

# Road Safety in the Regions Toowoomba Forum

## Summary and key themes

**Date:** Wednesday 26 September 2018

**Place:** FKG Group Office, 275 McDougall Street, Toowoomba

## Background

On 26 September 2018 the Honourable Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads, hosted the *Road Safety in the Regions Toowoomba* forum which focused on road safety issues in the Darling Downs region.

21 people attended the Toowoomba forum including key stakeholders from the local community, transport industry, and state and local government agencies.

Delegates had the opportunity to discuss key road safety issues in their area, as well as potential short and longer-term solutions to these issues.

The solutions suggested will be considered and used to inform the development of Queensland's Road Safety Action Plan 2019–2021.

## Key themes

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

### 1. Local issues

Road safety issues which were identified as particularly important for the Darling Downs region may be defined by three broad categories. These are negative driving culture, road infrastructure and the interaction between different drivers and vehicle types.

Negative driving culture captured unsafe driving behaviours such as inattention, driving while fatigued, speeding and drug driving, as well as, unhelpful attitudes such as intolerance of other road users and the tendency to view road safety as the responsibility of others.

When considering road and roadside infrastructure, delegates identified that the existing infrastructure is not meeting the demands of the growing population as well as it could be. Issues around the condition of rural roads and the frequency and visibility of signage were also raised.

The interaction between different vehicle types was also seen as a key area in need of improvement. Within this category, poor road sharing between light and heavy vehicles was highlighted as a concern. Delegates also emphasised the Darling Downs region had a wide variety of drivers of differing skill levels and experiences, including those from both urban and rural environments, as well as overseas licence holders and caravan drivers.

## 2. Short-term solutions

A variety of short-term solutions within a number of different categories were proposed by the forum delegates. These categories included education and training, increased compliance activities, safety campaigns and changes to infrastructure.

### 2.1 Education and training

Potential solutions suggested by delegates which sought to improve education and training included:

- educating road users about the importance of sharing the road with heavy vehicles
- providing education for overseas licence holders to increase their awareness of Australian roads and road rules
- adjusting the community road safety grant framework so that it would allow for programs with a longer-term focus
- supporting staggered, ongoing driver training, as well as retraining and retesting drivers when new road rules come into force
- incentivising participation of individuals and companies in additional driver training (for example, offering discounted licence renewal fees).

### 2.2 Compliance activities

Compliance activities which were suggested by delegates to address the identified road safety concerns included:

- implementing an annual vehicle inspection regime
- increasing licence checks for drivers with trailers over 4.5 tonne gross vehicle mass
- reducing the cost of conducting tests which target drug driving
- increasing the use of technologies such as video monitoring and point to point cameras
- placing a greater emphasis on enforcing legislation which relates to road sharing (for example, rules around minimum passing distances)
- improving the consistency of speed restrictions for different heavy vehicle combinations.

### 2.3 Safety campaigns and social media

Delegates identified a number of possible approaches which related to safety campaigns and social media, these included:

- creating campaigns to improve trucking awareness
- creating campaigns which incorporate images of individuals injured in road accidents
- increasing and broadening social media use to remind the public about road rules.

### 2.4 Changes to road and roadside infrastructure

Several suggestions relating to road and roadside infrastructure were also raised by delegates. These included:

- increasing the size and number of speed signs in the Darling Downs (including speed repeater signs and 'speed ahead' signs when entering towns)
- increasing the number of weighbridges.

### 3. Longer-term solutions

Delegates were also asked to consider possible longer-term solutions to the key issues they identified. Predominantly these ideas were linked to vehicle design, education and training, the use of incentives and engagement with industry and community. In particular, delegates suggested:

- altering design standards found in the Australian Design Rules to eliminate drivers' ability to access their phone while driving and introducing alcohol and drug interlocks
- prioritising road safety education from an early age
- providing government funded driver training
- rewarding organisations which invest in driver training
- incentivising good driving by introducing a reverse demerit point system
- introducing legislation reforms around the use of mobile devices and smart watches
- leveraging existing connections with industry and community for maximum benefit
- improving Queensland roads by introducing more audible tactile lines
- changing the language used to describe road safety (for example, 'road toll' implies that loss of life is an inevitable part of driving).