

# The Role of the Traffic Management Coordinator (TMC) in the Transport System



## Introduction

The decisions made daily by a TMC have the potential to have immediate impacts on all road users. A TMC is usually the last stop before approving the closure of a footpath, cycle lane or a relocation of a bus stop due to road works. As part of the responsibilities a Traffic Management Coordinator will be out on site monitoring and enforcing various conditions to working on the network. The role acts as a gatekeeper and an regulatory enforcer that tries to find a balance between various stakeholder needs. All road users are taken account of during the daily operations on the network



A role that champions equity in transport by looking after the needs of all road users, while balancing the needs of businesses, contractors and the clients. The client in some cases are the Local Government Agency that the Traffic Management Coordinator is employed by.

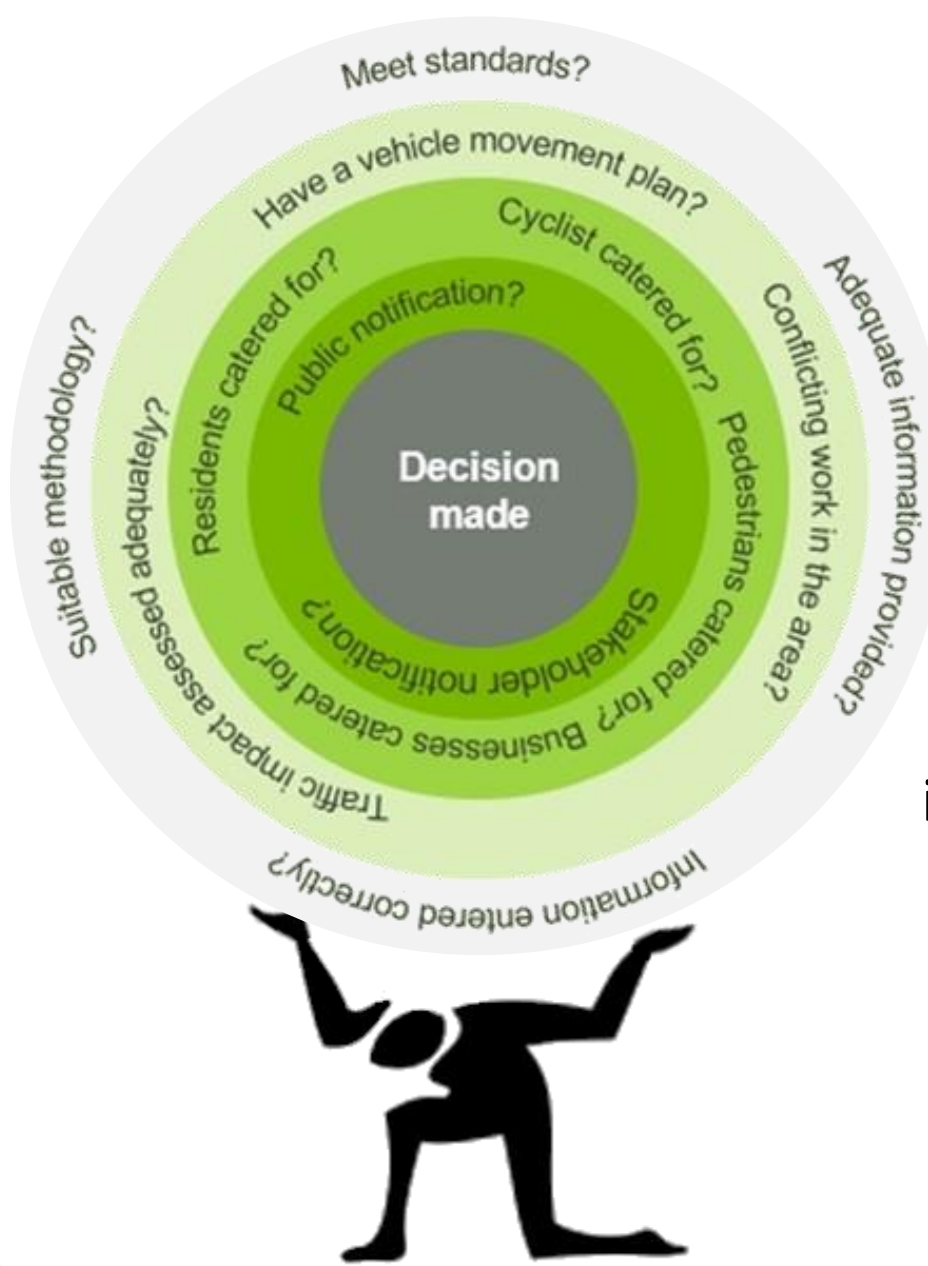
This presentation aims to show how the role fits into the wider transport system, the value added by the role and some of the obstacles faced in the temporary traffic management industry.

