

Safer Roads, Safer Queensland Forum

Summary and key themes

Date: Wednesday 28 February 2018

Place: Premiers Room and Speakers Hall, Parliamentary Annexe, Parliament House

Background

On 28 February 2018, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Honourable Mark Bailey MP, hosted the fifth *Safer Roads, Safer Queensland* forum which focused on vulnerable road users and driver distraction.

In keeping with the previous forums, a wide range of stakeholders participated representing key industry organisations, research institutions, government agencies and peak bodies representing road user groups, including young people.

Each delegate was offered an opportunity to discuss their ideas and suggestions to improve road safety in relation to each of the theme areas – driver distraction, motorcycle safety, bicycle riding safety and pedestrians.

This forum built on the success of the four previous *Safer Roads, Safer Queensland* forums which shaped the development of Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-21 and the 2015-17 and 2017-19 action plans. The forums are designed to open up the discussion about road safety in Queensland and hear from a wide range of stakeholders about their challenges and potential solutions.

Where to from here

The Queensland Government sincerely thanks all participants for their valuable time and insights.

During the forum, a great many ideas were put forward. The key themes and discussion points as well as initiatives that will be progressed by the government are summarised below. The initiatives build on those already outlined in Queensland's *Road Safety Action Plan 2017-19*.

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 of the participants.

1 Driver distraction

Driver distraction is an increasing problem on our roads. It includes all types of distraction not just mobile phone use. In 2016 alone, 28 Queenslanders lost their lives as a result of driver distraction on our roads. This represented 11 per cent of the Queensland road toll. In addition driver distraction was 20 per cent of total hospitalised casualties. The number of crashes caused by mobile phone distraction is difficult to capture and verify and is therefore likely to be under-reported.

We live in a digital age where people want to be continually connected to others through their phones and other electronic devices. Research conducted by the Department of Transport and Main Roads reveals about 75 per cent of Queensland drivers admit to using mobile phones while driving. Contrary to popular belief, this is not just a young driver issue. People of all ages, professions and backgrounds are engaging in this risky behaviour.

Participants discussed:

- Distraction is a broader topic than mobile phones, there is no 'one size fits all solution. However tackling mobile phone use could have large benefits.
- The importance of continued driver education on the dangers of distraction and the need for people to take accountability and change their behaviour.
- Reviewing the penalty regime for people using their smart devices to better reflect their level of driving impairment and the increased risk they are to other road users.
- Working with the technology providers on what mobile device functionality is available when driving. It was noted technology such as automated vehicles will assist, but could take a long time to be developed to an effective level, then fleet replacement (10 year average age of fleet) would add extra time on to that.
- The need to improve data collection on this issue.

Initiatives to take forward – driver distraction

- Work with stakeholders to investigate driver distraction and develop a prioritised list of actions. This includes working with tech companies, vehicle manufacturers and telecommunications companies to identify solutions addressing the current influences on drivers which result in distraction (current Action Plan action #24).
- Introduce a graduated penalty regime for people using their devices to better reflect their level of driving impairment and the increased risk they are to other road users.
- Explore options to re-run and expand the successful 'Chin up' online mobile phone campaign.

2 Vulnerable road users

Motorcyclists, pedestrians and bicycle riders are our most vulnerable road users. Regardless of who or what might have contributed to a crash, they will almost always be worse off in terms of injury or death.

Last year 50 motorcyclists, 35 pedestrians and eight bicycle riders were killed on our roads – 38 per cent of the 2017 Queensland road toll - and there were more than 1000 hospitalised casualties in this vulnerable road user group.

Participants discussed:

- A key shared theme was the importance of finding innovative ways to change attitudes about sharing the road safely and encouraging all road users to practice greater tolerance, patience and courtesy on our roads.

Initiatives to take forward – vulnerable road users

- Investigate a range of innovative ways to change attitudes about sharing the road safely and encouraging all road users to practice greater tolerance, patience and courtesy on our roads.

2.1 Motorcycle safety

In 2017 there was 50 motorcyclist fatalities which was just over 20 percent of the Queensland road toll. In addition for the five years to 30 June 2017, motorcyclists were 15 per cent of total hospitalised casualties.

