Reducing Road Trauma ... The Next Steps

Road Safety Advisory Council
One of the primary roles of the Road Safety Advisory Council is to monitor road safety performance in South Australia and make recommendations to the State Government for strategies and actions which will reduce road trauma.

The Council is concerned to note that South Australia is the worst performing State in terms of annual road fatality rates and that there has only been a slight decline in crashes, fatalities and serious injuries over the past decade.

The Council supports recent initiatives such as the 50 km/h urban speed limit, more stringent conditions for novice drivers, increased funding for Black Spots and other road infrastructure improvements, and demerit points for camera offences. However, in order to raise our road safety performance, we have to do more.

The Council notes that research strongly indicates that the key contributing factors to our unacceptable road toll are speeding, drink driving, fatigue, and the failure of drivers and passengers to use restraints.

On 23 September 2003, the Council released the “Reducing Road Trauma in South Australia – Possible Initiatives 2004-2010” Discussion Paper to seek public comment and feedback on the future direction for road safety programs. More than 50 responses were received from members of the community, key stakeholders and community road safety groups. Feedback was wide-ranging with many comments focusing on one or two key initiatives and others providing feedback on all three key strategy areas. In addition, four Sub-Committees and 12 Task Forces established under the Council Governance Structure have provided valuable input.

From this wide-ranging input, a number of initiatives have been developed by the Council. They are outlined in this document and presented for the Government's consideration as the next steps in reducing road trauma and ensuring we achieve our goal of dramatically reducing death and injury in South Australia.

The initiatives are consistent with the Government’s “South Australian Road Safety Strategy, 2003–2010” and fit under the broad strategies of Safer Roads, Safer People, and Safer Vehicles. The proposals include engineering, enforcement and education initiatives which require either legislative, regulatory or operational changes. The development and implementation periods for each initiative will therefore vary according to the processes that need to occur, including funding considerations.

The Council has also identified a number of key road safety issues that it will progress in the year ahead; these include the compulsory use of restraints for children over 12 months of age, random drug testing, and assessing fitness to drive.

Sir Eric Neal AC CVO
Chair, Road Safety Advisory Council
Road Safety Strategic Context ...

Key Facts, Findings, and Comparisons

The Road Safety Advisory Council has taken into account a range of key facts, findings and comparisons in developing the initiatives proposed in this document. They include:

• Serious casualty crashes in rural areas have increased over the past 10 years while metropolitan crashes have declined slightly
• Two-thirds of people killed on our country roads come from the country
• Nearly 20% of fatal and serious crashes occur in 110 km/h zones
• The number of drivers and riders with a BAC level above 0.05 killed in crashes has risen steadily over the past five years — in 2002, the percentage reached 32%, taking us back nearly two decades to where we were in 1983
• Young adults are over-represented in crashes — people aged 17–24 account for only 13% of the total population but 18% of fatalities and 28% of serious injuries
• Excessive speed appears to be a growing factor in a significant number of crashes in both the rural and metropolitan areas
• Education programs, particularly advertising, are most effective when integrated with enforcement campaigns — enforcement is critical to road safety
• 36% of vehicle occupants killed in rural South Australia in 2002 were not wearing a seat belt
• Research indicates fatigue could be a factor in more than 20% of crashes
• Motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians account for 24% of fatalities and serious injuries
• Fatalities amongst older motorcyclists have increased
• A number of States and Territories have recognised the crucial role of school education in road safety and developed resources and initiatives at all age levels
• There are a number of emerging road safety issues including older drivers, drugs and driving, and vehicle compatibility
• A number of road safety issues are being dealt with at a national level, particularly vehicle safety standards and, specifically, heavy vehicle safety
156 road fatalities were reported to South Australia Police during 2003

This is two more than the 154 fatalities recorded for 2002 and three fatalities or two percent below the average number of fatalities for the previous five years.
Reducing Road Trauma ...
Road Safety Advisory Council’s Key Recommendations 2004

