

COMPARING SAFER JOURNEYS PROPOSALS WITH AUSTRALIAN ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES

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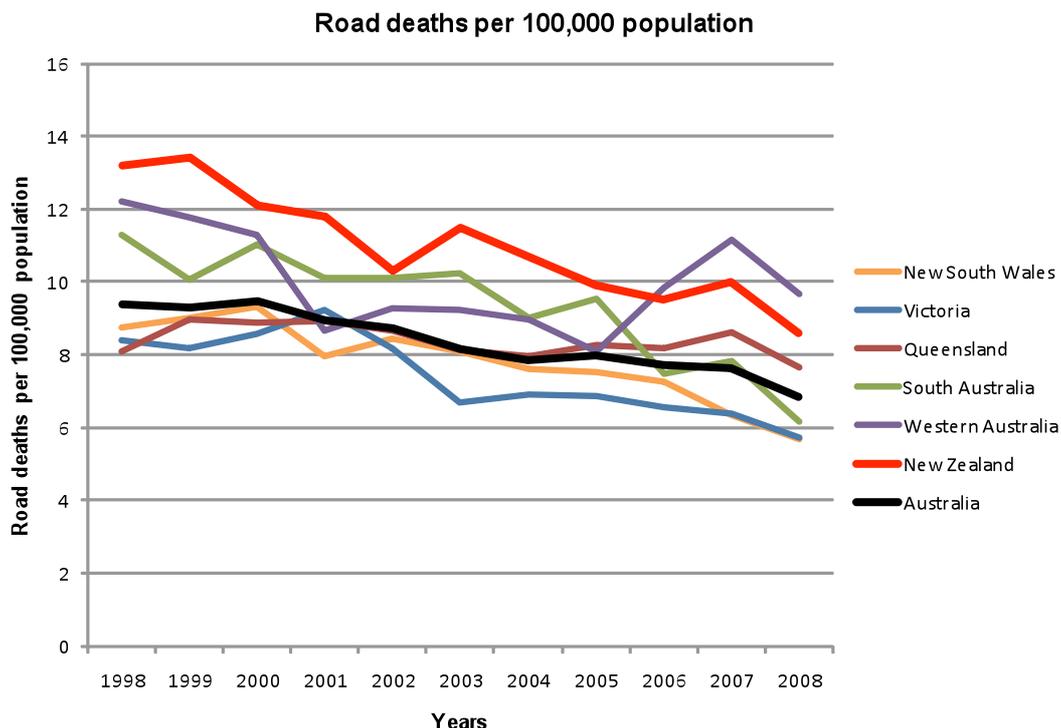


Introduction

This document compares proposed initiatives for high priority areas outlined in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document with road safety actions proposed or implemented in Australia. It does not attempt to comprehensively compare *Safer Journeys* with road safety initiatives in individual Australian states, or to identify international best practice.

Australians enjoy a higher level of road safety than New Zealanders and this is one of the reasons Australia is often used as a point of comparison. The rates of road deaths per 100,000 population in Australia in 2007 and 2008 were 7.6 and 6.9 respectively. This compares with the New Zealand rates of 10 and 8.6.

However, there is significant variation between Australian states in their road safety performance. The 2008 road death rates for various Australian states were as follows: Australian Capital Territory 4.07, New South Wales 5.70, Victoria 5.72, South Australia 6.18, Queensland 7.64, Tasmania 8.03, Western Australia 9.66 and Northern Territory 34.10. Death rates per 100,000 population for Australia, New Zealand, and selected Australian states, are compared in the graph below.



The *Safer Journeys* strategy will be key to improving road safety in New Zealand. A *Safer Journeys* discussion document was released in August 2009 for public consultation. This document summarised New Zealand's road safety performance and suggested ways this could be improved. Proposed road safety actions were organised by priority as high, medium or of continuing focus.

The discussion document and feedback will form the basis for developing the *Safer Journeys* strategy to guide New Zealand road safety efforts over the next 10 years.

The five high priority areas in the discussion document were:

- increasing the safety of young drivers
- reducing alcohol/and drug impaired driving
- safer roads and roadsides
- increasing the safety of motorcycling
- safer speeds.

