

**Submission  
No 11**

## **REDUCING TRAUMA ON LOCAL ROADS IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (NSW)

**Date Received:** 3 February 2020



New South Wales

**IPWEA**

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS  
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA



# IPWEA (NSW) ROADS & TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE

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The Hon. Lou Amato, MLC  
Chair  
Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Chair Amato,

## **Submission to Staysafe inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW**

The Institute of Public Works and Engineering Australasia (NSW Division) fully supports the need for a Parliamentary Inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW.

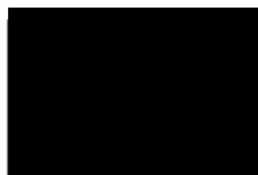
IPWEA (NSW) appreciates the invitation to provide this submission to the Staysafe Committee. The submission deals with each of the Terms of Reference based on a wide range of inputs. We would welcome the opportunity to address the Inquiry to provide further detail on the issues raised within this submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] in relation to this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Garry Hemsworth  
**Director IPWEA NSW Board**



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**STAYSAFE (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)  
Inquiry into Reducing Trauma on Local Roads in NSW**

**Submission by**

**INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING  
AUSTRALASIA**

**(NSW Division) Roads & Transport Directorate**

**03 February 2020**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission looks at a wide range of issues linking into Reducing Trauma on Local Roads in NSW. Each of the Terms of Reference has been systematically examined and the following recommendations have been made:

### **3.1 The role of local roads in road safety and trauma**

Having regard to the magnitude of the council managed road network and the proportion of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on that part of the network, all three levels of government must cooperate in the development of policies, strategies and programmes aimed at providing a sustainable funding model, appropriate technical resources and community engagement so that road safety performance can be improved and the level of trauma can be significantly reduced on the local road network.

### **3.2 The effectiveness of existing road safety planning requirements including in other jurisdictions**

1. Clarification of legal roles and responsibilities for Councils as Road Authorities should be undertaken in the context of existing legislation an equitable and sustainable funding model.
2. Broader cooperation with Local Government be developed in the ongoing implementation of the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021 with Transport for NSW and in particular the application of the Safe System approach to delivering Road Safety outcomes.
3. Local Government continue to work with Transport for NSW, NSW Police and the NSW Health to improve the quality and quantity of crash data being reported.

### **3.3 Opportunities for improving road safety planning and management on local roads, including through the Local Government Road Safety Program and Community Strategic Plan**

1. That the application of road safety auditing be encouraged through the development of guidelines and the provision of resources for road authority staff involved in all phases of the planning, delivery and maintenance of road assets to look at the network from a different perspective, to identify issues before they become Black Spots, and to tailor maintenance and reconstruction works to current safety standards.

2. That the NSW Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation be amended to require all councils to develop and implement a Road Safety Strategic Plan and that resources be provided to councils to implement this requirement generally in accordance with IPWEA (NSW) / Transport for NSW draft “*Guide to Developing Council Road Safety Strategic Plans*”.
3. That the State Government provide increased support for the Local Government Road Safety Program and that this Program be developed as a genuine two-way collaboration with Local Government and Council Road Safety Officers.

### **3.4 The role of local communities and their representatives in identifying and delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads**

1. There are a wide range of community representatives that can contribute to the development of local road safety policy and it is critical that local road authorities engage with all these organisations to ensure that the widest possible range of inputs is considered in the development of a Road Safety Strategic Plan.
2. IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the continuation and expansion of the Community Road Safety Fund detailed in The NSW Road Safety Plan 2021.

### **3.5 Other related matters**

1. IPWEA (NSW) recommends that the State Government supports an approach to the Federal Government to fully fund the \$3 billion annual Road Safety Fund recommended by the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy. A fund of this size could help resource councils to contribute to other aspects of the Safe Systems approach beyond the Safer Roads component. The issue of restricting the use of mobile devices in motor vehicles through technology should also be researched.
2. Vehicle fleet owners, including Councils, be encouraged to be early adopters of autonomous safety assist features in the purchase of their vehicle fleets.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 IPWEA NSW DIVISION**

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia NSW Division (IPWEA NSW) is the leading professional association representing Engineers and Public Works Officers engaged in public works and engineering, with the majority of members working in, or providing services to, Local Government (and the NSW Government).

IPWEA NSW is a charity with the purpose of advancing the public works excellence in Australia, particularly in NSW by:

- conducting and publishing research into improvements to the processes used in public works and services to enhance NSW Communities
- working with government at all levels to ensure that the interests of the community are represented in regard to the public decision-making process relating to public works and services, and
- providing a forum for all people engaged in the public works to discuss best practice and enhancing the future of NSW Communities

The IPWEA NSW mission is to enhance the quality of life of NSW communities through excellence in public works and services. This is achieved through the activities of the professional association that effectively informs, connects, represents and leads public works professionals for NSW.

### **1.2 IPWEA (NSW) ROADS & TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE**

The Roads & Transport Directorate has been established to meet the demand from members of IPWEA (NSW) to act as a focus for research activities and to provide technical advice.

