

3. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY FUNDING TO DEVELOP THE INTERSECTION SAFETY CAMPAIGN

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INTRODUCTION

The following report is a request for additional funding of \$20,000 for the Road Safety Budget. This funding will be used to carry out an additional promotional campaign targeting red light running in Christchurch. The promotional campaign will be co-ordinated with an enforcement campaign.

INTERSECTION CRASHES IN CHRISTCHURCH

The following information is taken from the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy and shows that if we can modify driver behaviour at intersections, we can have a major impact on the crash and fatality rate in Christchurch.

- “Christchurch is laid out in a grid pattern and has more intersections per kilometre of road than other centres. Intersection safety, therefore, has a greater impact on the safety outcomes of the city.
- Road users over involved in crashes in Christchurch – the elderly, motorcyclists, and cyclists – all tend to have a higher proportion of their crashes at intersections.
- 58% of urban injury crashes in Christchurch are at intersections compared with 48% in other main centres and 15 out of the 20 highest crash cost sites are intersections in the rural area.
- 35% of intersection crashes are at traffic signals where 4 out of 10 involve red light running and 3 out of 10 involve right turns failing to give way to straight ahead.”

CAMPAIGN TARGETING RED LIGHT RUNNING

Running red lights is one of the major factors in intersection crashes in the city. Starting in July 1998 three co-ordinated enforcement and promotional campaigns targeting red light running have been held. These campaigns were funded by the Christchurch City Council and the Land Transport Safety Authority with a contribution from the Automobile Association. There was insufficient funding to run these campaigns in the budget for intersection safety, but unused funding from other projects was added to the budget to make up enough to have an impact in the community.

POLICE ENFORCEMENT

Police enforcement and the promotional campaign were planned together. Police committed staff and resources to the campaign and employed new methods of apprehending red light runners, such as using hand held video cameras.

MEDIA INTEREST

One of the features of the campaign was the interest shown in the issue by the media. The community seems to have strong feelings on the issue.

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

The campaign was based on one held in the United States. It used television advertising, billboards, back of bus advertising and Police car doors to give the message that “the light is red for a reason, so stop”, and the Police will “stop you for good, your good”.

EVALUATION

The results of the survey to measure changes in attitudes and behaviour in relation to red light running since August 1998 are now available. During that time there have been two further red light running campaigns.

The executive summary of the report on the survey has been distributed.

Notable changes in the last twelve months are:

- A further increase in those expressing caution in entering intersections on the green light. Those who said they would slow down and proceed with caution on encountering a green light increased by 10%. There was an increase of 10% in this area between the first two surveys. This is a continuing trend.
- A further reduction in those recalling running red lights. Only 31% said they recalled running a red light. In 1998 this was 39% in the second survey and 47% in the first survey.
- “Unaware of the lights/mistake” had halved as a reason given for red light running and “Unable to stop in time” had increased. Perhaps drivers have been made more aware of traffic signals.
- Those who would, at an orange light, “assess the situation and either stop or proceed” as opposed to “stopping and waiting for a green light” had increased by 17%.
- The numbers who said they had seen Police officers issuing tickets for red light running declined from 7% to 4%. Similarly those indicating that it was “very unlikely” that offenders would be caught increased from 65% to 80%.
- There has been a shift in the expectation that it is “very likely” that someone will be hurt towards “somewhat likely” someone will be hurt.
- The recall of the information has declined. Television and bill boards feature most highly in the recall. Back of bus advertising does not feature well although it was used as frequently as the bill boards.

- There is a decline in the numbers of respondents who say they have changed their behaviour as a result of the advertising.
- The proportion of respondents indicating that the advertising has made them more cautious at intersections has increased. Note that 7% of respondents now say the advertising has made them more patient or slower drivers. This variable did not feature in the surveys a year ago.

The Land Transport Safety Authority crash data shows that reported crashes at signalised intersections has declined over the past year to a greater extent than in previous years.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Co-ordinating Committee for Traffic Safety requests additional funding of \$20,000 that will allow the present campaign to be extended in the year 2000/2001. In the current year the television advertising and billboards developed in the 1998/99 year are being replayed. There is just enough funding to do this.

To be effective, advertising promotions need to be changed frequently so that they retain their impact. By the end of the present financial year the current advertising will have been used for two years and it will be time to move to another stage of the promotion with new advertising. We will be able to target the advertising according to the findings in our evaluation.

We know from the drink drive promotions in the past that it is essential to keep up the pressure with these road safety advertisements. Behaviour that has been improved will deteriorate during a year with no promotions.

This campaign has been successful in changing behaviour and reducing crashes. In order to keep this change happening we need to continue to resource this project.

Recommendation: That another \$20,000 be added to the Road Safety budget for the intersection safety campaign.