

From: roadsafetystrategy@infrastructure.gov.au on behalf of [Office of Road Safety](#)
To: [RoadSafetyStrategy](#)
Subject: National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 - have your say submission - Michael Lane [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 22 March 2021 9:53:54 PM

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Submitted values are:

Name

Michael Lane

Email

[REDACTED]

State

NSW

Which area/s of the draft Strategy are you commenting on (select all that apply):

Targets for reducing deaths and serious injuries , The themes – safe roads, safe road use, safe vehicles and speed management , Data and performance management, Risky road use

What is your primary area of interest in road safety?

I have 60 years on road experience covering some 2 million kilometres both here and in most of Western Europe. I have only damaged a vehicle on the road once - when a wallaby jumped out in front of me. Much of my professional life was in assessing research and development proposal for the Grant and tax concession schemes administered by the Industry Department under its various names over the years. My interest is being able to travel quickly and undamaged and not subject to excessive and largely irrelevant legislation.

What road safety issues are the most important to address?

The most important issue to address is the examination of crash causes which should be done in a professional manner as in the UK (where my nephew is a fully qualified crash examiner in charge of others in the West Yorkshire Police). This system, like that in the aircraft industry, first ascertains what were the contributory causes and then investigates what precipitated those causes and their relevance. Note that my nephew who is a science graduate found the qualification course difficult. It is essential that this level of crash cause investigation be used as a basis for development of strategy.

Secondly is the appalling standard of driver training and testing. France, Germany and I think Italy only permit qualified instructors to teach. Our system whereby parents pass on their bad habits is appalling. As I drive here daily I see actions which would result in being sent for re-training in other countries. Deskillng as in this strategy leads to the inability to deal with unexpected occurrences.

Thirdly road construction is inadequate. There is no standard for grip on a road surface! It can be so low it is like driving on an oil slick - but "speed" gets blamed. 5 metres of mown wet grass between carriageways will not stop an out of control vehicle. The Europeans use solid "Armco" steel barriers which are highly effective.

Additionally there must be an independent review of research in road safety matters. The claim that each 5 km/h over a 60 km/h speed limit doubles the crash risk is based on research at the University of Adelaide, strangely unobtainable in the support documentation for this strategy but which I have studied. In my professional opinion it is full of errors. The method of measuring background speeds (checking only 4 vehicles) is clearly inadequate, the selection of a sample for examination is biased towards trivial crashes (fender benders) which are not assessed by traffic officers but by General Duty Officers and thus no real information on causes, the claim of investigation by researchers who had no intensive crash investigation experience puts the report into what is best described as fiction.

What do you believe are the strengths of this draft Strategy?

Nil. It is fundamentally a repeat of the earlier failed strategy based on erroneous research and input. For example the UK system of crash investigation shows that about 13% of fatal crashes involve exceeding a speed limit (published information) of which some two thirds are precipitated by factors such as intoxication, "Joy riders", evading capture, other non motoring illegal activity, suicide etc (advice from aforementioned professional crash examiner). Hence the over emphasis on speed management will fail to achieve the objectives.

The strategy resembles that of Prohibition in the USA - a failure with devastating unintended consequences.

Is there anything important that you think is missing from this draft Strategy?

As mentioned above intensive crash cause evaluation is not a part of this strategy and has not been used in lead up information as it does not exist here, further the practice (in NSW) of including assertions of unsafe speed but less than the speed limit as "Speed related" is misleading and, when used as evidence to the Auditor General's inquiry into the benefits of speed cameras is dishonest as it grossly over exaggerates the effect of raw speed (by a factor of 3) and the potential utility of cameras by a factor of 9.

There is no real indication of methods of crash reduction; the strategy is nearly all about secondary safety but the measures indicated are likely to increase crashes as they induce risk taking by pedestrians in the urban environment and the soporific effect of low speeds for long distances is well known. This was the reason that an experimental 50 mph limit in the Christmas period in the early 1960s in the UK was abandoned after 2 years. (I remember it well.)

There is no mention of the provision of good rest areas on highways which should include food and fuel - the best example are the French Aires on the Autoroutes.

The importance of sound driver training has been mentioned earlier. For example opposition to training of emergency braking means that the new driver has no experience of anti-lock braking and the onset of the banging and crashing as the suspension copes and the "pulsing" (more like a machine gun going off under your foot) of the brake pedal will frighten them into lifting off the brake pedal and likely crashing.

The best thing to do with this strategy is to scrap it and start again - consult with people who are positive and look for positive strategy and put aside those who can only think about more and ever restrictive controls; The negative attitudes in this strategy will mean that it will fail as did its predecessor and for the same reasons. Remember that Einstein said that repeating an experiment using the same methods and expecting a different result was a sign of insanity.

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