

Nicole Rosie  
Chief Executive  
Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency  
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17 May 2024

Dear Nicole,

Re: NZ Transport Agency proposed cuts to CAS data and staff

As the region's peak membership association for road safety, the Australasian College of Road Safety has significant concerns about the ramifications of the [NZ Transport Agency proposal](#) to more than halve the number of full time Crash Analysis System (CAS) staff and to scale back the collection and processing of crash data.

CAS is a nationally consistent and objective source of truth regarding reported crashes on New Zealand roads. It is recognised as a world-leading repository of crash information – the envy of all jurisdictions. The College is concerned that the proposal to reduce staff and downgrade the information collected will be a significant retrograde step to the robustness of the data and have flow-on effects to road safety outcomes in New Zealand. It has taken a long time to build CAS to its current robust state and implementing the proposal would take many years to recover from reductions in the quality and quantity of data stored in CAS.

CAS is a foundational dataset for road safety in New Zealand. It is fundamental to every aspect of evidence-based road safety from strategic direction and understanding the impacts of policy decisions, right through to informing investment and design decisions for infrastructure projects, maintenance works, speed management and enforcement activities. It is critical to almost every aspect of the industry's work in road safety.

The College is concerned about both the proposed reduction in staff numbers and the proposal to scale back the collection and processing of crash data, including data on non-injury crashes. The College is seeking assurance that the proposed staff cuts will not adversely impact the quality of crash data nor the timeliness with which it is made available. Whilst non-injury crashes are typically not used to inform strategic decisions, they provide a very important indicator of crash trends, increasing sample sizes to gain road safety insights, and are often used for determining where and whether the incidence of crashes is increasing or decreasing. Non-injury crash data are also used in assessing the surface renewals maintenance programme where a priority site must have two or more wet road crashes (including non-injury crashes) to be treated. The loss of non-injury crashes would result in a rewrite of the approach to resurfacing prioritisation.

The College is concerned that ceasing reporting on non-injury crashes could result in further under-reporting of less severe (minor) injury crashes. Such an outcome would be devastating for road safety, given all injury crashes are now extensively used to forecast the likelihood of future high severity crashes. Data from all crashes helps to build a picture of the development of crash trends; whether those are trends of increasing crash numbers and/or severity or whether the trends indicate decreases. Similarly, the trends arising from crash data after there has been investment in the road network allow us to determine the return on that investment and assist to guide future investment decisions. Simply relying on where fatal and serious injury crashes have occurred in the past to inform road safety decisions is an outdated method that was surpassed more than a decade ago. It is important that information regarding lower severity crashes remains captured and included in the CAS database.

Any interruption in the depth and quality of the data contained in CAS will have a significant adverse effect on the usability of the data over a long period of time. For example, a one-year gap in the depth and/or quality of the data will result in unreliable conclusions being drawn for a period of at least five years. Therefore, maintaining the consistency of the database is critically important.

To summarise, the College is very concerned about the ramifications of the proposal to cut CAS staff and scale back the collection and processing of crash data. The College urges the NZ Transport Agency to reconsider the proposal, as we believe it puts at risk this foundational dataset for road safety in New Zealand - fundamental to every aspect of evidence-based road safety decision making.

The College is seeking assurance from the NZ Transport Agency that the proposal will not impact the ability of the industry to access and use crash data to make informed decisions that will help transition the transport system towards one that is free of deaths and serious injuries.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns and can be contacted at [ingrid.johnston@acrs.org.au](mailto:ingrid.johnston@acrs.org.au) .



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