

Personal submission on Roads Act 1993 – Issues Paper Review

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I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Issues Paper.

1. There is currently poor compliance with the Road User Space Allocation Policy by both state and local road authorities. I recommend legislating this policy through the Act.
2. There is currently poor compliance with the Safe Systems Approach by both state and local road authorities. I recommend legislating this approach through the Act.
 - a. The Act should recognise that, while road safety is a shared responsibility, some have greater responsibility than others, as outlined below.

Highest responsibility	Road authorities who have the knowledge, skills and authority to design roads and streets, and set speed limits, in a way that minimises the likelihood and consequences of crashes.
	Motor vehicle operators who are: <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) operating heavy and dangerous machines that can easily kill, even at low speed;b) required to be trained and licensed;c) not allowed to have alcohol or drugs in their system;d) aged over 16;e) (except for motorcycle riders) protected by a vehicle body, crumple zones, air bags, seat belts and other vehicle safety features.
Lowest responsibility	Pedestrians and other vulnerable road users who: <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) may be children whose brains aren't fully developed;b) may be adults in control of multiple children;c) may have a cognitive impairment;d) may have a vision impairment, etc.

3. I recommend reform of the Local Traffic Committee system to delegate greater authority to councils to improve local streets in line with local community wishes, e.g.,
 - a. Ability to set lower posted speed limits.
 - b. Ability to demand changes to signalised intersection design and operation to give greater priority to active transport.
 - c. Ability to close streets temporarily for community events/traffic-free days.
4. I recommend an anti-discrimination clause with a requirement for inclusive design.
5. I recommend that the Act needs to explicitly prohibit road authorities from using “increasing/maintaining motor vehicle traffic flow” as a justification for design decisions for local streets - noting that:
 - a. motor vehicle flow/movement is not the primary purpose of a local street.
 - b. there is a strong association between traffic demand/volume and road capacity (1). I.e., road/intersection capacity increases tend to cause an increase in traffic volume, and vice versa.

(1) Duranton G, Turner MA. The fundamental law of road congestion: Evidence from US cities. American Economic Review. 2011 Oct 1;101(6):2616-52.