



# MONASH University

## Accident Research Centre

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROAD SAFETY SURVEY – 2000

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**Abstract:**

Data from the 2000 Local Government Road Safety Survey was compared with that obtained in the 1998 Local Government Road Safety Survey as an examination of changes in road safety at the local government level since the Saferoads Initiative was implemented in 1998. The two questionnaires achieved an equivalent high response rate.

There is some evidence of an increase in road safety activity at the local government level in 2000. A larger number of Council business units were indicated to share responsibility for road safety and twice as many Councils had set road safety targets in 2000. Road safety was also more likely to be mentioned in Council documents such as Corporate Plans. More Councils spent money on various road safety projects in 2000 and a greater number of Councils were planning future road safety activities. Even though it was a focus of the Saferoads Initiative, the number of Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy did not increase from 1998 to 2000. However many more Councils were developing one in 2000 than in 1998.

"Lack of resources" was the most likely reason as to why Councils did not have a Road Safety Strategy or Plan and "speeding in local streets" was the activity most likely to receive Council funding. Councils were most likely to collaborate with VicRoads and the Police to improve road safety. Few Councils conducted regular safety audits on the existing road system and few council staff received any formal training in relation to road safety. Safety audit training was the most common type of training that staff received and the most frequently chosen type of training that Councils indicated would assist them in conducting road safety programs. Few Councils had a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions, or had driver training or a Safe Driving Policy.

Suggestions are made for follow-up surveys to further evaluate the Saferoads Initiative and the changes in road safety activity at local government level.

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**Key Words:**

road safety, local government

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## Executive Summary

The 2000 Local Government Road Safety Survey sought to:

- highlight current road safety initiatives in 2000;
- compare the data obtained in the 2000 survey against the baseline measure set by a 1998 survey to assess the effects of the Saferoads Initiative; and
- identify opportunities to promote road safety initiatives.

### Similarities in responses between 1998 and 2000

In the following areas, the responses to the 2000 survey did not differ markedly from those of the 1998 survey:

- The questionnaire response rate was equivalent between the two surveys.
- Engineering- and infrastructure-type business units or departments were most likely to be identified as the primary source of responsibility for road safety.
- “Lack of resources” was the most likely reason as to why Councils did not have a Road Safety Strategy or Plan.
- “Speeding in local streets” was the activity most likely to receive Council funding and the highest single expenditure item. “Road safety promotion”, “child restraint use” and “bicycle safety promotion” were also common expenditure items.
- “Level of community concern” was the most likely factor that led to the development of individual road safety programs, followed by involvement of other groups such as VicRoads, crash data, and pressure from user groups. Community feedback and accident records were the most common method used by Councils to identify road safety issues.
- Councils collaborated with VicRoads and the Police to improve road safety.
- Only one-quarter of Councils conducted regular safety audits on the existing road system.
- Few council staff received road safety training. Safety auditing was the most common training received and the most common type of training that Councils indicated would assist them in conducting road safety programs.
- Almost all Councils regularly pruned trees to increase visibility, but few had a policy for planting frangible trees to minimise the collision hazard for motorists.
- Most Councils considered the effects on motorcyclists of proposed traffic management devices and specified that contractors sweep up loose material after works.
- A majority of Councils worked towards pedestrian safety; e.g. considering pedestrian needs when planning traffic control devices. The only activity where the number of Councils with no involvement exceeded the number with some involvement was minimising the number of intoxicated pedestrians.
- A majority of Councils had a Bicycle Plan or Strategy.

### Areas of increased road safety activity in 2000

The results of the 2000 survey provided some evidence of an increase in road safety activity at the local government level:

- The number and variety of departments with some responsibility for road safety increased.
- Twice as many Councils had set road safety targets.
- Few Councils possessed a Road Safety Plan or Strategy, however many more Councils were developing a Plan.
- A larger number of Councils spent money on various road safety projects.
- Road safety was more likely to be mentioned in Council documents such as Corporate Plans.
- Only a few more Councils evaluated road safety activities in 2000, but there were twice as many actual instances of evaluation in 2000. Community feedback, traffic surveys and crash data were all frequently used as evaluation tools.
- A greater number of Councils were planning future road safety activities.

### **Other differences between the 1998 and 2000 survey results**

The survey results also revealed instances where there were differences between 1998 and 2000 responses:

- In 1998 “safety of infrastructure” was the most common way that road safety was mentioned in Corporate Plans, followed by the development or use of a Road Safety Strategy. In 2000 the most common choices were the same but the order was reversed.
- Planned activities were most likely to be “improvement of infrastructure” in 1998 and development of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan in 2000.

### **Other data**

The 2000 survey included additional questions related to Council’s passenger vehicle fleet. Few Councils had a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions, or had driver training or a Safe Driving Policy. However, a majority of Councils require common safety features for their fleet cars, such as a driver’s side airbag, ensure that Council vehicles are regularly checked and maintained, and monitor the driving records of employees.

### **Other issues**

One of the primary aims of the Saferoads Initiative was to increase the level of road safety activity at local government level. Council responses to the two surveys suggest that overall there seems to be increased activity in road safety across all Councils, regardless of budget and location. However, this increase in activity was not reflected in a higher survey response rate in 2000.

As the Saferoads Initiative evolves to meet the needs of Councils and local government assumes further responsibility for road safety within its municipality, it is suggested that the survey be repeated in 2002 or 2003.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

In 1997 a Working Party chaired by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) with representation from municipalities, VicRoads, Victoria Police, Human Services, Local Government Professionals (LGPro), RACV, Department of Local Government and the Department of Infrastructure was formed to review the current status and effectiveness of road safety actions at the municipal level across Victoria. A strategy was developed to reduce road trauma at the local level, focussing on vulnerable road users - pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and the young and elderly.

In May 1998, the Road Safety in Local Government Initiative was launched by the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Municipal Association of Victoria. The Initiative aimed to encourage Councils to identify road safety problems in their municipality and form partnerships with other agencies and community groups to highlight road safety awareness.

A partnership was formed between the MAV, LGPro, Victoria Police, RACV, Transport Accident Commission and VicRoads to carry the initiative forward and provide long-term support. The Saferoads Initiative was developed with the goal of reducing the incidence and severity of road crashes in municipalities through multi-action programs, increased use of local government networks, and increased road safety resources at the local level.

A survey of the current road safety programs and practices of Councils was carried out in late 1998 by the Monash University Accident Research Centre (Haworth and Kowaldo, 1999) to provide a baseline measure for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Road Safety in Local Government Initiative.

### **1.2 AIMS**

The aims of the current study were to

1. highlight current road safety initiatives in 2000;
2. compare the data obtained in the 2000 survey against the baseline measure set by a 1998 survey to assess the effects of the Saferoads Initiative; and
3. identify opportunities to promote road safety initiatives.

### **1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE**

The methods involved in the development and distribution of the questionnaire are described in Chapter 2. The responses to the 2000 survey are then summarised in Chapter 3, followed by a comparison of the 1998 and 2000 survey responses in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains an overall discussion of the analyses and Chapter 6 constitutes a summary and conclusions.



## 2.0 METHOD

The study was conducted by means of a questionnaire mailed out to all Councils in Victoria.

### 2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENTS

A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix One. It was sent to Councils as a stapled A4 booklet with a covering introductory page and eight pages of questions. The questionnaire addressed issues such as:

- current Council road safety activities (including road safety programs, activities and responsibilities e.g. road safety audits, traffic management, health care, parking, etc.);
- activity resourcing levels;
- the existence or developmental stage of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan;
- road safety targets;
- current and required training in road safety;
- links with road safety networks and stakeholders.

The 2000 questionnaire was based on the questionnaire used in the 1998 survey (Haworth and Kowaldo, 1999). Other than some minor grammatical alterations, the changes made to the 1998 questionnaire were as follows (the question numbers refer to the 2000 version):

- Question 4. Councils were asked what types of business units were involved in road safety. The 2000 questionnaire added the response categories ‘risk management’ and ‘works and operations’.
- Question 1.14. “Traffic enforcement” was added as a budgetary line item in a question asking Councils how much they had spent of various road safety activities in the past year.
- Question 2.6. Councils were asked what organisations they collaborated with on road safety issues. The 2000 questionnaire added the options “Local Safety Committee”, “Safer Cities and Shires”, and “other local Councils”.
- Questions 3.1 and 3.3. In 2000 Councils were asked if they had a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions, and to describe the policy. (New question)
- Question 3.3. Councils were asked what safety features they specify for passenger fleet vehicles. (New question)
- Questions 3.4 and 3.5. The 2000 questionnaire asked whether Council operated a system that ensured that fleet vehicles were regularly checked and maintained. They were also asked if there was anything in place to ensure the safe operation of fleet vehicles, such as driver training programs. (New question)
- Question 3.12. This question concerned a range of pedestrian programs. The 2000 questionnaire had an additional category of program – whether Council operated any programs to provide alternative transport for the elderly.

- The 1998 questionnaire asked respondents about specific motorcycle safety promotion materials. This question was removed from the 2000 questionnaire.

Both the 1998 and 2000 questionnaires were based on a 1997 survey by the Municipal Association of Victoria (Arbuckle, 1997), but collected more in-depth information. Some questions from the 1994 New South Wales Survey of Local Government Road Safety Planning and Activities (Haworth and Bowland, 1995) were also integrated.

## 2.2 DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were mailed to all 78 Councils in Victoria under the auspices of the Saferoads Initiative. Individual recipients and their postal addresses were identified from the Saferoads mailing list, where the recipient was sometimes a specific road safety member of Council's staff or the Chief Executive Officer. The covering letter and questionnaire requested that completed questionnaires be mailed to the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

Questionnaires were posted on 15 September 2000, with a requested return date of 30 October 2000. Councils were telephoned during the week commencing 13 November 2000 to ask whether they required any assistance with the questionnaire. Few Councils returned the completed questionnaire by the specified return date, and so each non-responding Council was contacted by telephone several times over the period 15 November 2000 to 21 February 2001.

