

# Media Release 3rd December 2014 No Embargo 20KM/H SCHOOL BUS RULE IS A FARCE

Drivers are flouting the 20km/h school bus rule, leading to a child being critically injured after being hit by a car south of Christchurch on Monday. Lucinda Rees from NZ School Speeds, the organisation lobbying for consistently reduced speed limits outside schools, is calling on the Government to make radical changes and make roads safer for children.

Ms Rees claims that "children's lives will remain at risk until we have consistent speed limits at both school bus stops and school zones. Many urban school speed limits are reduced to 40km/h at peak times, but that is still too fast. With rural speed limits up to 100km/h outside schools - these school zones that by rights should be a safe haven for school children - turn into a farce. Yet crossing these roads is a real danger for children.

"If you can legally drive through a school zone at speeds up to 100km/h the message to drivers is that there is no need to slow near school children, so when they come across a school bus loading or unloading, they often don't slow down. Sadly, on a rural road south of Christchurch with dire consequences," says Rees.

"Children will behave unpredictably when getting off a school bus, just as they will crossing roads outside schools. It doesn't take much for children to be distracted, especially when surrounded by their peers."

The World Health Organisation recommends a maximum speed limit of 30km/h outside schools at peak times, a speed limit that would bring school zones closer to the 20km/h school bus rule. 30km/h speed limits have been widely adopted outside schools in European countries like the Netherlands and Norway where child road deaths and injuries are considerably lower per capita than in New Zealand.

"30km/h max outside schools at peak times urgently needs to be introduced. At other times of the day speed limit should be no more than 60km/h. This will change the culture of drivers and allow children a safer journey.

"Our thoughts are with all those involved in the devastating accident. Now the Government needs to act by introducing consistent speed limits outside schools in line with the school bus rule, so that children can make their way to and from schools without fearing for their lives. Safe travel to and from school should be a basic human right for all children."

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