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Regional road infrastructure

– low costs, high gains

WEDNESDAY 8 JULY



ABOUT ROADS AUSTRALIA

Roads Australia (RA) is the peak body for roads within an integrated transport system, representing an industry that contributes \$207 billion annually to the economy and supports 1.3 million jobs.

RA brings industry, government and communities together to lead the evolution of Australia's roads, integrated transport and mobility.

The nation's only roads champion, RA's 150+ members includes all of Australia's road agencies, major contractors and consultants, motoring clubs, service providers and other relevant industry groups.

RA's current policy focus extends across five activity streams: Safety; Capacity; Transport Reform; Journey Reliability; and Sustainability with Diversity and Inclusion an underlying commitment across each stream.

Register for [upcoming policy events](#) to contribute to the debate.

BACKGROUND

Despite making up only 17% of the nation's population, deaths on regional roads account for two in every three of the lives lost nationally.

While driver behaviour and vehicle design have a role to play in improving safety, relatively low-cost infrastructure treatments can be an effective and efficient way to reduce the number

of crashes. These treatments can be especially helpful in reducing run-off-road and head-on crashes.

EVENT SUMMARY

Over 120 attendees joined RA's webinar on 8 July 2020 to hear from:

- [Robin Jackson](#), Chief of Infrastructure Prioritisation, Infrastructure Australia,
- [Bernard Carlon](#), Executive Director, Centres for Road Safety & Maritime Safety, Transport for NSW,
- [Mike Stapleton](#), Deputy Director General, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, and
- [Colin Dominish](#), Regional Director, Southern Hemisphere, GHD Digital.

Speaker presentations are available on the RA [website](#).

The webinar was moderated by [Jeff Doyle](#), Safety Policy Stream Chair, RA and Chief Executive Officer, Altus Traffic Group and sponsored by [GHD](#).

RECENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

There have been several federal funding announcements in June and July 2020 relating to road safety infrastructure, as part of a \$1.5 billion nationwide infrastructure package including \$500 million for targeted road safety works.



Details of the funding by jurisdiction is provided in table 1, below.

RA has been supporting [increased Federal funding](#) for low-cost road safety treatments for some time, so RA is encouraged to see these types of treatments being funded, including shoulder widening or sealing and audio-tactile line markings, otherwise known as rumble strips.

POLICY INSIGHTS

The webinar brought together experts from across Australia.

Robin Jackson, Chief of Infrastructure Prioritisation, Infrastructure Australia (IA) presented on the [Infrastructure Priority List](#) for 2020, which is IA's largest list yet, comprising 147 nationally significant infrastructure proposals. A mid-year update, with new projects and initiatives, will be released in coming weeks.

He reinforced that regional roads account for a disproportionate amount of road fatalities, and one of the key themes of the List is a regional focus for both regional and rural road network

safety improvements, and well as mobile telecommunications coverage in regional and remote areas.

Mr Jackson indicated that the speed with which projects can be progressed from concept or problem stage to solution and delivery can help to speed up the recovery of the economy.

IA is calling for submissions to the 2021 Infrastructure Priority List and specifically encourages submissions from the following areas, which are relevant to roads:

- Addressing national waste and recycling management challenges; and
- Responding to national road maintenance issues.

Submissions close 31 August 2020. Visit IA's [website](#) for more information.

Bernard Carlon, Executive Director, Centres for Road Safety & Maritime Safety, Transport for NSW, presented road crash data for country roads in NSW.

T1. Recent road safety funding announcements

State/Territory	Funding (Joint Federal & State/Territory)	Road Safety Upgrades Include:
ACT	\$3.2 million	Upgrades to traffic signals to keep them on during power outages, the installation of road safety barriers and a variable speed limit
NSW	\$398 million	Mass action rollout of audio-tactile line markings
NT	\$34.6 million	Widening and sealing shoulders and improving or installing guardrails, truck stops and audio-tactile line markings
QLD	\$150 million	Audio-tactile line markings
SA	\$59.5 million	Safety barriers, shoulder sealing audio-tactile line markings
TAS	\$17 million	Heavy vehicle rest areas, electronic school zone signs and roadside barriers
VIC	\$97.2 million	Intersection upgrades on 30 high-speed, high-risk rural intersections, Pedestrian and Safer Schools (urban and regional) upgrades
WA	\$100 million	Approximately 1,400 kilometres of roads treated, with shoulder sealing and audible edge lines being installed in every region of WA



He reminded us of the ongoing importance of road safety, highlighting the 9,816 fatalities and serious injuries (FSIs) that occurred on country roads in NSW between 2015 and 2019, at a cost of \$13 billion.

The Towards Zero Infrastructure Program, which is included in IA's list as a High Priority Initiative, found that a \$1 billion investment in road safety is estimated to avoid 628 fatalities and 4,820 serious injuries over the lifetime of the investments, returning a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 5.06.

Mr Carlon presented TfNSW [research](#) showing the effectiveness of a number of road safety treatments including:

- Full containment (roadside and median barriers): 90-95% reduction in head-on FSIs; 90-95% reduction in run-off-road FSIs; and 50-75% reduction in FSIs across all crash types;
- Median barrier only: 90-95% reduction in head-on FSIs;
- Roadside barriers: 90-95% reduction in run-off-road FSIs;
- Wide centreline: 50% reduction in head-on crashes; and 20-25% reduction in run-off-road crashes; and
- Audio-tactile line marking: 20-25% reduction in run-off-road crashes; and 25% reduction in head-on crashes.

Mike Stapleton, Deputy Director General, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads who provided an overview of the work that has been happening in Queensland (QLD).

Wide centre line treatments (WCLT) have been used successfully in high-risk areas to reduce crashes where a vehicle crosses the centre line. This has been operationalised through application of policy requiring any project on a rural road with 4,000 vehicles per day or more to use WCLT and audio tactile line marking. In QLD, this has been found to reduce the rate of fatal and serious injury crashes by an average of 20% and the rate of head-on crashes by an average of 46%.

Other road safety treatments in QLD include:

- Township entry treatments (TET): implemented where high-speed rural roads transition to lower-speed roads;
- Sealing roads: with more than 2,000 kilometres sealed since 2001; and
- Regional roads stimulus packages.

Colin Dominish, Regional Director, Southern Hemisphere, GHD Digital, presented on digital innovations to improve road safety across Australia including:

- The role of technologies such as ITS in improving safety of roads. GHD is helping to assist road authorities in this, such as though the use of video in remote locations to understand the workings of an intersection.
- Their current work on a trial with TfNSW of a mobile phone app to measure the road roughness index.
- The use of training simulators to help drivers transition to larger heavy vehicles.
- The role of autonomous vehicles and the need to manage this well in regional areas to help save lives.

EVENT OUTPUTS & NEXT STEPS

A snapshot of the event was promoted through RA's [LinkedIn channel](#).

Looking ahead, RA plans to host further policy [webinars](#) on this and related topics.

In August 2020, RA will host another webinar featuring experts in regional road safety, and will look to expand on the issues raised in both these events in a [Road Work podcast](#).

