

For immediate release

Speed toll one of one

10:30 January 2004

Speed taking too many young lives - LTSA

'The deadly combination of too much speed and too little driving experience has claimed 21 dozen teenage lives on New Zealand roads already this year.

The four teenage boys killed in a high speed crash in Auckland early Wednesday morning takes the number of teens killed in road crashes in 2004 to 14. Excessive speed has contributed to 12 of those 14 deaths.

Director of Land Transport Safety David Wright says scores of young lives will continue to be lost in road crashes every year unless there is a wholesale change in society's attitudes towards the dangers of inexperienced drivers and high speed.

"When New Zealanders hear about a drink-driving crash, we get angry and we condemn that behaviour. But when young people - often unlicensed or breaching their licence conditions - lose control and crash at high speed, too many of us will merely shrug our shoulders and say 'bad luck' or 'boys will be boys'. Until driving too fast and driving without the **appropriate** licence is treated as seriously as driving drunk this tragic waste of young lives will continue.

"We must spend more time and energy as parents and as a society teaching our young people to take driving seriously and making sure they are properly licensed before letting them behind the wheel. We must teach them about the dangers of speed and alcohol, and to accept responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their friends, family and other road users," Mr Wright said.

Seventy-four 15-19 year-olds were killed on New Zealand roads last year - more than half in speed-related crashes.

For more information;

Andy Knackstedt - LTSA Media Manager - 04 931-8822 or 0212 763 222

Communications