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**Watch your speed, survive the journey****Thursday 1 August, 2019**

New Zealand Police, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, and Brake are urging people to think about the consequences of driving too fast for the conditions.

“If you crash at high speed, the level of injury sustained will be worse than a crash at low speed; effectively the speed you drive will dictate whether you or other victims in the crash walk away or are carried away,” says Acting Superintendent Bronwyn Marshall: National Manager for Road Policing (relieving).

“Our Police officers are often first at the scene of a crash. They see first-hand the tragic injuries and harm that occurs when people crash after making a choice to speed.

“Less speed really does mean less harm. Police will never apologise for stopping people who are taking unnecessary risks just to get somewhere a little faster.”

Mr Li Hsee, Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeon’s New Zealand Trauma Committee, urges motorists to think about the consequences before stepping on the accelerator.

“Road traffic crashes are the number one cause of major trauma in New Zealand. Speeding is one of the main driver behaviours associated with fatalities and life-threatening injuries. Severity of injuries and probability of death are proportional to the speed of impact.

“As trauma surgeons, we care for patients who survive road crashes. For many, it can result in a life of disability, pain, hardship and regret.

“We would challenge anyone who believes it’s okay to exceed the speed limit to spend some time on our watch. I’m sure they would change their mind very quickly.

“These crashes have considerable health and economic losses to individuals, their families and the nation as a whole.”

Speed is a contributing factor in around one third of all fatal crashes.

Caroline Perry, director of Brake, the road safety charity says as an organisation that supports bereaved families, we see the devastating consequences of crashes that involve speeding or driving too fast for the conditions.

“But it’s also important we understand that speed is an outcome factor in every crash; the speed you’re doing will determine the likelihood of you surviving a crash or not.

“It’s vital you keep below speed limits, and in winter, when weather conditions are often poor, that may mean slowing down even more and increasing the distance between you and the vehicle in front. Slow down and help keep yourself and others safe on the road.”

Acting Superintendent Marshall says if people just followed the rules of the road and reduced their speed, everybody on the road would be a lot safer.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

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