## What is a TMC?

A rare specimen that is typically found within a Road Controlling Authority, one that performs a broad range of responsibilities such as:

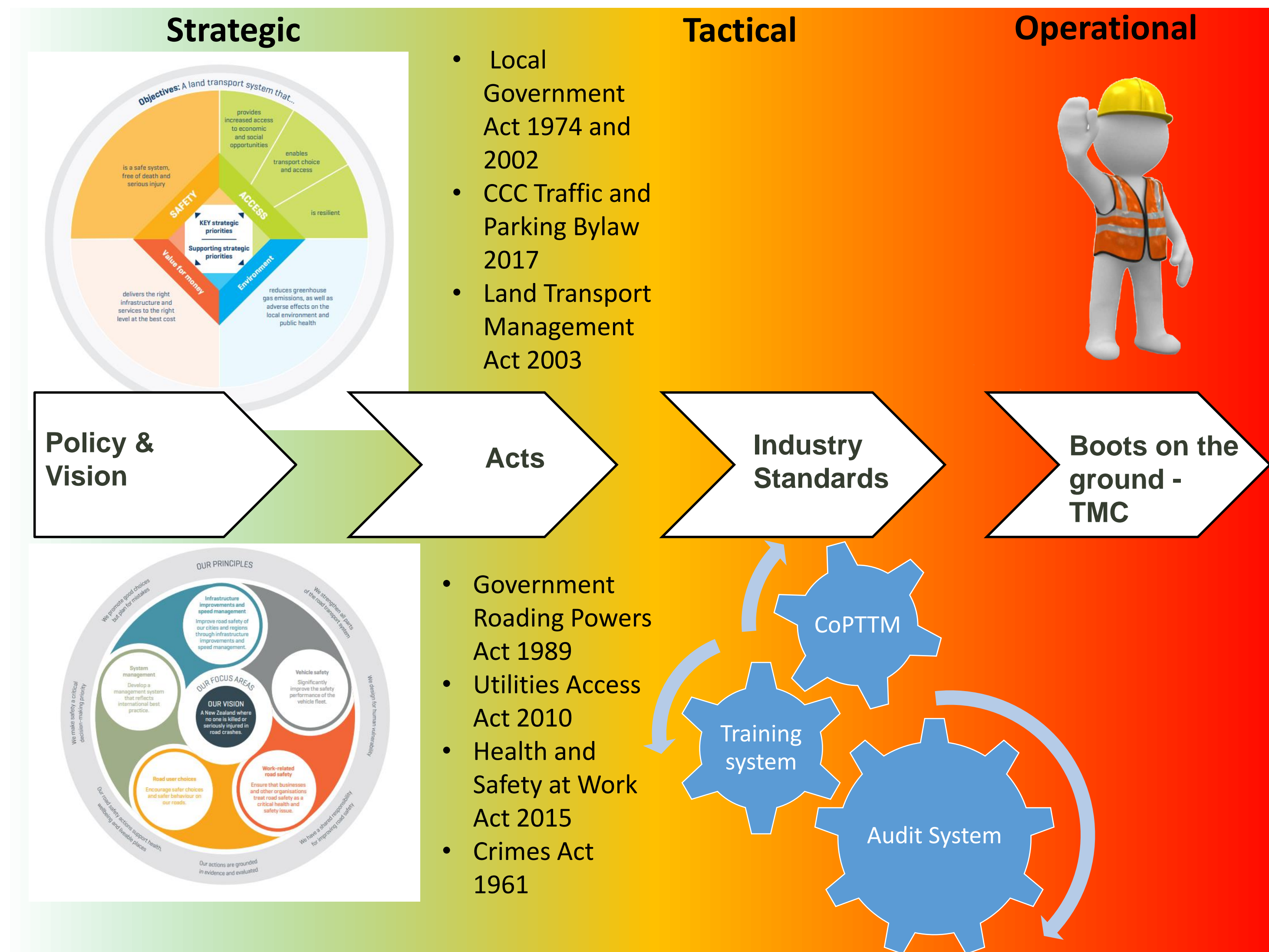
- Setting conditions when approving Traffic Management Plans;
- Communicate with internal/external stakeholders;
- Co-ordinate work within the network responsible for;
  - Check/approve or decline Traffic Management Plans;
  - Audit min of 5% of all worksite on network per month;
- Enforce conditions of approval;
  - Assess – network impacts;
- Assess – feasibility of construction;
  - Assess – Cost of TTM measures

It is unlikely that you will find all the skills needed to carry out the broad range of responsibilities above in one individual. In order to succeed and have good outcomes a high degree of collaboration is needed between various stakeholders. At the end of the day the TMC needs to make a decision after weighing all the available information.



