

STRAIT ROAD

ROAD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Paraparaumu Kohanga Reo leads way with road safety messages

A groundbreaking road safety video and education resource has been developed for Kohanga Reo in the Kapiti and Porirua regions.

The project is the result of eighteen months of planning and coordination across a number of agencies including Regional Public Health Injury Prevention Team, Kapiti and Porirua road safety coordinators and Kohanga Reo from Kapiti and Porirua. The project team members were Tania Parata and Monica Carter from Regional Public Health Services Injury Prevention Team; Sue Johnson, Kapiti Road Safety Coordinator; and Mark Kairua, Porirua Road Safety Coordinator.

The video aims to develop positive road sense behaviour. It demonstrates road safety messages for seat belt use and child car restraints and promotes the need for general care and attention when travelling on the roads both in cars and as a pedestrian.

"The video will build knowledge and awareness with our tamariki, rangtahi, maatua and kaumatua. More importantly our tamariki play an important role of 'little police' reinforcing messages about what is and isn't good road sense.

"The video portrays the messages through waiata and kapa haka. It's presented in a format that encompasses kaupapa Maori philosophy of Hauora, and more importantly, the elements of Hauora which are Taha Tinana, Taha Wairua, Taha Hinengaro and Taha whanaungatanga," Monica Carter said.



Kaumatua Rakavoteora Te Maipi helps children cross the road on the Kapiti Coast during the filming of a Kohanga Reo road safety video.

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Message from the Regional Manager – Demetra Kennedy

Welcome to our final issue of Strait Road for 2002. At the conclusion of another very busy year we continue to acknowledge the work of the region's road safety coordinators and to profile the success of their community education projects and initiatives. This work would not be possible without the support of our many road safety partners – the police, health authorities, ACC, local authorities and dozens of community-based organisations.

The Paraparaumu Kohanga Reo video project featured in this issue is a living example of these partnerships in action. Dozens of projects are ongoing or in progress while others are in varying stages of preparation and planning. The Government has recognised the value of active community participation in road safety by providing additional funding. This is part of its overall \$22 million package announced recently to target the road toll.

There has been rapid growth over recent years in terms of the number of people involved at the grass roots level and the number and size of projects being funded. The additional funding will assist to further support these efforts and will also be used for training community programme providers and a Treaty and cultural strategy for the LTSA.

One initiative being developed as a result of the funding boost is a Safe Routes programme. This aims to give safe access to the road network in communities where pedestrians and cyclists are shown to be at a high risk of injury. Cycle and pedestrian safety programmes are an ongoing focus of our region and we have had great success in raising awareness to the risks particular to this region.

The diversity of our work and the specific challenges of each district are again highlighted in this issue. We profile two more of our region's Road Safety Coordinators – Sue Johnson working on Wellington's Kapiti Coast and Mike Kennedy in the equally diverse and challenging Kaikoura District.

Thank you to all our partners for another year of great work. On behalf of the LTSA and all the road safety coordinators in this region we wish everyone a safe and restful holiday season.

Flying high over Kapiti for road safety

Kapiti's road safety coordinator Sue Johnson has her feet firmly on the ground most days but she took to the skies recently for a bird's eye view of one of the district's most hazardous intersections.

Sue says her two years as road safety coordinator on the Kapiti Coast has been challenging and fulfilling with a variety of community road safety projects and initiatives completed and ongoing.

"My job is just part of a huge inter-agency effort with cooperation and support from Police, the LTSA, ACC, health authorities and the Kapiti District Council. The road safety project with the Paraparaumu Kohanga Reo, featured in this Strait Road, is a living example of this teamwork and cooperation in action."

Sue's focus is community education in all matters relating to road use and road safety. Her area of responsibility extends from Paekakariki through to Otaki.

"Because our area is bisected by one of the busiest sections of State Highway One we have some very challenging safety issues particularly at the intersections crossing the State highway. The intersection at Paekakariki has been a recent focus in our ongoing intersection campaign. It was interesting to view this trouble spot from the air and see first hand how drivers react."

