

REVIEW OF ROAD SAFETY ISSUES FOR FUTURE INQUIRY

Organisation: Insurance Australia Group

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18 September 2018

Greg Alpin, Chair
NSW Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Staysafe Committee

Submitted via email: staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Alpin,

IAG welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on future areas of interest of inquiry for the Staysafe Committee in the 57th Parliament. Data and statistics to support the areas of inquiry are provided in an annexure.

About IAG

Our purpose is to make your world a safer place, which means we are working to create a safer, stronger and more confident tomorrow for our customers, partners, communities, shareholders and our people throughout Asia Pacific.

IAG is the parent company of a general insurance group, with operations in Australia and New Zealand. Our businesses sell insurance under many leading brands, including: NRMA Insurance, CGU, SGIO, SGIC, Swann Insurance and WFI in Australia; NZI, State, AMI and Lumley Insurance in New Zealand.

The issues

Improving road safety is a core aspect of IAG's motor and CTP insurance businesses and we offer the following suggestions for areas of inquiry in the 57th Parliament:

Distracted Driving

Distracted driving is a growing concern. Staysafe should investigate opportunities to help the public understand that being distracted whilst traveling on the road puts at risk the safety of themselves and those around them. Work in this area should focus on making distracted driving and road use a socially unacceptable behaviour, much like the drink driving campaigns in the 1980's and 1990's.

A related distraction issue is working to simplify our road signs. Simplified road signs make it easier for road users to understand instructions and rules, reducing the time spent calculating and assessing whether what the rule means and whether it applies at a particular time or space.

Studies have shown that distracted drivers impact significantly upon traffic flow, amplifying road congestion issues and decreasing driver distraction will likely have a collateral benefit.

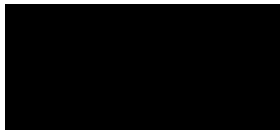
Road crash database

IAG believes that one of the key road safety issues for future inquiry is how to advance the establishment of a nationally consistent, non-fatal crash database which links hospital data and crash data. Such a database is crucial to accurately and comprehensively capture the nature of crash injuries in Australia.

The National Road Safety Action Plan has clearly articulated the need to establish a system which matches serious injury hospital data with road crash data, using an agreed definition of serious injury. Currently, Australia's performance in addressing serious injuries from crashes is difficult to measure because of the lack of a reliable, nationally consistent source of non-fatal crash data. A non-fatal crash and injury database will enable the measurement of the effectiveness of road safety initiatives which have been introduced to achieve the National Road Safety Strategy's aim of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30% by 2020.

IAG is available to discuss the above recommendations or answer any further questions in more detail. Please contact [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Cecilia Warren.

Cecilia Warren
Director, Research & Development
IAG

ANNEXURE 1

Distracted driving

Almost 100% of the driving population are aware of the issue¹, there are increasing occurrences of incidents related to driver distraction on our roads.

Inattention has been found to be a contributing factor in 78% of car crashes and 65% of near crashes (CARRS-Q 2017)², making it one of the largest modern problems in road safety. Often, accidents are reported with the cause being loss of vehicle control or speeding when in fact these are very likely secondary factors or results of driver distraction. Unfortunately, global studies show that this situation has continued to deteriorate over the last several years.³ In a trial on Sydney's Harbour Bridge, the system caught 750 drivers in just six hours⁴.

Equally, there are growing numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users who are so distracted with the use of electronic devices, that they no longer pay enough attention to what is happening around them as they navigate the road network.

The road sign in figure one demonstrates a complex request demanding a driver take their eyes off the road, in an area of increased risk, to see what time of day it is, and calculate what speed they should be travelling should be replaced with variable road signage that simply state the current speed limit.

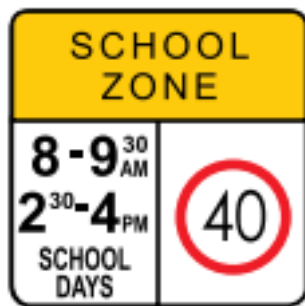


Figure one.

Road signs asking for multiple parameters to be examined and then applied by the road user should be eliminated from our road network in favour of signage that simple and clearly outlines what is expected (ie. Display the current speed limit).

¹ <https://www.ishn.com/articles/108774-distracted-driving-awareness-isnt-enough>

² Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety - Queensland (2015) 'State of the Road' A Fact Sheet of the Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety - Queensland

³ https://d1x6dm64pio2h2.cloudfront.net/casestudies/Zendrive_Distracted_Driving_2018.pdf

⁴ <https://www.news.com.au/technology/innovation/motoring/motoring-news/using-your-mobile-while-driving-heres-how-youll-be-caught/news-story/90178b07995711a2c3e61988242c5ee3>