

Workshop to discuss the National Road Safety Research Strategy

*A workshop of the National Health and Medical Research Council
and
the Australasian College of Road Safety*



Australian Government

**National Health and
Medical Research Council**



21 & 22 February 2013

**The Great Hall, University House, Australian National
University
Canberra**

Workshop Report

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Executive Summary

On 21 and 22 February 2013, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) hosted a workshop aimed at developing a national road safety research strategy. Forty-five stakeholders from around Australia including economists, policy makers, lobbyists, health professionals, researchers and scientists, met to discuss a research strategy, determining national research priorities in line with the current National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 and the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. A list of workshop participants is at [Appendix 1](#).

The research strategy aims to provide a high quality and effective framework for efficient research, development and evaluation activities, with the longer term goal of decreasing the rate of fatalities and injuries on Australia's roads.

Day 1 focussed on the high level framework of the research strategy and opportunities for implementing and monitoring. Day 2 was planned to refine the details of a research strategy and plan for implementation. Representatives from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and NHMRC presented at the workshop and provided information around funding in this area, including different funding schemes and how researchers could apply. Key researchers provided background on the 1997 National Road Safety Research and Development Strategy, including what has been learnt and what a new research strategy could look like.

Implementation and clear governance arrangements are integral to the lasting success of a research strategy, as stakeholders reported the lack of any monitoring and implementation strategies were major flaws in the 1997 Research Strategy. The Department of Infrastructure and Transport presented governance information and commented on the changing landscape in this sector. The remainder of the workshop involved interactive sessions where small groups discussed the research strategy, potential ownership of the strategy, what resources would be needed for ongoing maintenance, where the funding opportunities may be, and how the strategy could be monitored and evaluated over time.

Participants also discussed research priorities and the current issues and gaps in the road safety sector. Examples of suggested priorities include the economical impact/costs of accidents, post-crash response, road and vehicle design, and safety. Issues and gaps included data, funding opportunities, alternate modes of transport, and influences outside the transport system, communication, community acceptance, research methodology and capacity building.

The desired outcomes of the workshop were to identify the barriers, gaps and opportunities for research in the road safety sector in order to improve the coordination and concerted promotion of road safety research efforts across Australia.

The main outcomes of the workshop included agreement and consensus on the need for a research framework that could be monitored and updated on an annual basis – possibly at the annual ACRS conference. Outcomes also included the need to look closely at implementation of the framework, including the possibility of a joint NHMRC/NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust Fellowship and a NHMRC Partnership Centre.

The core of the framework was discussed by attendees, and a planning group representative of the variety of stakeholders was established to further develop and advise on the

consultation needs of this research framework. NHMRC and ACRS will work with the drafting group and provide secretariat support to finalise the framework and plan for implementation.

The Office of the National Health and Medical Research Council (ONHMRC) and ACRS have considered the information described at the workshop, and in consultation with workshop participants, developed this workshop report.

Box 1: Summary of key actions from the Workshop

1. Develop a Framework for Road Safety Research in Australia, rather than a research strategy. While similar, a framework document could be used more widely and does not necessarily require agreement or ownership by any other organisation than those represented at the workshop. However, the Framework would be circulated widely for comments and suggestions.
2. Establish a volunteer 'Drafting Group' with secretariat support from NHMRC and ACRS, tasked with drafting the Research Framework by mid-April. The drafting of the Framework would be based on preliminary work on the Research Strategy, the Survey results and the Workshop Report, as well as feedback and consultation with other interested stakeholders.

The following participants volunteered to be part of the Drafting Group:

- Barry Watson
- Ann Williamson
- Jeremy Woolley
- Judith Charlton
- Shaun Lennard
- Michael Tziotis

Following the workshop, Julian Lyngcoln also volunteered to be part of the group. This group is open to other volunteers.

3. NHMRC and ACRS to provide secretariat support to the group and circulate the draft Research Framework for comment. Broad circulation of the Framework is recommended to encourage commitment from a wide range of stakeholders.
4. Present the Framework at national conferences such as the:
 - The Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing & Education Conference in Brisbane on 28-30 August 2013,
 - ACRS Conference in Adelaide 7-8 November 2013, and
 - National Road Safety Strategy reviews that are scheduled for 2013.
5. The President of ACRS, Mr Lauchlan McIntosh to send a letter to all stakeholders seeking their support for the Framework. Mr McIntosh will promote the Framework and inform stakeholders that its inclusion in the National Strategy, as part of the decade of action on road safety, will assist research funding organisations, provide better collaboration between researchers and lead to reduced road crashes, injuries and deaths.
6. Communicate the benefits of the Research Framework to national and state politicians prior to the next election. The ACRS can write to all relevant politicians, demonstrating that we have the backing of all stakeholders (by documenting all stakeholders who have participated in the development of this Framework).

