



The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC

Deputy Leader of Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Roads and Ports

Mr Greg Aplin MP
Chair
Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)
Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Aplin

I write regarding the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety's (Staysafe) report into school zone safety which was published on 27 March 2012.

School zone safety is a priority for the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government. Crash analysis undertaken by the Centre for Road Safety at Transport for NSW has demonstrated school zones are effective in reducing pedestrian casualties.

A recent analysis of school zones in NSW found that overall there had been a 32 per cent decrease in the annual average number of pedestrian casualties in school zones during the five year period after the rollout compared to the period before they were rolled out.

These results are encouraging, but they indicate we still have work to do to improve school zone safety. I welcome the focus and guidance provided by the Staysafe Committee on this important area of road safety.

The NSW Government will continue working to ensure school children can safely travel to and from school across the state.

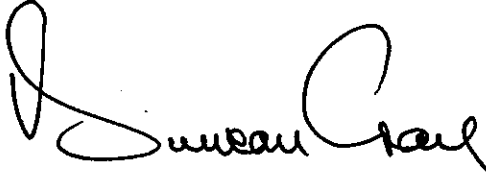
In the current term, the NSW Government has made a \$17 million commitment to fast track the rollout of flashing lights in school zones in NSW over four years to 2015. This includes both our original \$13 million commitment plus the recently announced \$4 million to roll out additional flashing lights in country regional school zones.

Please find attached the Government's position on each of the nineteen recommendations, which has been prepared by Transport for NSW in consultation with Roads and Maritime Services and Department of Education and Communities.

Transport for NSW will provide further progress reports and implementation details as requested.

I hope this information has been of assistance. For more information please contact Ms Margaret Prendergast, Acting General Manager, NSW Centre for Road Safety on (02) 8265 7510.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Duncan Gay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "G".

Duncan Gay MLC 24-9-19
Deputy Leader of Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Roads and Ports

NSW Government response to the recommendations in the Staysafe Inquiry into School Zone Safety report

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services provides more detailed figures regarding the cost of installation and maintenance of flashing light technology and how this treatment compares to alternative measures which could be adopted.

Position

Supported.

The School Zone Flashing Light system was selected after calling for an open Expression of Interest (EOI) by Roads and Maritime Services in 2006. The EOI was open to various technologies including flashing lights mounted on signs, mast arms and also in-pavement lighting. After evaluation of the EOI responses, six Alert Device solutions were chosen for a field trial. During the six month trial various aspects of the solutions were evaluated including effectiveness, public perception and reliability.

Following the results of this process, lights with flashing annulus and two lanterns were chosen as the basis of future deployments.

Below are details of the average installation costs in the 2011/12 financial year.

School Zone Flashing Light Costs

Average installation costs

Current Forward Estimate with no Contingency		
Per School Zone	\$	22,546
Per Sign	\$	11,241

Cost Breakdown:

Components	55%
Installation	22%
Site Surveys & Audits	5%
Project & Contract Management	17%

Maintenance costs

Total Estimate based on FY2011-12	\$	1,461,994
Per School Zone	\$	1,769
Per Sign	\$	882

Cost of Operations (Asset management, technical support, contract management, power and communications)

Total Estimate based on financial year 2011-12	\$	1,252,758
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Proposed Action

Detailed figures regarding the cost of installation and maintenance of flashing light technology are provided above. The costs have reduced considerably as the program has matured and management and support systems have developed.

Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) are currently investigating more cost effective options for flashing lights so that more schools will get lights across NSW. There are other technologies which may in the future improve drivers' awareness and compliance with speed limits, including variable speed limits. For example, Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) which informs the driver via visual and auditory feedback if they exceed the speed limit.

Recommendation 2

On the basis of the high degree of support for flashing light technology, the Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services considers imposing additional penalties for speeding in school zones governed by flashing lights. The revenue from such fines should be redirected to install additional flashing lights in NSW school precincts, particularly in school zones with non-standard operating times.

