

## ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE



According to Victoria's Road Safety Strategy, *arrive alive! 2002-2007*, the road environment is a contributing factor in up to 30 per cent of crashes, particularly on roads other than freeways and major highways. High standard roads reduce the risk of collisions and a forgiving roadside reduces the severity of injuries. The Strategy suggests that safety by design must continue to be an integral part of road infrastructure planning and increasingly become a key element in land use development to ensure long term safety benefits for future road users.

Previous editions of the newsletter have examined some aspects of driver behaviour and characteristics, and issues dealing with vehicle safety. This December 2004 edition aims to examine another important factor influencing the incidence and severity of road trauma – road infrastructure and roadside design.

The College has several policies which address very specific infrastructure issues, including Blackspots and road safety audits, and road safety barrier systems. For more information about these and other College policies consult the website:

<http://www.acrs.org.au/collegepolicies/>

## ROADS AND ROAD SAFETY SEMINAR

On 10 November 2004 a seminar was held outlining the European and Australian Road Assessment Programs (EuroRAP & AusRAP respectively) designed to provide safety ratings for roads. **Professor Claes Tingvall**, Director of Traffic Safety, Swedish National Road Administration provided a background to the EuroRAP program while **Dr Ken Ogden**, General Manager Public Policy, RACV discussed the AusRAP program.

According to Prof. Tingvall, it is now widely accepted that the road infrastructure plays a significant role in crash outcomes. He suggested that injury prevention should focus on reducing fatalities and serious injuries rather than purely the number of crashes. This "systems" approach considers energy transfer in a crash as being the major contributing factor to severity. Therefore, factors that can assist in creating a crashworthy system should be investigated. With this in mind, Prof. Tingvall suggested that infrastructure safety rating systems, such as the EuroRAP, need to

isolate the role of infrastructure. While statistics alone do not do this adequately, Road Protection Scores (RPS) resulting from the EuroRAP process provide useful means of assessing the quality of the infrastructure based on the premise that the vehicle is safe and the driver is safe (i.e. sober, restrained, not speeding).

Prof Tingvall commented that infrastructure safety rating schemes should be supported provided they are objective, based on a "systems" approach and provides useful rating information which, for example can help to set and provide rationale for the setting of speed limits. He concluded that the motoring public have a right to know about the relative safety of a given road and he believes that EuroRAP can assist with promoting the concept that a given road is safe, provided it is used in a safe way and with a safe vehicle.

Dr Ogden provided a complementary presentation, giving an overview of the characteristics of safer systems. He noted that humans are not perfect decision makers and consequently safety should be built into the system and that road design can and should adopt the vision zero philosophy. He further highlighted that the ultimate challenge is to provide a system of 5-star roads, with 5-star drivers in 5-star cars.

More specifically, Dr Ogden gave an overview of the status of the Australian infrastructure rating system known as AusRAP. The following section of the newsletter provides more information about this program and Dr Ogden's discussion.

The College is very grateful for and extends its thanks to Professor Tingvall and Dr Ogden for their time and effort in providing such informative presentations. For copies of the presentations please refer to the Victorian section of the College website.

## AUSRAP



Currently, objective and accepted measures exist of what constitutes a safe road user (essentially someone who obeys the law) and a safe vehicle (one which rates well under ANCAP). However, there is no equivalent measure of what constitutes a safe road. Launched on 15 November 2004 by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA),



AusRAP will make the risk of death and injury on different roads more meaningful and stimulate public discussion and action, by giving roads across Australia a safety rating. It will help road users understand how risk can vary according to changes in the road environment. Risk-aware road users will be more likely to adapt their driving to reduce their risk of a crash. The ratings will also provide road planners and engineers with vital benchmarking information to show them how well, or badly, a particular road performs compared with others.

AusRAP is a sister program to the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), which crash-tests new cars and awards them stars for safety. AusRAP will produce maps showing the risk of road crashes that cause deaths and life-threatening injuries and rate roads for safety highlighting improvements that could be made to roads to reduce the likelihood of crashes—and to make those that do happen survivable.

The Australian Transport Council (ATC) consisting of state and territory transport and roads Ministers, has since endorsed AusRAP, recognising its role in the National Road Safety Action Plan for 2005/2006. A copy of the full report, *AUSRAP: How safe are our roads?* is available on the AAA website at [www.aaa.asn.au](http://www.aaa.asn.au).

### INFRASTRUCTURE INQUIRY

In March 2002 the Parliamentary Road Safety Committee concluded its inquiry into rural road safety and infrastructure. The inquiry reported that in country crashes more people are killed and seriously injured in single vehicles running off the road than in all other crash types combined. The Inquiry also suggested that crashes on rural roads are more likely to be severe and involve a single-vehicle, often striking a fixed object such as a tree, pole, post, embankment or street furniture. A poor road environment was reported as being likely to be a significant contributing factor to crashes on Victorian rural roads.

In conducting this inquiry, the Committee sought information from State and Local Government Agencies, non-Government Agencies, and individuals from the community. Over 70 submissions were received and 157 witnesses appeared before the Committee. Following its inquiry the Committee published 50 recommendations covering many aspects of

rural road safety and infrastructure. For more information about Victorian Road Safety Committee or to view a copy of the *Inquiry into rural road safety and infrastructure* and its recommendations go to: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rsc>

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The Victorian Chapter of the College is a very active chapter and has a strong membership which will continue into 2005. Recently you may have received your membership renewal notice. Remember when you submit your renewal, to make sure you have checked your details and update or amend them as required. This will ensure that you receive communications from the College in a timely manner. In particular, check or add your email address.

### WEBSITE

The College has a comprehensive website at [www.acrs.org.au](http://www.acrs.org.au). It includes information about the College Policies, where to access road safety data, a publications list and membership information.

The website now has sub-sites dedicated to each College Chapter. The Victorian section is continually updated and includes:

- Information about upcoming Chapter events
- Summaries and presentations from recent Chapter events,
- downloadable copies of the Chapter newsletters

Make sure you bookmark the Victorian page and come back regularly for new and updated information.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Victorian Chapter Newsletter Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish you a safe and happy festive and holiday season. Take care on the roads and we look forward to bringing you more editions in the New Year.



### PAST EDITIONS

To access previous editions of any of the Victorian Chapter newsletters go to: <http://www.acrs.org.au/collegchapters/victoria/newsletters.html>



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