

**Supplementary
Submission**

No 20a

**INQUIRY INTO DRIVER AND ROAD USER
DISTRACTION**

Name: Withheld

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Partially Confidential

Due to recent pedestrian accidents / fatalities at signalised pedestrian crossings that maybe due to pedestrians and drivers being distracted whilst negotiating intersections.

Could Staysafe please also consider the following for all signalised pedestrian crossings and heavy vehicles in NSW to my original submission No. 20, Driver and Road User Distraction.

Could Staysafe consider the following:

1. Program all traffic lights so that pedestrian crossings have “auto introduction”.
2. Allowing the green walk light to stay green for the maximum time allowed
3. Have a green flashing pedestrian light introduced into NSW / Australia
4. Programming all lights with existing turn arrows to flash orange
5. Look at another trial of Pedestrian Count Down Timers
6. Increasing the time between orange and red vehicle lights by one second
7. Removed or reduced blind spots from all new buses and trucks
8. The view thru all mirrors are free from any obstructions and all standards followed
9. Allowing more “Buses Excepted” signs at intersections especially around schools
10. New bus Demister systems are connected to Air-conditioning systems
11. Voice announcements for school children on buses
12. Remove confusing school zone signage from side of roads
13. Advertise different road rules to the public
14. Allow Bus Drivers to report careless or dangerous behavior by motorist
15. Police and Rangers to enforce vehicles illegally stopping in dangerous locations
16. Standardise turning indicators on all new cars
17. Auto headlight on for new cars
18. Auto turn off of fog lamps.
19. Standardise High-beam light controls on vehicles
20. Look at removing “left turn permitted after stopping signs” at traffic lights
21. Look at increasing size or moving bus stops

1. Programming Auto Introduction to all pedestrian lights

Could the Staysafe committee please consider asking RMS to program the majority if not all traffic lights so that the pedestrian crossing has an “auto introduction” programmed 24hrs a day.

This will allow SCATS and the flow of traffic along major roads to be programmed to the millisecond allowing traffic flow for vehicles to be improved especially during the peak.

Currently along major roads the traffic lights change at different times due wether a pedestrian has pressed the button thus interrupting the smooth flow of traffic.

The press button on the traffic light pole could be removed so that pedestrians know that the crossing is automated. The cost of doing this would be minimal due to being only a programming change to SCATS and over time (maybe a year or two) the buttons could be removed after a trial period.

Pedestrians would not need to continuously press buttons at each set of traffic lights and if they arrive a millisecond after they have changed would not need to wait the full phase of the lights before crossing. If this occurs most pedestrians currently try and dangerously cross the road and children also waiting then cross without looking. Also pedestrians that arrive at a crossing assume the the person before has already pressed the button meaning that the pedestrian lights do not go green and then pedestrians including school children dangerously cross.

This currently is the case on the Pacific Hwy at Crows nest the crossing auto introduce and no push buttons have been installed (see point 2 below).

2. Allowing the green walk light to stay green for the maximum time allowed

Could the Staysafe committee please consider looking at the 2 sets of traffic lights on the Pacific Hwy at the intersections of Hume St and Oxley St Crows Nest. Both of these intersections currently have auto introduction pedestrian crossings on the side streets and pedestrians do not press any buttons. This allows pedestrians to be able to walk across the side street for the total period that the Pacific Hwy's vehicle lights are green and the red flashing walk signal activates about 10 seconds before these vehicle lights go orange. This means that pedestrians do not need to press a button and if they turn up to the lights a second after the traffic lights have turned green they can still cross the lights to some extent safely. These lights may benefit from a flashing green walk light (see point 3 below).

3. Have a green flashing pedestrian light introduced into NSW / Australia

Could the Staysafe committee please consider the introduction of a "fast" flashing green walk light signal at pedestrian crossings that would help make pedestrians more alert as they cross the road.

At traffic lights with pedestrian crossings that are not controlled by a red light, meaning all green circle vehicle lights (i.e. NOT one way streets, slip roads, red arrows or stand alone crossings). Could a flashing green walk light be considered so that pedestrians will know to check for vehicles before walking into the intersection. This flashing green walk light could continue to flash until about 10 seconds before the vehicle lights go orange.

At traffic lights that are controlled by a red light or a red arrow etc, the current green solid walk light would be used indicating that it is safe to cross, but educate people still to look.

