

August 2020

Submission

Joint Select Committee on Road Safety Inquiry: Road Safety in Australia - Additional Questions

Prepared and submitted by:



Joint Select Committee Inquiry on Road Safety

The Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) has been invited by the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety to respond to some additional questions as part of the inquiry on road safety.

These additional questions are as follows:

Questions on notice regarding data, targets, speed management and road standards

Further to your appearance at the hearing, the Committee would like your organisation's response to the following additional questions:

1. **Data:** What nationally consistent data relating to vehicle accidents would you like to see collected, and which body should collect the data? Should the data be made public?
2. **Targets:** The 2018 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-20 Report recommends the Commonwealth and states commit to an interim target of vision zero for all major capital city CBD areas, and high-volume highways by 2030. Does your organisation support the Commonwealth and state governments adopting this target?
3. **Speed Management:** Does your organisation support the installation of point to point speed cameras on all Commonwealth funded roads in the future? Should the Commonwealth Government make the allocation of funding to the states conditional on this commitment being met?
4. **Road Standards:** To what safety standard should all Commonwealth funded road projects be built? Should funding for projects be conditional on a particular safety standard being met?

Question 1.

What nationally consistent data relating to vehicle accidents would you like to see collected, and which body should collect the data? Should the data be made public?

Response:

The quality of road safety data is an area that requires constant evolution.

National collaboration is a critical factor and there needs to be nationally consistent records that look at road trauma. Currently, there is some variation between the states and territories regarding recording, definitions and criteria.

Data has helped the ARSF develop many new campaigns. For example, we used fatality numbers on Fridays to refine awareness campaigns. Whilst data enhancements have been made, some data has since been removed from the public data base. More detailed information on crash type, day matching date as well as home state of the people involved in the incident could help NGO's design more targeted messaging and help with all other road safety countermeasures.

There needs to be a holistic record on the full impact of road trauma. This needs to look at the long terms injuries and mental illness that result from road trauma.

There needs to be a central agency, perhaps an additional arm of the ORS that can collect this information and have it publicly available.

Question 2.

The 2018 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-20 Report recommends the Commonwealth and states commit to an interim target of vision zero for all major capital city CBD areas, and high volume highways by 2030. Does your organisation support the Commonwealth and state governments adopting this target?

Response:

In broad terms, the ARSF would be supportive of this interim target. However, we believe that having a largely metro focus could be limiting to an overall national view. Therefore, it is also essential that regional and remote areas are not forgotten when establishing any new targets.

Whilst we appreciate the need to prioritise activities and recognise the rationale behind targeting these key traffic areas, we must also recognise that more than two thirds of the fatalities occur on regional roads.

Setting a zero target for CBD and metro areas is admirable but it is also critical to establish a revised target for the regional areas as well.

Question 3.

Does your organisation support the installation of point to point speed cameras on all Commonwealth funded roads in the future? Should the Commonwealth Government make the allocation of funding to the states conditional on this commitment being met?

Response:

In our view, point to point cameras should be given greater consideration as part on an overall road safety strategy.

Whilst the use of these cameras has created some strong public debate, in our opinion they offer a fairer way to enforce speed on longer highways or freeways. Point to point measure speed as an average over a specific distance. This allows for longer period of speed monitoring, but cameras also allow an opportunity for a person to readdress an error over a journey or sector.

The more traditional fixed cameras offer no such flexibility and only capture an infringement at the site of the camera location. We have anecdotal evidence where very responsible drivers who try to always do the right thing, have made a human error at the camera site location and been fined. Whilst acknowledging the error, this infringement was not how they normally operate on the road and was a rare occurrence in their day-to-day driving habits.

There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest a driver or rider might reduce speed momentarily at the camera site and then increase speed once they have moved past the range of the camera.

Human error means that people will have a lapse in concentration or make a simple error at some point. If they happen to make that error at the site of the fixed single camera, they will be fined. However, an average speed over a sector would allow for a person to correct that action.

The point to point cameras would also extend the “safety halo” by monitoring speed over a sector rather than just one single location.

Question 4.

To what safety standard should all Commonwealth funded road projects be built? Should funding for projects be conditional on a particular safety standard being met?

Response:

The ARSF does not have the specialised design or engineering knowledge to comment on this question from a technical standpoint.

However, from a philosophical point of view, we would advocate for all Commonwealth funded road projects be built to the highest safety standard possible. There must also be specific safety milestones that must be met as part of the project funding.

This approach also needs to apply to all infrastructure programs at the state and local level.

These safety treatments and road designs also need to consider all road user groups. Consideration needs to be given to the types of access and utilisation. Vulnerable road users groups must be included as part of this overall approach.

We would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and we hope that many of the suggestions and recommendations we've outlined here will find practical application in future government programs.

Russell White is available for further enquiry and discussion regarding the above recommendations.