

road safety issues

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1999–2003 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and to identify possible ways to reduce the level of road deaths and injuries in the South Waikato and Taupo Area.

‘A comparison of the data provided in this report with the road safety objectives outlined in your road safety strategy will provide an indication of the road safety performance you are achieving in your area. The challenge for us all is to achieve a year-on-year reduction in road crashes. We know that saving family and friends from the trauma of death and injury on our roads will be achieved through a balanced combination of the three Es:

1. Education – effective community involvement in addressing road safety issues.
2. Enforcement – risk targeted road policing.
3. Engineering – the systematic management of our roading infrastructure.

I hope this copy of *Road safety issues 2004* assists you in identifying ways of achieving that balance for road safety in your area.’

Glenn Bunting

LTSA Regional Manager, Hamilton

Major road safety issues

South Waikato and Taupo Area

Poor observation

Speed

Drink-driving

Restraints and Helmets

Nationally

Speed

Drink-driving

Failure to give way

Restraints



2003 road trauma for South Waikato and Taupo Area

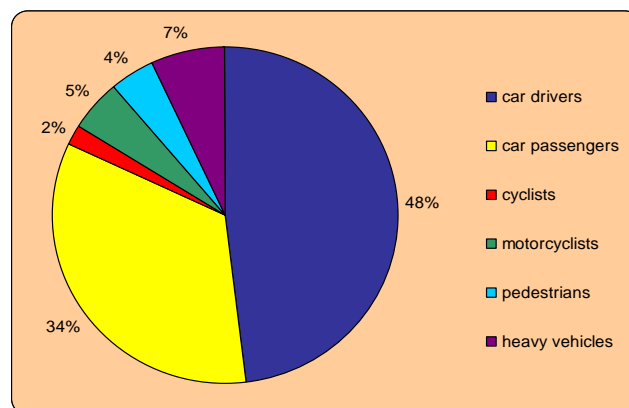


Deaths	27
Serious casualties	85
Minor casualties	229



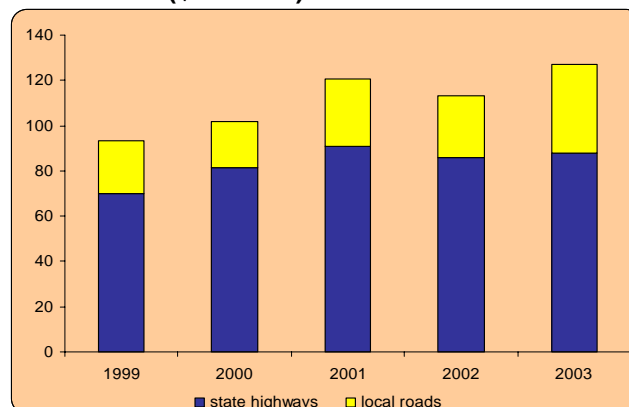
Fatal crashes	20
Serious injury crashes	49
Minor injury crashes	131
Non-injury crashes	375

Road user casualties 1999–2003



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)

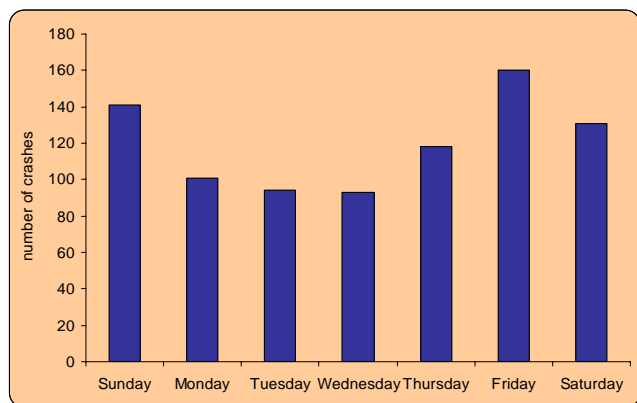


*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2002 prices.

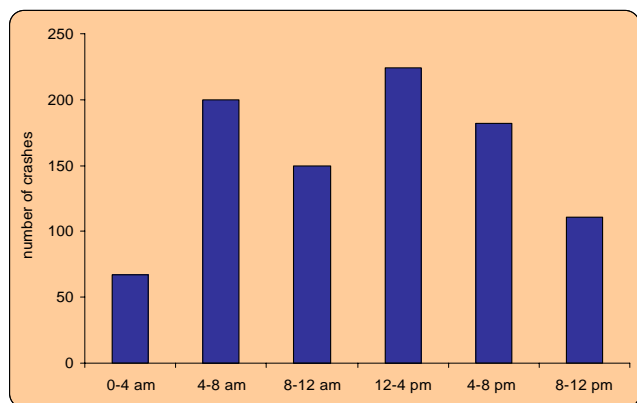
When crashes occurred

Crashes resulting in injury can occur at any time, but in the South Waikato and Taupo Area between 1999 and 2003, Fridays and the hours between midday and 4 pm were the worst periods.