The medium priorities were:

- light vehicles
- walking and cycling
- heavy vehicles
- fatigue
- distraction.

This report focuses on the high priority areas.

For each of these high priority areas, the initiatives in the discussion document are listed. Where there is a high degree of similarity between *Safer Journeys* and Australian initiatives, they are directly compared.

The 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan was developed by representatives of each Australian state. It represents Australia's nationwide approach to improving road safety. Although there is often close alignment between Australian states in road safety focus, there are areas where road safety approaches differ. This is due to the unique characteristics of each state and that there is no statutory obligation to follow the national action plan. Relevant information from the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan is also included in the following comparison.

In general, there is much in common between what is proposed in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document and what is in place or proposed for implementation in Australia. The 'safe system' approach to road safety proposed in *Safer Journeys* has already been adopted by Australia at a federal and state level and forms the basis of the Australian and state road safety strategies.

Alcohol

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Reducing the legal adult Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit from 80mg to 50 mg alcohol per 100 ml blood (BAC 0.08 to 0.05).

All Australian states and territories have a BAC limit for adult drivers of 0.05.

- A zero BAC for certain drivers, such as drivers under 20 years of age, adults without a full licence and commercial drivers.

Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania already have zero BAC limits in place for young drivers.

- Address recidivism through a zero BAC for repeat offenders and move towards mandatory alcohol interlocks for drink-drive offenders.

Several Australian states already have mandatory interlock programmes in place and others are in the process of moving from voluntary to mandatory schemes. Mandatory rehabilitation programmes for repeat drink-driving offenders are also being considered to address wider alcohol issues faced by many of these individuals.

- If the legal BAC is lowered, then introduce infringement penalties for offences between BAC 0.05 and BAC 0.079.

South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria all have similar schemes, with infringement penalties as an option between these BAC levels.

- Maintain the legal BAC at 0.08 and increase the severity of penalties (an alternative to lowering the BAC to 0.05).

All Australian states and territories have a legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) for adult drivers of 0.05.

Initiatives in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan

In addition, the following action was proposed in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan:

- nationwide focus on the effectiveness of enforcement and public education, particularly in rural areas, for example, improve rural random breath test effectiveness through innovative combinations of general deterrence and targeted operations.

This action would be supported by the following initiatives:

- Implement community education initiatives and extend programmes on the responsible serving of alcohol. Undertake a review of best practice community programmes that aim to minimise road trauma impacts resulting from alcohol use.
- Develop integrated programmes for recidivist drink drivers, including:
 - a best practice alcohol rehabilitation programme
 - increased use of alcohol ignition interlocks
 - assessing alcohol-dependence problems, prior to re-issue of a licence.
- Routinely test the blood alcohol level of all drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes.
- Pursue actions on heavy vehicle driver impairment, including implementation of fitness for duty requirements such as fatigue management accreditation and investigation of chain of responsibility¹ options.

Drugs

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Introducing random roadside testing for drugs (as technology allows). Ongoing research would be carried out in support of this initiative to better understand the prevalence of drug driving across the New Zealand population and what drugs were causing the greatest problems.

Several Australian states already carry out random roadside testing for drugs.

Other initiatives in Australia

- Education campaigns are also being carried out in Western Australia and Queensland, targeting schools and high risk groups and raising awareness of random roadside testing for drugs.
- To undertake further research on the size of the drug driving problem. This research would investigate the possibility of expanding detection and would involve access to coroners' records, and routine drug testing of all drivers and motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes.

¹ Chain of responsibility extends the liability for a driver breaching speed or work time limits, or dangerous overloading of a truck, to anyone who allowed or permitted it and reasonably could have prevented the offence. This promotes road safety by seeking to remove pressures on drivers to speed, drive while fatigued, or dangerously overload their vehicles.

Young Drivers

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Raising the minimum driving age to 16 or 17 years.

The minimum driving age in almost all Australian states is 16 years. The only exception is ACT where it is 15.75 years.

- Extending the minimum learner licence phase to 12 months.

The Australian system has more graduations than the New Zealand system, with a learner phase followed by two 'probationary' or 'P-plate' (equivalent to New Zealand restricted licence) phases of varying lengths.

