



New South Wales

IPWEA

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA



IPWEA (NSW) ROADS & TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE

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3 November 2017

Transport for New South Wales
18 Lee Street
Chippendale NSW 2008

RE: Submission on the Draft Road Safety Plan 2021

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (NSW Division) appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Draft Road Safety Plan 2021.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further detail on the issues raised within this submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mick Savage on tel: 8267 3000 or email mick.savage@ipwea.org in relation to this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Garry Hemsworth
Director IPWEA NSW Board



Mr Mick Savage
Roads & Transport Directorate Manager

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Comments on the National Road Safety Plan 2021

Submission by

**INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING
AUSTRALASIA
(NSW Division) Roads & Transport Directorate**

3 November 2017

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Executive Summary

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (NSW Division) is the leading association representing Engineers, Public Works Officers and Road Safety Officers working in, or providing services to Local Government and the NSW Government. IPWEA (NSW) is ideally placed to advocate for road safety on behalf of Local Government through the knowledge and expertise of the NSW Roads & Transport Directorate and IPWEA (NSW) Road Safety Panel.

While the Draft Road Safety Plan provides for measures aimed at delivering better road safety outcomes, it seem to have overlooked certain aspects significant to achieving these goals.

This submission calls for the following:

- Improved targeting of data collection
- Build better collaborative partnerships and coordination among all stakeholders and recognize Local Government as a major stakeholder
- Increase Local Government engagement
- Recognize the unique characteristics of the Local Road Network
- Provision of Pathways for Vulnerable Road Users
- Greatly improved support for Local Government roads.

Strategic actions in these areas would likely result in the greatest benefits in terms of overall improvements in road safety.

Submission Conclusions

- Overall, the plan provides for what Transport for NSW and the Roads and Maritime Services will do as opposed to what the road safety practitioners in the State need to be doing. The adoption of the Safe Systems model is a sound choice for long term strategy to drive road safety in our community. The key element in the approach is the word *System* – without an integrated approach from key partners in the development of NSW, the approach will have limited utility.
- Safety management begins with infrastructure planning. Planning for growth and infrastructure are key elements in addressing design standards, network layout and performance for all road users, with direct consequences for safety. This is particularly important for brownfield development where modern standards are not always able to be achieved and comprises need to be made.
- Road safety is a shared responsibility. Ensuring the delivery of positive road safety outcomes entails the collaboration and participation of all levels of government, stakeholders, and communities. As a greater proportion of fatalities occur on Local

Government-managed roads, there is a need for deeper Local Government involvement. This can be achieved through greater engagement, resource support, and providing opportunities to contribute to policy.

Introduction

IPWEA (NSW) is a not for profit, membership based, professional organisation representing engineers and others involved in the provision of public works and services predominantly in the Local Government sector.

IPWEA (NSW) Mission is:

“To enhance the quality of life of NSW communities through excellence in public works and services. This is achieved through our professional association that effectively informs, connects, represents and leads public works professionals for NSW.”

This submission has been prepared by the NSW Roads & Transport Directorate on behalf of the Board, council members and representatives of the IPWEA (NSW) Road Safety Panel.

The Roads & Transport Directorate has been set up to meet the demand from members of IPWEA (NSW) over the past few years to act as a focus for research activities and to provide technical advice. Its main purpose is to assist Local Government in NSW in the area of road infrastructure and transport related activities by:

- Assisting members in discharging their road management roles in the most effective manner consistent with current legal obligations and the most recent technical practices particularly in the critical area of consistent and cost effective asset management;
- Assisting the IPWEA (NSW), the Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW, individual Councils and members in lobbying for a higher priority to be placed on road infrastructure provision and maintenance and for a more equitable share of resources and funding; and
- Providing for IPWEA members and Local Government a powerful technical and research resource on transport issues at regional, state and national level. The activities would be, as circumstances dictate, either proactive or reactive to achieve the optimum benefit for the region or state.
- The Directorate commenced operation in October 2004 and has been involved in determining the needs of members and developing solutions to meet those needs.

IPWEA (NSW) Road Safety Panel

The Road Safety Panel is a committee of IPWEA (NSW) and is managed by the Roads and Transport Directorate. The Panel's goal is to make a significant and measurable contribution to improve road safety awareness, knowledge and expertise in NSW. Membership of the Panel is by invitation and includes representatives from Transport for NSW, ARRB Group, LG NSW, AITPM, NSW Police Highway Patrol, and urban and rural councils.

IPWEA (NSW) Comments on the Draft Road Safety Plan 2021

The IPWEA (NSW) thanks the NSW Government for the invitation to make a submission on the Draft Road Safety Plan 2021. While the Draft Plan calls for various initiatives to deliver better road safety outcomes, it seems to have overlooked a number of issues that the IPWEA (NSW) believes are essential in achieving these objectives.