Day of week for crashes 1999–2003



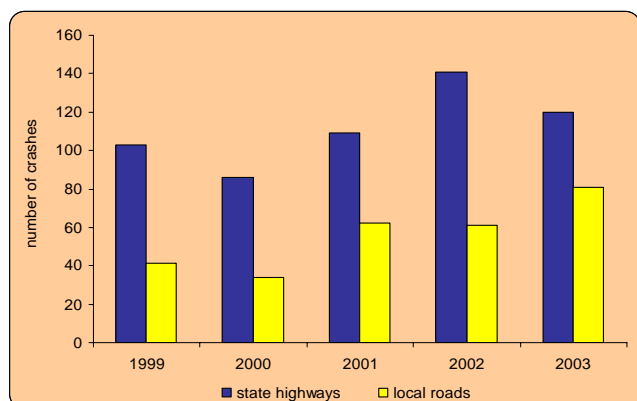
Time of day for crashes 1999–2003



Where crashes occurred

During the 1999–2003 period, approximately 94 percent of fatal crashes (where one or more people were killed) and 74 percent of injury crashes occurred on rural roads. In rural areas there is a greater chance of a fatal crash occurring than in an urban area, due to the higher speed limits.

Location of crashes 1999–2003



Who was involved in crashes

Between 1999 and 2003, 1,408 people were injured on South Waikato and Taupo Area roads.

Licence status of all drivers involved in injury crashes in 2003

Licence status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
Full licence	49%	61%
Learner or restricted	20%	19%
No or wrong licence	21%	3%
Forbidden or disqualified	3%	3%
Overseas	2%	6%
Unknown	5%	8%

Ethnicity status of all drivers involved in injury crashes in 2003

The collection of ethnicity information commenced in late 2001 via the traffic crash reports completed by the New Zealand Police.

Ethnicity status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
NZ European	56%	50%
Maori	38%	32%
Pacific Islander	4%	6%
Asian	1%	8%
Other	2%	4%



Poor observation

Poor observation includes:

- inattention or failing to notice, eg failing to notice traffic lights while driving home on 'autopilot' and thinking about what to cook for tea
- attention being diverted, eg being distracted by children in the back seat
- not seeing or looking for another road user until too late, eg not checking behind when changing lanes, or experiencing near misses at intersections.

Nationally, not seeing or looking for other parties until too late was the third highest contributing factor in injury crashes in 2003 and resulted in a total social cost of \$621 million.

Failure to see or look for another road user until too late caused 2,304 crashes in 2003 – a greater number of crashes than either speeding or drink-driving, but with a lower social cost and a lower rate of severity.

In the South Waikato and Taupo Area, poor observation was a factor in 25 percent of injury crashes in 2003, a decrease from 2002 and decreasing against the national trend.

There were 189 injury crashes relating to poor observation reported in the last five years.

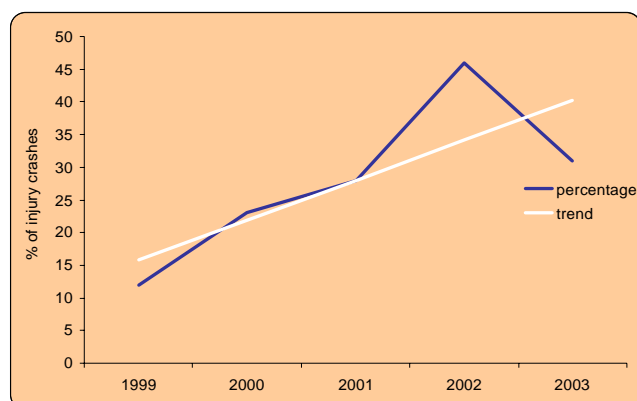
Poor observation was predominantly an urban issue in the South Waikato and Taupo Area in 2003 and was a factor in 31 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit lower than 70 km/h. Poor observation has fluctuated as a factor on urban roads over the last five years, with the number of injury crashes falling from 26 in 2002 to 16 in 2003.

Forty-four percent of poor observation crashes occurred at intersections.

