

I would like to make a submission regarding the terms of reference for Aspects of road safety in Australia.

Please note that these comments are not the view of Wyong Shire Council but are my comments based on over 30 years of experience in the planning, designing of transport engineering infrastructure & road safety issues.

Generally there is an understanding based on Federal & State agencies documents that State agencies generally promote Road Safety.

This is supported by the wording within the following documents.

The National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020, National Road Safety Action Plan 2015-2017 & the NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012-2021.

In the past few years these documents have been released.

These documents all indicate that the State agencies are to work with & support Local Government.

Comments from these documents include:

- Work with Local Government to share road safety information and resources
- Lead and coordinate road safety interventions across State Government, Local Government & the community.
- Form closer partnerships with local government to further progress road safety outcomes.
- Develop and promote land use planning procedures and policies and urban development guidelines at State and local levels to incorporate Safe System principles.
- Work with local government to improve consistency and guidance on road safety for vulnerable road users including on road and off road bicycle facilities.
- Work with local government to undertake road safety audits to address the maintenance and upgrade of pedestrian facilities.
- Development of strategies and programs with local government.
- Mainstreaming road safety within councils and road agencies will see road safety benefits on locally managed roads.
- Reduce serious casualties on roads controlled by local government.
- Local governments will need support to apply the Safe System approach and to find and apply cost-effective and innovative solutions.
- Working with local governments to develop and deliver infrastructure improvement strategies that include cost-effective safety treatments.
- Work with and support local governments in improving the safety of local roads and communities.

The Australian Road Research Board “Local Government and the Safe System Approach to Road Safety” and the Austroads Research Report “Road Safety on Local Government Roads” Final Report predate the abovementioned strategies.

These documents also suggest that Local Government requires assistance in the areas of road safety.

- Local Government Safety be specifically addressed in the new National Road Safety Strategy
- Actions be developed to target local government and assist them to better manage safety issues on their road network
- There is a need, particularly applicable to Local Government, to include information on how to achieve incremental improvements in road safety.
- Local government often lacks the staff resources to deliver safety outcomes. This includes availability of staff, and staff with appropriate skills to perform their roles.
- There appears to be a need for specific road safety guidance for local government.
- Those tasked with addressing safety within local government often do not have the time or means to access relevant safety guidance and expertise.
- Results showed that the vast majority of Local Government thought that the Safe System approach was ‘at best’ somewhat understood with less than 10% rating their understanding higher than that,
- For every council there should be available at least one full time employee who is responsible for road safety. For smaller councils, this might entail sharing of this resource across a number of councils. This safety coordinator should have a clearly defined role, and access to relevant information on addressing road safety specifically on local government roads.
- There are shortages of skilled staff for delivering safety.
- Responsibility/liability for improving safety appears to be unclear in some jurisdictions, and this can be a barrier to improving safety.
- There appear to be competing policy demands within local government.
- There appears to be a need for specific road safety guidance for local government.

As can be seen with the above, there is a strong indication from a number of agencies that would suggest that Local Government requires assistance with regards to road safety.

Local Government generally has responsibility for about 80% of the road network. This road network accounts for about 50% of crashes.

In our Local Government area (Wyang Shire in NSW) greenfield subdivisions (developments) add on average 1% per year to the total road network within our local government area.

In the past 20 years this has resulted in the addition of approximately 180 km of new roads to our road network.

This doesn't include the provision of new intersections, cycleways, interchanges, carparks and other transport facilities.

Recently, the Sydney Morning Herald quoted that approximately 11,500 km of new roads had been created as a result of new developments & subdivisions in the past ten (10) years. This is an approximate increase to the NSW road network of 8% over this 10 year period.

These significant amounts of new roads, intersections, carparks, shared paths etc need to be planned, designed, assessed, approved, constructed, accepted & maintained to maximise safety issues.

Appropriate road safety mechanisms need to be applied throughout the life (strategic planning to decommissioning/renewal) of these transport & traffic facilities to reduce &/or eliminate road fatalities, road trauma, frequent minor impacts, (ongoing costs to the community), etc. These include bingles, trauma from pedestrian falls, cyclist crashes, incidents in carparks etc.

We need to address road safety early on the in development/planning process to reduce &/or eliminate road fatality/trauma & reduce/eliminate the need for costly black spot projects & the retrofitting of transport infrastructure by Councils. These funds could be better spent elsewhere, such as in the management of the massive asset renewal backlog that currently sits with many Local Government organisations.

This problem, I believe is mainly due to the focus & budgets of the State agencies. These are being significantly cut & the priorities are being shifted away from providing the core services that they need to provide.

There is no consideration of the significant long term benefits of assisting Local Government with relatively small outlays.

We are not looking at doing multimillion dollar projects, but only training for Local Government practioneers.

Recommendations

1. Introduce road safety into Planning Degrees, either an appreciation or introduction to Road Safety.
 - a. In Local Government Town Planners are the starting point for the creation of transport infrastructure. We need to get things right at the start.
 - b. If we have a new subdivision, for example with 10 uncontrolled cross street intersections. Although they may have a lower speed environment they generate 32 vehicular conflict points at each location that is 320 vehicular conflict points. If they had staggered "T" intersections there would only be nine (9) vehicular conflict points per "T" intersection, needing double the "T" intersections to provide the same number of street legs. 20 "T" intersections at nine (9) vehicular conflict points per intersection is a total of 180 vehicular conflict points. This is a reduction of 140 vehicular conflict points just by planning a different road layout.
2. The Centre for Road Safety & the RMS (NSW state agencies) promote road safety, however a number of high profile other NSW state agencies appear to ignore, not appreciate or devalue the importance of road safety. These include; the Department Planning & Environment, NSW Police, Department of Education & Communities & Urban Growth (previously Landcom).
3. Introduce road safety considerations within the state planning legislations.

4. The Centre for Road Safety & RMS to provide resources for the training of Local Government in Road Safety. This could even come from the ALGA or other equivalent state agencies.

Should you require clarification or further information on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Adam Mularczyk
Team Coordinator
Engineering Assessments
Wyang Shire Council