

Roundabout design not safety conscious



Jack Treffner (aka the Drive Doctor) is a driver trainer with a passion for teaching scientifically-proven techniques on the best way to drive more smoothly, more attentively and with more stability, to improve driving enjoyment and safety.

Dr Treffner was involved in the world's first study of the serious effects of mobile phones on the control of driving and also understands the issue of distraction and loss of attention and how this has become a huge problem for society.

He believes design of roads and signage also play an important role and is concerned

that some new designs are letting the driving public down.

The new Cambridge roundabout, as needed and welcome as it is, has been built without due attention to driver vision and vehicle visibility.

The photo was taken looking south from a position at the the northern Victoria Street intersection. As can be seen, or rather, as can not be seen, the two vehicles (a large van and a large truck) on the other side of the roundabout are completely invisible due to road signs being placed inappropriately.

One is at eye level for the

typical driver in a typical car, and the other higher.

The result is the two signs occluding whatever is on the other side approaching.

The solution is simple: lower the yellow arrows sign completely to ground level so that the only thing it visually occludes is the grass and/or flower bedding.

The other higher sign should be lowered similarly.

The same mistake was made at the new Airport Road/SH3 roundabout intersection where a sign completely blocked vision of all traffic approaching from the right.



After I wrote to the *Te Awamutu Courier* and had my concerns published last July, NZTA attempted to address the problem.

They cut the sign poles completely and lowered the sign. It is now better than before, but still occludes some traffic and is not ideal — the sign should really be repositioned altogether.

Now we have the same issue again in Cambridge.

The leading cause of all crashes, as much as 80 per cent according to NZ AA research, is inattention.

Driving is all about perceptual awareness. Usually it's the driver's fault (eg, mobile phone distraction), but in cases like this, the road designers must be held responsible for

ignoring basic requirements.

Why are the authorities responsible not being advised by those skilled in studying road safety behaviour and human perception?

I am happy to help and offer advice and expertise.

■ Find out more about the Drive Doctor at www.metaffordance.com

Before modifying sign heights



After modifying sign heights

