transport projects but its challenges. During the board's Auckland meeting the Waterview Connection proposal was heard in an open public session. This meant those who had concerns with aspects of the proposal could speak to the board and hear from the team working on this large and complex project. This was so it could take into account the community's concerns about the project and consider further work that needs to be carried out.

In the next issue of *Pathways*, we will bring you details on the new structure of the NZTA. Everyone from the leadership team to those who work at the sharp end of our business have helped to create a structure for our new Agency that will enable us to engage as effectively as possible with our partners and customers. Their support and input underpins all the efforts of our Agency across its many functions to deliver better transport outcomes for all New Zealanders. This is why maintaining and enhancing relationships with our partners and customers and valuing their input is a strong focus for our Agency.

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'Of course we want tourists to visit here, but if they have a bad experience they won't return and they'll tell others back home. So we are working across two important sectors, economic development as well as road safety.'

The NZTA is also working with tour operators who provide a service to cruise ship passengers.

The Agency is in partnership with the Port of Tauranga, the Police Commercial Vehicle Investigation Unit and Tourism BoP to

target everything from taxis to large buses meeting tourists at the Tauranga port.

The NZTA's Midland Transport Relationships Manager Robyn Denton says vehicles and drivers are checked to ensure they are complying with standards and legal requirements, and a complaints system is being established to capture the views of tourists who are only here for a short time.

'We want to know the specifics if these people have a problem so we can follow the issues up.'

A similar system is also being established in Dunedin.



Food for thought at Christchurch show day.

## Farmers get the good oil at show day

The NZTA's first outing at Christchurch's annual show day extravaganza offered a great opportunity to reach an important audience.

Transport Regulatory Adviser Chris Bell says it was exciting to talk first-hand with farmers and rural contractors about transport issues relevant to the sector.

'Farmers and contractors can contribute to discussions about changes which affect them. There are many ways they can get involved, and we want them to.'

With a range of experts on-site, visitors to the NZTA stand got answers to a wide range of questions, from registration and licensing queries, to the operator rating system and new driver logbook rules.

Chris says vehicle standards were another area of interest, particularly rules relating to vehicle dimensions.

## By foot or by cycle, councils are getting there

Councils across New Zealand are stepping up to the challenge of planning for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

A stocktake of walking and cycling strategies published by the NZTA in October shows that councils are taking significant steps forward in planning for walking and cycling.

When the *Getting there – on foot, by cycle* strategy was released in 2005, only 30 territorial or regional authorities had produced walking and cycling strategies. By 2008 the number of authorities with strategies has nearly doubled to 55.

These 55 councils have produced 61 walking and cycling strategies. The report notes that the next challenge going forward is to update and align the strategies to deliver on walking and cycling targets.

'We're delighted to see councils picking up the ball and running with it,' said the NZTA's Acting Principal Advisor Walking And Cycling, Gerry Dance.

'We decided to provide 75 percent funding assistance to help councils with planning for walking and cycling strategy development, and you can see that this policy is paying dividends. We're really looking forward to working with councils to turn these plans into reality.'



### For more information

The full report, prepared by ViaStrada, is available from: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/road-user-safety/walking-and-cycling/docs/walking-cycling-strategy-stocktake.pdf>

The 2005 companion report can also be accessed at: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/research/reports/274.pdf>

# Putting walking and cycling back on the menu

A recent report signals that more emphasis needs to be placed on walking and cycling infrastructure projects.

NZTA Senior Policy Adviser Jason Morgan examines the issue in detail, and suggests that, here in New Zealand, walking and cycling have moved from the dessert menu right into the main course.

## Larger helpings for walkers and cyclists

The planning of walking and cycling facilities in New Zealand resembles dinner at a fine restaurant. You enjoy your appetiser, you fill up on your main meal and if you have any money or room left, you order some dessert.

The recently released *Regional land transport programme guidelines* (RLTP) signal that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the planning, prioritisation and delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure projects.

In a sense, walking and cycling have moved from the dessert menu right into the main course. A little bit of crème brûlée on the side of your filet mignon, if you like.

The new RLTP guidelines establish a hierarchy of interventions that approved organisations should consider when developing regional land transport plans. Accordingly, greater emphasis should now be placed on demand management or walking and cycling solutions before new capacity options are considered.

The full hierarchy is:

- demand management
- walking and cycling
- public transport
- operations of roads
- maintenance of roads
- renewal of roads
- minor improvement projects, then
- major improvement projects.

The intervention hierarchy is consistent with the updated *New Zealand transport strategy* that calls for a transport sector that actively encourages rather than just allows for walking and cycling.

