

2018 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2011 – 2020

Attention : Dr. John Crozier
: Professor Jeremy Woolley

Also : The Hon. Melinda Pavey MP. Minister for Roads, NSW
: Mr Ken Kanoffski CEO, Roads & Maritime Services, NSW
: Mr Michael Fuller, New South Wales Police Commissioner

DISCUSSION PAPER **NO. 2**

This discussion paper, for the purposes of the above named Inquiry will endeavour, in the limited space and time available, to describe in some detail, newly developed and proposed new initiatives in road safety management and road safety development applicable to New South Wales and other Australian States.

This report follows on from an earlier '**defining report**', to the New South Wales Government in Feb. 2015 by the same author. Copies of that major report will also be made available to the above named Inquiry. That report was entitled :-

'The Future of Road Safety Development in New South Wales'

2015 – 2025

THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING MODERN ROAD SAFETY
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES TO NEW SOUTH WALES, TOGETHER WITH A NEW,
INNOVATIVE & HIGHLY EFFECTIVE ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

THIS REPORT RECOMMENDS THE INTRODUCTION OF SOME TWO HUNDRED
CHANGES AND NEW ROAD SAFETY PROVISIONS IN ORDER TO BETTER MANAGE
& IMPROVE ALL FUTURE ROAD SAFETY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN
NEW SOUTH WALES

PROPOSED CHANGES TO NEW SOUTH WALES ROAD SAFETY 2018 – 2025

1.) Intersection Crashes in New South Wales

Intersection vehicle crashes in New South Wales are responsible for causing 19% of the State's road crash fatalities and a staggering 47% of the State's road crash, serious injuries. The economic costs alone, to NSW is estimated to be in the order of some five billion dollars and growing. The 'human costs' are incalculable.

Note; it has also been revealed (in former discussions with the Motor Accidents Authority, NSW), that approximately **40% of all hospital emergency department trauma admissions are due to motor vehicle crashes in NSW.**

One can reasonably conclude therefore, that motor vehicle intersection crashes are responsible for approximately 20% of all hospital emergency department 'trauma' admissions, thereby placing hospital emergency depts ., with limited resources and staff, under considerable pressure and stress – just from the enormous number of intersection crashes in NSW. It has been reported that each year in NSW, there are some 44,000 serious crashes. If so, one could conclude therefore that **preventable, intersection crashes in New South Wales that cause fatalities, serious injuries and moderate injuries, could be a figure as high as 10,000 - 15,000, each year.**

1.1 THE NEW SOUTH WALES RESPONSE & 'STRATEGY PLAN' TO COMBAT THE UNACCEPTABLE & VERY HIGH NUMBER OF INTERSECTION CRASHES IN NSW.

*** In 2018 and now for more than two decades , there has not been any response or any attempt by the NSW Centre for Road Safety, to address this very serious road safety issue ! It is incumbent therefore, upon the New South Wales Roads Minister, the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, to provide an explanation to the NSW public and all NSW road users, as to why, the NSW Centre for Road Safety has failed to carry out this critical life-saving work that is also fundamental to the success of any road safety strategy – be it a New South Wales Strategy or the 'closely associated' - National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.**

1.2 UNDER A PROPOSED AND NEWLY ESTABLISHED 'NEW SOUTH WALES ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION ,' INTERSECTION CASUALTY AND FATAL CRASHES WILL BE TARGETED AS A HIGH PRIORITY MATTER FOR IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION AND PROMPT ACTION.

1.3 HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED IN NEW SOUTH WALES IN 2018 / 19 ?

The following new initiatives, new measures, new procedures & new 'innovations' will be put in place across metropolitan and rural regions of NSW following the usual consultation periods.

a) It is proposed that any driver found responsible for **causing a motor vehicle crash of a serious nature,** will automatically suffer an appropriate period of licence loss, in addition to any other existing penalties that currently apply.

'At fault' drivers, where a matter is not determined in a NSW Court, can easily regain their drivers licence after the specified period, but also after undergoing an **appropriate 'traffic offenders course'.**

This proposed new penalty measure is important for NSW because currently

there is little or no 'deterrent mechanism' in terms of careless drivers entering busy intersections to quickly, or to impatiently or to foolishly or to distracted and as a consequence, one or more vehicles is significantly damaged and one or more persons has suffered minor or more serious injuries. Alternatively, a new driving offence could be added to a long list of existing offences which carries with it a driving licence points loss of 10 points for what is really a very serious offence, (ie. causing serious crash with significant property damage and or minor, moderate or serious injuries suffered as well as substantial traffic disruption and emergency services call out).

