

## **Submission to NZTA on Speed Review through Burkes Pass Township**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2019**

**Request; That the current speed limit zone of 80 kph is reduced to 50kph** and that the current zone is extended outward in both directions for transition from 100kph to 80kph in preparation for the slower 50 kph. The reasons for this are as follows:

**Background; The present situation of 80 kph is grossly unsafe**, and multiple surveys in Burkes Pass since 2010 have shown speeds in excess of 80kph with up to 52% of vehicles (2013) in violation. Increasing numbers of vehicles from tourism, new developments/subdivision in the Mackenzie, as well as further afield in Wanaka and Queenstown, mean more traffic through Burkes Pass. In summer, cycle tourists are also regularly pedalling through. Significant numbers of crashes in the Mackenzie (about 197 since 1980 according to latest statistics), have fatigue listed as a factor. Slower speeds encourage rest stops and may help prevent some of these crashes.

Burkes Pass township has changed significantly over recent years; local businesses/attractions show an increase in visitor numbers, a significant increase in accommodation provision both for tourists, and worker accommodation for Lake Tekapo, where massive tourism related expansion is being experienced. Burkes Pass is catering for this as it is the nearest neighbour, a 15 minute drive away.

**Past measures to enhance safety have NOT worked** for a number of reasons;

- realignment of a corner near the cemetery on the approach from Tekapo has enabled higher speed, and road seal widening through the township created the ability to cut the corner in town and the ability to pass slower traffic rather than reducing speed. The painted flush median may have mitigated some of this but has had no net benefit in lowering speed that we have observed.
- the thresholds planted/ maintained by the Burkes Pass Heritage Trust/residents for the past 16 years (approved by NZTA) have taken time to mature and recently some of the plantings were damaged/removed by widening of adjacent seal to create a pull off lane thus negating the perceived narrowing and hence slowing effect,
- the speed indicator sign, present for only a few weeks each year, is far too close to the town centre to allow motorists to react effectively,
- enforcement is not effective due to the short distance between 80 kph speed signs.

### **Exceptionally High-Risk Factors in Burkes Pass Township**

1. **Vehicles from the Tekapo direction make a sudden unexpected downhill entrance at high speed into the pedestrian area.** They pass through open countryside after the cemetery and have no visual clues that the township is there until they are in its centre.
2. **The highway has a marked curve in the centre of the town with limited visibility** through the curve and there is a significant camber that encourages speed. Easy parking in the layby outside the toilet means that truck drivers and cars with boat trailers/campervans/caravans find it easier to stop here than at Tekapo and as a consequence the limited visibility becomes complete obstruction.
3. **Significant pedestrian traffic across the highway;** there is a layby on either side of the curve for drawing off from the highway and parking, together with attractions on both sides of the road. Pedestrians walk mainly between the Three Creeks shopping complex/coffee caravan/historic church on one side of the road across to the public toilet, Heritage Walk, and motels on the other side. Evidence of pedestrian numbers is the new door counter on

- the public toilet showing approximately 18,000 users since installation about one year ago. Accommodation for permanent residents and visitors is also on both sides of the highway.
4. **Pedestrians cannot cross the road from edge of seal to edge of seal with any margin for safety** given the speed and limited visibility of vehicles, even if travelling at 60 kph (see appendix 1 Pedestrians crossing at Burkes Pass Township – An analysis of time and speed). A fit and well person is only just reaching the other side (or has to run part way) before the vehicle is on them let alone an elderly or less mobile person. **Even at 50 kph a less mobile person would have difficulty crossing safely.** If a pedestrian is hit by a car travelling at 50kph then 40% of pedestrians will die, at 60 kph, 70% will die and at 70kph, 95% will die (ref. CCC and AA fact sheet). It takes 65 m to stop at 60kph and 45m at 50 kph.
  5. **High variability in vehicle speed through town is a major risk**, with large numbers of cars and trucks travelling at 80 km/h plus, mixed with many vehicles moving slowly, doing U-turns and starting and stopping (sometimes in the middle of the road).
  6. **A side road to the Rollesby Valley is hazardous**, located just at the northeast end of the curve, it has frequent traffic to the farms and homes along its length. Turning in or out of this corner is hazardous due to; limited visibility, significant variability in traffic speed, its proximity to the Three Creeks layby entrance and distracted tourist driver behaviour at this point. A new side road into a recent subdivision has been built at the northern threshold and potential for another has been advertised up near the cemetery last year.
  7. **The significant camber of the road means that the entrance to the popular Three Creeks shopping complex layby is hidden** when travelling north east so campervans and others are frequently observed stopping in the middle of the road to search for it and subsequently 60% of Three Creeks visitors do a U-turn to enter this layby.

