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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

This summer 1,000 reusable in-car rubbish bags will be given away to Southlanders as part of a trial devised by Highways South and WasteNet Southland.

Justin Reid, Maintenance Contract Manager for Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, and Highways South spokesperson said the initiative aims to combat roadside rubbish and keep Southland beautiful.

“Keep New Zealand Beautiful research indicates 42 per cent of litter volumes comes from highways and roadsides,” Mr Reid said.

“Roadside rubbish harms wildlife, pollutes waterways, and can block drains and culverts causing flooding on roads and road reserves. It’s a hazard for roadside mowing, and an eyesore for road users.”

Mr Reid said it was not a simple task to collect roadside rubbish on state highways where traffic can be travelling at speeds of 100km/h. Traffic management is needed to ensure the safety of those collecting the rubbish, which also causes delays for road users.

To combat roadside rubbish, this summer Highways South and WasteNet Southland have joined forces to devise a litter prevention campaign to raise awareness of the issue, and to help road users stop littering by giving away 1,000 reusable in-car rubbish bags.

WasteNet Southland Senior Waste Officer Donna Peterson said if road users had a convenient and tidy way to collect rubbish in their vehicles, the hope was they would be more likely to keep it in their vehicles until they stopped at the next public rubbish bin or arrived home.

“By preventing roadside rubbish in the first place, we will improve our environment, reduce roadside flooding caused by rubbish-blocked drains and won’t need to organise clean up events” Ms Peterson said.

The bags being distributed were reusable, made from a sturdy waterproof material, and had a Velcro closure in the base making them easy to empty.

“It was important we found a reusable rubbish bag, as we did not want to contribute to the use of single-use plastic” Ms Peterson said.

“The bags are sized to hold the common rubbish materials you may have when on a road trip – bottles, plastic food wrappers, receipts and food waste.”

The bags are being distributed in December through local Community Boards, Council offices, and community groups and the team will be giving the bags away at the Invercargill Farmers Market on Sunday 13 December held at the Railway Station on Leven Street.

Photo caption: Angela Molloy WasteNet Southland and Julz Orr South Alive are holding up examples of the car-tidy bags which are being given away this summer.

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