It is no longer acceptable for an 'at fault' driver in such circumstances, to simply walk away from a 'serious crash scene' (a scene of devastation & personal injury), with in effect, just a slap on the wrist (ie. negligent driving – not give way, -3 demerit points and a fine of \$435.00).

a 1.) Intersection crashes in NSW , are a major source of both fatalities and trauma injuries.

Substantial reductions in both types of casualty crashes are urgently needed in NSW. Part of the solution to achieving this outcome, is to ensure that careless, distracted, drug affected drivers as well as alcohol affected drivers (eg. under- 0.05) and low level speeding drivers, **now risk facing 'temporary loss of driving licence and further sanctions'**. Such necessary and responsible new provisions are and will be essential in order to provide a **genuine disincentive** for those irresponsible drivers who choose to drive without caution, without proper care & control and without proper respect and understanding of the likely consequences of their dangerous actions.

b) New driver/ rider, 'recommended procedures' have now been developed to assist all drivers to more safely navigate into and across busy intersections be they traffic light controlled or otherwise. **This simple effective, new measure** if widely adopted by drivers/riders, has the clear potential to further reduce intersection crashes in NSW.

b 1.) Traffic light controlled 'cross' intersections as well as signalised 'T' intersections which allow vehicles to 'filter' across (ie. to drive laterally across the direct path of on-coming vehicles which can be travelling at speeds up to 70 and 80 kph, have the potential to and do cause very serious crashes which can result in both fatalities and very serious injuries.

***** It is now recommended that drivers who are proceeding through a busy intersection on a green traffic light phase with vehicles ahead of the driver that are waiting to turn right, across the on-coming driver's pathway, should adopt the simple technique of switching on headlights,** to, in effect warn the vehicle ahead that a on-coming driver is approaching the intersection at speed.

Similarly, it is also strongly recommended as a genuine safety precaution, that right turn vehicles, waiting at busy intersections, also switch on headlights to more clearly indicate their 'stationary' presence and that they, are 'waiting and ready' to turn right as soon as possible.

b2.) **These simple, newly devised, road safety driving techniques** have the real potential, once again if widely adopted by NSW drivers, to prevent a significant number of intersection crashes and thus preventing also, further and avoidable, loss of life as well as preventing easily avoidable, severe or very serious injuries. Note, that the most recently manufactured vehicles are already equipped with DRL's or Daytime Running Lights, which in effect, do the same function as the 'safety technique described above.

c) **A recent and as yet 'unpublished' major discovery regarding 'Intersection safety' and previously unknown, 'serious intersection design flaws or design failures', has and will have a major impact in terms of road safety outcomes, when and where all New South Wales driver training programmes are advised to incorporate these 'groundbreaking' new discoveries, that each and every driver/ rider in New South Wales, should and must be made aware of, as soon as possible.**

In order to reduce further, deaths and serious injuries from such previously unknown but extremely dangerous signalised traffic intersections that were constructed almost 50 years ago but that are still operating in 2018 without the necessary recommended safety modifications.

d) **Reducing The Deadly Occurrence of Head-On Collisions in NSW & Other States.**

The NSW CRS's own statistics clearly indicate that New South Wales experiences some 95 very serious head-on vehicle collisions per year on average. Such catastrophic collisions are responsible for 23% of New South Wales's road toll fatalities and 6% of all serious injuries.