Position

Not supported.

Additional penalties for speeding in school zones currently exist, with 1 demerit point added to offences in school zones.

Flashing lights are an advisory sign and motorists cannot incur penalties related to the operation of flashing lights.

To generate greater transparency and public confidence in the enforcement camera program, the Government will now ensure that money raised from speed, red light and point-to-point cameras goes directly towards improving road safety. The NSW Community Road Safety Fund will be used to fund road safety initiatives such as enhanced high visibility police enforcement operations, engineering works and road safety education.

Proposed Action

Nil.

Recommendation 3

The Committee also recognises that flashing light technology constitutes the most effective warning system for alerting motorists to the presence and operational times of school zones and recommends that Roads and Maritime Services aims to install flashing lights at all school zones as part of a longer term child pedestrian safety strategy, based on a standardised and rigorous assessment of priority.

Position

Supported

Flashing lights are an effective warning system to alert motorists they are travelling in 40km/h school zone. Transport for NSW will also continue to monitor other technologies, to ensure that the best possible technology is utilised.

As at 30 June 2012 there were more than 870 school zones with Government funded flashing lights across the state, covering more than 1,020 of the 3,154 NSW schools. The majority of the school zones with flashing lights have been assessed as high risk, with many on high speed and multi lane roads. Other school zones have high visibility signage and dragon's teeth.

Proposed Action

To ensure that all NSW schools have access to flashing light technology, it is proposed to trial a more cost effective rollout of school zone flashing lights which could be installed on lower order and lower risk roads.

The Government has made a \$17 million commitment to fast track the rollout of flashing lights in school zones in NSW over four years to 2015. This includes both our original \$13 million commitment plus the recently announced \$4 million to roll out additional flashing lights in country regional school zones.

As at 31 July 2012 flashing lights had been installed in 872 school zones covering 1,032 schools in NSW. On 22 August 2012 the Government announced 179 school zones covering 189 schools that would receive flashing lights in the 2012/13 financial year. At the end of this year's rollout around one third of schools in NSW will have Government funded flashing lights.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services conducts a comprehensive cost benefit evaluation of pedestrian bridges in relation to alternative treatments to ensure that the high cost of construction can be justified on the basis of usage.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The RMS Pedestrian Bridges Program delivers grade-separated road crossings that make it easier and safer for pedestrians to walk to destinations on or near major roads, particularly schools.

Pedestrian bridge projects follow the same development processes as other major road construction projects, and delays are often caused by protracted land acquisition and extended public consultation through strategic, concept and detailed design stages.

This program started in 2001 and receives annual funding that allows the construction of one pedestrian bridge and early stage development of another each year. The program has delivered a total of 13 bridges. There are approximately 170 locations on a list of potential pedestrian bridges.

The RMS pedestrian program is intended to be subsidised by funding through public outdoor advertising.

One of the two most recent bridges to be constructed and opened to the public is at Haberfield on Parramatta Road, near Bland Street. This bridge provides safe and convenient access for students attending Haberfield Primary School, De La Salle College, Bethlehem College and St Joan of Arc School. The other recently completed bridge is at Ermington on Silverwater Road near South Street. This bridge provides safe and convenient access for students attending Rydalmere Primary School and Rydalmere East Primary School.

RMS has recently begun construction of a pedestrian bridge over Epping Road adjacent to Vimiera Road, Marsfield. This bridge will increase the safety of students at Epping Boys High School, currently accessed across eight traffic lanes, and improve the efficiency of signalised intersections on Epping Road. Construction will be completed in 2012.

RMS is also leading the various pre-construction planning, development, design and public consultation stages for a shared pedestrian / cycle bridge across Anzac Parade near the Sydney Cricket Ground, connecting the Moore Park sporting and entertainment precinct to the Sydney Boys High School and Sydney Girls High School. As well as improving students' safety, this bridge will facilitate pedestrian movement between Moore Park major events, Central railway station and car parking areas; and will improve cycling connections between the Eastern Suburbs and the City of Sydney's cycleway network (including Bourke Street).

