

# SPEECH NOTES

## NZ Federation of Motoring Clubs AGM

SPEECH FOR: HON MICHAEL WOOD, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

24 JULY 2022

EVENT BEGINS AT 11.00AM

YOU WILL BE SPEAKING FOR 15 MINUTES WITH 10 MINUTES ALLOCATED FOR A Q AND A

- We like to think of ourselves as a nation of innovators but surprisingly New Zealanders were not particularly early adopters of motorised transport.
- Carl Benz put the first car into production in 1888 but it wasn't until 10 years later in 1898 that the first vehicles were imported into New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>
- We have since made up for that slow start with around 4.4 million passenger vehicles now on our roads.
- We now have one of the highest per capita rates of car ownership in the world - in 2021 we had 897 cars for every 1000 people.
- Cars have been as much a part of our culture as the kiwi and the silver fern.
- We've put them in movies – everyone remembers the yellow mini in Goodbye Pork Pie – and discussed it at social events.
- Getting your licence was seen as a rite of passage - the first steps towards independent adulthood. And who doesn't remember the thrill of buying their first car?
- Motor vehicles have a practical purpose but also make a statement about who we are - our lifestyles, our aspirations, our tastes, even our favourite colours.
- They also carry with them the imprint of the era they were built – the brown upholstery of a 1978 Austin Princess and the space age tail fins of a 1959 Chevy Impala tell us as much about a decade as any history book.
- For many of you, cars are your hobby, and in some cases your livelihood. But your passion projects are also preserving the heritage of New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> There were a number of backyard tinkerers trying their hand at building their own cars/motorbikes in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cecil Wood of Timaru is sometimes credited with building the first motor vehicle in New Zealand in 1896 but this is disputed.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil\\_Wood\\_\(engineer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_Wood_(engineer))

- You are preserving our automotive history and ensuring people continue to see these vehicles on the road.
- You also work to share your skills and knowledge to help others, building a greater sense of community.
- As an umbrella organisation, the NZ Federation of Motoring Clubs has worked hard to represent the interests of its various member groups.
- I note the many thoughtful and well-researched submissions you have made on legislation including those relating to the setting of speed limits and emissions reduction.
- I have been particularly appreciative of the meetings I have had with your leadership and their keenness to engage on issues of importance for your membership.
- Last year I met with Federation President Harry Duynhoven along with Diane Quarry President of the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand and Tony Robinson, President of the New Zealand Hot Rod Association.
- Some interesting points were raised and I was happy to refer you to Waka Kotahi to start finding and implementing solutions for some of these issues.
- Waka Kotahi has worked with you to consider the proposal to move vintage/classic vehicles and private motorhomes to a 12-month Warrant of Fitness/Certificate of Fitness regime.
- With very little data on these specific vehicles the process has not been easy.
- Officials at Waka Kotahi tell me they have been very grateful for the information your clubs have been able to provide to help identify what options may or may not work.
- Preferred options have been presented to the Director of Land Transport who has asked the team to make further considerations specifically around the evidence that determines the level of road safety risk that these changes may have. They are also further exploring the need to make legislative change with the Ministry of Transport.
- The Waka Kotahi team will continue to work collaboratively with NZ Federation of Motoring Clubs and the individual clubs as they work through these considerations.
- I know there was some hope that I would be able to make some kind of official announcement today but unfortunately this project has been slowed down by Covid.
- It remains a work in progress however.
- Waka Kotahi has also initiated a project with the Military Vehicle Association to look into some of the challenges that military vehicles have in the regulatory environment so we're looking forward to more progress on that front.
- It's important we do our best to find solutions for these issues that are efficient, effective and above all safe.

- Safety has always been a key focus for the transport, particularly this year.
- Earlier this year, I was delighted to take part in the launch of the new Road to Zero strategy.
- We're trying to change the way New Zealanders think about deaths and serious injuries on our roads.
- On average, one person is killed every day on New Zealand roads, and another seven are seriously injured.
- The worst moment of my week is receiving a report each Friday that gives an overview of all road fatalities in the preceding seven days.
- We talk about the road toll as if we're perfectly willing to pay a price in life and limb for the ability to move around.
- We're far too complacent about the number of people killed and injured on our roads and New Zealand's Road to Zero strategy aims to turn our thinking on that around.
- The Road to Zero strategy is based on the belief that no-one deserves to die or be seriously injured on our roads, even when they make mistakes.
- We've chosen zero for a reason. What do you consider an acceptable number of road deaths each year? 319 – the number killed on our roads last year? 200? 10? Clearly the only reasonable answer is zero.
- Across the billions of kilometres travelled by New Zealanders every year, people will get it wrong sometimes, even those who consider themselves good drivers.
- Mistakes on the road are inevitable, but deaths and serious injuries don't need to be.
- Road to Zero is our plan to build the safest road system we can, and work towards zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads.
- The Road to Zero action plan sets an initial target of achieving a 40 percent reduction in deaths and serious injuries by 2030.
- Achieving this target requires a concerted effort right across the country and within communities to support a sustained reduction in trauma on our roads.
- Road to Zero is not about any single initiative but rather, it's about how we develop a Safe System that includes safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe road use and safe roads.
- It's not one thing – it's ALL these things working together to keep people safe on our roads.
- Countries such as Sweden and Ireland, and the state of Victoria in Australia, have all shown in recent years that a system-wide, evidence-led approach can significantly reduce deaths and serious injuries on roads.

