

For the consideration of members of the Regional Transport Committee

In my view, all road users are put at risk by the location of this view stop.

But let's consider the highest risk group as an example: drivers visiting from Europe, China, America and so on all used to driving on the right. They pick up a campervan in Auckland; drive for a couple of hours and are confronted by a magnificent view:

- They are not used to New Zealand driving or road conditions or NZ drivers, who are purported to be some of the worst in the developed world;
- They probably have never driven a vehicle anywhere near as large and cumbersome as they now find themselves in;
- They are confused by driving on the left hand side and sitting on the right;
- They have limited experience of the handling characteristics, capability and performance of the vehicle they are driving;
- They may be getting all sorts of conflicting advice from passengers;

After driving a little over 100km, they are invited to turn right to enjoy the view.

So far, so good, but they still have to negotiate their way back to the highway; a manoeuvre described by the Editor of the *Advocate* as "a bit tricky".

And that's when the fun begins.

Except it isn't funny; it isn't a giant video game; it is real life.

And, in real life, as a safe system recognises, people make mistakes and people, **not necessarily the people who make the mistakes**, die!

This is where the instincts built up over a lifetime of driving on the right and a lifetime of driving smaller, more manoeuvrable and more responsive vehicles kick in.

With limited experience of driving in NZ, drivers are required to make decisions they shouldn't have to in unfamiliar circumstances where they are, quite possibly, fatigued from a 10 or 20 hour flight and shouldn't be driving in any case.

What we do know is that safety wasn't on top of the list when NZTA selected this site - in fact, safety wasn't even on the list at all!

Even finding a site for a view stop wasn't on the list!

What NZTA's CEO told us was that all they were looking for was a point halfway between the top and bottom of the hill with a bit of spare land for, wait for it....., a turnaround!

Even when the turnaround morphed to a view stop, despite the significant change to traffic volume and type as well as a major departure from internationally acceptable standards of safety engineering, NZTA, according to Mr Gliddon, made no attempt to assess the safety of the site in any way whatsoever.

A view stop on the northbound side **would present NO safety issues whatsoever.** A view stop when motorists need to cross 2 lanes of high speed traffic in a high crash **is dangerous, totally unnecessary, contrary to international best practice and is the very antithesis of a safe system.**

Put bluntly, it is completely insane and totally unacceptable to build danger into a system when safe options are readily available.

In my view, NZTA have seriously short-changed Northland.

They have put our visitors at risk by encouraging them to enjoy the magnificent view when, by doing so, they put themselves, their families and other people's families in danger and when there are far safer and far better viewing options.

Except NZTA don't tell them that; they call it a safe system when all it is is just a triumph of expediency over safety – like using nails instead of bolts because nails happen to be available. Naked expediency doesn't build a safe system.

The whole purpose of a safe system is that potential danger is identified and the risk and severity of accidents minimised and not maximised; that is why we now travel the Brynderwyns fenced in from all sides, except for this view stop.

NZTA had options with safe access to superior views which they did not consider in their obsession with a turnaround halfway up the hill.

There may be those who believe that we should leave issues of construction to the constructors. If you are one of those, you clearly haven't learned the lessons of Cave Creek when a free reign was given to constructors without providing adequate oversight.

Recent changes to workplace Health and Safety legislation allow for the identification of personal accountability, and specify substantial penalties, for those who could reasonably have been expected to have identified safety issues but did not take prudent action to mitigate these.

I would expect a matching high standard in respect of public safety.

After all, for some the roadway is their workplace.

It appears to me that this committee has a duty of care in respect of the safety of road users so that when safety issues are identified it is incumbent on each of you to take all reasonable steps to assess and mitigate these.

And that is your responsibility; to close this view stop down, commission an independent safety audit carried out free of NZTA influence and only re-open it in the event of it obtaining a clean bill of health.

If it isn't proven safe, you can then talk to NZTA about Mr Gammie's stated commitment and responsibility to provide properly planned and safe stops.

Wayne Deeming
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