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW sets strategic transport priorities, and as part of this accountability develops policy and principles for investment in transport projects. Transport for NSW is currently preparing revised Principles and Guidelines for Economic Appraisal of Transport Investment and Initiatives. This framework will ultimately cover active transport projects including pedestrian bridges. While such projects may be proposed primarily as a way of reducing safety risks to vulnerable road users, they can also deliver benefits for other road users, for instance by simplifying the operation of signalised intersections. Transport for NSW guidelines ensure that proposed pedestrian bridges represent a cost-effective solution in comparison to other, lower-cost interventions, using a detailed cost benefit evaluation.

RMS is currently developing a draft technical direction to assess the feasibility of a proposed stand-alone pedestrian bridge and then rank appropriate projects for available funding within the RMS Pedestrian Bridges Program. The technical direction proposes to evaluate each potential pedestrian bridge location against comprehensive criteria including the feasibility of alternate options. Other criteria includes: community and stakeholder interest; environment and heritage issues; existing amenity for pedestrians; pedestrian demand; pedestrian safety; road characteristics; vehicle volumes; adjacent land use; and, preliminary feasibility of a potential pedestrian bridge.

When RMS undertakes major road projects a total solution for customers is evaluated, and if warranted, a pedestrian bridge will be included in the overall project cost benefit calculation.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services conducts more evidence based research into the cost effectiveness and benefits of pedestrian fencing in reducing crash casualty risk.

Position

Support in-principle

There have been numerous crashes involving pedestrians where they have crossed the road at unsafe locations. To reduce the potential for pedestrians to be involved in crashes, pedestrians are redirected to safer crossing locations or to where pedestrian facilities have been provided by means of pedestrian fencing.

The Pedestrian Fencing Program, which forms part of Transport for NSW's Road Toll Response Package, is now in its third year. Locations are selected based on high risk crash locations and generally in consultation with the community, through the Local Council. Consideration is also given to the potential impact on the community and accessibility to retailers / businesses.

Proposed Action

The Pedestrian Fencing Program has an in-built evaluation tool which Transport for NSW will continue to utilise to assess the cost effectiveness and benefits of pedestrian fencing in reducing crash casualty risk.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that all revenue raised by school zone cameras be reinvested in specific road safety projects.

Position

Supported.

Proposed Action

On 1 June 2012 the NSW Government announced that revenue from speed cameras will be used to directly fund road safety programs through the establishment of the NSW Community Road Safety Fund.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services and NSW Police conduct further research into adherence to speed limits in school zones, with a view to stricter enforcement of the 40km/h restrictions.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The Centre for Road Safety conducts on road annual speed surveys in a sample of school zones across the state. These have been conducted since 2008 and measure compliance with the speed limit.

Speed surveys show that drivers travel at a speed which is much lower than the regular (non school zone) speed limit during school zone times and there has been a general downward trend in the proportion of drivers speeding in school zones.

There is also a high level of support for the use of fixed speed cameras in school zones.

There are 59 fixed speed cameras located in 39 school zones. It is also likely that as part of the expansion of the Mobile Speed Camera and Red Light Speed Camera Programs, a number of new locations will be in school zones; however this will be determined by the crash risk of the particular location.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW will consult with the NSW Police Force about further research into adherence to speed limits in school zones, and where school zones meet the criteria for mobile speed camera and red light speed camera (safety cameras) locations, cameras will be used to enforce the school zone speed limit.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services institute a more standardised and rigorous system of auditing all 3,154 school zones in NSW on a regular basis, thereby ensuring regular maintenance of signage and prompt remediation of degraded infrastructure.

Position

Supported in-principle.

There are approximately 10,000 School Zones across NSW. A typical school zone comprises 40km/h speed signs, 40km/h speed patches, dragon's teeth and some have flashing lights.

