



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

Priorities for the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030

Prepared for the Transport and Infrastructure Council

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1. Protecting our most vulnerable road users

Bicycle Network is Australia's biggest bike riding organisation representing nearly 50,000 members nation-wide. With more than 40 years' experience in advocating for infrastructure, policies and initiatives that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable road users, we believe that we can provide valuable input into the development of the new National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

It's well established that the best way to reduce the risk for people riding bikes is to reduce the chance of them being struck by vehicles. As a result, many of our recommendations are applicable for all road users.

There is a need for dramatic change in road safety management in Australia. A reluctance and failure to implement plans, lack of investment, poor governance and a lack of accountability all served to stall any progress in road safety outcomes under the previous strategy.

Road safety remains an urgent national problem and requires all three levels of government to be an active part of the solution. Given the huge human and economic costs of road trauma, current actions and investments are not enough.

The new National Road Safety Strategy faces the same risk of failure without a focus on implementation and accountability frameworks for all stakeholders involved including governments, vehicle suppliers (speed and safety technologies) and telecommunications companies (distracted driving).

To reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on our roads, particularly amongst our most vulnerable road users, Bicycle Network strongly urges the Australian government to incorporate the following recommendations and priorities into their latest draft of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

Many of our recommendations are consistent with the recommendations and findings from the 2018 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. To put it bluntly, the time for talk is over, it's time for the rubber to hit the road.

If you have any questions about any of the priorities and recommendations outlined, please contact us.

Craig Richards
CEO
Bicycle Network
craigr@bicyclenetwork.com.au

Anthea Hargreaves
General Manager – Public Affairs
and Marketing
Bicycle Network
antheah@bicyclenetwork.com.au

2. Recommendations and priorities

2.1 Plan, fund and build places for people to ride where interactions with vehicles are minimised

i. Invest in bicycle infrastructure

Federal and state governments should spend an annual minimum of \$20 per capita on bike infrastructure. This will facilitate a sustained investment in active transport and road safety focused infrastructure and momentum for delivery.

ii. Establish a national framework, policy or regulation that requires bike infrastructure to be part of all federally funded land transport projects.

The provision of new or improved active travel links should be a critical measure of success for all major transport projects, upgrades and their ongoing maintenance. It should not be an additional extra. Positive provisioning ensures fair and balanced equity of access for all road users.

iii. Require that all investment in road infrastructure planning, design and construction require safe systems principles and the inclusion of separate safety treatments that protect vulnerable road users.

Better planning and design is necessary across our road network to protect people who ride and walk. Intersection design should be a key focus area as many intersections fail to adhere to safe systems principles. Design must minimise conflict points and impact speeds and remove or simplify road user decisions. Additionally, all high-speed roads (those above 80km/h) should have median and roadside hazard protection, sealed shoulders and delineation.

iv. Urgently prioritise and implement the recommendations from the 2018 inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.

It is critical that the recommendations from the inquiry are prioritised and included in the new strategy. Many of the recommendations serve to overcome existing issues around accountability, governance and implementation.

2.2 Reduce vehicle speed

i. Apply lower speed limits on local streets, in built up environments or those streets with high volumes of bike riders and pedestrians.

It's clear that lower speeds reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads. Lowered speed limits encourage better and safer forms of interaction between different types of road users which in turn leads to more attractive and liveable communities

A 30km/h speed limit on local streets is recommended by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as it is associated with lower risk of crashes and lower risk of road trauma [1]. Most vulnerable road users will survive a crash with a car travelling at 30km/h or lower, often sustaining only minor injuries. At 40 km/h, almost all crashes result in severe injuries, with roughly half resulting in fatalities [2].

ii. Lower speed limits on arterial B and C class roads with high-crash risks to 80 kmph

Reduce speed limits on roads outside of built-up areas (roads in regional and rural areas) that have a high crash risk if Safe System compatible infrastructure improvements (median and roadside hazard protection, sealed shoulders and delineation) are not practical or possible in the short term. A reduction in average speeds of approximately five per cent, would yield a reduction in fatalities by as much as 20 per cent [1].