## 2.3 ANALYSIS

Resources and demands vary among Councils and this is likely to affect road safety involvement. Table 2.1 summarises the annual budgets for 1998/99 for Councils in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria. The mean budget for Metropolitan Councils is greater than the mean for Councils in Regional Victoria but there is a large range within each group. In general, the Councils with lower budgets were outlying Metropolitan areas or rural regions (not provincial cities).

**Table 2.1 Comparison of annual budgets for 1998/99 for Councils in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria. Data supplied by the Municipal Association of Victoria.**

Budget measure	Metropolitan Councils	Regional Victoria Councils
Mean	\$65.0 million	\$21.4 million
Minimum	\$19.1 million	\$3.1 million
Maximum	\$150.8 million	\$106.7 million
Less than \$20 million	1	29
\$20 million or greater	30	18

Due to the range of Council budgets, it was considered inappropriate to categorise Councils into Metropolitan and Regional groupings. Instead, Councils were grouped into Metropolitan (31 Councils, of which only one had a budget of less than \$20 million), Large

Regional (18 Councils with budgets of \$20 million or greater), and Small Regional (29 Councils with budgets of less than \$20 million). The data obtained in the 1998 survey was analysed according to these classifications.

In order to make comparisons between the 1998 data and the data collected during the 2000 survey, the same budgetary classifications were used in the latter analysis; i.e., if a particular Council was classified as a Small Regional Council in 1998, then that classification was maintained for analysis of the 2000 survey data. It was not expected that any particular Council's budget would change sufficiently relative to the other Councils in the same category between 1998 and 2000 such that it would belong to a different category in 2000.



## **3.0 RESULTS OF THE 2000 SURVEY**

### **3.1 RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **3.1.1 Response rate**

At the final cut-off date of 28 February 2001, 62 (80%) of Victoria's 78 Councils had returned their questionnaires. Responses were received from 23 Metropolitan Councils (74% of all Metropolitan Councils), 15 Large Regional Councils (83%) and 24 Small Regional Councils (83%). There was no consistent pattern in the locations, budgets or sizes of those Councils that did not respond to the questionnaire.

Both the questionnaire and an accompanying letter specified that the due date for questionnaire returns was 30 October 2000. All Councils that had not responded by this date were contacted on multiple occasions by telephone until they had either returned a completed questionnaire or the final cut off date of the end of February had passed. When contacted by telephone the primary reason given by Council staff why they had not yet responded was associated with a lack of resources.

Two additional Councils returned their completed questionnaires after the analyses had been completed and the report written – one Metropolitan and one Small Regional Council. As their responses were similar to those of the other 2000 returns, the complete dataset was not reanalysed. A brief description and discussion of these two questionnaires is contained in Appendix Two.

#### **3.1.2 Business units responding**

Councils were asked to list the business units of any individuals who helped to complete the questionnaire. In 59 of the 62 cases the number of individuals completing the survey was three or less, with one Council having five respondents, another with six and one instance where this question was not answered. The average number of Council staff completing each questionnaire was 1.7 individuals.

The business units of the persons completing the survey are summarised in Table 3.1. The primary person completing the survey was most likely to be from an engineering- or infrastructure-type business unit, although the actual names of the units varied somewhat. The other respondents were likely to be from an engineering unit or some other unit specific to that particular Council (and so categorised as 'other'). Where there were multiple respondents, the additional individuals were often from the same business unit as the primary respondent.

### **3.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ROAD SAFETY**

Councils were asked to nominate the business unit or department with the primary responsibility for road safety within the Council. The names of the business units or departments varied somewhat and are grouped together in Table 3.2. The most common types of business units or departments were the classifications "engineering" and "infrastructure" which together accounted for 50% of the responses.

**Table 3.1 Type of business unit of the primary and secondary respondents who completed the survey.**

Type of business unit	Primary respondent	Secondary respondents
Assets	8	3
Engineering	16	5
Infrastructure	10	2
Planning	3	2
Project management	1	0
Technical services	4	0
Traffic/transportation	7	4
Works	1	2
Other	7	6
No response	5	37
Total	62	61

**Table 3.2 Type of business unit or department that has the major responsibility for road/traffic safety.**

Type of business unit	Number of Councils
Assets	6
Engineering	16
Infrastructure	15
Planning	3
Project management	1
Technical services	6
Traffic/transportation	5
Works	6
Other	4
Total	62

Generally, the individual completing the questionnaire was a member of the department that had been identified as having the principal responsibility for road safety within the Council.

Other than the department with primary responsibility, the questionnaire also asked what other departments had any degree of responsibility for road safety. A large number of such

business units or departments were identified. These organisations and their roles are summarised in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Types of business units or departments which have some responsibility for road/traffic safety and their roles as described by Councils.**

Business unit	Number of Councils	Roles
Administration	5	Budget allocation, reporting of incidents, project funding control, receipt & referral of road safety issues
Assets	4	(no descriptions given) <sup>1</sup>
Building	9	Building regulations in relation to traffic, construction of property access, corner fences, access, footpaths, hoardings, road occupancy
Community Services	24	Community safety and education, safer cities officer, nurse education, older pedestrian safety and transport, plan & provide infrastructure, resource centre, child safety, implementation of road safety plan, programs & strategies, traffic school, young drivers & drinking, safe driving, Community Safety Plan, Road Safety Council, school crossing attendants
Engineering	49	Infrastructure planning, respond to safety issues, assessment & implementation, traffic parking consultation, design of traffic management treatments & assets, traffic & road infrastructure management, funding bids, customer liaison, forward planning, road safety monitoring, construction supervision
Finance	4	Finance, facilitating funds, budget for traffic engineering
Health	11	Enforcement, nurse education, disability access, day care, Meals on Wheels, the elderly, Community Safety Plan, environmental health issues, Municipal Health Plan, community education, health promotion
Human Services	6	Community activities, promotions, disability access, day care, Meals on Wheels, disabled parking, preschools, aged care, home care, staff training, OH&S issues
Infrastructure	4	(no descriptions given)
Local Laws	41	School crossings, parking enforcement and infringements, obstructions, cattle crossings, signage, traffic control, parking policies, fire control, enforcement – pedestrians & skateboards, stock management
Parks	13	Maintenance & removal of hazards, OH&S, maintenance of roundabouts & median strips, trimming vegetation, assessing visibility, roadsides, tree maintenance
Recreation	11	Utilisation of road network, OH&S, bicycling strategies, off road paths, pedestrian paths, horse trails
Risk	21	Public liability, hazards, Council assets, structures, insurance claims, auditing, incident investigation, blackspot treatment design, complaints, pedestrians, cyclists, minimise risk & exposure to claims, fleet management, loss prevention, OH&S

**Table 3.3 (cont.) Types of business units or departments that have some responsibility for road/traffic safety.**

Business unit	Number of Councils	Roles
Planning	20	Land use management, development access & parking, planning applications & permits, safety aspects of planning, subdivision approvals, access vehicle movements & control, strategic input into developments
Traffic	23	Parking sign placement, investigation, planning of assets & innovations, accidents, safety, speeds and volumes of traffic, parking enforcement, school crossing supervisors, membership of Road Safety Council, surveys, design, planning, monitor & review of parking & traffic flow strategies, local laws, inspection of problems
Works	41	OH&S issues, pavements, signage, delineation, education/training of crews, installation & maintenance of assets, safety audits, worksite traffic management, construction practices, day to day road maintenance, emergency responses
Other <sup>2</sup>	10	Studies, programs, restraints, blackspot issues, Roadsafes, parking enforcement, publicity, safety audits, strategy, programming, budgeting, works, traffic management policy, links to other authorities & bodies, safety inspections, fleet management, planning & supervision of capital works, upgrades, implement asset management strategy, audits to ensure passage of emergency vehicles, urban design landscaping, management, education, works traffic management, parks, fleet management, obstructions, school crossings

<sup>1</sup> “No descriptions given” indicates that the respondent chose “other” and then only wrote the name of the department, without describing the department’s role.

<sup>2</sup> While many of the roles listed under “other” are common with roles listed under other departments, the names of these departments are unique to particular Councils.

### **3.3 ROAD SAFETY IN COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

Councils were asked whether any road safety programs or initiatives were mentioned in their Corporate Plan, Municipal Strategic Statement, and Municipal Health Plan. They were also asked whether they had a Road Safety Plan and how Council identified road safety issues.

#### **3.3.1 Corporate Plan**

Corporate Plans varied in their duration and expiration dates (see Table 3.4). Five Councils (one Metropolitan and four Small Regional) left the question about the period covered by the Corporate Plan blank. No response on this question may indicate that the Council does not have a Corporate Plan, however that question was not specifically asked.

Overall, 38 (62%) of Councils stated that road safety programs or initiatives were mentioned in their Corporate Plans, five did not answer the question and one Council was revising their plan (see Table 3.4). The most common duration of a Corporate Plan was

2000-2003 (66% of responding Councils). The five Corporate Plans begun before 2000 (i.e. 1998 and 1999) were no less likely to mention road safety programs than those begun since 2000.

Large Regional and Metropolitan Councils were equally likely to mention road safety programs or initiatives in a Corporate Plan (73% of responding Councils) (see Table 3.5). Small Regional Councils were substantially less likely to mention such programs or initiatives (52% of responding Councils).