Current Maintenance Practice

Transport for NSW recommends that school principals inform the local council or their RMS Safety Around Schools Coordinator of any obscured, damaged or faded school zone signage including patches on local roads. The council will inform RMS of any work required. For issues on State roads, principals are advised to contact their RMS Regional Safety Around Schools Coordinator. The public may in some cases report deteriorated or damaged signage/patches. Also, RMS reports maintenance issues which are identified on their routine roadside signage inspections around the State. Accordingly, RMS will address maintenance issues as they are raised.

RMS carries out spot retro-reflectivity testing on some signs from time to time to determine if they are fit for use. In some cases, skid resistance testing has been undertaken on the patches to confirm their safety. However, no scheduled inspection/audit program exists for these signs. The current maintenance practice for the signs, patches and dragon's teeth are:

- *40km/h signs* are replaced when damaged and when they come to the end of their life. The average life varies from 5 to 10 years.
- *40km/h patches* are re-marked when RMS receives notification of poor quality patches.
- *Flashing lights* – RMS currently manages four supply contracts and one installation and maintenance contract for school zone flashing light signs.
- *The Dragon's teeth* program has been in place for a short time. These markings are normally in good condition.

The Central Management Computer (CMC) software developed in-house by RMS constantly monitors the condition of the school zone flashing light signs.

The current maintenance practice is based on the routine (scheduled) as well as corrective maintenance. All faults reported by CMC or others are analysed by RMS and if repair is needed, the maintenance contractor is authorised to attend the site and perform necessary remedial actions within the terms of the Service Level Agreement. Scheduled maintenance activities including battery replacement, cleaning etc., are planned based on the product specifications and historical data, and managed by RMS, and performed by the Contractor.

Currently, one full time asset engineer attends to the day to day operational and maintenance issues of school zone signs and with the support of the RMS engineering team attends to all aspects of maintenance / asset management of school zone signs. The actual level of service delivery compared against the possible level of service that is available between school zone hours (e.g. 8am – 9:30am; 2:30pm – 4pm) for Sydney region in Term 2, 2012 has been 99.4%, and for the other regions between 97.6% and 99.3%.

Action

RMS will investigate establishing and implementing a formalised inspection/audit program and a testing regime with retro-reflectivity and skid resistance testing. RMS, in conjunction with local councils, will also investigate improving the maintenance of 40km/h speed signs, 40km/h speed patches and dragon's teeth.

RMS is currently developing a fit for purpose maintenance strategy. Maintenance for flashing lights is currently being conducted at satisfactory levels.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Communities evaluates the adequacy of provision of Road Safety Education Consultants in schools, with a view to expanding the availability of these Consultants across all school regions.

Position

Supported in-principle

The Road Safety Education Program is fully funded by the NSW Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW. Currently, 8.4 (FTE) Senior Education Officer 1 consultants provide direct support to teachers and schools across the ten regions. New England Region is staffed two days per week (0.4 FTE) and Northern Sydney and Sydney Regions share a position (0.5 FTE per region).

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW will review the provision of Road Safety Education Consultants. This will include evaluation of resource availability in consultation with all three education sectors.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services undertake additional research to determine the effectiveness of the road safety education program for school children in modifying the behaviour of children, parents and carers around school precincts.

Position

Supported.

Transport for NSW has conducted independent evaluation/research of the NSW Schools Road Safety Education Program on a regular basis. These evaluations aim to provide information for future directions and identify improvements in the program.

In 2009 an independent and external evaluation assessed the penetration and recognition of road safety education by former and current students (1,612) in NSW schools in rural and metropolitan areas.

“An overwhelming majority of students recall material about road safety that has been covered in primary or secondary school; the key messages recalled are consistent with those highlighted in the NSW Centre for Road Safety’s educational resource materials” (Taverner Research 2009).

