

## Plan Change 48

26 July 2019

Submission by: Anne Clough

My family deliberately chose to relocate from Auckland to Oakura in 2010 with our children aged 4 & 6 because of the village lifestyle, slower pace of life & close community relationships it would offer. And to also enjoy the space & beautiful, relaxing outdoor views & escape the hustle/bustle & anxiety of busy towns.

We enjoy this village environment where you know your neighbours, where a chance meet up at the Oakura Beach can turn into an impromptu potluck BBQ that evening with kids running around playing Spotlight. Our kids are free to walk & cycle around safely & get involved with all community opportunities including sport & cultural.

I fully supported the community engagement & input into the Oakura Long Term Plan which included areas of growth, where anybody wanting an input was invited to be involved and to be heard via the Kaitake Community Board & their focus groups, yet now it appears a developer has taken it upon himself to try and push his own ambition upon our community. This is the same Developer of "The Paddocks" who offered many assurances to get "The Paddocks" development accepted but as evidence points out is going back on his word to the people of this community by looking to develop 400 houses on Lot #29. Now I am extremely concerned as to what he will do if the Plan Change were to go ahead – would he quickly on-sell the land immediately once consents are granted to nonTaranaki related business people or overseas investment companies & start the destruction of our beautiful community. Who knows?

What is the point of asking for the involvement of the community if one individual can override the wider community agreed plans. It will destroy the heart of the community and try to separate rather than join together the members → what sort of community will this then create?

Furthermore if this Private Plan Change 48 were to go ahead, it would set a precedent in the future for large farms on the boundary of Oakura Village to be rezoned into residential & split into huge subdivisions.

If the Plan Change were to go ahead, the village community that we so love would change. With the increased population, I worry about the stretch on the classroom sizes at Oakura Primary School & Kindergarten, the ability & access for all the kids to play & participate in local dance, soccer, rugby, surfing clubs as facilities & resources will become stretched & entry will need to be made on eliteness within the sports or entry by who can pay the most money as demand will outstrip supply of these wonderful community sport & cultural offerings.

No longer will we have immediate beach access parking & easy access to facilities & shops on the Main Road.

Traffic & congestion fears concern me, no longer will it be safe for our kids to bike from Surrey Hill Road, down through Wairau Rd and past this huge development, then deal with the increase in traffic turning onto SH45 – this will create tension, confusion and possibly a school child fatality. Just in a recent time frame we have had 1 road death (Stuff News, Nov

1st, 2016), just metres from the SH45/Wairau Rd intersection where a tractor & car collided, a near fatality (Stuff News, April 4th 2019) on the Main Road between the Oakura Four Square & Pharmacy where a 12 year old Oakura school girl & a car collided and we have ongoing community requests to reduce speeds at both entrances to Oakura before more fatalities occur (Stuff News, May 5th 2017). For multiple years, concerned Oakura parents continue to write to Transit with regards to each of the five High School buses transporting our children to & from their New Plymouth Highschools where up to 30 students can be standing on each bus whilst travelling along 10km of 100km/hr main highway into New Plymouth. With a increase from the many proposed households in the Lot 29, these deadly road statistics & public transport concerns will only grow worse.

The mountains & Kaitake Ranges which give us such a sense of beauty, nature & serenity that typify my beautiful Oakura will get covered in small houses obliterating our view of the majestic Kaitake Ranges.

I ask you to listen to community members & myself who are opposing the Plan Change in its entirety for these are the people who developed the first tennis courts, bowling greens, surf & boardriding clubs. They & our subsequent locals created this unique culture of Oakura & with over 390 submissions that are 100% opposed in totality to the plan change put forward by the Oakura Farm Park Ltd clearly shows the community feeling. We need to keep our Rural Zoned land as that is why we chose to live here & not in surburbanville in New Plymouth. Please retain the heart of Oakura & our community. Please reject the Plan Change 48 in its entirety & do not rezone any of the land.

# Man who died in Oakura tractor crash named

Hannah Lee 08:20, Nov 03 2016

The man who died after his tractor rolled on a dangerous stretch of State Highway in Taranaki was Oakura man Robin Coutanche.