Improved Targeting of Data Collection

IPWEA (NSW) believes that statistics/data, – Our road trauma challenge – should make the distinction between Local Government and State roads as this will provide for a more accurate level of reporting and will ultimately guide the flow of road safety related funding and resources down the track. The IPWEA NSW has previously raised the following concerns regarding the data and information:

1. Lack of data regarding the severity of injury crashes which limits local councils' ability to calculate the costs of crashes and prioritise treatments.
2. The location of the crashes are not always pinpointed as the data is not always entered by Police at the scene of the crash making it difficult to accurately determine the cause of crashes later on.
3. Under reporting of crashes, especially off road crashes, as many people do not want Police involved in what they consider minor incidents or to avoid possible prosecution.

These issues continue to inhibit the ability of councils and policy makers to make truly informed decisions and develop strategies to address road safety. These are not the fault of the NSW Police, rather are more a reflection on the way the data is gathered. It is also a matter of Police resourcing. As of October 2014 Police are no longer required to attend minor crashes and are now only called to attend and investigate crashes when a person is killed or injured, parties fail to exchange details or a driver is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

IPWEA (NSW) believes that improving the collection and reporting of detailed crash data in NSW will foster a better understanding of the extent of crash related injuries. This would assist local councils and communities to determine exactly where the burden of injury is occurring and how much it is costing. This would also greatly assist councils to prioritise

roads upgrades and develop other strategies and programs - to prevent or lessen the effects of vehicle crashes.

Collaborative partnerships and engagement

The IPWEA (NSW) believes that the Draft Plan does not fully address the fundamental issue of collaborative partnerships, coordination and involvement of all parties. In fact, it has been common practice to keep Local Government participation to a minimum. This is evidenced by the limited engagement opportunities offered to Local Government in policy formulation. Road safety is a shared responsibility. The success of any strategy entails commitment by all levels of Government – State and Local, stakeholders, and the community as well as their continuous engagement. Aside from engaging Local Government, local stakeholder coordinating arrangements should be encouraged as these can help create a sense of responsibility and have a sense of ownership of road safety within the community. This could also guarantee that road safety is kept on the Local Government agenda.

Coordination is crucial for State agencies, particularly Transport for NSW (CRS), RMS, Department of Planning, Department of Education, Urban Growth, and NSW Health, to be on the same page when it comes to road safety. Engagement with some State agencies reveal that most do not share the same safe systems philosophy as Transport for NSW (CRS & majority of RMS). It is critical that this aspect is corrected as many are polar opposites.

The work of Road Safety Advisory Council (RSAC) is valuable in terms of developing strategies, overseeing implementation, and monitoring of outcomes. Local Government, as Road Managers, should have greater representation in the RSAC. The 30% target of reduction of fatalities by 2021 cannot be achieved without assistance from Local Government as Local Government is responsible for 89% of the total road network where almost 70% of fatal road accidents occur. Local Government must be recognized as a major stakeholder

State Government must collaborate with Local Government to develop Local Government's capability in network safety assessments. These safety assessments coupled with Road Safety Auditing must be supplemented with the implementation of road safety strategic plans as part of each Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. At present, only a handful of councils have documented local Road Safety Strategic Plans. Perhaps a closer partnership between State and Local Government can be fostered in this area in order to provide the necessary support and tools to assist Local Government in developing local road safety strategic plans in consultation with their communities. Funds may be allocated to specifically provide Local Government with training and resources to identify, plan, and strategically manage road safety outcomes effectively in their respective local government areas. Once systems are developed and established, groups of Councils can assist each other going forward.

Support for Local Government and continuation of the LG Road Safety Program

While the Draft Plan recognizes that a large proportion of road fatalities occur on Local Government-managed roads, there is inadequate reference to the role that Local Governments

play in delivering road safety outcomes. Moreover, Local Government's extent of involvement remains vague. Local Government is better placed than state or federal government to realise and address community concerns about road safety implementation, being the people on the ground. Councils provide local road infrastructure, support local enforcement activities and provide the local community with road safety information.

The Draft Plan recognizes the importance of the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP), however, does not provide specifics on how State Government will promote, support, and reinforce this endeavour. The LGRSP ended in June 2017 and the status of the program remains unknown. The continuation of this Program is significant to Local Government as it allows for the provision of Road Safety Officers (RSOs) in every Council. RSOs do a commendable job working with local communities, engineers, planners and other stakeholders to address road safety issues. The function of RSOs could be enhanced and expanded to better target the achievement of State Government objectives. Thus, their continued presence is instrumental to accomplishing greater road safety outcomes.

The Uniqueness of the Local Road Network

IPWEA (NSW) believes that not all roads are created equal. The Draft Road Safety Plan focuses on strategies that readily apply to the State Road Network but does not recognize that State Roads and Local roads have different problems requiring different solutions.

