

**Date:** Monday, 15 June 2026  
**Time:** 1-3pm  
**Location:** Rototuna Library, 30 North City Road, Hamilton, Waikato 3281  
or ([Online \(MS Teams\)](#))

**Facilitator:** Sarah Gibb, Community Waikato

**Note taker:** Yvonne Mariano, Programme Administrator, Waikato Regional Council

**Attendees in person:**

**Tofeeq Ahmed**, Team Leader – Portfolio Delivery, Waikato Regional Council

**Loryn Scanlan**, Age Concern Waikato

**Bridget Doran**, Bridget Doran Consulting

**Ian Angus**, Friends of Morrinsville Community Charitable Trust

**John Petry**, Friends of Morrinsville Community Charitable Trust

**Rae Hooper**, Hato Hone St John: Health Shuttle – Hamilton

**Adam Jackson**, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato

**Celeste Shirley**, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato

**Val Sparks**, Paeroa Volunteer Drivers - Paeroa Community Support Trust

**Jan Meredith**, Paeroa Volunteer Drivers

**Ann Deihl**, South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc

**Christine Kuysten**, South Waikato Community Health Shuttle

**Johnette Callaghan**, Southern Lake Health Shuttle

**Craig Jeffrey**, Southern Lake Health Shuttle

**Marnie Goodman**, Tairua Care & Friendship Club Inc

**Lorraine Austin**, Te Aroha Community Support (Health Shuttle)

**Margaret Daniels**, Waka Eastern Bay

**Attendees via Teams:**

**Maurice Flynn**, Accessible Transport Lead, Waikato Regional Council

**Claudia Cameron**, Bay of Plenty Regional Council

**Andrew Gillgren**, Mai Lighthouse

**Robyn Driver**, Mai Lighthouse

**Gillian Smith**, Taupo District Council

**Angela Mckee**, Te Kauwhata Community House

**Tony Marsters**, Whitianga Community Services Trust

**Purpose:** An opportunity to build relationships and share knowledge and information in support of rural transport initiatives and projects in the Waikato region.

## Meeting notes:

1. **Welcome and Introduction:** Sarah opened with karakia and request for the attendees to do a roundtable of introductions.

Unfortunately, there were IT problems and so the online attendees only got to hear some of the session and Bridget's presentation was unable to be shown on the day. She offered to record it separately to be assessed by anyone at a later date.

2. **Safe driving at every age:** Dr. Bridget Doran [*View presentation by clicking [here](#)*]

### **Introduction & Key Analogy**

Driving is more than just mechanical skill, it involves managing complex, real-world situations automatically. Like learning music, once the basics are mastered, performance relies on awareness and judgement. Because driving involves many tasks at once, we depend on unconscious habits, making it unrealistic to stay fully focused on all times. Therefore, safety depends on developing strong, positive driving habits.

### **Complexity of Driving**

Learning in a controlled environment differs from real-world driving, where drivers must manage speed, positioning, distance, navigation, and parking, all while responding to traffic and unexpected situations automatically. Safe driving depends on performing these tasks automatically.

### **Role of Habits in Driving**

- Experienced drivers rely on established habits rather than conscious thought.
- It is unrealistic to expect drivers to focus on driving every moment.
- Daydreaming while driving is natural and unavoidable.
- Emphasis should be on developing **good automatic habits**, not constant attention.

### **Impact of Fatigue on Driving**

Fatigue significantly impairs driving, with lack of sleep reducing reaction time and unconscious safety responses to a level comparable to driving under the influence of alcohol.

### **Key Goals for Driver Safety**

The goal of driver safety is to protect drivers and passengers by building strong habits, encouraging safe reactions, and fostering a supportive safety culture, without placing blame on lapses in attention.

### **Promoting good habits**

Bridget's study of 35 Hamilton drivers, who were asked what they were thinking while driving, found that while most drove safely, poor habits were linked to unsafe behaviour, highlighting that **habits are critical to driving safety**.

- **Safe Speed:** Drivers should adjust their speed based on road and traffic conditions rather than just posted limits, with monitoring systems helping to reinforce safe behaviour.
- **Safe Following Distance**
  - Maintain sufficient space between vehicles.
  - Provides reaction time for unexpected events (e.g., sudden stops, obstacles).
  - Tailgating increases risk and discomfort.

### **Promoting Good Driver Reactions**

Supporting drivers to be prepared and ready for unexpected situations.

