

27 October 2021

Adam Parkinson  
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Ref. NZT-6673

Dear Adam

Thank you for your email of 7 October 2021 regarding the safety ratings for vehicles.

As you have asked a number of questions relating to vehicle safety, I will address each of your questions in turn below.

**1. How safety for people not in the vehicle is factored into this system - vulnerable users like pedestrians and cyclists.**

There are three light vehicle safety rating systems used in New Zealand; The Vehicle Safety Risk Ratings (VSRR), Used Car Safety Rating System (UCSR) and Australasian New Car Assessment Programme (ANCAP). They all incorporate vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists into the overall safety rating.

VSRR is often used when there are low numbers of a specific vehicle which means there is not enough real-world crash data, so the rating is based on the average crash rating of similar vehicles (e.g. other small SUVs) from the same year of manufacture. The data is used to measure the safety of the driver, people in other cars, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. This safety rating is used for approximately 30 percent of the New Zealand light vehicle fleet.

UCSR also uses real-world crash and injury data gathered from approximately 8 million police-reported driver injury crashes across New Zealand and Australia. The vehicle safety ratings are calculated by Monash University's Accident Research Centre. Vehicles assessed under UCSR display two ratings, one that indicates the vehicle's ability to protect its occupants (Driver Safety) and a second rating which takes into account driver safety and the vehicles impact on other road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. This rating is displayed as 'Overall Safety' on [rightcar.govt.nz](http://rightcar.govt.nz). Approximately 60 percent of the light vehicle fleet is rated under UCSR.

The remainder of the light vehicle fleet is rated by ANCAP, which assesses the design of the front of the vehicle to minimise injury risk to pedestrians when struck. Vehicles are also assessed for their ability to actively avoid or mitigate impacts with pedestrians and cyclists. In recent years they have begun to display a rating for vulnerable road user safety.

**2. How the weighting system for the final score works and how the weight of risks to people outside the vehicle are assessed.**

For information on how UCSR and VSRR weigh the final score please refer to this report conducted by Monash University Accident Research Centre:

- [https://www.monash.edu/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1992177/UCSR-2019-Update-MUARC-Report-338-updated.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1992177/UCSR-2019-Update-MUARC-Report-338-updated.pdf).

In sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this report you can find the methodology of the Overall Safety ratings for UCSR and VSRR.

ANCAP has a specific protocol for vulnerable road users. You can find a link to these protocols here:

- <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.ancap.com.au/app/public/assets/9b1474e72837e1509e4bf89430baca24a5b64460/original.pdf?1594164464>.

**3. Does NZTA recognise that vulnerable users outside of vehicles need added protection and that these vehicle ratings might influence that, as well as choices made by vehicle buyers.**

Yes, Waka Kotahi's Safe Vehicles Programme, the vehicle arm of Road to Zero, our road safety strategy for 2020-2030 is focused on educating New Zealanders to make better vehicle choices not just for themselves, but for all road users.

**4. Are NZTA advocating for effective engineering controls (rather than these sorts of administrative controls these vehicle safety ratings are), such as geo fencing, speed limiters, geo fenced speed controls - for vehicles to make a meaningful dent in the worsening DSI stats for Aotearoa?"**

As part of the Road to Zero Action Plan, Waka Kotahi is working to identify new vehicle technologies that could have a positive impact on the safety of the light vehicle fleet. This includes, but is not limited to, the types of technologies you mention.

If you would like to discuss this matter further with Waka Kotahi, you are welcome to contact Todd Wylie, Team Lead Safe Road Use Vehicles Speeds Roads and Roadsides, by email to [todd.wylie@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:todd.wylie@nzta.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



**Fabian Marsh**  
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