

Road Safety Decade of Action: Workshop Summary

Prepared by Blair Turner, ARRB Group



November 2010



Introduction

Worldwide, it is estimated that around 1.2 million people die in road crashes every year, and a further 50 million are injured (WHO 2009). This represents a major burden on health systems, as well as inflicting a massive amount of pain and suffering on individuals, families and communities. Around 90% of these deaths and injuries occur in low and middle income countries, many of which are on Australia's doorstep.

Road injuries are the leading cause of death in the 15 to 29 year age group and rank in the top three in the 4 to 44 year age group (WHO 2009). Often it is the major bread winner who is killed or injured in a road crash. When this happens, it can plunge families into a generation or more of poverty. Although already considered a problem of significant proportions, the situation is set to worsen, with estimates that by 2030 road crashes will be the fifth leading cause of death, topping 2.4 million fatalities per year unless action is taken (WHO 2009).

In Australia too, road crashes result in a large number of deaths and injuries every year. Over the five year period between 2005 and 2009, an average 1556 people have died on our roads each year (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government 2010) with a current estimated total cost of \$18 billion per year (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics 2009).

2011 will mark the start of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. This initiative was instigated by a UN resolution, co-sponsored by more than 90 countries, including Australia. The goal of this global initiative is to halt or reverse the increasing trend in road traffic deaths and injuries around the world.

As part of the 24th ARRB Conference (in October 2010) a workshop was held in association with the Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia (REAAA) to provide background information on the Decade of Action. A further aim of the workshop was to discuss how those based in Australia can usefully contribute to this new initiative, both here in Australia and globally. Several presentations were provided giving background on the Decade of Action and current activities relating to this.

Over 50 attendees contributed to discussions on Australian involvement. This document presents a summary of these presentations, and a synthesis of the discussions that followed.

Background to the Decade of Action

Robert Klein, Road Safety Consultant, presented on the background to the Decade of Action. Key points are as follows:

- Global interest in the road safety epidemic has increased significantly in recent years.
- A global Ministerial conference on road safety was held in Moscow in November 2009 which passed the 'Moscow Declaration' for a Decade of Action in Road Safety.
- In March 2010 the UN approved a resolution proclaiming 2011-2020 as a Decade of Action in Road Safety. The resolution was sponsored by 90 countries including Australia.
- The resolution has as its goal to stabilise and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels.
- The Commission for Global Road Safety has estimated that given the right circumstances and actions, a target of a 50% reduction in fatalities could be achieved, resulting in 5 million less fatalities over the decade (Figure 1).

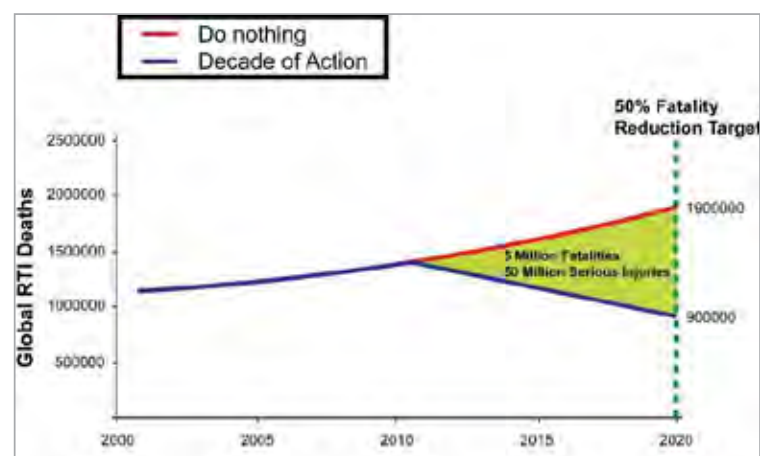


Figure 1: The Decade of Action Target. Source: personal communication, FIA Foundation

- A draft strategy has been prepared for the Decade of Action by WHO (available at www.who.int/roadsafety/news/2010/unrsc_decade_of_action/en/index.html). This has five key pillars, including Building Capacity, Safer User Behaviour, Building Safer Roads, Building Safer Vehicles and Improving Post-crash Care.
- In September 2010 the Decade of Action 'Tag' was launched, along with the slogan 'Wear. Believe. Act' (Figure 2). The Tag is seen as an important communications tool, and is intended to raise the profile of the Decade of Action.



Figure 2: The Decade of Action Tag. Source: FIA Foundation¹

- The Decade of Action will commence on 11 May 2011.

Rob McInerney, Chief Executive from the International Road Assessment Program (iRAP) presented on the Road Infrastructure Pillar of the Decade of Action. Key points from this presentation were that:

- Engineers need to remember the well known formula for kinetic energy = $\frac{1}{2} mv^2$, and that we must manage this energy when designing roads.
- Speed management plays a critical role in infrastructure safety.

