

Weather-activated signs are live

New Zealand's first weather-activated road signs with adjustable speed limits on State Highway 29 over the Kaimai Range went live on 2 November 2015.



The 22 high-tech signs are part of an innovative NZ Transport Agency trial that aims to reduce the crash rate on the steep road, which links the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

The variable speed signs, along with four web cameras, are linked to a weather station at the summit of the Kaimai Range.

The Transport Agency monitors the weather station and the speeds can be adjusted between 30km/h to 100km/h depending on conditions. The speeds are enforceable by Police.

The two year trial aims to encourage people to drive at safe speeds that are appropriate to the road and conditions when rain, ice and fog hit the Kaimai Range. Data shows that over 70% of the crashes on the Kaimai Range happen in wet weather, and that over 40% of these were caused by drivers travelling too fast for the conditions.

The signs will allow the Transport Agency to drop the speeds to 60km/h on the Waikato side and 80km/h on the Bay of Plenty side in adverse weather. They will also be used during road works or in the event of a crash when speeds may be reduced to as low as 30km/h.

The overall goal in the Government's road safety strategy *Safer Journeys* is to reduce the number of crashes and the severity of the crashes that occur. The Transport Agency's aim is to create a truly safe transport system which needs safe roads, safe vehicles, safe road use and safe speeds.

If it is successful, and there is a reduction in death and serious injuries within the trial site, the trial may be rolled out across similar sites around New Zealand.

SH29 over the Kaimai Range plays an important part in linking the Bay of Plenty and the Waikato. The summit and eastern and western flanks of SH29 record a high frequency of adverse weather conditions such as heavy rainfall, fog, high winds and ice.

SH29 is a high volume national strategic route. Its safety, efficiency and reliability is important to the economy. Approximately 9000 vehicles travel over the range daily, including around 1300 heavy vehicles.

Frequently asked questions

The 22 variable speed signs have been installed on a 12 kilometre stretch of SH29 over the Kaimai Range, between the State Highway 28 (SH28) junction on the Waikato side, and Soldiers Road on the Tauranga side.

Where is the trial zone?

The trial length is divided into two zones (eastern and western flank) to account for differences in localised weather. This will allow the speed limit reduction to be put in place for either the eastern flank or the western flank, or both, dependent on the weather conditions.



What are the speed limits?

- The speed limit from SH28 junction to the summit (on the Waikato side) will typically be reduced to 60km/h in adverse weather.
- The speed limit from the summit to Soldiers Road (on the Tauranga side) will typically be reduced to 80km/h.
- The signs will have the ability to show a range of speeds from 30km/h to 100km/h in the instance of extreme weather or events such as road crashes or road works.

How long is the trial for?

This is a two year trial which will be regularly monitored to assess driver behaviour and compliance.

Are the speed limits enforceable?

Yes. The activated speed limits are enforceable by Police and are not an advisory speed limit.

When did the trial start?

The trial started on 2 November 2015 and will run for two years.

How do the signs work?

The weather station located at the summit of the Kaimai Range is monitored 24/7 and the signs will be activated in adverse weather and deactivated once the weather has cleared.



Any questions relating to the project please do not hesitate to get in touch:



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