

Working Toward Effective Integration of Road Safety into Major Transport Projects: Learnings from NSW

Peter Warrington, Luke Wilby, Alice Ma, Ralston Fernandes, Melvin Eveleigh, Bernard Carlon

NSW Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW

Abstract

Road safety engineering treatments play a key role in reducing serious casualties on NSW roads. Despite a recent record investment in safety infrastructure in NSW, there is an even bigger investment in major transport infrastructure projects.

The Safe System approach is widely adopted by road safety practitioners, but less widely applied to major transport projects.

This paper outlines how embedding road safety principles into major infrastructure projects is critical to achieving long-term safety benefits. It draws on collaborations such as Sydney's light rail projects, and looks to further opportunities to reduce serious casualties as NSW continues to grow.

Background, Summary and Conclusions

Road trauma costs the NSW community around \$5 billion per year. The NSW Government is strongly committed to improving road safety for all road users and the *NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012-2021* (Transport for NSW, 2012) aims to achieve at least a 30 per cent annual reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by the end of 2021.

Road safety infrastructure improvements play a key role in reducing serious casualties on NSW roads, and there has been a recent record investment in safety infrastructure improvements in NSW. At the same time, there is an even bigger investment in major infrastructure projects throughout the broader transport sector including new and/or improved motorways planned or under construction, increased major road infrastructure investment at a State and National level, and increased investment in light and metro rail systems that connect with other transport modes in the road environment.

The Safe System approach to road safety is adopted worldwide to reduce road trauma, and underpins all road safety work in NSW. The approach recognises there is a limit to the forces humans can withstand in a crash, while accepting that human error on our roads is inevitable (International Transport Forum, 2008). While this approach is widely understood and adopted by road safety practitioners, it is less widely applied to major projects outside of road safety.

The Centre for Road Safety has been working closely with Transport for NSW's light rail teams to improve safety on their projects, which has resulted in road safety audits being mainstreamed into all new projects at the design, planning and construction phases. Embedding core road safety principles into major infrastructure programs, such as light rail projects, the construction of Sydney's Metro Rail expansion and the revitalisation of the Sydney CBD allows the whole transport sector to achieve sustainable long-term safety benefits. This is also a cost-effective approach to achieving these benefits, given the substantially greater investment that would be needed to retrofit safety improvements in the future.

There is already overlap between road safety and the Government's wider programs and objectives, such as greater pedestrianisation. As Sydney and other areas in NSW continue to grow and change, there will be opportunities for further integrating road safety principles into the broader core

business of government – such as the design of urban renewal areas, and congestion management strategies. Taking these opportunities to embed road safety into the broader transport agenda will greatly improve road safety outcomes across the entire existing and future NSW road network.

References

- Transport for NSW (2012). *NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012-2021*. Publicly downloadable from: http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/road_safety_strategy.pdf.
- International Transport Forum (2008). *Towards Zero: Ambitious Road Safety Targets and the Safe System Approach*. OECD, Paris.