## Role of the TMC in the Transport System

A TMC is a system manager within the transport system that sits at the operational level. A role that ensures the strategic policies, legislations and industry standards are met during the day to day operations within the network they are looking after.



**CoPTTM = Code of Practice for temporary traffic management.**  
This is the standard reference for all temporary traffic management on state highways and local roads. It includes levels of temporary traffic management, signs and forms used, and a series of sample traffic management plans.

## Importance of the Role

### Avoiding the bad outcomes...



### ... and promoting the good.



The success of the role is measured in outcomes. Trying to avoid crashes, reduce impacts on businesses, maintain various accesses: pedestrian, cycle, resident and public transport. As far as practical, minimise delays to motorist. At the same time, need to promote the good outcomes, nurture innovation and ensure road users and road workers get home safely.

## Obstacles to Better Outcomes

Obstacles	Issues	Possible Solution
Industry knowledge gap	Lack of theoretical and operational knowledge leads to poor decisions being made in planning and implementation of temporary work – this results in the creation of various risks that are neither identified nor adequately controlled.	New NZTA competency framework is being rolled out. Organisations and RCAs need to strengthen these changes by setting appropriate standards internally and externally.
Industry Processes	National and local processes are overly cumbersome leading to a culture of avoidance and negative attitudes towards temporary traffic management. This can also lead to added project costs and a lack of innovation.	A holistic review of the industry processes once the new competency framework has been ingrained i.e. move away from prescriptive regulation
Road user knowledge and behaviour	Road users have a poor knowledge of temporary traffic management signs and often view temporary work as a hindrance, leading to poor driver behaviour.	In the past NZTA has considered an education focused campaign to raise the knowledge and awareness of temporary traffic management. Increasing fines associated with road user behaviours (e.g. speeding) through temporary traffic management.
Contractor attitude	Contractors see traffic management as a hindrance and an unnecessary cost.	More work between NZTA and WorkSafe at a high level to drive a better understanding of expectations – temporary traffic management is health and safety.
Lack of suitable resources	Temporary traffic management industry is not appealing due to wide reaching perception about 'road workers'. Furthermore, there are limited qualifications / career paths in this industry. This results in many people avoiding the industry as a career option	Adjusting the industry to have suitable NZQA to turn it into a stepping-stone for the wider transportation industry – the new competency framework does add small elements of this to the industry.
Work-related stress	Traffic Management Coordinators are subjected to a wide range of stress factors, such as: public abuse due to expectations (e.g. if a contractor does something wrong it's 'your fault'), contractor manipulation e.g. 'if you don't approve this work xyz will happen', political pressures associated with work where the TMC seen as a roadblock slowing work progress. TMC can be witness to events which involve serious injury or loss of life as part of their role (e.g. serious accidents or other police events).	Adequate resources at road controlling authorities. Appropriate industry culture e.g. 'Prescriptive Regulation vs. Performance-based Regulation'.
	The accumulation of these factors over a certain time can lead to fatigue and burnout, which in turn can lead to: poor decision making, staff turnover and with-it loss of skills/knowledge.	

### Prescriptive Regulation vs. Performance-based Regulation

	Pros	Cons
Prescriptive regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Simple (provides a clear description of accepted safety practices)</li> <li>✓ Easy (compliance is simple to verify by safety inspectors)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Heavily rely on the knowledge of system</li> <li>✓ Slow to respond to technology</li> <li>✓ Discourage innovation and efficiency</li> </ul>
Performance-based regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ More cost effective</li> <li>✓ Legislative adaptability and flexibility</li> <li>✓ Encourage innovation and efficiency</li> <li>✓ Transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Require significant culture changes</li> <li>✓ Reactive compliance culture</li> <li>✓ Require adequate safety training and enough resources</li> </ul>

## Conclusions

Traffic Management Coordinators play a significant part in the equity of transportation when it comes to temporary works. They are responsible for taking in large amounts of information in a short period of time and trying to drive balanced outcomes for all stakeholders. It is not an easy task to always achieve good outcomes that achieves a balance between safety, transport efficiency, community impact and project efficiency. There are many opportunities for the industry to develop which will alter the way a TMC works, but ultimately their role of being the 'gatekeeper' will remain important to ensure good outcomes. Be nice to them!