Its main purpose is to assist Local Government in NSW in the area of road infrastructure and transport related activities by:

- Assisting members in discharging their road management roles in the most effective manner consistent with current legal obligations and the most recent technical practices in the critical area of consistent and cost-effective asset management and road safety;
- Assisting the IPWEA (NSW), Local Government NSW, individual Councils and members in lobbying for a higher priority to be placed on road infrastructure



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provision and maintenance and for a more equitable share of resources and funding; and

- Providing for IPWEA members and Local Government a powerful technical and research resource on transport issues at regional, state and national level. The activities would be, as circumstances dictate, either proactive or reactive to achieve the optimum benefit for the region or state.

The Directorate commenced operations in October 2004 and has been involved in determining the needs of members and developing solutions to meet those needs. Over that period the Directorate has made submissions to the NSW Parliament Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety) on a range of issues including the 2013 Inquiry into Non-Registered Motorised Vehicles, the 2015 Inquiry into Motor Cycle Safety in NSW, the 2016 Inquiry into Driverless Vehicles and Road Safety in NSW, the 2017 Inquiry into Driver Education and Training, and most recently, the the 2018 Review of road safety issues for future inquiry.

This submission has been prepared by the NSW Roads & Transport Directorate on behalf of the Board, council members and representatives of the IPWEA (NSW) Road Safety Panel.

### **1.3 IPWEA (NSW) ROAD SAFETY PANEL**

The Road Safety Panel is a committee of IPWEA (NSW) and is managed by the Roads and Transport Directorate. The Panel's goal is to make a significant and measurable contribution to improve road safety awareness, knowledge and expertise in NSW. Membership of the Panel is by invitation and includes representatives from Transport for NSW, NSW Police, ARRB Group, LG NSW, AITPM, and NSW local councils. Input into this submission has been sought from members of the Panel.

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## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The Staysafe Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads. As noted by the Committee, while “local roads are crucial to country life, linking people and goods to regional and economic centres, local roads have a higher percentage of fatalities and serious injuries than state roads”. Therefore, there is a need for intervention and the Committee wishes to examine the existing road safety planning requirements and any opportunities for improving the current system.

On 21 November 2019, the Staysafe Committee called for submissions to its inquiry. The Committee’s Terms of Reference are to inquire into and report on the role of local roads in road safety and trauma, particularly existing road safety planning requirements and opportunities for improving these.

This submission is structured in relation to the inquiry’s Terms of Reference. IPWEA (NSW) provides recommendations where appropriate for consideration by the Staysafe Committee.

The Terms of Reference for the inquiry are:

- a. *The role of local roads in road safety and trauma*
- b. *The effectiveness of existing road safety planning requirements, including in other jurisdictions*
- c. *Opportunities for improving road safety planning and management on local roads, including through the Local Road Safety Program and Community Strategic Planning*
- d. *The role of local communities and their representatives in identifying and delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads*
- e. *Other relevant matters*

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## 3.0 Response to Specific Inquiry Terms of Reference

The following are the IPWEA's comments relating to the Terms of Reference:

### 3.1 The role of local roads in road safety and trauma

#### 3.1.1 A General Overview

IPWEA (NSW) believes that not all roads are the same. The focus of policy and the development of strategies in the past has concentrated on the State Road Network but has not recognised that State Roads and Local Roads have different problems and levels of service requiring different solutions.

Many rural local road users travel huge distances on a daily basis. The trips can be long, repetitive and travelled at continuous high speed. Patchy radio and mobile phone reception is a further distraction. The standard of local roads is often to a lower level than State Roads. These conditions make concentration over extended periods very difficult.

Local Government faces challenges that limit its ability to achieve safety outcomes. In 2010, Austroads published a Research Report (Austroads 2010) that detailed a range of issues endemic to local roads including:

- Crashes are sparsely distributed over a vast network.
- Those tasked with addressing safety within local government often do not have the time or means to access relevant safety guidance and expertise.
- There are data issues (particularly relating to access and interpretation of crash data) that make addressing road safety difficult for local government.
- It is difficult to fund treatments (especially given the dispersed nature of crashes on local government roads).
- There is a need to gain community and political buy-in, and convert this to action.
- There are shortages of skilled staff for delivering safety.
- There are network planning issues, including a greater need for use of road safety audit and network assessments.
- Responsibility/liability for improving safety appears to be unclear in some jurisdictions, and this can be a barrier to improving safety.
- There appear to be competing policy demands within local government (e.g. for funding; between safety and environmental issues, as in the case of roadside tree removal).
- The changing population structure, traffic volumes and composition need to be considered.

These issues have not yet been adequately addressed and continue to provide a good summary of the range of issues faced by local road managers.

The reality is that conditions that apply to the State road network do not necessarily apply to the remainder of the local road network. This should not be overlooked. Rural and remote Local Governments need to address road safety over large areas with limited resources. Road safety improvement initiatives should be decided based on resources available to the local community including skills and capabilities, facilities and budget.

