

13 December 2007

Tim Hughes
Land Transport New Zealand
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Dear Tim

New Zealand Traffic Institute (TRAFINZ): Submission on the Draft RTS 14: Guidelines for Facilities for Blind and Vision-Impaired Pedestrians.

The NZ Traffic Institute (Trafinz) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the recently released Draft RTS 14 update.

Trafinz represents a wide grouping of NZ local authorities covering the majority of the New Zealand population. Its membership includes regional councils, the major metropolitan cities and smaller provincial authorities. The Institute's Executive is comprised of elected councillors and officers drawn from a cross section of the local government membership, together with senior personnel representing its key government agency partners, including the Police, and a number of senior technical staff from transport consultancies that volunteer their services *pro bono*.

The Institute's primary focus is on transportation planning, traffic management, and road safety. It provides specialist advice to members on transportation, traffic and safety issues, by drawing on the depth of expertise available through its members and particularly its national technical committee. The Institute also acts as a conduit for local authorities to respond to the NZ Government on new transport and safety policies and on proposed new and/or amended legislation.

Overview

Trafinz has a strong interest in pedestrian safety as part of its wider interest in transport safety in New Zealand. LTNZ will recall the Trafinz initiative in 2001 when we released *A Guide to Pedestrian Crossing Facilities* which remains arguably the best reference document on the subject.

The Institute recognises the increasingly important role that pedestrian activity plays in the environmental sustainability, health and prosperity of the wider community. It is essential that all those people on foot who need to negotiate our often busy and challenging roads can do so with the highest possible levels of safety and are not killed or seriously injured because they have impairments.

As well as the obvious importance of establishing best practice design standards which the revised RTS 14 is seeking to do, it is important to make the point that more resource should be going into research into pedestrian needs and the performance of our existing infrastructure. This will assist practitioners to provide the most appropriate measures tailored to the specific needs of a specific site or community.

On the matter of funding, Trafinz believes that a higher level of financial assistance should be made available for all safety related improvements so as to ensure that all

road controlling authorities are encouraged to roll out the types of improvements identified in RTS 14 as quickly as practicable. It is known that not all RCA's are able to take up their full allocation for minor capital works, due to difficulty in finding their local share.

Draft Guideline:

In regard to the Guideline, Trafinz commends the submissions made by two of its member authorities; Auckland City and Manukau City. We believe these two submissions raise a number of important points which should be considered by the drafters of the Standard.

We would comment also that many of the photographs included in the original and now the update, still display deficiencies and ambiguities and we believe should not be used as best practice applications. It is very important to provide good examples and Trafinz members may be able to assist in providing examples so that appropriate ones can be selected for inclusion.

TRAFINZ is happy to discuss any of the comments contained in the submission and any queries can be directed to the Chair of the TRAFINZ Technical Committee, Steve Spence, Chief Transportation Engineer, Wellington City Council (☎ (04) 803 8099 Email: steve.spence@wcc.govt.nz)

Yours sincerely

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