

15 September 2009

Submission on proposed Aro St 30 km/h speed limit

Presented on behalf of the Aro Valley Community Council by Denis Welch

The Aro Valley Community Council welcomes the proposal to set a 30 km/h speed limit through the Aro St shopping centre but believes strongly that the proposed speed-limit zone should be extended down to the pedestrian crossing outside Aro Park.

This is because of the considerable risk that, once they're through the 30 km/h zone as proposed, drivers coming down Aro St will speed up again as they come round the bend just past the last shop, in anticipation of the long straight stretch ahead, right down to Willis St.

What many of them don't seem to know, or remember, is that a few months ago a new pedestrian crossing was laid down for the benefit of people going to and from not only Aro Park but the Aro Valley pre-school and the community hall, as well as all the pedestrians coming through the shortcut from Palmer St.

This crossing is an accident waiting to happen. Take my word for it. I live in a house that fronts right onto it and the street outside my window resounds all day long with the noise of screeching brakes, as drivers realize at the last minute that someone is on the crossing. Many drive right through it in any case, sometimes when pre-school children are waiting to cross. I've noticed there is actually active resentment on the part of some at having to slow down, let alone stop.

Even before the crossing was installed, I'd noticed a tendency for cars to go ever faster up and down Aro St. Some of them go at literally sickening speeds—well over 70 km/h, let alone 50 or 30. It's an old narrow street and the potential for an horrendous crash seems to me all too real. It'll just take one person to step out from between parked cars at the wrong time, or a speeding vehicle to clip a parked one, and mayhem could ensue.

It seems Aro St has the misfortune to serve as a main artery for people driving to and from Kelburn, Highbury, Northland and Karori. The only alternative for them is Glenmore St, unless they want to wind their way down Kelburn Parade, Salamanca Rd and The Terrace. And I may be wrong, but my impression is that the traffic has got denser since the bypass opened. Certainly the queues of traffic in Aro St have lengthened at certain times of the day, as commuters' cars (most of them, depressingly, containing only one occupant) wait to turn into Willis St.

Yet there are no speed cameras in Aro St, no speed bumps, not even one of those flashing 'Slow Down' electronic signs that tells you how fast you're going. Even with a 30 km/h extension I think safety measures like this are also essential.

The AVCC completely supports the proposal to set a 30 km/h limit through the shopping area but equally strongly argues for its extension down to the Aro Park pedestrian crossing.



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