### 3.1.2 The Network

The *2017 Road Asset Benchmarking Report (IPWEA 2017)* shows that NSW councils are responsible for managing 165,346 km of regional and local roads and 10,064 bridges with a replacement cost of \$73.0 billion. The life cycle cost of the road and bridge network is estimated at \$1.287 billion per annum for 2016/17. Expenditure for the year of \$1.036 billion was 80% of the annual life cycle cost. Current service levels and expenditure levels are not sustainable.

**Table 1 The NSW Road Network**

<b>Road Length in km</b>			
	<b>Sealed</b>	<b>Unsealed</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Regional Roads</b>	<b>15,192</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>18,398</b>
<b>Local Roads</b>	<b>68,469</b>	<b>78,480</b>	<b>146,949</b>
<b>Total Local Roads</b>	<b>83,661</b>	<b>81,685</b>	<b>165,346</b>
<b>State Roads</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>
<b>Total NSW Roads</b>	<b>101,661</b>	<b>84,685</b>	<b>186,346</b>

*Source: 2017 Road Asset Benchmarking Project, IPWEA NSW*

There are other privately provided roads which the public are able to access (e.g. National Parks and Wildlife 38,500 km).

Road users are not concerned about the ownership of any elements of the network – they simply want to be able to go from origin to destination in relative comfort and with safety.

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### 3.1.3 Safety Statistics

Following a substantial downward trend to 2014, fatality rates in NSW increased significantly between 2014 and 2018 (Transport for NSW 2020). This data is shown in the extract published by the Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety reproduced below. The total fatalities for the year to the end of December increased from 347 in 2018 to 352 in 2019.

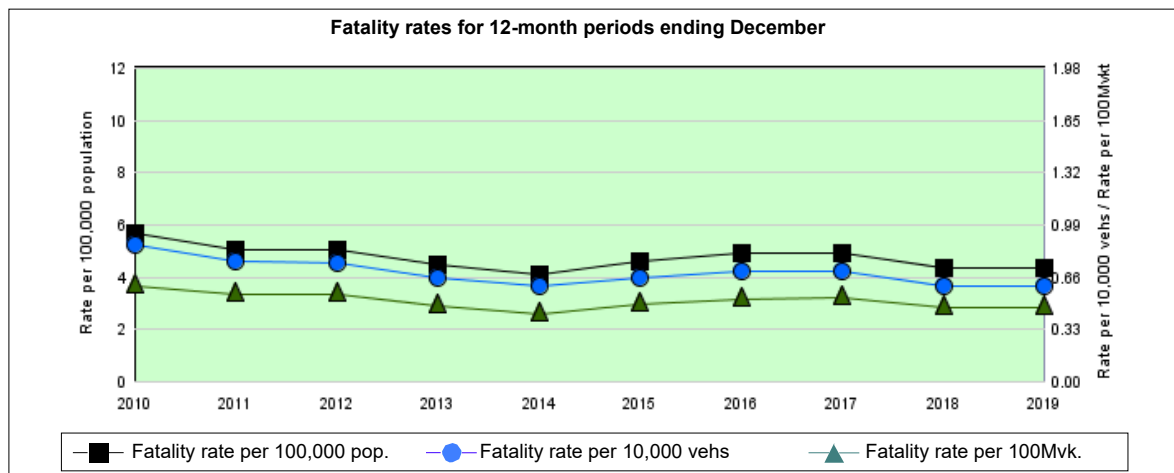
On a more positive note, casualty rates have continued to trend downwards over the 10-year period 2010 to 2019. Casualties for the year ending November 2018 were 15,130. This total has decreased to 14,747 for the year to November 2019.

Monthly Bulletin of  
Preliminary Traffic Crash Data  
**December 2019**



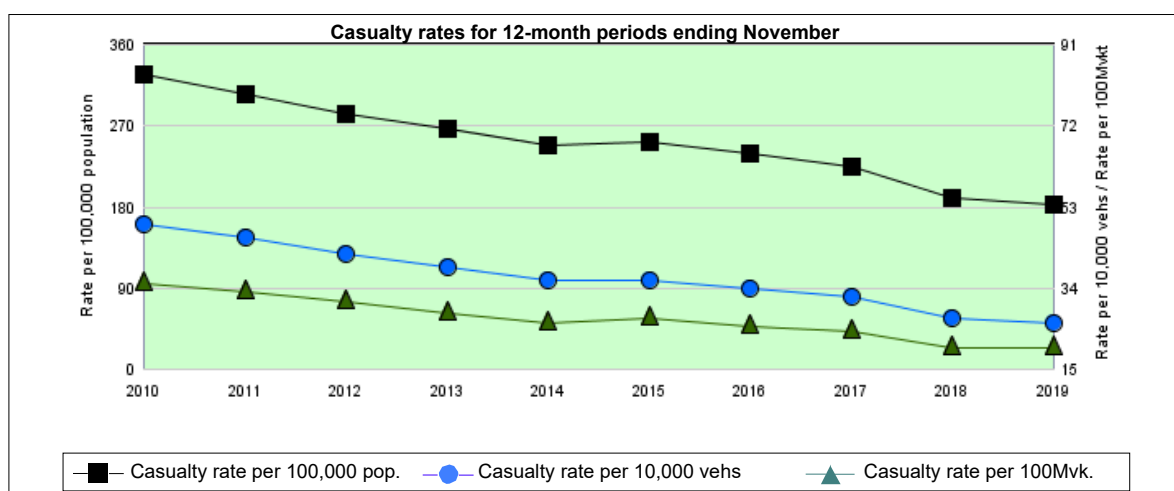
**Fatality rates for 12-month period ending December 2019**