**Table 3.4 Whether road safety programs or initiatives were mentioned in the Corporate Plan as a function of period of the Corporate Plan**

Period of plan	Road safety plans or initiatives mentioned?				Total
	Yes	No	No response	N/A	
2000	0	1	0	0	1
2000-03	24	15	2	0	41
2000-04	2	0	0	0	2
2000-05	6	0	0	0	6
1998-2001	2	0	0	0	2
1999-2000	1	0	0	0	1
1999-2002	1	1	0	0	2
Currently revising	0	0	0	1	1
Rolling 3 year plan	0	1	0	0	1
No response	2	1	2	0	5
Total	38	19	4	1	62

**Table 3.5 Numbers of Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils who mentioned road safety programs or initiatives in their Corporate Plans**

Road safety mentioned	Type of Council			Total
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	
Yes	16	11	11	38
No	6	4	9	19
N/A	0	0	1	1
No response	1	0	3	4
Total	23	15	24	62

Councils were also asked to describe the road safety programs and initiatives mentioned in their Corporate Plans. The responses to this open-ended question were coded into the categories in Table 3.6. The most common road safety program or initiative mentioned was a Road Safety Strategy or Plan, either in terms of development or use. Small Regional Councils had the highest rate of non-response to this question. Blackspot programs were the only class not mentioned at all, although some Councils this may have included this under provision of “safety of infrastructure”. When the non-responses are removed, each type of Council mentioned a similar number of programs in their Corporate Plan.

**Table 3.6 Types of road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in Corporate Plans.**

Program	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Blackspots	0	0	0	0
Education	1	1	0	2
Safety of infrastructure	3	5	4	12
Traffic management	3	3	2	8
Pedestrian/cyclist	2	5	1	8
Safety strategy	9	5	7	21
Other	5	5	5	15
No response	7	4	12	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>89</b>

**3.3.2 Municipal Strategic Statement**

Overall, 32% of Councils who responded said that road safety programs or initiatives were mentioned in their Municipal Strategic Statements (see Table 3.7). Councils were asked how road safety programs were mentioned in their Municipal Strategic Statement, and their answers were categorised as in Table 3.6. The relatively high number of “other” responses in Table 3.8 suggests that the majority of mentions do not fit neatly with any of the classifications used.

**3.3.3 Municipal Health Plan**

A total of 40% of Councils stated that road safety programs or initiatives were mentioned in their Municipal Health Plans (see Table 3.9). Metropolitan Councils were substantially more likely to mention road safety in their Municipal Health Plans than either Large or Small Regional Councils, with Large Regional Councils more likely to mention it than Small Regional Councils (as a proportion of the total number of Councils in each Council category).

**Table 3.7 Numbers of Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils who mentioned road safety initiatives or programs in their Municipal Strategic Statements**

Road safety mentioned in strategic statement	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	10	4	6	20
No	12	11	16	39
N/A	0	0	1	1
No response	1	0	1	2
Total	23	15	24	62

**Table 3.8 Types of road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in the Municipal Strategic Statement.**

Type of activity	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Blackspots	0	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0
Safety of infrastructure	3	3	2	8
Traffic management	0	2	3	5
Pedestrian/cyclist	2	0	1	3
Road safety strategy	3	1	0	4
Other	7	4	2	13
No response	13	9	17	39
Total	28	19	25	72

The mix of road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in Municipal Health Plans differed from those in the Corporate Plans and Municipal Strategic Statements. The most commonly mentioned road safety programs or initiatives in the Municipal Health Plans for Metropolitan Councils related to providing safe infrastructure, pedestrian and cyclist facilities, and a Road Safety Strategy (see Table 3.10). Small and Large Regional Councils had a more even spread of the types of activities mentioned in the Municipal Health Plan.

**Table 3.9 Numbers of Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils who mentioned road safety initiatives or programs in their Municipal Health Plans**

Road safety mentioned in municipal health plan	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	15	5	5	25
No	8	9	17	34
N/A	0	0	1	1
No response	0	1	1	2
Total	23	15	24	62

Overall, the number of Councils who reported that road safety programs or activities were mentioned in Council documents was similar for the Corporate Plan, Municipal Strategic Statement and the Municipal Health Plan. The spread of non response and “other” was also similar across the three documents, and in each case the Small Regional Councils were least likely to answer the question.

**Table 3.10 Types of road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in the Municipal Health Plan.**

Type of activity mentioned in health plan	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Blackspots	1	0	0	1
Education	3	2	0	5
Safety of infrastructure	6	2	1	9
Traffic management	1	0	0	1
Cyclist/cyclist	7	2	1	10
Road safety strategy	5	0	1	6
VicRoads	2	1	0	3
Other	11	6	3	20
No response	6	7	19	32
Total	42	20	24	87

### 3.3.4 Road Safety Plans or Strategies

Nine of the 62 responding Councils had a Road Safety Plan or Strategy (15% of the total). A Road Safety Plan was under consideration by 14 Councils (23%) and was being developed by 28 Councils (45%) (see Table 3.11). Metropolitan Councils were substantially more likely to have or be developing a Road Safety Plan or Strategy, with none saying that they did not have a Plan. The majority of Councils possessed a Road Safety Plan or Strategy or were developing or considering one.

**Table 3.11 Numbers of Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy**

Road Safety Plan?	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	6	2	1	9
No	0	1	10	11
Considering	1	5	8	14
Developing	16	7	5	28
Total	23	15	24	62

Councils that did not have a Road Safety Plan were asked to specify the reasons for this. Table 3.12 summarises the options that respondents were able to choose from and the number of Councils who chose each option. The most common response overall was “insufficient resources”, cited by 24 Councils. Most of the Councils indicating that they were under-resourced were regional – only two of the six Metropolitan Councils who responded to this question cited lack of resources as the reason for not having a Road Safety Plan, as opposed to 22 of the 29 regional Councils who chose this option. Only four Councils overall stated that they did not have a Road Safety Plan because it was not in the Corporate Plan. No Councils chose an option that indicated that they thought road safety was not an important issue (e.g., “road safety is not a priority”, “hadn’t thought of it” and “no need”).

Councils were asked how they identified road safety issues. The responses were grouped into the categories in Table 3.13. The two methods reported most often by the total sample of Councils were “community feedback” and “accident records”, such as CrashStats. This pattern was also present within the groups of Metropolitan and Large Regional Councils. However, “staff assessments” figured slightly higher amongst the Small Regional Councils. “Staff assessments” was chosen by only one Metropolitan Council.

**Table 3.12 Reasons why Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils do not have a Road Safety Plan.**

Reason for no road safety plan	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Road safety is not a priority	0	0	0	0
Hadn't thought of it	0	0	0	0
No resources	2	6	16	24
Not in Corporate Plan	1	0	3	4
Competing demands	0	0	0	0
Road safety covered elsewhere	0	0	0	0
No need	0	0	0	0
N/A	2	2	1	5
Other	1	0	1	2
No response	17	7	3	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>62</b>

**Table 3.13 How Councils identify road safety issues.**

Method for identifying issues	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Road safety audits	4	2	1	7
Community feedback	14	9	12	35
Council documents	8	4	5	17
Funds available	0	1	1	2
Other organisations (e.g. VicRoads)	4	5	4	13
CrashStats / accident records	16	11	7	34
Staff assessments	1	5	8	14
Traffic / speed counts	6	2	2	10
Other	3	2	4	9
No response	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>145</b>

Councils were asked if they had set any road safety targets. A total of fifteen Councils (24%) had set road safety targets – eleven Metropolitan and four Large Regional Councils. Only one Small Regional Council did not respond to this question. Six of the Councils with road safety targets also had a Road Safety Plan. The types of road safety targets that were listed in response to an open-ended question included black spot treatments, footpaths and bike paths, tackling speeding, developing a road safety strategy, and reducing the road fatality rate within particular Councils by values such as 5%, 20% and 50%. One Council said that it planned to tackle three separate road safety issues each year.

### **3.3.5 Allocation of resources for road safety activities**

Councils were asked to report their total annual budget for 1999/2000. However, there may have been confusion amongst the respondents as to whether this question related to Council's overall budget or just the roads/infrastructure budget. Many Councils did not complete this item. So rather than reporting this data, estimates of the total program cost (including salaries) provided by Councils for a range of individual activities related to road safety during the 1999/2000 financial year were analysed. The expenditure on each type of activity is summarised in Table 3.14. These figures need to be treated with caution because some Councils may have spent money on particular activities but were not able to identify that cost within a broader budget. The larger number of Councils who left blanks for the non-engineering programs may reflect this.

“Road construction/realignment” was the largest and most common type of road safety-related expenditure by Councils. “Local area traffic management” was the next most frequent expenditure item, followed by “pedestrian needs”, “bicycle facilities” and “removal of roadside hazards”. However, while “traffic enforcement” was the sixth most common activity, it was the second most expensive in terms of average expenditure after “road construction/realignment”, followed by “pedestrian needs”, “bicycle facilities” and “road auditing”.

Items incorporated into the category “other” included a motorised wheelchair workshop, “planning”, resealing, development of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan, school crossings, and parking.

The questionnaire also asked how many equivalent full time Council staff were involved in each of the categories of expenditure listed in Table 3.14, as well as asking how many staff were involved overall in road safety issues. It was expected that these numbers should coincide, however this was never the case. It would seem that it was difficult for Councils to determine with any degree of accuracy or certainty how many hours were spent by staff on some of the activities included under the banner of road safety, especially if such duties were not the primary function of particular employees. This view is further supported by statements such as “this is impossible to answer” and “everyone involved with roads”. Thus the validity of the recorded data for this item is open to question and so not reported here.

**Table 3.14 Expenditure on various road safety-related activities during 1999/2000**

Type of activity	Number of Councils who spent money	Mean expenditure* \$(000 rounded)	Maximum expenditure \$(000 rounded)
Local area traffic management	39	110	500
Road construction/realignment	46	1524	7000
Road safety auditing	22	54	2100
Removal of roadside hazards	31	30	190
Identify high-risk accident groups	4	1	10
Bicycle education	6	1	50
Bicycle facilities	33	62	400
Pedestrian needs	35	86	625
Pedestrian awareness programs	6	29	1000
Programs for elderly pedestrians	9	1	20
Traffic enforcement	27	158	2900
Other	11	176	795
Total (as stated)	50		

\*Mean expenditure includes those Councils who responded that they did not spend any money on this area, but it does not include those Councils who left the item blank.

