



Promoting a more positive traffic safety culture in Australia: Lessons learnt and future directions

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CARRS-Q is a joint venture initiative of the
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*What influences public perception of
road safety problems?*

*What issues need to be discussed if we are to
make significant progress in reducing road
trauma?*



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Overview

- Traffic safety culture
- Successful changes in traffic safety culture
 - Drink driving
 - Seat belt use
- Behaviours still in need of attention
 - Speeding
 - Phone use when driving
- The role of the media

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Historically

- Traditional strategies to reduce crashes:
 - Education
 - Driver training & mass media messages
 - Enforcement
 - Legislation, countermeasures & penalties
 - Engineering
 - Road & vehicle design to protect from adverse consequences

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Traffic Safety Culture ^[1]

- Various definitions
- More or less focus on individual/community
- A continuum
- Includes:
 - Beliefs about what behaviours are normal
 - Expectations associated with violations
 - Attitudes about behaviours

Ward, Linkenbach, Keller & Otto, 2010

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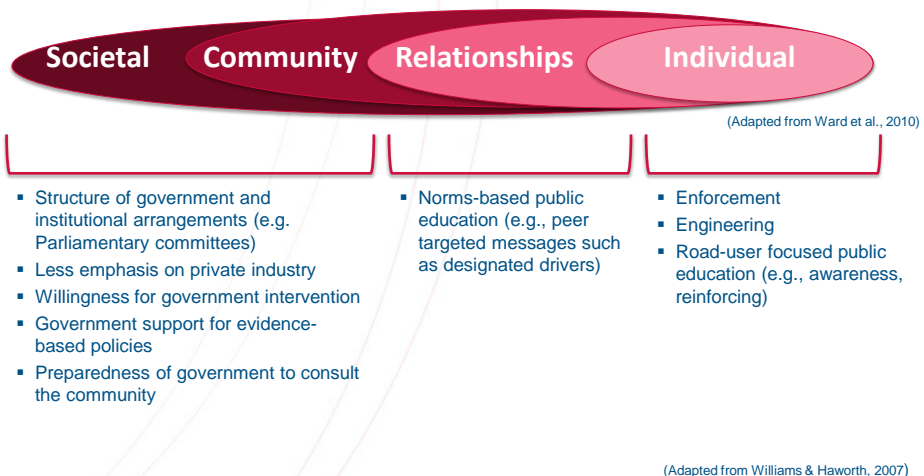
Traffic Safety Culture ^[2]

- *The perceptions people have about what behaviors are normal in their peer group/community and their expectations for how that group reacts to violations to these behavioural norms.*
- *Applies to behaviours that:*
 - *increase crash risk (e.g., drink driving),*
 - *are protective (e.g., wearing seatbelts),*
 - *and are related to acceptance or rejection of traffic safety interventions.*

Ward, Linkenbach, Keller & Otto, 2010, p.4

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Traffic Safety Culture in Australia ^[1]



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Traffic Safety Culture in Australia ^[2]

- Under-utilized concept in the Australian context
- Why TSC has not gained traction in Australia is unclear
- May reflect:
 - Lack of robust theoretical model to guide TSC
 - Strong reliance on marketing-driven public education

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Traffic Safety Culture in Australia ^[3]

- Australia often seen as having a more positive TSC compared to some countries (e.g., USA) Why ?
- Public more accepting of govt. intervention
 - Community education/media campaigns during pre-legislation & pre-enforcement periods have been vital
- Govt. more willing to intervene
- Govt. adopts evidence-based approaches
- Better availability of funds
- But perhaps not as positive as some other countries (e.g., Sweden)

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Sweden

- Vision Zero
- Share the Vision
 - Volvo: No fatalities in their cars by 2020
- Speed limits
 - Our strongest tool
 - Must relate to body's ability to survive if hit
- Is it ok to save a minute vs. is it ok if someone dies?

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Sweden

- Help people not to speed via technology
- Help people not to drink and drive
 - Trucks used to supply goods for govt contracts must have Alcohol Interlock fitted
- Corporate responsibility
 - Post office van

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Australian Success

- Large reductions in fatalities since 1970
- Many stakeholders involved
- Media:
 - Educating about risks (behaviour & enforcement)
 - Role in changing public perceptions
 - Chicken or egg ?
 - Attitude or behaviour change, which comes 1st ?

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Drink driving

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Drink driving ^[1]

- Almost universal support in national attitudinal surveys of RBT for many years (Petroulias, 2011)
- Big changes in community attitudes towards & culture of drink driving in Australia
- Strong social disapproval:
 - ‘Criminal’
 - ‘Breaking the law’
 - Elliott, 1992
- Still a problem (~25% of fatalities) Australian Transport Council, 2011

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Drink driving ^[2]

- Emergent challenges to consider
 - Increase in women being detected
 - Youth binge drinking
 - Drink driver/drink walker
- We must be ready to tackle these new challenges as well as work on traditional ones

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Drink driving ^[3]

- Alcohol Ignition Interlocks
 - Currently used primarily for recidivists in Australia
- Opportunity to normalise their use
 - Fleet vehicles
 - All vehicles ?
- Strengthen the community message that DD is never acceptable

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Seat belt use

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Compulsory Seat Belt Use ^[1]

- Substantial initial opposition in 1970s
- Traffic Accident Research Unit of NSW Dept. of Motor Transport, 1971 wrote:

It is suggested that the fundamental source of public resistance is that motorists do not feel vulnerable to death or injury under normal driving conditions.