We understand that in the current Speed Management Guidelines 2016 the views and observations of the local community and environmental risks are to be given serious consideration. **A 60 kph limit is not sufficient or suitable for our exceptional and particular circumstances and therefore we are asking for a 50 kph limit with whatever engineering solutions are required to support this.**

Jane Batchelor

Chairman of the Burkes Pass Heritage Trust

Postal Address; 41 Kirkwood Avenue, Christchurch 8041

Ph 03 3481531 (Chch), cell phone 0273689709, 03 6856271 (Burkes Pass)

Email [janelbatch@gmail.com](mailto:janelbatch@gmail.com)

## Appendix 1:

### Pedestrians Crossing at Burkes Pass Township

#### An analysis of time and speed in support of reducing the speed limit to 50 km/h

1. **A pedestrian standing on the edge of the seal can first see a vehicle when it is about 180m away.**

This was observed with a person standing on the seal edge near the public toilet. Sight of a vehicle coming down the hill is limited due to the horizontal curve in the road.

At the other crossing at the church, visibility is limited for vehicles coming down the hill because of the vertical curve in the road.

2. **The time for a vehicle to travel 180m is**

- **6 s at 100km/h,**
- **8 s at 80km/h,**
- **9 s at 70 km/h,**
- **11 s at 60km/h**
- **13 s at 50km/h**

This was calculated based on the vehicle speed and taking the distance of 180m.

3. **The time for a pedestrian to cross the road varies between**

- **9s for a fit and able person to about**
- **14 seconds for an older person.**

This time was measured from seal edge to seal edge between Three Creeks and the public toilet. This crossing location has a high usage. The toilet door count of approximately 18,000 visits a year gives an indication of the number crossing as many of them cross from Three Creeks to the toilet and back.

#### Comparing this data

With a 60 km/h approaching vehicle

- a fit and able pedestrian could cross the road with 2 seconds to spare.
- an older, slower pedestrian has no chance of crossing safely.

With a 50 km/h approaching vehicle an older, slower pedestrian can still not completely cross the road before the vehicle has reached them.

This assumes that there are no vehicles parked in the line of sight (in the layby area) which is often not the case.

#### Speed Limit and Actual speeds.

There is evidence that a significant number of vehicles at Burkes Pass travel 10 km/h faster than the speed limit. Taking this into account:

With a speed limit of 60 km/h a significant number of vehicles will be travelling at 70km/h. This would be uncomfortable for a fit person to cross and dangerous for a slower, older person.

With a speed limit of 50 km/h, a significant number of vehicles will be travelling at 60km/h and as shown above a slower, older person has no chance of crossing safely.

## Conclusion

**A reasonably fit and alert person could probably cross the road safely with vehicles travelling at 60km/hr. This would require a speed limit of 50km/h because a significant number would travel at 60km/h.**

**An older person could NOT cross safely even if the actual vehicle speed is 50 km/h. A lower speed limit than 50km/h is required and/or an engineering solution would be needed to allow older people to cross in safety.**



Graham Batchelor

[grahambatch@gmail.com](mailto:grahambatch@gmail.com)

0273910673