
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

National Road Safety – Eyes on the road ahead

Inquiry into National Road Safety

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services**

June 2004
Canberra

© Commonwealth of Australia 2004

ISBN [Click **here** and type ISBN Number]

Contents

Foreword.....	vii
Membership of the Committee.....	ix
Terms of reference.....	xi
List of abbreviations.....	xiii
List of recommendations.....	xv

THE REPORT

1	Introduction	1
	Inquiry Background.....	2
	Report Structure	3
2	Road Safety in Australia	5
	Road Safety Trends.....	6
	Road Safety Strategies	13
	Implementing the Strategy	21
3	Speed Management.....	31
	The speed problem.....	32
	Dealing with speed	33
	Western Australia	34
	Fixed speed cameras NSW	35
	Victoria	37
	Lower speed limits	38

Urban Roads.....	38
Rural Roads.....	40
4 The Road Environment	43
Improving Road Safety—the National Road Safety Strategy.....	43
Commonwealth Funding	46
The Black Spot Program	47
The need for greater funding.....	48
A Safer Road Environment.....	53
Heavy vehicles and other road users.....	58
5 Driver Management	63
Improving Road User Behaviour—the National Road Safety Strategy.....	64
Public Education and Awareness	66
Vehicle Advertising.....	67
Driver Training	69
Licensing.....	72
Enforcement.....	74
Driver impairment and distraction	77
Managing Fatigue.....	77
Drugs and Alcohol	78
Audio-visual entertainment devices.....	80
6 Vehicle Safety.....	81
Vehicle Safety—the National Road Safety Strategy.....	81
Vehicle Safety Technology.....	83
Implementing New Technology.....	86
Australian Design Rules.....	88
ANCAP.....	92
Specific Issues.....	95
Alcohol Interlocks.....	96
Seat Belts.....	97
Daytime Running Lights and Fog Lights.....	98
Rollover Protection	101

Reversing Alarms and Cameras	102
Vehicle Compatibility	102
Speedometers.....	105
7 Special Issues	107
Heavy Vehicles.....	107
Managing Fatigue.....	111
Driver Competence.....	115
Buses	116
Vulnerable Road Users	118
Youth	121
Changing culture.....	123
Dissent Report—Mr Patrick Secker MP, Member for Barker	127
APPENDICES	
Appendix A – List of submissions.....	131
Appendix B – List of exhibits	133
Appendix C – List of public hearings	135



Foreword

Road safety is an issue of national significance. Every year, some 1700 Australians are killed in road accidents and many more are seriously injured. In economic terms the cost of road trauma is some \$15 billion a year. Furthermore, every year governments and industry invest huge sums of money to create safer roads, vehicles and driver behaviour.

In 2003, 1634 people died on Australia's roads. While this was an improvement on the previous year, it still marks a worrying trend—the improvement in Australia's road safety record over the last two decades has levelled out. With this in mind, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services asked the Committee to investigate matters relating to road safety in Australia.

This report, *National Road Safety—Eyes on the road ahead*, addresses a wide range of road safety issues. It proposes a range of solutions to matters both big and small, all of which have the potential to save lives. Overall, the report highlights the need for a national approach to road safety. As a nation, we must ensure that all stakeholders, including governments, vehicle manufacturing and motoring groups, and road users generally are aware of their responsibilities for improving road safety. Ongoing investment in the safety of our roads and vehicles, in driver education and in effective law enforcement are all vital to reducing the road toll, a goal which interests every member of the community.

The Committee would like to thank all those who contributed to the inquiry, and particularly those who participated in the one day forum held on 28 November 2003. The Committee received submissions and took evidence from a wide variety of stakeholders, including governments, road safety experts, industry and motoring bodies and concerned citizens. Their responses have already stimulated discussion on a variety of road safety issues. This report will provoke further examination of matters pertaining to road safety and lead to advances in an issue of concern to all Australians.

Paul Neville MP
Committee Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Mr Paul Neville MP

Deputy Chair Mr Steve Gibbons MP

Members	Mr Peter Andren MP	Mr Stewart McArthur MP
	Mr Barry Haase MP	Mr Frank Mossfield MP
	Mrs Sussan Ley MP	Mr Alby Schultz MP
	Ms Kirsten Livermore MP (from 20/08/02 to 02/12/02)	Mr Patrick Secker MP
	Ms Michelle O'Byrne MP (to 20/08/02 and from 02/12/02)	

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mr Ian Dundas

Inquiry Secretary Mr Bill Pender

Research Officer Mr Robert Little
Mr Shane Read

Administrative Officers Mrs Marlene Dundas
Ms Jeannie Brooks



Terms of reference

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services is to inquire into national road safety. The terms of reference are to:

1. Review the strategic objectives, priority areas and proposed measures in the National Road Safety Strategy 2001 – 2010, and the National Road Safety Action Plans for 2001 and 2002 and for 2003 and 2004 and consider whether these remain appropriate.
2. Identify any additional measures or approaches that could or should be adopted by the Commonwealth, States and Territories, local government and non-government agencies and bodies (including industry) to reduce road trauma.
3. Identify factors that may be impeding progress in reducing road trauma, and suggest how these could be addressed.