**Safer Roads**

**Upgrading & Maintaining**
- Introduce an annual Mass Action Program
- Introduce an annual Roadside Hazard Program
- Continue the Safer Roads Program

**Safer People**

**Speed**
- Introduce immediate loss of licence for excessive speed
- Review existing 110 km/h rural road speed limits
- Implement a Safety Camera Enhancement Program

**Drink Driving**
- Amend legislation to provide for full time mobile RBT
- Introduce immediate suspension of licence for BAC of 0.15 or above

**Drugs**
- Re-introduce blood testing for drugs

**Fatigue**
- Promote rest areas with signage and information maps

**Licensing**
- Introduce mandatory carriage of licence
- Provide educational material when drivers reach six demerit points

**Young Drivers**
- Introduce an enhanced Graduated Licensing Scheme for novice drivers
- Develop an interactive road safety website for novice drivers

**Children**
- Develop and introduce road safety curriculum resources

**Motorcyclists**
- Introduce a power to weight ratio for novice motorcyclists
- Introduce an advanced course for motorcyclists returning to riding after an absence

**Attitudes & Behaviour**
- Introduce demerit points for using a hand-held mobile phone while driving
- Develop stronger road safety links with Local Government
- Enhance road safety communications

**Technology**
- Implement a Road Safety Advanced Traffic Management System

**Safer Vehicles**

**Light Vehicles**
- In conjunction with SA Police, increase random light vehicle inspections

**SAPOL Issues**

Request the Commissioner of Police to consider:
- Reducing the enforcement tolerance on speed detection devices
- Increasing the number of hours that speed cameras are operated
- Increasing saturation campaigns in rural areas

**Other Key Initiatives Under Consideration**

- Future use of alcohol interlocks
- Fitness to drive
- Vulnerable road users
- Mandatory restraint use for children over 12 months
- Restraint fitting advisory service
- Vehicle confiscation
- Review of penalties
- Random drug testing
- Fixed and point-to-point speed cameras
- Vehicle compatibility
- Lower speed limits on urban arterials
- Good driving incentive programs
- Double demerit point schemes
**RECOMMENDATION** Introduce an annual Mass Action Program

Mass Action programs address infrastructure problems identified over longer sections of road whereas Black Spot programs address problems at specific locations (e.g., intersections). Sections of road with poor crash history are selected and a number of relatively low-cost treatments are applied, including options such as shoulder sealing on bends, audio-tactile line marking, and installing rumble strips.

The Council notes that funds are already dedicated to these measures but considers that a greater road safety benefit would result from better integration between programs and a greater emphasis on achieving road safety outcomes rather than focusing on network improvements. In other words, that crash history should be the prime determinant in selecting sections of road for infrastructure treatments.

**RECOMMENDATION** Introduce an annual Roadside Hazard Program

Roadside hazards – objects such as trees and lighting (Stobie) poles – are a major factor in 40% of car occupant fatalities. The road network and the type of roadside hazard varies across regions. For example, the Adelaide Hills and Barossa Valley have a significant number of trees which are close to the road.

The Council believes that the guidelines for planting trees should be renewed and tightened; that existing roadside hazards should be protected or removed; and that road safety should be written into the criteria for the current Stobie pole removal program.

The Council has established a Roadside Hazard Task Force that is identifying and assessing roadside hazard locations and appropriate treatments (removal would be a last resort for significant trees).

**RECOMMENDATION** Continue the Safer Roads Program

Transport SA currently undertakes a number of road safety infrastructure treatments and spends a minimum of $20 million per annum under the Safer Roads Program. The treatments include shoulder sealing, overtaking lanes, audit response programs, audio-tactile marking and blackspot programs.

Black Spots are identified by higher than usual crash rates at particular locations. Addressing problems at these locations has proved to be highly effective with significant safety benefits for every dollar spent. Special attention is being paid to rail crossings.