- Attendees were urged to do more, be ambitious, change their mindset and to take action. It cannot be a Decade of the Same!
- A new document on Safe Road Infrastructure in the global context has been released, and is available from the iRAP website (www.irap.org/library).
- The infrastructure pillar of the UN Decade of Action covers the four key areas of ownership and accountability for the death on our roads; safe operations, maintenance and upgrading of existing networks; ensuring that new infrastructure meets the needs of all road users; encouraging capacity building, research and knowledge transfer in safe infrastructure.
- iRAP's vision is a world free of high-risk roads by 2020. This will ensure that the highest volume 10% of roads in each country are made safe through provision for vulnerable road users; safe roadsides; divided high speed roads; safe intersections and safe speeds.

Eric Howard, Road Safety Consultant presented on the Road Safety Management Pillar. Key points were that:

- There is a strong need to build road safety capacity in developing countries, including in our region.
- There are currently a number of key weaknesses in terms of road safety management (e.g. no agreed lead agency, weak partnership arrangements and no coordinated decision making hierarchy for agencies).
- There are established ways to improve this situation, including training of practitioners (and in particular key 'gatekeepers') in road safety management, building political awareness, and institutional strengthening.
- Guidance on improving road safety management exists, and Australians are active in this space.

Blair Turner, Principal Research Scientist at ARRB Group presented some of the recent and current initiatives that Australian safety experts have been involved in internationally. Key points were that:

- Australia has previously contributed significantly to global and regional road safety, and it is within the reach of individuals and organisations to now contribute in a substantial way to the Decade of Action.

¹ Copyright FIA Foundation. Permission to use this image in this document has been obtained.



- Previous Australian work includes some major initiatives such as involvement in and the production of global and regional road safety guides, export of initiatives that are known to work (e.g. seat belt legislation), and development and management of the International Road Assessment Program (iRAP).
- Australian individuals and organisations are represented on many of the key global and regional road safety organisations (e.g. APEC, GRSP, UN Road Safety Collaboration, iRAP).
- Australians have been involved in regional and global training and capacity building, including through workshops, in-country projects, exchange programs, distance learning, and transfer of equipment (e.g. enforcement technology).

Alan Coulthart, Principal Infrastructure Advisor for AusAID presented on recent AusAID initiatives in road safety. Key points were that:

There was an increased focus on road safety from AusAID's document *Development for all: towards a disability-inclusive Australia Aid Program*. This included an emphasis on preventable impairment.

- Currently AusAID road safety activities are in two main areas. Road safety assessments include the identification of high risk sites, and appropriate treatments for these. Example projects include iRAP in Vietnam, road safety audits in various countries and long term technical support in Indonesia.
- The other area is road user behaviour campaigns. Successful example projects include helmet wearing in Vietnam, speed management in Thailand, seatbelt and restraint use, and drink driving.
- Australia has built a strategic relationship with the Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) to improve road safety outcomes particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.
- A number of the challenges to improving safety in the region were also highlighted.

Workshop Discussion

Coordination of activities

It was noted that Australia is already involved in a significant way in global road safety, but it was suggested that there is no real coordination of our international road safety activities, and that this should be addressed. Coordination should include facilitation of resources. It was suggested that this be addressed at senior government level (e.g. COAG).

Some type of coordinating body is required to concentrate Australian efforts at the regional and global level. It was also suggested that Australia lacks a road safety champion.

Australia's previous international involvement has relied largely on a philanthropic approach, but with the increased global emphasis on road safety, this needs to switch to a more sustainable approach in terms of funding. A long term commitment is needed.

Australia's federal system of government presents challenges for coordinated national action, with road safety being primarily a state and territory responsibility. There is a need to coordinate and connect relevant resources at local, state and national levels. Austroads may have an important role in this respect.

NGOs and corporates have capacity for involvement in the Decade of Action, but again there is a need to coordinate actions.

Transfer of knowledge and experience

Australia has very solid experience in road safety, both within Australia and globally. There is a need to identify areas of safety where we perform well (and particularly those areas with high safety impacts) and concentrate on these in our international efforts. One suggestion was in the area of heavy vehicle safety, although there are many others.

There is a need to prepare new professionals for involvement in these global initiatives. The benefits of this are likely to be twofold: countries where the skills are applied will benefit from trauma reductions, and the individuals participating are likely to gain in terms of personal and professional development. Opportunity should be sought for younger Australian professionals to gain experience overseas, perhaps initially in some sort of shadowing role. Longer term projects lend themselves well to these sorts of arrangements.



Photo: D. Best.

It was suggested that Australia has a wealth of road safety guidance documents that would be of relevance to those working in other countries. It was recommended that greater dissemination of this guidance be investigated, including the possibility of Austroads providing these documents for free to those in developing countries.

Some type of network involving senior road managers in the region would be of value. There are several organisations already active in the region that could act as a platform for establishing and maintaining such a network (e.g. REAAA).

Australia could assist developing countries by conducting further research to address global research needs. For example, little is known about the safety benefit of various road infrastructure measures in developing countries.