- *These probationary phases mean that the minimum age at which someone can be fully licenced in Australia is 18 years and six months. This is two years older than the minimum age for an equivalent licence in New Zealand which is 16 years and six months. In Victoria the minimum full licence age is 21 years.*

- Strengthening the restricted licence test to encourage 120 hours of supervised driving practice.

New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland require drivers to complete more than 100 hours of supervised driving practice before progressing on to the next licensing stage. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia also include minimum time requirements for night driving practice.

- Introducing vehicle power and modification restrictions for young drivers.

Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales have restrictions on the driving of high-performance vehicles by probationary drivers (ie drivers who are not fully licenced).

- Impound vehicles of those who breach their learner and restricted licence conditions.

All Australian states have a fine and demerit point system in place for those who breach the conditions of the graduated licence system. New Zealand has recently increased demerits and lowered fines for breaches of the conditions of the graduated licence system.

- Increase the benefit of approved professional driver training courses (eg allow these to be taken in the learner licence phase and replace the time reduction for completion with another incentive).

A number of Australian states encourage driver training. In South Australia and ACT there is a driver training and assessment option as an alternative to the formal test for a provisional licence.

- Introduce compulsory third party insurance.

Australia has a compulsory insurance scheme covering personal injury as part of vehicle registration. This is similar to New Zealand, where the ACC levy on vehicle registration covers personal injury. However, Australia does not have a compulsory insurance scheme to cover vehicle or property damage.

- Raise public awareness of young driver crash risk.

A number of Australian states have public education and advertising programmes focusing on young drivers.

Other initiatives in Australia

- New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have 80 km/h speed restrictions in place for learner drivers.
- Several states do not allow mobile phone use of any kind (including hands-free) for learner drivers.
- New South Wales, Victoria and ACT place towing restrictions on learner drivers (eg either no towing or a restriction on the weight of the trailer towed).
- In Victoria, drivers must have a good driving record in order to progress to the next licence phase.

Initiatives in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan

In addition, the following actions were proposed in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan:

- Implement and evaluate best practice education programmes and graduated licensing systems for novice drivers.
- Encourage community and industry participation in key graduated licensing initiatives.
- Increase public awareness of the safety benefits for novice drivers of:
 - extensive supervised experience before solo driving is permitted
 - limiting access to higher risk driving, such as late night/early morning driving, driving with peer passengers, and drinking and driving.

These actions would be supported by the following initiatives:

- Develop better methods for engaging young people in road safety issues.

- Monitor and report on research into novice driver development, risk factors, and the effectiveness of different interventions.

Roads and roadsides

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Targeted programmes to address high-risk rural roads and high-risk urban intersections.

Australia has established a consistent risk-based approach to investment in the road network (including AusLink highways, state-controlled and local government roads) and is developing programmes and trials for targeted safety upgrades of higher-risk sections.

Nationally, Australia is seeking to implement risk assessment and treatment programmes for major routes (including hazard removal, speed limit changes, shoulder sealing, audible edge lining and protective barriers) to address the problem of run-off-road crashes.

Australia is also looking to maintain or increase the current level of investment in black-spot and other safety-targeted road programmes².

- Carry out more crash reduction studies and make these more targeted.
- Treatments to make high-risk roads more self-explaining (making it easy for drivers to understand the right speed for the road at all times and in all conditions).
- Changing the give way rules for turning traffic and pedestrians.

*All Australian states have the give way rule for turning traffic that was proposed in *Safer Journeys*. Victoria made this change in 1993 and the reduction in crashes exceeded expectations.*

- Develop and support new approaches to safety on mixed use arterial roads.

Initiatives in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan

In addition, the following actions were proposed in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan:

² Australian black spot programmes have been assessed as having cost-benefit ratios between about 4 and 14 (Bureau of Transport Economics, *The Black Spot Program 1996–2002: an evaluation of the first three years*, BTE report 104, Canberra, 2001)

- Develop road-to-vehicle technology solutions to address single vehicle run-off-road crashes and other rural crash problems.
- Adopt the safe system approach as a priority from conception to completion of new road and maintenance works.