- Improving road safety also improves our health and wellbeing, and supports connected, liveable places for our communities. We want people to feel safe to ride bikes and let our tamariki walk to school.
- Our investment through Road to Zero is already resulting in ongoing improvements across the road network with a focus on areas we know to be dangerous. For example, data showed that in the year after safer speed limits were set on State Highway 6 between Nelson and Blenheim, there were no deaths (five in the preceding two years), and just one serious injury crash (15 in the preceding two years).
- Across the rest of the Road to Zero programme there is a huge amount of work that has been completed or is currently being worked on that will keep New Zealanders safer on our roads. That includes improved vehicle safety standards, a strengthened road safety partnership with NZ Police, the introduction of the new speed rule with a focus on safe speeds around schools, a review of fines and penalties, and the ongoing roll-out of a large programme of maintenance and improvements to roads all over the country.
- We will do everything we can to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads but this has to be a shared national effort.
- It is not just about government agencies taking action. As a society, as communities, as families and as individuals, we need to fundamentally shift our attitudes to road safety
- We won't get to zero deaths and serious injuries overnight, but by having zero as the vision and working towards it with a clear plan and a hard target for 2030, we can save hundreds of lives and prevent thousands of injuries, which is worth fighting for.
- Every New Zealander has a role to play. It takes everyone to get to no one.
- Behavioural and attitudinal change takes time and requires us to be open to having our opinions challenged.
- It has been suggested that increased driver training is the way forward. This has real benefits in the pre-licence stages but a survey of all the available studies to date by the Global Road Safety Facility in Geneva found no evidence that post-driver licence training programmes have any effect on road trauma reduction.
- In fact, post-driver licence training seems to have the opposite effect, making people overconfident and more likely to crash.
- Safer speed limits have also incited plenty of discussion. Speed limits need to fit the road environment.
- We can engineer our roads to be as safe as they possibly can be but it's neither practical nor possible to make every road in our state highway network drivable at 100kph.
- Some roads will always need to be travelled at a safer, lower speed limit.
- At the other end of the scale though we have the newly completed Waikato Expressway - two lanes in each direction, a central median barrier, and no significant curves – where we've been able to set the speed limit at 110kph.

- Another area where our thinking and behaviour is being challenged is climate change and the need to reduce our emissions.
- The recently released Emissions Reduction Plan lays out the actions needed across every sector of the economy to reduce emissions and achieve New Zealand's first emissions budget.
- Transport has a significant role to play in this and I understand the concerns some of you may have around these issues.
- In many ways, vintage and classic vehicle owners could be said to offer the perfect example for others in our vehicle fleet to follow – well maintained cars that are generally not driven every day therefore limiting their emissions.
- I know that you have questions around the availability of fuel for your vehicles in the long-term and this was one of the issues raised with me during my meeting with the three Presidents last August.
- I note that the intention is to increase use of biofuels and work is underway on the Sustainable Biofuels Obligation which will see biofuels blended with conventional fuels in a way that will be safe for consumers to use.
- Fuel wholesalers will remain responsible for the safe supply of quality fuels for public use and will determine where biofuels will be deployed across their fuel supply.
- There is recognition that vehicles like yours will not be compatible with biofuels blends so strict labelling requirements will be in place to ensure consumers are aware of the presence of biofuels in supply at the pump.
- The Sustainable Biofuels Obligation will also encourage the supply of advanced, or drop-in, biofuel which I understand will be more suitable for use in many of your vehicles without the need for modification.
- This is a period of great change and there is much that is still being worked on.
- Thank you for continuing to being involved in this period of change and raising matters with myself and Waka Kotahi.
- You are great advocates for the interests of New Zealand's many thousands of motoring enthusiasts and I'm sure you will continue to be so long into the future.
- Kia ora huihui tātou katoa