



Be safe, be seen

When four-year-old Bella saw her little sister Maggie wearing a 'cool' jacket she wanted one as well, and Dad was delighted to oblige.

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After many years of exploring the globe and searching for a business idea to get passionate about, former Aucklander Kristi Drain and partner Helen chose Napier as the best place on the planet to settle down, start a family and run a business.

Kristi discovered the Roadworks 'Safe and Seen' clothing range online and was so impressed from the reaction to the innovative gear from his own children, that he bought the company.

"They love wearing them," Kristi said, adding that he and Helen also wear a stylish and safety-driven 'Roadworks' jacket from the adult range when they hit the road and track, cycling and walking the beautiful environs of Hawke's Bay.

It was started in 2005 by Wellington mum Anna Southon. She wanted a rain jacket for her daughter to start school, but could find only black and navy – and neither would make her five-year-old visible in a traffic mad world. Anna decided to do something about it, taking up the designing pens, and the result is a smart and very visible line of rain jackets and vests designed to look cool, keep kids seen, and therefore safer.

As Kristi points out, "Construction site workers, truck drivers and labourers all wear high visibility clothing, yet ironically our cherished children are walking, cycling and making their way to and from school, often in poor light conditions, without the advantage of garments that keep them safe and seen."

Since taking over the business, Kristi has made a few subtle design changes and added more sizes to include the whole family. The flashes of silver that contrast in with the fluorescent lime and black ensure the clothing gets the 'cool' thumbs up from kids, which as any parent will attest to is a major part of getting a youngster to wear something with safety firmly in mind. The clothing looks good and wears well, and is designed to take the usual knocks and scrapes kids seem to attract. It's durability and unisex designs means they can be passed down to other siblings ensuring good value for parents.

By using fluoro lime panels the gear is highly visible during the day, and when in low light, or night sets in, the reflective



LEFT: Occasionally it does rain in Napier, but when schools out at Port Ahuriri, staying dry and safe when heading home is no problem.

RIGHT: Helen, Kristi, Bella and Maggie, never afraid to get out in the rain and splash in puddles.



strips and silver reflective fabric do their safekeeping job. "For parents there is a strong assurance factor," said Kristi. "It is not all about visibility. Having an affordable range of practical rain wear for kids means more families can afford to keep their kids dry and warm, increasing their ability to concentrate on learning at school and improve general well-being."

Now that's smart

With sizes from two-year-olds through to teens and adults, seam sealing, concealed hoods, plenty of large pockets inside and out, large naming label inside, toggles and velcro closures to keep the weather out – and there's the advantage of being able to roll them up

into a compact package that stays easily in the school bag – these are very smart and practical items.

Apart from the smart look, there is (for young lads) the attraction of having something that looks like the safety gear of the big boys who they see operating diggers and cranes. For young ladies, the addition of funky coral-pink panels in the Roadworks Glo jacket gets the nod.

There is also a Roadworks backpack cover in fluoro waterproof material – an effective way of ensuring good visibility when the youngster is carrying a bag.

Roadworks is beginning to gain national attention, through Kristi's drive at putting them on display at expos as well as contacting

schools and pre-schools with the Roadworks fundraising programme – with every Roadworks jacket or vest ordered through a school he donates \$5 back to the school.

Kristi hopes to get the Roadworks brand further afield in the near future, with Australia, UK and Ireland on the target list. There are also other product ideas waiting to get fully explored. "Ultimately I would hope Roadworks will become a household name as it's such a good idea and very well positioned," says Kristi.

We'll leave the final summation to Bella and Maggie...and a growing number of youngsters for that matter. 'Cool'.

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