

# Implementing Safe System Treatments in NSW School Zones

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## Abstract

Children's road safety is one focus of working towards zero, and school zones are provided in NSW wherever a school has a direct road access point.

NSW has implemented a suite of school zone safety treatments via a series of targeted programs, since school zones were implemented for all NSW schools in 2003. As a result, school zones are now one of the safest areas of the NSW road network. Fewer crashes now occur in NSW school zones, and research indicates that drivers take particular care.

### Safe System treatments in NSW school zones

#### *40km/h Speed Limit*

A 40km/h speed limit applies from 8:00-9:30am and 2:30-4:00pm in school zones on school days. There are more than 3,000 schools across NSW, and 50 school zone speed cameras complement police enforcement.

#### *Road Environment Treatments*

Consistent, high-visibility treatments are in place in all school zones. There are now more than 6,000 school zone flashing lights in place, as well as dragon's teeth road markings and 40km/h signage.

The NSW Government has also recently completed a safety infrastructure program which funded local councils to install infrastructure like raised crossings, kerb blisters, pedestrian refuges and safety fencing. 140 safety infrastructure projects were completed between 2016 – 2018.

#### *Behavioural Treatments*

A variety of driving and parking offences attract a higher fine and additional demerit point when committed in a school zone. Such penalties apply for offences including speeding, double parking and illegal U-turns, and seven additional stopping and parking offences were recently added to this penalty framework.

State-wide radio and press reinforce awareness of school zone dates, times and demerit points throughout the year. There are also crossing supervisors at approximately 800 pedestrian and children's crossings.

#### *Vehicle Treatments*

The Centre for Road Safety has also developed the Speed Advisor smartphone application, which alerts drivers when they are entering an operational school zone.

The app is available free of charge for Apple and Google smart phone users, and has been downloaded to almost 180,000 devices in total.

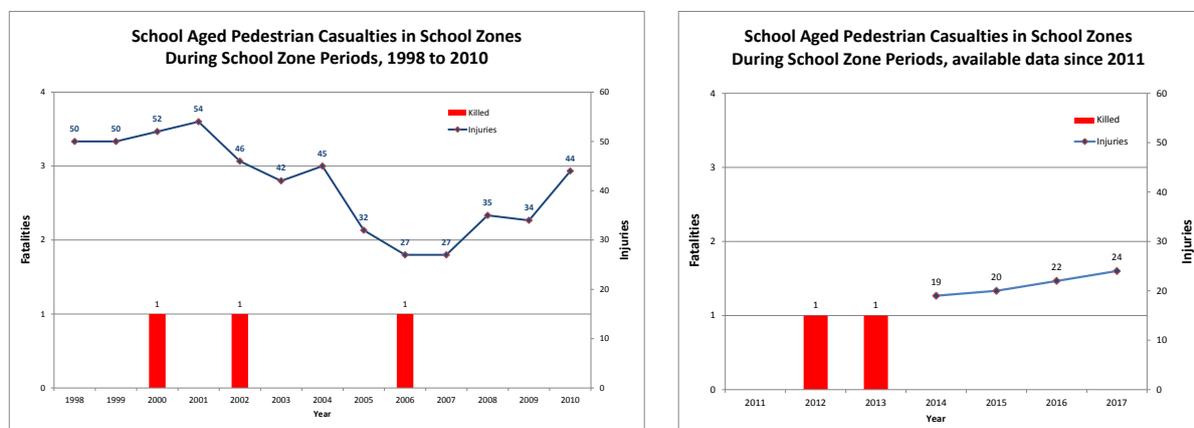
### NSW Safe System in School Zones

<p><b>Safe Roads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic calming treatments</li> <li>- Enhanced visibility:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Flashing lights</li> <li>o Dragon’s teeth</li> <li>o Signage</li> <li>o Pedestrian crossings</li> <li>o Fencing</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Pedestrian bridges</li> <li>- Protected bus stops</li> <li>- Kiss and drop zones</li> <li>- Consistent look and feel</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safe People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased penalties             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Speeding</li> <li>o Double parking</li> <li>o U-turns</li> </ul> </li> <li>- School Crossing Supervisors</li> <li>- School education programs</li> <li>- Safety campaigns</li> <li>- Safety resources (e.g. bike helmets)</li> <li>- Policies for managing dedicated access points</li> <li>- Staggered school start times</li> <li>- Police &amp; council enforcement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safe Speeds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 40km/h (8-9:30am &amp; 2:30-4pm)</li> <li>- Police enforcement</li> <li>- 50 x school zone speed cameras</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safe Vehicles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speed advisor smartphone app             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ‘Entering active school zone’ announcements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### These Treatments have been Effective

A prior review of child pedestrian casualties pre and post implementation of school zones, found that child pedestrian casualties (killed and injured) decreased from more than 50 per annum prior to 2001 to around 30 per annum between 2005 and 2009.

Recent data indicate that there are now approximately 20 child pedestrian casualties in active school zones each year.



**Figure 1: Child pedestrian casualties in school zone locations.**

*Note: Data from 1998-2010 is from a prior study, derived by overlaying crash data and speed zones for a sample of NSW school zones. More recently, NSW injury data has been coded within school zones from 2014.*

The Centre for Road Safety also completed research in 2017 which identified that in general, few drivers consider the unpredictability of others. However, in school zones, drivers do consider the unpredictability of children, and focus on other road users.

The research also identified that drivers generally perceive that there is some flexibility around the road rules, particularly around the need for absolute compliance with speed limits. However, in school zones drivers take compliance more seriously.

**Reference:** Ipsos (2017) Deep Diving NSW Drivers’ Road Safety Attitudes and Behaviours