



Press Release

27th March 2013

Alcohol Healthwatch calls on the Government to deliver on community expectations for safer roads and reduce the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) for all drivers over the age of 20 years to at least 0.05.

Alcohol Healthwatch director Rebecca Williams says we have plenty of evidence to support lowering the BAC in order to reduce the number of people who die or are injured on our roads, and surveys show that 85% of the public support a lower limit.

Williams says The Safer Journeys 'Action Plan' launched today by Associate Transport Minister Michael Woodhouse provides for more inaction and procrastination on reducing alcohol-related road crashes. "We certainly don't need more conversation on this issue, and any suggestion that there will be different BAC limits for different groups of drivers is simply ludicrous."

The research is clear, the more alcohol in the system the greater the risk of being involved in an alcohol-related crash. It is also clear that impairment kicks in at relatively low levels of alcohol. It is important that all drivers are encouraged not to drink or at least limit their drinking to one or two before getting behind the wheel.

Williams says that road safety messages need to be consistent, easy for people to understand and simple to enforce. There is already variation for drivers under 20 years, who have a zero blood alcohol limit. Further variation is likely to confuse and make it extremely difficult to communicate a consistent message to the public.

There has been no appreciable reduction in alcohol-related fatal crashes on our roads in the last ten years. These have remained more or less stable despite highly visible enforcement and an increase in the number of breath tests administered.

It's time to make the call on the lower BAC level for New Zealand and start saving lives.

For further comment contact:

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