Coutanche died on Tuesday after his tractor rolled on South Rd, State Highway 45, just past the 100kmh zone on the southern side of the small coastal village.

A car and a tractor collided at approximately 4.20pm and despite members of the public rushing to the scene and performing CPR, Coutanche, the driver of the tractor, died at the scene, police said.



SIMON O'CONNOR/FAIRFAX NZ

The scene from the fatal tractor accident in Oakura, Taranaki.

Coutanche was 70 years old.

The Serious Crash Unit is continuing to investigate the incident.

Following Coutanche's death, Oakura residents living near the crash site called for the 100kmh zone to be moved further south away from residential areas.

They recalled numerous crashes along the stretch of road and at the South Rd/Wairau Rd intersection, saying motorists often failed to slow down to the 50kmh speed limit when entering the town and speeding up at the intersection, well before they drove into the 100kmh zone.

Detective Sergeant Drew Bennett said New Plymouth police were well aware of residents' concerns about the stretch of road where the tractor crashed.

"At this early stage no specific comment can be made about the road until the investigation has been completed," he said.

"As with all investigations like this all factors are examined which includes driver behaviour, vehicle condition and all environmental aspects including the road layout.

"Police again express our condolences to the family of Robin as they grieve for him. Their tragic loss is another reminder to us all that we need to look out for each other on the roads so we all have safer journeys."

Witnesses have been spoken to, but police would like any further witnesses to contact New Plymouth police on 06 759 5500.

**Stuff**

# Child, 12, hit by car in Oakura

Jane Matthews and Leighton Keith 14:46, Apr 04 2019



SIMON O'CONNOR/STUFF

It is believed the girl was hit by the car after she stepped out in front of it in Oakura.

A 12-year-old girl has been taken to hospital with minor injuries after being hit by a car in coastal Taranaki.

Officers were called to South Rd, Oakura, around 8.20am on Thursday after reports of a child on a bike and a car colliding near the intersection with Dixon St.

However, when they arrived they discovered a 12-year-old girl had been hit by a car heading north, Sergeant Pat Duffy said.



SIMON O'CONNOR/STUFF

The 12-year-old was taken to hospital with minor injuries.

Duffy said the car was heading north and it appeared as though the girl had stepped out in front of the car. She had not been on a bicycle.

"It appears she has run out from the side of the road into the path of a car that was travelling slowly."

He said both the driver and the pedestrian attempted to take evasive action but in the end they collided.

A doctor, who was at the scene, checked the girl was alright before she was transported to Taranaki Base Hospital by St John ambulance with minor injuries.

Duffy said the girl was extremely lucky and the collision was a timely reminder for motorists and pedestrians to take at peak times.

"All drivers need to make sure they are particularly vigilant when kids are making their way to and from school.

"Children should use a pedestrian crossing when there is one available and they defiantly should be taught to look both ways before crossing the road."

