

WINNING WORDS

Minding cyclists

LIZZIE McKENNA (Letters, November 28) says that "urban roads are designed for cars and other motor vehicles". This is not the case, either in legislation or engineering design. Urban roads need to accommodate a variety of transport travelling at different speeds: buses, emergency vehicles, motor scooters, bicycles. Roads also need to accommodate pedestrians and vehicles crossing the traffic flow.

I've just spent three months in Vancouver, Canada, where I travelled by public transport, bicycle, foot and car. I was struck by the respect shown by road users to each other. Pedestrians don't confuse motorists by crossing midblock. Motorists slow as soon as a pedestrian appears in the vicinity of a pedestrian crossing. Oncoming traffic makes way for motorists entering from a side road. Vehicles passing cyclists wait patiently for a suitable passing opportunity.

New Zealand is very different. Every holiday season we see letters in the papers from disgruntled European and American tourists, appalled at New Zealand's driving behaviour. What we need to do to address cycling deaths (and the much higher level of motor vehicle deaths) is a greater level of mutual respect and standards in our road use. The Cycling Advocates' Network's "Stop on Red" campaign for cyclists to observe road rules, and the proposal for 10-yearly driver testing, are practical steps to achieve this.

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