The Workshop

Background

Stakeholders in the road safety sector have indicated that research efforts in this area are somewhat fragmented and suggested opportunities exist to improve the coordination and strategic direction of Australian research funding to complement the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 (National Strategy).

The idea to develop a National Road Safety Research Strategy to underpin the National Strategy came about after discussions held by the ACRS National Executive Committee, many of whom are directors of major road safety research institutions in our region. Subsequent consultation with NHMRC at a senior level led to the agreement to progress this initiative.

Reducing road trauma is a preventive activity for health care, with the potential to significantly relieve financial and social pressure on our public health system. The value of a shared goal to ensure road safety research in our region is as effective and efficient as possible, and is aligned with the aims of the National Strategy, is therefore inherent in this initiative.

Due to the broad ranging causes and consequences of road trauma, development of a National Road Safety Research Strategy requires input from a wide range of organisations. To ensure the widest possible consideration of views about the strategic direction of road safety research in Australia, NHMRC in collaboration with ACRS, convened this workshop to facilitate the development of a research strategy to improve the coordination and concerted promotion of road safety research efforts across Australia.

Purpose

To facilitate the development of a National Road Safety Research Strategy to ensure high quality, effective and efficient research, development and evaluation activities, with the longer term aim of sustainably decreasing rates of fatalities and injuries on Australia's roads.

Workshop Objectives

1. To draft a National Road Safety Research Strategy
2. Determine national research priorities in line with the current National Strategy that encompasses 4 pillars of road safety, and the over-arching UN Decade of Action
3. Begin planning for implementation of the Research Strategy including identifying:
 - The relevant funding bodies,
 - Strategies for funding bodies to include the Research Strategy in their funding policy, and
 - Administrative processes required to support the Research Strategy to ensure its longevity
4. Bring together all relevant stakeholders and end users into the current road safety research space.

The 2-day Program for the workshop is at [Appendix 2](#). In addition to a day focussed on the high level framework of the Research Strategy and opportunities for implementing and monitoring, NHMRC and ACRS planned a half day to refine and flesh out the details of the Research Strategy, and plan for implementation with those who wished to participate.

Workshop Facilitators

The workshop was co-facilitated by Professors Don Aitkin and Murray Lampard.

Professor Don Aitkin AO is a writer, strategist and consultant. He has been Chair of the NRMA/ACT Road Safety Trust since 2002 and before that chaired the committee that devised Road Ready in the ACT. He served as Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Canberra from 1991 to 2002, and as Vice-President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee in 1994 and 1995. Professor Aitken was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1998.

Professor Murray Lampard APM is currently the Independent Chairman of the Road Safety Council of Western Australia. In 2008 he retired from the Western Australia Police at the rank of Deputy Police Commissioner and brought a wealth of both strategic and operational road safety experience to the workshop. He is the Chairman of the Defence Reserves Support Council of Western Australia and Chairman of the Child Health Promotion Research Centre at Edith Cowan University.

Road Safety Stakeholders

To better appreciate the large number of stakeholders working in the road safety sector, ONHMRC and ACRS developed a Road Safety Stakeholder Mud Map ([Appendix 3](#)). This attempts to illustrate the relationship between stakeholders and the National Strategy. As the landscape in this sector is undergoing change, please note that this may need updating at a later stage.

Australia's National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport, through the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure, released its ten year National Road Safety Strategy (National Strategy) in 2011. The National Road Safety Strategy is based on Safe System principles. Its overarching aim is that no person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia's roads. The National Road Safety Strategy has four pillars that focus the strategies and activities for the decade:

- Safe Roads,
- Safe Vehicles,
- Safe Speeds, and
- Safe People.

The National Strategy represents the commitment of federal, state and territory governments to an agreed set of national road safety goals, objectives and action priorities. It sets out a range of high-level directions and priority actions to drive national road safety performance to the end of 2020, and also lays the groundwork for longer-term goals and aspirations. The Prime Minister praised the National Strategy as marking a 'turning point for global road safety, (working towards) sparing people from avoidable deaths and injuries that cause so much anguish and cost for our communities'.

Workshop participants noted that although the National Strategy does not detail specific actions and explicitly say research, there are innumerable actions which say explore, investigate, and further develop, which is code for research.

Workshop Proceedings

Introduction

Mr Lauchlan McIntosh AM, President, Australasian College of Road Safety, opened proceedings and stressed how improving road safety to further reduce unnecessary road trauma in Australia is essential. Despite Australia's respectable record in reducing road trauma based on high quality research, our world ranking has slipped and we are not reducing death and injuries from road crashes at the rates forecast in the National Strategy. He said while we often know what to do, we do need research to find more solutions so we can save lives and injuries.

Professor Don Aitkin emphasised the importance of collaboration and partnerships, stating that a research strategy must be inclusive of all stakeholders, encouraging players to own the problem and take responsibility of improving the problem.