List of abbreviations

AAA	Australian Automobile Association
ADR	Australian Design Rule
ANCAP	Australian New Car Assessment Program
ASB	Advertising Standards Board
ATA	Australian Trucking Association
ATC	Australian Transport Council
ATSB	Australian Transport Safety Bureau
AusRAP	Australian Road Assessment Program
BAC	Blood Alcohol Concentration
BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio
BIC	Bus Industry Confederation
BTE	Bureau of Transport Economics
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DRL	Daytime Running Lights
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
EU	European Union
FCAI	Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries

GPS	Global Positioning System
HID	Xenon High Intensity Discharge (lights)
ISA	Intelligent Speed Adaptation
ISS	Intelligent Safety Systems
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
MUARC	Monash University Accident Research Centre
NCAP	New Car Assessment Program
NMAA	National Motorists Association Australia
NRSAP	National Road Safety Action Plan
NRSS	National Road Safety Strategy
NRTC	National Road Transport Commission
NTC	National Transport Commission
PBS	Performance Based Standards
RTA	Roads and Traffic Authority (NSW)
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



List of recommendations

Recommendation 125

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in its road safety planning:

- set best practice benchmarks for all road safety activities;
- sees that these benchmarks are incorporated into future National Road Safety Action Plans; and
- directs funding to those jurisdictions which comply with the best practice benchmarks so defined.

Recommendation 228

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to:

- incorporate the collection of comprehensive and nationally consistent road accident injury data in the next National Road Safety Action Plan; and
- incorporate targets for reducing serious road injury in the *National Road Safety Strategy, 2001–2010*.

Recommendation 329

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to implement a comprehensive system of targets, timelines and accountabilities in future National Road Safety Action Plans and that each new Plan incorporate a more comprehensive review of its predecessor than presented in Plans to date.

Recommendation 438

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to undertake a study of different speed enforcement measures in all State and Territory jurisdictions with a view to developing national best practice speed enforcement guidelines.

Recommendation 539

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government initiate the adoption under the next National Road Safety Action Plan of:

- uniform national 50 km / h speed limits on local urban roads;
- uniform national 60 km / h speed limits on urban arterial roads;
and
- exemption provisions for rural communities from uniform national urban speed limits.

Recommendation 642

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to undertake research into safe speed limits on rural roads with a view to implementing a system of speed limits and signage appropriate to the engineering standards and local conditions of roads.

Recommendation 752

The Committee recommends to the Australian Government that:

- the pool available for Black Spot funding throughout Australia be increased by 25%; and
- thereafter, Black Spot funding should be divided on the basis of:
 - ⇒ major projects 70%
 - ⇒ projects requiring a safety audit 20%
 - ⇒ lower cost projects 10%.

Recommendation 858

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government adopt the following measures to improve the safety of the road environment:

- With the State and Territory Governments, establish a national investment strategy for improving the safety of the road environment.
- With the State and Territory Governments, carry out further work on national road design, maintenance and safety standards.
- Increase black spot funding by 25%.
- Increase the Safety and Urgent Minor Works component of National Highway funding by 25%.
- Increase funding for low cost measures to improve the safety of the road environment.
- Ensure that design and maintenance standards on the national highway system conform with world's best practice.
- With the State and Territory Government establish a national system for rating the safety of roads.

Recommendation 960

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to establish a well advertised national call centre for reporting road damage.

Recommendation 1062

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that any national standards for the design, maintenance and safety of roads reflect the needs of all road users including heavy vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians.

Recommendation 1167

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work through the Australian Transport Council to establish a system for coordinating and funding road safety campaigns on a national basis.

Recommendation 1269

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Advertising Standards Board and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries to review the voluntary code of practice with a view to a more rigorous compliance.

Recommendation 1376

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the Australian Transport Council, urge the development of a uniform licensing system across Australia, to incorporate:

- graduated licences for novice drivers;
- special licenses for four wheel drive vehicles and caravans;
- the use of demerit points to address all major traffic infringements; and
- the suspension or loss of licences to address serious or repeated infringements.

