

Committee Secretary

Joint Select Committee on Road Safety

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Joint Select Committee on Road Safety – Terms of Reference

Thank you for the email on 4 December 2019, with an invitation to make a submission on the Terms of Reference for the recently established Joint select committee on Road Safety. Firstly, congratulations on the establishment of the Road Safety Committee. The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia (hereon referred to as Kidsafe Australia) acknowledges the importance of the enquiry and final response in addressing the unnecessary loss of lives on Australia's roads.

Background

Kidsafe Australia's purpose is to make a safer world for children by preventing and reducing the number of deaths and the severity of avoidable injuries. We are a trusted voice for children and take a leadership role by collaborating with others to foster and drive national research, advocacy and education to prevent child injury.

Kidsafe was established in 1979, as the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia during the international year of the child to address the unnecessary loss of life to Australian children from accidental injury. There are offices in all states and territories across Australia. We work at the national level with government departments, industry bodies, education providers, health professionals, the media, voluntary organisations and community groups to address child injury prevention.

Injuries are the leading cause of death in Australian children aged one to fourteen, accounting for nearly half of all deaths in this age group¹². Many of these deaths and injuries can be prevented.

Children are at significant risk of road injuries in Australia, with transport-related injuries one of the leading causes of death in children under the age of 15³. It is estimated that 1.39 million people die each year from transport-related injuries globally³, with children accounting for 186,300 of these deaths⁴. In the 2016/17 financial year alone, there were over 6,300 injuries to Australian children aged 0-14 years for Transport crashes⁵.

The road setting poses a number of injury risks, particularly to children. Road-related injuries often involve motor vehicles but may also involve children as motorcycle passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and wheeled pedestrians (eg. scooters, skateboards); the vast majority of these injuries are unintentional. The road setting is not limited to traffic areas on public roads and car parks, but also settings such as driveways, farm areas, off-road areas and skate parks.

A range of developmental, environmental and demographic factors increase a child's risk of injury on and around roads. Children's cognitive skills and motor function are not fully developed, resulting in them being more susceptible to injuries from transport related causes^{4, 6}. Their vulnerability is also increased by factors such as their small stature, their inability to assess risks, lack of supervision, inadequate use of child car seats/safety restraints or protective equipment, and limited capacity to understand of road rules⁷. Demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status have also been shown to influence the risk of transport related injuries⁶.

Comment on Terms of Reference

Kidsafe would like to acknowledge that the Terms of Reference (ToR) outlined for the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety are comprehensive and will adequately guide the development of a new National Strategy. Specific comments on relevant parts are outlined in the table below.

Terms of Reference	Kidsafe Comment
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	<p>Kidsafe supports the Committee's role in investigating the effectiveness of existing road safety support services and programs. Kidsafe delivers road safety programs and services for the community, targeting children aged less than 15 years of age. This age group is our most vulnerable and often relies on others to ensure they stay safe on and near the road. Some of our programs are funded, and others are undertaken to address a need without sufficient resourcing. Insufficient resourcing for evidence based programs at a local, state and national level is an issue facing many community organisations. Kidsafe supports a review into the coordination and delivery of all existing programs by all stakeholders (as per the ToR) to reduce duplication and ensure they align with national best practice recommendations. These include the Kidsafe and Neuroscience Research Australia <i>Best Practice Guidelines for the Safe Restraint of Children Travelling in Motor Vehicles</i> which are currently being updated.</p> <p>The current National Road Safety Strategy⁸ identifies that the responsibility for Road Safety is shared by all. Kidsafe works with both professionals and parents to ensure they have the required knowledge and skills to contribute significantly to safety on the roads.</p> <p>As an organisation that values the importance of partnership with others, Kidsafe works collaboratively at a national, state/territory and local level with health, education, industry and transport organisations.</p>
b. The impact of road trauma on the nation, including the importance of achieving zero deaths and serious injuries in remote and regional areas	<p>The importance of setting clear targets for a reduction in all injuries, especially a reduction in road trauma is supported by Kidsafe. The effectiveness of the "Global Decade of Action of Road Safety" will no doubt be evaluated in the coming months as the decade draws to a close in 2020, identifying what interventions were effective and proposing best practice recommendations.</p> <p>It is important to note that the final response and implementation arrangements for the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy (2018) outlined a commitment to a Vision Zero target for 2050 with an interim target of vision zero for all major capital city CBD areas and high volume highways by 2030⁹. It appears there are some inconsistency in the proposed targets to be considered for the next</p>

