

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Giving Road Safety a Boost

*On Monday and Tuesday this week, Waimakariri Police were supported by seven members of the New Zealand Police Highway Patrol, Lioness volunteers, Waimakariri Rotary and the Waimakariri District Council in running a road safety operation.*

The initiative was organised by local Police and Injury Prevention Waimakariri in response to the need for greater awareness and accountability around using booster seats, wearing seatbelts and general road safety.

As part of the two day operation, checkpoints were set up outside all but one Waimakariri school, with restraints being checked by Police and volunteers gifting pencils and stickers to children who were properly restrained. More than 1000 vehicles were stopped during the operation with three notices issued for an unrestrained child and two notices for speed.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) database, the death rate of New Zealand children aged 0 to 14 years involved in motor vehicle crashes is worse than most other countries that feed back to this database.

In 2010, there were around two deaths per 100,000 people for 0 to 14 year olds involved in motor vehicle crashes. This is higher than almost all developed countries, including Australia (1.3 deaths per 100,000), and the United Kingdom (0.6 deaths per 100,000).

Waimakariri District Sergeant Rene Pabst says he is pleased with the operation which was well received by the parents and teachers that he has spoken with. "The partnerships between Police and community are important and I am thrilled by the turnout of support staff from our community - some of whom came to help on their days off."

Waimakariri Injury Prevention Coordinator Sarah Lodge says it was great to re-establish the operation, which was an annual event prior to the earthquakes and to reinforce the importance of wearing seatbelts and using booster seats for young children.

"For children 0 to 14 years, one of the leading causes of injury involves children who are passengers in motor vehicles. There are approximately 16 deaths a year and the equivalent of one classroomful (26) of children admitted to hospital a month."

"Studies show booster seats for pre-school and school aged children can reduce the risk of hospitalisation and death by up to 59% and correct installation is also important. When used correctly, child car restraints reduce the risk of death for infants by up to 70% and toddlers by up to 54%. They also reduce the need to hospitalise children four years and under who are involved in a car accident by up to 69%.

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For more information contact:

Sarah Lodge  
Waimakariri Injury Prevention Coordinator

Phone: 03 311 8900 ext. 8829  
Email: sarah.lodge@wmk.govt.nz