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MEMORANDUM

From: National Safety Engineer: Colin Brodi

**Subject: Report on Austroads Road Safety Task Force Meeting, Sydney
16 September 2005**

Background

The Road Safety Task Force is a committee made up of a safety representative from all the Austroads partners plus other key stakeholders such as MOT (NZ), National Transport Commission (Aust) and ARRB. It appears that its main role is to guide/determine the direction of road safety research in Australasia. Bill Frith (NZ MOT) is the programme manager and committee chair. I have taken over the Transit NZ position from Dennis Davis. The committee appears to meet approximately 6 monthly (Feb/Sept) .

The meeting was held on 16 September at the RTA crash lab near Parramatta, Sydney.

Work Programme and Items

- 1) Briefly discussed progress on current (05/06) research projects. Attached is a stocktake on past and current research projects prepared by Joe Motha (ATSB) that provides a very good summary of Australasian road safety research projects. I suggest this be circulated to the Regional Road Safety Engineers for their information.
- 2) The 2006/07 and beyond research programme was discussed. A large proportion of the budget is already committed to ongoing projects, particularly with ARRB and to a lesser extent MUARC. One possible new area is a scoping exercise on the benefits and costs of developing an instrumented vehicle for the research of driver behaviour associated with different road design and traffic environments. Similar vehicles are used in overseas research. This topic needs to be canvassed within New Zealand, possibly with the likes of TERNZ, Opus Central Labs, MWH, BECA etc to see the support and likely use of such a vehicle. Other 06/07 research topics are likely to come out of a Stage 1 report on "Road Safety in rural and remote areas of Australia" that identified a range of knowledge gaps, many of which would be relevant to New Zealand.

The 2006/07 programme will be discussed and set at the February 2006 meeting. I think it would be good to discuss New Zealand's desires prior to this. Is there a forum in New Zealand between the Research Groups, Transfund, LTNZ, and Transit NZ etc that discusses research directions in New Zealand? I will also discuss this sometime with Bill

Frith and Ian Appleton.

- 3) PIARC meeting: Phil Allen (SA) gave an update on the April 2005 technical committee meeting held in Greece. Phil is a member of the Technical Committee 3.1 and on Working Group 1: Making cost effective road safety investment.
- 4) Road Safety Publication Series. This is part of the new Austroads series that replaces the Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice and other guidelines. Volumes 1 (safety overview) and volume 9 (Network/System Risk Assessment) are due to be published in the near future. There was discussion about the need for separate modal group volumes such as cyclists/pedestrians/motorcyclists. It was agreed not to do this, as safety needs to be considered in the total system context, not individual elements. However it was conceded that separate brief reference guides may be developed for some user groups.
- 5) Crash Laboratory: We were taken for a very short tour of the RTA crash laboratory. This is a new \$20 million facility, not yet officially opened, that combines a number of previous testing operations scattered around Sydney. It includes restraint testing, vehicle NCAP testing, barrier tests (up to TL4), helmet testing etc. It is a very impressive facility that demonstrates RTA's commitment to road safety.

Benefits to New Zealand

As a member of Austroads, Transit NZ presumably contributes towards the safety research funding. These task force meetings keeps us up to date with what research is occurring and gives us the opportunity to have an input into the programme. It also provides a valuable networking opportunity with all the Australasian Road Safety Managers.

Recommendations

- 1) Transit NZ continues to be represented on the Road Safety Taskforce.
- 2) I consider opportunities or a forum to discuss research priorities within the NZ Road Safety Industry, or at least within Transit NZ, so that I am representing the opinions of all NZ and not just myself. I will discuss this at the Transit NZ Safety Engineers meeting scheduled for 1 & 2 December 2005.
- 3) The research papers that come out of this programme are widely distributed within Transit NZ.