Poor observation is a challenging issue for all road safety groups to address. In particular, thought needs to be given on how to address:

- complacency of drivers
- looking but not seeing
- roading networks that contain surprises for the inattentive driver.

Urban poor observation-related crashes



Key crash locations

The following table provides a breakdown of the key locations at which poor observation crashes occurred during the 1999–2003 period:

South Waikato District

- SH 5 and SH 1 intersection
- SH 5 and SH 28 intersection
- SH 5 (2,000m east of Waiohotu Road)

Taupo District

- SH 1 and Arahori Street intersection
- SH 1 and SH 5 intersection
- SH 1 and Poihipi Road intersection

Territorial local authority performance

The following table provides the percentage of poor observation related crashes that occurred for each TLA and their peer group during the period 1999–2003:

	TLA	Peer group*
South Waikato District	23%	28%
Taupo District	23%	28%

* Peer groups consist of TLAs with similar geographical, population and traffic volume profiles.

80 Speed

Speed includes not only exceeding the speed limit, but also driving too fast for the condition of the road. No matter how good drivers think they are, speeding significantly increases the chances of crashing and serious injury or death.

- A child struck in a suburban street by a car travelling at 10 km/h over the speed limit will be killed.
- Driving at 50 km/h in dry conditions requires 37 metres stopping distance. Driving at 100 km/h in dry conditions requires 111 metres stopping distance.
- Driving at 100 km/h in light rain requires the same stopping distance as driving at 120 km/h on a sunny day.

Nationally, speed is the major contributing factor to fatal road crashes. Crashes involving excessive speed tend to be more severe, and therefore, the associated social cost is much higher.

In 1,917 crashes during 2003, the driver was travelling too fast for the conditions. These crashes resulted in a total social cost of \$671 million. Drivers travelling at excessive speed accounted for around 14 percent of open road crashes.

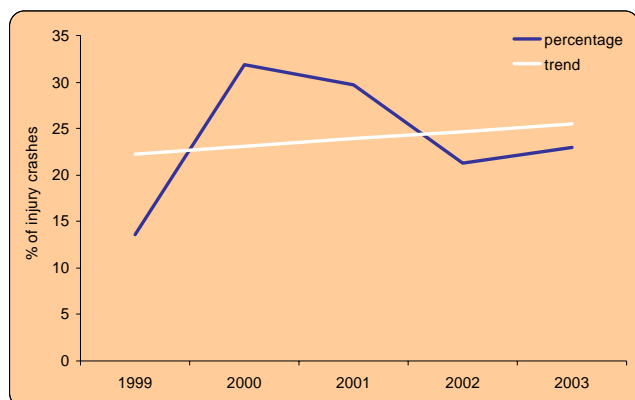
In the South Waikato and Taupo Area, speed was a factor in 20 percent of injury crashes in 2003. This was a decrease from 2002 and decreasing against the national trend.

There were 180 speed-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Speed was predominantly a rural issue in the South Waikato and Taupo Area in 2003 and was a factor in 23 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h. Most roads in the Waikato Region were built for 80 km/h speeds and cannot be driven safely at the open road maximum of 100 km/h.

Speed has fluctuated as a factor on rural roads over the last five years, with the number of injury crashes rising from 31 in 2002 to 34 in 2003.

Rural speed-related crashes

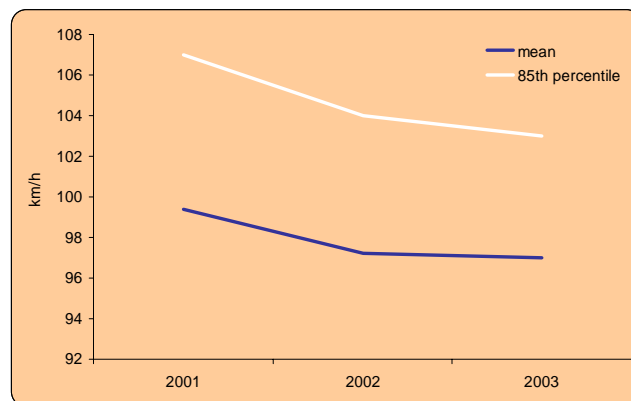


Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2003 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that:

- 46 percent of drivers said they enjoyed driving fast on the open road
- 17 percent of drivers agreed there was little chance of a crash when speeding if they were careful
- 38 percent of drivers thought the risk of being caught speeding was small
- 83 percent thought enforcing the speed limit helped to lower the number of road deaths.

