**Title: Impacts of Rural Speed Limits on Manaaki Tangata**

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| Rural New Zealand Highways are often seen primarily as connections between major destinations, with a preference (from a driver’s perspective) of being the fastest and most direct connection between where they are and where they want to be. Typically, these journeys will transit through many small towns, villages and communities that have settled around the highway, or the road was built to connect to and through them.  Over time as these rural communities have developed or expanded, so too has the number of vehicles using the highways and the expectations from both groups for their respective interests. Historically, this has been managed through designating rural townships and open roads and assigning a speed limit to each.  With rural speed limits historically favouring maximising the efficiencies of traffic, this has resulted in the needs of local communities being overlooked as blanket speed limits are applied, or general rules making it difficult to adjust the bounds of what is considered a Rural Township.  The recent incorporation of the Speed Management Guide has provided greater opportunity for Rural Communities to have their say on what is important to them and to reconnect with “the other side of the road”. Recent speed limit changes implemented within the Bay of Plenty have sought to incorporate the needs of the local communities to allow the speed limit review to act as a mechanism to improve not only the safety of those driving along the road, but also those living alongside it.  This presentation will describe and discuss where the new approach to Rural Speed limits can have a significant improvement on all aspects of Te Whare Tapa Whā for Rural communities, and how this attempts to overcome the historical severance effect that high-speed roads can have, and the value of a collaborative approach to consultation and engagement. |

Preferred presentation type: Rapid Fire