

Leading Law Enforcement Towards Zero: NSW Police Force Road Policing Strategy 2021

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Abstract

In response to the release of (the NSW Government) Road Safety Plan 2021, New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) has developed *Road Policing Strategy 2021*.

The plan, devised by NSWPF Traffic and Highway Patrol Command, does not simply rebadge the objectives contained in the Road Safety Plan 2021 with a police logo, but commits NSWPF to an ambitious plan of general road safety deterrence and specific road policing activity.

The Road Policing Strategy 2021 is our roadmap to achieving the objectives of Road Safety Plan 2021 and the integration of Towards Zero/Safe Systems into NSWPF business-as-usual.

Background

In 2018 Transport for NSW released *Road Safety Plan 2021*. The plan will "reinforce strong partnerships between government, local councils, stakeholders and the community". As a key government stakeholder, NSWPF reviewed Road Safety Plan 2021 and integrated future road policing strategies with the plan's priority areas.

Road Policing Strategy 2021 explains what NSWPF will do to support Road Safety Plan 2021, and how NSWPF can embed Towards Zero as "business as usual".

Road Safety Plan 2021 Priority Areas: NSWPF actions

NSWPF Road Policing Strategy 2021 will focus on priority areas the overarching government plan such as speeding (Road Safety Plan 2021, P8).

Table 1. Behavioural factors in NSW fatalities (Road Safety Plan 2021 P8)



Speeding represents the largest causation factor in NSW fatalities. Highway Patrol vehicles are equipped with three speed measuring instruments and there are 1,400 Highway Patrol officers that detect and stop speeding motorists at the roadside.

There are other behaviours that contribute to road trauma and Highway Patrol are assisted by other members of the 17,000-strong NSWPF such as General Duties officers attached to Police Area Commands and Districts.

Road Policing Strategy 2021 has seen Highway Patrol and Generalist officers' team up and form *Strike Force Puma* to target high-risk offenders such as disqualified drivers who continue to drive.

In its first six months, Puma laid 143 traffic and criminal charges and 720 other legal actions (eg penalty notices). General duties officers who were rotated through Puma can go back to their commands and reinforce that road safety is indeed everyone’s business.

Road Policing Strategy 2021 formalises a 70:30 sharing of random breath testing (RBT) and roadside or mobile drug testing (MDT) which is doubling to 200,000 roadside tests by the end of 2020, with Police Area Commands and Districts carrying out 30% of this task.

Figure 1. NSWPF Road Policing Strategy



Towards Zero: NSW Police Actions

Embedding Safe Systems into Government business-as-usual is a recommendation from the *Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020*. For road policing, this represents a paradigm shift from the "E's of road safety" for which police were seen as responsible for the E of enforcement.

Road Policing Strategy 2021 shows how police can impact on all safe systems pillars. Police are role-models for the community and need to make decisions with safety in mind.

For example, Police are provided with the safest possible vehicles which, when on-sold to the public via auction, increases the safety of the used vehicle fleet. Educating police about safer vehicles influences their decision making so they buy safer family vehicles.

There are other areas where efforts can be re-doubled, such as Local Council Traffic Committees where police can be advocates for safer roads.

Finally, projects to replace 20th century police computer systems should enhance the quality of road policing data and improve tasking and deployment.

Conclusion

The underlying philosophy behind Road Policing Strategy 2021 is that *Road Safety is everyone's responsibility. We must believe that deaths and serious injuries on NSW roads are unacceptable.*"

References

- Road Safety Plan 2021 (2018), Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety, Retrieved from towardszero.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/road-safety-plan.PDF
- Woolley, J., Crozier, J., (2018), Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. Retrieved from roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/files/NRSS_Inquiry_Final_Report_September_2018_v2.pdf