

## Dunedin rocked by riots

By MICHELLE SUTTON in Dunedin -  
The Southland Time



Police in riot gear during the Undie 500 car rally riots in Dunedin at the weekend.

### Undie 500 2009



TACKLED: Police deal with students during the Undie 500 rally in Dunedin.

Two nights of drunken rioting rocked Dunedin at the weekend, with about 70 arrests after the annual Undie 500 car rally.

Most of the people arrested were from Dunedin addresses, although police were unable to say yesterday how many of them were students from outside the city, including Southland and Central Otago.

Mayhem and violence spilled into the city's student area on Friday and Saturday nights, with police blaming Otago students.

The Undie 500 event, organised by Canterbury University engineering students, involves a pub crawl from Christchurch to Dunedin, in cars worth less than \$500.

However, police said yesterday Canterbury students were responsible for only a few of the problems.

Facing off against a mob of about 600 people in North Dunedin's Castle St area on Saturday, police in riot gear used pepper spray to subdue and disperse the hordes.

In a repeat of Friday night's chaos, students again lit fires and pelted police with bottles.

Police arrested between 50 and 60 people, following on from 20 arrests on Friday night.

They would appear in the Dunedin District Court on Thursday and Friday, with no hope of diversion.

Sergeant Matt Scoles, of Dunedin, said about 80 per cent of those arrested were from Otago University, while 10 per cent were Canterbury University students and the remaining 10 per cent from other parts of the South Island.

Most arrests were for disorderly behaviour, liquor-ban breaches and obstruction.

There were no reports of injuries, Mr Scoles said.

Inspector Dave Campbell said the crowd advanced on police on Saturday night, "challenging the police line", after officers tried to grab a man.

"Many students were pepper-sprayed, and officers had to call for more supplies as some had emptied their canisters on those students," Mr Campbell said.

Despite promises of better behaviour from students, "nothing has changed".

Carl Shrimpton, president of rally organiser Ensoc (Canterbury University Engineering Society), said he understood the problems were caused by Otago students, rather than Undie 500 participants.

He had warned rally participants to avoid the streets.

"The Undie 500 is used as an excuse [for the problems] and it shows the culture down here," Mr Shrimpton said.

"Certainly, there is a culture down here of burning things and drinking."

Mr Shrimpton said he was pleased with the actions of the 600 Undie 500 participants. However, he said the behaviour of Otago students was out of Ensoc's control.

"There's obviously an underlying culture down here that's not for us to repair. I would be looking for everyone involved to get together and try to fix it."

Pleas for sensible behaviour from Otago University, police and Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin were again ignored, with the third consecutive year of chaos on North Dunedin's streets.

A briefing involving the Dunedin City Council, Otago University and police would be held within two weeks.

However, Mr Shrimpton rejected calls by Mr Chin and Dunedin North MP Pete Hodgson to ban the Undie 500 from Dunedin.