



**REMOVE YOUR HEADPHONES
REMOVE YOUR RISK**



11 August 2017

Pedestrians with headphones targeted in new campaign

A rise in rail incidents involving pedestrians wearing headphones is being targeted in a new safety campaign that is being launched by Associate Transport Minister Tim Macindoe for Rail Safety Week at the Wellington Railway Station today.

KiwiRail Chief Executive Peter Reidy says the rising number of incidents involving pedestrians at railway crossings is worrying.

“We are seeing an increase in the number of people using personal-technology and this appears to be causing distraction around railway tracks.

“A number of recent deaths have involved the use of headphones. These events cause an enormous amount of trauma for the victim’s friends and family, the wider community and our people.

“This year’s Rail Safety Week campaign focuses on the dangers posed by devices such as smartphones and headphones.

“For KiwiRail, safety is critical. We want everyone to come home safely at the end of the day, and to do that you need to take care round railway crossings,” says Mr Reidy.

TrackSAFE NZ’s Foundation Manager Megan Drayton says three deaths at level crossings in the past 18 months reportedly involved the use of headphones.

“Near-misses are also on the rise. In 2005 there were nine near misses with pedestrians at level crossings. Last year there were 94, and there have already been 68 so far this year.”

“People are often on autopilot when they’re familiar with an environment and don’t remember to look up from their phones or remove their headphones when they approach a level crossing,

“Other factors are also feeding into this - growing populations, more train services and faster and quieter trains, particularly in Auckland and Wellington,” she says.

The Rail Safety Week campaign features up and coming Wellington band, Drax Project, in a social media video which highlights the importance of stopping the music as you approach the tracks.

The video will be unveiled at Rail Safety Week’s launch at Wellington Railway Station on Monday 14 August 2017, and will be publicly launched on Facebook and other social media channels from 11am.

Rail Safety Week is a nationwide campaign that raises awareness of safe behaviour around railway tracks.

It is coordinated by KiwiRail in close partnership with TrackSAFE NZ, the NZ Transport Agency, NZ Police, Auckland Transport, Transdev Auckland, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Transdev Wellington. For further information about Rail Safety Week see www.tracksafe.co.nz.

Safety advice for pedestrians:

- Every time you're near railway tracks, be alert. Trains can come at any time, from either direction.
- Only cross at formed pedestrian crossings or an overpass or underpass.
- Remove your headphones, stop and always look both ways for trains before crossing the tracks.
- Only cross if you are sure there are no trains in sight.
- Obey the warning signs at the crossing – if lights are flashing or bells are ringing it means a train is approaching.
- If a train has passed or is stationary at a station, always check both ways again to make sure another train is not coming. Two tracks might mean there is a second train.