

# Safe System News

TOWARDS ZERO



getting there together

## Moving Towards Zero: Working together to prevent road trauma



**A message from  
WALGA CEO  
Ricky Burges**

Road safety is a significant issue in communities across WA. In 2008, 209 people lost their lives in road crashes across the state. Already in 2009, 115 people have died and another 241 have been critically injured on our roads. While road safety efforts in the past have resulted in significant improvements to the number of deaths and serious injuries, rising numbers in recent years have highlighted the need for a new approach.

At a State and Local Government level, we are moving in to a new era in road safety. *Towards Zero*, the road safety strategy for WA 2008-2020 was endorsed by WALGA State Council in April 2008, and in March 2009 was formally adopted by the State Government. This

strategy was formed after extensive consultation with road safety experts, partners, Local Governments and the community.

*Towards Zero* reflects the long term vision of the Road Safety Council of WA - a road transport system where crashes resulting in death or serious injury are virtually eliminated. *Towards Zero* is an aspiration which does not accept road trauma as a fact of life. To achieve this goal, a fundamental change is needed in the way road safety is approached by the community and stakeholders.

*Towards Zero* is underpinned by the Safe System approach to road safety - a holistic view which provides a framework to assess, guide and improve the safety of travel. At the core of this approach is the need for responsibility for reducing risk to be shared by those who use the roads and those who design, maintain and operate all parts of the road transport system. This approach does not ignore risk taking behaviour, but acknowledges human fallibility and the need for greater allowances when people simply make

mistakes. Planning and developing a Safe System means looking beyond standards and towards systematically planning and designing a sustainable and inherently safe road transport system for all road users.

WALGA, as a member of the Road Safety Council, has realigned its role in road safety to reflect the adoption of the Safe System approach at a state strategic level. Through funding from the Road Trauma Trust Fund, WALGA created three Safe System Coordinators to establish the Local Government Safe System Project. The project will work closely with the sector to identify the challenges and opportunities for Local Governments to adopt the Safe System approach and principles in to policies and practices. The project will compliment the road safety activities undertaken by WALGA's RoadWise Program.

I am pleased to introduce this project to the sector and welcome the opportunity to continue to work together to prevent road trauma in our communities.

### Local Governments are key partners in road safety

- Local Governments design, manage, maintain and operate 72% of the WA road network - a total road length of 127,049 kilometres.
- 43% of all travel and 65% of all crashes occur on the Local Government road network.
- As leaders and influencers in local communities, Local Governments are well placed to have a positive impact on road safety outcomes.



## The Local Government Safe System Project:

*The safe system approach does not accept that death or serious injury should be a risk when using the road transport system*

The first phase of the Local Government Safe System project will include:

- Communicating the benefits of the Safe System approach and the important role that Local Governments play in creating a safe transport system in local communities.
- Gathering information and data on the current situation in Local Government regarding their capacity to implement a Safe System approach.
- Work with the sector and partners to develop Safe System 'good practice' principles to give Local Governments more clarity on the application of the Safe System approach.
- Consultation with the sector to establish the challenges and opportunities for Local Government to embed Safe System principles in policy and practice.
- Based on the findings of Phase 1, work collaboratively with Local Government and partner agencies to develop a plan for Phase 2 of the project.

## The Safe System cornerstones:



**SAFE  
ROADS &  
ROADSIDES**

Improving the safety of roads could reduce the number of serious crashes by as much as 40%. Investing in Safe System infrastructure improvements will continue to save lives and prevent serious injuries in to the future, creating a lasting legacy of an inherently safe road network.

Travel speeds greatly influence the chance of surviving a crash, whatever the cause of the collision. Ensuring that speed limits are appropriate for the standard of roads and vehicles, and creating environments which support lower travel speeds are important steps in reducing the number of serious crashes.



**SAFE  
SPEEDS**



**SAFE  
VEHICLES**

Buying safer vehicles, including older cars, could result in around a third less people being killed or seriously injured on our roads. Vehicle safety features can help avoid crashes, and protect vehicle occupants in the event of a crash.

While the safe system seeks to build a road transport system that is tolerant to human error, road users still have a responsibility to use it responsibly and legally. Compliant, alert and safety conscious road users play a vital role in preventing crashes.



**SAFE  
ROAD USE**



**SAFE  
SYSTEM  
FOUNDATION**

Supporting initiatives including data collection, research, monitoring and reporting are essential to the success in implementing the four cornerstones of the Safe System approach. Building support in the community and capacity within organisations that are involved with road safety is vital.

## 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)