Intersection accidents are relatively high in the Kapiti area and account for a third of injury accidents. Kapiti's intersection crash level is higher than similar authorities in both urban and rural situations.

Sue says driver education is part of the intersection campaign highlighting problem intersections and raising driver awareness to signalling, correct lane use and merging into oncoming traffic. "The police look after the enforcement side of the campaign ensuring drivers comply with all aspects of road use. The road engineers take care of the design and special features of any intersection such as visibility by surveying traffic behaviour. Recent road alignment



Kapiti Coast RSC Sue Johnson boards a helicopter to get an overhead view of the district's busy intersections linking into State Highway One north of Wellington.

improvements at the Paekakariki intersection with SH1 are already having an impact on driver behaviour," Sue said.

Initiative for older drivers

As well as the State highway, Kapiti District has some unique demographics with one of the largest populations of older people.

Sue Johnson, with the help of the LTSA and other local agencies, initiated an education resource called The Positive Guide for Mature Drivers specifically to assist Kapiti residents. The resource has now been developed for use nationwide as the Positive Guide for Mature Road Users. Both are ongoing projects and the booklets are available from the LTSA and local authorities.

"It is recognised that the ability of older people to cope with the roading and driving environment reduces with age. Recovery from injury is also slower for older people.

The written guide was the result of hundreds of hours of consultation. Agencies such as Age Concern and Grey

Power helped us to achieve our goal of empowering older drivers and making them more aware of the driving challenges that Kapiti District presents," Sue said.

It's not unusual for Sue to have up to six projects on the go at any one time – some being planned and developed and others in action or ongoing. Sue came to the road safety coordinators job from a background in community education coordinating programmes and teaching at Whitirea Community Polytechnic.

Sue is well placed for the Kapiti job. She has been a resident of the Kapiti Coast for many years.

"Locals are well aware of the dangers a busy State highway brings and it's easier to target them with safety programmes and messages. It's the thousands of people travelling the highway north and south every day which are harder to reach," Sue said.

Many hats make heavy work for Kaikoura RSC

When Mike Kennedy is asked to give a talk about his work he sometimes takes along a box of hats. This is to demonstrate the many jobs that he does in the Kaikoura District and it leaves most people wondering if a 24-hour day is long enough.

As well as being Kaikoura's Road Safety Coordinator Mike Kennedy is Kaikoura's Civil Defence Officer, Principal Rural Fire Officer, Dangerous Goods Inspector, and field technician in charge of water monitoring. His other hats include Honorary Fisheries Officer for the Ministry of Fisheries and a Launch Warden for Environment Canterbury. He's also a rescue crewmember with the Kaikoura Volunteer Coastguard and a Kaikoura LandSAR member. He maintains his teaching skills as CBES boating education tutor, where he runs Radtel, NZ Day Skipper and Boatmaster courses.

And still there's more to Mike's repertoire of skills and roles. He's a qualified instructor in NZMSC Outdoor Risk Management, firearms, bush craft and abseiling frequently conducting courses in all disciplines – mostly in his spare time.

The question Mike then gets asked is "when do you have any spare time?" The answer when interviewed for this article was "around May 2005!"

Mike says while he is busier than he would like, most of his work involves coordination and training people to ensure any job he is responsible for gets done professionally, on time and on budget.

He's been wearing the Kaikoura road safety coordinator's hat for about 12 months and came into the job not expecting it to be as time consuming as it is. "In part that's because of Kaikoura's location and there's a lot of time-consuming travel to attend meetings in Christchurch and Blenheim.

Keeping drivers alert

"There are some particular road safety challenges in the Kaikoura region and much of that is due to the more than a million tourists that visit the area annually. There are a lot of accidents involving overseas drivers and other visitors largely caused by being distracted by the scenery.