- **Drive fresh:** Staying “fresh” through adequate sleep, hydration, and nutrition, recognising the difference between rest and sleep, and taking regular breaks with the flexibility to stop when needed.
- **Limit distractions:** Drivers should avoid all mobile phone use, including hands-free, as it delays reaction time, and callers cannot see or respond to road conditions, like passengers can. Only take calls after safely pulling over.

### **Building a Culture of Safe Driving**

- **Drivers are supported to say no to a trip:** Drivers should feel supported to decline or stop trips if not fit to drive.
- **Drivers are encouraged to rest:** Encouraging Rest and Wellbeing
- **Retire from volunteer driving at the right time:** Driver transitions and retirement should be managed through open communication and trust, recognising that driving ability and self-awareness may decline over time.
  - Gradual transition to less demanding driving roles
  - Offer alternative volunteer roles (e.g., support person, admin tasks)
  - Encourage dignified and timely retirement from driving

#### *Open Discussion:*

- Marnie from Tairua Care & Friendship Club Inc mentioned that with modern cars it automates many driving functions (like lights and wipers), which can make drivers more complacent and less engaged, potentially leading to reduced attentiveness and increased reliance on others.
- Bridget from Bridget Doran Consulting mentioned that the modern vehicle trends, such as the shift from manual to automatic cars and the use of touchscreens, are reducing driver engagement, which can negatively impact focus and safety by requiring drivers to take their attention off the road.

She pointed out that stress can significantly impact driving by reducing focus, so it is important to understand drivers’ personal situations and create an environment where they feel comfortable discussing any concerns.

Zoning in and out while driving is normal, as familiarity allows drivers to operate on autopilot, but alert reactions still occur when needed, although monitoring technologies are used in some settings to detect fatigue risks like drowsiness.

- Val from Paeroa Volunteer Drivers shared that one part of their volunteer driver policy includes an age-based retirement guideline, introduced after safety concerns with an older driver, and has since been adjusted to allow some flexibility while ensuring driver safety.

- Bridget raised a question to Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato and mentioned that she was at a transport conference in Australia last week and that much of the policy discussion was about transport and health. There is a push internationally to share objectives between transport and health, including shared Key Performance Indicators. Transport is a means to access everything that supports a good life, not just healthcare itself: social connection, access to food, education, employment and other things. What appetite is there in the health system for us to have conversations that could inform an incoming government about the value of joined up thinking across transport and health, for good outcomes for communities?

Adam from Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato agreed that there is potential to improve the way the health sector considers investment in preventative treatments, and not just specialist Healthcare. Particularly important in rural communities. They want to bring services to people as much as possible, and to bring people to health services when they need to. He is sure that there are others in hospital and health management interested in these issues too.

#### *Feedback:*

- Sarah from Community Waikato identified that the discussion highlighted concerns about the future and sustainability of volunteer drivers, emphasizing the value of informal, social settings where volunteers feel comfortable sharing issues and supporting succession planning.
- The providers shared their insights into why some drivers avoid using advanced car features and instead stick to basic functions, as varying vehicle technologies and increasing automation can reduce confidence, create inconsistency, and potentially limit driving skills.
- Tofeeq from the Waikato Regional Council noted that work on driver safety is highly relevant beyond community transport, with the potential to influence sectors such as courier and taxi services, where long hours, fatigue, and pressure to meet delivery demands can compromise safe driving practices.
- Bridget emphasizes constant full focus while driving can be unrealistic and counterproductive, so promoting positive habits like driving fresh, taking breaks, and staying hydrated is a more practical and effective approach to safety.

### **3. WRC Community Transport Update:** Tofeeq Ahmed

- **Accountability Report for FY 2024- 2025**

Tofeeq acknowledges all funded providers who submitted their data for this report and made clear the importance of the report for advocacy and funding efforts. The data collected supports building a strong narrative to influence councils' decisions.

*Funding Impact:* Funding has increased significantly due to this work - from \$200,000 to \$300,000, now reaching \$500,000.

*Draft Accountability Report:* Community transport delivered approximately 78,000 trips for 20,000–21,000 people, covering 1.7 million kilometres, representing a 50% increase compared to last year. The second data shows that 90% of trips are for medical and health-related purposes, highlighting the critical role of around 600 volunteers, who collectively contributed approximately 73,000 hours of service.

The figures stated above are draft and subject to final confirmation. Once finalised, they will be made available to the public for potential future funding use. The data highlight the significant impact of community transport services across the region.