These actions would be supported by the following initiatives:

- Review the balance between general road investment and funding for safety-focused works, seeking to make road safety a mainstream priority for all road investment decisions.
- Develop and agree on a standard methodology for road risk assessment to support the development of well targeted programmes and outcome-based performance measures.
- Review black spot criteria, taking into account safe system principles.
- Develop and adopt best practice approaches to improving safety at intersections, including the use of cost-effective measures such as signage, delineation, red-light/speed cameras, skid resistance treatment and other measures to reduce speeds.
- Place audible centre line markings on major undivided rural transport routes.
- Implement a programme of road and roadside improvements specifically to address motorcycle crashes at high-risk locations and routes.
- Implement a programme to improve the rest area network across Australia.
- Include and apply safe system principles in infrastructure documents, safety audit processes and professional development programmes for designers, engineers, traffic managers and allied professionals.
- Implement speed management actions – in particular, to introduce lower speed limits on high-risk roads or road sections, especially where road improvement is not feasible in the short-term.

Speed

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Increase the number of road safety cameras.

Victoria³ and New South Wales⁴ have both implemented extensive speed management programmes since 2000. These include increased use of speed cameras. Queensland, South Australia and ACT are planning to increase their numbers of road safety cameras.

- Create more speed zones (eg 80 or 90 km/h) on high risk rural roads.

Several states are reviewing their speed limit setting policies so that speeds better align with the standard of the road and follow safe system principles.

- Increase the adoption of lower speed limits in urban areas (eg 40 km/h zones).

Several Australian states are moving to the adoption of lower speed limits in urban areas.

- Investigate the requirements needed to support Intelligent Speed Assist⁵ (ISA) technology which can send signals to a driver when they are speeding.

Western Australia and Victoria are planning to increase the number of vehicles fitted with ISA and several states have trialled, or are in the process of trialling ISA systems.

³ Between 2000 and 2002, Victoria implemented a raft of tightened speed compliance measures – including expanded use of mobile covert speed cameras, a 50 percent increase in speed camera operating hours, lowered enforcement thresholds and an integrated publicity campaign – that saw measured travel speeds decline on many parts of the road network. These changes were followed by a large and sustained reduction in road deaths, particularly among vulnerable road users and in urban areas, where the effect of reduced travel speeds was greatest.

⁴ In recent times, NSW has implemented a concerted and integrated speed management programme involving: an extensive rollout of fixed speed cameras, zero speeding tolerance for provisional license stage one (P1) drivers focused enhanced enforcement, a prominent mass media campaign dealing with youth self-image and driver behaviour ('Pinkie' campaign), and a focus on reviewing and adjusting speed limits. Speed surveys conducted between 2004 and 2007 found that 85th percentile speeds in 70 km/h and 60 km/h speed limit zones reduced by 6 km/h and 3 km/h respectively. The number of speed-related fatalities declined 34 percent from 205 in 2005–06 to 135 in 2007–08.

⁵ ISA is a system that warns drivers when they are exceeding the speed limit.

- Change the penalty system to deter speeding (higher demerit points and lower fines).

The key difference between Australian and New Zealand penalties for speeding is that Australia applies demerit points for offences detected by fixed speed cameras (those not operated by police officers). Only fines are applied to fixed speed camera offences in New Zealand.

- Review speed limits on mixed-use urban arterial roads.

Initiatives in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan

In addition, the following actions were proposed in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan:

- Develop a national best practice speed management strategy.
- Implement national best practice speed enforcement measures, including:
 - point-to-point automatic speed detection (this is also known as time-over-distance technology, where a vehicle is recognised at the beginning and end of a section of road and the travel time computed to determine whether speeding has occurred over this section)
 - other targeted, automated speed enforcement technologies, where appropriate
 - unmarked speed enforcement measures such as unmarked police and cameras combined with high-visibility approaches and low tolerances.
- Identify high-risk roads or road sections for speed limit reductions where road improvements are not feasible in the short-term.
- Implement high-profile mass public education campaigns about safer speeds and campaigns that support the concept of unpredictability in speed enforcement (eg the presence of hidden speed cameras).
- Work towards introducing advisory Intelligent Speed Assist (ISA) technology.
- Improve heavy vehicle speed management by implementing national chain of responsibility reforms for speed compliance.
- Improve enforcement of heavy vehicle speed limiter compliance.

