



What is a social model approach to road safety?

At the centre of developing the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 is a recognition that road safety is not solely a transport problem, and transport solutions alone are not enough to realise our goal of Vision Zero. We are seeking support and engagement well outside of the traditional government road agencies to progress road safety outcomes. The social model approach to road safety will look beyond the transport sector, beyond governments and beyond the road safety community to build wider community acceptance of road safety solutions to prevent road trauma.

The social model is layered, with the individual at its heart. It expands from responsibility for an individual's own behaviour to their ability to influence other individuals and organisations, to organisations actively prioritising safety, community influence and advocacy, right through to systemic change at a macro societal level. The aim of using a social model approach is to build road safety into "business as usual" through various touchpoints and mechanisms across multiple sectors of society.

The outer layer of the social model is the **system/public policy approach**. All levels of government regulate, legislate, fund and set policy for road safety outcomes. At a macro level, injury prevention through better policy coordination and investment against key risk factors is a primary role for all levels of government. At the micro level, a specific project for a targeted audience or at a specific location are delivered through government funding.

The next layer is the **community approach**. Many of our key road safety stakeholders fit within this layer. It is within community that a road safety culture is developed, a social license built and positive behaviours leveraged through peer to peer interactions and advocacy. This is a particularly effective layer in which to engage government at all levels and the broader community on public policy issues. A good example is cycling groups which bring local issues to local government attention, comment on town masterplans, lobby for safer routes and priority at traffic lights, conduct safe riding classes, and coordinate group events to promote cycling and safety.

Organisational responses are the third layer. Within organisations the use of resources and the creation of an authorising environment are required to make safety a priority. Data and evidence is needed to influence the strategic direction within organisations. Once benefits can be demonstrated the adoption of organisation-wide policies result in best practice approaches. Within the freight industry leading organisations are on a pathway to establishing a mature safety culture with increased work health and safety practices, improved vehicle technology and using telematics. Corporate fleets are another good example, where the adoption of five-star vehicles has become the norm, individual vehicle trips have been replaced with video conferencing, public transport or work bikes routed away from main arterials. The levers to engage organisations to adopt these measures include reduced fuel and maintenance costs, lower fleet numbers, fewer hours on the road and fewer work, health and safety claims. These tangible benefits for organisations lead to better road safety outcomes.

Leadership within and across agencies can have a powerful influencing effect. The **interpersonal function** is the fourth layer and this is where relationships across groups, agencies and sectors are leveraged to influence injury prevention and bring safety to front of mind.

The capacity of each **individual** is captured at the centre of the social model approach. Each individual using their skills, knowledge and experience to advocate, create change and establish new norms within their personal realm of influence.

All parts of the social model approach working together over time will represent long-term cultural change towards road safety. By working across sectors, we aim to foster a safety culture to improve community acceptance for road safety solutions.

The social model will be used to implement the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 through the National Action Plan.

For more information on the development of the National Road Safety Strategy, please contact the team by email at officeofroadsafety@infrastructure.gov.au.