*Open Discussion:*

- Most drivers, who use their own vehicles, were satisfied with the current petrol cost reimbursement and did not request an increase, although some clients felt the support provided was not enough, reflecting varying affordability.
- It was mentioned by one of the providers that for private vehicle use, contributions are flexible, with their clients typically donating around \$30 per trip to Hamilton (often more), supplemented by an additional \$70 reimbursement, bringing the total to about \$100 per trip, which drivers are currently satisfied with.
- Some providers receive a fixed donation to cover vehicle costs, with flexible contributions from clients and support available for those who cannot afford to pay. Other groups support community wellbeing by sharing resources and skills, encouraging self-sufficiency, and giving back through collaborative activities rather than financial contributions.

*Feedback:*

The accountability report demonstrates the substantial value of volunteer contributions, 73,000 hours translating into millions of dollars in support, while clearly showing the council the impact of funding and strengthening the case for continued support.

- **Update on Community Transport Grant Fund FY 2025/2026**

The Community Transport Grant Fund distributed \$500,000 this year, funding 29 out of 32 applications, with a few declined for not meeting the criteria. WRC will continue with the current funding approach until new information becomes available. The next step is to review the Community Transport Fund settings to ensure they remain fit for purpose, given the increased funding and rising demand. Updates will be provided as this work progresses.

#### **4. Te Whatu Ora/Health NZ Update: Adam (AJ) Jackson**

- **Current contracts:**

Adam informed the group that the final budget confirmation, including CPI adjustments, is expected soon, after which updated funding agreements will be issued to providers. There is a possibility of a shift toward longer-term arrangements potentially structured as three-year agreements through initial 12-month terms with renewal options.

## 5. Roundtable updates

- Tofeeq asked everyone send through any updates (e.g., contact details, coverage areas, or services) for the Community Transport Forum website so that it can be kept accurate and used effectively for both public information and advocacy purposes.
- There was general discussion about community transport providers facing ongoing challenges with hospital discharges, including pressure to act like taxi services, coordination issues, long wait times, and limited capacity, highlighting the need for clear boundaries, better communication, and collaboration with health services.

### Actions:

Topic	Discussion	Action & time frame	Person(s) responsible
Community Transport Lead (?)	Introduction of the newly appointed lead	Introduce the newly appointed lead to all stakeholders, outlining their role and responsibilities.	WRC
Safe Driving at every age	Presentation	Bridget to record her presentation with slides to then make available to everyone because the slides were unavailable due to IT problems in the room on the day.	Bridget Doran

### Upcoming 2026 forum dates:

25 September (date to be confirmed)

7 December (date to be confirmed)

To learn more about Community Transport, visit: [Home | Waikato Community Transport Forum](#) or <https://www.waikatocommunitytransport.org.nz>

Any queries, please email [communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz).

# Safe driving at every age

Waikato Community  
Transport Forum

June 2026

Bridget Doran




## What I will talk about today...

- 1. How humans drive a car:  
the psychology**
- 2. A culture of safe driving  
for community transport  
providers**

