



Joint Select Committee on Road Safety

Improving Road Safety in Australia Interim Report

July 2020

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 1 August 2019, both houses agreed to present an interim report on or before 30 March 2020 and a final report on or before 31 July 2020. On 28 November 2019, the House of Representatives agreed to extend the interim reporting date to (on or before) 31 July 2020 and the final report date to (on or before) 31 October 2020. This was agreed upon in the Senate on 2 December 2019.

The Joint Select Committee on Road Safety is appointed under a resolution of appointment which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on 1 August 2019. The resolution was amended on 02 December 2019. The committee will inquire and report on the following:

- a. the effectiveness of existing road safety support services and programs, including opportunities to integrate Safe System principles into health, education, industry and transport policy;
- b. the impact of road trauma on the nation, including the importance of achieving zero deaths and serious injuries in remote and regional areas;
- c. the possible establishment of a future parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety and its functions;
- d. measures to ensure state, territory and local government road infrastructure investment incorporates the Safe System principles;
- e. road trauma and incident data collection and coordination across Australia;
- f. recommending strategies, performance measures and targets for the next National Road Safety Strategy;
- g. recommendations for the role of the newly established Office of Road Safety; and
- h. other measures to support the Australian Parliament's ongoing resolve to reduce incidents on our roads, with a focus on the recommendations from the Inquiry into the effectiveness of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020.

1.2 On 28 November 2019, the House of Representatives agreed to extend the interim reporting date to (on or before) 31 July 2020 and the final report date to (on or before) 31 October 2020. This was agreed upon in the Senate on 2 December 2019.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The committee advertised the inquiry on its website and wrote to relevant organisations inviting written submissions. The closing date for the receipt of submissions was 31 January 2020.

- 1.4 The committee received fifty-one submissions which are available on the committee's website at:
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Road_Safety

Witnesses

- 1.5 The committee held three public hearings from 20-22 July 2020, and hopes to hold further hearings as soon as possible. The committee heard from the following individuals and organisations:

20 July 2020

Canberra – via video/teleconference

- Dr John Crozier, Chair, National Trauma Committee, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Associate Professor Jeremy Woolley, Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR)
- Australasian Trauma Society
 - Associate Professor Dr Tony Joseph, Senior Emergency Physician & Trauma Director, Royal North Shore Hospital
- NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) - Transurban Road Safety Centre
 - Professor Lynne Bilston
- Safer Australian Roads and Highways (SARAH)
 - Mr Peter Frazer, President
- Australian Road Research Board
 - David McTiernan
 - Tia Gaffney
- Austroads
 - Dr Geoff Allan
 - David Bobberman

21 July 2020

Canberra – via video/teleconference

- IAG
 - Ms Cecilia Warren, Director – Research & Development
- 3M Australia
 - Mr Kosta Karagiannopoulos, Application Engineering Specialist – Transport Safety Division
 - Mr Andrew King, Division Manager – Australia & New Zealand Transportation Safety Division 3M
- Electric Vehicle Council

- Ms Alex Kelly
- Mr Behyad Jafari
- The George Institute for Global Health
 - Dr Kate Hunter, Senior Research Fellow, Injury Division
 - Professor Rebecca Ivers, Head of School, Professor of Public Health
 - Associate Professor Julie Brown, Program Head, Injury Division
- Pedestrian Council of Australia
 - Mr Harold Scruby, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
- Australian Road Safety Foundation
 - Mr Russel White, Founder and Chief Executive Officer
- International Road Assessment Programme
 - Mr Rob McInerney, Chief Executive Officer
- National Heavy Vehicle Regulator
 - Mr Salvatore Petrocchio, Chief Executive Officer

22 July 2020

Canberra – via video/teleconference

- Transport for NSW
 - Mr Bernard Carlon, Executive Director - Centres for Road Safety and Maritime Safety
- NSW Ambulance
 - Ms Clare Beech, Executive Director
 - Mr Peter Payne, Director – Data Analytics
- Australian Motorcycle Council
- Motorcycle Council of NSW
 - Mr Brian Wood, Secretary of MCC NSW and Treasurer of AMC
 - Mr Jason Anthony, Vice-Chairman of MCC NSW
 - Mr Vivian Buck, Treasurer of MCC NSW - via teleconference
- Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads
 - Mr Andrew Mahon, General Manager, Land Transport Safety & Regulation Branch
 - Ms Joanna Robinson, Executive Director – Policy, Safety and Regulation
 - Mr Dennis Walsh, Chief Engineer
- Queensland Police Service - via teleconference
 - Assistant Commissioner Ben Marcus
- Australian Automobile Association
 - Michael Bradley
 - Mr Craig Newland