Professor Murray Lampard highlighted the importance of a whole-of-Australia response, noting that on average 25 people across Australia die every week on the road and road trauma is everyone's business. He highlighted the significant experience and skills of all workshop participants, and the ideal opportunity presented for all to make a significant contribution.

Setting the Scene

Australian Research Council (ARC) and NHMRC research funding in the sector

Presentation by Professor Marian Simms, Executive Director, ARC

Professor Simms outlined the process of applying for specific research grants at ARC, stating there are 22 disciplinary areas ranging from statistics to literature, culture and religious studies, and everything in between. Although ARC does not have a field of research specifically dedicated to road safety, research in this area is picked up through Discovery projects that include projects such as improvements in drivers' speed and management behaviour and the linkages to reducing the cost of accidents from sleep medication. In 2012 there were approximately 8,000 applications from individual researchers; however, there is an up-hill trend showing the number of approvals dropping in relation to the number of applications received.

Presentation by Mr Chris Thorpe, Assistant Director, NHMRC

Mr Thorpe outlined the variety of NHMRC funding schemes including project grants, program grants and targeted calls for research. Although NHMRC is not a major funder of road safety research, it is interested in the health and medical issues involved with driver

behaviour. Although grants are competitive, he encouraged participants to look at the NHMRC website and explore the various avenues that are available.

Governance: what is the current landscape of the road safety sector in Australia?

Presentation by Mr John Goldsworthy, Director, Road Safety Policy, Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Mr Goldsworthy outlined some of the national governance arrangements currently in place and highlighted that the landscape of the road safety sector is undergoing change. The Australian federated system, comprising the Australian Government, eight state and territory governments and 600 local councils, brings some challenges. Under Australia's constitution, road safety is the province of state and territory governments which are responsible for roads, transport regulation, broad traffic laws enforcement, driver licensing arrangements, vehicle registration, road maintenance and road safety education. A number of important national regulatory processes are in place with the agreement of state governments including the Motor Vehicle Standards Act, the National Transport Commission, Australian road rules, vehicle standards/rules, heavy vehicle driver fatigue, the Road Safety Remuneration Act, work, health and safety and Australian consumer law.

The key body for national governance arrangements is the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure (SCoTI), supported by the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials Committee (TiSOC) which is responsible for coordinating and delivering national road safety initiatives. They are supported by two peak bodies, the National Transport Commission and Austroads.

Feedback from peers: Pre-workshop survey results

Presentation by Professor Barry Watson, Director, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, Queensland

Professor Watson referred to the survey that was developed to help inform discussions at the workshop. The survey was sent to approximately 60 road safety stakeholders in early January 2013 to elicit information about their organisation and their views on road safety research. The Pre-Workshop Survey Results Report is at [Appendix 4](#) and summarises the information gathered.

Brief history of the 1997 National Road Safety Research and Development Strategy

Presentation by Professor Barry Watson, Director, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, Queensland

Professor Watson referred participants to the previous research strategy, the National Road Safety Research and Development Strategy, produced in 1994 and updated in 1997. Although this Strategy has not been maintained, it is still highly relevant and has been used as a starting point to draft a new research strategy.

Draft New Research Strategy – Overview

Presentation by Professor Ann Williamson, Director and NHMRC Senior Research Fellow, Transport and Road Safety (TARS) Research, School of Aviation, University of New South Wales

Professor Williamson discussed the structure of the draft road safety research strategy, including the vision, goals, strategies, actions and research priorities, and definitions of each:

- Goals: the objectives set to ensure that the strategic program is effective,
- Strategies: the methods and approaches proposed in order to achieve the goals,
- Actions: the activities that are needed to achieve the strategies, and
- Research Priorities: specific topics and areas of research that are identified as priorities (these may take the form of an Implementation plan which will be changed on a more regular basis).

Professor Williamson stressed the importance of a new group being involved to keep the strategy active.

Workshop Session One: Draft Research Strategy

Professor Lampard opened the session emphasising the need for research to be global, outcomes-based, delivered on time and on budget, and with capacity to influence policy and legislation. Workshop participants broke into six table groups to discuss the overall structure and scope of the draft research strategy, including the vision, goals and strategies.

The following general comments were received:

- It is essential that the research strategy:
 - is innovative, ambitious and forward-thinking,
 - clearly articulates the purpose,
 - clearly identifies the target audience - determining where the strategy should be targeted – i.e. namely government, funders, non-government organisations and other stakeholders,
 - sets the agenda around big research goals such as the reduction of road trauma,
 - contains clear definitions which are universally understood,
 - encourages transparency in research,
 - includes tangible actions and timeframes – immediate, medium term and aspirational, and
 - be an enabling document and a point of reference for all jurisdictions.
- The research strategy must also include:
 - **An international perspective:** it is important that the strategy links to global research, and explores comparative visions of international research organisations,
 - **Interaction with broader health issues and other influences on road safety:** the strategy needs to involve all stakeholders and seek expertise outside the road safety sector (e.g. urban design, public transport, rural and remote users, community/consumers) and identify how we can better interact with these influences. Participants agreed that many agencies/individuals are

interested in doing something, but don't have the big picture road map. It is important to give other domains some direction to make sure their research is targeted to meet our safety goals, and