Recommendation 1479

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government request the Australian Transport Council establish a task force to coordinate the implementation of drug and alcohol road safety strategies, with a view to introducing:

- uniform penalties for drug and alcohol infringements;
- tougher penalties for alcohol related infringements; and
- a national approach to detecting and dealing with motorists driving under the influence of drugs.

Recommendation 1580

The committee recommends that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau review the potential for video devices to cause driver distraction and propose measures to minimise the impact of such devices on driver concentration.

Recommendation 1692

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake a comprehensive review of the Australian Design Rules to:

- ensure that ADRs are more responsive to the rapid uptake of new vehicle safety technology; and
- ensure that ADRs cover components and replacement parts.

Recommendation 1792

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to devise national standards for:

- vehicle modification;
- registration of specialised vehicles; and
- accreditation of secondary manufacturers.

Recommendation 1894

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government join the Australian New Car Assessment Program, and contributes \$500 000 per annum to its work.

Recommendation 1995

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government only purchase vehicles with state of the art safety features for government car fleets, and recommend similar action to the States and Territories.

Recommendation 2096

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government introduce an ADR for the mandatory fitting of alcohol interlocks on all new vehicles.

Recommendation 2198

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- immediately introduces an ADR providing for the fitting in all new cars of intrusive seat belt warning devices;
- directs the ATSB to conduct research into seatbelt interlocks with a view to introducing an ADR by 2010.

Recommendation 2299

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government introduce an ADR for the mandatory fitting of daytime running lights on all new vehicles.

Recommendation 23100

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to investigate the issue of fog lights and vehicle light fittings generally with a view to adopting ADRs which:

- prevent the fitting of unnecessarily powerful lights to any vehicle;
- ensure that all light fittings comply with appropriate safety standards.

Recommendation 24101

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- ask the Australian Transport Council to introduce ADRs for rollover protection in passenger vehicles and four wheel drives; and
- fund ANCAP testing of rollover propensity and crashworthiness of passenger vehicles and four wheel drives.

Recommendation 25102

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- ask the Australian Transport Council to introduce ADRs for reversing alarms and cameras; and
- fund ANCAP testing of reversing alarms and cameras.

Recommendation 26103

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government urge the Australian Transport Council to commission research into the problem of vehicle compatibility as a matter of priority with a view to identifying specific countermeasures to be applied in the next National Road Safety Action Plan and beyond.

Recommendation 27104

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government bring the tariff on four wheel drive vehicles into line with the tariff on other imported cars, with genuine primary producers and others who have a legitimate need for four wheel drive capability receiving tariff exemption.

Recommendation 28104

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with its State and Territory counterparts to prohibit the use of non-compliant bull-bars, except under specific exemption, and to remove all vehicles from the road that fail to comply with such prohibition.

Recommendation 29105

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to investigate the design of speedometers with a view to bringing them into line with actual speed limits.

Recommendation 30111

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government introduce new ADRs covering seat belts, improved cabin strength and underrun protection in heavy vehicles.

Recommendation 31114

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government request the Australian Transport Council to:

- devise standards for truck rest areas;
- establish a program of works based on those standards; and
- immediately commence a program for establishing temporary truck rest areas based on interim measures such as standardised coloured reflector stops.

Recommendation 32115

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government request the Australian Transport Council to:

- start a program of research into leakage of fumes from coolant, oil and exhaust into truck cabins;
- report on the effects this leakage has on drivers;
- incorporate this issue and any solutions into the National Heavy Vehicle Safety Plan 2006 – 2008;
- develop maintenance schedules that incorporate checks for leakage of fumes into cabins; and
- assess the feasibility of installing carbon monoxide detectors into truck cabins.

Recommendation 33116

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government liaise with the National Transport Commission and industry bodies to establish and implement training strategies for the road transport industry.

Recommendation 34118

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the National Transport Commission to develop a nationally consistent system of regulation and accreditation for the road passenger transport industry with a view to its implementation by the States and Territories.

Recommendation 35118

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take steps to reduce the age of the bus fleet by:

- restricting the age of buses that can be imported for other than collectable or vintage purposes to under 15 years of age, unless substantially rebuilt or modified vehicles comply with agreed accreditation safety standards; and
- providing tax incentives to replace older buses in the form of a five year effective life depreciation rate.

Recommendation 36121

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to develop and implement national strategies for:

- Motorcycle safety;
- Cyclists; and
- Pedestrians.

Recommendation 37123

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to develop and implement a national youth road safety strategy and action plan.

Recommendation 38126

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ask the Australian Transport Council to evaluate the Driving With A Difference Program at the University of Western Sydney, with a view to its implementation nationwide.