



Dear Sir,

I refer to the above matter and submit that it would be commendable to attempt to address the failed road safety strategies implemented in recent years and to implement "a fresh approach with innovative but realistic ideas to meet the 2010 target".

When I heard about this I thought that it is about time and was looking forward to the clear misdirection increasingly noticeable in recent years being corrected with a fresh approach. My enthusiasm however has been dampened during discussion with associates who suggested that the comment "We will call a number of key stakeholders and people to discuss whether the target remains appropriate, how to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of existing measures, and to provide new ideas on additional ways of reducing road trauma," is a dead giveaway that there is no intention to have any substance to the inquiry.

More particularly, it was suggested that the "stake holders" responsible for the current approach that has resulted in an identifiable plateau of the road trauma rate - namely some or all of RARU, MUARC, RTA, TAC, VicRoads, various Transport Ministers, Police Ministers and Chief Traffic Police etc etc will be simply called upon to sell their failed initiatives in a cynical public relations move to overcome valid community concerns. In other words nothing more than creating the appearance that something is being done and making excuses for the current approach in addition to suggestions that the current approach be continued from a slightly new angle to veil it as a new approach.

Clearly, there is an increasing focus on enforcement of minor breaches of speed limits posing no harm to anyone rather than effective road safety measures and this misallocation of resources generates a formidable sum of money without continuing the steady decline in road deaths enjoyed in this country for decades. Equally clearly the groups that have driven the current initiatives are unlikely to admit that their approach is counterproductive so an inquiry based on their submissions would be a farce.

Are these concerns valid or will the stakeholders be new faces who can genuinely be expected to suggest "a fresh approach with innovative but realistic ideas to meet the 2010 target"?

I look forward to your response.

If it is a serious inquiry and my associates missed the mark I would also like to suggest two improvements:

(1) That a wholistic approach to the road safety problem is needed. Resources should be allocated based on their likely effect. For example I believe that many states keep records on the causes of crashes (not the contributing factor statistics they feed the public) and the proportion of crashes or fatal crashes with a particular cause could attract the corresponding proportion of resources. In Queensland the publication "Road Traffic Crashes in Queensland" lists speed as causing 5% of crashes. Therefore 5% of resources should be allocated to speed enforcement. The same could be applied to other causes. Inexperience is a large cause but is not an enforcement issue. Therefore a proportion of funding commensurate with the proportion of crashes caused by inexperience should therefore be available to fund hands on driver education that provides suitable experience before licencing is allowed. If there is for example 4 times as many crashes caused by inexperience as there is caused by speeding then 4 times as much money should be available to provide driver training as there is to pay for police and equipment that enforce speed offences.

(2) That people charged with day to day tasks in relation to reducing road deaths have some type of accountability and can't just blame the driving public for everything. If I don't perform I get a warning. If I still don't perform I get sacked. Why do people remain employed when road deaths increase for a number of years and eventually drop down as roads improve and car safety features drift into the cars in present usage? While the public cannot be fully controlled (although they usually argue that they can get the public to stick precisely to a speed limit when it suits them) between these people road safety advertising, traffic enforcement, and available enforcement technology is under their control.

Yours faithfully,

John Bennett

—