- **Alignment with other national strategies:** such as cycling, railway level crossings, preventative health strategies, binge drinking and Australian work, health and safety frameworks.
- Participants agreed that further exploration is required on:
 - Policy determinants - although this is a research strategy, the link to policy-makers, i.e. those that can make road safety happen once the research is done, is essential. The new strategy must strike a balance between research and policy outcomes, as the 1997 Strategy was too research-focused,
 - commitment to value, and
 - how the jurisdictions will connect with the research strategy.

More specific comments relating to the vision and goals include:

Vision

The vision outlined in the draft Research Strategy states:

A research strategy that ensures high quality, high impact, effective and efficient research, development and evaluation activities and funding to sustain it in order to support the goals, strategies and activities of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.

The following comments were received from workshop participants:

- The vision should:
 - underpin the goals of the National Strategy but also reflect any other road safety strategies (e.g. state-based) in Australia,
 - be more ambitious, aspirational, and provide a more long-term perspective that supports the vision of no deaths or injuries – it could mention reducing road trauma and aspiring to reductions equal to the best in the world,
 - be concrete, measurable and priority-driven,
 - relate to output rather than associated with a national strategy - expand and extend the focus beyond the life and scope of the National Strategy to also capture a vision for future research. A better approach could be to align the vision with the 'zero target' concept that 'no person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia's roads', rather than direct alignment with the National Strategy,
 - encourage community interest in road safety, and
 - support the UN decade of action for road safety.
- 'High impact' needs to be better explained. It is not clear whether this relates to the bottom line of reducing deaths and serious injury.
- Suggested re-wording: change the word 'ensures' to 'facilitates'.
- **Consideration should be given to including a set of "Guiding Principles" in the document, in order to highlight key strategic and contextual issues underpinning the development of the Framework. Among these issues could be the need for the**

Framework to link to both national and international road safety strategies, while still adopting a long-term perspective to our research. These “Guiding Principles” could also be informed by the Strategic Issues identified in the previous strategy (which included Co ordination, Information Management, Setting Priorities, Utilisation of Research, Research into Improved Management Systems, Developing Expertise, Resourcing, and Evaluation).

- These guiding principles represent underpinning values that the goals need to achieve.

Suggested Principles for consideration of the Framework

Any research in this field should:

- Be problem oriented and focussed,
- Complement the National Road Safety Strategy,
- Work with policy makers to ensure translation,
- Build on the work of others, including that with an international perspective,
- Where possible, cooperate or assist with other international research efforts,
- Support the United Nations ‘Decade of Action’,
- Engage the community (towards community ownership),
- Consider all the harm associated with crashes (not just fatalities), and
- Commit to evaluating all activities.

Goals

Participants noted that the goals should be strategic, clearly defined, focus on priority-driven research and concentrate on return on investment in view of scarce resources.

The following comments were received for each of the Goals outlined in the draft Research Strategy:

Goal 1: Road safety research that is progressive, innovative, responsive and relevant to the road safety needs of Australia

- ‘Road safety needs of Australia’ should be broadened to demonstrate a more international perspective.

Goal 2: Road safety research that is nationally coordinated and integrated with programs and strategies across jurisdictions and other community sectors

- ‘Programs and strategies’ should be changed to ‘research strategies and programs’ – there could be an issue in that programs are already running and to get national coordination would be a bit ambitious.
- Areas outside transport should be incorporated.
- In-line with this goal, a register should be set up of current research to promote data sharing.

Goal 3: Road safety research that is based on the best available evidence and analytical techniques with priorities set in the most effective way

- Inconsistency in this goal written on page 3 and what is written in the table on page 4 - 'best available evidence' rather than 'best available information sources'.
- It is important that this goal accommodates emerging issues.
- This goal could also include 'and best research methodologies' after 'best available evidence'.

Goal 4. Road safety research that is adequately resourced in terms of expertise and funding, including value for money.

- A clear definition of 'adequately resourced' is required.
- The word 'management' is missing – often projects are well resourced but do not have appropriate management and therefore achieve poor outcomes.
- Suggested rewording: Road safety research that is appropriate in terms of expertise and management and funding that delivers value for money.
- This goal should emphasise the importance of funding projects at a high level and to conduct research more thoroughly - not to encourage getting the cheapest cost per research project.
- It is important to identify where we can get the best value for money in terms of road safety initiatives, to look further than just research and involve stakeholders even if they cannot commit funds.

Goal 5. Road safety research that is peer reviewed, communicated promptly, disseminated widely and promoted to encourage translation into policy and practice.

