



2 March 2018

National Road Safety Strategy  
Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email to: [roadsafetystrategy@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:roadsafetystrategy@infrastructure.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020* (the inquiry).

The LGAQ is the peak body for local government in Queensland. It is a not-for-profit association established solely to serve councils and their needs. The LGAQ has been advising, supporting and representing local councils since 1896, allowing them to improve their operations and strengthen relationships with their communities. The LGAQ does this by connecting councils to people and places; supporting their drive to innovate and improve service delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions; and delivering them the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence.

Local governments are a key provider and manager of infrastructure including community facilities, roads and bridges, storm water management, water supply and treatment. The infrastructure and services provided by councils support the operation of regional economies and the communities they sustain. Councils are under constant pressure to increase the number and expand their range of services, including as a result of rising community expectations, increasing demands from other levels of government and changes in standards and legislation.

Queensland's 77 councils are stewards of approximately 82 per cent, or some 153,000km's, of the State's vast road network. Furthermore, approximately 79 per cent of the local government-controlled road network is categorised as 'rural' in nature<sup>1</sup>. The long-term trend, through to 31 August 2016, shows 51 per cent of fatal and serious injury (FSI) incidents occurred on the local government-controlled network<sup>2</sup>. This long-term trend is higher than that of the national average for the local government-controlled road network<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans*

The *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020* (the strategy) acknowledges the role of all three levels of government in responding to road safety challenges. However, the LGAQ notes that the *2015-17 Action Plan* (action plan) supporting the strategy places a strong emphasis on state

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Local Government Comparative Information 2015-16*.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Transport and Main Roads, *The Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP)*, presentation to various Queensland Regional Roads and Transport Groups, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Austroads, *Austroads Research Report AP-R518-16, Safer System Roads for Local Government*, 2016.



and territory roads carrying the highest traffic volumes. The local government sector is largely ignored. As such, the opportunity to work constructively with councils to achieve reductions in FSI incidents on local roads, where the majority of incidents are occurring, is lost.

While the action plan has taken a state-controlled road focus, the LGAQ commends the initiative shown by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to partner with councils through the Queensland Roads and Transport Alliance to extend assessment of road safety risk using the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) to the local government-controlled road network. Recognition of the ongoing capability and capacity development needs of the local government sector should be elevated as a national priority in future road safety strategies and action plans.

The achievement of the ambitious targets established in the strategy requires a coordinated response across the entire road network. As such, the LGAQ suggests the 2018-20 Action Plan presents a significant opportunity to demonstrate a greater national leadership role while placing strong emphasis on supporting the local government sector. Continued demonstrated leadership is critical in ensuring road safety remains at the forefront of local decision making.

#### *Black Spot Program*

The Australian Government's Black Spot Program (BSP) provides funding to address known locations with a history of repeat crashes (reactive basis) and locations posing significant risk as identified through a completed road safety audit (proactive basis).

While the BSP is highly regarded by councils that are able to access this vital source of funding, a large proportion of councils are simply unable to seek funding through the BSP, with the majority of these councils located in regional and remote areas. For potential reactive projects (many of which are high risk locations) there is a lack of incidents to meet the requisite accident history. Similarly, for proactive projects many councils lack the capability and capacity to undertake the required road safety audits to even be eligible to apply for funding. With two out of every three deaths occurring in regional and remote areas, rural communities are at a significant disadvantage given these constraints<sup>4</sup>.

Across recent application rounds, LGAQ has observed that approximately a third of Queensland councils applied for funding provided through the BSP. Reactive applications typically outweigh proactive applications, particularly in dollar terms. While the overall number of proactive applications has increased in recent years, this avenue is utilised by a smaller number of councils. Many councils, especially in rural and remote areas, do not have staff who are qualified to undertake road safety audits. The cost of completing such audits through third parties is seen as prohibitive when applying to a competitive program, particularly considering the low cost of treatments for which funding is otherwise sought.

The LGAQ acknowledges, and supports, the role of the BSP in addressing locations where accidents frequently occur. However, in line with the established action plan item to review road safety programs, the LGAQ recommends the BSP be reviewed with a view to ensuring capability and capacity constraints are not the limiting factor in seeking funding on a proactive basis to address high risk locations on the local government-controlled road network. The LGAQ suggests that proactive applications based on a completed safety risk assessment such as AusRAP (or Australian National Risk Assessment Model (ANRAM) once available) be considered as part of the review. The targeting of treatments on roads with a lower star rating has the potential to significantly reduce risk, particularly in rural and remote areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, *Road Safety in Australia Factsheet*, 2017.



### *Funding available through the Black Spot Program*

For a number of consecutive years, including those of increased funding in 2015-16 and 2016-17, the number of eligible projects submitted has led to the BSP being oversubscribed. In achieving a balance between reactive and proactive applications, the Queensland Black Spot Consultative Panel has been unable to recommend numerous reactive projects where the calculated Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) has been in excess of the minimum required to be eligible under the program's required minimum BCR of 2.0. Not only does this leave high risk locations untreated, it also leads to the potential for those locations to remain untreated in the longer term as requisite requirements (i.e., crash history over a defined time period) can impact eligibility when resubmitted under a future program development round.

Queensland councils support for the BSP is evidenced by the fact that over 100 applications are made during each program development round. Over the last three nomination rounds, projects collectively worth \$175 million have been submitted by Queensland councils. With \$12 million per annum currently allocated for Queensland Black Spot projects, there is a continued unmet need for further investment in the program for Queensland as well as nationally. Recognising this, the LGAQ's Advocacy Action Plan includes an item seeking 'continued and increased funding levels for the Federal Black Spot Program<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, the LGAQ seeks a review of the Program's eligibility requirements for the reasons outlined above and is pleased to note that such a review is currently underway and will be finalised as part of the 2018-20 Action Plan.

If there is a need for further information or clarification regarding this submission, please feel free to contact Mr Scott Britton, Principal Advisor – Roads, Transport and Infrastructure via email at [scott\\_britton@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:scott_britton@lgaq.asn.au) or via telephone on 1300 542 700.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Buckler', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sarah Buckler PSM  
GENERAL MANAGER – ADVOCACY

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://lgaq.asn.au/documents/10136/fa0f0ba9-db86-41a7-b40f-2b742ae42053>