*This may prove to be an **insurmountable barrier** to public education designed to increase the seatbelt wearing rate.*

McLean, 2012, p.15

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Compulsory Seat Belt Use ^[2]

- Turned out NOT to be an 'insurmountable barrier'
- Sustained high levels of restraint use in Australia



- Has the Australian public grasped the link between:
 - non-restraint use and risk of injury/death?
 - alcohol use and risk of crashing/injury/death?

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Speeding

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Insurmountable Barrier ?

It is suggested that the fundamental source of public resistance is that motorists do not feel vulnerable to death or injury under normal driving conditions.

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Speeding

- Extensive enforcement & education, but remains prevalent
 - Implicated in 34% fatalities & 13% serious injuries
- Link between travel speed and crash outcome appears not to be widely accepted
- Deliberate disregard for speed limits by some
- Vocal minorities advocating for reduction of speed management strategies
- NT recent announcement
 - Trial of return to open speed limit on highways

Australian Transport Council, 2011; Fletter, Lennon & Watson, 2007; Ipsos Social Research Institute, 2012

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Everyone ~~X~~ does it...

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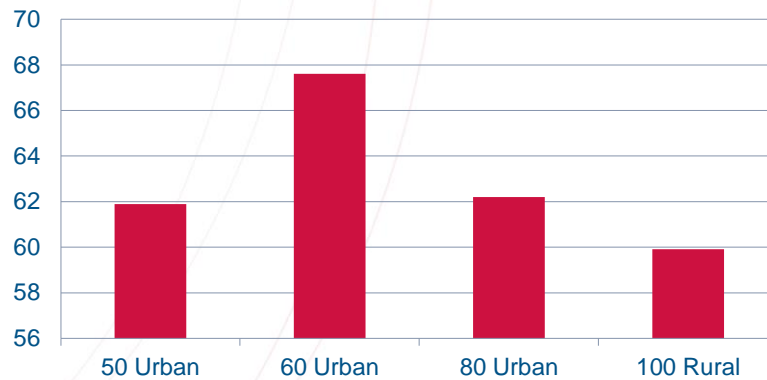
Mean speeds

	New Zealand Mean speed	Queensland Mean speed
100 km/hr speed limit (Rural)	95.6 km/hr	97.84 km/hr
60 km/hr speed limit (Urban)	51.3 km/hr	56.76 km/hr
80 km/hour (Rural)	-	74.8 km/hr
50 km/hr Urban Mean Speed	-	46.19 km/hr

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Source: NZ Police Assistant Commissioner Cliff, 2013; Kloeden, 2012

% At or Below Speed Limit, Qld



Source: Kloeden, 2012

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**We can help to change the
conversation.....**

Not everyone speeds !

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Challenges for Speed Management ^[1]

- Not as simple as transferring what has worked for Drink driving/seat belt use
 - Speeding is transient
- Not a 1 size fits all approach
- Need to target motivations for speeding
- Counteract media glorification
- Counteract discrediting of enforcement
- New technology may assist
 - Point to point speed enforcement
 - ISA

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Challenges for Speed Management ^[2]

- Mismatch between beliefs and behaviours
- Acceptance of tolerances
 - Reported belief that we should be able to drive:
 - 65 km+ in 60 km/hr zone (48%)
 - Up to 110 km in 100 km/hr zone (35%)
- Yet, speed identified most commonly as factor that contributes to crashes (54%)
- 70% - chance of being involved in a crash significantly increases if speed increases by 10 km/hr

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Petroulias, 2011



Phone Use While Driving

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Prevalence

- Hand held use illegal in all AU jurisdictions
- NSW:
 - 88% drivers reported making calls while driving
 - 68% reported sending sms
- Large differences in self-report vs observational studies
 - Deliberately concealing text messaging

Campbell, 2012; Gauld et al, 2013

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Beliefs ≠ Behaviour

- Similar to speeding
- Misalignment between belief & behaviour
 - Extensive media attention/public outrage when crash/fatality involves phone-using driver
 - Calls for technology to block signal while driving

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Enforcing Phone Use

- Difficult to enforce (concealment)
- Therefore, education campaigns may be particularly important to persuade drivers not to engage in this high risk behaviour
- Naturalistic driving studies may also provide important information for this purpose
 - Ability to show real consequences:
 - Near misses, loss of vehicle control
 - Collisions

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Role of the Media ^[1]

- Australia's excellent progress since 1970
 - **But who knows about it apart from us ?**
- Qld drivers surveyed about # fatalities
 - Majority under-estimated extent of deaths
 - Half reported less than half actual #
- Media may, in part, contribute to under-estimates
 - Some estimates based on small numbers heard in media during Christmas/Easter periods

Role of the Media ^[2]

- May inadvertently give impression that these are the bulk of fatalities
- This misperception
 - Is likely to do little to highlight true extent of road trauma
 - May act as barrier to convincing motorists of need to heed road safety messages & need for new countermeasures



Summary

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- Not all behaviours are the same, therefore not all solutions are the same
- Need to:
 - Promote understanding of road safety gains
 - Continue work to promote change in community norms associated with speeding/phone use
 - Use new technologies to promote safety
 - Influence 'Cognitions' within traffic safety culture context
 - Attitudes, values, expectations of violations
- Create a culture accepting of new initiatives aimed at saving lives

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Questions ?

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