### 3.4 ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES

#### 3.4.1 Road safety activities during 1999/2000

The total program cost for various road safety activities during the 1999/2000 financial year, as supplied by respondents, is summarised in Table 3.15. The road safety activity in which Councils were most likely to have been involved was a program to reduce speeding in local streets (62% of responding Councils). Of the 38 Councils spending money to curb speeding in local streets, 25 spent over \$5000 and ten spent between \$1000 and \$5000. In many cases the money was actually spent on infrastructure, such as local area traffic management initiatives to slow traffic.

**Table 3.15 Total program costs for various road safety activities during the 1999/2000 financial year**

Activity	Number of Councils by program cost				No response	Number of 'spending Councils'
	\$0	\$1-999	\$1000 – \$4999	\$5000 +		
Seatbelt wearing	53	3	3	0	3	6
Child restraint use	31	15	9	4	3	28
Drink driving	42	10	4	1	5	15
Speeding in local streets	23	3	10	25	1	38
Road safety promotion	35	9	13	1	4	23
Bicycle safety promotion	41	8	4	6	3	18
Not driving while fatigued	48	7	4	0	3	11
Other	19	1	2	9	31	12
Total	292	56	49	46	53	151

The next most frequent activity was associated with child restraint use, however 24 of the 28 spending Councils spent less than \$5000 on this activity. Several Councils mentioned that their involvement was in the form of minimal support for a health centre or community group who actually conducted the activity – such as restraint checking or providing baby capsules for the public to borrow or hire. Promotional activities were also common, although relatively little money was spent in these areas. For example, pamphlets may have been printed and made available for distribution at events or through Council offices. For some of the other activities, such as not driving while fatigued, drink driving and bicycle activities, money was often spent on promotions or seminars.

Councils were also asked what factors led to the development of the programs they had spent money on. Fourteen Councils did not respond to this question. Another five stated that the question was not applicable because they had no programs in place. The most common response overall and within each category of Council was “level of community concern or involvement” (71% of all responding Councils). “Advice from other organisations” such as VicRoads was the next most common response, followed by “number of crashes/injuries” and then “pressure from specific road user groups” (see Table 3.16).

**Table 3.16 Factors that led to the development of road safety programs.**

Factor	Number of Councils			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Crash data	8	6	3	17
Community involvement/ concern	16	9	9	34
Pressure from user groups	4	3	4	11
Audits	4	1	3	8
VicRoads or other group	10	5	3	18
Road safety Council	1	1	0	2
Staff	0	0	1	1
N/A	1	1	3	5
Other	3	2	1	6
No response	2	4	8	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>116</b>

In general, few of the activities described in Table 3.15 were evaluated. Table 3.17 shows that overall, 18 Councils (34% of responding Councils) evaluated their road safety programs, although in both the Metropolitan and Large Regional Councils 46% of the responding Councils evaluated their programs compared to 11% of the Small Regional Councils.

**Table 3.17 Were any road safety programs undertaken in 1998/99 evaluated?**

Were programs evaluated?	Number of Councils			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	10	6	2	18
No	12	7	15	34
N/A	0	0	1	1
No response	1	2	6	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>62</b>

Those Councils who said that some of the road safety activities they undertook were evaluated provided 25 separate instances of evaluation for analysis (see Table 3.18). Community feedback and traffic surveys were the most common methods of evaluation of initiatives or programs.

**Table 3.18 Ways in which the road safety activities were evaluated**

Type of evaluation	Number of Councils
Crash data	2
Traffic surveys	6
Community feedback	7
Road Safety Council	1
VicRoads or other organisation	4
Other	5
N/A	2
No response	42
Total	69

Four Councils (all Metropolitan) mentioned some type of speed evaluation. One of these Councils stated that a lower speed had been achieved and another said that any changes were insignificant. Seven Metropolitan mentioned that the activity evaluated was a traffic management treatment and two Regional Councils specified that they had carried out Blackspot works. Two Metropolitan Councils said that there had been before and after studies, but were not specific as to what was actually measured, such as crashes, speed, etc.

### **3.4.2 Proposed programs for 2000/2001**

The proposed road or traffic safety programs or activities planned for the 2000/2001 financial year are summarised in Table 3.19. The most common programs or activities listed were “pedestrian/cyclist” activities and the development of a Safety Strategy or Plan. Only five Councils (three Small Regional, one Metropolitan and one Large Regional) responded that they had no road or traffic safety programs or initiatives planned for the coming financial year.

After “pedestrian/cyclist” activities, Metropolitan Councils were somewhat more likely to list “traffic management”, while developing a strategy and infrastructure projects were the highest responses for the large and Small Regional Councils respectively.

**Table 3.19 Proposed road or traffic safety programs or activities for the 2000/2001 financial year.**

Activity/program	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Blackspot	5	0	4	9
Education	7	3	1	11
Infrastructure	2	1	5	8
Investigate traffic issues	1	0	3	4
Traffic management	9	3	2	14
Pedestrian/cyclist	12	3	4	19
Audit	3	0	2	5
Road safety Council	0	0	0	0
Develop strategy	9	6	4	19
Not specific	11	5	5	21
None	1	1	3	5
No response	1	4	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>126</b>

### 3.4.3 Partners in road safety

Councils were asked to nominate from a list those organisations that they collaborate with to improve road safety. All but one Council – a Small Regional Council – indicated that they collaborated with VicRoads and all but three Councils – one Large and two Small Regional Councils – work with the Police (see Table 3.20). The next most common response was a local Road Safety Council, although a smaller proportion of Small Regional Councils were involved with Road Safety Councils.

Of the organisations provided for respondents to choose from, the TAC had the lowest level of collaboration with individual Councils. Two Metropolitan, two Small Regional Councils and three Large Regional Councils reported that they collaborate with the Transport Accident Commission.

**Table 3.20 Organisations which Council collaborates with to improve road safety.**

Organisation	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Road Safety Council	20	12	14	46
Police	23	14	22	59
VicRoads	23	15	23	61
TAC	2	3	2	7
Local Safety Committee	10	7	5	22
Safer Cities & Shires	4	5	3	12
Other Councils	14	7	7	28
Other	3	2	2	7
No response	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>242</b>

### 3.4.4 Training

In an open-ended question, Councils were asked what training staff receive in order to deliver road safety programs (see Table 3.21). The most common types of training across and within each type of Council were “auditing” and “seminars or courses” – each involving twenty Councils (together comprising 78% of the total valid responses).

One Metropolitan, one Large Regional Council and six Small Regional Councils said that there was no training at all, and two Metropolitan and three Large Regional Councils said that there was no specific training. The only Council to nominate “on-the-job” type training was a Small Regional Council. The responses that make up the “other” category were primarily meetings such as LGPro meetings or responses like “road safety auditing”, where it was not clear whether this was a course or some other method of training.

When asked what training courses would assist Council in conducting road safety programs, most Councils nominated “road safety auditing” and “promoting road safety in the community” (each accounting for 38% of responses), followed by “accident analysis and identification” (24% of responses) (see Table 3.22). One Metropolitan Council indicated “other” – a specific bicycle education course.

**Table 3.21 Training that staff receive in order to deliver road safety programs.**

Training	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Accident analysis	1	1	4	6
Auditing	10	3	7	20
Seminars/courses	11	4	5	20
Nothing specific	2	3	0	5
On-the-job	0	0	1	1
Other	8	4	2	14
None	1	1	6	8
No response	2	2	6	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>84</b>

**Table 3.22 Training that would assist Council to deliver road safety programs.**

Training	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Audit	20	12	16	48
Accident analysis	17	7	7	31
Promoting safety	20	11	17	48
Other	1	0	0	1
No response	0	1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>133</b>

### 3.5 ROAD SAFETY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

In Section 3 of the questionnaire, Councils were asked about their involvement in a range of road safety-related activities.

#### 3.5.1 Safety audits

Twenty-five percent of responding Councils indicated that they had a policy of conducting regular safety audits of the existing road system (see Table 3.23). In addition, a large

number of Councils were considering or actually developing such a policy (28% of responding Councils). Small Regional Councils were relatively more likely than Large Regional Councils to have a policy of conducting regular audits, who were in turn more likely than Metropolitan Councils to have such a policy.

**Table 3.23 Does Council have a policy of conducting regular safety audits of the existing road system?**

Regular safety audits?	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	3	3	9	15
No	10	6	9	25
Considering	8	4	3	15
Developing	2	0	3	5
No response	0	2	0	2

Sixty-one percent of responding Councils reported that no new works were independently audited, and less than 9% reported that 50% or more of projects were audited (see Table 3.24). Overall, 37% of Councils conducted some degree of auditing of new works. Metropolitan councils were more likely to audit new works (43% of Metropolitan councils), followed by Small Regional Councils (38%) and Large Regional Councils (27%).

**Table 3.24 What percentage of new works are currently independently audited?**

Percentage of works audited	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
None	12	9	15	36
Less than 50%	8	3	7	18
50% - 99%	1	0	2	3
All	1	1	0	2
No response	1	2	0	3

### 3.5.2 Enforcement

Councils were asked about the role their parking officers played in road safety. Not surprisingly, enforcement of parking restrictions or local bylaws was the most commonly reported role (see Table 3.25). School-related activities such as training crossing guards, involvement in safety education or promotional programs for school children and liaising with school staff was the next most common role for parking officers in regards to road safety, followed by advising Council of hazards. Seven Small Regional Councils indicated that a parking officer was not employed by Council and five Councils did not respond to the question. Activities that were classified as ‘other’ include removal of derelict vehicles, fire prevention and signage issues.

Six primarily Small Regional Councils said that their parking officers played no role in road safety. However, these parking officers are probably principally employed for enforcement purposes and most Councils listed enforcement as a road safety function. It is possible that the parking officers in these Councils may perform other tasks that could also be classified as safety-related, even if this is not a primary duty, such as reporting problems in the road system regarding maintenance or sight lines. This question was open-ended – it may have been better to provide options for the respondents to choose from. In none of the questionnaires returned was it indicated that a parking officer assisted in completing the questionnaire for any Council, and so if parking officers have other inputs into road safety that are informal, such as reporting hazardous sections of roadway, they may not have been known to the individual(s) completing the questionnaire.

