

Safe System News

TOWARDS ZERO



getting there together

Local Governments have their say on the safe system approach to road safety

Thank you to all Local Governments who completed the recent safe system survey. There was a positive response to the survey, with over 70 responses showing a growing interest in the role that the sector plays in road safety.

The survey responses are currently being analysed by Synovate. A report on the survey findings will be made

available to Local Governments early in 2010.

Following on from the survey, a series of workshops for Local Government officers, Elected Members and stakeholders which will be conducted during the second quarter of 2010.

These workshops will provide an opportunity for a more in depth exploration of the challenges

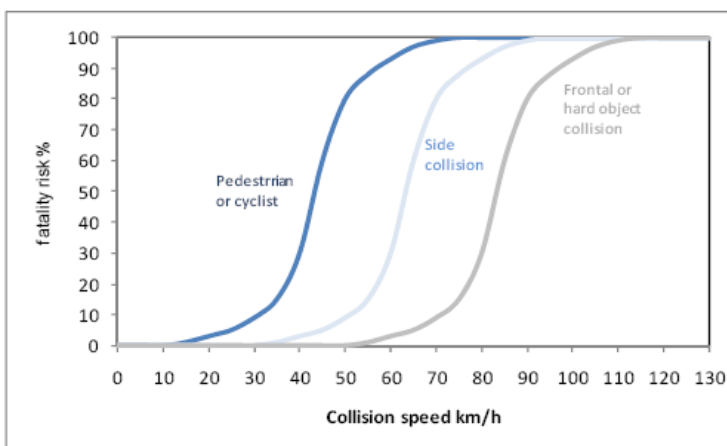
and opportunities for Local Governments to adopt and implement the safe system approach to road safety.

More information will be provided as the planning for the workshops progresses. To find out more, please visit www.roadwise.asn.au/safesystemproject for project updates.

Safe speeds - accounting for human tolerance to force

A safe system approach to speed is one that takes into account human tolerances to force. It acknowledges that the chances of surviving a crash decrease rapidly above certain impact speeds, depending on the nature of the collision.

This diagram shows the human tolerances for different crash types in modern vehicles, and shows the thresholds for speeds where it becomes unlikely that someone will survive the crash.



A safe system approach acknowledges that different road types need different speeds and gives consideration to the thresholds for managing better crash outcomes. For example, while a speed limit of 30km/hr is most appropriate where there are unprotected road users such as pedestrians or cyclists, speeds of ≥ 100 km/hr may be possible on roads where there is no possibility of frontal or side-on conflicts between road users.

Source: Wranborg, P 2005, *A New Approach to a Safe and Sustainable Road Structure and Street Design for Urban Areas*, paper presented at Road Safety on Four Continents Conference, Warsaw, Poland.



Guiding principles for creating a safe system

Creating a safe system depends heavily on understanding and implementing these five principles

1 The limits of human performance - We all make mistakes and we need to acknowledge the limits of our capabilities. Prevention programs addressing drink driving, speeding and non-use of seatbelts are still important, but they will not address the whole road safety problem. We will still make mistakes, so a guiding philosophy that acknowledges human error and fallibility is essential.

2 The limits of human tolerance to violent forces - In a crash there are physical limits to the amount of force our bodies can take before we are seriously or fatally injured. The safe system seeks to create a road transport system in which the forces in crashes are within our physical limits. This includes catering for the physical limits of unprotected road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

3 Shared responsibility - In a safe system approach we all take an individual and shared role in road safety, rather than responsibility resting with the individual road user. Road users remain responsible for driving safely and system designers are responsible for planning, designing and influencing the operation of a safe system.

4 A forgiving road system - We need to design a road system that is inherently safe, so when crashes do happen, deaths and serious injuries can be avoided. A safe system must be forgiving when mistakes happen, and recognise and cater for the physical limits of humans.

5 Increased use of public transport - Buses and trains are safer modes of travel than cars and motorcycles. The fewer people driving cars and riding motorbikes on the roads, the fewer death and serious injury crashes will occur.

Source: *Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy for WA 2008-2020*

Road safety on the agenda

Road safety has been in the spotlight recently at a number of conferences and forums.

The **National Local Roads and Transport Congress** was held in Mackay in November and provided an opportunity for Local Government to consider a national approach to roads and transport.

Presentations from keynote speakers, including representatives from Federal, State and Local Government, are available at www.alga.asn.au/policy/transport/congress/2009/.

The **Australasian Road Safety Research Policing & Education Conference** was held in Sydney in November and highlighted

recent national and international progress in the implementation of the safe system approach. Proceedings are available at www.rsconference.com. The 2010 conference will be held in Canberra from 1-3 September 2010. For more information or to submit an abstract, visit www.roadsafetyconference2010.com.au.

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