Number of fatalities	352
Rate per 100,000 population <sup>1</sup>	4.35
Rate per 10,000 vehicles <sup>2</sup>	0.6
Rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled <sup>3</sup>	0.5



**Casualty rates for 12-month period ending November 2019**

Number of casualties*	14,747
Rate per 100,000 population <sup>1</sup>	182
Rate per 10,000 vehicles <sup>2</sup>	26
Rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled <sup>3</sup>	20



<sup>1</sup> Based on preliminary estimated population data <sup>2</sup> Based on RMS vehicle registration data

<sup>3</sup> Travel estimates are based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Motor Vehicle Use.

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From the local road point of view these statistics are particularly alarming. The proportion of fatalities occurring in the metropolitan area was 119 representing 33.8% of the total. The total for country urban and non-urban locations was 233 representing 66.2%.

Any significant reduction of fatalities within NSW cannot be achieved without assistance from Local Government as Local Government is responsible for almost 89% of the total road network where 66% of fatal road accidents occur. Local Government must be recognized as a major stakeholder in the development and funding of a whole of network approach to producing road safety outcomes.

***Recommendations:***

**Having regard to the magnitude of the council managed road network and the proportion of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on that part of the network, all three levels of government must cooperate in the development of policies, strategies and programmes aimed at providing a sustainable funding model, appropriate technical resources and community engagement so that road safety performance can be improved and the level of trauma can be significantly reduced on the local road network.**

## 3.2 The effectiveness of existing road safety planning requirements including in other jurisdictions

The information provided in Section 3.1 above clearly indicates that the existing road safety planning requirements are not meeting the *Road Safety 2021* stated aim of reducing road fatalities by at least 30 per cent from 2008–2010 levels by 2021. The average fatalities for the 2008 to 2010 period was about 400 per year. A reduction of 30% or 120 fatalities per year requires a much more concentrated and targeted effort.

To put this into context, safety on our roads has improved substantially since 1999 when the annual road toll was 577 (39% reduction). This decrease occurred after the significant reductions resulting from the introduction of compulsory seat belts in 1970 and RBT in 1982.

It must also be noted that the population of NSW has continued to increase with a resulting increase in registered vehicles and an increase in km travelled. The number of heavy vehicles using the road network has also continued to increase.

### 3.2.1 Legislative Framework

Councils as road authorities have the full range of responsibilities in relation to public roads required of all road authorities. This is specified under Section 7 of The NSW Roads Act 1993 which states *inter alia*:

#### **7 Roads Authorities**

- (4) *The council of a local government area is the roads authority for all public roads within the area, other than--*
- (a) *any freeway or Crown road, and*
  - (b) *any public road for which some other public authority is declared by the regulations to be the roads authority.*
- (5) *A roads authority has such functions as are conferred on it by or under this or any other Act or law.*

Councils also have a duty of care under the Civil Liberties Act 2002 to take precautions against any risk of harm. Together with TfNSW, Councils owe a duty of care to all road users by maintaining the highest safety standard that is practical for the road network under its care. Best practice is to implement the most cost-effective treatments that are feasible to address safety issues.

There is, however, a lack of clarity in relation to what “functions are conferred” to councils in relation to traffic management.

One example of this is contained in the introduction section of the RTA *A guide to the delegation to councils for the regulation of traffic including the operation of Traffic Committees* Guide (RTA 2009), published in 2009 which states:



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*The Roads and Traffic Authority is legislated as the organisation responsible for the control of traffic on all roads in New South Wales. Traffic is controlled by the installation of prescribed traffic control devices, such as regulatory signs, or traffic control facilities, such as medians.*

*New South Wales has many roads, which range from freeways to local streets. All these roads require the control of traffic. The RTA believes that the most effective means of dealing with the number and range of traffic related matters, particularly those which arise on regional and local roads, is to deal with them at the local level. The RTA has therefore delegated certain aspects of the control of traffic on regional and local roads to the Councils of Local Government areas.*

*The RTA continues to manage NSW's State road network. However, local government continues to also play an important role in the management of this road network by providing traffic input and advice when necessary.*

*These guidelines provide the policy and framework for Councils to exercise the traffic functions delegated to them by the RTA. They outline the delegated functions, the limitations that apply to Councils when exercising their delegated functions, the responsibilities of the various parties involved in the process, and the roles of the local and regional traffic committees.*

There is a final clarifying paragraph that states:

***It is important to note that the legislative power to control traffic through the authorisation of traffic control devices, lies with the RTA and the delegation of this power does not remove the RTA's ability to exercise those delegated functions should circumstances warrant action.***

This Guide is still current and applies to the recently renamed RMS and accordingly to Transport for NSW.

