

Hon. Simeon Brown
Minister of Transport
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RE: Support the inclusion of equestrians as vulnerable road users

Dear Minister Brown


I am writing to you to express concern regarding the current status of horse riders on New Zealand roads. Recently the Waikato Regional Transport Committee received a presentation from the New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network on the plight of horse riders using the road network and were reminded of numerous instances where horse riders face significant risks due to their vulnerability when interacting with other road users. Despite the inherent dangers, horse riders are not currently overtly recognised as vulnerable road users under the existing legislation. We support the imperative that this oversight is addressed to ensure the safety and well-being of all road users.

Horse riders, much like cyclists and pedestrians, are exposed to various hazards, including fast-moving vehicles, narrow roadways, and limited visibility. The unpredictable nature of horses further exacerbates these risks, making it crucial for vehicle drivers to exercise heightened caution when encountering horse riders. By formally recognising horse riders as vulnerable road users, a greater sense of awareness and responsibility can be fostered amongst motorists, thereby reducing the likelihood of crashes or incidents involving horses and enhancing road safety for everyone as part of a safe system approach to road safety.

The Waikato Regional Transport Committee respectfully requests that the Ministry of Transport undertake a comprehensive review of the current legislation to overtly include horse riders in the category of vulnerable road users. This review should consider the unique challenges faced by horse riders and propose appropriate measures to mitigate these risks.

Thank you for considering this request on behalf of the Waikato Regional Transport Committee. We trust that you will give this matter the attention it deserves and take the necessary steps to protect the safety all road users, including horse riders, on our roads. I look forward to your positive response and the implementation of measures that will ensure a safer environment for all road users.

Yours sincerely



Cr Mich'eal Downard
Chair – Waikato Regional Transport Committee