



New Zealand Automobile Association Inc.

Northland AA District Council District of the year award entry 2023

7th February 2024

Road Maintenance

Continuing our earlier work of actively campaigning for better roads, a multimedia campaign based on extensive newspaper publicity was continued in 2023. The fact sheet data produced by Motoring Affairs was presented to the RTC, raising the profile of NZAA.

Resilience of State Highway Network

Weather events experienced in Northland in 2022/23 have highlighted resilience and maintenance deficiencies of Northland roads. A media release circulated to local MP's, RTC members, Northland mayors and Regional Council Chair, along with multiple radio and newspaper interviews, articulated the concerns of local AA members; Short-term repairs were necessary, urgent detour upgrades were needed and a long-term solution is vital.

These actions have resulted in a raised profile of the Brynderwyns project and during the 2023 election campaign multiple parties included 4-laning in their transport policies, with the final coalition agreement committing to a four-lane highway alternative route to the Brynderwyns. This stretch of roading has a huge impact on our Northland community, a vital link to the rest of the country.

Speed Limit Reviews

Cr Westgate's speed review submission to KDC regarding the Pouto-West Coast speed review advised that the recommended speeds were not self-explaining, were inconsistent and the roads were not high risk. This was considered by KDC and no recommended speed changes excluding schools were approved. A continuation of three years of excellent factual submissions on speed reviews by Cr Westgate.

Driver Licencing

Driver licence testing capabilities have been high on Northland AA's agenda for several years, particularly relating to our multiple, isolated, disadvantaged communities. This year Cr Waitohi led a Far North community testing pilot, with 100% pass rate for full licences, which is now being implemented in the Kaipara. Alongside this, Cr Johnston's role in getting driver licence facilitation into 3 schools, Silver Fern Farms, Howard League and 6 community organisations, plus Cr Lambeth's involvement with Blue Light, has meant that an additional 147 practical driver licences have been obtained in the Kaipara District.

Breath Testing

Northland has the highest road toll per head of population, with a major contributor to these fatalities being impairment, including alcohol. A continuance of the 2022/23 press campaign, backed up by OIA data, alongside specific discussion with the Road Policing Manager, has seen a significant increase in roadside testing. In the period July to December 2023, more tests were undertaken than in the previous 4 financial years.

Public Relations

Council members are involved with the Northland Road Safety Forum, Northland Freight Group and attend the Northland Regional Transport Committee meetings. Chair Rissetto has presented to the RTC, highlighting AA's credentials, interest, research capability, and commitment to be an advocate on behalf of road users. Cr Williamson presented to the forum about the work of the AA Research Foundation and is in his 14th year of writing a fortnightly column for Northern Advocate about roading, road safety and driving matters, including AA views and activities. Councillors have regular meetings with NTA/NZTA, MPS and local councillors sharing progress and updates.