Road infrastructure improvements such as constructing overtaking lanes and sealing shoulders provide significant road safety benefits. In particular, sealing the shoulders on rural arterial roads has the potential to reduce crashes by more than 40% by providing additional margins when vehicles run off the road because of driver fatigue or errors in judgement.

The Council acknowledges the increased funding provided by the Government for these treatments, particularly the newly-introduced $7 million State Black Spot Program. Federal funding for these initiatives is also acknowledged and strongly supported.
**Safer People**

### Speed

**RECOMMENDATION**  
Introduce immediate loss of licence for excessive speed

In South Australia, excessive speed is reported to be a factor in at least 11% of road deaths each year. Public feedback on the *Possible Initiatives* document strongly supported the need to tackle speeding.

Statistics from SA Police show that, in 65% of all detected dangerous speed offences in 2002-03, drivers were travelling at speeds in excess of 45 km/h or more above posted speed limits (60 km/h or higher).

South Australia currently has the lowest monetary penalty for high level speeding ($330 compared with up to $1515 in New South Wales); however, the Council considers the loss of licence to be more a more effective deterrent than increasing the fine. The Council notes that excessive speed is penalised by immediate loss of licence in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
Review existing 110 km/h rural road speed limits

South Australia has a relatively high proportion of rural roads with a speed limit of 110 km/h. This includes 75% of the State's rural arterial network, all non-urban National Highways (with the exception of the section of the Dukes Highway between Bordertown and the Victorian border which is temporarily signed at 100 km/h) and approximately 700 kilometres of local roads. In South Australia, 58% of fatal crashes and 46% of serious crashes occur on rural roads. Of these rural crashes, more than 40% occur on roads zoned at 110 km/h.

In July 2003, following consultation with local councils, the speed limit on 1114 kilometres of rural arterial roads was reduced to 100 km/h. However, there are still 8640 kilometres of rural arterial roads/National Highways with a speed limit of 110 km/h that should be reviewed.

Work undertaken by Professor Jack McLean at the Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR) predicts that an actual lowering of speed by 5 km/h among all vehicles would result in a 30% reduction in serious casualty crashes. If speeds were lowered by 10 km/h, the reduction would be 46%.

The Council recommends that a review be undertaken by Transport SA, in consultation with Local Government and other stakeholders, of the remaining rural arterial roads/National Highways with a speed limit of 110 km/h.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
Implement a Safety Camera enhancement program

The Council is aware that South Australia currently has a relatively low number of safety cameras (red light and/or speed cameras). Research by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has indicated that, overall, 40% of the community support an increase in the number of speed cameras and 42% support an increase in speed limit enforcement. There also appears to be widespread support for red light cameras.

The Council recommends that new cameras be installed at locations on the road network with high crash rates. Pole-mounted housings should be installed at more intersections and each intersection would be clearly signed as a “Safety Camera” location.

The Council also supports the purchase of mobile safety cameras which can be deployed in locations where it would be difficult or impossible to use car or tripod-mounted units (e.g., road works and narrow or winding roads).
**RECOMMENDATION** Amend legislation to provide for full-time mobile RBT

Mobile random breath testing (RBT) is the deployment of breath testing from any police patrol. Mobile RBT is used in all other Australian jurisdictions and has been shown to be an efficient and effective tool in combating drink-driving offences, particularly when used in conjunction with fixed RBT stations.

From 1988 to 2002, the percentage of drivers and riders killed with a BAC above the legal limit has risen from 22% to 32%. For every increase of 0.05 BAC above zero, the chance of crashing doubles.

Limited use of mobile RBT commenced in South Australia on 29 September 2003. SA Police figures show that the detection rate with mobile RBT is up to ten times higher than with fixed RBT stations.

**RECOMMENDATION** Introduce immediate loss of licence for BAC of 0.15 or above

At 0.15 BAC a driver is at least eight times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver, and above 0.15 the risk rises exponentially. About 28% of all those detected to be above the legal limit of 0.05 had a BAC of 0.15 or above. For drivers and riders with an illegal BAC involved in crashes, the percentage with BACs of 0.15 or above is even higher – in the vicinity of 55%.