**Table 3.25 The roles that parking officers play in road safety.**

Role played by parking officer	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Advise of hazards	3	3	2	8
Animal control	0	1	1	2
Assist public	2	0	0	2
Education	2	0	1	3
School-related	8	4	1	13
Enforcement	16	8	7	31
Other	6	4	2	12
None	1	1	4	6
N/A	0	0	7	7
No response	0	3	2	5
Total	38	24	27	89

Less than half (43%) of all responding Councils reported assisting Police with in-depth investigation of crash sites (see Table 3.26), and the level was approximately consistent across all three categories of Council. However, 80% of responding Councils worked with Police to target enforcement, particularly Metropolitan Councils.

### 3.5.3 Street trees

Almost all Councils reported regularly pruning trees by footpaths, cycle tracks and roadways to maintain clear visibility for users (Table 3.26). However, only one-quarter of the responding Councils had a policy of planting only frangible trees to minimise the collision hazard for motorists.

**Table 3.26 Council involvement in various road safety-related activities**

Activity	Response	Number of Council responses			
		Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Assist police with in-depth investigations	Yes	10	6	10	26
	No	13	8	14	35
	No response	0	1	0	1
Work with police in enforcement	Yes	20	9	18	47
	No	3	5	4	12
	No response	0	1	2	3
Prune trees for visibility	Yes	21	13	24	58
	No	1	0	0	1
	No response	1	2	0	3
Plant frangible trees	Yes	5	3	6	14
	No	16	8	17	41
	No response	2	4	1	7

### 3.5.4 Pedestrians

Table 3.27 summarises the number of Councils involved in various pedestrian safety activities. Almost all Councils indicated that they examine the safety consequences for pedestrians when planning traffic control devices and provide accessible pedestrian refuges and painted medians where appropriate.

Just under three-quarters of responding Councils investigate the safety of bus stopping locations for boarding and alighting passengers (73%). Metropolitan Councils were more likely to indicate that they did this (83% of Metropolitan Councils), followed by Small

Regional Councils (67%) and then Large Regional Councils (67% of this category of Council).

**Table 3.27 Council involvement in various pedestrian safety activities**

Activity	Response	Number of Council responses			
		Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Examine safety consequences for pedestrians when planning traffic control devices	Yes	23	13	21	57
	No	0	0	1	1
	No response	0	2	2	4
Provide accessible pedestrian refuges and painted medians	Yes	23	11	21	55
	No	0	2	1	3
	Considering	0	0	2	2
	No response	0	2	0	2
Provide pedestrian malls	Yes	13	5	8	26
	No	2	7	9	18
	Considering	5	1	3	9
	Developing	1	0	0	1
	n/a	1	0	2	3
	No response	1	2	2	5
Investigate adequacy of walk phases for elderly and those with children	Yes	16	6	5	27
	No	3	5	11	19
	Considering	3	0	1	4
	Developing	1	0	0	1
	n/a	0	2	6	8
	No response	0	2	1	3

**Table 3.27 (cont) Council involvement in various pedestrian safety activities**

Activity	Response	Number of Council responses			
		Metropolitan	Large Regional	Small Regional	Total
Investigate safety of bus stops for passengers	Yes	19	9	16	44
	No	3	4	6	13
	Considering	0	0	1	1
	Developing	1	0	0	1
	n/a	0	0	1	1
	No response	0	2	0	2
Provide alternative transport options for the elderly	Yes	17	5	16	38
	No	1	7	7	15
	Considering	3	0	0	3
	Developing	1	1	0	4
	No response	1	2	1	4
Provide programs to minimise intoxicated pedestrians	Yes	2	3	2	7
	No	14	10	21	45
	Considering	1	0	0	1
	Developing	4	0	0	4
	No response	2	2	1	5

Two-thirds of all Councils provided alternative transport options for elderly residents. This option is most likely to be available in Metropolitan Councils (74% of Metropolitan Councils, or 91% if those considering or developing such an option are included), followed by Small Regional Councils (67%) and Large Regional Councils (33% of these Councils).

Just under half of all responding Councils reported that they provide pedestrian malls and investigate the adequacy of traffic signal walk phases, although there are several Small Regional Councils where this item is irrelevant due to absence of traffic lights in the municipality. Metropolitan Councils were most likely to be active in these areas.

Only 12% of all responding Councils provided programs to minimise intoxicated pedestrians – two Metropolitan and two Small Regional Councils, and three Large Regional Councils. Five additional Metropolitan Councils indicated that they are currently developing or considering developing these initiatives.

### 3.5.5 Motorcyclists

Most Councils (83% of the responding total) reported that they considered the effects on motorcyclists of proposed traffic management devices, particularly the Metropolitan and Small Regional Councils (see Table 3.28). All but one of the responding Councils – a Large Regional Council – insist that contractors must sweep up loose material after carrying out maintenance or construction works. Five Councils did not respond to this question.

### 3.5.6 Bicyclists

Two-thirds of all Councils have a bicycle strategy or plan, predominantly Metropolitan and Large Regional Councils (see Table 3.28).

**Table 3.28 Council involvement in various motorcycle and bicycle safety activities**

Activity	Response	Number of Council responses			
		Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Consider effects on motorcyclists of proposed traffic management devices	Yes	21	10	18	49
	No	2	3	5	10
	No response	0	2	1	3
Contractors must sweep up after maintenance/ construction	Yes	21	12	23	56
	No	0	1	0	1
	No response	2	2	1	5
Have a bicycle strategy/ plan	Yes	19	12	10	41
	No	4	3	14	21
	No response	0	0	0	0

More than one-third of Councils did not provide information on the lengths of bicycle paths and lanes on local roads, off-road and shared with pedestrians (see Table 3.29). Many of the Councils noted that this information was not available, and others were not able to split the figures they had into the three categories of path, hence the different numbers of Councils contributing to the data in the table (as indicated in the parentheses in Table 3.29).

Of those Councils that did report data for bike paths, there were several very large estimates of path length, and so the median rather than the mean lengths of bicycle paths and lanes are summarised in Table 3.29. It seemed from the data that some Councils may have only included dedicated bicycle infrastructure, whereas others may have included any pathways that they considered useable by bicycles.

Metropolitan Councils seemed to have a larger extent of bicycle pathways on and off road and shared with pedestrians. Proportionally, Metropolitan Councils also provided slightly

more data for this question than did Large Regional Councils, both providing somewhat more data than Small Regional Councils (70%, 67% and 54% of each Council category respectively). A larger number of Metropolitan and Large Regional Councils possess Bicycle Strategies or Plans than the number that provided data for the path length question. Three Small Regional Councils that did not have a Bicycle Strategy or Plan may have dedicated bicycle pathways.

**Table 3.29 Median length of bicycle paths and lanes. Numbers of Councils who provided data to each median are in brackets.**

Type of path	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
On local roads	12.8 (16)	6.4 (10)	4 (13)	7 (39)
Off road	15 (15)	10 (11)	5 (13)	10 (39)
Shared with pedestrians	15 (13)	7 (8)	3.3 (15)	9.1 (36)

### 3.6 COUNCIL AS A FLEET OPERATOR

#### 3.6.1 Alcohol at Council functions

Councils were asked whether they had a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions. Table 3.30 shows that 79% of Councils did not have a policy. Six Councils (just under 10%) did not answer the question.

**Table 3.30 Does council have a policy regarding serving alcohol at council functions?**

Alcohol serving policy?	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	5	4	3	12
No	16	9	19	44
No response	2	2	2	6

#### 3.6.2 Safety features of fleet vehicles

Councils were asked about the safety features they require for their passenger car fleets. Seventy-three percent of Councils require driver's side airbags, 55% ABS brakes, 52% for cruise control, and 24% require a passenger side airbag (see Table 3.31). Only 6% of Councils indicated that they had no policy on vehicle features at all, although nine Councils (15%) did not answer the question.

Other features that were sometimes requested included fire extinguishers, and cargo barriers for wagons. ABS and cruise control were more prevalent in regional Council policies, possibly reflecting the longer distances and less rigorously maintained roads of many of the physically larger regional Councils (as opposed to the category “Large Regional” used throughout this report).

**Table 3.31 Fleet vehicle features.**

Vehicle feature	Number of Council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Driver's airbag	16	10	19	45
Passenger airbag	4	6	5	15
ABS	8	11	15	34
Cruise control	6	11	15	32
Other	3	1	0	4
No policy	2	1	1	4
No response	5	1	3	9

**3.6.3 Maintenance and operation of the fleet**

Councils were asked whether they had a system in place to ensure that fleet vehicles were regularly checked and maintained. Only two Metropolitan, two Large Regional and one Small Regional Council replied that they did not have such a system – one Large Regional Council did not respond to the question (see Table 3.32).

**Table 3.32 Whether Council has in place a system to ensure regular checking and maintenance of fleet vehicles.**

Response	Number of Councils			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Yes	21	12	23	56
No	2	2	1	5
No response	0	1	0	1

When asked whether Councils had in place any procedures to ensure the safe operation of fleet vehicles, only 41 Councils (66%) said that driver accident involvement was monitored (see Table 3.33). The proportion of each Council type that chose this response was approximately equivalent, ranging from 60-63% of Large Regional and Small Regional Councils, up to 74% for Metropolitan Councils.

Four Councils – two Metropolitan and two Large Regional Councils – indicated that they had all of a Driver Training Procedure, a Safe Driving Policy, and monitored accident involvement. One of these Councils also selected “other” and said that there were consequences for drivers who did not drive safely.

Five Councils (two Metropolitan, two Small Regional and one Large Regional Council) said that they had no procedures in place for ensuring the safe operation of Council cars, although eleven Councils did not respond to the question at all. Seven Councils indicated that they had a Safe Driving Policy and ten Councils chose “other” as their response. “Other” responses included two Councils that said that the driver was responsible for the vehicle’s maintenance and another who said that such procedures were under consideration.

