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Cody C
By email: fyi-request-24767-165d57a0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Cody

Information Request – Cycleway delays

Thank you for your information request dated 15 November 2023 asking for the following information.

Please supply the supporting evidence, if any, used by FENZ when making submissions to local and central government that shows cycleways have actually caused delays in response times.

Please also supply trend of average response times in Christchurch over past ten years or nearest available periods, if held.

Your request has been assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). We have identified four documents addressed to local or central government that make the specific claim that cycleways may cause delays in response times. As the documents themselves contain supporting evidence for these claims, please find them enclosed. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

The submissions identified are all to Wellington City Council over proposed changes across the city. Specifically, they relate to

- Changes to the Brooklyn Road cycleway
- The Karori Connections project
- The Newtown and Berhampore Transport Project
- The Newtown and Berhampore Transport Project hearing

We note that the claims made in these submissions are not the general claim that cycleways cause delays in response times. Rather, they claim that specific cycleways in Wellington are likely to cause delays to response times in situations where our vehicles interact with them during emergency responses.

As far as evidence, it is very difficult to provide statistical evidence of changes in response times because the reasons for differing times (faster or slower) contain many variables. We do not respond to the same calls, at the same places, at the same time of day, in the same traffic conditions often enough to be able to make an accurate assessment of the reasons for differing times. Therefore, we did not make these claims on the basis of quantitative delay data.

Instead, the evidence relied on was information and feedback from fire appliance drivers who have experienced the impact of similar roading changes in other parts of the city. These roading designs are often intended to slow vehicle traffic down, so it is no surprise that the information and feedback from drivers suggests they are sometimes being slowed down.

For example, the cycleway design in some areas (Kilbirnie, Island Bay) contain concrete “island barriers” which are placed between the traffic lanes and the bike lanes. This means, in some cases, cars are not able to pull to the left sufficiently enough for fire appliances to pass them while remaining within their lane. In such cases, overtaking traffic requires moving into the on-coming traffic lane (who also cannot pull sufficiently to the left) which requires more care and can only be completed when the way is clear, ultimately taking more time to achieve.

Fire and Emergency will continue to respond to incidents as they arise and in a timely manner.

Below are the average response times to all incidents in Christchurch over the past ten years:

Calendar Year	Average Response Time (minutes)
2014	9:36
2015	8:00
2016	7:53
2017	7:58
2018	7:50
2019	7:58
2020	8:47
2021	7:53
2022	7:38
2023	7:54

The average response time is calculated by averaging the times it took for the first appliance to arrive at the scene of an incident, from the time the communication centres first received the call, for all incidents in Christchurch. The 2023 response time is the average as of 29 November 2023.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa nā



Ethan Fett
Acting Manager Information Requests

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