Some functions such as the installation of traffic signals and the implementing of speed limits for example, are not included in the delegation. The avenue for councils to deal with issues excluded from the delegation is through the Local Traffic Committee.

The major point of contention arising from these circumstances is that the delegation does not include any source of funding for councils to implement traffic control programmes. In some cases, councils have seen this as a further example of cost shifting.

This issue needs to be clarified and a coordinated process developed for the management of traffic including the funding model for achieving the best outcomes.

### **3.2.2 NSW Road Safety Plan 2021**

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IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the adoption of the NSW *Road Safety Plan 2021* (TfNSW 2018) by Transport for NSW and in particular the identification of the Safe System approach to dealing with the problem. There is also strong support for the Priority Area *Saving lives on country roads* which recognises some of the issues already identified. The Plan states:

*Reducing fatalities on country roads is one of our biggest challenges and a key focus of the Plan.*

*The fatality rate on country roads is four times that of metropolitan roads. In 2017, 272 people lost their lives on a country road. This trauma affects local country communities and families. On average, over 70 per cent of the lives lost on country roads are locals, country residents.*

*Roads are crucial to country life, linking people and goods to regional and economic centres and connecting NSW to the rest of Australia. Fewer transport options means people living outside of major centres rely on the vast country road network.*

*But these roads can lack the safety features that help prevent a crash or protect road users if a crash occurs, especially at higher speed.*

However, the IPWEA (NSW) Submission to RMS on the Draft Plan suggested that some areas require further attention. The submission stated:

*While the Draft Road Safety Plan provides for measures aimed at delivering better road safety outcomes, it seems to have overlooked certain aspects significant to achieving these goals.*

*This submission calls for the following:*

- *Improved targeting of data collection*
- *Build better collaborative partnerships and coordination among all stakeholders and recognize Local Government as a major stakeholder*
- *Increase Local Government engagement*
- *Recognise the unique characteristics of the Local Road Network*
- *Provision of Pathways for Vulnerable Road Users*
- *Greatly improved support for Local Government roads.*

*Strategic actions in these areas would likely result in the greatest benefits in terms of overall improvements in road safety.*

These matters are dealt with in more detail elsewhere in this submission.

### **3.2.3 Crash Data**

IPWEA (NSW) believes that crash data should more clearly distinguish the Road Authority with responsibility for the site of crashes as this will provide for a more accurate level of reporting and will ultimately guide the flow of road safety related

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funding and resources in the future. The IPWEA NSW has previously raised the following concerns regarding the data and information:

1. Lack of data regarding the severity of injury crashes which limits local councils' ability to calculate the costs of crashes and prioritise treatments.
2. The locations of the crashes are not always pinpointed as the data is not always entered by Police at the scene of the crash making it difficult to accurately determine the cause of crashes later on.
3. Under reporting of crashes, especially off-road crashes, as many people do not want Police involved in what they consider minor incidents or to avoid possible prosecution.

These issues continue to inhibit the ability of councils and policy makers to make truly informed decisions and develop strategies to address road safety. These are not the fault of the NSW Police, rather are more a reflection on the way the data is gathered.

It is also a matter of Police resourcing. As of October 2014, Police are no longer required to attend minor crashes and are now only called to attend and investigate crashes when a person is killed or injured, parties fail to exchange details or a driver is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

IPWEA (NSW) believes that improving the collection and reporting of detailed crash data in NSW will foster a better understanding of the extent of crash related injuries. This would assist local councils and communities to determine exactly where the burden of injury is occurring and how much it is costing. It would also greatly assist councils to prioritise roads upgrades and develop other strategies and programs - to prevent or lessen the effects of vehicle crashes

IPWEA (NSW) would also like to recognise the enormous improvement in the availability of crash data over the past few years. The Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety has developed the distribution of crash data from being available quarterly in arrears on CD to being available online with access to the latest available statistics. A wide range of reports are available and these can be populated by council area with trends available over a five-year period. This has greatly enhanced the value of crash data to road authorities.

With this advance comes the need for ongoing staff training so that all councils have an understanding of what is available and how they can use it. This aspect needs to be considered in the development of policies dealing with the management of the local road network.