- This goal is not well defined and could be split into two goals - 'peer reviewed' needs to be highlighted separately – perhaps included into goal three.
- Any use of tax dollars should be made public, however, not all research is funded by government, and this research also needs to be captured.
- Suggested rewording: change 'disseminated widely' to 'made publicly available'.
- A definition of 'disseminated' is required.

Workshop Session Two: Governance and Implementation

Professor Warwick Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, NHMRC, addressed workshop participants and discussed the new 2013-15 NHMRC Strategic Plan, stating that for the first time, NHMRC has committed to specific actions within each National Health Priority Area, of which *Injury Prevention and Control* is one. NHMRC is Australia's leading expert body for supporting health and medical research; for developing health advice for the Australian community, health professionals and governments; and for providing advice on ethical behaviour in health care and in the conduct of health and medical research.

Professor Anderson noted that Members of the Council of NHMRC include the chief medical officers from each state and territory and that there are mechanisms within Council to develop a case for action and reach into the funded research community to build a case. These could include issuing public statements and calls for priority-driven research or

advising national or state governments directly. Professor Anderson commented that there are ways NHMRC could influence public policy. The process can take a while but the Council does consult, base what it does on evidence and ensure that all parts of the Australian community have a say. He highlighted that the Council of NHMRC has been happy to co-host this workshop.

International Perspectives:

A video clip presentation was played to participants – *A Press Club Address by Brian Schmidt and Alan Finkel – Research and Innovation: Australia's Global Influence*.

Workshop participants discussed whether there were international examples of road safety research strategies and concluded that not many existed as most other countries tend to integrate research more into national strategies. Participants agreed that research carried out in Australia should be made available to other organisations overseas, and that the strategy needs to encourage local researchers to work with international researchers.

Professor Aitkin introduced the second workshop session and emphasised the importance of collaboration and partnerships, providing an example of the difference between Australia and Sweden. Participants then broke into six table groups to discuss:

- Governance – who should 'own' the research strategy
- Resourcing – what is needed to ensure adequate resources to achieve the aim of the Research Strategy and ongoing governance and maintenance?
- Where are the funding opportunities?
- What do we need to do to ensure translation of research findings in this sector?
- Monitoring and evaluation – how will we know if the strategy has been effective and over what time frame?

The following comments were received:

Governance/ownership

There were differing views on who should own the strategy. Some participants thought a level of independence is important, although there was concern that an independent group could become marginalised. Others believe that a strong government link with some sort of a management panel is important and that the link needs to be maintained by the people who can implement research. Some participants commented on the need to attract groups that are interested in road safety and willing to pay for it, suggesting linking the strategy to industry groups with the potential for them to provide funding.

Most participants agreed that, given the limited resources, lack of appetite in government for new bodies, and the number of different groups/committees that are established and then discontinued, setting up another group would not be a good idea. Rather, we should explore ownership by an already established group that represents government, independent stakeholders and researchers.

Other comments included:

- The current governance structure is not ideal – road safety governance is currently fluid and we need to work with the different road agencies,
- It is important to protect the links between government agencies and the research centres,
- A definition of 'own' is required - ownership is different to monitoring and implementing. Groups involved in each of these will have different roles to play,
- A diverse group of people benefit from the research strategy and a basic government model does not support the wide range of stakeholders, and
- International models should be explored, such as big studies in the UK, USA and Europe that involve a number of universities. The theft reduction council has been highly successful and could also be a good model to explore.

Participants commented that the group who owns the Research Strategy needs to:

- Include stakeholders who need outcomes - jurisdictions, policy-makers, researchers, clinicians and consumer groups,
- Ensure that the research strategy prospers - it is important to identify who wants to own it,
- Be an independent body funded by government which cuts across political and state boundaries,
- Link strongly with government – the best vehicle for the link would be for buy-in from Ministers, and
- Report to the National Road Safety Executive Group (NRSEG) and include external organisations.

Resourcing

There were differing views on resourcing and what is needed to ensure adequate resources to achieve the aim of the research strategy and ongoing governance and maintenance. Most participants agreed that this is a challenging area as there is no magic pot of money. Some participants considered that more money and resources need to be made available and that this should be provided by government. Others believed it is important to explore alternative and expanded sources of funding, and to look more broadly into the more affluent parts of the private sector (such as insurance companies).

Other comments included:

- There needs to be an ability to leverage government funds to build big partnerships with reasonable budgets,
- Collaboration is important - the more collaboration that can be achieved, the more likely it is to unlock funding for projects. Many of the jurisdictions are conducting research, so increasing collaboration across jurisdictions would be valuable; national collaboration would allow large scope projects and perhaps some research in areas which may not otherwise be tackled; and bringing together funders and research groups would be beneficial,
- A more systematic focus on research is required,
- More linkage and partnership funds with three or five year grants would be beneficial, and
- Development of a road safety research register, to make sure existing resources are utilised.