The Council notes that many offenders charged with a drink-driving offence do not appear in court for weeks and sometimes months, during which time they continue to drive. The most important feature of immediate loss of licence is the swiftness of punishment. By satisfying the principles of immediacy and certainty of punishment it has been shown to have strong deterrent effects. Offenders whose offence was expediently processed through the courts have been shown to have lower re-offending rates than those experiencing long delays.

**RECOMMENDATION** Re-introduce blood testing for drugs

The Council has noted research indicating that the use of certain drugs (both licit and illicit) can reduce a driver’s performance or increase the likelihood that the driver will engage in risky behaviour.

SA Police currently have the power to stop and test a driver suspected of driving under the influence. The taking of blood for analysis is already in place for road crash casualties who are treated at hospital (including innocent victims of the crash). However, recent legislative changes have effectively removed police powers to require blood tests from people who are suspected of driving under the influence of a drug or drugs other than alcohol. Evidence that the driver had recently consumed a drug or drugs would greatly facilitate the chance of a successful prosecution in such cases.

The Council recommends that the Road Traffic Act 1961 be amended to provide for blood testing for drugs.

**RECOMMENDATION** Promote rest areas with signage and information maps

While estimates of the proportion of casualty crashes involving driver fatigue vary, research by ATSB indicates it could be as high as 20% across Australia. Fatigue is a likely cause of many single vehicle crashes on open rural roads where two-thirds of rural fatal and serious injury crashes occur.

Drivers beginning to experience signs of drowsiness need to rest. Roadside rest areas of a high standard and strategically located will encourage this. Signage is a simple and cost effective means of ensuring road users are advised of the rest opportunities ahead and at the same time raising awareness of the dangers of fatigue by incorporating simple messages.

Fatigue and rest areas signage has been installed on approximately half of the State’s sealed rural roads. The Council recommends that signage of the entire network be completed as soon as possible and supports an enhanced focus in road safety communications on fatigue and the dangers it poses.

In response to numerous requests, the Council also recommends that, in conjunction with the upgrade of rest areas, a State-wide map highlighting the locations of all rest areas be produced and distributed.
RECOMMENDATION Introduce mandatory carriage of licence

Almost all developed countries require drivers to be able to produce their licence on demand. ATSB’s annual Community Attitudes to Road Safety Surveys show that most Australians believe that carriage of a licence is already mandatory (even if, in some States, it isn’t). Moreover, around 85% of those surveyed approved of mandatory carriage of licence.

Currently in South Australia drivers of heavy vehicles, drivers subject to Probationary conditions, visiting motorists, and driving instructors seated next to a learner driver are required to carry their licence at all times when driving.

The proposal to introduce mandatory carriage of licence for all other drivers in South Australia has been raised previously in a number of forums. The Council recommends that this be progressed to assist police in enforcing a number of road safety provisions including detection of unlicensed drivers.

RECOMMENDATION Provide educational material when drivers reach six demerit points

When drivers reach an aggregate of six demerit points they are sent a “warning notice” informing them that they have reached half the number of points leading to disqualification.

The Council recommends that, in addition to the warning notice, road safety education material and relevant information should also be provided to drivers.

RECOMMENDATION Introduce an enhanced Graduated Licensing Scheme

Feedback on the Possible Initiatives document strongly supported increased training for novice drivers.

The Council established a task force to review the current licensing scheme for novice drivers. Based on the work of this task force, the Council recommends that an enhanced Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) with a two-stage provisional licence (P1 and P2) be introduced to replace the current single-stage P licence.

The key elements of the proposed GLS include more comprehensive testing for a learner’s permit; a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving in varied road conditions during the L permit phase; a mandatory Hazard Perception Test during the P1 phase; optional driver awareness courses; no requirement to display a plate during the P2 phase; and significant penalties for L and P licence holders who do the wrong thing (including curfews and passenger restrictions).