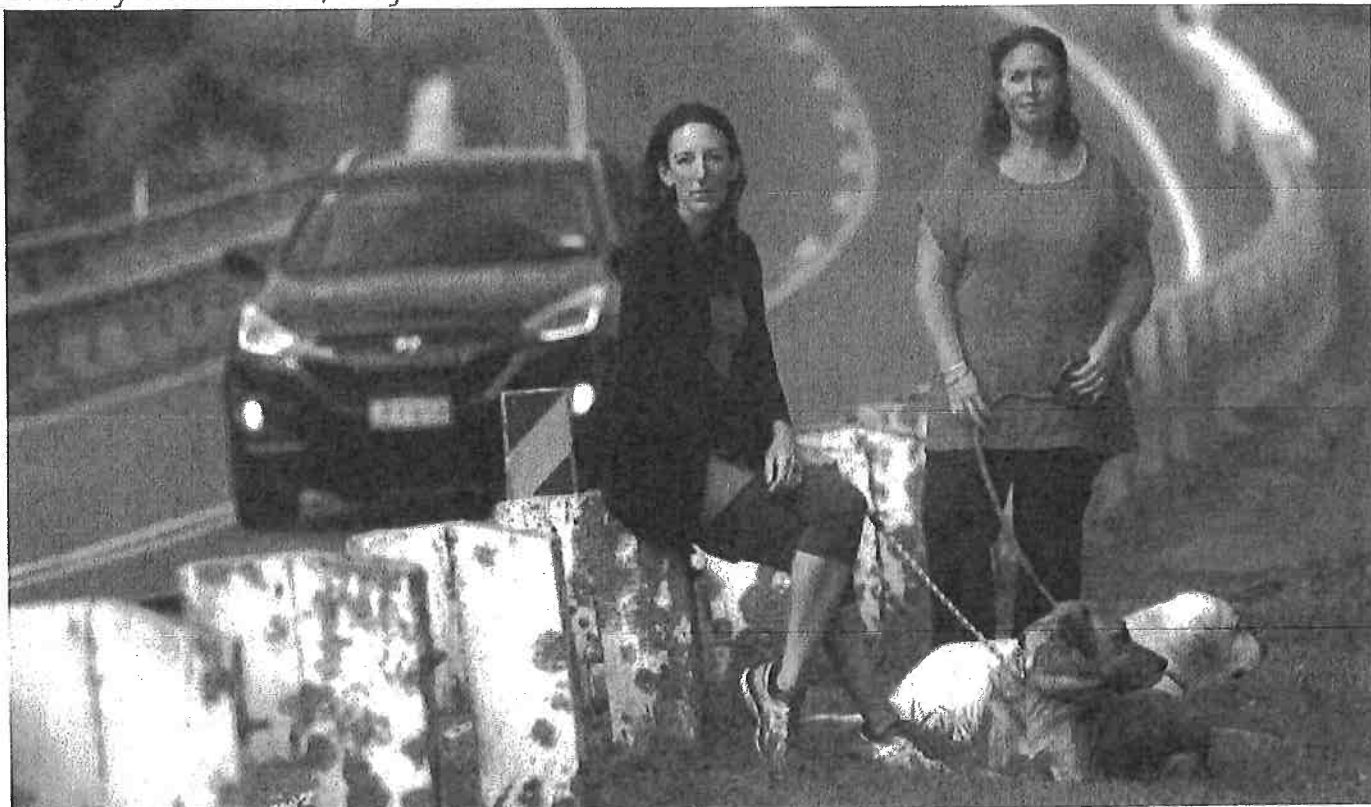
"Children should use a pedestrian crossing when there is one available and they defiantly should be taught to look both ways before crossing the road."

A Fire and Emergency New Zealand crew from Oakura also attended the scene.

Stuff

# Roads in Oakura to get safety improvements, but residents still want speed reduction

Brittany Baker 17:14, May 05 2017



ROBERT CHARLES/FAIRFAX NZ

Oakura residents Sarah Ashworth, left, and Esther Kirk have asked for NZTA action since November 2015.

Dangerous roads in a small North Taranaki town will be improved after residents campaigned for safer streets.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) announced plans on Friday that would address a number of complaints from Oakura residents, who have said the main stretch of road and the entrances to the village were dangerous.

The project, which will commence this month, will improve the left turn into and out of Corbett Park, improve the visibility of the passenger crossing on Dixon St, remove nearby car parks at the Dixon St intersection, improve guardrails on the River bridge on the Corbett Park

side of State Highway 45, and close the passing lane on the northern entrance.



SIMON O'CONNOR/FAIRFAX NZ

Penny Holdcroft, Oakura resident, was of the many to call for speed reduction in the village.

One of those to call for NZTA attention was Oakura woman Esther Kirk, who said while she was happy to finally receive a response, she had yet to back down on further action.

"I'm very pleased with the development but I'm still going to push for speed reduction," she said.



SIMON O'CONNOR/FAIRFAX NZ

Paul Cunningham lived where the fatal crash in Oakura happened. He said he was hit by a passing car in the same area and was keen to see something change.



However NZTA have said the removal of the passing lanes would lead to an overall reduction in vehicle speed as motorists would not speed up to overtake slower vehicles.

"The review took into account crash data for the area, road alignments, traffic volumes and speeds," Ross I'Anson, NZTA highway manager, said.