1997 National Road Safety Research and Development Strategy

The previous research strategy, the National Road Safety Research and Development Strategy, produced in 1994 and updated in 1997, has not been maintained but is still valued by most of the participants.

Participants agreed that implementation and clear governance and monitoring arrangements are integral to the lasting success of the research strategy, as the lack of implementation strategies was a major flaw in the 1997 Strategy.

Monitoring/evaluation

Participants agreed that there is a need for measurable goals to evaluate the success of the research strategy, and that ongoing evaluation of the strategy's success is required.

Suggested measurable goals include:

- More information sharing and less duplication,
- More/larger collaborative projects,
- More research translated into practice,
- More funding for road safety research projects,
- Increased capacity building,
- Projects in line with the strategy,
- Stable governance structure, and
- Recognition of the strategy in industry.

Participants agreed that it will be important to reference the strategy, keep it updated and ensure there are mechanisms in place to refresh it. They also suggested to:

- Coordinate an annual forum to develop research priorities and discuss research undertaken, and
- Hold annual or biannual meetings to review the research strategy.

Workshop Session Three: Research Priorities and Strategic Issues/Gaps

Participants split into six groups to discuss research priorities and strategic issues/gaps, and the following comments were received:

Research priorities

Participants suggested the following research priorities (defined as specific topics and areas of research that are identified as priorities):

- Economical impact/costs of accidents (including societal costs),
- Post-crash response,
- Vehicle design and safety – to help determine how and why Australia has fallen behind international best practice and how we can recapture momentum and bring our fleets back up to the best in the world,

- Safe system framework – need to look across the safe system for broader counter measures and explore the role of the different pillars of the safe system within crashes,
- Understanding intelligent transport systems and electronic ‘gadgetry’ both for roads and vehicles and how that will impact lives over the next decade, and
- Other non-road safety specific research, such as geography and urban design, which can also contribute to road safety issues.

Participants suggested that the Austroads budget could be targeted more closely to research priorities, and proposed that as a starting point for prioritising research, a priority framework could be developed in the form of a matrix comparing the size of the data gap (or problem), its impact on health dollars and its ability to be translated into policy. Another idea was to create a register of existing and past research so all stakeholders could easily see what is being studied now as well as what has been undertaken in the past.

Other strategic issues or gaps

The following issues/gaps were also raised as important to consider in the development and implementation of the research strategy:

Data

Participants all agreed that data harmonisation is an important issue for the future – this refers to the collection of and access to comparable and interpretable data across the broad range of stakeholders, and data linkage and bottom up data that creates a closer link with surgeons and hospital data. There is a need for core shared datasets and to conduct national projects with data collected in all jurisdictions, rather than just the areas which could afford to contribute funds. Participants noted that the National Strategy has a target reduction that can’t be measured in all jurisdictions, and that Austroads may be interested in a project in this area. Funding is also needed to develop a road safety evidence data base, similar to what exists for some health professionals, where research receives a quality rating. This would help researchers to know what is expected and funders to know what research is worth.

Participants agreed that the following data does not exist or is not accessible enough and needs to be part of the road safety data picture:

- Demographic characteristics of road trauma victims, which also includes cyclists and pedestrians,
- Post-crash data (e.g. from police, GPs, nurses, surgeons). Post-crash response could be brought into mainstream road safety, and
- There is also the burden of road trauma, rehabilitation and beyond and the emerging issue of psychological impacts of road crashes.

Speed

Speed is still considered a major road safety issue and contributor to road trauma.

Participants agreed that getting the message out about speed is an issue. Further research quantifying the impact of speed on road trauma is not required (there is already sufficient research on this), but rather a new approach to selling the message about the dangers of speed is needed. Some participants noted that there are new technologies and issues with P- platers who could be used as a cohort study.

Funding opportunities

Participants agreed that the research strategy provides an opportunity to make a difference to the government funding structure, and that a broad view of funding is required. There are multiple sources of funding and it is important to be smarter, more collaborative, and explore funding outside ARC, NHMRC and other government sources.

Insurance companies provide many funding opportunities that should be explored. There is an incentive for insurers because of third party and property damage issues. The economic aspects of road trauma and the cost of injury were mentioned as potential drivers of road safety, and participants suggested that this could be an angle from which to approach insurance companies about potential funding. Participants noted the current jurisdictional reform of Compulsory Third Party insurance and the potential of including road safety and research funding on the agenda as part of this reform.

Collaboration with vehicle manufacturers and research centres with expertise in vehicle technology is also important. Exploring research undertaken internationally (and who's funded it) could also provide clues as to how best to secure funding.

Alternate modes of transport

Participants agreed that road safety strategies have been too car-centric in the past, and that with more people travelling by different methods (such as walking, cycling and by motorcycle) there is a need for research and data across a range of transport modes. The Amy Gillett Foundation expressed its full support for the notion of a nationally coordinated approach to cycling research and to issues which affect cyclists and their safety. The strategy could also have a role in extending the reach of road safety into other areas, such as city planning. This would involve extending the understanding of outcomes of research into other areas to identify common goals. Participants agreed that strong communication is essential to achieve this outcome.