**Table 3.33 Procedures that Council has in place to ensure the safe operation of its vehicle fleet.**

Policy procedures	Number of council responses			
	Metropolitan	Large regional	Small regional	Total
Driver training	7	6	5	18
Safe Driving Policy	3	3	1	7
Monitor accident involvement	17	9	15	41
Other	2	4	4	10
No procedures	2	1	2	5
No response	3	3	5	11



## 4.0 COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF THE 1998 AND 2000 SURVEYS

As discussed earlier, one of the aims of the 1998 survey was to establish a baseline for measuring the effects of the Saferoads Initiative. One of the aims of the 2000 survey was to produce data that could be compared to the baseline record and so examine changes that have occurred in the intervening period. This section of the report describes the differences observed between the findings of the 1998 and 2000 surveys, and is structured similarly to Chapter 3 – the analysis of the responses to the 2000 questionnaire.

### 4.1 RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 4.1 summarises the number of Councils that responded to the 1998 and 2000 surveys, categorised according to Council type. The proportion of responses each Council type contributed to the results is similar for the 1998 and 2000 analyses.

**Table 4.1 Number of Councils that responded to the 1998 and 2000 surveys by Council type.**

Questionnaires Returned	Number of responses by Council type			
	Metropolitan	Large Regional	Small Regional	Total
Returned in 2000	23	15	24	62
Returned in 1998	24	16	24 <sup>1</sup>	64
Total number of Councils in Victoria	31	18	29	78

Table 4.2 presents the response rates of the Metropolitan and Large and Small Regional Councils for the 1998 and 2000 surveys as percentages of the total number of each Council type. Overall, 63% of the total number of Councils responded to both the 1998 and 2000 surveys, and can therefore be used to make comparisons between the surveys. Just under 20% of Councils overall responded to only one of the surveys and 1% did not respond on either occasion.

The Large Regional Councils had the highest response rate for both surveys, with 72% of these Councils returning both the 1998 and 2000 questionnaires. As a group, the Small Regional Councils had the second highest response rate for both surveys (66%) followed by the Metropolitan Councils (55%). In terms of the actual number of responses (i.e. not taking into account the size of the Council group), the Small Regional Councils returned the highest number of questionnaires (19). The group of Metropolitan Councils had the second highest number of responses with 17 questionnaires, followed by the Large Regional Councils with 13 questionnaires returned.

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes a Small Regional Council that responded too late to be incorporated into the 1998 analysis and report but responded to the 2000 survey.

**Table 4.2 Response rate for the 1998 and 2000 questionnaires by Council type expressed as a percentage of the total number of each type of Council.**

Questionnaires Returned	Percent of Councils that responded (%)			
	Metropolitan	Large Regional	Small Regional	Total
1998 & 2000	55	72	66	63
1998 not 2000	23	17	17	19
2000 not 1998	19	11	17	17
Neither 1998 or 2000	3	0	0	1

**4.1.2 Business units responding**

The questionnaire asked what business unit the individual(s) actually completing the questionnaire belonged to. The overall number of business units that answered the questionnaire was similar between 1998 and 2000 when the “other” category is taken into account. In both surveys the “engineering” and “infrastructure” departments were the most common responding units, although there were more engineering business units in the 2000 survey – 16 versus 11 in 1998. The third most common responding business unit in 2000 was “assets” followed by “traffic/transportation”, whereas it was “planning” followed by “technical services” in 1998. Taking into account all individuals who were noted on each questionnaire as assisting in its completion, there was little difference in the total number individuals responding – 88 in 1998 versus 81 in 2000.

**4.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ROAD SAFETY**

In response to the open-ended question of which Council business units have the major responsibility for road safety, the principal categories of department were essentially the same in 1998 and 2000. The most common responses and their order of frequency were the same across the two questionnaires – “engineering”, followed by “infrastructure”, “technical services” and “assets”.

Councils were also asked what business units have any responsibility for road safety, with a series of options to choose from. The options indicated by Councils in 1998 and 2000 are shown in Table 4.3. A substantially larger number of departments were indicated to have some responsibility for road safety in 2000 than 1998 – 296 versus 193 (a 53% increase). One category saw a considerable decline in the number of responses between 1998 and 2000 – “engineering”, which totalled 60 responses in 1998 versus 49 responses in 2000. Three extra categories were included in 2000 that were not present in 1998; “assets”, “infrastructure”, and “risk”.

The larger increases in the number of departments with some responsibility for road safety in 2000 over 1998 were for “risk”-type departments, “community services”, “local laws”, and “works”. While these increases in responses may indicate an increased responsibility for road safety, a broadening of the responsibility across more Council departments, or increased specialisation amongst some departments, it may also mean that the respondents

in 2000 were more likely to be aware of how a greater variety of departments may be contributing to road safety.

**Table 4.3 Types of business units or departments with some responsibility for road safety. 1998 versus 2000.**

Business unit	Number of councils in 2000	Number of councils in 1998
Administration	5	6
Assets	4	(not included in 1998)
Building	9	3
Community Services	24	8
Engineering	49	60
Finance	4	2
Health	11	6
Human Services	6	5
Infrastructure	4	(not included in 1998)
Local Laws	41	29
Parks	13	6
Recreation	11	6
Risk	21	(not included in 1998)
Planning	20	19
Traffic	23	28
Works	41	8
Other	10	7
Total	296	193

### 4.3 ROAD SAFETY IN COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

#### 4.3.1 Corporate Plan

The number of mentions of road safety in Council Corporate Plans increased from 33 to 38 Councils between 1998 and 2000. However this increase of five Councils who said that road safety was mentioned was less than the decline in the number of Councils who said that road safety was not mentioned, down from 29 in 1998 to 19 in 2000. This difference can be seen in the increase in the number of non-responses in 2000. The distribution of these responses across Council types was approximately equivalent across the two surveys.

The profile of the type of mention of road safety in Corporate Plans changed somewhat between the questionnaires. The use or development of a Road Safety Strategy was substantially more common in 2000 (a total of 21 responses in 2000 and 2 in 1998), as was the category “other” (15 responses in 2000 and 2 in 1998), indicating that there were a large number of individual programs mentioned that were not easily categorised. The number of programs or initiatives mentioned by both Large and Small Regional Councils between the surveys was similar, however there were substantially fewer mentions by Metropolitan Councils in 2000.

#### 4.3.2 Municipal Strategic Statement

Six additional Councils mentioned road safety in their Municipal Strategic Statement in 2000 compared with 1998, three of which were Metropolitan Councils. The “traffic management” and “other” categories of types of road safety mention were higher in 2000 than 1998, although the size of the difference was not substantial.

#### 4.3.3 Municipal Health Plan

Road safety was mentioned in Council Municipal Health Plans by almost twice as many Councils in 2000 compared with 1998 – 25 versus 14 respectively. Nine of the extra 11 Councils were Metropolitan Councils, with the remainder being Small Regional Councils. Of the 55 mentions of road safety in Health Plans in 2000, 20 were categorised as “other”, compared with 33 mentions in 1998 with 5 “other”.

#### 4.3.4 Road Safety Plans or Strategies

The number of Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy did not substantially change between 1998 and 2000 (8 versus 9 respectively), and most of these Councils were Metropolitan (see Table 4.4). In both surveys, 14 Councils were considering developing a Plan. The number of Councils developing a Plan increased from three Metropolitan Councils in 1998 to 28 in 2000 (16 Metropolitan, 7 Large Regional and 5 Small Regional).

**Table 4.4 Numbers of Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy. 1998 versus 2000.**

Road safety plan?	Number of Council responses							
	Metropolitan		Large regional		Small regional		Total	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
Yes	6	6	1	2	1	1	8	9
Considering	7	1	4	5	3	8	14	14
Developing	3	16	0	7	0	5	3	28
No	8	0	11	1	19	10	38	11
Total	24	23	16	15	23	24	63	62

The primary reason given for the lack of a Road Safety Plan in both surveys was a shortage of resources. In both surveys this problem was most likely to be identified by Small Regional Councils, followed by Large Regional Councils and then Metropolitan Councils.

Councils were asked how they identified road safety issues. There were 137 responses to this question in 1998 and 141 responses in 2000 (see Table 4.5). In both surveys “community feedback” and “accident records” were the most common responses, although more Councils of each type identified these options in 2000 than 1998. The response “Council documents” was chosen more often in 2000, “staff assessments” was more common in 1998, and “road safety audits” and “other organisations” such as VicRoads were identified approximately equally often in the two surveys. Traffic counts or speed surveys were listed by ten Councils in 2000 but not identified as a separate category at all in the 1998 analysis. The relative distribution of these responses amongst the council types was similar across the two surveys.

**Table 4.5 How Councils identify road safety issues. 1998 versus 2000.**

Method of identifying issues	Number of Council responses							
	Metropolitan		Large regional		Small regional		Total	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
Road safety audits	3	4	1	2	3	1	7	7
Community feedback	13	14	8	9	8	12	29	35
Council documents	5	8	2	4	1	5	8	17
Funds available	4	0	3	1	4	1	11	2
Other organisations (e.g. VicRoads)	6	4	7	5	3	4	16	13
CrashStats / accident records	13	16	7	11	6	7	26	34
Staff assessments	9	1	7	5	11	8	27	14
Traffic / speed counts	Not counted in 1998	6	Not counted in 1998	2	Not counted in 1998	2	Not counted in 1998	10
Other	4	3	3	2	6	4	13	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>141</b>

Twice as many Councils had set road safety targets in 2000 compared to 1998 – 15 versus seven. In both cases the Councils who had set targets were most likely to be Metropolitan, followed by Large Regional and Small Regional Councils.

### **4.3.5 Allocation of resources for road safety activities**

A substantially greater number of Councils indicated that they had spent money on a road safety activity or program in 2000 than in 1998 – 50 versus 29 respectively. “Road construction/ realignment” was the most common item in both surveys and received both the highest average and highest single expenditure on both occasions. “Local area traffic management” was the second most common item in both surveys, although the 2000 mean expenditure for this item was approximately half that in 1998.

