

10. ROAD SAFETY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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The purpose of this report is to provide information on projects being undertaken by the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee.

The following report summary is the result of surveys carried out by the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee and the Land Transport Safety Authority to evaluate the use of speed trailers in Canterbury.

EVALUATION OF SPEED TRAILERS IN CANTERBURY - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A speed trailer is a type of speed information device (SID). It is a trailer that can be parked at the side of the road, with an electronic sign at the top set to show passing vehicles how fast they are travelling. Most can be set to show how much the fine would be if the driver is exceeding the speed limit.

Speed trailers have been used in Christchurch for several years. To evaluate the effectiveness of speed trailers, their usefulness as a tool in raising awareness of speed issues in the community should be taken into account, as well as the issue of whether drivers slow down when they see them. Speed trailers can be used in a variety of situations. It is important to find out which situations are most effective so that they may be deployed for maximum effect.

Four separate surveys were used to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of speed trailers.

- Speeds of free running vehicles measured before and after the speed trailer with a control survey when the speed trailer was not present.
- Road side interviews with drivers who had passed the speed trailer.
- A survey of schools where the speed trailer had been used outside the school.
- Interviews with installers of speed trailers to find out about problems with the trailers and improvements that might be made.

Surveys found that the speed trailer did have an effect on speeds for at least 200 metres downstream of the trailer. It is clear that the speeds of vehicles, especially those in the higher speed brackets reduced more when the speed trailer was present than when it was not.

A survey of 27 schools found that almost every school thought the speed trailer raised awareness of vehicle speeds.

At most schools a reduction in vehicle speeds was noticed when the speed trailer was operating. Respondents at most schools felt the trailer had helped learning about speeds. Respondents from nearly half the schools made comments about additional benefits. Most of these related to teaching maths skills and making drivers aware that a school was there.

Most schools (85%) would like to use the trailer again. Nearly half thought the trailer was available often enough. About 22% thought it was not. Most schools thought once a term or once every six months would be ideal for using the speed trailer. Positive supportive comments about the speed trailer were added by most of the schools.

Drivers were interviewed at three sites after they had passed the speed trailer. Police, out of sight from the trailer, pulled drivers over and students carried out the interviews. The three sites were at Marshland Road where there is an 80km/h speed limit, at Pages Road where there is a 50km/h speed limit and at Halswell Road where the speed limit is 60km/h. In all 544 drivers were interviewed.

Most drivers noticed the speed trailer and understood that the trailer told them how fast they were going or was a reminder to check their speeds. About 12% of drivers thought the speed trailer might be used to ticket drivers.

When drivers were asked how fast they thought they were travelling before they saw the trailer most said between 10 km/h above or below the speed limit on those roads.

On Marshland Road nearly 5% of drivers did not know the correct speed limit. For Pages Road this figure was nearly 13%. At Halswell Road about 21% of drivers did not know the correct speed limit.

Drivers were asked what they thought the speed limit should be on the road. About 15% of drivers at Marshland Road thought the speed limit should be 100km/h. At Pages Road nearly half the drivers thought the speed limit should be 60km/h, while only 38% thought it should be 50km/h which is the current speed limit. At Halswell Road about 16% of drivers thought the speed limit should be only 50km/h instead of 60km/h which it is at present. Another 4% thought it should be between 50km/h and 60km/h.

More than 70% of drivers said they were made more aware of their speeds by driving past the trailer. About 36% of drivers said they slowed when they saw the speed trailer. Most drivers thought they were already travelling at or near the speed limit. Nearly 50% of drivers made positive comments about speed trailers. There were few negative comments.

Interviews were carried out with five people who regularly set speed trailers up in their local areas. Checkpoint trailers made by Autons were the most common but one installer had used both the checkpoint trailer and the other model produced by Ken Hay. Most installers felt the trailer was easy to operate.

Three out of five installers thought the operating instructions were clear and adequate. Some of the problems experienced by installers included the weight of the trailer, getting data, damp getting in and the need for four separate keys.

Installers suggested improvements including making it lighter, making changing tyres easier, making the electric terminals secure against vandals and having a generator on board for charging.

The researchers conclude that the trailer does slow traffic and that it makes drivers more aware of their speeds. Schools and community groups find it useful for slowing traffic and for raising awareness of speed issues in the community. Improvements which would make the trailers easier to use include making them lighter and damp proof.

SUBMISSION ON LAND TRANSPORT ROAD USER RULE

The Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee has made a submission on the yellow draft of the Land Transport Road User Rule.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.