2.3 Mandate and facilitate safer vehicles

i. Establish national safety standards for heavy vehicles

Heavy vehicles continue to pose an unacceptable risk to vulnerable road users. It must be a requirement that all new heavy vehicles are fitted with the following:

- Class V mirrors, reversing and blind spot cameras, giving the driver a better view of road users around their vehicles
- Side underrun protection to protect bike riders from being dragged under the wheels in the event of a collision
- Audible left turn warning and reverse squawker alert systems to communicate heavy vehicle movements to all road users
- Hydraulic payload monitoring system to determine and notify drivers of real time truck weight.

Importantly, standards should also be set to enable heavy vehicles to transition to low cab vehicles. Strict timelines should be set and incentives provided so that all heavy vehicle fleets on our roads (both new and old) are fitted with the technology by 2025.



ii. *Introduce nationally consistent reforms that support autonomous vehicles, innovation and vehicle safety technologies*

There is no excuse for continuing to allow new vehicles on to Australia roads that fail to protect people. There needs to be end-to-end regulation to fast-track and support the safe commercial deployment and operation of automated vehicles in Australia.

The regulation should facilitate all new vehicles to meet the following minimum standards with:

- Lane departure warnings – designed to warn drivers when they are drifting into another lane by monitoring the markings on the road.
- Autonomous emergency braking (AEB) – identifies when the brakes are being applied in a panic through force and initiates the maximum brake. According to the European Commission, the widespread use of this technology can reduce the normal stopping distance by 45%.
- Frontal collision warning systems – using sensors scanning the distances between vehicles and other road users/objects, the system is designed to detect impending frontal collisions. It is already being used in many Volvo, Hyundai, Toyota and Volkswagen models.
- Electronic stability control – uses intelligent sensors to monitor driving patterns and is ready to autonomously take over the car if the driver loses control.

2.4 Fund programs that help make our young people road ready

i. *Invest in the Ride2School Road Ready program*

There is currently no formalised training for young people until they obtain their learners permit. By missing opportunities to interact with the local street environment, young people don't understand the roads in a way that will ultimately enable them to be competent drivers when the time comes.

Car crashes are the second leading cause of death among young people aged 15 – 29 in Australia, and there are clear gaps between states in terms of education programs [3].

Funding Bicycle Network's Ride2School Road Ready program will enable young Australians to become responsible and lower risk road users before they get behind the wheel.



2.5 Combat driver distraction and high risk behaviours

i. Support the rapid roll out of hi-tech traffic camera technologies and legal reforms that make it easier for police to enforce distracted driving laws.

The rapid roll out of hi-tech traffic camera technologies nationally will help support police efforts and overcome the challenges of enforcement. Effective enforcement is also reliant on police working with road safety researchers to identify areas of driver distraction where policing may provide a positive impact.

ii. Fast-track in-vehicle mobile phone blocking technologies and its mandated implementation across all new vehicles sold in Australia.

A key part of the hardware that can proactively address the issue of illegal mobile phone use is signal blocking technologies. Bicycle Network recommends that technological intervention must be mandated where people cannot control or self-regulate their compulsion to use their phones while driving.

iii. Higher penalties for distracted driving with consistency across states and territories.

Greater penalties, when partnered with both enforcement and structural interventions, can have long term success in changing undesirable road user behaviours.

iv. Unify Australia's road rules to protect vulnerable road users

Specifically include minimum passing distance law for drivers when overtaking bike riders as part of the Australian Road Rules to propel and add pressure on Victoria to introduce the law. Police units across all states and territories should be supported with minimum passing distance enforcement programs and technologies.



References

- [1] OECD/ECMT, "Speed Management. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development European Conference of Ministers of Transport, France," 2006.
- [2] Global Road Safety Partnership, "Speed management: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners,," Global Road Safety Partnership, Geneva, 2008.
- [3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "Deaths in Australia," Australian Government, Canberra, 2018.