Just like a keen business minded chef, we need to look at new ways to serve up walking and cycling so that it becomes palatable to a broader audience. To do this we need to recognise that designs that have sufficed in the past may no longer be satisfactory.

New Zealanders love to walk and ride bicycles. We regularly drive long distances to places that are pleasant to walk (hike) and cycle. At least 25 percent of us own bikes. There is a willing customer base ready to dine on walking and cycling activities. When planning networks and corridors, we need to make a mental shift from sufficient to seductive. That is – will this project create a network connection that many inexperienced cyclists may try, and if they do try it will they enjoy it?

The RLTP guidelines also outline the importance of having a clear vision that is expressed in a walking and cycling strategy that includes concepts like:

- the five-point hierarchy of measures for cycling provision – traffic volume reduction, traffic speed reduction, junction treatment and traffic management, redistribution of the carriageway, and then the cycle lanes and paths
- the five main requirements for cycling – coherence, directness, attractiveness, safety and comfort
- the five Cs for walking – comfortable, convenient, convivial, conspicuous and connected.

## Bon appétit!



### For more information

For more information contact the NZ Transport Agency education advisor in your region. To view the RLTP guidelines go to: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/nltp/guidelines-2009-12/docs/rltp-guidelines-09-12-v1.pdf>

# Testing time for graduate truckies

Recent graduates of a truck driving course run by the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic in Tauranga had their theoretical knowledge and practical skills put to the test when they took part in the Polytech's Road Safety Awards.



NZTA National Manager Commercial Road Transport John Doesburg centre, with Bay of Plenty Polytechnic Road Safety Award winners Dawson Ngaira (right) and Steve Melville (left).

The awards involved the 15 graduates answering truck driving theory questions and completing a variety of practical tasks similar to those they would face on the job. These included correctly loading a truck and

thinking about placement of the various items for safety and balance of the vehicle. One of the more daunting exercises involved backing into a yard without hitting the gates. An overhanging verandah added to the complexity of this particular challenge.

During the exercises participants were marked on their driving skills, heavy motor vehicle safety knowledge and compliance with rules.

NZTA National Commercial Transport Manager John Doesburg presented the graduates with their awards. He said the course, supported by the NZ Road Transport

Association, is aimed at producing professional heavy motor vehicle drivers.

John said based on the quality of the course graduates who took part in the awards programme, the course is well on the way to achieving that aim.

'All of the graduates took on the challenge with enthusiasm and determination to do well. The two winners showed exceptional skills, planning their approach to the practical test well, looking to be as efficient as possible but not compromising safety. They will do future employers proud with the skills they have learnt,' he said.

## Taxis get a big tick from the public

A new survey gauging New Zealanders' perceptions of taxi services has revealed a high level of public confidence in the taxi industry.

The survey, carried out for the NZTA by an independent research company, canvassed 800 recent taxi users in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Key results include:

- 94% of respondents rated the physical condition of taxis as 'very clean' or 'acceptably clean' and of 'reasonable' or 'very good' physical condition
- 82% felt 'very safe and secure' or 'reasonably safe and secure' using taxis
- 78% felt drivers were 'professional' or 'very professional'.

Of the 27% who reported a negative taxi experience sometime in the past, only a quarter said they had complained to the company concerned.

NZTA National Manager Commercial Road Transport, John Doesburg says while this may suggest most negative

experiences are relatively minor, the NZTA encourages taxi users to tell companies about poor service.

'Public feedback is crucial to driving improvements in the taxi industry. All taxi organisations are legally required to maintain a complaints register and make this available to the NZTA. We're committed to improving taxi industry standards, and the more information we have from the public the better. If the taxi service you receive is below par, make a complaint - you'll be giving the company a reason to lift its game.'

John also stressed that taxi users should contact their nearest NZTA office if a complaint isn't resolved, while serious incidents should be immediately reported to the Police. He urged taxi users to note the taxi company's name, the taxi's fleet number and the driver's unique ID. The easiest way to do this is to ask for a receipt, which by law must carry all these identifiers.

Other highlights from the survey include:

- consumption or planned consumption of alcohol is the most common reason for taxi use
- patrons are twice as likely to choose a taxi firm based on reputation as they are on price
- over half of those surveyed consider it important that their chosen taxi company make an effort to be environmentally friendly.

The survey sets a benchmark against which the NZTA will be measuring public confidence in the taxi industry over the coming years.



**For more information**

For full results of the survey, visit <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/publications/index.html>



The new Maha roller brake machine with chassis load simulation.

# Tougher tests for heavy vehicle brakes

New brake tests for heavy vehicles are being rolled out across New Zealand as part of a drive to reduce crashes and improve the safety of heavy vehicles.