Issues raised

Governance and leadership

- 1.6 A core and central issue of the inquiry for the committee is how road safety is prioritised and managed within government of all levels, and across the broader community. It is evident that the impacts of road safety extend beyond the boundaries of transport, infrastructure and enforcement portfolios, and therefore the responsibility for addressing all aspects of road safety needs to be equally shared.
- 1.7 A key focus on leadership and governance that will instil road safety firmly in the centre of government is required. Providing an ongoing oversight role, particularly in the areas that will require transition, co-ordination and accountability, is paramount.
- 1.8 Constitutional responsibilities naturally create challenges for the effective implementation and co-ordination of a national strategy for road safety. This is reflected in the submissions to this committee, highlighting the importance of a monitoring role to ensure co-ordination across jurisdictions and all levels of government. These constitutional issues extend to the purpose and role of the Office for Road Safety, and any future parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety.

The next National Road Safety Strategy

- 1.9 With the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS)2011-20 drawing to a close and the findings of the Inquiry into the NRSS (2018) (the Inquiry) in hand, the primary Government stakeholders are all committed to significant improvements and accountability in the formulation of the next NRSS that will achieve the necessary road safety outcomes.
- 1.10 The Transport Infrastructure Council (TIC), as part of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) arrangements, has committed to the consideration of the remaining recommendations from the Inquiry in the next NRSS. The direction and progress of those recommendations are key areas for this committee to explore with the Office of Road Safety in upcoming hearings.
- 1.11 The Transport Infrastructure Council (TIC) has agreed to adopt a social model approach to underpin the action plans and acknowledges policies and actions outside these portfolios can provide leverage for more effective collaboration across society.

Data collection and dissemination

- 1.12 Of critical importance for the next strategy is the data collection, harmonisation and monitoring and reporting. The submissions and hearings to date have signalled a strong appetite for a governance and oversight role particularly in this area.
- 1.13 The committee notes that at this point in time key components of the next NRSS, including the definition and collection of serious injury data and transition plan for harmonisation across jurisdictions and further testing of the Safe Systems principles for the Australian context, have yet to be finalised. The current definition for 'serious injury' varies depending on the jurisdiction, and as part of the very foundation of the strategy, it is evident that this situation will require close attention in the development of meaningful and achievable targets and performance indicators.
- 1.14 It is not only definitions that have to be agreed, exactly what datasets to share must be agreed, and the subsequent data must be widely available. Different states hold data in different places, such as the health system, or the police or licensing systems, and this poses further problems in collecting and analysing data. The committee heard that some jurisdictions have resolved some of the data collection issues and are at different stages of developing valuable data resource systems.
- 1.15 Suggestions were heard for data sharing, such as linking closely with the Australian Trauma registry, which would have the dual advantage of linking with data from serious injury. Other approaches suggested in evidence included integrating different states' crash databases, and crash investigations processes, as well as up to date data from emergency departments and hospitals to more accurately identify road trauma.
- 1.16 The collection of data from smaller hospitals is also a major inhibitor in providing an accurate picture of road trauma, particularly in rural and regional areas. This is of particular importance when looking at the disproportionate impact that road trauma has in indigenous communities.
- 1.17 Submitters further maintained that data collection should also be extended beyond existing sources to include the impact of road trauma on the mental health of all those involved, including victims, families and first responders.

The role of a Parliamentary Standing committee

- 1.18 On top of the issues discussed above, and its oversight role of the Office of Road Safety, other roles for a Standing Committee have been proposed that include how the broader transport and infrastructure portfolio, and other department and agencies such as health and education, can contribute and support the NRSS in areas such as innovation and technology. This may involve the Committee measuring and assessing the effectiveness or

suitability of initiatives nationally. Whilst these responsibilities are held at various levels of government, opportunities for a Standing Committee to inquire on specific issues may be of benefit throughout the next strategy and will inform the final report and recommendations.

Further issues

1.19 The committee received an extensive number of submissions outlining various issues, with a substantial amount of confluence across submitters. Some of the other issues are identified below, and these issues will be explored and analysed in the committee's final report. These fall under the following broad headings:

- Jurisdictional cohesion;
- Various policy measures utilised or not by different jurisdictions, such as point to point speed cameras and mobile phone usage detection.
- Road conditions - particularly in rural and remote areas, road certification and safety ratings;
- Driver education – programs offered across jurisdictions to address particular road safety and driving issues;
- Vehicle fleet management – Age of vehicles, safety features of current fleet, and new vehicles; export controls and market behaviour around safety features; and
- Road Trauma – consequences, costs of, and response to.

Conclusion

1.20 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee has been unable to gather as much evidence as it hoped in the timeframe originally conceived by the parliament. The committee therefore submits this short interim report to inform the parliament of its activities to date, and will table its final report on or before 31 October 2020, in accordance with its resolution.

Mr Pat Conaghan MP
Chair