The Council also recommends further consultation on the proposed enhanced GLS, particularly with young people.

RECOMMENDATION Develop an interactive road safety website for novice drivers

The Council recommends that an exciting, state of the art, interactive website for pre-learners and fully licensed drivers, but particularly L and P licence holders, be developed.

This site would be a “one stop shop” providing all road safety information in one place, with links to other appropriate websites. Interactive technology would be used to enable novice drivers to undertake “practice” tests and other simulated driving scenarios. Information regarding the GLS would also be included.
RECOMMENDATION  
**Develop and introduce road safety curriculum resources**

South Australian produced road safety education resources are currently only available for primary schools. The Council recommends that secondary and early childhood road safety curriculum resources be developed and introduced.

The major primary school program is called Road Ready and is available for Years R-7. Transport SA estimates that more than 90% of primary schools have the Road Ready package but utilisation rates may be as low as 30%. Bike Ed, a program about cycling safety, is also offered in Years 5 – 7. Approximately 4000 students complete Bike Ed each year.

Some secondary schools make use of curriculum resources produced interstate. There is also a growing trend, particularly in the middle to upper secondary (Years 10 – 12) for students to initiate their own road safety projects, under teacher guidance. These have included drama productions, films, multi-media CD-ROMs, debates, community surveys and local community radio discussions on varied aspects of road safety that concern youth. Schools are fully supportive of such initiatives, not only for the enhanced relevant learning that ensues but also for the associated strengthening of community partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION  
**Introduce a power to weight limit for novice motorcyclists**

The Council is aware that, in general, novice motorcycle riders throughout Australia are restricted to a motorcycle of less than 250 cc engine capacity while learning and for the first 12 months following issue of a motorcycle driver’s licence. However, the engine capacity is not necessarily a good indicator of a vehicle’s speed and acceleration. For this reason, the ACT, NSW, and Victoria restrict novices to a 250 cc motorcycle with a maximum power to weight ratio of 150 kilowatts/tonne.

The power to weight ratio of a vehicle is the ratio of the maximum net power output of the engine to the vehicle’s weight. The higher the ratio the greater the power that is available to move the vehicle. This ratio determines the acceleration — the higher the ratio the faster the vehicle can accelerate.

A power to weight ratio limit has the merit of preventing novices from riding high-powered motorcycles which may have performance characteristics unsuited to the learning process or are capable of unnecessarily high performance and speed.

The Council recommends that a maximum power to weight ratio be determined and applied for novice riders (learners and those with less than 12 months experience).

RECOMMENDATION  
**Introduce an advanced course for motorcyclists returning to riding after an absence**

Casualty numbers for motorcycle riders aged 40 and over are increasing.

Australia-wide, in the three year period 1998–2000, the motorcycle kilometres travelled by the 40+ age group increased by 17%. Over the same period, kilometres travelled in all vehicle types by this age group only increased by 3%; the size of this age group has also only risen by 3%.

Because of the greater distances they are travelling, this older rider group is likely to present a greater crash-reduction challenge in the future.

The Council recommends that introducing an advanced training course for riders returning to motorcycling after an absence of several years be investigated.
Safer People | Attitudes & Behaviour

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Introduce demerit points for using hand-held mobile phones**

It is an offence to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving a vehicle. The current expiation fee in South Australia is $175; however, the offence attracts no demerit points, unlike in some other States.

Road safety authorities across Australia are concerned about devices, particularly mobile phones, that are contributing to driver inattention and distraction. Research has shown that using a mobile phone or other device that causes the driver to be distracted can increase the risk of being involved in a collision by up to four times. A recent fatality in Victoria involved a motorist hitting and killing a cyclist while the motorist was sending an SMS message on a mobile phone.

SA Police statistics show that the number of expiations for mobile phone use has steadily risen from 1104 in 2000 to 2784 to September 2003.

