

**11. CHRISTCHURCH SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:
LYTTELTON TUNNEL SPEED LIMIT**

RR 9411

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Corporate Plan Output: Traffic Signs and Markings	

The purpose of this report is to brief the Council on the proposal by Transit NZ to increase the speed limit through the tunnel section of State Highway 74 from its present 50 km/h to 60 km/h.

BACKGROUND

The Committee, at its meeting on 9 February 1999, considered a report on proposed changes to speed limits on roads in the city. Included in a supplementary report was the proposal from Transit NZ to increase the speed limit through the Christchurch to Lyttelton road tunnel.

Councillors questioned the need to increase the speed limit. Transit NZ representative Tony Spowart indicated that information in support of the proposal would be made available to the Committee at its meeting in March.

BYLAW SPEED LIMIT

The change in speed limit through the road tunnel would be achieved by the Transit NZ Board introducing a bylaw to affect the change. Out of courtesy the authority seeks the views of adjoining road controlling authorities before enacting bylaw procedures. In this case it is understood that the Banks Peninsula District Council is supportive of the change in speed limit; Transit NZ is seeking a similar endorsement from the Christchurch City Council.

DISCUSSION

The following letter has been received from the Regional State Highway Manager Transit NZ:

“Further to the issues raised at the City Services Committee meeting regarding the increase of the Lyttelton Tunnel speed limit from 50 km/h to 60 km/h the following additional details are offered.

The attached printout from survey carried out on 2 December 1998 indicates the 85 percentile vehicle operating speed to be generally between 60 and 70 km/h. The proposed speed limit is more in keeping with this operating speed.

The tunnel has a very good crash record and the majority of the infringements observed on the tunnel monitors are that of overtaking. It is

considered that the proposed increase of the legal speed limit would only have a positive effect.

There are no comparable tunnels in New Zealand with a 60 km/h limit. The two lane tunnels in Wellington are 50 km/h in a 50 km/h speed limit area, while the Terrace Tunnel is three lane, two undivided lanes north bound and one south bound. It has a posted speed limit of 100 km/h however during off peak periods operates at speeds in the range of 70 - 80 km/h.

We await your further advice regarding this matter.”

CONCLUSION

The proposal by Transit NZ to increase the speed limit through the Christchurch to Lyttelton road tunnel from 50 km/h to 60 km/h would reflect the operating speed of traffic through the tunnel.

The Committee discussed the merits of the proposed change in the speed limit. However there are concerns about the narrow carriageway through the tunnel providing no separation between the opposing lanes of traffic.

Recommendation: That the Council not support the proposal to increase the speed limit in the Christchurch - Lyttelton road tunnel from 50 km/h to 60 km/h.