



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Safety

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: Today I will launch the State Government's two most important strategic documents for road safety—the recently revised edition of the Queensland Road Safety Strategy 1993-2003 and the State's Road Safety Action Plan 1999-2000. These two documents outline the State's approach to reducing road trauma and indicate the road safety initiatives to be implemented across all the organisations with road safety responsibilities. As a whole-of-Government document, the strategy is the broad 10-year framework for road safety, and the action plan is a detailed annual program of priorities for the year ahead.

The Road Safety Strategy was introduced to encourage a more holistic and cost-effective approach to road safety planning. The strategy outlined a vision for road safety in 2003 and the guiding principles and objectives to achieve that vision. Since 1996, annual action plans have been produced to give increased focus to the strategy. The revised edition also takes stock of how far we have come and what further areas of improvement are available.

Our performance so far has been commendable. The original strategy listed more than 120 actions. Of these, 85% were achieved by 1998. The strategy aimed for a 30% reduction in fatal crashes by 2003. This target has been met some four years early in per capita terms, with a 41% reduction between 1992 and 1998. As part of the revised strategy, crash reduction targets have been revised for all categories based on what is believed to be feasible in the next few years.

The success of this approach can be greatly attributed to the integrated and cooperative nature of the programs. A mix of engineering, enforcement and education tools are developed by Queensland Transport, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Main Roads and other agencies within the framework of these strategies. The media, in particular the Courier-Mail, has also played a critical role in supporting the Road Safety Strategy.

The action plan is the annual operational plan for Queensland's road safety agencies, including Queensland Transport, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Main Roads. As such, the action plan guides the implementation of road safety initiatives in the strategy which are the particular priorities for the year ahead. It is based on a trend analysis of crash statistics, a review of the current performance of all major programs and the pooling of the expertise of a wide range of key stakeholders from across the State.

The top 10 actions for the 1999-2000 plan include extending the Speed Management Strategy, improving random breath testing, providing more effective sanctions and penalties, improving vehicle safety, maintaining the State Traffic Task Force, developing the State Cycle Strategy and improving our roads. Accurate, up-to-date crash figures are essential to determine where the problems are and how our programs can be improved. Engineering measures play a key role in helping us design better roads and safer vehicles. Enforcement operations are important in motivating motorists to do the right thing, while public education programs are pivotal for informing the public and providing the incentive for behavioural change. Each year, the strategy is reviewed at Statewide and regional road safety summits, which involve a broad cross-section of road safety agencies to create the yearly action plan. This thorough and consultative approach to road safety has made Queensland a pioneer in the field. There is no way that this process could be described as peremptory.

Despite the improvement in crash rates, road crashes continue to be one of our most significant public health problems. Queensland is vast and growing rapidly, with more than 2.2 million licensed drivers, 2.7 million registered vehicles and 175,000 kilometres of roads. The annual cost of road crashes is estimated to be \$1 billion, in addition to the grief suffered by the families and friends of those killed or injured.

Queensland has two distinct road safety challenges. Firstly, our decentralised population and vast distance make us Australia's most road dependent State. Secondly, our strong population and economic growth rate mean more vehicles on our roads and a greater risk of road crashes. While unfortunately we have not done as well this year in terms of road fatalities, it is important for members to know that the numbers of people hospitalised are a little below last year's at this time. In trend terms, the road toll is still better than what was anticipated in 1992, when the Road Safety Strategy was first formulated. I hope all members will join with me in urging the public to make their contribution to reducing the road toll by always following the road rules and driving with road sense at all times.
