

Safer Summer – the Public Perceptions and Efficacy of a 4-Year Enhanced Speed Enforcement Programme

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Abstract

Safer Summer is an enhanced speed enforcement partnership between Accident Compensation Corporation and NZ Police.

Safer Summer provided tactical social-marketing to complement Police's targeted summer holiday enforcement operations. Safer Summer informed the public of Police's introduction of a reduced speed enforcement threshold over the summer holidays, with the intention of moderating speeds and getting more homogeneous travel flows. Lower speeds were expected to result in safer travel with reduced numbers of crashes and fewer fatal and serious injuries.

Share the learnings from this programme using social marketing, advertising, children and poetry to engage the public with Police enforcement.

Introduction

This paper reviews Safer Summer 2013-17, following progress from pilot through a stage-gate in 2016 to final campaign in 2017.

The Safer Summer programme began in 2013/14 with a pilot after Police's operations to implement a reduced speed enforcement threshold received mixed responses by public commentators in the media and the public at the roadside. Three social-marketing campaigns followed from 2014/15 to 2016/17, each evaluated and building on findings from the previous summer's campaign. As part of the campaign, Police increased their visibility on the road and implemented a highly publicised reduced speed enforcement threshold.

The paper considers the implementation of a variety of methods of engaging with the driving public and the resulting key findings. These include a major public launch in 2013/14, billboards, social media, advertising, in-car children's games, contributions by Z-Energy, IAG Insurance and TR Group, through to the final 2016/17 Holiday Haiku initiative bringing poetry and iconic New Zealand poet Sam Hunt on-board to spread the safer speeds message.

Discussion

Safer Summer was designed to enhance Police's targeted summer holiday enforcement operations by publicising Police's intentions to enforce a lower threshold for speeding during the busy summer holiday period. Encouraging reduced driving speeds when traffic was heavy was expected to result in safer travel with reduced numbers of crashes and fewer fatal and serious injuries.

The right messaging was crucial as the Safer Summer programme sat below the national strategic behaviour-change programme managed by NZTA. To make sure Safer Summer was

complementary to the national campaign messaging, ACC, Police, NZ Transport Agency and advertising consultants worked closely together.

Evaluating each social-marketing campaign year-by-year provided up-to-date information on what was and wasn't working. These learnings enabled informed changes to be made as the programme progressed to make sure that what was delivered resonated with our customers and achieved the desired result.

Core to message development was a shift in public perceptions from "enforcement as revenue-gathering" to "enforcing for safety". Segmentation of the driving public was used to develop messaging, channels and touch points for targeted groups of drivers.

Results

An early evaluation was completed for the pilot operation in the summer of 2013/14. This indicated that the rate of speeding significantly and substantially decreased and that a reduction in fatal, severe and minor crashes occurred, but there was insufficient crash data to provide statistically robust estimates for the change in crashes (van Lamoen, 2014).

Preliminary results from the evaluation of the enhanced enforcement package over the three campaign periods refined the findings of the 2014 analysis, estimating that some 30 deaths and 100 serious injuries were prevented annually on rural roads by the programme.

Conclusions

A campaign of this type involving a well-publicised reduction in the speed enforcement threshold is unusual internationally and there is little speed-related research to support an intervention of this type. The findings from the finalised evaluation (early-2019) will inform ACC strategies for road safety messaging and successful co-investment and NZ Police's ongoing approach to speed enforcement, seasonal operations and operational policy.

References

Van Lamoen, N., (2014). *Evaluation of the "Safer Summer" Road Safety Campaign*. Wellington, New Zealand Police. Retrieved from <http://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/safer-summer-campaign-evaluation-report.pdf>