
From: Brian Wood
Sent: Saturday, 8 August 2020 10:51 AM
To: Committee, Road Safety (SEN)
Subject: Joint Select Committee on Road Safety - Response to the Additional Questions

Dear Gerry,

Thank you for hosting myself and Jason Anton, at last weeks Public Hearings by the Joint Committee on Road Safety as representatives of the Australian Motorcycle Council and the Motorcycle Council of NSW.

In response to your request for answers to the following additional four questions, the Australian Motorcycle Council wishes to formally reply as follows:

1/

DATA: The AMC supports the establishment of an "Independent office of road safety data", which was also the #1 recommendation of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety conducted in 2012, stating that there was an "...urgent need to establish an Independent Office of Road Safety Data". It is abundantly clear to the AMC, that Road Safety statistical data of "some" sorts is being collected in "some" fashion across a range of organisations nationally. This leaves the critical elements of "independence, impartiality, accurate analysis, timeliness, public availability and relevance" clearly lacking. An independent department tasked with collecting, curating, analysing such data would undoubtedly be of valuable assistance in assessing the cost / benefits of road safety measures. It is understood that such Agencies as Police, Road Management, Road accident insurers (CTP, TAC, etc), along with legislators, regulators and the general public, would all benefit from access to comprehensive, unbiased and independent road safety data.

2/

TARGETS: The AMC gives qualified support to setting such targets in the manner described below. The ultimate value of any worthwhile Road Safety initiative or comprehensive road safety program can only be determined if the original objectives are accurately measured against actual outcomes or results. It can be very tempting to create simple numerical targets – e.g: number of road users detected exceeding speed limits. However, the setting of such a numerical target and whatever numerical outcome (result) that was achieved is NOT directly related to road safety. So targets need to be DIRECTLY related to road safety and not related to achieving numerical outcomes which, in themselves, may not have contributed to improving road safety in its focus on "Towards Zero". States with a heavy focus on "speeding," with ever increasing penalties and ever increasing use of detection technology, show little or no improvement (reduction) in the road toll. Whilst speeding offence targets may be met, there is no commensurate road safety "Towards Zero" outcome. Additionally it should be noted that road safety is a complex matrix of numerous factors and a focus on any single factor is not conducive to achieving desired outcomes when many other factors are not included in the program. It should also be noted that most relevant Agencies will note that after thorough forensic analysis of a serious or fatal road accident, "speed" is most correctly listed as a "contributing" factor rather than a "causal factor". However, as per Item 1 above, in the absence of reliable, comprehensive, independent road safety data, it becomes increasing more difficult to set relevant targets, let alone, accurately record relevant outcomes or results. It is the perennial problem of subjectivity v-s objectivity, with so-called data currently being recorded by untrained personnel. A simple example would be a doubling of the number of speed detections, but no commensurate beneficial impact on the road toll. Accordingly, Targets are only credible and useful if they are used to measure the success (or failure) of the component elements of the "Towards Zero" program, as strictly road safety benefits.

3/

SPEED MANAGEMENT: The AMC does not support such a blunt, unilateral and one dimensional approach to road safety. Speed and speed management are but a very small part of the complex matter that makes up the “road safety” matrix. Accordingly, to focus unduly on just one element of road safety (at the possible expense and ignorance of other factors), would be a recipe for failure. If the Committee was to support the installation of point to point speed cameras on all Commonwealth funded roads in the future, it immediately places a singular and unjustified focus on speed, and imposes the same on the States in order to obtain such Commonwealth funding. Such a narrow focus will potentially undermine the public's confidence in the Commonwealth's approach to road safety, and would fail to provide any incentive to address other critical road safety factors (such as driver distractions, driver competencies, road construction, road maintenance, road surface, roadside furniture, etc.). It is also a "more of the same" approach which arguably is at the root of a clear plateauing in road safety improvements. In addition, the available research both indicates that speed limit compliance has improved significantly and that greater compliance to speed limits is not a path to induce step change improvements in road safety statistics. It is clearly time for a change, and accordingly, this proposal is not supported.

4/

ROAD STANDARDS: The AMC supports road design and construction to recognised Australian standards, and believes that all Commonwealth funded road projects should be built to a minimum of a AusRAP 4 or 5 star standard for maximum safety of all road users. Very simply, without a “standard” there is no way of ever knowing how effective such a roadway is. Roadways need to be planned, constructed and maintained to a predetermined standard, set against a background of adopting “world's best practice”, and in consultation with ALL road user groups to ensure that the safety of one road user group is not achieved at the compromising or expense of any other road user group. Accordingly Road standards are supported by the AMC, subject to the above qualifications of a minimum AusRAP 4 or 5.

Thank you,

Kind regards,

B. Wood (Australian Motorcycle Council)