The new tests, which require heavy vehicles to be tested in a laden state for the first time, are being introduced as part of the Heavy-vehicle Brakes Rule. The improved brake testing regime is being introduced as part of the six-monthly certificate of fitness (CoF) test for heavy vehicles.

The phased rollout of the tests began on 1 December in most of the lower North Island, with implementation planned throughout the country by June 2009.

The new tests will check that vehicles brake safely in all conditions of loading, and will ultimately help to improve the

safety of all heavy vehicles.

As part of the implementation of the new regime, testing stations across the country have been upgraded with brake testing machines capable of simulating a load on a vehicle by pulling the axles or chassis down.

The new test method will involve each of a vehicle's axle groups being loaded to a minimum of 60% of the manufacturer's axle rating or the statutory axle limit (whichever is the lesser). This can be achieved via load simulation or with an actual load. Currently most vehicles are tested in an unladen state.



For more information

For further information on the Heavy-vehicle Brakes Rule, visit: [www.landtransport.govt.nz/commercial/hvbr](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/commercial/hvbr)

## More than a meal at these roadside truck stops

Truckies in Waikato and the Bay of Plenty have been digesting safety tips along with the snacks and drinks on offer at a dozen roadside education stops in the region.

The roadside education initiative is being led by ACC with assistance from the Police Commercial Vehicle Investigation Unit, the NZTA and local Road Transport Association representatives.

NZTA's Midland Transport Relationships Manager Robyn Denton says while there is no compulsion for drivers to stop, there has been a great reaction to the offer of a roadside coffee, water or sandwich and a chat about issues of interest to truck drivers.

'We talk about the warning signs of fatigue and strategies to avoid it. But we also talk about their jobs, new rules around work time and logbooks, pre-trip vehicle inspections - anything and everything they have questions about.

'One guy said he had been looking for one of our stops for a while, because he wanted to pick up a fluoro safety belt cover which makes it obvious he is wearing his safety belt. He was very pleased to have found us.'

The idea for the education stops grew from earlier fatigue stops that encouraged truck drivers to recognise the physical and mental signs of weariness and do something about it.

There is no enforcement involved, Robyn says. 'It's just a chat with people who can offer advice about everything a truck driver may need to know. And this has generated calls back to us.'

She says the education stops have prompted some trucking companies to get in touch and ask for visits from NZTA advisors to help them clarify any issues or questions.



# New manual aims at better value for money

Local authorities, suppliers and other interested parties are being given an opportunity to comment on the interim *Procurement manual* following the release of a formal feedback document.

The *Procurement manual* is aimed at helping organisations obtain better value for money from their National Land Transport Programme funding and will provide them with greater flexibility and more guidance.

Ten regional and territorial authorities, along with the NZTA's Highways and Network Operations Group, are currently piloting the interim manual. The views and experiences of the pilot participants will help shape the manual before it is formally released.

Approved organisations and stakeholders not involved in the pilot also have the opportunity to contribute to refining the new manual through the formal feedback process which runs until the end of March this year. Both the interim manual and the feedback document are available online at [www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/procurement](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/procurement).

The NZTA held a series of presentations around the country during November and December 2008 to provide local authorities, their suppliers and other interested parties with information on the interim version of the *Procurement manual*. The roadshow visited 10 locations from Whangarei to Dunedin, and provided attendees with the opportunity to discuss the draft manual with the NZTA project team.

The feedback process will run until the end of March 2009. Following analysis of feedback, the *Procurement manual* will be refined and formally released in mid-2009.



Participants and presenters at the NZTA roadshow in Whangarei, 12 November 2008

Until its formal release, the procurement procedures contained within the interim *Procurement manual* are not approved for use by organisations other than those participating in the pilot. Those local authorities who are not involved in the pilot but are keen to use other aspects of the interim manual, such as developing a procurement strategy, should contact the NZTA to discuss what options are available.



### For more information

More information on the interim manual and the feedback document is available online at [www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/procurement](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/procurement)

## Bypass offers big gains for everyone, even the environment

### Road users of all kinds will benefit from the new Avalon Drive Bypass in Hamilton.

The \$41 million State Highway 1 bypass provides a free flowing route to reduce congestion, improve safety and separate inter-regional state highway traffic from internal city traffic in the Newton area of Hamilton city.