Mike Kennedy and his many job hats on location in Kaikoura. Mike is holding the latest hat, a cycle helmet, which represents part of his road safety role. Two hats not featured in the story but in the photo are a SEAFEST hat and a Santa hat. The latter needs no explanation but Mike wears the SEAFEST hat when he's being site manager for the local annual food and wine event.

"The main state highway down the coast has some fantastic scenery but the road requires 110 percent driver concentration. Driver fatigue is another contributing cause of accidents and we have worked with other agencies in the region to reduce this risk through an education programme providing travel fatigue refreshment stops and guidelines to planning long journeys. We have an inter-regional fatigue group and together we coordinate programmes targeting drivers coming off the Picton ferry with tips and refreshment stops located right through to the south of the South Island.

"The regional speed programme is another that is helping raise driver awareness to particular hazards or trouble spots and I have recently completed Kaikoura's first 'Safe with Age' course", Mike said.

Juggling hats and roles

Mike's well qualified to wear his many hats having come from almost 30 years as an infantry instructor and

outdoor recreation instructor. As the region's Civil Defence Officer his biggest job was as an HQ team member the 1993 floods that caused considerable damage to the town. A recent accident on the State highway where an articulated truck crashed into the ocean spilling thousands of litres of rat poison saw Mike in the multiple roles of fisheries officer, dangerous goods inspector and civil defence officer. He had to wear his rural fire office hat on the same day to deal with a nearby bush fire.

"There's never a dull moment and it's good to know that there's support and shared programmes to tap into among nearby road safety coordinators and other community agencies.

"It's quite tough getting safety messages across to motorists just passing though. The three factors most commonly identified in the accident statistics are failing to take curves, fatigue and older drivers – and often all three factors are combined," Mike said.

LATE NIGHT BUS POPULAR IN NELSON

Nelson's newly introduced late night bus is proving a hit with the young people who asked the authorities to make one available to them at weekends.

When introduced in November the late night service came with the condition that "it was to be a use it or lose it service".

Nelson Road Safety Coordinator Margaret Parfitt says the service seems to be catering for more than the young with several middle aged couples taking advantage of it as a safe and affordable way to travel home after a few drinks.

In its first four weekends the service catered for an average of 50 people per night with a predicted increase with university students returning home for the summer holidays and secondary students finishing the school year.

The service was two years in the planning involving the Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Health Action and the Safer Community Council. Margaret says it's great to finally have it up and running and with such good demand.

"When we were planning the clear message we got from all levels of the community was that a cheap transport operation was needed running late into the night.

"The fare for a trip on the late bus is just \$3. It also has a major safety function both to support the 'don't drink and drive' message and to provide safe transport home for people who might otherwise walk.

"Travellers need not worry about revellers on the late bus. A Maori Warden will accompany the driver on the service," Margaret said.

She says the early popularity of the service is good news as the City Council considers extending the trial into the winter months. People must support it to make it feasible to continue.

Paraparaumu Kohanga Reo leads way



The video features 16 children from Te Kohanga Reo Ki Tararua o Paraparaumu singing the songs especially composed with a road safety theme. The children ranging from 11 months to five years sang and danced to the same songs to win the Kohanga Reo national championships earlier this year for the second time. The songs were written by kaumatua Rakauoteora Te Maipi who has also overseen the development of the video and resource.

The public health injury prevention team has a responsibility to develop programmes on injury prevention as identified by Maori. The Kohanga video project carries on from the successful Maori car seat rental schemes and Safe Routes to School programmes at primary school level.

Two of the leading causes of injury to Maori tamariki are accidents while travelling unrestrained in vehicles and pedestrian casualties. This project continues to build and reinforce the importance of 'buckling up' and 'keeping safe in and around our streets'.

"The working team is confident that this is just the beginning of many projects and we will all continue to work together to endorse and promote good road safety practices by mokopuna and their whanau members in Kapiti and Porirua," Monica said.

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