Communication and Community interest and acceptance

Community awareness and acceptance of road safety was also raised as a public health research priority. The community accepts the road toll as a fact of life and the road safety sector is saying it is an issue – a demand for road safety in the community needs to be created. Good communication is a high priority, and this communication involves a range of people – the general community, politicians and funders. The strategy needs a communication strategy.

Political will and support will be important to the success of the strategy, as is the need to effectively work with the media- a clear message is needed so this is part of the public conversation on road safety, and extend beyond the 'converted ABC audience' to include a much broader audience.

Participants agreed that a clear and collective identity is needed, suggesting that perhaps road safety is not talked about, but rather road danger, which costs as much as the defence budget. The road safety sector needs to show stakeholders that while a lot of research is being done, it is not well communicated or coordinated and there are suggestions about how it can be

improved. The outcome would be fewer deaths, financial savings and less horror. Australia is recognised internationally as a leader in road safety. This has come from a vast amount of research over the last 40 years which needs to be communicated to the funders – a way of alerting funders to the value of road safety research.

Participants noted the number of existing communication mechanisms that could be leveraged from instead of reinventing new ones. Suggestions on methods to improve communication included:

- Email or newsletter to notify stakeholders of what is happening in research,
- Annual conference forum where stakeholders discuss current research, and
- Development of a matrix demonstrating the value of research.

Research Methodology and Capacity Building:

Participants noted the challenges for the next generation of researchers, arguing that it is incredibly difficult to sustain an academic career on just road safety. There is a push from universities for academics to build a track record. Many researchers move away from road safety or broaden their field into something else of which road safety is a small part.

There is a need to encourage interest in research and its application to road safety. Road safety should be identified as a field of study rather than a discipline with clear determinants as to what falls into this field of study. As it is a multi-disciplinary field of study, researchers need to be careful not to be excluded from funding because road safety research doesn't fit into a single category.

Participants argued the importance of high-quality translation of targeted research, support for more fundamental theoretical research (through discovery grants), and better use of existing funding to give researchers longer timeframes to put in tenders and promote better quality of research.

Summary and Next Steps

Professor Aitkin opened this session by referring to a road safety PhD student, Lucienne Kleissen, who addressed him at a seminar saying 'we talk about road safety but it is all about death and trauma; it should be about a feeling of well-being knowing that everybody will look after you'. Professor Aitkin went on to discuss road safety research in Australia stating that ARC funding applications have increased from 2,000 per year in 1988 to 8,000 now, and that some 122,000 full time members constitute the research industry in Australia, demonstrating the considerable research endeavour in this country.

Jurisdictions are part of the federal system and the Commonwealth has no particular role in section 51 of the Constitution about roads and road safety. However, the Commonwealth has grown enormously relative to the states in the last 113 years through uniform taxation power and the acquisition of wealth which, through another constitutional facility, enables it to make grants to the states. The Commonwealth can say to the states 'if you want to do something we will give you the money'.

Australia is intensely competitive compared to other cultures. Road safety is naturally a national issue, but there is a tension because the jurisdictions have policy responsibility. Stakeholders have very different reasons for wanting research in road safety. The ACT Minister has said that he will only propose new legislation which is based on good research and evidence. As such, the ACT takes longer to do something compared to other jurisdictions. If something works in one jurisdiction, other jurisdictions will say 'why don't we do it'? This is the way a style of federal system has evolved.

Another activity that occurs in road safety is citizen action, where citizens are funded to develop and make areas for pedestrians, vehicles and bicyclists safer. An example is schools which are funded to stop children running out on the street.

Governments have an important role in regulation – random breath testing and seat belts – where it can be shown that the reduction in deaths is consistent with the passage of legislation.

All of this tension affects the research endeavour in road safety, and that is why collaboration is so important. At the same time a lot of work is conducted by research enterprises which are competitive in what they do and how they do it. In early 1992 a model was brought in where people who were competitive but needed to collaborate were brought together to work against a common enemy. Such a body could be called a cooperative research endeavour, and participants here today are just the people to take something like this forward.

Once ministers and others can be convinced that there is a payoff to be had, and that death and trauma rates will decrease by improving quality of data, research and collaboration, they will listen. Participants agreed that a meeting could be held annually or biannually to represent the research endeavour in Australia, and suggested that a secretariat would be required that could set a framework around research priorities and collaboration.

Conclusion Day 1:

In summary, the research strategy should identify long-term collaborative projects, stress the need for a road safety research data base which reflects all Australasian literature (with links to international research), demonstrate potential cooperation mechanisms, include a suggested quantum for research expenditure on road safety in Australia, contain a clear articulation of the likely benefits to the community and be a dynamic document subject to constant review.