This would be extremely cheap to implement only requiring a programming change to SCATS and would **not** require any additional physical equipment or wiring of traffic signals which would cost a lot of money as previously stated by the RTA (page 18 OTSI report 27th September 2005).

Could the flashing green light be made faster than the current red flashing red walk light so that it alerts both the pedestrian and drivers to check and use caution and so it would not be confused with a solid green walk light.

NSW / Australia would then have 4 pedestrian light signals.

1. **Solid green walk:** all other vehicle lights thru pedestrian crossing are red and the pedestrian has right of way. This would be used at intersections that have one-way streets, slip roads, red arrows or red lights (i.e. stand alone pedestrian crossings).
2. **Flashing green walk:** vehicles may proceed thru crossing but **must** give way to pedestrians, both pedestrians and vehicles must use caution and look whilst using crossing.
3. **Flashing red walk:** pedestrians must not leave the kerb but can finish crossing.
4. **Solid red walk:** vehicles have a green light and are travelling thru the crossing pedestrians must not leave the kerb.

Pedestrians currently disregard the solid or flashing red walk signal and walk across the intersection by having a quick glance, other pedestrians including school children follow without looking.

Pedestrians currently do not look if the walk signal is solid green and just walk across the crossing thinking that they have right of way and are unaware that vehicles including heavy vehicles maybe negotiating the intersection

4. Programming all lights with existing turn arrows to flash orange

Could the staysafe committee consider asking RMS to program all traffic lights that have orange arrows to make them flash orange for the total time the pedestrian lights are flashing green or flashing red.

At Neutral Bay the T intersection traffic lights are confusing for vehicles exiting Wycombe Rd onto Military Rd due to the round green light and flashing orange arrow coming on at the same time. This gives the wrong signal to vehicles and if a driver is distracted may think that the green light means go thru the pedestrian crossing. These types of signals should be removed and made clearer for both pedestrians and drivers.

5. Look at another trial of Pedestrian Count Down Timers

Could the Staysafe Committee consider asking the RMS to trial pedestrian count down timers at specific intersections that have controlled traffic lights.

The previous trial was always going to fail due to the location of the trail.

Could the trial be conducted at the intersection of George St and Park/Druitt Sts in the Sydney CBD and stand alone pedestrian crossings along the full length of Martin Place.

6. Increasing the time between orange and red vehicle lights by one second

Could the Staysafe Committee consider extending the time between the vehicle traffic lights going from orange to red by one second to reduce pedestrians walking out onto the road at pedestrian crossings and being hit by vehicles still travelling thru the intersection.

Pedestrians are distracted talking to other people or on the phone and walk out onto the road as soon as the sound of the walk signal starts and do not look even-though vehicles are still travelling thru the intersection. A second is not a lot to ask because a lot of intersections are now larger with heavier traffic flow meaning that about 3 seconds is too short for distracted drivers to react to an orange light and may brake heavily causing a multiple vehicle accident.

7. Making sure that all blind spots including mirrors are removed or reduced from all new buses and trucks

Could staysafe request from the RMS that vehicle manufactures are complying with all previous staysafe, RMS(RTA) and other safety reports for heavy vehicles especially buses. Staysafe 26. recommendation 12.

Could the staysafe committee consider asking heavy vehicle manufacturers to make sure that wherever possible that all mirrors and other objects are kept to a minimum whilst designing new vehicles. Objects placed in the drivers view that create a blind spot means the blind spot may travel at the same speed as a pedestrian crossing the road and if the pedestrian is distracted or thinks that the green walk signal means that they do not need to look for vehicles turning then this could be catastrophic.

8. The view thru all mirrors including internal mirrors are free from any obstructions and safety systems in all new buses and trucks (especially buses) comply with all relevant standards and specifications

Could staysafe request from the RMS that all heavy vehicle manufactures are complying with all previous staysafe, RMS(RTA) and other safety reports and standards for heavy vehicles especially buses.

This includes but not limited to Staysafe report No. 26 (Nov 1994) (recommendations 12, 14, 17, 18, 19), RTA Technical Specification 146 and 147, the Henderson Report 1995, Transport NSW Bus Specifications and any relevant OTSI reports that may contribute to heavy vehicle driver distraction.