The top five items in terms of the number of Councils who spent money on them were the same and in the same order in both surveys, however “traffic enforcement” was the sixth most common expenditure item and had the second highest mean expenditure in 2000, but was not categorised separately in 1998.

## **4.4 ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES**

### **4.4.1 Road safety activities during 1999/2000**

A larger number of Councils spent money on the road safety activities nominated in the questionnaire in 2000 than in 1998 – 151 versus 116 Councils respectively. Table 4.6 lists the road safety activities and the number of Councils who spent money on them. In both surveys the activity undertaken by the greater number of Councils and receiving the most funding was “speeding in local streets”.

With respect to the number of Councils spending money, the next three activities were similar across the surveys – “road safety promotion”, “child restraint use”, and “bicycle safety promotion” – although not in the same order. The 2000 survey responses indicated that more Councils spent up to \$4,999 on individual activities than they did in 1998, but that the number of instances where \$5000 or more was spent was similar in the two surveys – 49 instances in 1998 and 46 in 2000.

In both surveys, level of community concern was the most important factor that led to the development of the programs listed in Table 4.6. Use of crash data, involvement of other groups such as VicRoads, and pressure from specific user groups were also important factors in the development of road safety programs in 1998 as well as in 2000.

In 1998, 29 Councils indicated that particular activities had not been evaluated in any way, whereas in 2000 this figure was 34 Councils. In 2000 there were 25 instances where Councils identified a particular evaluation strategy that had been used to assess the success of particular activities, such as “crash data”, “traffic surveys” and “community feedback”. Responses to the 1998 questionnaire indicated 12 instances of evaluation.

### **4.4.2 Proposed programs for the coming financial year**

In the 2000 survey more Councils indicated that they had plans for activities or programs for the coming financial year than in the 1998 survey (110 versus 88, see Table 4.7). In both cases only five Councils indicated that they had no activities planned at all. The most frequently identified activity planned by Councils for 2000/2001 was the development of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan, with 19 Councils nominating this activity in this open-ended question. This is a substantially larger number than the six Councils who had recorded this option in the 1998 survey.

**Table 4.6 Comparison of number of road safety programs by cost. 1998 versus 2000.**

Activity	Number of Councils by program cost				Number of 'spending Councils'	
	\$1-\$4999		\$5000 +			
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
Seatbelt wearing	3	6	0	0	3	6
Child restraint use	16	24	1	4	17	28
Drink driving	7	14	1	1	8	15
Speeding in local streets	4	13	27	25	31	38
Road safety promotion	19	22	5	1	24	23
Bicycle safety promotion	11	12	10	6	21	18
Not driving while fatigued	4	11	0	0	4	11
Other	3	3	5	9	8	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>151</b>

The numbers of responses for “education programs”, “investigation of traffic issues”, “traffic management”, “pedestrian/cyclist” activities, and carrying out a safety audit were similar across the two surveys. However, substantially fewer Councils indicated “Road Safety Council” and “infrastructure” activities in 2000.

#### **4.4.3 Partners in road safety**

Councils were asked what organisations they collaborate with on road safety. There were a larger number of collaborations in 2000 compared to the 1998 responses – 242 versus 170 respectively – although the 2000 questionnaire did include three extra options not listed in the 1998 questionnaire (see Table 4.8). Other than a greater involvement with Road Safety Councils in 2000, the responses to the options included in both surveys were approximately similar. In both cases Councils of all three types were most likely to work with VicRoads and the Police on road safety issues and programs.

The main increases in collaborations in the 2000 data were due to the three options added to the 2000 survey – “Local Safety Committee”, “Safer Cities and Shires”, and “other Councils” – each of which received between 12 and 28 nominations. While it may be possible that had these options been available in 1998 the data would have been different, one would imagine that in at least some cases the 1998 respondents would have chosen the “other” option to include such collaborations; however the distributions of “other” between 1998 and 2000 were approximately similar and quite small.

**Table 4.7 Proposed road or traffic safety programs or activities for the coming financial year. 1998 versus 2000.**

Activity/program	Total number of Council responses	
	1998	2000
Blackspot	3	9
Education	15	11
Infrastructure	18	8
Investigate traffic issues	6	4
Traffic management	11	14
Pedestrian/cyclist	17	19
Audit	3	5
Road safety Council	6	0
Develop strategy	6	19
Not specific	3	21
Total	88	110
None	5	5

#### 4.4.4 Training

Personnel from a greater number of Councils, particularly Metropolitan Councils, received training in road safety audit in 2000 than in 1998 – 20 versus 11 Councils respectively. While the number of “seminars/courses” responses was similar across the two surveys, substantially fewer Councils indicated “nothing specific” in 2000 – 16 responses in 1998 as opposed to 5 in 2000.

When asked what training courses would assist Council in road safety, the overall number of responses was 128 in 2000, compared with 113 in 1998. Audit training was mentioned by 48 Councils in each survey. In 2000, more Councils indicated they would like “accident analysis” training and training at “promoting road safety” (79 versus 60 for 2000 and 1998 responses respectively for these two options combined).

**Table 4.8 Organisations which Council collaborates with to improve road safety. 1998 versus 2000.**

Organisation	Number of Council responses	
	1998	2000
Road Safety Council	37	46
Police	54	59
VicRoads	61	61
TAC	7	7
Local safety committee	Not an option in 1998 questionnaire	22
Safer Cities & Shires	Not an option in 1998 questionnaire	12
Other Councils	Not an option in 1998 questionnaire	28
Other	9	7
No response	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>242</b>

## 4.5 ROAD SAFETY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

### 4.5.1 Safety audits

Councils were asked if they had a policy of conducting regular safety audits of the existing road system. In both surveys about a quarter of Councils indicated that they did have such a policy and a further third said that they were considering or developing one. Forty percent of Councils said that they had no policy of conducting regular safety audits.

The type of Council possessing a policy of regular auditing was somewhat different in 1998 compared to 2000. In the latter survey, Small Regional councils were most likely to have a policy of regular auditing, whereas in 1998 it was most likely to be a Metropolitan Council. In 2000 more Metropolitan and Large Regional Councils indicated that they did not have a regular audit policy. Additionally, a greater number of Metropolitan and Small Regional Councils were either considering or developing such a policy in 2000 compared to 1998.

Compared to 1998, in 2000 a greater number of Metropolitan and Small Regional Councils indicated that no new works were audited (see Table 4.9). Fewer Councils audited some new works in 2000 than in 1998. A potential explanation for this finding was the rewording of the question in 2000. The 1998 question asked:

*What percentage of new works are currently audited?*

whereas the 2000 question asked:

*What percentage of new works are currently independently audited?*

It may be that new works that were audited (but not independently) were included in the 1998 responses but not the 2000 responses.

**Table 4.9 Percentage of new works that are audited. 1998 versus 2000.**

Amount of new works audited	Number of Council responses							
	Metropolitan		Large regional		Small regional		Total	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
None	7	12	9	9	12	15	28	36
Some (1-100%)	16	10	6	4	11	9	33	23
No response	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	3

#### **4.5.2 Enforcement**

The distribution of parking officer duties is quite similar in the 1998 and 2000 surveys. In both surveys the most common response was “enforcement”, followed by educational and school-related activities (if these options are combined). Not all school-related activities are associated with education or promotion of safety, such as crossing guard training, but the options are mixed in terms of the way they were coded between the 1998 and 2000 survey responses. Advising Council of hazards was also a common response in both surveys (8 Councils in 2000 and 12 in 1998).

While there were some minor variations between Council types, the response distributions were almost identical for the survey questions regarding assisting Police with in-depth investigations and working with Police in enforcement issues at hazardous sites. In both surveys less than half of the Councils said that they were involved in in-depth investigations. However, about three-quarters of all Councils indicated that they worked with Police in regards to enforcement.

#### **4.5.3 Street trees**

In both surveys almost all Councils said that they pruned trees for visibility reasons. In both 1998 and 2000 only 14 Councils reported that they planted frangible trees to minimise collision hazards. However, there was a small change within the type of Councils planting frangible trees. In 2000 there were two Metropolitan and one Large Regional Council fewer planting frangible trees, with three additional Small Regional Councils now doing so.

#### **4.5.4 Pedestrians**

Councils were asked about their involvement in a variety of pedestrian safety activities. Again the distribution of responses across the two questionnaires was similar in the 1998 and 2000 surveys. In both surveys almost all Councils indicated that they “examine safety consequences for pedestrians when planning traffic control devices” and “provide accessible pedestrian refuges and painted medians”. In both surveys approximately half of all Councils said that they “provide pedestrian malls” and “investigate adequacy of walk phases for elderly and those with children”. Approximately three-quarters of all Councils said that they “investigate safety of bus stops for passengers”, and in both 1998 and 2000 a small number of Councils indicated that they “provide programs to minimise intoxicated pedestrians”.

Just under two-thirds of Councils responded that they “provide alternative transport options for the elderly”. While this question was not posed in 1998, given the similarity in the other pedestrian question responses, it is reasonable to expect that this question may have elicited a similar response in the two surveys.

#### **4.5.5 Motorcyclists**

In both surveys 49 Councils indicated that they considered the effects of proposed traffic changes on motorcyclists. Fifty-six Councils responding to the 2000 questionnaire (55 Councils in 1998) indicated that they specify that contractors must sweep up after maintenance or construction.

#### **4.5.6 Bicyclists**

Approximately the same number of Councils had a Bicycle Safety Plan or Strategy in 1998 and 2000 (43 and 41 respectively). When asked about the length of bicycle path in their local government area, 39 Councils gave distance estimates in both 1998 and 2000. However, due to a number of very large estimates, the data from the 2000 responses were presented in terms of medians, whereas the 1998 data was presented as means. A reanalysis of the 1998 data in terms of medians is presented alongside the 2000 data in Table 4.10.