The Council notes that, nationally, there is agreement for the introduction of three demerit points for using a hand held phone while driving and recommends that the offence attract demerit points to demonstrate to the public that using hand-held mobile phones while driving is unacceptable.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Develop stronger road safety links with Local Government**

The Council notes that, in most other States, there is a more formalised involvement of Local Government in road safety. Generally, this is supported by significant State Government funding.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has stated that it supports greater State Government investment in road safety initiatives. Local Government is represented on the Road Safety Advisory Council and associated Sub-Committees and Task Forces, and is committed to working with the State Government to develop strategies to reduce road fatalities and trauma.

The Council recommends that a Department of Transport and Urban Planning officer be placed at the Local Government Association for a period of six months to identify areas for collaboration in road safety between State and Local Government. The officer will be required to produce a report for the Council’s consideration highlighting possible road safety initiatives and approaches that can be undertaken to provide benefit to the community.

This proposal has been endorsed by the LGA.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Enhance road safety communications**

The “South Australian Road Safety Strategy 2003 – 2010” proposes an enhanced focus on road safety communications and public education, particularly in regional areas. Road safety advertising is funded primarily by the Motor Accident Commission (MAC), which contributes up to $2 million a year, and the Department of Transport and Urban Planning which contributes $0.6 million.

The Council considers that road safety communications should focus on four primary themes – drink-driving, speed, restraint use and fatigue, with minor campaigns on tailgating and inattention. The Council also recommends greater integration with enforcement and a focus on more localised, action-orientated road safety messages.
Reducing Road Trauma ... the Next Steps

**Safer People**

**Technology**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Implement an Advanced Traffic Management System

An advanced traffic management system (ATMS) uses technology to provide motorists with up-to-date “live” information on travel times, road conditions, speed limits, crashes and congestion. The features include video monitoring of the road, incident detection, weather stations, variable speed limit signs linked to weather conditions, and changeable message signs.

The Council has been advised by Transport SA that the optimal site for an ATMS is the Adelaide-Crafers Freeway where the system would provide added road safety benefits, particularly in winter months.

The Council supports the immediate installation of the system.

**Safer Vehicles**

**Light Vehicles**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Increase random light vehicle inspections

The Council notes research that has shown that vehicle defects contribute directly or substantially to 3% of crashes. The most common defects are faulty tyres and brakes.

For the first 20 years of a vehicle’s life, the crash rate is relatively constant at around 7%, indicating that vehicle defects play a small role in vehicle crashes. With vehicles older than 20 years, there is evidence that they are less involved in road crashes. It is possible that these older vehicles are not used as much, travelling fewer kilometres and therefore having lower levels of exposure compared to newer vehicles.

The Council believes that, with a low incidence of vehicle defects causing or likely to have played a significant role in a vehicle crash, the chance of an annual vehicle inspection program or change of ownership inspection program eliminating all defects likely to cause or contribute to a crash is very low. Instead, the Council supports the current policy of random roadside inspections, which are more cost effective, but recommends that the number of random inspections be increased.

Roadside inspections should target primary crash-related defects, readily apparent illegal vehicle modifications, and environmental issues of smoke and noise.

The Council understands that the present laws may need to be changed to allow better and more efficient random roadside inspections to take place.
The Road Safety Advisory Council requests the Commissioner of Police to consider the following recommendations.

**CONSIDERATION** Reduce enforcement tolerance on speed detection devices

Survey research from ATSB has indicated support for stricter speed enforcement. When asked how much leeway should be given before drivers are booked for speeding, a majority of people nominated tolerances of 5 km/h or less for both 60 km/h urban zones (78%) and 100 km/h rural zones (53%). In both cases, a substantial proportion of people advocated a zero tolerance approach (22% and 24% respectively). The tolerance in Victoria has been publicised as 3 km/h.

The general speed enforcement tolerance allowed in South Australia is a policy issue for the Commissioner of Police. The Council recommends that the Commissioner consider a reduced enforcement tolerance.

