

speeds cornerstone, fine tuning of speed limits in and around remote centres is outlined as a specific initiative for regional and remote areas. The incorporation of these specific initiatives as well as the initiatives outlined for all of Western Australia in *Towards Zero* into the actions, responsibilities and timeline plan from the meeting in Yalgoo demonstrate that the safe system approach can be applied to a remote setting [1].

Overall the approach to pedestrian safety in the township of Yalgoo was a positive step in the right direction however the process and approach used can always be improved. The information provide to the meeting by relevant stakeholders was relevant but not comprehensive. A holistic approach to removing death and serious injury on the Shire of Yalgoo road network would take into consideration all crash types. Pedestrian safety within the Shire of Yalgoo is a minor issue and an in depth analysis shows single vehicle run-off-road crashes to be the main cause of serious injury and death.

A longer lead time would allow for the preparation of a comprehensive objective data set to provide a detailed background of the issue. For example, a road safety audit could have been conducted on the road section which would have assisted in identifying a number of technical issues. A stronger explanation of the safe system approach would also have added value and improved the outcomes from the meeting. One other consideration is the inclusion of a number of other agencies and community members to strengthen the community and agency support for action on the issue.

The actions in the meeting highlight short, medium, long term and ongoing actions which provide a framework to improve pedestrian safety in the shire of Yalgoo. The framework is aligned to *Towards Zero*, and will be actioned over a number of years. Due to the long term actions outlined the success of the framework will not be known for some time but many of the short term actions on the framework have already been actioned. Community involvement and support has been a key factor in the process to date and the high level of community and agency participation shows a shared responsibility for road safety in the Shire of Yalgoo.

Conclusion

The use of the OLA Process has highlighted that the safe system approach to road safety can be applied in a remote setting. Key to the success of any road safety initiatives in remote areas is community and agency participation as well as strong leadership from one agency (in this case the Shire of Yalgoo).

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The Advantages of the National Road Safety Council as an Independent National Body promoting road safety in Australia

by RFS Job and R Cook

National Road Safety Council, Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Abstract

In Australia, the accountability for, and management of, road safety rests almost entirely with the states and territories. In order to promote road safety more effectively and nationally, the jurisdictions work together in several ways, including the National Road Safety Executive Group, and the creation of National Road Safety Strategies each covering periods of a decade. Critical national advocacy

groups already exist, including the Australasian College of Road Safety, ANCAP, and the Australian Automobile Association (AAA). In addition, the states, territories, and Commonwealth Governments agreed to create the National Road Safety Council (NRSC), an independent body working at the national level for road safety, but with funding from all the jurisdictions. This paper identifies advantages of this body in advancing road safety, and considers the best ways for the NRSC to move forward.

Key advantages of the NRSC include: (1) independence of commentary from Government and credibility as an unbiased advocacy group (unlike the Government experts in each jurisdiction who are often presented in the media as simply defending the Governments position rather than bringing evidence based expertise); (2) independence from the pressure of the views of members (which may sometimes limit the evidence basis of road safety positions of motoring clubs); and (3) the funding base, which while small in comparison with the jurisdictions, is still large compared with other independent voices such as the ACRS. The NRSC has three strategic advantages that it aims to capture: (1) by purchasing materials or processes for national use it captures efficiencies over each state conducting its own purchase process; (2) as an independent voice the NRSC can advocate courageous actions, helping the political process, applying pressure for national uniformity, and encouraging stronger decision making through the knowledge that the other states are doing it and the feeling that ‘I am not alone in this’; (3) the NRSC has sufficient funds to trial some promising programs and conduct key pieces of research. Examples of these are identified from the activities of the NRSC to date, including the funding of materials, advocacy to the media, and the trialling of programs.