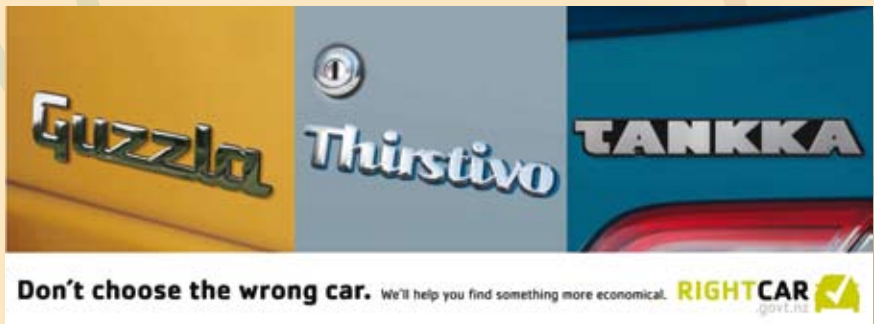
The project has also made adjacent local roads safer and easier to use for cyclists and pedestrians. One kilometre of new paved pedestrian and cycleways and underpasses have been added near the Rifle Range Road roundabout, including two shared pedestrian/cycleways which pass under the Norton Road rail bridge. New footpaths have also been constructed.

The project also includes a new railway bridge to carry the North Island main trunk line over Norton Road, and environmental

restoration works in the Waitawhiriwhiri Gully to help recreate its natural forest habitat.

The new two-kilometre bypass was opened to traffic several months ahead of schedule on 18 October, with an official ceremony on 29 October.





# Choose the right car

The latest print advertisements for the Rightcar vehicle information website take a novel approach to helping car buyers find safer, more fuel efficient, and cleaner running vehicles online.

Look out for these ads in newspapers and magazines, and online soon.

Rightcar provides people with comprehensive, searchable information about vehicles sold in New Zealand since 2005. The website provides safety and environmental impact information

for each vehicle. A star rating system is used to evaluate fuel economy, driver safety, the safety of other road users, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and air pollution. The website also supplies information on the effects of car use and driving behaviour.



**For more information**

Is your car a star?

Check it out at [www.rightcar.govt.nz](http://www.rightcar.govt.nz).



# What's on



**Businesses and organisations throughout New Zealand will be encouraging staff to swap their office chairs for bike saddles when the annual Bike Wise Battle commences in February.**

The Bike Wise Battle is a free competition where organisations from across New Zealand compete with others of a similar size to get the highest percentage of staff on their bikes at least once during February's Bike Wise Month. Participants only need to cycle for 2 km or 10 minutes, and they can do it anywhere, anytime they feel comfortable.

The highest-participating organisations and departments in five different size categories will win a voucher for a morning tea. There are daily spot prizes, so the more biking a participant does, the higher the chances of winning, and all participants go into a draw to win one of three Avanti bike spot prizes.

The NZTA will be taking part - will you battle with us? Register at [www.bikewise.co.nz](http://www.bikewise.co.nz) from 7 January 2009.

**23-24 February**  
**9th Annual NZ Integrated Transport Summit**  
Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland

Towards an integrated and sustainable transport system, balancing the needs of the economy, the environment and society. International address: Carey Curtis, Curtin University, Australia, Dr Chin Kian-Keong, Land Transport Authority, Singapore.

For more information:  
[www.conferenz.co.nz/9th-annual-new-zealand-integrated-transport-summit-4.html](http://www.conferenz.co.nz/9th-annual-new-zealand-integrated-transport-summit-4.html)

**26, 27, 28 February**  
**Northland Agricultural Field Days**

For more information contact Adam Doesburg:  
[adam.doesburg@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:adam.doesburg@nzta.govt.nz)

**The Expo 5-7 March**  
**Mystery Creek Events Centre - Hamilton**

Multiple vehicle displays and expert vehicle staff on hand. Attracts experts from across the truck and heavy equipment industry, from designers and engineers to fleet managers and mechanics. Popular with the public too, so should be something for everyone.



Walk to School Every Week  
Ia Wiki Hikoi Ki Te Kura

**Feet First: Walk to School Every Week is being developed to support school-based curriculum and will be operational for all four terms of 2009.**

All schools with year 1 to 8 students are invited to register. For more information contact [raewyn.baldwin@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:raewyn.baldwin@nzta.govt.nz)



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Email [contacts@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:contacts@nzta.govt.nz)

## Our contact details

For general enquiries, or contact information about NZ Transport Agency please check our website [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz) or email us at [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz)

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
Victoria Arcade, 44 Victoria Street  
Private Bag 6995, Wellington 6141  
New Zealand  
Telephone: +64 4 894 5400  
Fax: +64 4 894 6100

**TRANSPORT REGISTRY CENTRE**  
Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4412  
New Zealand  
Telephone: 0800 108 809  
(motor vehicle registrations)  
Telephone: 0800 822 422  
(driver licensing)  
Fax: +64 6 953 6406

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