	<p>National Road Safety Strategy and the terms of reference for the committee.</p> <p>The most recent report on Trends in Injury Deaths, by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)² found that Transport injuries accounted for 1,409 unintentional injury deaths, almost 11% of all injury deaths in 2016-17. Children under 15 accounted for almost 4% of all Transport injury deaths during this period. More people were also killed on our roads in regional and remote location than major cities accounting for 52.5% combined, with the death rate in remote locations 5 times that of major cities. The rate of transport related deaths rose markedly with increasing remoteness of usual place of residence.</p> <p>While the good news is that an average decrease of 3.7% per year between 1999-00 to 2016-17 in unintentional transport injury deaths², we are still a long way from achieving zero, or the targets set for the current National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 of at least a 30% reduction⁸ in any location.</p>
<p>c. The possible establishment of a future parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety and its functions</p>	<p>Kidsafe welcomes the consideration by the Joint Select Committee into the future establishment of a parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety, if the current Senate Standing Committee for Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport⁸ does not already address these issues.</p> <p>Traditionally a Joint select committee such as this one established for Road Safety are temporary. While in this case it has been established by both houses of parliament to enquire and report on the issue of road safety, the consideration of a permanent standing committee focusing on this import safety issue is an important term of reference of the joint select committee.</p> <p>One options for consideration could be the separation of transport from rural and regional affairs and the establishment of a combined Transport and Road Safety parliamentary Standing Committee with a portfolio to expand on the work of the Joint Select Committee under the standing committee structure.</p>
<p>d. Measures to ensure state, territory and local government road infrastructure investment incorporates the Safe System principles</p>	<p>Kidsafe supports the Safe System principles, and agrees to the establishment of measures to ensure appropriate investment in infrastructure nationally.</p>
<p>e. Road trauma and incident data collection and coordination across Australia</p>	<p>Kidsafe regularly consults road transport injury data currently collected on numerous levels, from road crash data to hospital statistics and death data through AIHW and ABS. Access to accurate and the timely collection of road trauma and incident data is integral to the development of evidence based best practice interventions to reduce road trauma.</p> <p>In Western Australia, Kidsafe is responsible for preparing reports on child injury data collected by the Perth children's hospital (PCH). While this data is site specific, investigation is ongoing to identify</p>

	<p>avenues for collecting this data from other satellite paediatric trauma sites across the state. The level of information available in the Injury Surveillance and Trauma registry system at PCH are vital sources of evidence for targeted campaigns, identification of emerging injury issues, and changes in injury mechanisms. For example an increase in child passenger presentations or the severity of these injury presentations to PCH, then the underlying causes can be investigated.</p> <p>As outlined in the National Road Safety Strategy⁸, Australia does not presently have the systems in place to reliably measure national indicators of serious injuries from road crashes. It is a complex issue, and while investigation is currently underway the solution will be long term, and relies on the progressive efforts by states and territories to establish databases linking hospital statistics with crash data.</p> <p>A centralised clearing house of road safety research, injury and incident data is of critical importance and has in fact been recommended by recent research conducted for the Day of Difference Foundation¹⁰ by Mitchell et al. However it is not an easy task and requires commitment and resourcing. Once the data becomes available, it could be provided through the new Office of Road Safety website.</p> <p>Kidsafe supports the inclusion of this term of reference within the Committee's scope, and further progress the issue of nationally consistent and accessible data, in conjunction with the existing activity being undertaken by the National Road Safety Strategy.</p>
<p>f. Recommending strategies, performance measures and targets for the next National Road Safety Strategy</p>	<p>Kidsafe supports the Committee's role in recommending strategies, performance measures and targets for the next National Road Safety Strategy.</p> <p>Kidsafe would like to see any new National Road Safety strategy continue to ensure an ongoing commitment to the protection and education of our most vulnerable, which is children. In particular, different strategies for supporting those in low socioeconomic, regional and remote locations and those with a disability, as these groups continue to be over-represented in injury data.</p> <p>The importance of organisations such as Kidsafe in supporting health professionals and parents/carers as educators, supporting behaviour change amongst our future road users' needs to be a principle focus, as well as the continued advancement in design to support all road users whether they are drivers, motorcyclists, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and commercial or heavy vehicle drivers.</p> <p>In addition, Kidsafe recognises the large volume of road safety research that has been undertaken locally and internationally and that priority should be given to evidence based interventions and strategies that help support and address these issues.</p> <p>The current Safe Systems approach, considering the community as a whole with multiple strategies for change, has been a valuable plan for action as no one strategy can work in isolation. Kidsafe looks</p>

	forward to being involved with any upcoming consultation on the next National Road Safety Strategy.
g. Recommendations for the role of the newly established Office of Road Safety; and	<p>Kidsafe supports the establishment of the Office of Road Safety in 2019 and its current role in providing greater leadership and coordination of road safety efforts at a national level.</p> <p>Kidsafe looks forward to working in partnership with the newly formed Office of Road Safety and other key stakeholders to address the important issue of child injury prevention and safety on and around our roads nationally.</p>
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.	<p>Kidsafe supports this proposed term of reference, and provides in principle support of the recommendations and actions outlined in <i>Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy (2018)</i>, at the November 2019 meeting of the Transport Infrastructure Council.</p> <p>Other measures for consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing resource commitments to include funding to community organisations for promotion of key evidence based interventions for road user safety. Organisations such as Kidsafe operate effectively and efficiently at the community level (across a range of 'communities' - socio economic, geographically isolated, linguistically diverse and health challenged). While this is resource intensive the value to communities and the subsequent capacity building is in fact very beneficial and socially responsible. Our ability to translate research into practical relevant programs has seen significant reductions in child injuries. Kidsafe is seen as a trusted source of service delivery and education in the community, especially on child road safety issues. • Access to affordable, correctly installed child car restraints for remote, indigenous and low-socioeconomic communities – as seen with the success of the Kidsafe NT program in partnership with MACC (eg. Buckle up Borroloola). • Support for maintaining mandatory Australian Standards for Child Car Restraint Systems, and review of the current Australian Standards, including restraints for children with disabilities and Accessories for restraints used in motor vehicles. • Kidsafe supports the inclusion of Child Car Restraints to the Product Stewardship Act and the adoption of the SeatCare program announced on November 13 by Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley. This will make it easy for parents and families to dispose of old and potentially dangerous child car seats for recycling. • Support for the recommendations outlined in the Child Safety Good Practice Guide¹¹ and Active and Safe: Preventing unintentional injury to Aboriginal children and young people¹². • Support the inclusion of Road Safety in the development of the National injury prevention strategy to ensure national consistency and coverage of priority areas.

References:

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