**CONSIDERATION** Increase the hours that speed cameras are operated

The Council recommends that the Commissioner consider an increase in the deployment of speed cameras with a particular focus on times of heightened crash risk.

**CONSIDERATION** Increase Saturation Programs in rural areas

On average 59% of fatalities and 50% of serious injuries occur in rural areas. In addition, two thirds of the drivers and riders killed or seriously injured in rural areas live in rural areas. These statistics are of great concern to the Council and indicate that there is still a long way to go to combat the number of deaths and serious injuries on our country roads.

In 2003 SA Police conducted a Rural Highways Saturation Program with the objective of reducing road trauma on rural roads. The Program operated from March until September on every Thursday, Friday and Saturday on four major highways – Stuart, Dukes, Eyre and Riddoch. An educational brochure was produced and local media was used to highlight the program. Transport SA assisted and provided fixed signs on the four highways indicating to motorists that these highways were being regularly patrolled.

Initial crash data analysis by SA Police has shown a decline in crashes during the implementation of the program. It is clear that a visible police presence combined with education and increased media exposure can have a dramatic effect on the behaviour of motorists on rural roads.

The Council recommends that the Commissioner of Police consider increasing the use of integrated education and enforcement “saturation” programs in regional areas, noting that additional funding will be required.

The Council also notes that enforcement works best when linked with education and recommends that the Government’s Road Safety Communication Plan incorporate this integration.
The Road Safety Advisory Council has established 12 Task Forces which are working through a number of other initiatives including those outlined below. Recommendations on these issues will be developed over the next 6 to 18 months.

**Future Use of Alcohol Interlocks**

The Alcohol and Drug Task Force is currently investigating possible changes to the alcohol interlock program. Future options may include reducing the minimum licence suspension period before being able to fit an interlock to one month; making alcohol interlocks mandatory for repeat offenders with a BAC above 0.08; and investigating a possible reduction of the costs associated with the current interlock program to encourage more participants in the program.

**Random Drug Testing**

Victoria has recently introduced legislation to provide for random drug testing of drivers. The Alcohol and Drug Task Force will monitor the application of the program in Victoria.

**Fitness to Drive**

While many factors contribute to safety on the road, driver health is an important consideration and drivers must meet certain medical standards to ensure there is not an increased risk of a crash in which they or other road users may be killed or injured. In addition, as the proportion of older people in the State rises, the number of older people involved in crashes is expected to increase.

The Council has established a Fitness to Drive Task Force to investigate the issues associated with determining fitness to drive and the current South Australian practices in regard to older drivers.

**Vehicle Compatibility**

Over recent years, there has been a trend towards the purchase of larger light vehicles, particularly 4WDs, and smaller light vehicles, specifically small four-cylinder vehicles with low engine capacity. Differences in weight, height off the ground, geometry and stiffness leads to the potential for greater damage to the smaller, lighter vehicle during collisions between the two types of vehicle.

The Council notes that research has shown that the driver or occupant of the smaller vehicle has a greater risk of death or injury than the driver or occupants of the larger vehicle. It is also aware that the City of Melbourne is contemplating controlling the use of 4WDs in areas of high pedestrian activity in the CBD.

A related issue is the use of bull bars on 4WDs generally and their impact on pedestrian safety. ATSB has carried out research into this issue (2000) and concluded that there was potential for improvements, particularly in relation to pedestrian and cyclist injuries. Victoria has recently announced it is looking at the issue of bull bars on 4WDs.

The Commonwealth is also looking at the issue of the sales tax applied to 4WDs being 5% compared to 20% for smaller vehicles.

A further issue is the mix of heavy vehicles and vulnerable road users, particularly in metropolitan areas. There are some practical initiatives in relation to these issues that are partly picked up in the National Road Safety Strategy Action Plans for 2001-02 and 2003-04.

The Council will undertake further work during 2004, including discussions with other States and the Commonwealth, on possible initiatives to address these issues.
Double Demerit Point Schemes

The *Possible Initiatives* document suggested the application of double demerit points for BAC and speeding offences during periods of high crash history or increased traffic volumes. Double demerit points on long weekends and public holidays have been applied in NSW and have been trialled in Western Australia.

