



Associate Professor Jeremy Woolley
Director of the Centre for Automotive Safety Research
University of Adelaide

Dr John Crozier
Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' Trauma Committee

Thursday 1 March 2018

Dear Assoc Prof Woolley and Dr Crozier,

The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) Limited welcomes the opportunity to respond to the *Inquiry into progress under the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020*. In addition to this submission, RACV is supportive of the submission by the Australasian Automobile Association (AAA), of which RACV is a member.

RACV represents over two million members and has on average a member in three out of every four households across Victoria. RACV makes a significant contribution to road safety by delivering programs that aim to promote safer road users, safer cars and safer roads on behalf of our members and the community.

Key factors involved in road trauma in Victoria

Victoria has a history of leading the way in reducing road trauma, however we continue to have too many people killed and seriously injured on our roads. In 2015, there were 252 people killed and a further 6,294 seriously injured on Victorian roads. The figures were worse in 2016, with 290 Victorians killed and 7,181 seriously injured.

There has been a reduction in lives lost on Victorian roads since the commencement of the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) in 2011. Victoria continues to have the lowest fatality rate of all Australian states in 2017 at 4 per 100,000 population. However, Victorian road crash fatalities remain above the NRSS target of a 30% reduction, and it seems unlikely that this target will be met.

Drink and drug driving, aberrant speed, fatigue and distraction continue to be the main contributing factors in many crashes. Vulnerable road users, including young drivers, older pedestrians and motorcyclists also continue to be over-represented in the Victorian road toll statistics, and regional road trauma is disproportionately high.

For example, from 2015-2017, young drivers aged 18-25 years accounted for 19-24% of all drivers killed in Victoria, yet only accounted for approximately 10% of all licenced drivers, while pedestrians aged 70 years and older accounted for 32-35% of all pedestrians killed in Victoria. For the same period, motorcycle riders accounted for 12-19% of all Victorian road fatalities, however there was an unusual spike in 2016. Motorcycles represent almost 4% of the number of registered vehicles in Victoria. In

2017, 61% of fatal crashes occurred on rural roads, despite only one third of Victoria's population living in rural Victoria.

The effectiveness of the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) 2011-2020

Despite some improvement since the commencement of the strategy, it is clear that the NRSS objectives are unlikely to be met. Analysis by AAA shows that almost 90 per cent of the targets contained within the NRSS will not be met and governments are failing to fulfil the commitments made. There has been only a 14.1 percent reduction in road fatalities achieved to date. The year to December 2017 recorded the highest number of people killed on Australian roads in six years, with 1,225 fatalities. The number of Australians who have sustained serious injuries from road crashes is unknown. Without a national measurement for serious injuries in place, it is difficult to monitor progress and evaluate which safety measures need to be given the greatest priority.

Issues and priorities for consideration in development of a post-2020 national road safety strategy and 2018-2020 action plan

Road safety needs to be addressed through a safe system approach that considers safe road users in safe vehicles on safer roads. Road safety initiatives should be evidence led and governments should avoid introducing programs that have no road safety benefit and are counter-productive to road safety. In developing future strategies, there should be financial incentives for State and Territory Governments to meet targets, such as funding for specific projects and programs to improve local and state road infrastructure.

RACV supports the AAA National Road Safety Platform, which outlines the key steps the federal government should take in coordinating a national response to road safety. In the platform, the AAA advocates for:

- **A re-established Federal Office of Road Safety** to coordinate the national policy response to the ongoing deaths and injuries caused by road crashes.
- **Improved data collection** – To help identify gaps in road safety and measure success.
- **Promoting best practice research** – All states and territories should be equipped with the tools to address emerging and critical issues in road safety.
- **Funding of land transport infrastructure** – Proven risk assessment methods such as the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) should be used to prioritise projects which will have a positive road safety outcome.
- **Safer vehicles** - Ongoing Government funding should be provided for vehicle safety programs, including ANCAP and Used Car Safety Ratings to continue conducting independent crash tests and vehicle safety assessments. Resourcing should also be provided to engage in proactive assessment of international developments which may affect the Australian Design Rules. In addition, taxes that increase the cost of safer vehicles should be removed.

RACV strongly supports the national adoption of AusRAP; in particular, the star rating of roads. This has the benefit of providing information about the safety of Australia's roads in a format that is easily understood by road users, whilst also providing a pro-active tool for road managers to identify sections of road requiring further engineering investigations. AusRAP also assists funding agencies with

identifying the quantum of funding required to improve safety within networks, and the types of road safety measures that should be considered.

The safety of local roads is a significant challenge for local government; with extensive low volume road networks at low standards. Local governments have challenges with maintaining their existing networks, with few options to fund comparatively high-cost road safety improvements.

Updates to the Federal Strategy can assist State and Local Governments with implementing AusRAP as a tool. Firstly, the Federal Government can facilitate the States, Territories and Local Government with governance and national technical assistance. Secondly, funding will assist Councils with applying the program to, say, the highest volume 20% of their network. Finally, a program like an expanded Blackspot program, can be used to fund works to address the issues identified by AusRAP. For example, this might be funding rumble strips, barriers, shoulder sealing, removing roadside hazards or speed limit reductions, on local, State and Territory roads.

Federal road safety funding should be tied to the implementation of the Australian Road Assessment Program, the adoption of a minimum 3-star target, minimum 4-star for new roads, and annual progress towards meeting their targets.

A significant constraint on the effectiveness of police catching drivers under the influence of drugs is the cost and particular requirements of roadside drug tests. A revised strategy should provide assistance to the States and Territories with investigating new drug tests that more cheaply and effectively address the operational requirements of Police using roadside tests.

If you would like any further information regarding our submission please contact Melinda Spiteri, Manager Road User Behaviour on 9703 6671 or via email at Melinda_Spiteri@racv.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



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