Almost all of the students interviewed showed evidence of exposure to key themes of the NSW School Road Safety Education Program materials with 98% recalling road safety experiences from secondary school and 97% from primary school.

The research demonstrated that students do remember key road safety education themes and messages that were a part of their educational experiences. The majority of road safety education material was recognised through this study as having been presented by the students’ classroom teachers. Their strong recall of key road safety messages was consistent with those highlighted in the educational school resources.

Additionally, Transport for NSW is constantly updating its Road Safety Education Program resources. It is currently revising the Move Ahead with Street Sense material for Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6, 11-12 year olds) which will increase interactivity and maintain today’s technologically advanced educational standard.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW will undertake further independent evaluation/research of the NSW Schools Road Safety Education Program to ensure improvement to the safety of NSW children, both around schools and more broadly outside school precincts where most child pedestrian incidents occur.

Recommendation 11

The Committee reiterates views expressed in previous reports and recommends that appropriately qualified and experienced road safety practitioners augment the current teaching of road safety as part of the school syllabus alongside classroom teachers.

Position

Partially supported.

The delivery of the curriculum in schools is the mandate of the education sectors (NSW Department of Education & Communities, Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools).

The decision to access these programs is made by the individual schools. Transport for NSW is unable to endorse externally provided programs.

Many external agencies offer one off road safety events and support to schools. Schools make local decisions based on the needs of their students and community. It is important that external programs supplement the current Personal Development, Health and Physical Education road safety teaching and learning program, not replace it. Research indicates that teachers are best placed to deliver road safety education to students in schools, as they are trained educators and schools provide a structured network for the delivery of tailored learning.

Transport for NSW will continue to provide quality school educational resources and support teachers through professional development provided by qualified and experienced road safety education consultants.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW will provide a framework for schools to assist them identify appropriate external road safety practitioners to complement the school education program.

The Department of Education and Communities' Road Safety Education Program will continue to provide feedback and advice to external road safety programs. Professional learning is currently being developed and will be trialled in Term 3, 2012 for schools that choose to attend or engage one off road safety education service providers. This localised professional learning will provide the curriculum context and key considerations for using external providers to supplement road safety education teaching and learning programs.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education, through the Council of Australian Governments process, ensures that the proposed national curriculum adopts the NSW policy of mandatory road safety education for all students.

Position

Support in-principle

The NSW Board of Studies is responsible for implementing the Australian Curriculum framework and developing the syllabus for NSW. Road safety is a critical part of the Health and Physical Education Australian Curriculum syllabus.

Transport for NSW, through the Minister Roads and Ports, has requested the assistance of the Education Department in ensuring that road safety education continues to be a mandatory component for all NSW school students' studies, by advocating for its inclusion in the Australian Curriculum (Health and Physical Education) through appropriate channels (Department of Education and Communities and the NSW Board of Studies).

The Department of Education and Communities' Road Safety Education Program has provided detailed feedback through the Department's consultation processes in response to the Health and Physical Education Shaping Paper regarding the importance and place of road safety education in the Health and Physical Education curriculum. This has been done through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Proposed Action

The NSW Government will continue to advocate for mandatory road safety education in the Australian Curriculum (Foundation - Year 12).

Recommendation 13

The Committee reiterates previous recommendations in relation to the future operation of the Road Safety Officer Program and again recommends that the Program be maintained and expanded to provide greater certainty of employment for staff currently employed and to increase its effectiveness and reach across NSW council areas.

Position

Supported.

The NSW Local Government Road Safety Program has been in operation since 1992 and was reviewed by the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) in 2008, to determine its efficiency and effectiveness. Recommendations from an evaluation of a recent pilot of ARRB's recommendations are being carefully considered by Transport for NSW to assist in the development of an updated delivery model for the program. Road Safety Officers will continue to be an integral part of the Local Government Road Safety Program.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW supports the ongoing maintenance of the Local Government Road Safety Program and is currently finalising an enhanced model that will aim to increase the effectiveness and reach of the program across NSW local government areas.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services, in conjunction with local councils examine the feasibility of supporting school zone safety projects undertaken by Road Safety Officers by initiating an awards system to recognise significant road safety projects in school zones.