These actions would be supported by the following initiatives:

- Establish a best practice model for rehabilitating repeat speeding offenders.
- Work with communities to introduce lower speed limits where appropriate.
- Conduct further research and promote the links between the safety benefits of lower speeds and reductions in fuel consumption, greenhouse gas impact and vehicle/fleet operating costs.
- Further develop and trial criteria for setting speed limits that take account of the Safe System perspective.

- Monitor industry response to the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) *Voluntary Code of Practice for Motor Vehicle Advertising* which sets voluntary standards for vehicle advertising. Encourage further effort, as appropriate, to reduce the depiction of speeding (and other unsafe practices) in advertisements.
- Work towards the implementation of vehicle and speed monitoring technology to improve heavy vehicle speed compliance.
- Work towards introducing automatic number plate recognition systems to facilitate enforcement operations.

Motorcycling

Proposals in the *Safer Journeys* discussion document compared with Australian initiatives (where available).

- Improving the rider training and licensing regime for new motorcycle riders.

At a national level, Australia is considering options for a best practice graduated licensing system for novice motorcycle riders (2009/10 Australian Transport Council (ATC) Action Plan).

Several Australian states already have more comprehensive entry requirements into the motorcycle licensing system than New Zealand, in the form of pre-learner riding courses. New Zealand requires a basic handling skills test to obtain a learner licence.

All Australian states have an older age of entry into their motorcycle licence system with a minimum age of 16 years, compared with 15 years in New Zealand.

- Introduce a specific programme of treatments for motorcycle black-spots.

Victoria introduced a motorcycle safety levy in 2006/07. The levy is used to develop and implement motorcycle black-spot treatments and other programmes to enhance safety such as improved rider training and licensing systems.

Western Australia and New South Wales also have specific motorcycle black-spot treatment programmes.

- Require all new motorcycles to have anti-lock brake systems by 2015.

The general approach in Australia is to encourage the uptake of anti-lock brake systems through advertising and promotion.

- Introduce a differential ACC levy based on engine size (ie bikes over 600cc pay a higher ACC levy than smaller bikes).

A similar system is in place in Victoria. Those deemed to live in high-risk areas within the state must also pay a higher motorcycle levy.

- License moped riders and require warrant of fitness tests for mopeds.

In ACT, NSW and Victoria mopeds can only be ridden by motorcycle licence holders. In all other states, mopeds can be ridden by those with a car driver licence.

- Promote high visibility and protective clothing.

A number of Australian states work with motorcycle retailers and trainers to promote motorcycle safety gear.

Other initiatives in Australia

- NSW, Victoria and Queensland all have motorcycle-specific strategies.
- Victoria is also looking to encourage motorcycle manufacturers to develop new technologies that will help prevent motorcycle crashes and reduce or lessen motorcycle injuries. Technologies include motorcycle airbags and linked braking systems.
- South Australia is looking to encourage partnerships between motorcycle retailers and clubs to promote safety features on motorcycles. The state is also looking to target returning riders through methods such as providing information with all motorcycle licence renewal notices that highlights the risks associated with returning to riding after a break.
- Most Australian states have a power to weight restriction for learner motorcycle riders of 150 kilowatts per tonne combined with a 660cc restriction. There is an approved list of motorcycles that fall within this band from which learner riders are able to choose.

Initiatives in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan

In addition, the following actions were proposed in the 2009/10 Australian Road Safety Action Plan:

- Implement public education programmes focused on the greater risk faced by motorcyclists and measures to mitigate this risk.
- Ensure that motorcycle-specific issues are taken into account in the design and construction of new roads and improvements to existing roads, including maintenance and selection of safety treatments, particularly on popular motorcycle routes.
- Promote to riders the safety advantages of ABS, linked braking systems and traction control in motorcycles, and encourage the motorcycle industry to increase the availability of motorcycles with these features.
- Examine the feasibility of introducing minimum standards and a national rating system for protective clothing for motorcyclists.