***Recommendations:***

- 1. Clarification of legal roles and responsibilities for Councils as Road Authorities should be undertaken in the context of existing legislation an equitable and sustainable funding model.**

2. **Broader cooperation with Local Government be developed in the ongoing implementation of the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021 with Transport for NSW and in particular the application of the Safe System approach to delivering Road Safety outcomes.**
3. **Local Government continue to work with Transport for NSW, NSW Police and the NSW Health to improve the quality and quantity of crash data being reported.**

### **3.3 Opportunities for improving road safety planning and management on local roads, including through the Local Government Road Safety Program and Community Strategic Plan**

#### **3.3.1 Improving Road Safety Management**

Large proportions of Local Government Road Authorities' local and regional road networks have never been formally designed. Many roads were originally located along routes used by bullock teams and horse drawn vehicles. Frequently, these roads followed ridge lines or other geographic features and deviated to avoid "obstructions" such as creeks and gullies and significant vegetation. Over the years these roads became more formalised with the addition of gravel and then seals. Over the same period of time, vehicle speeds, weights and volumes have also increased. These changes have resulted in vertical and horizontal alignments on parts of the network being less than optimal.

These shortcomings become apparent on sections of the network through clusters of accidents occurring at specific locations. Historically, funding has been provided through the Black Spot and other safety related programs to allow investigation and rectification to be carried out at identified locations.

There is a view that such programs which rely on crash history for the allocation of resources, is in fact an indication of the shortfall in road and road safety management.

With this in mind, IPWEA (NSW) approached Transport for NSW with a proposal to offer training to all Councils in NSW to improve skills and capacity in road safety auditing. As a result of this collaboration training was offered for two staff from each NSW Council to be trained in Road Safety Auditing. Training was completed by staff from 122 of the 128 councils across the state.

The aim of this training was to provide the skills for council staff involved in development assessment, asset management and road maintenance to look at the network from a different perspective, to identify issues before they become Black Spots, and to tailor maintenance and reconstruction works to current safety standards.

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It is anticipated that this approach will lead to fewer fatalities and serious injuries on council roads in future years.

### **3.3.2 Community Strategic Plan**

The *2017 Road Asset Benchmarking Report (IPWEA 2017)*, asked councils if they have a Formal Road Safety Plan in place. For the 121 responding councils the reply was that 81 (66%) do not have a Road Safety Plan while 42 (34%) have an adopted Road Safety Plan.

As a result of this information, discussions were finalised with Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety to support the updating and reissue of the *Guide to Developing Council Road Safety Strategic Plans* and to deliver training on the implementation of the Guide to Councils across NSW during 2019 – 2020.

The Guide has been designed to assist local councils to develop road safety strategic plans and integrate them into the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The Guide is based on ‘best practice’ methodology developed through systematic investigation, consultation and feedback on the experiences of a number of NSW councils. These councils represented a range of large and small, rural and urban local government areas (LGAs) that had developed and implemented road safety strategic plans.

The latest edition of this Guide has been revised in the context of changing circumstances including the adoption of the Safe System Approach to Road Safety and the introduction of the NSW Government legislation for integrated planning and reporting for local government.

There is a need to ensure that the training developed to support both the road safety auditing and road safety strategic planning continues to be available to councils as they require it in the future.

### **3.3.3 Local Government Road Safety Program**

Until 2018, the Local Government Road Safety Program was funded on a year by year basis with funding for councils not confirmed until the end of the preceding financial year. This created a degree of uncertainty for council Road Safety Officers and resulted in frequent loss of experienced staff.

This issue was raised with the Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety which confirmed that funding is currently a three-year rolling program with funding confirmed until 2021. This has returned certainty to a substantial element of the delivery mechanism for the Local Government Road Safety Program.

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IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the statements in the Road Safety Plan 2021 that the State Government:

*Support the Local Government Road Safety Program and councils in their role as custodians of the vast local road network.*

and

*Road safety delivery through partnerships. Delivery of road safety initiatives by partners and stakeholders is critical to reducing the road toll, including grassroots projects across local communities. This includes our Local Government Road Safety Program, where 77 officers work across local councils to develop and deliver targeted programs in their communities. Local initiatives are also supported through Community Road Safety Grants, with 76 local projects with a total value of over \$880,000 funded over three years since 2015–16.*

This level of support needs to continue and to increase if more positive outcomes are to be achieved for the local road network.

Finally, it is very important that this program is a genuine two-way collaboration. There have been instances in the past where the development of targeted local programmes has been displaced by the need to deliver state wide safety programmes. Road safety is not a one size fits all proposition.

**Recommendations:**

- 1. That the application of road safety auditing be encouraged through the development of guidelines and the provision of resources for road authority staff involved in all phases of the planning, delivery and maintenance of road assets to look at the network from a different perspective, to identify issues before they become Black Spots, and to tailor maintenance and reconstruction works to current safety standards.**
- 2. That the NSW Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation be amended to require all councils to develop and implement a Road Safety Strategic Plan and that resources be provided to councils to implement this requirement generally in accordance with IPWEA (NSW) / Transport for NSW draft “Guide to Developing Council Road Safety Strategic Plans”.**
- 3. That the State Government provide increased support for the Local Government Road Safety Program and that this Program be developed as a genuine two-way collaboration with Local Government and Council Road Safety Officers.**

## **3.4 The role of local communities and their representatives in identifying and delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads**

### **3.4.1 Community Representatives**

A simple initial understanding of the term Community Representatives is that this is a reference to elected representatives, however, this is a narrow view. There is a wider range of community representatives that have an interest in delivering road safety initiatives to reduce trauma on local roads. These include:

- Police;
- Ambulance;
- Fire Brigade;
- Hospital Boards and medical practitioners;
- Local State and Federal MPs;
- Local Clergy;
- Schools;
- Service and sporting clubs;
- Local businesses;
- Freight operators;
- Bus and public transport operators;
- As well as elected Councillors.