Participants discussed:

- Involving or making more use of local rider knowledge in determining problem roads and identifying problem sites for treatments (in the analysis and solutions).
- The need to develop a better understanding of motorcyclists as a cohort, as they are not a homogenous group. Better understanding can help develop better communication strategies.
- Increasing the use of social media to communicate with motorcyclists.
- The need to change motorcycle rider's attitudes regarding the need to wear protective clothing for all journeys (irrespective of trip length).

Initiatives to take forward– motorcycle safety

- In 2018 the successful 'Sixth Sense' motorcycle campaign will be re-run and expanded.
- Explore options for greater utilisation of social media to promote motorcycle rider safety.
- Through the TRSP (current Action Plan action #1), deliver \$6.8m in projects over the four years of 2017-18 to 2020-21 aimed at improving safety of motorcyclists.
- Investigate the viability of introducing a motorcycle specific Hazard Perception Test into the licensing system.
- Develop opportunities for motorcyclists to refresh their riding skills and knowledge including road environment scanning, correct positioning and skills to respond to hazards.
- Promote the benefits of vehicle safety technology (such as anti-lock braking systems) and encourage uptake.
- Participate in a national program to develop a star rating system for protective clothing to inform motorcyclist purchasing decisions (current Action Plan action #17).
- Undertake customer research to gain a better understanding of motorcycle riders' motivations and risk profiles.

2.2 Bicycle safety

In 2017 there were eight bicycle rider fatalities which was just over three per cent of the Queensland road toll. In addition for the five years to 30 June 2017, bicycle riders were five per cent of total hospitalised casualties.

Participants discussed:

- Exploring opportunities to improve the safety of bicycle riders by reviewing speed limits in areas with high levels of activity.
- Revisiting the recommendations of the 2013 inquiry into cycling (A new direction for cycling in Queensland, Report No. 39 – Inquiry into Cycling Issues, Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, November 2013).
- The need for safer infrastructure, including access to meaningful destinations; maintenance of infrastructure necessary to reduce injury claims; standard practices/drawings – lips/gaps/steps; targeting locations of greatest need; planning hierarchy rebalance modes; and improve intersection and roundabout design.
- Increasing the policy responsiveness and enforcement of minimum passing distance legislation.

Initiatives to take forward – bicycle safety

- Explore options to re-run the successful 'Stay wide of the Rider' online mobile phone campaign and continue to promote tolerance, patience and courtesy when sharing the road between user groups.
- Explore opportunities to improve the safety of bicycle riders by reviewing speed limits in areas with high levels of activity.
- Through the TRSP (current Action Plan action #1), deliver \$20.5m in projects over the four years of 2017-18 to 2020-21 aimed at improving bicycle riders' safety.
- Implement initiatives outlined in the Queensland Cycling Action Plan 2017-19.

2.3 Pedestrian safety

In 2017 there were 35 pedestrian fatalities which was 14 per cent of the Queensland road toll. In addition for the five years to 30 June 2017, pedestrians were six per cent of total hospitalised casualties.

Participants discussed:

- The success of the Flashing School Zone Sign program and the risks around other areas where children are present, for example, child care centres.
- Exploring opportunities to improve the safety of pedestrians by reviewing speed limits in areas with high levels of activity.
- The need for safer infrastructure that better caters for pedestrians including improved lighting around areas of high night time activity and more accessible footpaths in popular

pedestrian areas. Discussed challengers around ride sharing pick up sites and capacity around public transport stations.

- Determining where the highest risk locations are for pedestrians.
- The need for more education about pedestrian safety, including infrastructure provisions to cater for pedestrian needs.
- Exploring the opportunities technology may offer for increasing pedestrian safety. This will include outcomes of interstate trials, for example, traffic lights on the ground in Melbourne's CBD for distracted pedestrians.

Initiatives to take forward– pedestrian safety

- Explore opportunities to improve the safety of pedestrians by reviewing speed limits in areas with high levels of activity.
- Through the TRSP (current Action Plan action #1), deliver \$33.4m in projects over the four years of 2017-18 to 2020-21 aimed at improving the safety of pedestrians including the continual rollout of changes to the timing of pedestrian crossing lights to protect pedestrians; and the continuing commitment to install flashing signs in school zones to protect our children.
- TMR will undertake analysis of pedestrian and bicycle rider crash data to develop criteria identifying high risk locations that should be considered for speed limit reviews. These criteria will trigger a review of a road which has experienced significant pedestrian and bicycle rider serious casualty crashes.
- Incorporate Safe System Assessments into road infrastructure project development to positively provide a safer road environment for pedestrians.