The Australian National Road Safety Strategy

It is unclear at this point whether the current draft of the new National Road Safety Strategy for Australia contains reference to, or sufficient linkage to the Decade of Action. Like the Decade of Action, this strategy also spans the period from 2011 to 2020. This linkage needs to be examined with urgency. The Decade of Action provides an international framework for road safety activity, and actions within Australia need to be connected to this. In addition, the national strategy is a very useful means to concentrate thinking about how Australia can be involved at the global level in the Decade of Action.



Figure 3: Rob Klein presenting on the Decade of Action



Early indications are that the crash reduction targets in the new Australian Road Safety Strategy will be less than those set down in the Decade of Action. This needs to be reviewed with urgency, especially given that others in the region look to Australia for guidance on road safety issues. If a lower target is set for Australia, any difference with the international target needs to be carefully explained.

It was also suggested that we need to look at delivery of safety within Australia and New Zealand, as our performance over the last decade has not improved greatly.

Recommendations

As a priority, the new Australian Road Safety Strategy should be reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the new global Decade of Action road safety strategy. Opportunities should also be sought to include actions to facilitate global involvement in road safety, and achievement of the Decade of Action outcomes.

A coordinating body is required to maximise the impact of current and future efforts in the delivery of global road safety. A high profile road safety champion would be an asset in this aim, and would also assist in the delivery of road safety within Australia.

The coordinating body (as well as individuals and organisations) should explore ways that we can concentrate our efforts in terms of transfer of knowledge

and experience at the regional and global levels. There are several suggestions in this report on this issue.

Individuals and organisations should consider how they can contribute to the Decade of Action. To facilitate this, greater education and publicity about this initiative is required.

This workshop had limited scope to address all of the issues relating to global road safety, and was recognised as a starting point in this task. It is suggested that further workshop events be held to more thoroughly explore these issues. ARRB is proposing a follow-up roundtable session early in 2011. It is intended that this roundtable include peak road safety bodies, motoring clubs, road authorities and other key stakeholders, and that it aim to help progress discussions in advance of the launch of the Decade of Action.

Further information and dissemination

For further information, please contact Blair Turner (email: blair.turner@arrb.com.au; phone +61 3 9881 1661). Permission is granted to forward this document to others, and to reproduce parts of this document with appropriate acknowledgement. It is anticipated that parts of this document will be reproduced as a journal article in the near future.

References

Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) 2009, Road crash costs in Australia 2006, Report 118, Canberra, Australia.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government 2010, Road deaths Australia 2009 Statistical Summary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Canberra, Australia.

WHO 2009, Global status report on road safety: time for action, World Health Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland.

About ARRB:

ARRB Group Ltd (ARRB) provides research, consulting and information services to the road and transport industry. ARRB applies research outcomes to develop equipment that collects road and traffic information and software that assists with decision making across road networks. ARRB is the leading provider of road research and best practice workshops in Australia.

ARRB Group Ltd
ABN 68 004 620 651
www.arrb.com.au

MATERIALS, PAVEMENT & CONCRETE DESIGN & TESTING | TRANSPORT POLICY, OPERATIONS & ECONOMICS |
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT | EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURE & DATA COLLECTION SERVICES |
SAFE SYSTEMS | ROAD SAFETY | TRAFFIC ENGINEERING | HEAVY VEHICLE TESTING & SIMULATION |
LAND TRANSPORT RESOURCES & INFORMATION | KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER & CAPACITY BUILDING |

Head Office:

Australia, Victoria:
500 Burwood Highway
Vermont South VIC 3133
Australia
P: +61 3 9881 1555
F: +61 3 9887 8104
info@arrb.com.au

Regional Offices:

Western Australia:

191 Carr Place
Leederville WA 6007
Australia
P: +61 8 9227 3000
F: +61 8 9227 3030
arrb.wa@arrb.com.au

Queensland:

123 Sandgate Road
Albion QLD 4010
Australia
P: +61 7 3260 3500
F: +61 7 3862 4699
arrb.qld@arrb.com.au

South Australia:

Aurora Building
Suite 507, 147 Pirie St
Adelaide SA 5000
Australia
P: +61 8 7200 2659
F: +61 8 8223 7406
arrb.sa@arrb.com.au

New South Wales:

2-14 Mountain St
Ultimo NSW 2007
Australia
P: +61 2 9282 4444
F: +61 2 9280 4430
arrb.nsw@arrb.com.au

China:

Floor 13, Zhen Xing Building
118 North Hu Bin Road
Xiamen PRC
P: +86 592 2135 552
F: +86 592 2136 663
www.arrb-china.com.cn

UAE:

Unit 101, Al Safa Tower
Sheikh Zayed Road
Dubai, UAE
P: +971 4332 8532
F: +971 4332 8584
www.arrb-me.com

Luxmoore Parking
Consulting
Ground Floor
12 Wellington Parade
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
P: +61 3 9417 5277
F: +61 3 9416 2602