Some of these representatives, including Police, Ambulance, and Fire Brigade are direct responders to traffic accidents and are responsible for removing casualties from vehicles and conveying them to hospital. While none of these groups are qualified road engineers or asset managers, they each have views on causes and risk – information that needs to be collected and collated and taken into account in managing the local road network.

Hospital Boards, medical practitioners and clergy see the outcomes of road trauma and also have views about cause and risk – again information that needs to be collected and collated and taken into account in managing the local road network. An example of this group's views is available in the report of the Inquiry into The National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 September 2018 (Co-Chairs Associate Professor Jeremy Woolley and Doctor John Crozier). A little more detail on this report is included below.

Service and sporting clubs and local businesses all have an interest in safe and healthy communities. It is not uncommon for such organisations to fund and support

local road safety initiatives, particularly in regional areas. This resource should not be forgotten in implementing local road safety plans.

Freight operators, and bus and public transport operators have a direct interest in road safety since their businesses rely on safely negotiating the local road network on a daily basis. They also have Work Health & Safety obligations which include road safety considerations.

Councillors elected to a local council have obligations in a wide range of areas that impact on road safety. They are required to make decisions in the best interests of their communities. Councillors are elected from a variety of backgrounds and possess different skills, but in general they are not road safety experts. They are expected to run a large business that operates in an environment of ever-increasing costs and responsibilities and a constrained revenue base. Given these circumstances it is critical that elected representatives have access to factual and up to date information and are provided with the opportunity to undertake training to increase their skill levels. This is particularly true in the case of the need to make policy decisions on road safety and to be able to provide appropriate input into Council's Local Traffic Committee.

In summary, there is a wide range of community representatives that can contribute to the development of local road safety policy. It is critical that the local road authority (the Council) engages with all these organisations to ensure that the widest possible range of inputs is considered in the development of a Road Safety Strategic Plan as proposed in Section 3.3.2 above.

### **3.4.2 Local Communities**

Section 3.4.1 above lists some of the community representatives having a direct interest in road safety; however, they are only part of the total picture.

Everyone living in a council area relies on a safe and efficient road network to carry out their daily activities. They expect to be able to get their children to school, go to work, or shopping or attend social activities on a safe road network. They also rely on an efficient freight network to get goods and services to local businesses. The road network is largely taken for granted except when it becomes unserviceable or is in poor condition. These circumstances are quickly brought to the road authorities' attention and immediate action is expected.

This also gives rise to, in some cases, unreasonable expectations, especially in the introduction of a Safe System approach to improving road safety. Three examples of the difficulties faced by road authorities in introducing a Safe System are:

1. Safer roads – all our roads should be sealed with marked centre lines and edge lines. Safety barriers should be installed at critical locations and roadside vegetation should be removed, but we don't want a significant rate increase to



pay for it. The reality is that road authorities are battling to maintain their road network in its current condition.

2. Safer Speeds - A significant speed reduction on parts of the network could result in a major improvement in road safety and a marked reduction in fatalities and serious injuries. The reality is that as time poor road users, our focus is on the inverse relationship between speed and travel time – the faster we travel the less time it takes. There is no community understanding of the link between speed and serious accidents.
3. Safer Vehicles – Councils have an opportunity to be a local community leader through the adoption and implementation of a safer vehicle policy for their own vehicle fleets. This only requires a conscious decision to purchase only vehicles fitted with the current range of safety assist features.

The NSW *Road Safety Plan 2021* (TfNSW 2018) promotes the use of the Safe System approach to improving road safety. It also promotes the ongoing funding of the Community Road Safety Fund which includes: The Graduated Licensing Scheme reforms; Public education campaigns; Safer Roads Program; New and used car safety ratings and vehicle research; and Flashing lights at schools. This program is fully supported by IPWEA (NSW).