Keywords

Indigenous road safety, National Road Safety Strategy, Road safety advocacy, Road safety leadership, Serious injuries, Stakeholder consultation

Introduction

Australia’s achievements in road safety over recent decades continued in 2011; the first year of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 [1]. 2011 saw a 4.4% reduction in deaths on our roads compared with 2010 - that is a saving of 60 lives. Nonetheless, we can and should be doing better. Australia is ranked 14th of the 27 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in terms of road traffic deaths per 100,000 population, demonstrating that others are doing significantly better than Australia.

Injuries are also of great importance in road safety. Unfortunately, there is a long lag time in the collection and collation of these data, which are thus not yet available for comment for 2011. While a longer lead time is understandable because of the much larger volume of data, this limits the use of serious injury data in news and advocacy because by the time they are available they are no longer seen as recent or newsworthy.

Unlike the large majority of countries [3], in Australia road safety is managed largely independently by each state or territory rather than being managed nationally. The state or territory governments are held accountable for the toll of death and injury in their jurisdiction, and have the power to create and revise road safety policy independently in their jurisdiction. Thus, significant differences exist in almost every aspect of road safety policy, including separate speed zoning guideline documents, distinct penalty regimens and distinct graduated licensing systems, which vary from requiring 120 hours of learner training before moving to a provisional licence, to 50 hours, to no minimum required hours. Even policy on vehicle inspection and road design requirements are set largely independently within the states. The Commonwealth government sets vehicle standards for safety through the Australian Design Rules (ADRs), although recently a state (Victoria) set vehicle design requirements in excess of the ADRs. These differences exist despite attempts to create national uniformity through various mechanisms including model road laws, which the jurisdictions adopt to varying extents. One task of the National Road Safety Council (NRSC) is to promote and facilitate national action for road safety.

This paper describes the role of the NRSC, its advantages as a road safety advocacy and action group, and outlines its work to date.

The Objective and Composition of the NRSC

The NRSC’s objective is to contribute to the reduction in death and serious injury on Australian roads by facilitating the development and implementation of effective road safety measures.

Our roles are to: heighten awareness of road safety issues; undertake research that assists in improving road safety; raise the profile of road safety with key stakeholders including government, industry, business, academia, and the community; provide appropriate support for road safety activities and events; and assist with the timely implementation of road safety measures set out in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 [1] and the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 [4].

The NRSC is an independent group of committed people, made up of road safety experts and community leaders appointed by the Australian Transport Council of Ministers (now Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure: SCOTI). The NRSC first met in 2010. The five Council Members, five Road Safety Ambassadors, and Executive Director are deeply committed to eliminating trauma and loss from road crashes in Australia. The passion and

commitment of members and ambassadors have helped the Council to achieve more in its short life to date.

Advantages of the NRSC

The NRSC has five structural/resource advantages:

1. It is able to offer commentary that is independent of Government, despite the broad Government funding, and indeed its record of public comment (promoting lower speed limits and calling for point-to-point speed cameras) attests to the NRSC's strong use of this independence.
2. The NRSC has credibility as an unbiased advocacy group. It has no more expertise than the Government experts in each jurisdiction, but they have the problem of often being presented in the media, or being seen by the public, as simply defending the Government's position rather than bringing evidence based expertise.
3. Independence from the pressure of the views of a large body of members (an issue for the motoring clubs) or profits (an issue for vehicle manufacturers).
4. Access to and credibility with Governments.
5. Funding base, which while small in comparison with the jurisdictions, is still large compared with other independent voices such as the ACRS.

The NRSC also has three strategic advantages that it aims to capture:

1. By purchasing materials or processes for national use it captures efficiencies over each state conducting its own purchase process.
2. As an independent voice the NRSC can advocate courageous evidence based policy and action, promoting good policy to the community, helping the political process, applying pressure for national uniformity, and encouraging stronger decision making through the knowledge that the other states are doing it and the feeling that 'I am not alone in this.'
3. The NRSC has sufficient funds to trial some promising programs and conduct key pieces of research that may be of national relevance.