Position

Partially supported.

Transport for NSW supports the concept for an awards system for community based initiatives undertaken by Road Safety Officers rather than a specific awards system for school zone projects, as most school zone projects are delivered by Roads and Maritime Services, Council engineers and professional educators.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW is initiating the development of an awards system to recognise community based initiatives undertaken by Road Safety Officers in NSW.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services and the Department of Education and Communities investigate methods of improving the dissemination of school zone road rules and regulations to parents, carers and motorists utilising school zones and highlight this as part of driver education for licensing requirements.

Position

Supported.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW and RMS will collaborate with the Department of Education and Communities, Australian Independent Schools and Catholic Education Commission to develop suitable, appropriate processes to better disseminate relevant information to schools.

The road rules relating to schools zones are represented in the Road Users' Handbook (page 77). The handbook can be purchased at RMS motor registries or downloaded for free from the RMS website. In addition to the information in the handbook, RMS is currently developing a pamphlet reminding all roads users of important rules. School zone safety will be included in this new publication. With regards to new drivers, it is a requirement of the driving test that the test route include a school zone if one is in the local area.

Transport for NSW and RMS will work together to further enhance the content about school zone road rules in the Road User Handbook.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services review the existing guidelines surrounding its drop off and pick up initiative. The new guidelines should more accurately define the operation of the drop off area in question, standardise the practice across all NSW schools and be disseminated widely as part of existing road safety education initiatives in all schools.

Position

Supported in-principle.

The RMS drop off and pick up initiative was established in 2006. This initiative aims to provide parents and carers with a safe environment to drop off and pick up their children when driving them to and from school.

The drop off and pick up initiative utilises existing 'No Parking' areas at schools. The area, always on the school side of the road, provides a facility that is convenient for drivers and an environment that enhances children's safety. Parents and carers are able to legally drop off or pick up their children within a two minute timeframe while a volunteer adult supervisor assists the children into or out of the car.

Transport for NSW and RMS are not aware of the take up rate of this initiative among school communities as most are on local roads under the jurisdiction of the local council.

Proposed Action

Transport for NSW and RMS will review the guidelines to identify potential improvements.

Recommendation 17

The Committee further recommends that the specific rules and penalties associated with offences in school zones should be publicised in a public safety education campaign developed by Roads and Maritime Services. This campaign should also highlight the success and benefits of the operation of school zones in reducing crash severity and improving pedestrian safety.

Position

Supported in-principle.

Proposed Action

As part of its ongoing school zone campaign, Transport for NSW will identify whether any further changes are required to highlight the issues.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that Roads and Maritime Services conducts an evaluation of alternative school zone hours of operation based on data available from other Australian jurisdictions, with a view to assessing the effectiveness of altering the operation of school zone hours in NSW.

Position

Not supported.

Transport for NSW does not support a broadening of school zone hours to times when students are not accessing schools. The current approach of standardised times at the start and end of gazetted school days has seen road safety gains made in school zones across NSW. Creating alternative school zone operating hours may create a risk of driver complacency and reduced compliance at key times when school students are about because for the majority of the time, drivers would not see children at these locations.

Proposed Action

Nil

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that a coordination committee comprising the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the Department of Local Government, Roads and Maritime Services and the Department of Education and Communities be established to jointly plan and develop a coordinated management strategy for school zone safety in areas designated for future schools.

Position

Partially supported.

School agencies already must comply with a range of guidelines and procedures when applying for a development application to construct a new school.

Proposed Action

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Education recently met and agreed to develop a Planning Guidelines for Schools. The Department of Local Government, Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services will also contribute to a coordinated management approach for school zone safety in areas designated for future schools.