

Submission to the State Government's Road Safety Strategy

November 2020

Note: This is not an endorsed LGA Submission. It is subject to consideration by the LGA Board of Directors.

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Summary of Principles

The Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) welcomes the opportunity to be involved in development of the State Government's Road Safety Strategy ('the Strategy') and recommends the following principles:

Principle 1: A safe road system supported by all levels of government

Principle 2: Sufficient investment in the State's roads for a safe road system for the 21st century

Principle 3: Road and roadside safety is integrated into all aspects of planning of the State's road system

Principle 4: Complementary principles

Principle 5: A safe road system which includes a quality public transport network and pedestrian and cyclist routes

Principle 6: Educate the public about the impact of speed

Principle 7: Educate the public about the benefits of safe vehicles

Principle 8: Motorcycles should reflect the latest technology in vehicle safety

Principle 9: Heavy vehicles should reflect the latest technology in vehicle safety

Principle 10: Focus on driver and passenger behaviour

Principle 11: Improve knowledge about the road safety system to better prioritise actions

Principle 12: Encourage leadership in road safety by state and local government

Introduction

About the Local Government Association of South Australia

The Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) is the voice of local government in South Australia, representing all 68 councils across the state and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara.

The South Australian *Local Government Act 1999* recognises the LGASA as a public authority for the purpose of promoting and advancing the interests of local government. The LGA is also recognised in and has prescribed functions in 29 other South Australian Acts of Parliament. The LGA provides leadership, support, representation and advocacy relevant to the needs of our member councils.

The LGASA is a strong advocate for policies that achieve better outcomes for councils and the communities they represent. As such, the LGASA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the *South Australian Road Safety Strategy* and is pleased to be included on the working group for the Strategy.

Background

This submission is informed by the *Guide to a Local Government Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan* ('the Guide'). The Guide was endorsed by the LGASA Board of Directors on 29 August 2019 and was provided to the government and to the Hon Corey Wingard, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. The Guide was developed in consultation with the LGASA's member councils and continues to form the basis for LGASA advocacy on road safety.

The LGASA has been working with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on its consultation with local government and is keen to ensure that the interests of local government are recognised in the government's *Road Safety Strategy* ('the Strategy'). The LGASA is pleased to be represented on the government's Road Safety Strategy Working Group to ensure the interests of local government in road safety are recognised.

Guide to a Local Government Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan

In 2019, the LGASA prepared the Guide in recognition of the importance of road safety to local government in South Australia. The Guide is based on the safe systems approach to road safety which is the basis for the existing national and state government strategies.



Principles for the Road Safety Strategy

The LGASA encourages the government to reflect the following important principles in the Strategy. These principles are important to local government and are appropriate to form part of the government's Strategy, accompanied by clear strategies, actions and performance indicators. The LGASA encourages the government to accompany the Strategy with clear and informed messaging using a range of media that can be actively supported by local government.

Principle 1: A safe road system supported by all levels of government

The LGASA advocates for the development of a safe road system which is supported by all levels of government. Given the importance of the road network and road safety to local government, the LGASA is a key stakeholder to be consulted by state and national governments in development of their road safety strategies.

Since the Guide was released, the federal government has appointed an Office of Road Safety, which was a key recommendation of the Guide. The Office of Road Safety is now reviewing the national Road Safety Strategy.

The LGASA appreciates being appointed to the state government's Road Safety Strategy Working Group and its consultation in development of the National Strategy.

The LGASA supports integration of road safety strategies at a local, state and national level. Given the extent of road infrastructure managed by local government, it must be included in consultation and decision-making at all levels of government

Principle 2: Sufficient investment in the state's roads for a safe road system for the 21st century



With the limited funding available to local government, opportunities for funding for road improvements and investment in skill development of its staff, are limited. Through collaboration between state and local government, funding and knowledge capacity within local government could be enhanced. The LGASA would like to work with the state government to facilitate improved access to resources and is keen to develop a model whereby state government could support capacity-building of local government.

Many state roads, particularly regional roads, require significant investment in upgrades and maintenance. State government support for councils undertaking road audits would help prioritise roads requiring upgrades, rather than concentrating on 'black spots' in a reactive process. Investigation of processes and methods to develop a cost-effective approach to road safety audits would provide significant support to local government.

Coordination of grant opportunities could be coordinated through a state government resource to assist councils in the process and prioritisation of grant opportunities.

The LGASA supports the need for making adequate funding and expertise available to local government for maintenance and upgrades of roads.

Principle 3: Road and roadside safety is integrated into all aspects of planning of the state's road system

When road maintenance is undertaken by the state government, there are often untapped opportunities when undertaking road maintenance or new road projects, to upgrade road safety for all users, rather than just replace 'like for like'.

For example, the current Magill Road and Portrush Road Upgrade has been widely criticised in the media for using slip lanes and not prioritising pedestrian and cyclist traffic. All new road infrastructure projects must prioritise road safety for all users.

