

## **Information to support road safety communication**

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### **Abstract**

The Motor Accident Commission (MAC) is the CTP Insurer in South Australia, and also has the responsibility for road safety communication in that State. There are many road safety issues that could be addressed through communication. Information is required to identify these, priorities them and properly address them. There is a role here for market research, but this Paper will concentrate on the road crash statistics and road crash research that form the base for the communications planning.

### **Keywords**

Marketing, promotions, road safety research, communications, speed, cycling safety

### **Report**

The Motor Accident Commission (MAC) is the CTP Insurer in South Australia, and, since 2007, has had the responsibility for road safety communication in that State.

The communication is through television, radio, print media, ‘new’ media, and regional billboards. There are also promotional activities with organisations, such as the Motorcycle Riders Association Toy Run.

Numerous road safety issues can be addressed through communications. Issues must be significant and amenable to marketing and/or promotions. Budgets are always limited, thus there should be an ‘evidence based’ approach to the choice of issues. In the real world, evidence is not always available or clear, and this can influence decisions.

Australia adopts the ‘Safe Systems’ approach to road safety, identifying issues of: safe speeds, safe people, safe vehicles and safe roads. The first two issues are particularly relevant to marketing. Marketing can also have a role in promoting safer vehicles.

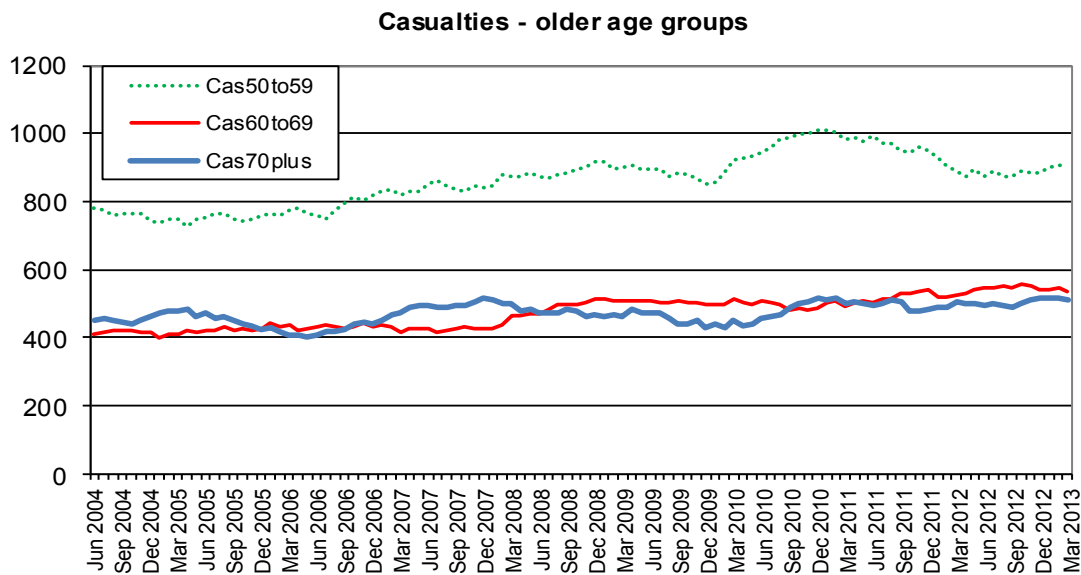
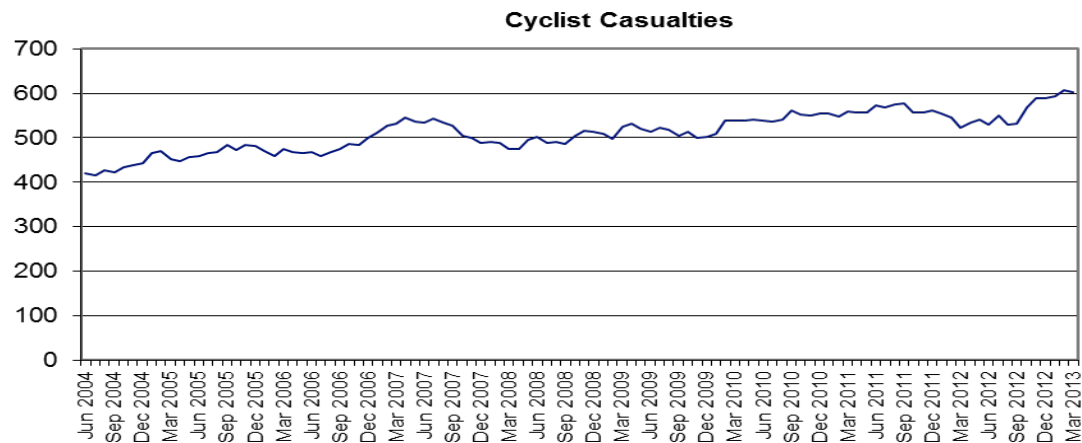
In Australia, the major behavioural issues that might be addressed by marketing and promotion are :

- Speed and speeding
- Drink and drug driving
- Seatbelt use
- Fatigue
- Inattention/distraction

There are also opportunities to address the various road user types (eg motorcyclists) and specific age, gender or ethnic groups, and geographic regions.

MAC has access to databases of road crashes, CTP claims, enforcement statistics and various relevant denominators (eg registered vehicle numbers). MAC also has access to published research, and through sponsorship of the Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR), can commission new research or literature reviews.