Speed surveys are undertaken annually throughout the country by the LTSA and it is pleasing to see that nationally both urban and rural speeds are continuing to decrease. The following graph illustrates the results of surveys undertaken in the Waikato Region over the last three years.

Waikato rural speeds



Territorial local authority performance

The following table provides the percentage of speed-related crashes that occurred for each TLA and their peer group during the period 1999–2003:

	TLA	Peer group*
South Waikato District	21%	20%
Taupo	22%	20%

* Peer groups consist of TLAs with similar geographical, population and traffic volume profiles.



Drink-driving

Alcohol affects the way people drive. Studies repeatedly show that the risk of crashing increases as a driver's blood alcohol level increases. Contrary to popular opinion, people with a high blood alcohol level are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash than those who have not consumed alcohol. If injured, they are also more likely to encounter complications in their recovery.

For every 100 drink-drivers or riders killed in road crashes, 59 of their passengers and 36 other road users died with them.

Nationally, alcohol was the second highest contributing factor in road crashes during 2003 and resulted in a total social cost of \$632 million. In past years, over 40 percent of fatal crashes and over 20 percent of all reported injury crashes featured one or more drivers affected by alcohol.

For the 12 months to September 2003, alcohol-affected drivers contributed to 27 percent of all fatal crashes and 12 percent of all injury crashes.

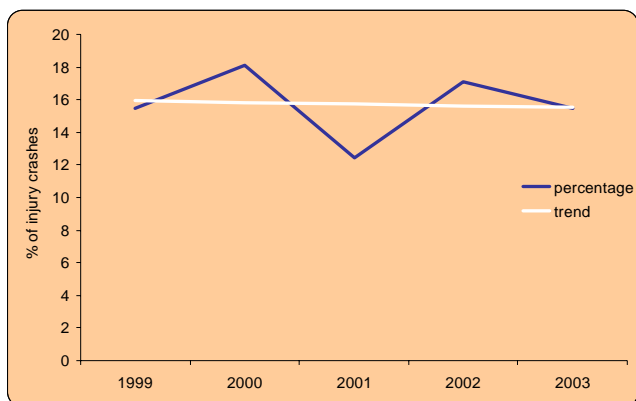
In the South Waikato and Taupo Area, alcohol was a factor in 16 percent of injury crashes in 2003, a decrease from 2002 and decreasing in line with the national trend.

There were 134 alcohol-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Alcohol was predominantly a rural issue in the South Waikato and Taupo Area in 2003 and was a factor in 16 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h.

Alcohol has fluctuated as a factor on rural roads over the last five years, with the number of injury crashes falling from 25 in 2002 to 23 in 2003.

Rural alcohol-related crashes



Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2003 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that:

- nine percent of drivers now agreed that there was not much chance of a crash when driving after drinking if they were careful
- 40 percent of drivers believed that the overall risk of being caught drinking and driving was small
- 78 percent believed compulsory breath testing helped to lower the number of road deaths.

A small group of regular high-risk drink-drivers make up only one percent of all drivers on the road at night and weekends, but are responsible for nearly half the crash fatalities at that time.

Last drink surveys are completed by New Zealand Police officers at the time of processing drink-drivers. The information from these surveys is used in a number of ways and includes assisting:

- liquor licensing assessment groups to identify at-risk premises
- the New Zealand Police to target their activities to drink-driving
- health authorities to target their activities and to monitor the impacts of any legislation changes.

Territorial local authority performance

The following table provides the percentage of alcohol-related crashes that occurred for each TLA and their peer group during the period 1999-2003:

	TLA	Peer group*
South Waikato District	16%	17%
Taupo	16%	17%

* Peer groups consist of TLAs which have similar geographical, population and traffic volume profiles.

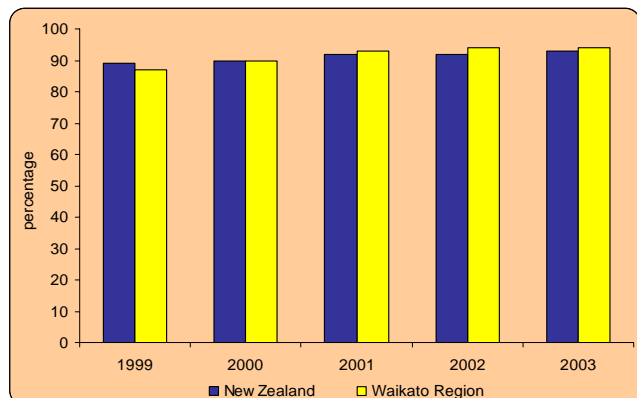


Restraints and helmets

In 2003, 99 of the people killed on the roads were not wearing safety belts. At least 41 of those lives would have been saved had they used the safety belts available to them. Three were children.