"The improvements being made will have biggest influence on improving safety on this stretch of road for all road users."

And as part of implementing the Government's road safety strategy, NZTA has released the Speed Management Guide at the end of 2016.

"The Guide outlines a best practice approach to calculating speed limits and provides a new and consistent methodology for identifying the safe and appropriate speed for state highways and local roads," I'Anson said.

"It is based on the road's function, design, safety, use and the surrounding environment, including land use."

The approach would be used by both NZTA for state highways and councils for local roads to identify and prioritise where speed management will contribute most to reducing deaths and serious injuries.

I'Anson said NZTA would work with local stakeholders and communities throughout the region to consider what are safe and appropriate speeds.

However Kirk said this nationwide approach disregarded Oakura's concerns, which were raised in November 2015.

Twelve months later, several other residents stepped forward for swift action following the fatal crash of 70-year-old Robin Coutanche, who was killed after his tractor rolled on SH45 just south of the village.

Frustrated residents felt their year-long campaign had fallen on deaf ears and placed Coutanche's death in the spotlight to grab NZTA's attention.

Resident Paul Cunningham called the stretch of road, which includes a highway intersection and a speed limit change from 50kmh to 100kmh within 50 metres of each other, "a disaster waiting to happen".

He said cars regularly overtook each other and drivers rarely abided by the 50kmh signs.

Cunningham had fallen victim to speedy driver when he said a car travelling 120kmh slammed into the back of his vehicle while he pulled into his driveway, which is located about 20 metres past where the 100kmh zone begins.

He had suggested NZTA move the 100kmh zone further back from residential houses.

Penny Holdcroft, another Oakura resident, said her husband had installed a reinforced concrete fence after a car crashed into their property, which is on the corner of the intersection of SH45 and Wairau Rd and within the 50kmh zone.

She said she had personally heard or attended seven crashes in the area in the seven years she had been living there and feared traffic problems in the area were only getting worse.

**Stuff**

# Parents upset with kids standing on school buses

Christina Persico 16:50, Aug 08 2017



ANDY JACKSON/STUFF

A packed school bus heads out of New Plymouth towards Oakura.

Annalisa Facer wants a change in laws around school bus seating before tragedy strikes.

Facer's daughter Willow Johnson catches the bus between Spotswood College and Oakura. The year-9 student is rarely able to get a seat and so must stand for the 15 minute journey that is largely on the open road with a 100kmh speed limit.

Facer said she knew the buses had a legal standing limit but wanted the practice to end for the safety of the students.

"But it's just one of those things that why wait until something goes wrong."

Facer has support in her stance from Inglewood woman Faye Gurry, who lost her 9-year-old son Terry in a bus crash in 1993.



ROBERT CHARLES

It's a long running issue but it still concerns many parents - should kids be standing on the bus?

Gurry said the current safety standards were diabolical and wanted a ban on standing, and compulsory seat belts.

Her son died after his school bus crashed on its way to Kaimata School, spinning on some diesel on the road.

After his death the family launched a petition calling for seatbelts in buses. But after discussions with various authorities they were told it was too expensive.

"But what is the cost of a life," Gurry said.

"So we gave it up in the end. We were very fragile and it just didn't happen, and I've regretted it ever since."

Taranaki Regional Council transport services manager Chris Clarke said the students travelling to Oakura do have options if they did not want to stand.

"All they need to do is wait for the other buses," he said. "The buses aren't illegally overloaded; they're allowed to carry standing passengers."

"The buses are the safest form of transport."

He said the biggest issue was in the afternoon, but more and more seats became available as students are dropped off.

He said there had been no incidents related to children standing on buses.

"There's no speeding, it's legal, they're not overloaded," he said. "We do not want to put the safety of children at risk."

Spotswood College principal Mark Bowden said he had often been out on bus duty and seen drivers tell children to wait for the next one because the bus was full.

He said standing in buses was not ideal.

"They shouldn't be, but until they change the law that requires all students to be seated and belted in, the contractors are within the law," he said.

"This is an historic issue which I think will change in time."

Stuff