9. Allowing more “Buses Excepted” signs at intersections especially around schools

Could the staysafe committee please consider asking the RMS to look at intersections and allow more “buses excepted” signs at “No Right Turn” intersections so that buses do not need to make difficult left hand turns thru intersections and have to use back streets to get on the other side of the road. Buses need to be on the correct side of the road to safely set down passengers and sometimes need to make multiple turns in order to be on the right side of the road. Many intersections that currently have “No Right Turn” signs make it difficult for buses that are now longer than previous models and thus have to make multiple difficult turns in side streets, but only need to make one turn thru an intersection to get to their destination safely. Buses may only need to turn into certain roads once per hour, per day or once per month and by having a single “Buses Excepted” sign at the intersection will not reduce traffic flow but allows buses to safely turn and get to their destination safely. Most bus companies have computer systems that calculate the safest route so the RMS would only need to place one sign at each intersection as the driver would have this turn by turn information already.

Staysafe report No. 26 (Recommendation 22)

10. New bus Demister systems are connected to Air-conditioning systems (if fitted).

Could staysafe committee consider altering their original staysafe No. 26 (recommendation 13) due to the majority of new buses now have air-conditioning systems that would better demist the drivers windows to see pedestrians crossing roads.

The majority of new cars, if you turn on the air-conditioning whilst demisting the front windscreen it will clear the mist faster and keep the mist away until the air-conditioning is turned off. This could be simply changed on all future buses by continuing the air-conditioning ducts to the front windows similar to what happens on the side windows . This will allow drivers to have a clear vision of the road around at all times because the air-conditioning is always turned on. If the bus becomes full of passengers quickly or the weather changes suddenly it will take time for the current demister to work effectively. These ducts should also be connected to any booster fans to clear the mist faster.

11. Voice announcements for school children on buses

Could the Staysafe Committee consider Staysafe 26. recommendation 14.

All new buses or existing buses that have existing equipment installed and are used by school children. When the bus school flashing lights are activated, the internal speaker system has a voice announcement every time the passenger bus stop button is pressed. A recorded announcement is played within the bus reminding children to wait until the bus has left the kerb, find a safe spot to cross and to look before crossing.

The cost would be minimal because most existing buses have a six speaker system with a recorded voice module already installed.

12. Remove confusing and old school zone signage from side of roads

Could the Staysafe Committee consider asking the RMS to remove confusing and old school zone signage from the side of roads.

One of these signs is on Epping Rd between Balaclava Rd and Herring Rd Marsfield Sydney.

The signs states the following “School bus stop zone 40km/hr when bus lights flash” with yellow zig zag line marking and 40 painted on road. These signs should only be used on rural roads because all urban bus stops may have large numbers of school children crossing the road and numbers of children may change from time to time. Staysafe No. 26 recommendation 25.

This would make it confusing for drivers who would think that they only need to slow down to 40km/hr at these zones around Sydney. If a bus stops at a normal bus stop without these signs the driver is not required to slow down to 40km/hr.

Signage / advertising should be placed along roads reminding drivers that they must slow down at **all** bus stops if the bus school lights are flashing and the fine associated for disobeying this rule Staysafe No. 26 recommendation 29.

13. Advertise different road rules to the public

Could the Staysafe Committee consider asking the government to have an advertising campaign explaining the different road rules to the general public.

This would include but not limited to the following:

School children and parent safely using public transport and walking to school.

School flashing lights on buses

Do not overtake turning vehicles

Giving way to buses leaving the kerb.

Do not cut in front of heavy vehicles and the distance they need to stop

Being courteous to other road users

The amount of passengers that buses carry and the traffic chaos if we did not have them

Tigers teeth school zones and zig zag marking before pedestrian crossings

Blind spots of heavy vehicles

(maybe have a ad with a normal driver spending a day with a truck driver and see the difficulties faced every day on Sydney’s congested roads)

14. Allow Bus Drivers to report careless or dangerous behavior by motorist

Could the Staysafe committee consider Staysafe No.26, recommendation 21.

Due to advances in digital video technology since Staysafe 26, and the ability of bus drivers to be able to isolate and automatically download video footage of the road around the bus to a server at a central location.

If a bus driver feels that an unsafe, careless or dangerous act by another road-user has occurred the bus driver could report this to the police and the driver/owner of the vehicle in question could be sent a caution / fine by the police after viewing the video and if cautioned it would be recorded officially against the owner of the vehicle.