Each year, a broad summary of the road safety situation is prepared at MAC to help in the planning for the marketing and promotions for the new year. The standard major issues are covered in these summaries. In addition, each month MAC prepares a package of trend graphs (12-month moving totals) for a host of other indicators. The following two graphs are selected from that package. They were chosen because they revealed an upward trend, as opposed to the vast majority of the graphs.



CTP claims and other information

MAC is the CTP insurer in SA. In addition to a general responsibility to reduce road trauma, MAC has a responsibility to maintain a viable CTP scheme, which includes controlling crash costs. Reducing the number and severity of crashes, generally reduces CTP costs. Often this will require the same types of road safety initiatives as for general trauma reduction, but sometimes priorities will change. For example, pedestrian injuries are often more severe than a normal injury, cost more, and may warrant greater attention than say car occupant injuries.

The following table gives a broad indication of the importance of various issues. There is no hard-and-fast rule in how to balance the various issues here, and in the end, they merely form some background for a round-table discussion on priorities. Whether an issue is amenable to marketing and promotions, is another critical input.

	2007-2011			2012			CTP cost % (2007 to 2012)
	Fatalities	Serious injuries	Casualties	Fatalities	Serious injuries	Casualties	
Speeding	36%*	?	?	33%*	?	?	?
Drink driving	31%*	19%	11%	21%*	18%	9%	15%
Drug driving	23%*	?	?	23%*	?	?	?
Restraint use (non)	34%	10%	3.4%	34%	9%	2.5%	8%
Fatigue	12%	8%	4%	10%	8%	3%	4%
Inattention	24%	44%	44%	28%	45%	46%	?
Motorcyclists	13%	13%	6%	16%	15%	6%	11%
Pedestrians	12%	9%	5%	10%	10%	5%	12%
Cyclists	3%	6%	6%	3%	10%	8%	6%
Young (16-24)	26%	26%	24%	18%	24%	22%	19%
Older (70+)	15%	8%	6%	23%	10%	7%	3%
Rural	61%	48%	24%	67%	50%	23%	16%
Loss of control	49%	46%	24%	46%	44%	22%	10%
Intersection	24%	36%	51%	17%	32%	52%	52%
Rear end	3%	7%	29%	7%	6%	32%	34%
Truck	13%	6%	5%	18%	7%	5%	7%

\*Detailed analysis of individual fatality records.

Once the issues to be addressed are identified for the year, and budgets allocated for each issue, detailed road safety reports are prepared. The responsibility then passes to those within MAC who must prepare briefs for the marketing agencies. The process in preparing the road safety reports for two issues, speeding and cycling, are described below.

### Speed/speeding

The issue of speed/speeding is probably the most important in road safety. Marketing might be used to help in gaining public acceptance for lower speed limits, but for this campaign, attention was given to reducing speeding. Reports from in-depth studies provided the principles for attention to speeding. Although mass database records for speeding have limitations, profiles of speeders can be produced from odds-ratio statistics - eg identifying problem age groups, localities etc. Enforcement statistics also contribute to the profiling.

In the preparation for a new campaign on speeding, attention was given to whether there was greater potential reduction in road trauma from targeting high, mid or low level speeding. CASR was commissioned to research that issue, and pointed to the low-level speeders (Doecke). This was complemented by an internal assessment that it should prove easier to influence the type of people who were low-level speeders than others. The CASR report showed that the great gain with low-level speeders came because there were so many of them. This also suggested that television marketing could be cost effective.

### Cycling

In the period 2006 to 2010, cyclists accounted for 3% of fatalities in SA, 6% of casualties and 5% of CTP claim costs. Fatality statistics had changed little over the years, but casualties and claim costs were increasing rapidly. This was probably associated with the increased popularity of cycling. A decision was taken to address the issue, but initially through promotions rather than the highly expensive television advertising.

Profiles of cycling crashes and casualties were prepared. There were a number of useful research reports from Australia on the issue which added to the profiling, but there were also holes in the information, including detail for South Australia. Accordingly, CASR was commissioned to prepare several reports. One report (Lindsay) presented a detailed profile of a sample of cyclists seriously injured, including past riding experience and behaviour on the day of the crash. A second report (Raftery) investigated the use of high visibility clothing.

Research has shown that most cyclist crashes involving motor vehicles, were the fault of the driver of a motor vehicle. It seemed that the drivers simply had not seen the cyclist, or saw the cyclist when it was too late to react. An obvious solution was to improve the visibility of the cyclist. The “Be Safe. Be Seen” campaign was born, and the initial move was to team with the Tour Down Under.

### The team

The statistician/researcher has input to the start of the planning process, but there are many more players in the process from plan to campaign. MAC has an in-house marketing team that uses the road safety statistics and research, plus the results of market research, to develop appropriate messages likely to resonate with audiences. Several agencies are contracted to support the process and carry the brief through to implementation.

Colmar Brunton

Research the message – what to say

MEC

Place the message – where to say it

Clemenger BBDO Adelaide

Make the message – how to say it

### **References**

Doecke SD, Kloeden CN, McLean AJ (2011) **Casualty crash reductions from reducing various levels of speeding** (CASR076), Centre for Automotive Safety Research, Adelaide.

Lindsay VL (2013) **Injured cyclist profile: an in-depth study of a sample of cyclists injured in road crashes in South Australia** (CASR112), Centre for Automotive Safety Research, Adelaide.

Raftery SJ, Grigo JAL (2013) **The conspicuity of South Australian cyclists: implications for safety** (CASR113), Centre for Automotive Safety Research, Adelaide.