

MEDIA Release



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'Road to Zero' Values New Zealand Lives - Trafinz calls for Action, Now

Imagine a country where children look forward to walking or cycling to school, parents arrive home safely, and the journeys we take for work or pleasure do more than leave us alive or uninjured, they also improve our lives. This is happening now in countries like UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland and Norway as part of their Vision Zero approach – an aspirational ethical approach where no death or injury is acceptable on roads.

Trafinz represents most transport system designers (Local Authorities and safety professionals) and congratulates the Government on its draft 'Road to Zero' (RTZ) Road Safety Strategy which is applying the Vision Zero approach to save 750 lives and 5,600 serious injuries over the next ten years.

The new Strategy is well overdue and critical, in April this year 45 New Zealanders lost their lives on our roads - the worst April in ten years in New Zealand. "Last year we killed or injured someone's loved one, every hour, of every day, of every week, of every month for the whole year on our roads" says the Trafinz Vice President John Goettler. This level of road harm is simply unacceptable.

"Trafinz members care about their communities they serve and have an ethical responsibility to keep them safe – No road death or serious injury is acceptable to us, or our communities," says Mr Goettler.

Trafinz also see many opportunities in the new Strategy for improving people's well-being as they travel, including healthy streets that are social, encourage business, are inviting and good for the environment.

The Government's bold Vision Zero approach includes a wider systemic focus on building and operating safe roads, providing safe speeds, using safe vehicles, enabling safe road users and calls for stronger system designer leadership. It's a great opportunity for New Zealand to create a level of human safety similar to the successful best performing countries. Says Mr Goettler.

Success will require a shift in traditional thinking and responsibility, away from the historical focus of 'blaming individual road users' towards a greater responsibility among transport system designers for creating a 'forgiving and self-explain road environment for all road users' – truck drivers, car drivers, passengers, people walking, people cycling, motorcycle riders, the elderly, children, visual and mobility impaired users.

"People are vulnerable, and as humans we regularly make mistakes on the road. Putting in place safe and survivable vehicle speeds is one of the most effective ways we can create a safe place for our communities. It will allow our children to experience the freedom of being active and grow up to be healthy adults," says Trafinz President Councillor Andy Foster.

The Road to Zero strategy will require courageous leadership from many agencies to achieve the Vision of a safe transport environment for New Zealanders. Trafinz members are excited by the opportunity for real change and are building widespread support throughout local government and transport professionals for the Strategy.

As one of the longest serving transportation organisations, Trafinz and our safety partners (both in New Zealand and internationally) know what works that will save lives on our roads, and we know how to do it.

Immediate actions can be made to save lives this year and get this Strategy off to a decisive start. Trafinz encourages New Zealand communities to both support and be part of these actions, including the immediate low-cost implementation of vehicle speed management on urban streets and rural roads.

For further information contact the Institute President or the Institutes' President Councillor Andy Foster, the Vice President John Gottler or go to the web site for details <http://www.trafinz.org.nz>

Trafinz

Trafinz or the New Zealand Local Authority Traffic Institute was formed in 1948, it represents local authority views on road safety, land use integration, traffic management and control in New Zealand. It acts as a forum for collectively pursuing transportation issues of interest to local authorities, and for sharing information and advice. It exists to lobby the government, to influence decision making on road safety, transportation and land use integration. Member local authorities represent more than two thirds of the NZ population.

Trafinz serves the public interest by advocating for safe, efficient, sustainable, economic transportation planning and the management of traffic. Trafinz has a wide interest in pursuing all aspects of road safety, traffic management, land use integration, roading reform, effective community involvement, environmental issues, parking, traffic operations, transport planning, worlds best performance and innovative solutions.

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For official comments.

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