The NRSC's program of work to date and planned work reflect the leveraging of these advantages.

NRSC priority areas

The NRSC has chosen six priority areas of focus. These were chosen for the NRSC's capacity to effectively influence within them, as well as their importance to road safety as outlined below for each.

1. Safer speeds

Safe system principles identify speed as a key element to be managed in order to reduce exposure to physical force [2]. This requires revision of speed limits and improved compliance with the speed limits. In official figures, speeding is a major contributing factor in about 34 per cent of Australian road deaths and about 13 per cent of serious injuries, although this is an under-estimate.

2. Alcohol/Drug issues

Australia led the world in introducing random breath testing for alcohol (Victoria was the first state to introduce RBT, and soon after NSW was first to introduce it on a wide scale and show the large benefits). Australia is also a leading country in enforcement of drug driving, through random saliva testing (Victoria was the first state to introduce this testing for marijuana and speed, and NSW was the first to introduce it for marijuana, speed and ecstasy). While these programs work well, we can do better. Alcohol continues to be a major factor in serious crashes with around 30% of all road deaths in 2011 involving a driver over the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit. Impairment from other drugs adds to this.

3. Fleet safety including heavy vehicles

Fleet safety is about safer vehicles and safer use of them for work purposes. Encouragement and regulation for the manufacture and purchase of safer vehicles have great potential for saving lives and reducing injury in Australia, which has an average vehicle age around 10 years. The risk of death or serious injury in a crash is lower for later model vehicles: the risk in a vehicle made in 2007 is about half that of a vehicle made in 1987. Heavy vehicles are substantially over-represented in fatal crashes, on both per vehicle and per kilometre of travel bases. Many factors contribute to this over-representation: they are an unforgiving object of great momentum in collisions with other vehicles, in addition to behavioural issues of fatigue, speeding, drug use, and failure to wear seat belts.

4. Indigenous road safety

Indigenous Australians are 2.6 times more likely to be killed in a road crash and 1.3 times more likely to suffer a serious traffic-related injury than non-indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians make up an estimated 5 per cent of road deaths and 3 per cent of serious injuries. Many indigenous Australians also have difficulty legally accessing the road transport system as licensed drivers due to issues of proof of identity, remoteness and access to training.

5. Motorcycle safety

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of motorcyclist deaths increased by 17 per cent, while the rest of the road toll decreased significantly. 2011 went against this trend, with less motorcyclist deaths than in 2010. Nonetheless, in 2011, motorcycle riders made up 15 per cent of deaths, yet motorcycle usage accounts for about one per cent of vehicle-kilometres travelled. Motorcycling activity has grown rapidly.

6. Young driver safety

In 2011, people aged 17–25 years made up 23% of drivers killed on Australia’s roads, but represent only 16% of the adult population. In total 279 people aged 17-25 died on Australia’s roads in 2011 (see Table 1). Road crashes are the leading cause of death for this age group.

NRSC work and projects

The Council has a number of projects completed, ongoing, or in planning. Key examples of each are described below, to provide insight into the work of the NRSC.

Indigenous driver training

The Driver Safe NT Remote project (see Figure 1) is a flagship project for the NRSC, which is providing \$1m of funding over two years. This innovative trial involves a driver training and education program being delivered to specific indigenous communities in remote areas of the Northern Territory over a two-year period, which commenced at the end of March 2012.

A major issue facing regional and remote indigenous communities is the lack of licensed drivers. A complex range of factors contribute to this, including issues with

proof of formal identification which their non-indigenous counterparts take for granted, language barriers, the reduced availability of licensing services, plus a lack of access to appropriate vehicles and supervised learner driving. Directly associated with these challenges are a disproportionately high indigenous prison population rate due to a high number of repeat traffic offences, and a reduced ability to access employment and other social and developmental opportunities. The associated over-representation of indigenous people in road fatalities and injuries is also well recognised. This confluence of factors is a key contributor to disadvantage.