Road safety needs to be the central criterion in awarding infrastructure projects, so that the industry will adapt and advance with the higher standards in road safety expected across all projects.

The LGASA urges the integration of road and roadside safety for all road users into all aspects of planning for the State's road system.

Principle 4: Complementary principles

Road safety must be an integral principle in planning for projects such as placemaking and upgrading of pedestrian precincts. In designing attractive pedestrian precincts, road safety is also achievable. This also leads to economic development by resulting in more pedestrian-friendly precincts where people want to linger and spend money.

Similarly, by advocating for electric vehicles, the State government can help meet emissions targets while simultaneously raising the average age of vehicles on South Australian roads, thereby improving the safety of roads.

The LGASA urges government to consider complementary principles such as placemaking and support for electric vehicles to contribute to road safety.

Principle 5: A safe road system which includes a quality public transport network and pedestrian and cyclist routes

Reducing reliance on motor vehicles and encouraging use active travel is in the best interests of the community for a range of environmental and health reasons. There are also significant safety outcomes if an appropriate network is developed. The state government is currently missing opportunities to support active travel in its road upgrades and other infrastructure works.

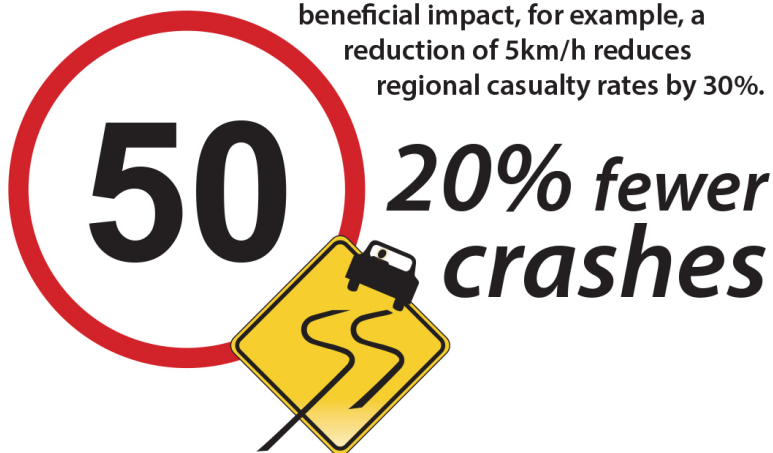
Pedestrian routes should be well-designed, so they get people where they want to go, are shaded, safe, well lit, signposted, and easy to walk on. For cyclists in Adelaide, crashes are more likely to occur when bicycle and motor vehicles collide. Cycling in South Australia is increasing, and Adelaide has high cyclist commuting rates. Improved cyclist networks are the best way to improve safety for this group. Shared-use paths need to meet adequate widths, sightlines and be in appropriate locations to avoid collisions between pedestrians and cyclists.

A high-quality public transport system supports a network for all users. It also provides a safe and viable alternative to less confident or capable drivers, people who might otherwise drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs, or who would be driving older cars which are inherently less safe.

The LGASA encourages government investment in public transport and active travel systems to support a range of positive outcomes.

Principle 6: Educate the public about the impact of speed

In 2003 in South Australia, the application of a 50km default urban speed limit resulted in a 20% reduction in crashes. Particularly in regional areas, speed reduction can have a significant beneficial impact, for example, a reduction of 5km/h reduces regional casualty rates by 30%.



The evidence about the positive impact of reduction in speed limits is overwhelming. Yet according to a recent RAA survey (report in *SA Motor*, Spring 2020), 30% of RAA members would like rural roads to increase their default speed from 100 to 110Kmh.

To ensure community support for the need for reduction in speed limits, the community must be educated about these benefits and see adherence to speed limits modelled by community leaders.

Regular reviews of speed limits need to be undertaken to ensure the speed limits are appropriate and reflect road infrastructure, condition and changing conditions. However, reducing speed limits is not an appropriate solution to poor infrastructure. Reduction of speed limits is only one action government can take, and a holistic approach to road safety is advocated.

The National Office of Road Safety supports integration of the principle of safe speeds into its other pillars of Safe Roads, Safe Road Use and Safe Vehicles recognising the importance of speed in all decision-making.

Educate the public about the impact of speed, the difference a reduction in speed can make and the need to drive to the conditions, while integrating management of speed limits into all decisions about road safety.

Principle 7: Educate the public about the benefits of safe vehicles

The estimated average age of South Australian vehicles is 11.8 years, compared to 10.4 years nationwide, reflecting delayed adoption of new technologies, such as adaptive cruise control, speed limit advice (via GPS), intrusive seatbelt reminder systems, automatic emergency braking and alcohol interlocks (which can be retrofitted). Over the next 10 years, many innovations, such as stability control, will be available in 50% of vehicles.

