

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM

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Paper Details:

Presentation title:	Do our aspirations match our abilities? Systematic challenges facing the traffic and transport profession
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Overview of Presentation

World class transport systems require world class traffic and transport professionals. But do our professional aspirations match our professional abilities? This paper analyses systematic challenges facing the traffic and transport profession in New Zealand and finds the answer is “perhaps not”. It identifies and discusses four inter-related professional challenges: 1) the lack of scientific rigour that characterises many professional practises; 2) the degree to which professional recommendations fail to consider economic considerations of value; 3) the frequency with which professional practises result in incomplete and potentially unsafe solutions; and 4) the tendency of the profession to hide subjective value-judgements behind technical jargon. Critiques are supported by reference to research and experience in both New Zealand and similar jurisdictions internationally. It is argued the impacts of these challenges are inter-related and cumulative. Taken together, they risk undermining the relevance of the traffic and transport profession, and in particular its ability to support economic, social, and environmental outcomes. To finish, the paper summarises some possible options for addressing these professional challenges. The significance of the challenges, and the slow pace of progress hitherto, suggests major institutional changes may be required.