Front seat safety belt use – adult

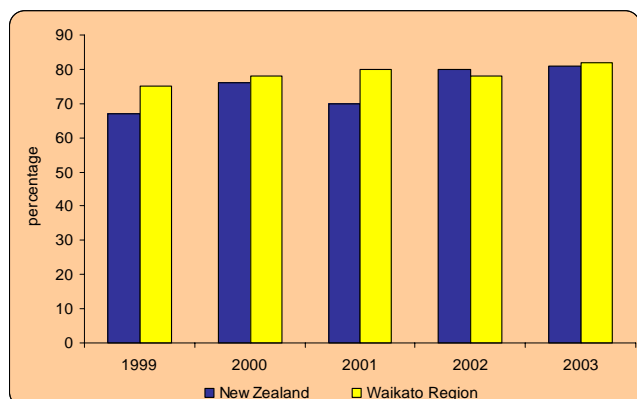
Wearing rates 1999–2003



Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2003 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 34 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of an adult being caught not wearing a safety belt when driving was very or fairly likely.

Rear seat safety belt use – adult

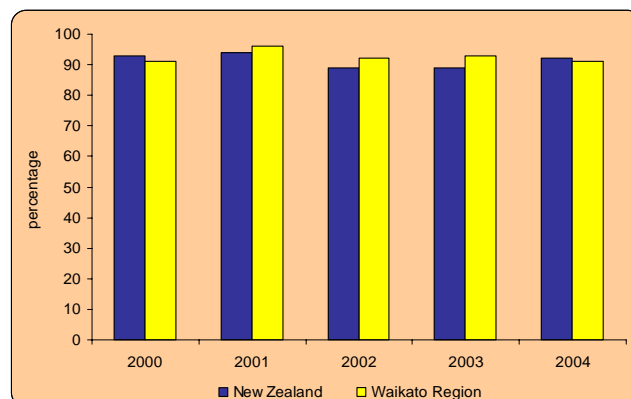
Wearing rates 1999–2003



Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2003 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 12 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of an adult being caught not wearing a safety belt as a rear seat passenger was very or fairly likely.

Cycle helmets

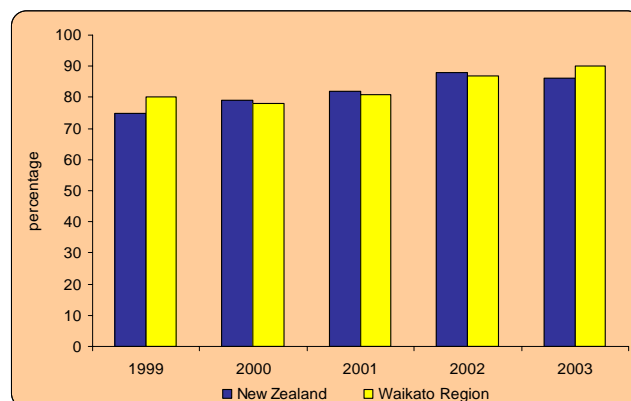
Wearing rates 2000–2004



Since becoming compulsory in 1994, cycle helmet use has increased substantially from wearing rates of 60 to 65 percent in 1992/93. In 2004, the helmet wearing rate of 92 percent was lower than the 94 to 96 percent wearing rates observed from 1995 to 2002. It was, however, an increase on the 2003 wearing rate of 89 percent.

Child restraint use

Wearing rates 1999–2003



Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2003 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 29 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of being caught if a child under five in a back seat was not in a child restraint was very or fairly likely.

Road Safety to 2010

The *Road Safety to 2010* strategy provides a direction for road safety in New Zealand and describes the results the government wants to achieve by 2010.

It sets out:

- the government's balanced approach to road safety, using initiatives built around the three Es – engineering, education and enforcement
- the first stage of initiatives (to 2004)
- the co-ordination, funding and other mechanisms that will be involved in implementing the strategy
- the priority areas that will be a focus for the government's road safety activity up to 2010.

The *Road Safety to 2010* strategy is an important component in achieving the *New Zealand Transport Strategy* goal of an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system.

Regular progress updates for the 27 projects that are currently being undertaken as part of the *Road Safety to 2010* strategy can be found on the LTSA website.