Research shows that the time of greatest risk on South Australian roads is Friday when the largest majority of fatal and serious casualties occur. The Council considers that applying “double demerits” on Fridays only, throughout the entire year, is worth further investigation.

Fixed and Point-to-Point Speed Cameras

Fixed speed cameras are commonly used in some States. NSW, which has 110 fixed speed cameras, has shown remarkable crash reductions where cameras have been placed. Recently point-to-point speed cameras (which measure a vehicle’s speed between two cameras) have been introduced in Victoria.

The Council believes that further work should be undertaken on the application of these cameras in South Australia.

Mandatory Restraint Use for Children over 12 Months

The Restraint Use Task Force is currently considering a number of initiatives regarding the use of restraints. A major initiative is the mandatory use of child restraints for children over 12 months of age. While this is also being investigated at a national level, the view of the Task Force is that this issue requires immediate attention.

Another issue is the possibility of establishing a State-wide restraint fitting advisory service for South Australia. This was also supported in the feedback received from the community on the *Possible Initiatives* document.

Vulnerable Road Users

Cyclists and pedestrians represent 16% of the road toll. It is clear that the protection and needs of all road users must be taken into account when developing strategies to reduce the road toll, especially those at greater risk of injury.

In conjunction with the Office for Walking and Cycling, the Council will develop further road safety initiatives in 2004. Consultation on proposed initiatives will need to be undertaken with key stakeholders, particularly cycling associations, to ensure that their views are taken into account.

Vehicle Confiscation

The *Possible Initiatives* document suggested that the option of vehicle confiscation be investigated for unlicensed driving.

The Government has indicated that it will introduce legislation to deter “hoon” drivers by immediately restricting the use of their vehicle and, in certain circumstances, impounding their vehicle. The Council therefore does not consider it appropriate at this time to introduce confiscation or impounding of vehicles as a penalty for unlicensed driving.

The Council will continue to monitor the development of the Attorney General’s legislation and interstate experience.
Good Driving Incentive Programs

An option to promote safer and improved driving behaviour is through the establishment of driver “incentive programs”. NSW has implemented a Gold Licence Scheme which provides a financial benefit to drivers who have held an unrestricted drivers licence for a period of at least five years with no cancellations or disqualifications. The incentive is in the form of a reduced licence fee for a five year Gold Licence.

The Council will further examine the merits of an incentive scheme in South Australia during 2004.

Review of Penalties

The Council will address the following issues and undertake further investigations:

- Retesting or licence regression for repeat offenders
- Sanctions for repeat offenders involved in multiple crashes
- Extending the period of demerit point accumulation for repeat offenders

Lower Speed Limits on Urban Arterial Roads

With the introduction of the 50 km/h default urban speed limit in March 2003, urban arterial roads retained their existing speed limit which is signposted and is commonly 60 km/h. These roads carry the majority of traffic and, not surprisingly, 70% of crashes in metropolitan Adelaide occur on this network. Consequently, a further logical step in the pursuit of improved road safety for South Australia would be to investigate the potential for lowering speed limits on urban arterial roads. This is consistent with the National Road Safety Action Plan 2003-04 which includes the “selective extension of urban speed limits less than 60 km/h (for example to local shopping precincts, school zones and other areas of high pedestrian activity)”.

The Council requests that Transport SA investigates lower fixed and variable lower speed limits on sections of urban arterial roads, particularly in areas of significant pedestrian activity such as shopping precincts.
### Interstate Comparison of Selected Initiatives

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<th>SA</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>NT/ACT</th>
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<td>Annual Mass Action Program</td>
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<td>Immediate loss of licence for excessive speed</td>
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<td>Full time mobile RBT</td>
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<td>Promotion of rest areas with signage and maps</td>
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The Road Safety Advisory Council

January 2004