



Safety initiative: Timaru District Council land transport engineer Brian Ward beside the active signals on the rear of a school bus. *Picture: Supplied*

Active signal success

A TIMARU District Council school bus safety initiative has been adopted nationally by Land Transport New Zealand.

Council staff set up a trial of active signs on the front and rear of the buses more than a year ago and drivers of the two trial vehicles said they noticed a distinct improvement in traffic behaviour responding to the flashing signs.

The signs combine the use of children symbols with two alternate bright flashing orange lights that can be seen from well behind the stopped bus.

The trial was conducted on two school bus routes from Pleasant Point to Timaru, and Temuka to Timaru.

Council land transport manager Andrew Dixon said LTNZ had announced the adoption of the warning signs.

The bus driver activated the signals when there was a need to slow traffic as the bus stopped or moved off.

"It was so effective that one driver

advised that when the bus was leaving a stop, cars slowed and let the bus in, and this has improved over the period of the trial," Mr Dixon said.

"A reduction of passing traffic speeds of up to 16kmh was achieved when the new signs were deployed," he said.

Mr Dixon said the school bus initiative was helping reduce road injuries in the district and actively contributing to the Government's road safety 2010 strategy targets of reducing deaths nationally to 300 and injuries to 4500 per annum on the roads by 2010.

"To achieve this target, new and innovative ways of improving road safety must be applied by using the three Es — enforcement, education and engineering.

"This initiative is a simple low-cost engineering measure. The council will continue to be committed to road safety education through our road safety co-ordinator and work closely with police on enforcement," Mr Dixon said.