This project addresses the above factors. The Council also expects that this program will foster safer behaviour by providing improved driving experience while learning, and through the incentive to comply with road rules by having a licence to lose and starting out within the system instead of on the outside from the beginning. The NRSC is a joint funder of the program in partnership with the NT Department of Lands and Planning and the Territory Insurance Office. The NRSC funding will assist this program in building capacity within indigenous communities, directly improving road safety and overcoming barriers to obtaining a licence and finding employment for indigenous drivers. These objectives strongly support the NRSC’s key priority of indigenous road safety.

In the short time the program has been running many indigenous people have already gained a licence, and as an unexpected benefit of having the relevant staff available in the community, six drivers were able to upgrade their licences to become “bush taxi” drivers.

These early successes already point to the possibility of similar programs being adopted successfully in other jurisdictions.

Table 1. Road traffic deaths by age group and gender in Australia

Year	Males	Females	Age 0-16	Age 17-20	Age 21-25	Age 26-39	Age 40-59	Age 60 +
2001	1,265	471	136	245	205	410	374	376
2010	980	371	74	173	163	305	356	280
2011	933	356	98	136	143	277	340	294

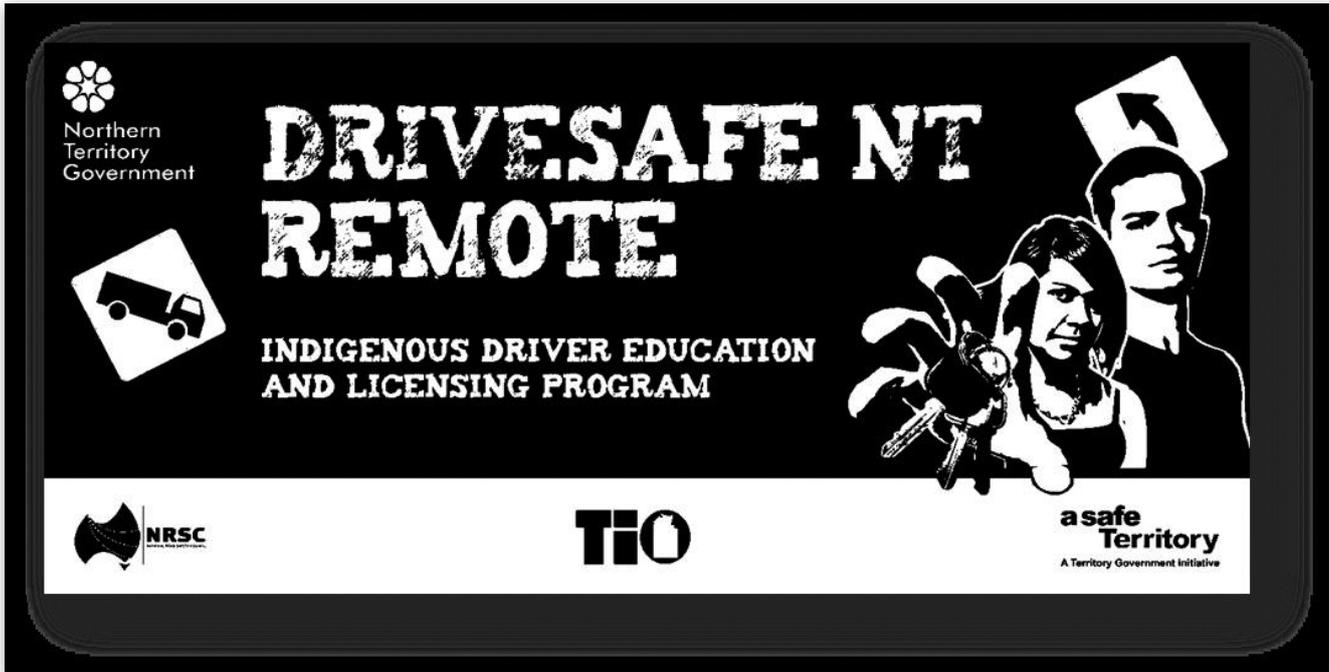


Figure 1. Promotional material for the Driver Safe NT Remote project

Engaging the Road Safety and Road User Communities

A key role of the NRSC is to consult and engage with stakeholders, the community and Government for road safety. The Council has delivered effectively on this role. Road safety is a complex problem in which commitment and concerted actions from many players are required to succeed in reducing the toll of death and serious injury. Some sound evidence-based road safety policy and practice can be challenging for the community to accept. NRSC aims in consultation and engagement are to increase awareness and sustained commitment by all actors in the road safety field, to increase community understanding of the National Road Safety Strategy [1] and the need for change to improve road safety, to promote and facilitate road safety, to forge critical partnerships across relevant government, industry and community sectors. The NRSC has been active in this arena.

Engaging with stakeholders

The Council lobbied the road freight industry on speed limiter tampering. Invited talks promoting road safety were also delivered to meetings of key road safety stakeholders: the trucking industry at ITTEC12: The International Truck, Trailer and Equipment Conference, Melbourne; the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) seminar in Adelaide; and the ACRS Media and Morality Seminar, Sydney. Further formal talks and informal discussions are already planned for the remainder of the year, with various stakeholders.