If a vehicle is in or near a bus zone and refuses to leave not allowing the bus to safely stop and let off passengers the vehicle could be issued with a fine. Most bus drivers would not use this system except in extreme circumstances and it would act as a deterrent to other road users who may think again before doing something dangerous around buses carrying school children.

15. Police and Rangers to enforce vehicles illegally stopped in bus zones and other dangerous locations

Could the Staysafe Committee consider asking the police and council rangers to clamp down on the illegal use of bus zones, no stopping zones and bus only lanes especially by rouge taxi drivers that are stealing fares from honest taxi drivers that are adhering to the road rules.

It is only a matter of time before a catastrophic accident occurs between a bus that is carrying up to 120 passengers all without seat belts and a vehicle that suddenly pulls in front to pick up or set down somebody at a bus stop, no stopping zone or bus only lane.

Honest taxi drivers are waiting at taxi ranks for over half an hour for a fare but rouge taxi drivers are stealing these fares by dangerously stopping to pick up passengers anywhere including on the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

If heavy vehicle drivers are distracted for a second as these vehicles suddenly stop in-front, this will cause a serious accident.

Other drivers are now imitating taxis by just pulling up at dangerous locations and placing their hazard lights on and talking on phone or picking somebody up from the middle of a pedestrian crossing.

Councils could consider using pole mounted video cameras in dangerous locations similar to other counties to enforce vehicles illegally parking, putting at risk the safety of other road users including rangers that may also be distracted.

16. Standardise turning indicators on all new cars

Could Staysafe committee consider asking the Federal government to change the Australian Design Rules for new cars so that all blinker indicator sticks are on the right side of the steering wheel column.

The reason is that drivers that drive both a European and Australian cars have to constantly remember which side of the steering wheel the indicator is located. Drivers are turning on the windscreen wipers instead of the indicator and are ultimately giving up using the indicators due to it being too difficult to remember which side of the steering wheel it is. This is then giving the wrong message to pedestrians and other road users if the car is going around a corner or changing lanes meaning that an accident / fatality will occur. Vehicle manufactures would find this easy to do just by rotating the indicator and windscreen unit inside the steering column 180 degrees and it would not cost them any more.

17. Auto headlight on for new cars

Could the Staysafe committee consider asking the Federal government to change the Australian Design Rules for new cars with LCD speedos or speedos / dashboards that are backlit even with the headlights off. These new cars should be made to have an auto headlight on sensor installed that automatically turns the headlights on as it gets dark. This would reduce the amount of cars that are dangerously driving without their headlights on at night because the driver is unaware / distracted due to the speedo already being lit and are putting pedestrians and other road users in danger.

18. Auto turn off of fog lamps.

Could the Staysafe committee consider asking the Federal government to change the Australian Design Rules for new cars with rear fog-lamps, front fog-lights or driving lights that every time the engine is turned off these lights are reset. This means that the next time the car is started, if it is adverse weather the driver needs to activate these safety devices again.

About 1 in 10 new cars with these devices are driving around with them continuously on and are unaware that the orange light on the dash means that these safety devices are on. These lights are extremely bright and is very distracting to other road users who may be unable to see pedestrians.

19. Standardise High-beam light controls on vehicles

Could the Staysafe committee consider asking the Federal government to change the Australian Design Rules all new cars so that the position of the high-beam stick is the same for all new vehicles.

If a driver turns on the high-beam they push the indicator stick forward and it must lock into that position so that as they go to indicate the indicator stick is in a different location alerting the driver that the high-beams have been left on.

or

A beep is sounded every minute or so indicating that the high-beams are on.

Drivers are unaware that the high-beams have been left on or are driving hire cars and are unfamiliar with the controls of the car.

20. Look at removing “left turn permitted after stopping signs” at traffic lights

Could the Staysafe Committee consider asking the RMS to look at removing “left turn permitted after stopping” signs at many intersections due to traffic lights nowadays being more adaptive to changing traffic conditions. Many of these signs are at major intersections with an increased number of pedestrians crossing these intersections and drivers only looking for other vehicles.

21. Look at increasing size or move bus stops

Could the Staysafe Committee consider increasing the size of bus stops due to the larger size of new buses and increased frequency along major roads. Could the location of all bus stops be considered and if found unsafe moved so it is safer for pedestrians especially school children who maybe distracted and also may not be seen by vehicles approaching the stop.

Staysafe No 26. recommendation 26, 22.

Please find attached the OTSI report from 27th September 2005 and other relevant documents that I have quoted.