

Media Release



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Sober driving an increased priority for Christmas

New billboards have been placed around Taupō District to encourage people to drive sober. The signs went up in various locations throughout the District earlier this month.

The billboards were installed by Taupō District Council in partnership with police and the New Zealand Transport Agency. Eight billboards were erected from Turangi to Mangakino. The campaign is being supported by St John ambulance and the New Zealand Fire Service.

Head of Road Policing in Taupō District, Senior Sergeant Fane Troy, says police are keen to get the message across that there will be no tolerance for drink driving over the holiday period. "We want to emphasise that although it's the festive season and people will celebrate, we want people to get home, so be safe and drive sober," he says. He believes the billboards will send the right message. "They are about family and whanau and being responsible – being there for those you love."

There have already been nine fatalities on Taupō District roads this year and Mr Troy is keen to see the year out without any more. From 2007-2011, alcohol was a factor in 16 deaths from vehicle crashes. All up, alcohol contributed to 55 crashes on local roads and another 46 crashes on state highways. Those injured in the crashes numbered 139.

Taupō District Council Road Safety Coordinator, Christine Hutchison, says Council is keen to see people keep safe over the holiday period. "Historically this is a time when people die on the road and we don't want to see that happen," she says. "The billboards are a great reminder about driving sober and we want motorists to pay attention when behind the wheel."

Mrs Hutchison says the message is clear – if you're going to drink, don't drive. "Your family wants you home this season, and the best way to make sure you are is to drive sober."

END

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