



Media release

Friday 27 November 2015

New campaign urges rural drivers not to drink and drive

Canterbury Road Safety Coordinators are running a joint campaign aimed at reducing crashes as a result of rural motorists drinking then driving.

Selwyn District Council and three other rural Canterbury Councils are participating in the Christmas and New Year campaign, which encourages drivers to plan a safe ride home if they have a few drinks during the festive season and summer holiday period.

Many people believe drink drivers have a lower chance of being stopped by police when they drive on rural back roads. Canterbury Police will be carrying out more random patrols on rural roads over the coming summer. The booze bus will also be deployed in rural areas as well as urban areas.

In Selwyn District between 2010 and 2014, 145 crashes involving alcohol were recorded by Police. In this period there were 13 deaths and 35 people seriously injured in the district as a result of alcohol related crashes.

"This years' campaign encourages drivers to plan how they can get home safely before they go out," says Selwyn Road Safety Coordinator Ngaire Tinning. "Good options to think about are to have a sober driver, use the courtesy van, share designated driver duties, or invite friends to sleep over so they don't need to be on the road if they have been drinking."

"Drink driving is never acceptable as it puts everyone at risk of being injured or killed in a road crash that could have been avoided," she says.

In many cases when drivers are affected by alcohol, inappropriate speed and failure to wear a safety belt are factors that can also contribute to the severity of the crash. Most crashes involving alcohol happen over the weekend – from Friday evening until Sunday morning.

"Alcohol affects everyone differently and a number of factors are involved, such as how much, if anything, you have had to eat and what weight you are. As it's not easy to say how much different people could drink under the new law, the best advice is for people to avoid driving if they have been drinking, and to plan ahead to get home safely," says Mrs Tinning.

As part of the summer campaign, posters, coasters, bar mats and pens will be given out to hotels, taverns and other licenced premises in Selwyn in early December. Mrs Tinning says that local hotels and taverns already do a great job with host responsibility, as almost all premises have courtesy vans and the Council campaign is designed to support their efforts.

Locally a large number of sports clubs and local business have also taken up the opportunity to help promote the campaign by getting safety messages to their members.

“The design is again quite light-hearted and we have found that the items have been popular with the public in Selwyn and other parts of Canterbury,” says Mrs Tinning.

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