### **Recommendations:**

1. **There is a wide range of community representatives that can contribute to the development of local road safety policy and it is critical that local road authorities engage with all these organisations to ensure that the widest possible range of inputs is considered in the development of a Road Safety Strategic Plan.**
2. **IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the continuation and expansion of the Community Road Safety Fund detailed in The NSW Road Safety Plan 2021.**

## **3.5 Other related matters**

### **3.5.1 Inquiry into the NRSS 2011-2020**

In September 2017, an inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 (NRSS 2018) was announced by the Federal Government. A panel of four was convened to conduct the inquiry. It was co-chaired by Associate Professor Jeremy Woolley, Director of the Centre for Automotive Safety Research at the University of Adelaide, and Dr John Crozier, Chair of the Trauma Committee at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

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The Executive Summary in the report stated:

*Australia's road safety performance has stalled.*

*A total of 1,226 people were killed in road crashes in 2017. In addition to the tragedy of road deaths, at least 36,000 people are injured every year. Brain injury, quadriplegia, amputations, de-gloving, burns, loss of sight, fractures and dislocations are just some of the life-changing injuries that create an avoidable burden on families, friends, communities, the health sector, insurers and social services. The cost to the Australian economy is over \$30 billion a year. The scale of the personal and financial cost of road trauma is unacceptable, and current actions and investments are not achieving the desired results. A step change in approach is paramount.*

The Report's Key Findings include:

*Drawing on the insights provided through the consultative process—together with the collective experience and knowledge of an established advisory panel of experts—it became evident that a transformative approach to road safety was needed across Australia. Road trauma targets are not being met and, at the same time, the Safe System approach espoused in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 is often not being honoured 'in the field'. There is a disconnect between noble intentions, resourcing the actions and road safety practice.*

*A key finding of the inquiry is implementation failure. The lack of focus on a harm elimination agenda means that sub-optimal results are unintentionally achieved because some improvement in safety is often regarded as sufficient or is assumed. We accept that we are making the roads, vehicles and users "safer" but frequently miss the opportunity to make them "SAFE" outright. The distinction is subtle but vitally important. As part of providing a safe transport system, we must move from a coping mechanism to one that fixes the problem once and for all. Moreover, the scale of response and the mechanisms in place to ensure judicious allocation of resources are critical if Australia is truly committed to eliminating all harm on its road network.*

The Recommendations of the Report include:

3. Commit to a minimum \$3 billion a year to a road safety fund.
8. Accelerate the adoption of speed management initiatives that support harm elimination.
9. Invest in road safety focused infrastructure, safe system and mobility partnerships with state, territory and local governments that accelerate the elimination of high-risk roads.

10. Make road safety a genuine part of business as usual within Commonwealth, state, territory and local government.

This Report was considered at the NSW Local Roads Congress held in State Parliament House on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019. Congress delegates adopted a Communiqué which stated:

*The Congress calls on the Federal Government to fully fund a \$3 billion annual Road Safety Fund recommended by the Inquiry in the National Road Safety Strategy. A fund of this size could help resource councils to contribute to other aspects of the Safe Systems approach beyond the Safer Roads component. The issue of restricting the use of mobile devices in motor vehicles through technology should also be researched.*

### **3.5.2 Autonomous Vehicles**

IPWEA (NSW) previously made a detailed submission to the Staysafe Committee Inquiry on Driverless Vehicles and Road Safety in 2016. This submission raised a number of questions around how local road network assets might need to be upgraded and how such upgrades might be funded to accommodate Autonomous Vehicles. These questions arise from the data provided in section 3.1 – namely that around 50% of the local road network (81,685km) is unsealed.

At the present time IPWEA (NSW) does not see autonomous vehicle technology as a short-term solution to the problem of reducing trauma on local roads in NSW.

As mentioned earlier Councils have an opportunity to be local community leaders through the adoption and implementation of a safer vehicle policy for their own vehicle fleets. This only requires a conscious decision to purchase only vehicles fitted with the current range of safety assist features.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. IPWEA (NSW) recommends that the State Government support an approach to the Federal Government to fully fund the \$3 billion annual Road Safety Fund recommended by the Inquiry in the National Road Safety Strategy. A fund of this size could help resource councils to contribute to other aspects of the Safe Systems approach beyond the Safer Roads component. The issue of restricting the use of mobile devices in motor vehicles through technology should also be researched.**

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- 2. Vehicle fleet owners, including Councils be encouraged to be early adopters of autonomous safety assist features in the purchase of their vehicle fleets.**

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This submission has canvassed a wide range of information to outline some of the threats and opportunities faced by Councils across NSW in managing road safety on the local road network.

It is clear that the efforts made over the past ten years have not been successful in reducing fatalities and serious injuries on the road network. Two thirds of these fatalities and serious injuries are occurring on the local road network.

The solution adopted at both the Federal and State Government levels has been to adopt and implement the Safe System approach to the problem. This requires the application of knowledge, staff skilled in road safety, and financial resources to meet the desired objectives.

Based on the report into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020, road trauma is costing the community \$30 billion each and every year. The report calls on governments to commit to a minimum \$3 billion a year to a road safety fund. Based on this information, a reduction of 10% or more per year in road trauma would result in a positive outcome in purely economic terms. The overall improvement to the wellbeing of our communities would be much greater.

IPWEA (NSW) appreciates the invitation to provide this submission to the Staysafe Committee. The submission deals with each of the Terms of Reference based on a wide range of inputs. We would welcome the opportunity to address the Inquiry to provide further detail on the issues raised within this submission.

## **5.0 CONTACT**

Please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] in relation to this submission.

## **6.0 REFERENCES**

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