Community Road Safety Programme

The LTSA's Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) has developed over the last decade on the basis that community involvement in, and ownership of, road safety issues are essential to the success of any country's road safety strategy.

The vision of the CRSP is:

Community involvement in road safety so that positive and sustainable changes in attitudes occur and contribute to making New Zealand's roads safer.

By funding community development for road safety and community road safety programmes, the CRSP generates demand and new initiatives for road safety, and also links communities with road safety professionals.

The *Community Road Safety Strategy* has recently been revised so that the CRSP can continue to develop in accordance with the recommendations from its recent review and the *Road Safety to 2010* strategy.

Further information on the *Community Road Safety Strategy* and the Programme can be found on the LTSA website.

Road policing

In December 2003, the Minister of Transport announced new enforcement measures to help meet the *Road Safety to 2010* strategy goals of no more than 300 road deaths and 4,500 hospitalisations a year by 2010.

Unless further action is taken across the three Es – education, engineering and enforcement – we could be facing a road toll of 400 by 2010.

The additional enforcement measures zero in on serious and repeat drink-drivers and excessive speed.

The measures targeted at serious offenders include:

- immediate roadside licence suspension for exceeding the permanent posted speed limit by 40 km/h
- drink-drivers with blood alcohol levels of 130 mg/100 ml or higher will immediately lose their licence for 28 days
- a 'three-strikes and you're out' scheme for drink-drivers, including licence suspension for committing two offences within a four-year period and roadside vehicle impoundment for drink-drivers committing three offences within a four-year period
- the introduction of 'anywhere anytime' speed cameras.

'Road policing in the Bay of Plenty Police District is the responsibility of all Police staff. While we now have a dedicated 'TAG' Traffic Alcohol Group focused on drink-drivers, alcohol enforcement is still the responsibility of all staff. Although speed enforcement on the highway network is one of the primary roles of the Highway Patrol, everyone else contributes to the effort. A similar approach is taken with other key strategic risk factors impacting on road safety.

While we continue to have unacceptably high levels of road trauma, we will continue to focus on the high-risk behaviours contributing to that trauma.

With the use of well constructed risk-targeted deployment plans we aim to do the right thing in the right place at the right time, all the time!

Through a 'whole of policing' approach to road policing we intend to further reduce both the road toll and road trauma in the Bay of Plenty.'

Inspector Kevin Taylor
Road Policing Manager
Bay of Plenty Police District

Partnerships

The LTSA works closely with many road safety partners at national, regional and local levels. These include government departments, enforcement agencies, territorial local authorities, health authorities and local service providers. Some of the key road safety partners in the South Waikato and Taupo Area include:

New Zealand Police

District Road Policing Manager
Kevin Taylor
PO Box 741, Rotorua
Phone 07 349 9554

Road Safety Co-ordinators

Robert Kathie
South Waikato District
Private Bag, Tokoroa
Phone 07 886 1710

Barnaby Bates
Road Safety Promotions and Marketing
Waikato Regional Council
PO Box 4010, Hamilton East
Phone 07 856 7184

Local Authority Engineers

Alex Shaw
South Waikato District Council
Private Bag, Tokoroa
Phone 07 886 1710

Bob Hopkins
Taupo District Council
Private Bag 2005, Taupo
Phone 07 377 9839

TNZ Area Manager

Alan Burkett
PO Box 973, Hamilton
Phone 07 957 1610

Accident Compensation Corporation

ACC Injury Prevention Consultant
Waikato/King Country area
Lisa Taylor
PO Box 952, Hamilton
Phone 07 957 5826

ACC Injury Prevention Consultant
Rotorua and Taupo area
Louise Kirk
PO Box 649, Rotorua
Phone 07 350 0315

Assistance from the LTSA

The LTSA Hamilton Regional Office is able to assist in road safety activities such as:

- development of safety management systems
- crash reduction studies
- safety audits
- crash data provision and analysis
- general road engineering advice
- general road safety advice
- community development
- community programmes.

The LTSA website also contains road safety information, including electronic copies of this report and all of the others that have been produced for the country. We encourage you to visit this site: www.ltsa.govt.nz

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority

Regional Manager
Glenn Bunting
Phone 07 958 7840

Education
Laura Whangapirita
Phone 07 958 7843

Engineering
Robyn Denton
Phone 07 958 7864

Hamilton Regional Office
Private Bag 3081
183 Collingwood Street, Hamilton
Phone 07 958 7840, Fax 07 958 7866
www.ltsa.govt.nz