The Council has also consulted many other organisations prominently including the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), Transport and Road Safety Research (The University of NSW), The George Institute for Global Health (The University of Sydney), Pedestrian Council of Australia, Centre for Automotive Safety Research (The University of Adelaide), Monash University Accident Research Centre, the Australasian College of Road Safety and the National Transport Commission. The Ambassadors have engaged with stakeholders such as the motoring clubs and police.

Finally, the Council also sponsors and supports strong advocacy groups and events, such as this ACRS Conference, other conferences, the Ride Beyond the Trauma event, and the National Local Government Road Safety Awards.

Engaging with Government

The Council have engaged the various levels of Government including visiting and consulting all the state and territory governments, as well as the Commonwealth; resulting in better understanding of road safety issues, and improved collaborations. Key changes from these meetings include working on specific issues within jurisdictions, and a focus on rural road safety in response to the over-representation of rural and regional people in serious crashes compared with metropolitan dwellers. The Council sponsored the National Local Government Road Safety Award, provided road safety analysis and advice to the Motor Accidents Commission of South Australia

(MAC), and lobbied for a ban on radar detectors in Western Australia. The Council also promoted evidence based road safety practice in face to face meetings, conversations and correspondence with Ministers and their staff.

Engaging the public through various media

The NRSC is again upgrading its website to better represent and communicate its messages. The ambassadors have been invaluable in continuing engagement with the community on road safety issues, especially through Ms Melissa Doyle on television and Mr Neil Mitchell on radio.

This year, the NRSC contributed to the public dialogue on road safety by regular reporting of the Council's initiatives and views in the media. The NRSC received more media coverage than last year, stimulating public interest and dialogue. This has included state and national television coverage, many regional, state and national radio interviews, and extensive print media coverage. Coverage has included over 40 radio interviews in 2012 and has often been high profile and national, including national television (Sunrise, and The Project) as well as front page stories (Sydney Morning Herald). The Council promoted its activities and key actions from the United Nations Global Road Safety Plan [4] and the National Road Safety Strategy [1], including:

- The application of safe system principles.
- The over-representation of rural people in serious crash and the risks of trees near roadsides.
- Safer vehicles for young drivers.
- Wire rope barriers.
- Road safety statistics and risk.
- Holidays and driving risks.
- The safety value of enforcement and the success of double demerit points in NSW.
- The importance of speed enforcement for road safety.
- Point to point speed enforcement.
- Speed limits that better reflect risk.