****** Over a period of some ten years, the NSW Center for Road Safety has demonstrably failed to carry out the work that it was assigned to do by the NSW Government ! However, the NSW CRS continues to operate unsatisfactorily and has not been held to account by successive Roads Ministers, in New South Wales.**

Put simply, the New South Wales Centre for Road Safety whose job it is to find new road safety solutions for all types of vehicle collisions including deadly head-on collisions and advise the community accordingly (& the NSW Government) ,has in effect, **simply refused to study or examine this 'high priority' road safety issue in New South Wales!**

(The reader should be aware that as regards the various professional units operating within the CRS such as the Statistics Group, the Communications Group, the Automotive Technology Group, and so on....there is no criticism whatsoever, as to the satisfactory and professional performance of those 'resources', in the various support groups of the organisation).

e) **Multi-Vehicle Collisions**

Should any reader still remain uncertain about these claims, one can simply ask yet another very relevant & revealing question ie . for example, **...What exactly does the NSW Road Safety Strategy say about – ‘Multi- Vehicle Collisions’ in New South Wales ?** Multi –Vehicle Collisions in NSW are increasingly causing, huge traffic jams and severe traffic delays and extreme difficulties for emergency service personnel, as well as , often, multiple injuries to more than one person and even sometimes, multiple fatalities !

So of course, one would just assume that this, now common type of vehicle crash, would be listed in the New South Wales Road Safety Strategy, **as a matter for urgent investigation / examination, with details as to ...what the CRS’s plan is to reduce the prevalence and severity of such’ highly disruptive’ and trauma causing motor vehicle crash events.**

However, if one can even find such a ‘strategy’ , there is certainly no mention whatsoever of Multi-Vehicle collisions and what the Government’s strategy or plan is to try and reduce the incidence of such catastrophic events which usually involves either serious injuries and / or horrific fatalities.

d 1) (returning to discussion : ‘head-on collisions’, as per above)

In order for the NSW Government to fully address the urgent issue of how to reduce substantially, the frequency of catastrophic ‘ head-on’ collisions in New South Wales the following proposed new strategy ‘outline’ is offered:-

Proposed New Strategy

(M. Arena , 2015)

1. Continue with construction of ‘divided’ dual carriageway motorways.
(will have some but limited impact on head –on collisions due to high cost & construction delays / completion time needed)
2. Commence an urgent study of ‘Outer Metropolitan High Speed Roads’ (OMHSR) specifically in relation to - the potential risk for and ‘expected occurrence’ of head-on collisions (refer also to RMS comm..dated 28 Nov. 2017 –See Attachment, Mamre Rd. Crash, Western Syd. 28 Nov.17, - 1 dead,8 others injured)
3. Existing Two Lane Highways & Major Two lane Rural Connecting Roads. With Moderate to High Traffic Volumes.

Commence retro-fit, of median line concrete barriers, initially for ‘most dangerous’ sections of roadway.

Where ‘median line barriers’ have not been installed, RMS to continue with its programme of major road widening and installation of 1 metre wide painted, center lines, as a first step, in further **separating opposing vehicles travelling at high speed towards each other.**

4. Re-Inspection of earlier constructed motorways, that do not have any **'in built' centre barriers. It is common for persons working in the roads or road safety portfolios, to easily overlook a common fault of some earlier constructed motorways.** Such motorways were not fitted with centre barriers and it is not uncommon on such motorway sections for 'out of control' vehicles including **heavy vehicles** – to 'erratically and suddenly,' spear off to the right without warning, then travel down & across the grass swale' and then , sometimes, **straight into on coming vehicles that are already travelling at high speed.**

5. Further public education and learner driver education re; the dangers of 'Head- On' vehicle collisions and how to avoid causing a collision.

6. **Innovative & newly developed & recommended 'driver techniques',**
to aid in avoidance of 'fatal' Head-On collisions in NSW & other Aust. States. (This technique is now available for every driver/rider to adopt for 'safer' long distance driving and higher speed driving – details upon request)

7. New, automated, driver assist technology, in new vehicles from about 2020 if mandated by Federal Govt. can alert the driver by **audible siren** and **'seat shaker', whenever a vehicle moves to close to the painted median line.**

(Limited impact in first 10 years due to low numbers overall , of such vehicles on Australian Roads. Newly licenced P- Plate unable to afford initially. Some older drivers and some on medication, unlikely to update their vehicle.

*(NOTE 1. : The above described, proposed, innovative changes to New South Wales road safety and applicable to all Australian States, form part of some two hundred proposed changes, first outlined in the earlier report of 2015, copy attached. These proposed changes, taken together, for the first time in NSW, constitute major , highly effective and long overdue and much needed – **genuine road safety reform**, for New South Wales & all Australian States.*

Mark M Arena,
Road Safety Specialist, (Independent)
(Formerly - Convener, Australian Road Safety Foundation & name 2004 – 2012
Sutherland, NSW)
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