

Signs come under scrutiny

ADVERTISING hoardings are in the sights of both the Waitomo District Council and the New Zealand Transport Association (NZTA) as they look to remove roadside distractions.

As part of the NZTA's risk assessment in making roads safer over the summer months, concerns about the increase of roadside advertising hoardings has been identified as a distraction for drivers.

Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna says: "There are no issues with these types of signs as long as they are on private land, set back from the road, and conform to the size requirements in the council's district plan.

"However, the council has received complaints about the increase in signage appearing alongside some roadsides within the district and is looking to bring about a positive resolution."

NZTA is continuing to work on the issue of driver distractions on roadsides which includes advertising signage, under its Safer Journeys Strategy.

Meanwhile the council is in the process of carrying out a district-wide stocktake on signage to determine

which signs have consent, and which don't and if they fit the criteria under the District Plan. Once completed the council will make a decision on its signage policy for the future.

"This means signage that has approval will remain in place, but those not approved by the council may be removed," says Mr Hanna.

OTOROHANGA

Otorohanga District Council chief executive Dave Clibbery says the council attempts to be accommodating in respect of temporary signs for local activities or events provided they are not an obvious traffic hazard and are not the subject of public complaints.

He says anyone wishing to erect such signs should discuss with council staff what they intend to do before the signs are erected to minimise potential for problems later on.

The Waikato region has one of the highest year-to-date road fatality tolls in New Zealand with more than 60 deaths to date this year.

Waikato Regional Transport committee project chairman Hugh Vercoe, says: "We are looking to remove



DISTRACTING?: Advertising signage that competes with road safety information for driver attention on North King Country roads concerns NZTA and the Waitomo District Council.

as many contributing factors that add to the road toll as possible. While speed, and alcohol are the main contributors we are looking at everything that

causes driver distraction and advertising billboards that compete alongside safety signage for driver attention falls into that category."

IN BRIEF

Strawbridge family's appeal

THE appeal by Chiefs assistant coach Andrew Strawbridge to raise funds for medical equipment for the Moto'otua National Hospital in Samoa where he was treated after falling critically ill while there for the historic All Blacks versus Samoa match in July has been a great success.

More than \$65,000 has been donated, with Straw-

bridge and his wife Laura overwhelmed by the public's generosity. "We thank everyone who has supported us in my recovery and helped with the appeal. This experience has taught us a lot about the human spirit, the kindness of people and how lucky and well-resourced we are in New Zealand with our hospitals and primary care physicians," says Strawbridge. The first shipment of medical equipment has been flown to Samoa.



Christmas is coming...

TKDI Christmas Tree Competition
Open to all Te Kuiti businesses.
Place a tree on the street outside your business decorated to reflect your business, product or service.
Judging - December 18

Waitomo News Christmas Window Competition
Open to all Te Kuiti businesses.
Judging - December 15

Christmas Shopping Hours
TKDI is asking all retailers to consider these hours.
Sunday, December 13 - 10am-2pm
Saturday, December 19 - 9am-4pm
Sunday, December 20 - 10am-4pm
Mon-Wed, December 21-23 - 8.30am-6pm
Thurs, December 24 - 8.30am-5pm

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