Good Gear Guide and the Driveway safety brochure

The NRSC has funded and distributed a number of information brochures targeting particular communities of interest and assisting in heightening public awareness of specific areas of risk in road safety, leveraging the benefits of national purchase rather than by each jurisdiction. These include *The Good Gear Guide*, an evidence-based publication advising motorcyclists on the best type of

protective clothing to use when riding a motorcycle and the *Where Are Your Kids* brochure that addresses safety in home driveways to assist in avoiding the unfortunate reality of children being run over and killed or seriously injured in driveways.

Visiting drivers

Significant risk is created by international drivers coming to Australia for holidays from countries in which they have learned to drive on the right side of the road. It is easy for drivers to revert to old habits and start driving on the right in Australia, risking severe crash types such as head-on crashes. This is a particular challenge for road safety management because the conventional means of communication to the motoring public (such as through television or newspapers) are not likely to be effective for this risk group. The NRSC has designed stickers to go into hire cars to help manage this risk. These KEEP LEFT stickers with appropriate guiding arrows are designed to be placed inside hire cars. One major hire company has already ordered the stickers and the NRSC is negotiating with the other major companies.

Motorcycle and scooter safety summit

The NRSC is working towards hosting, in consultation with the Motorcycle Safety Consultative Committee, a Motorcycle and Scooter Safety Summit late in 2012. Attendance would be invited including key stakeholders representing the various interest groups that have links to motorcycling activities. The NRSC wants this forum to tackle real issues, engage in frank discussions, and develop achievable outcomes that will assist in increasing safety for motorcyclists.

Survey of Community Attitudes to Road Safety

The NRSC jointly funded a survey of community attitudes to road safety, with the Department of Transport and Infrastructure (Commonwealth). A total of 1,555 interviews were conducted with people aged 15 years and over. The issues examined include: perceived causes of road crashes, exposure and attitudes to random breath testing, attitudes to speed, perceptions of police enforcement, mobile phone use while driving, reported usage of seatbelts, involvement in road crashes, and experience of fatigue while driving. The results of the survey are available for all to use, at: http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/publications/2011/community_att_11.aspx

Other projects planned and underway

The NRSC has a number of other projects underway or committed, including:

- Funding and contributing content input to the Monash University Accident Research Centre's development and delivery of a road safety leadership and management training program; an important capacity building program for road safety management.
- Reviewing and assimilating information on speed, speeding and road safety for the production of readily accessed and understood materials on this complex and poorly understood issue.
- Advocating for the effective inclusion of road safety in the national school curriculum, to ensure road safety can be taught consistently in schools reaching children from an early age.
- Examining the features and effectiveness of safe driving agreements.
- Managing a project to evaluate the suitability of area classifications (as remote, regional, and urban, etc.) for appropriateness for road safety data and comparison purposes. The identification of a suitable area classification will allow more effective targeting and management of road safety for remote, regional and metropolitan environments, rather than maintaining almost purely state and territory based comparisons, which can be misleading.
- Support to promote safer vehicles to the community, based on the Used Car Safety Ratings and further support for promotion of the ANCAP ratings of new vehicles.

Conclusions

The NRSC has strategic and structural advantages in the fight to eliminate death and serious injury on our roads. It is making full use of these advantages in advocacy, support of research, provision of programs and educational materials. The Council is advocating strongly for road safety from a position of independence, is providing sound evidence-based advice to Governments, and is managing projects to directly improve road safety and provide information to leverage road safety investment.

The NRSC also believes that serious injury data could be much more useful in advocacy and promotion of issues to the public if these data were available sooner. The NRSC appreciates that there is a challenge in delivering this.

Acknowledgement

The NRSC is funded by each state and territory government and the Commonwealth government.

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Next issue: The next issue of the journal, Vol 24.1, will be a Special Issue devoted to the Safer People pillar of the Safe System. Articles are now invited for this issue to be published February 2013.