

Moutere Hills Residents Association Submission to the Tasman District Council

Review of Consolidated Bylaw Chapter 4 - Speed Limits Bylaw 2004 Speed Limit Reduction for Moutere Highway between Upper Moutere Village and Moutere Hills Community Centre

About the MHRA

The Moutere Hills Residents Association (MHRA) is an incorporated society that represents members from throughout the wider Moutere Hills area.

The MHRA aims to promote interest in the social, environmental, economic and cultural life in the Moutere Hills area; to determine the consensual opinion of residents and ratepayers on the development of the Moutere Hills area; and to act as a channel of communication between the Tasman District Council and any other statutory bodies and the residents of the Moutere Hills area on matters relevant to the community.

Objectives of this Submission

We are proposing a speed limit reduction for the section of the Moutere Highway between Upper Moutere Village and the Moutere Hills Community Centre from 100 kph to 70 kph in order to calm traffic and enhance road safety both at the community centre entrance and leading up to the village.

While we are generally in favour of the proposed Moutere Highway Realignment Option 2 between George Harvey and Kelling Roads which is currently planned for 2020/21, we see the proposed speed limit reduction as an important measure to improve safety until such time that the realignment takes place and may in itself alter traffic flow for the better and may allow entry/exit points near the centre and adjacent roads to be re-designed.

Background

Upper Moutere is a vibrant community with a steadily growing population. The school is attracting increasing numbers of pupils, the Moutere Inn is developing a reputation as a highly frequented tourist destination, and the Moutere Hills Community Centre is the very successful and growing hub for sporting and social events, servicing the greater Moutere Hills area. From this and the proximity to the emerging Great Taste Trail it can be expected that the Moutere Highway through Upper Moutere Village will continually attract more traffic in the foreseeable future.

Situation

The stretch of Moutere Highway between the bend at George Harvey Rd and the bend at Kelling Road, as it passes the Moutere Hills Community Centre gates, has a speed limit of 100 kph.

There are many sporting and social occasions when numbers of children on bicycles come and go through the MHCC gates directly onto the 100 kph highway. There have been instances of near misses reported concerning school children spilling out of the MHCC gates in the path of fast moving vehicles. While the nearby bends have advisory signs of 65 kph it is not uncommon to see vehicles navigating these at speeds closer to 100 kph and accelerating out of the corner, particularly from the southern, banked bend.

Sightlines from the MHCC gates past the bends are occluded in both directions by trees, and additionally to the North by the Telecom building.

At Kelling Road bend the busy Country Kids pre-school traffic joins feeder traffic from upper Neudorf Road to access the highway.

The highway limit continues at 100 kph for about 900 metres until it reaches the sloping and narrow Upper Moutere cutting, just past the lower entrance to the Moutere Inn. Vehicles travelling south seem often to hit this transition at speed, using the slope to decelerate from 100 kph to 50 kph at the top.

Conversely, many vehicles travelling North from the village speed up while travelling down the slope before hitting the transition to the open road (and the entrance to the Moutere Inn car park) at something well over 50 kph.

Proposal

It is our opinion that there would be much benefit in reducing the speed limit on the Moutere Highway between Upper Moutere Village and the George Harvey Road Bridge to 70 kph.

In addition we consider the transition from 50 kph to 70 kph should occur further north from the village, away from the cutting and the Inn car park entrance; perhaps closer to the Fire Station.

We believe these changes would:

- help calm traffic approaching the village from the North past adjacent residential entrance points and prepare drivers for the upcoming 50 kph section through the village
- reduce the traffic speed at the MHCC gateway, and give cyclists and other drivers emerging from the MHCC more time to sight cars approaching from the highway bends
- help merging traffic from Country Kids pre-school and Kelling Road (including children cycling to school) attempting to join the highway
- provide a safer entrance to the Moutere Inn car park
- reduce the speed of traffic on the often cycled highway linking the school and village to the Community Centre and Kelling Road