By incorporating innovations from other state government initiatives, such as support for electric vehicle technology, which will ensure newer, safer vehicles, the government could support a range of objectives which set the government up for success.

The community needs greater education about the significant benefits of improved safety of vehicles and the need to maintain vehicles properly.

As significant fleet purchasers, the government has considerable influence in ensuring a steady supply of new vehicles entering the market, being on-sold to the public and reducing the average age of vehicles and encouraging the adoption of new, safer technologies.

The LGASA supports a range of measures to encourage the purchase of new vehicles such as fleet purchasing, support for electric vehicles and community education.

Principle 8: Motorcycles should reflect the latest technology in vehicle safety

Motorcycles make up 22% of serious casualties but only 1% of vehicles/kilometres travelled. While motorcycle riding is increasing in popularity, research indicates that behavioural factors such as speed, alcohol, drugs and fatigue are significant contributing factors to serious motorcycle crashes (DIT research).

The LGASA supports measures to include improved safety of motorcyclists such as use of protective clothing, ABS braking systems, newer vehicle technology, more rigorous training and licensing and improved road infrastructure with a focus on road shoulders.

Principle 9: Heavy vehicles should reflect the latest technology in vehicle safety

Heavy vehicles, being heavy vehicles and trucks, make up only 3% of registered vehicles but account for 8% of the vehicles/kilometres travelled and are involved in 18% of all road fatalities. Encouraging uptake of the latest technology and regular vehicle checks are the best way to ensure vehicles meet safety standards. Road infrastructure upgrades should also include installation or upgrade of truck rest stops and improved road shoulders.

The LGASA supports measures to include improved safety of heavy vehicles including encouraging new technology, improved truck rest stops and improved road shoulders.

Principle 10: Focus on driver and passenger behaviour

Poor behaviour of drivers and passengers is a significant risk factor in road trauma:

- drink driving - with 28% of fatally injured drivers testing over the legal blood alcohol limit
- failure to wear seatbelt - with 28% of fatally injured drivers failing to wear a seatbelt
- illegal and inappropriate speed – with 34% of fatally injured drivers exceeding the speed limit or failing to exercise good judgement in their speed
- distractions can double the chances of being involved in an accident.

Recent research has shown that drivers may be diverting their attention by engaging in distractions as often as every 96 seconds while driving and about 5.9% of these cases are linked to a safety-related incident including failure to see the traffic light change, poor situation awareness, lane exclusion, swerving in lane, failure to indicate, hard braking and failure to yield to pedestrians.

There is an increased public awareness of the dangers of mobile phone use while driving, but many car users are less aware of other distractions such as eating, drinking, reaching for objects, looking at vehicles/events outside, using audio equipment and responding to other passengers.

The RAA reports (p.14 *SA Motor* Sept. 20) that '*distracted driving is one of the biggest killers on our roads, playing a part in nearly half of all road fatalities in South Australia*'.

The State government's current campaigns around distractions are supported.

The LGASA supports education campaigns so the public better understands the impact of poor driver and passenger behaviour.

Principle 11: Improve knowledge about the road safety system to better prioritise actions

While some groups of drivers are more vulnerable than others, such as internationally trained drivers, older drivers, novice drivers and motorcyclists, specific strategies must target those groups to improve safety outcomes.

Such strategies can be most effective if supported by evidence and research and the LGASA supports the research being undertaken by DIT as part of development of the Strategy. This must be supported by improved evidence-gathering from key agencies.

The LGASA supports improved evidence-gathering from SA Health and SAPOL in order to inform decision-making about road safety.

Principle 12: Encourage leadership in road safety by state and local government

Work-related travel is a significant risk factor. On average, company drivers travel more than twice the annual distance of private car drivers and have about 50% more accidents. As significant employers and community leaders, state and local government employees, as well as state and local government

The LGASA supports an holistic approach to safe driving practices in state government that entrenches safe driving into work-related travel.

leaders, can significantly influence the community about the importance of road safety. Safe driving adopted for work is likely to influence safe driving practices in private.

Conclusion

This submission reflects the approach of the LGASA's Guide to a *Local Government Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan* endorsed by the LGA Board of Directors in August 2019. It is based on consultation with LGASA member councils and has been reviewed by the State government's Road Safety Strategy Working Party for input.

The LGASA considers road safety a significant issue for its member councils and the community, and one which can be approached in a range of ways. While road safety can be tackled by improving infrastructure and educating drivers, encouraging uptake of new technology and building knowledge and capacity of road managers, state and local government also have opportunities to influence driver behaviour through its staff and leaders.

The LGASA is keen to support state government on developing the Strategy and seeking opportunities to implement its actions through local government. Significant and ongoing funding is required to improve road safety outcomes but the benefits are significant, both in community wellbeing and economic outcomes. Money invested to improve infrastructure will reduce road trauma and thereby significantly reduce the economic toll on the community.

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Attachment:

Guide to a Local Government Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2019



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