
Surgeons commend new road safety plan

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As people who care for those seriously injured in road crashes, trauma surgeons commend the goals of the new road safety plan released today, says Li Hsee, Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' (RACS) New Zealand Trauma Committee.

“Trauma surgeons witness firsthand the devastating and horrific impact of road crashes on people’s bodies, lives and families. We fully support the vision of this plan – a New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes.

“However, delivering the plan and achieving the goals will require considerable investment and we urge the Government to ensure the levels of commitment to, and investment in, all of these focus areas are sufficient to bring about significant, lasting and meaningful improvements to road safety in New Zealand.”

Mr Hsee welcomed the Government’s announcement of the plan’s first priority action, to strengthen drug driving enforcement by introducing oral fluid testing of drivers. “Roadside alcohol testing has proven to be an effective deterrent to people driving under the influence of alcohol; we hope that this new testing regime will discourage people from taking the wheel after taking drugs.

“Trauma surgeons would also like to see urgent priority being given to regulations around the use of e-scooters in New Zealand. We are seeing severe musculoskeletal and head injuries – similar to those sustained in car crashes – that patients are suffering from crashing or falling off e-scooters. Many of these injuries would be preventable if robust, well enforced regulations for the use of e-scooters were in place. There need to be clear and consistent rules around the use of helmets, age limits, no drunk or drugged riding, only one person per scooter at a time and a late night curfew. We appreciate that e-scooters are an environmentally friendly and fun way to get around but we would urge the Government to urgently consider introducing regulations to increase e-scooter safety and prevent injuries.

“We sincerely hope the new road safety plan brings about a renewed and active commitment from not only the organisations and agencies – but also everyone who uses our roads – to making New Zealand the safest place in the world to drive, walk, cycle and scooter.”

About RACS: RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in New Zealand and Australia in nine surgical specialties – Cardiothoracic Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery.

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