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## **NZ road safety campaigner given international award**

The Automobile Association is paying tribute to researcher Gerald Waters, who has been recognised with a prestigious global award for his efforts to reduce impaired driving on New Zealand roads.

Mr Waters this week received an International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety' (ICADTS) award in Brisbane. It acknowledges individuals who have made outstanding contributions to international cooperation in alcohol and drug related traffic safety programs.

"In just a few short years Gerald has become a leading voice in the fight against impaired driving," says AA Motoring Affairs General Manager Mike Noon.

"His passion and commitment to keeping our roads free from drunk or drugged drivers is inspiring."

A 2010 crash where a repeat drunk driver killed a close friend of Mr Waters was the catalyst for him starting to question what could be done to prevent more tragedies like this occurring. Since then he has studied a huge amount of international and local research on what works and what doesn't in terms of reducing drink driving, as well as founding the Researching Impaired Driving in New Zealand charitable trust.

"Gerald has helped point out many of the current failings in the way New Zealand deals with drunk drivers and that there are changes we can make that will save lives," says Mr Noon.

"Like the AA, he has called for greater use of alcohol interlocks in offenders' vehicles, more rehabilitation treatment and the introduction of more alcohol and drug courts."

While receiving his latest award was an enormous honour, Mr Waters wanted to acknowledge the hard work of all the other organisations and individuals that are also trying to reduce drink driving in New Zealand.

"There have been some good steps in the right direction in recent years with alcohol interlocks now a sentencing option and an alcohol and drug court being trialled in Auckland.

"Unless we are treating the underlying issues and addiction that many offenders have, all we are doing is catch and release.

"More than one hundred people die each year in crashes involving drunk drivers and we have to do more to prevent these senseless tragedies."

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*The New Zealand Automobile Association is an incorporated society with over one million members. It represents the interests of road users who collectively pay over \$2 billion in taxes each year through fuels excise, road user charges and GST.*