

# Safe System News

TOWARDS ZERO



getting there together

## Getting to know road safety challenges and opportunities in Local Government

WALGA's Local Government Safe System Project (LGSSP) was established earlier this year and is working with the sector to identify the challenges and opportunities for Local Governments to adopt and implement the safe system approach to road safety.

During November, the LGSSP will be conducting a survey of all Local Governments to determine the current level of road safety and safe system awareness, activity

and capacity. The survey will be distributed electronically by market research company Synovate.

Local Government Chief Executive Officers, Mayors and Presidents will soon receive an email with a link to an online survey.

This approach will ensure that feedback is collected at both the operational and political level.

Local Governments are strongly encouraged to complete the survey. All responses will be

reported in aggregate form only and all individual responses will remain confidential.

The information received will help inform both this project and the sector, as we work towards achieving a safe road transport system for our communities.

For enquiries about the survey, please contact Andrea Smithson, Safe System Coordinator, on mobile 0429 034 641 or email [asmithson@walga.asn.au](mailto:asmithson@walga.asn.au).

## Why we need a safe system approach to road safety

The safe system seeks to prevent crashes that result in death or serious injury. It does this by addressing the fact that in the event of a road crash, it is the interaction of three key elements that determine the outcomes:

- The speed at which the vehicle is travelling at impact,
- The safety performance of the vehicle and
- The object that is struck and how forgiving it is.

The safe system manages or reduces the risk from these key elements. While the safe system does rely on, and continues to encourage, safe road user behaviour, it recognises that some users will take risks and many more will make mistakes.

The safe system helps to cater for our human limitations.



*From Towards Zero - Road Safety Council's Recommendation to Government to reduce road trauma in Western Australia 2008-2020*



## The cost of road trauma

Figures released by the Office of Road Safety demonstrate the significant costs of road trauma in Western Australia:

- Every fatal crash in WA comes at an average cost to the State of \$2.43 million.
- Every serious crash in WA resulting in hospitalisation costs an average of \$600,000.
- In 2007, road deaths and injuries in WA came at a total cost of \$2.4 billion.
- These costs are based on medical expenses, property damage, potential loss of earnings and use of emergency services. It does not include other costs such as counselling or mental health costs.



## How is it done? Establishing principles of safe system good practice for Local Governments

The Local Government Safe System Project recognises that a set of safe system good practice principles for Local Government will enhance the understanding and application of the safe system approach to road safety.

The project team and Advisory Group aims to work with the sector to develop a set of agreed, evidence based principles which will help Local Governments adopt and implement an effective approach to improving road safety outcomes in their communities.

The process to develop the safe system good practice principles for Local Government will include:

- A comprehensive literature search and review.
- Draft principles prepared using the best available national and international evidence.
- Expert consultation and validation via a panel of road safety experts to determine a final set of agreed principles.

The research for this process has already commenced, and it is anticipated that the expert panel will be convened early in 2010. The final principles will be produced later in the year, and communicated extensively with Local Governments.

---

*The ethical foundation for a safe system is that we do not want to design and operate a road system that allows for death and serious injury to occur.*

---

## Contact us:

Ruth Wernham — ph. 9213 2041 / email [rwernham@walga.asn.au](mailto:rwernham@walga.asn.au)

Andrea Smithson (based in the Great Southern) — ph. 0429 034 641 / email [asmithson@walga.asn.au](mailto:asmithson@walga.asn.au)

[www.roadwise.asn.au/safesystemproject](http://www.roadwise.asn.au/safesystemproject) | [www.walga.asn.au](http://www.walga.asn.au) | Towards Zero [www.ors.wa.gov.au](http://www.ors.wa.gov.au)