Implementing the Queensland Road Safety Policy

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Abstract

In 2018, senior leadership within Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) signed off the first "Road Safety Policy". The policy aims to embed Safe System principles in TMRs business and includes two key methods being, 1, to incorporate default treatments in all new projects and 2, to mandate the use of a newly developed Safe System Project Management Control Checklist and utilise the Austroads' Safe System Assessment Framework throughout all stages of the projects lifecycle from early concept planning to finalisation. The implementation of the Policy included stakeholder engagement prior to final sign-off, workshops with affected areas and the development of fact sheets and frequently asked questions.

Background

The Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015–21 is the first time a Queensland Government has committed to a vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries. The strategy is firmly based on Safe System principles and is framed by the guiding vision that no person should be killed or seriously injured on Queensland's roads.

The Safe System's guiding principles are centered on human physical frailty, that people make mistakes and the transport system must accommodate for these, without resulting in death or serious injury. The four pillars featured in Safe System philosophy are safe roads and roadsides, safe speeds, safe road users and safe vehicles. Queensland's safe system approach encourages transport users to be alert and compliant, while aiming to reduce the severity of crashes through protective infrastructure treatments, speed reductions, improved driving behaviours and vehicle safety features.

The supporting Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2017–19 delivers and supports significant long-term improvements to the safety of Queensland's road transport system, especially through strategic investment in infrastructure safety, safer road users and capacity building work. While there are dedicated road safety programs to deliver on many of these actions, the challenge is to ensure that transport investment which is being driven by other outcomes also prioritises the delivery of safety improvements.

The Policy

The Road Safety Policy aims to incorporate these Safe System principles in the project lifecycle of all projects in all investment programs, through the planning, development, implementation and finalisation phases. There are two main goals of the policy, the first is to incorporate known and accepted best practice treatments in to all projects as the 'default standard', 13 of these are included in the Policy; the second is to aid the incorporation of the Safe System principles using a newly developed Safe System Project Management Control Checklist and the Austroads' Safe System Assessment Framework.

The Road Safety Policy was signed off by TMR's leadership in August 2018 and went into immediate effect. Achieving the sign off by senior leadership required extensive consultation across the department.

Challenges and resolution

Since coming into effect, the Safer Roads team (the policy owners) have faced many challenges in implementing the intent of the policy. The common theme in the feedback received on the policy was around the intent of the default treatments and how they should be implemented.

To overcome these challenges and ensure the intent of the policy is met, the Safer Roads team have been conducting workshops with other teams that implement the policy as well as developing fact sheets which explain the reasoning behind the default treatments. The fact sheets are living documents which are updated in response to questions received or from further consultation with technical experts.

The Safer Roads team is also undertaking specialist Safe System Assessment training to better be able to assist the department with their obligations under the policy.

Ensuring that the Road Safety Policy is implemented effectively assists TMR in meeting its goals under the Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015–21.

References

Transport and Main Roads (2018), Road Safety Policy

Queensland Government (2015), Safer Roads, Safer Queensland: Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-21

Queensland Government (2017), Safer Roads, Safer Queensland: Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2017-19