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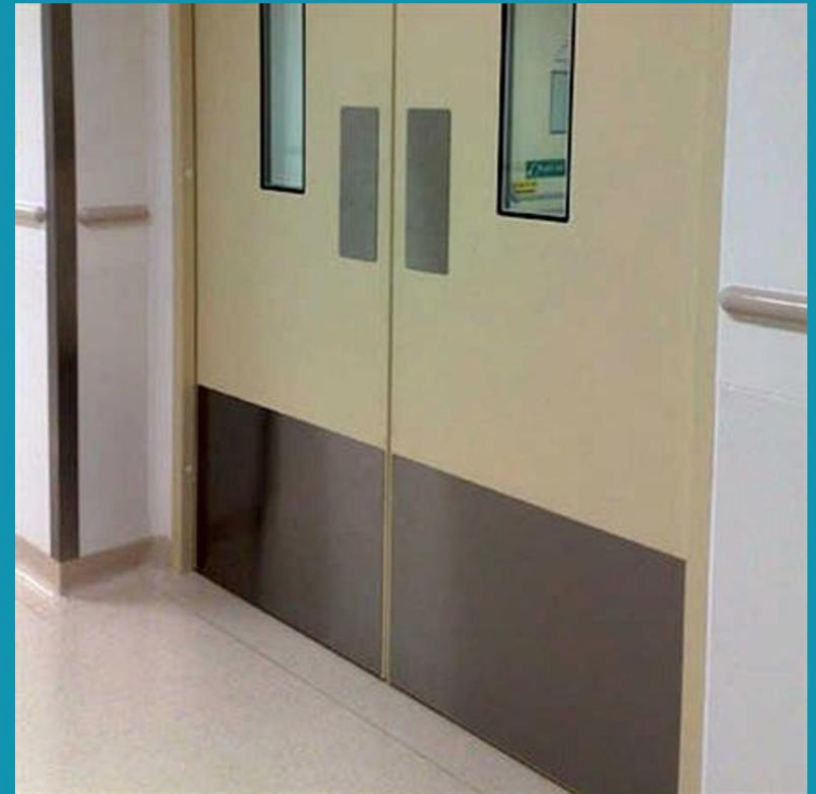
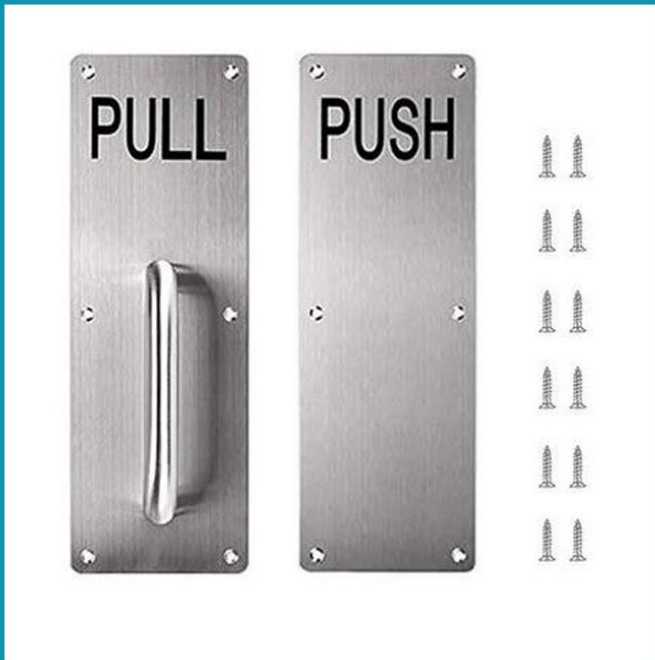
*I have no lid upon  
my head,  
but if I did,  
you could look  
inside and see  
what's on my  
mind*

*Dave Matthews  
Band*

# Premise: A lot of our behaviour is automatic



# Premise: A lot of our behaviour is automatic



# Even complex tasks become automatic with practice



**Once we have learned how to drive,  
we think about other things**

# We drive as we live.



What I will talk about today...

## 2. A culture of safe driving for community transport providers

Our goal is *not* to make all drivers ‘pay attention’.  
Our goal is to keep everyone safe.  
We want **good habits, and good reactions,**  
**and a safe culture.**



# Promoting good habits

## Promoting good habits

### 1. Safe driving speed

*We drive to the conditions*

### 2. Safe following distance

*We allow good margins for our own errors,  
and for other people's errors*

**Promoting good reactions**

**= fueling our unconscious support system!**

# Promoting good reactions

## 1. Drive fresh

*Hydration, nutrition, sleep, rest*



# Promoting good reactions

## 2. Limit distractions

*No mobile phone calls while driving*



# Building a good culture of safe driving

## Building a good culture of safe driving

### 1. Drivers are supported to say no to a trip

*Have I slept well? Am I relaxed and fresh?*

# Building a good culture of safe driving

## 2. Drivers are encouraged to rest

*Do I need something to eat and drink?*

*Do I need to pull over and rest?*

## Building a good culture of safe driving

3. We retire from volunteer driving at the right time

# Building a good culture of safe driving

*Culture is built on trust.*



## Knowing when to stop driving

*As we get older,  
our awareness of our own abilities  
can decrease.*

*If a driver has bad habits, or bad reactions, it  
is time for them to retire from driving.*

## Knowing when to stop driving: a transition

Consider the kinds of trips your drivers are doing:

Are some less taxing than others?

Can we transition drivers to shorter, more familiar, safer, or more flexible trips?

## **Practical steps for Community Transport providers:**

### **1. Promote good habits**

Safe speeds, safe following distances

### **2. Promote good reactions**

Hydration, nutrition, sleep, rest, no mobile phone conversations

### **3. Build a culture of safe driving**

You can say no. You can stop to rest. Our drivers retire when the time is right.



[agewithoutlimits.org/image-library](https://agewithoutlimits.org/image-library)

Free age-positive images



## Age-positive image library

We've created the first free library showing positive and realistic images of over 50s.