Local Government faces challenges that limit their ability to achieve safety outcomes. These have to do with the special characteristics¹ endemic to local roads such as:

- Limited resources/access to funding
- Aging road network
- Increasing presence of heavy vehicles
- Delivery and timely flow of information on crash data, road condition data
- Increasing demand due to evolving travel patterns
- Long continuous distances

Therefore, conditions that apply to the State road network do not necessarily apply to the remainder of the local road network. This fact should not be overlooked. Rural and remote Local Governments need to address road safety over large areas with limited resources. Road safety countermeasures and engineering treatments should be decided based on resources available to the local community including skills and capabilities, facilities, and budget.

Also, preparing for automated vehicles does not only entail ensuring that vehicles are safe. It also necessitates that the road network can safely accommodate the new technology and if upgrades are indeed required, will funding be made available? Thus, when considering the design standards of vehicles, it is equally important to consider the design standards of the infrastructure and ensure that corresponding resources are allocated.

¹ Austroads 2010, Road Safety on Local Government Roads: Final Report, Sydney, NSW

Pathways and Vulnerable Road Users (Pedestrians and Cyclists)

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the provision of pathways for vulnerable road users. The IPWEA NSW commends the Draft Plan in recognizing that pedestrians and cyclists as vulnerable users. While current NSW funding programs are targeted substantially at shared pathways and road crossings, these programs do not take into account the fact that there are many existing urban roads without formal pathways. Also, in certain situations, providing 2.5m wide shared pathways is not always feasible. Thus, there is a need to consider a new footpath grant program that addresses this fundamental network deficiency in order to improve road safety outcomes for vulnerable road users in urban areas.

Improved Support for Local Government Roads

IPWEA (NSW) believes that initiatives should not only focus on eliminating the creation of safety issues but also focus on resolving old ones. The poor state of Local Government roads and its potential road safety hazard continues to be unheeded.

Local Governments manage road networks that suffer from general deterioration of road surface and varying patterns of use which often lead to increased volumes of traffic especially in areas where the design is unable to cope. Thus, it is necessary to have a continuous funding source to address these issues. Improving the surface condition by sealing, increasing width and alignment of many local roads, implementing local area traffic management, upgrading dangerous intersections and clear and better signage, can make a big difference to the safety of the local road network.

It should not be overlooked that in NSW, local councils are “Road Authorities” under the Roads Act, 1993. Local Government has responsibility for 89 percent of the road network and this portion of the road network accounts for almost 70 percent of road accidents. The estimated investment to replace the NSW local transport infrastructure is \$65.7 billion based on the values reported in financial statements of all 152 councils at 30th June 2014. The assets are reported as being consumed at an estimated \$907 million per annum.

The *2014 Road Asset Benchmarking Report* shows that NSW councils are responsible for managing 163,850 km of regional and local roads and 10,067 bridges with a replacement cost of \$65.7 billion. The life cycle cost of the road and bridge network is estimated at \$1.53 billion per annum for 2013/14. Expenditure of \$1.08 billion was 71% of the life cycle cost. Current service levels and expenditure levels are not sustainable.

Regional & local road lengths for responding councils

	Road Length in km		
	Sealed	Unsealed	Total
Regional Roads	15,117	3,201	18,317
Local Roads	65,885	79,647	145,533
Total	81,002	82,848	163,850

Source: IPWEA NSW Roads and Transport Directorate 2014 Road Asset Benchmarking Report

The net result of this funding shortfall is that the condition of the local and regional road networks is deteriorating, which is producing a corresponding deterioration in the safety of the network for road users.

While both the Australian and NSW governments have increased spending on roads in NSW, IPWEA (NSW) believes that a sustainable funding model that addresses the growing infrastructure backlog and infrastructure maintenance is necessary to ensure that safer roads are provided for the community. At present, other than funding for black spots, safer roads programs, and the LGRSP, there has been very little additional assistance from State Government. This is the general sentiment of majority of Councils surveyed across the State.

Conclusion

Overall, the plan provides for what Transport for NSW and the Roads and Maritime Services will do as opposed to what the road safety practitioners in the State need to be doing. The adoption of the Safe Systems model is a sound choice for long term strategy to drive road safety in our community. The key element in the approach is the word *System* – without an integrated approach from key partners in the development of NSW, the approach will have limited utility.

Safety management begins with infrastructure planning. Planning for growth and infrastructure are key elements in addressing design standards, network layout and performance for all road users, with direct consequences for safety. This is particularly important for brownfield development where modern standards are not always able to be achieved and comprises need to be made.

Road safety is a shared responsibility. Ensuring the delivery of positive road safety outcomes entails the collaboration and participation of all levels of government, stakeholders, and communities. As a greater proportion of fatalities occur on Local Government-managed roads, there is a need for deeper Local Government involvement. This can be achieved through greater engagement, resource support, and providing opportunities to contribute to policy.