**Consultation with the future generations/ the wider community**

In a world where public consultation around transportation projects often ends in abuse and negativity, this is an example of a largely positive experience. This includes empowering, teaching, learning, collaboration, and like all good stories it does include its antagonists. Real community engagement is arduous, repetitive, and time consuming - but if we want to create meaningful opportunities for all stakeholders to engage in the design and decision-making process, helping us deliver great solutions that improve their lives and wellbeing, then we need to cast our net wide. A letter drop and Facebook post just isn’t going to cut it. People need to understand the ‘why’ as well as the ’what’.

As an industry I feel that we need to challenge ourselves on what success looks like when it comes to community engagement and explore better ways to tell the transport planning story. Getting it right is in everyone’s best interest.

What triggered this thinking was the Streets for People project in Nelson. During this work I had the opportunity to work with a Yr10 class at Nelson College over an entire term to build their knowledge and critical thinking skills regarding transport planning, then apply that to the project area and others which are in the area.

This consisted of attending several classes to share knowledge, off-site trips and identify opportunities/challenges that culminated in them making presentations to our local MP, the Streets for People project group and senior Nelson City Council staff. The outcome of this activity was also reported by Stuff.

This work was valuable to not only our project’s outcomes, but as a catalyst to explore wider issues our community experiences when using our entire transport system. The development in their appreciation for, and desire to help shape, a great transport system for Nelson was rewarding and valuable. These learnings could be replicated wider to create more informed and engaged communities.