Effective engagement with all stakeholders is essential to ensure good research that leads to positive change. It is important to recognise the cost constraint environment and the difficulty of competing with small budgets and tight timeframes.

It is essential that the research strategy helps to optimise the research that is already happening and encourage better utilisation of that research, builds research capacity, strengthens communication with governments, funders and the community, and facilitates information sharing and relations among stakeholders, all with the aim to making a substantial contribution to saving lives.

Day 2 - 22 February 2013

Mr McIntosh commenced proceedings with the aim of refining the draft research strategy and developing ideas on how it could be implemented successfully. He re-capped Day 1 discussions and clarified the desired outcomes for Day 2.

There was open group discussion with the 22 participants, and then smaller table discussions regarding the research strategy and implementation and monitoring issues. For the purposes of this report – discussions from these sessions relevant to Day 1 topics have been included in the outcomes from Day 1.

Recommended key actions from the Workshop

1. Develop a Framework for Road Safety Research in Australia, rather than a research strategy. While similar, a framework document could be used more widely and does not necessarily require agreement or ownership by any other organisation than those represented at the workshop. However, the Framework would be circulated widely for comments and suggestions.
2. Establish a volunteer 'Drafting Group' with secretariat support from NHMRC and ACRS, tasked with drafting the Research Framework by mid April. The drafting of the Framework would be based on preliminary work on the Research Strategy, the Survey results and the Workshop Report, as well as feedback and consultation with other interested stakeholders.

The following participants volunteered to be part of the Drafting Group:

- Barry Watson
- Ann Williamson
- Jeremy Woolley
- Judith Charlton
- Shaun Lennard
- Michael Tziotis

Following the workshop, Julian Lyngcoln also volunteered to be part of the group. This group is open to other volunteers.

3. NHMRC and ACRS to provide secretariat support to the group and circulate the draft Research Framework for comment. Broad circulation of the Framework is recommended to encourage commitment from a wide range of stakeholders.
4. Present the Framework at national conferences such as the:
 - The Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing & Education Conference in Brisbane on 28-30 August 2013,
 - ACRS Conference in Adelaide 7-8 November 2013, and
 - National Road Safety Strategy reviews that are scheduled for 2013.
5. The President of ACRS, Mr Lauchlan McIntosh to send a letter to all stakeholders seeking their support for the Framework. Mr McIntosh will promote the Framework and inform stakeholders that its inclusion in the National Strategy, as part of the decade of action on road safety, will assist research funding organisations, provide better collaboration between researchers and lead to reduced road crashes, injuries and deaths.
6. Communicate the benefits of the Research Framework to national and state politicians prior to the next election. The ACRS can write to all relevant politicians, demonstrating that we have the backing of all stakeholders (by documenting all stakeholders who have participated in the development of this Framework).

Mapping outcomes to the original 'Workshop Objectives':

Objective One:

To draft a National Road Safety Research Strategy

Outcome:

Framework drafting group established to provide the Draft Framework by mid-April 2013. Secretariat support for the Drafting Group to be provided by ONHMRC/ACRS.

Objective Two:

Determine national research priorities in line with the current National Strategy that encompasses 4 pillars of road safety, and the over-arching UN Decade of Action

Outcome:

Participants discussed research priorities during workshop session three and included:

- Economical impact/costs of accidents,
- Post-crash response,
- Vehicle design and safety,
- Safe system framework,
- Understanding intelligent transport systems and electronic 'gadgetry', and
- Other non-road safety specific research, such as geography and urban design, which can also contribute to road safety issues.

Research priorities, in line with the National Strategy and the UN Decade of Action, could be discussed further once the Framework is in place, or may evolve as part of these activities.

Objective Three:

Begin planning for implementation of the Research Strategy including identifying:

- The relevant funding bodies,
- Strategies for funding bodies to include the Research Strategy in their funding policy, and
- Administrative processes required to support the Research Strategy to ensure its longevity

Outcome:

NHMRC Partnership Centres were discussed. NHMRC co-funds a \$25m scheme over five years aimed at better translation of research. Injury prevention and road safety could be a potential subject for a Partnership Centre. The first step is to identify partners and funding sources and then establish a business case and take it to the research area of the NHMRC for consideration. Mr McIntosh and Professor Aitken will follow up this potential with Professor Anderson, NHMRC CEO. ACRS and ONHMRC will further discuss the necessary administration details to ensure implementation of the Framework. Ideas suggested at the workshop include follow up of this activity at subsequent ACRS or other road safety conferences or meetings with a group representative of workshop participants.

Objective Four:

Bring together all relevant stakeholders and end users into the current road safety research space.

Outcome:

This was achieved by inviting all stakeholders to participate in the Workshop.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: List of Workshop Participants

Appendix 2: Workshop Program

Appendix 3: Road Safety Stakeholder Mud Map

Appendix 4: Pre-Workshop Survey Results Report