



Media Release

4 August, 2011

Selwyn teen driving courses packed

Recent driving skills courses have filled up as soon as they were advertised, new Schools Travelwise Coordinator Ngaire Tinning says.

Mrs Tinning has stepped into the role which was set up to educate primary and secondary school pupils about safer journeys. The previous coordinator is on leave.

A young drivers' course called **Leading Learners** has been developed to assist Selwyn learner drivers to enhance their current driving skills and experiences. The day-long course also reinforces the 120 hours minimum supervised practice driving recommended before a learner graduates to the restricted stage. This amount of driving practice can reduce by up to 40% the risk of crashing once restricted drivers start driving alone.

Comments from the July school holiday Leading Learners course showed that the 24 young drivers and their parents appreciated the opportunity to practice.

"Top marks! It (The course) helped teach my daughter valuable skills and allowed me to see the obvious things I forget to teach, which will enable me to be a better role model hopefully," – comment from a parent.

"It was great, I learned some good things that I think will make me a more confident driver," - from a young driver.

"Young Drivers are over-represented in our national road crash statistics, and unfortunately, Selwyn District is no exception," Mrs Tinning says.

"Too many of our young people are dying or being badly injured on our roads every year. In Selwyn, in 2010, there were 99 injury crashes – 13 of these drivers were aged between 15 and 19 years (nine of these were male)."

Driver licensing changes aimed to improve the safety of young drivers have come into effect during the first week of August 2011. The new measures include raising the minimum driving age to 16 years from 1 August and introducing a zero blood alcohol level for all drivers under the age of 20 on 7 August.

"The zero blood alcohol limit, which replaces the current 30ml blood alcohol limit, will reinforce the safe journey message, where young people will be encouraged to adopt alternative means to get home after having a drink, whether it be a sober driver, asking family or ringing a taxi," Mrs Tinning says.

Participants for the next course are also limited to 24 learner drivers and interest will be sought through local high schools in the near future.

Full details of the driver licence changes and other helpful information for teen drivers and their parents/caregivers is available on the Transport Agency website www.nzta.govt.nz and www.safeteedriver.co.nz.

Alternatively, if you have any local inquiries regarding young drivers, please contact Ngaire Tinning at the Selwyn District Council, on 347 2944 or email ngaire.tinning@selwyn.govt.nz.