



POST-EVENT SUMMARY OF SYMPOSIA AND WORKSHOPS AT ARSC2015

(As at 16 September 2016)

Tuesday 6 September: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Room 5
Workshop
Policing and Enforcement Workshop

Key Organiser:

ACT Policing

Overview:

Policing road safety is an important, challenging and sometimes heart-breaking job. Increases in the availability of intelligent transport systems, higher density living, and changing community perceptions of behaviour on our roads all add new complexities and challenges to road safety enforcement, and even the most comprehensive legislation on seat belt-wearing, drink-driving, speeding and other risks will fail to have an impact without effective, sustained enforcement.

The Policing Workshop was a way for road safety professionals to come together and share ideas on the best ways to detect and deter behaviours associated with risk driving, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement activities, and to work with towards embedding a strong, positive road safety culture across the communities in which we live, work and play.

Summary:

Facilitators/presenters in the Road Safety Education Workshop included:

- Sgt David Stocker, Forensic Crash Unit, QLD Police
- Senior Sgt Mick Timms, NSW Police
- Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer, Victoria Police
- Chaired by Assistant Commissioner John Hartley APM, Traffic and Highway Patrol Command, NSW Police

The Workshop, facilitated by Assist Commissioner John Hartley from the NSW Police Traffic and Highway Patrol Command, discussed crash-event data recorders in vehicles, the media's response to various policing

statements and policies (specifically regarding seniors and police pursuits), and the resulting public responses.

Presentations:

Sgt David Stocker, Forensic Crash Unit, QLD Police

Sgt Stocker discussed the advantages of EDRs – Event Data Recorders – which record information from a cars systems just before and directly after a crash. He pointed out the following:

- The biggest impediments to using EDRs in investigating a crash are the number of vehicles fitted with an EDR, and whether we can access that data. These two issues are the biggest inhibiting factors to investigators
- Crash factors are considered to be across three main areas - human, vehicle and environment
- Normal evidence collection at a crash site includes these three aspects and include a visual inspection of the scene, speaking to witnesses and looking at the vehicle information that is available. This may mean tiremarks, gouges and scrapes, fluid, debris, and close vehicle inspection, speaking to the driver, passengers, and any other witnesses
- Crash investigators must assume that the evidence at the scene is the only evidence available and as such spend much time collecting every scrap of environmental data that they can in case they cannot get further information
- EDR information takes about 10 minutes per vehicle to download on site



If the information that is in the EDR is complete it removes the necessity to collect every scrap of environmental data, which in turn could mean a significant reduction in road closure time, especially if the information can be combined with areal mapping.

The EDR keeps record from 5 seconds before an impact to five seconds after and records such information as whether and when the break was applied, vehicle and even individual tire speed, accelerator use, steering input, hydraulic breaking pressure, tire pressure – amongst many other things. It can also indicate the Forward Collision Warning Lamp status, which can in turn help ascertain the reaction time of the drive.

The majority of new cars in Australia have EDRs but there is a problem with investigators being able to access that information. In Australia, unlike places such as North America, there are no requirements on EDR makers to have software that can read EDRs commercially available, or standardisation about what information is recorded on the EDR. Legislation would allow investigators to be able to access more of this information in a more timely fashion, giving them accurate and reliable information regarding crashes and in turn likely allow for more targeted and better prevention measures to be ascertained.

Senior Sgt Mick Timms, NSW Police

On the 6th January 2016 the Daily Telegraph ran an article entitled “Seniors Urged to Quit Driving”. Utilising a media release by NSW police that pointed out an increase in accidents involving seniors (70+), and suggesting that there are *signs seniors should look for* in regards to their ability to drive safely, such as checking medications and self-assessing their skills, the article was heavily skewed to suggest that older drivers stop driving.



The article led to a social media backlash and meant that police had to combat the negativity and to impart the full message that they were trying to convey – specifically, that we all have different capabilities and nothing stays the same, that different drivers (ie, young drivers vs old drivers) have different issues, and that we all, including older drivers, should be self-regulating how and when to drive. Sometime this may mean voluntarily handing in a licence.

What this presentation pointed out was that the debate seems to turn constantly to one of “old vs young” and that, as with so many things, care needs to be taken in *how* the message is delivered.

Further interesting take-aways from this conversation included that we now have more older drivers than ever before (and this number will keep increasing), and that studies have shown the elderly listen the most to grandchildren and doctors. Keeping the messages local and having local communities working with older drivers has been well received, and that giving on-the-run comments to media should be avoided.

In short, Seniors on the Road need not be a no-go topic, but it is a sensitive issue and therefore care must be taken in how the message is delivered.

Assist. Comm. Doug Fryer, Victoria Police

Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer discussed the necessary evils that are police pursuits. Key points included:

- 17 times per day police have to decide whether to engage in a pursuit
- Every week there are 2,000 new drivers in Victoria, so the roads are getting busier, making roads more congested and the problem more complex
- Despite self-termination the perpetrators keep doing the wrong thing and the victims are often innocent
- The new methodology of who/where/when to pursue is kept a close secret and allows the officers involved more discretion about whether or not to engage in a pursuit
- The risks of pursuing and not pursuing are virtually identical. Death/serious injury, property damage, criticism of police actions
- It's the perception by the community that changes (from “do anything to get my stuff back” vs “don't put my loved ones in danger”)
- Police operate in the grey – that is to say, they can only operate only on the best information available to them at the time



In July 2015 it appeared to the public that a policy of “no chase” was put into place, and the number of recorded pursuits dropped from 145 per month to 6 per month. To the public this looked like a non-pursuit policy, but had a lot to do with what constituted and what was considered a pursuit. The policy was used as blame for an increase in vehicle-related crimes.

Since July 2016 the policy was put in place not to tell the community the strategy of how/when they would engage, and pursuits are around 65-75 per month. Now pursuits are based on a risk assessment, the methodology of which is not discussed as police don't want to inform the criminal element of that methodology. So while details of the policy have not been revealed, pursuits have increased.

