

# ‘All Roads, All Road Users’ Regional Road Safety Forum, Maryborough

## Summary and key themes

**Date:** Monday 27 May 2019

**Place:** Brolga Theatre and Convention Centre, Walker St, Maryborough

## Background

On 27 May 2019, the Department of Transport and Main Roads hosted the ‘All Roads, All Road Users’ forum in Maryborough which focused on the key road safety issues affecting the Wide Bay Burnett District.

28 delegates representing community groups, local industry and government agencies attended the event and participated in an open forum session and structured workshop activities. As part of these activities, delegates analysed various road crash scenarios and discussed the factors that may have contributed to the crash. Delegates then discussed and prioritised potential actions to address the key issues identified in the previous exercise.

## Where to from here

The Queensland Government sincerely thanks all participants for their time and input. The ideas put forward during the forum will be considered as part of the development of the next Queensland road safety action plan. Key themes, discussion points and a sample of specific initiatives are outlined below.

## Key themes

*Note: The below summary aims to capture the key discussion themes raised by a range of participants at the forum and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Queensland Government or all participants.*

Delegates had an opportunity to discuss what they considered to be the most pertinent road safety issues in their local area. More education and training and better infrastructure planning were identified as key areas for improvement. While greater road safety education was recommended across the board, several specific areas were also identified. In particular, participants highlighted the need for education and/or training around topics such as motorcycle safety, safe towing and safe mobility scooter use, as well as education on the impact of medical conditions on driving and the benefits of new vehicle technologies for older drivers. Within the broader area of infrastructure, delegates raised the importance of planning for increases in the population, investing in infrastructure that reduces both fatal and non-fatal crashes and changes to infrastructure to address known “hot spots” for crashes.

Delegates were then presented with road crash scenarios involving drivers of different ages and invited to discuss factors that may have contributed to the crash. Several notable themes emerged for each age group.

## Drivers aged 16 – 24

The following were the top issues identified for 16-24-year old drivers:

- Peer influence – for example, playing games, showing off and mobile phone use.
- Driver behaviour – for example, drink driving, speeding and complacency.
- Contextual factors – for example, fatigue associated with driving after work, road delineation and an unforgiving road environment, possible animal avoidance or mechanical issues.

## Drivers aged 25 – 39

The following were the top issues identified for 25-39-year old drivers:

- Inadvertent complacency – for example, a lack of understanding of safe following distances, poor knowledge of new (and existing) road rules and/or complacency around being actively involved in hazard perception.
- Personal risk-taking – for example, overconfidence due to years of driving, a poor attitude while driving, alcohol consumption and the influence of peer pressure.
- Contextual factors – for example, road conditions (including inconsistent and inappropriately high speed limits), lighting conditions and fatigue. Delegates considered these risky circumstances would be exacerbated when a driver is unfamiliar with the area.

## Drivers aged 40 – 59

The following were the top issues identified for 40-59-year old drivers:

- Driver behaviour – for example, speeding, distraction and inattention.
- Contextual factors – for example, wildlife on the road, lack of visibility due to weather conditions, a greater number of vehicles on the road during peak travel times and fatigue as a result of long distance driving.
- Motorcyclist safety – for example, a potential lack of quality safety equipment, lane positioning and a lack of relevant experience (for both riders and drivers).

## Drivers aged 60 – 74

The following were the top issues identified for 60-74-year old drivers:

- Medical conditions – for example, poor understanding around how different conditions (such as diabetes) can impact an individual's ability to drive, accidental drug driving due to a lack of education around the effects of medication and passengers being unaware of how to intervene / help in a medical emergency.
- Driver behaviour and heavy vehicles – for example, poor reaction times in emergency situations, and driver panic as the left lane ends when an overtaking lane has been in place. This panic can be exacerbated if there are a lack of 'escape points' on the road, such as a broad shoulder or a place to pull over. It was noted, in these circumstances, drivers may not consider give way rules, especially if they are unfamiliar with truck stopping distances and/or aerodynamics. Speeding, poor knowledge of current road rules and non-checking of blind spots were also noted.

- Vehicle type – for example, drivers may lack the skills required to tow caravans (particularly large, modern caravans), especially if they are overloaded. New vehicles and new in-vehicle technology were thought to be potential contributors to driver error.

### Drivers aged 75+

The following were the top issues identified for drivers aged 75+:

- Vehicle type – for example, a lack of safety features, poorly maintained vehicles and a lack of awareness of new technology.
- Declining health – for example, medical conditions, declining eyesight and poorer judgement and reaction times. Difficulty in making decisions in complex situations and feeling under pressure were also noted as concerns.
- Licensing – for example, over confidence in their abilities due to a desire to retain their licence. The lack of ongoing testing and the possible lack of formal testing for this cohort when they first received their licence were also raised as issues.

### Ideas

Following the initial analysis of different road crashes, delegates discussed ideas for potential actions. These were framed around the four pillars of the Safe System (that is, safe speeds, safe road users, safe vehicles and safe roads and roadsides). Delegates were then asked to prioritise the recommended ideas. Several ideas related to roads and roadsides and speeds, however, most prioritised ideas related to the safer road users pillar. These centred around increased education and training, licensing reforms and specific measures targeting older road users. A sample of ideas is provided below.

#### ***Ideas:***

- Pre-licence driver education measures.
- Ongoing driver education and information, including environmental awareness and recognising signs of fatigue.
- Additional licensing requirements for towing caravans.
- Licensing process review for older drivers – with scope to consider reaction times and require a broader range of medical specialists to be involved in the decision-making process.
- An information pack regarding medical conditions and the effects of medication on driving.
- Standardising and/or mandating protective clothing standards for motorcycle riders.