As Table 4.10 illustrates, the distribution of Councils providing bike path lengths in 1998 is similar to the number providing the data in 2000. There seems to have been an overall length increase in “bike paths on local roads” and those “shared with pedestrians”, with a decrease in “off road” paths. The lengths for all three types of paths decreased in 2000 for Metropolitan Councils but increased for Small Regional Councils. “On local road” and “off road” path lengths decreased for Large Regional Councils, but increased for paths “shared with pedestrians”.

It may be expected that generally a bike path length would increase if more funding became available or at least remain static. There are several reasons, however, why a bike path length would decrease in the two years between the surveys. An increase in conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists may have caused some “shared with pedestrian” paths to be declared “pedestrian only”; and “on local roads” paths may have caused too many traffic problems for Councils to keep them.

The median total length of bike paths was 27.8 kilometres in 2000, based on the responses of 48 Councils. In 1998 the median total length was 31 kilometres, provided by a total of 41 Councils.

**Table 4.10 Median length of bicycle paths and lanes. Numbers of responding Councils are in brackets. 1998 versus 2000.**

Type of path	Bike path length (km)							
	Metropolitan		Large regional		Small regional		Total	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
On local roads	16.7 (15)	12.8 (16)	7.5 (10)	6.4 (10)	3 (11)	4 (13)	6 (36)	7 (39)
Off road	25 (16)	15 (15)	12.7 (10)	10 (11)	3.6 (13)	5 (13)	13 (39)	10 (39)
Shared with pedestrians	18.4 (12)	15 (13)	5 (10)	7 (8)	1.8 (13)	3.3 (15)	4 (35)	9.1 (36)

#### 4.6 COUNCIL AS A FLEET OPERATOR

The 2000 survey asked Councils a series of questions regarding their passenger vehicle fleets and policies regarding the operation of the fleet. As there were no questions regarding this area in the 1998 survey, no comparisons can be made.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

This section of the report discusses response rates and the principal findings of the comparisons between the results of the 2000 and 1998 surveys.

### **5.1 RESPONSE RATES**

There are two aspects of response rate which are relevant to the interpretation of the survey results: failure to return the questionnaire and non-response to particular items of the questionnaire.

#### **5.1.1 Failure to return the questionnaire**

The data analysed from the 1998 survey (Haworth and Kowaldo, 1999) was based on 63 out of a total of 78 Councils, an 81% response rate<sup>1</sup>. Sixty-two Councils returned the questionnaire by the final cut-off date for inclusion in 2000 data analysis – an 80% response rate. Both return rates compare positively with the response rate of 72% for an earlier Victorian local government road safety survey (Arbuckle, 1997) and the 71% of mail questionnaires returned in a NSW survey (Haworth and Bowland, 1994).

In proportion to the overall number of each Council type, questionnaire return rates were approximately similar for Metropolitan, Large Regional and Small Regional Councils, both within and between the 1998 and 2000 surveys. In neither survey was there any evidence of geographical or budgetary clustering of non responding Councils.

While it is possible that Councils who did not respond were less interested in road safety or rated the task of completing the document as a low priority, the timing of the questionnaire may have meant that appropriate staff were on leave and this prevented timely completion of the questionnaire. During the process of making telephone reminder calls to Councils for the return of the 2000 survey, it became quite clear that while all potential respondents saw the benefit of such an evaluation, budgetary and time constraints meant that many expected that they may not complete and return the questionnaire. In some Councils there was the added difficulty that there was not a particular individual or department that such a task would naturally fall to, and so time was lost as it was passed between individuals or departments.

Overall, it appears that the Councils who returned the questionnaire were generally representative of all Councils in Victoria.

#### **5.1.2 Non-response to particular questionnaire items**

Generally the questions most likely to be left blank by respondents and therefore be classified as “no response” were those where a written answer was required, rather than simply ticking a box. For example, the question in the 2000 survey where the “no response” rate was highest asked how road safety activities were evaluated within the

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<sup>1</sup> However, Chapter 4 of the current report discusses the inclusion of a 1998 questionnaire returned after the 1998 data analysis was completed.

Council and provided space for respondents to write in their answers rather than providing a set of options for respondents to choose from.

The non-responses may also have reflected the shortage of time available to be allocated to completing the questionnaire, so that ‘harder’ questions were left until last by individuals and then possibly not completed at all. However, the “no response rate” may also be an indication of how the survey was completed. In almost all instances, the questionnaire was filled out by three individuals or fewer. As it was never the case that the department(s) that these individuals belonged to seemed to have total responsibility for road safety, it is quite possible that one to three individuals may not have sufficient knowledge of all of Council’s activities to fully complete the questionnaire. Additionally, with time and budgetary constraints, it is unlikely that the document was circulated amongst all departments for their input.

In general, Councils appeared to experience difficulty completing the items related to resource allocation, including overall budgets, budgets for specific programs, and staffing allocations. There were some questions that were not answered because they were not applicable, for example, questions about the content of a program which had not been implemented by that Council. None of the questions provided a “not applicable” option.

## **5.2 COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE 1998 AND 2000 SURVEYS**

### **5.2.1 Roles and responsibilities for road safety**

The types of business units or departments most commonly nominated as being primarily responsible for road safety in both surveys were “engineering” and “infrastructure”, where these groupings were made on the basis of the respondent’s answers to an open-ended question. Councils were provided with a multiple option answer set of typical business units or departments and asked to indicate which ones have some responsibility for road safety. In both 1998 and 2000 the business unit most frequently chosen was “engineering”. In both cases “local laws” was the next most common choice. The 2000 respondents selected the “works” option as equally often as “local laws”, whereas the third-placed choice in 1998 was “traffic”. There was an increase of 50% in the number of business units indicated to have some responsibility for road safety in 2000 compared with 1998.

### **5.2.2 Road safety in Council plans and strategies**

There were substantial increases in the number of Councils who indicated that road safety was mentioned in Council Corporate Plans, Municipal Strategic Statements and Municipal Health Plans in 2000 compared with 1998.

The Corporate Plans of 50 of the 62 Councils responding to the 2000 questionnaire indicated that their Plan began in 2000. The increase in the number of Councils that mentioned road safety in Council documents may reflect a higher awareness of road safety in local government in general, which may have then been incorporated into the Council documents that have been developed recently.

Developing or using a Road Safety Strategy and providing safe infrastructure were the most common types of road safety program or activity mentioned in Corporate Plans, although the order reversed between the questionnaires. In 1998 “safe infrastructure” was the most common response, while in 2000 it was “Road Safety Strategy”. Safety of

infrastructure was also a frequent choice for the types of initiatives or programs mentioned in Municipal Strategic Statements in both 1998 and 2000, although in 2000 “traffic management” was also common. The road safety programs and initiatives most commonly mentioned in Municipal Health Plans related to providing safe infrastructure as well as “pedestrian and cyclist facilities”.

The number of Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy was similar between the 1998 and 2000 surveys with eight and nine Councils respectively. The number of Councils that indicated that they were considering a Plan was identical at 14 Councils. However, many more Councils were in the process of developing a Plan in 2000 – 28 in 2000 versus three Councils in 1998. Theoretically, at the time of the next survey in excess of 51 Councils may have implemented a Road Safety Plan or Strategy.

The most common reason that Councils did not have a Road Safety Plan as indicated by both the 1998 and 2000 surveys was insufficient resources, which was cited by 37 Councils in 1998 and 24 in 2000. This was particularly common for Small Regional Councils.

The most frequently reported methods of identifying road safety issues in both 1998 and 2000 were community feedback and accident records (including Crashstats). A range of other methods were also identified in this open-ended question, such as staff assessments, traffic counts and road safety audits.

In 2000 15 Councils said that they had set road safety targets, compared with seven Councils in 1998. The content of these targets varied between Councils and included responses such as lowering the injury or fatality rate due to road crashes or developing a Road Safety Strategy.

### **5.2.3 Resourcing road safety**

In general, Councils experienced difficulty in completing the items related to resource allocation in both the 1998 and 2000 surveys, and so the estimated expenditures on each type of road safety activity need to be treated with caution. Some Councils may also have spent money on particular activities but were not able to identify that cost within a broader budget. However, a greater number of Councils indicated that they had spent money on road safety in 2000 compared to 1998 – 50 versus 29 Councils respectively.

In both surveys “road construction/realignment” was the largest and most common type of road safety-related expenditure by Councils. The top five expenditure items were the same and in the same order across the surveys – “road construction/realignment”, “local area traffic management”, “pedestrian needs”, “bicycle facilities”, and “removal of roadside hazards”.

### **5.2.4 Road safety activities**

The number of road safety activities on which expenditure occurred in the previous year was greater in 2000 than in 1998 (151 versus 116). In both surveys “speeding in local streets” was the most commonly cited item and received the most funding. “Road safety promotion”, “child restraint use” and “bicycle safety promotion” were the next most common items in order of the number of instances of expenditure in both surveys.

When asked what factors led to the development of road safety programs, “level of community concern” was the most common response in both surveys. Involvement of

other groups such as VicRoads, crash data and pressure from user groups were also common responses in both 1998 and 2000.

A larger number Councils said that they had evaluated road safety activities in 2000 than in 1998 (34 versus 29). There were also more evaluations reported in 2000 than in 1998 (25 versus 12), including community feedback, traffic surveys and crash data.

There were 110 road safety activities or programs indicated as planned for 2000/01 compared with 88 for 1998/99. In both surveys five Councils indicated that there were no activities planned for the coming financial year. Items that could be grouped as “improvement of infrastructure” were the most common activities indicated as planned in the 1998 survey, while in 2000 the most common response was the development of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan.

When asked what groups or organisations Councils collaborate with to improve road safety, in both surveys VicRoads and the Police were the most common responses. There was an increase in the actual number of collaborations in 2000, although the 2000 survey included three additional organisations that respondents could choose. Each of these extra organisations received between 12 and 28 responses.

### **5.2.5 Training**

According to the questionnaire responses, few Council staff received any formal training in road safety. Safety audit training was the most common training received and the type of training that the largest number of Councils indicated would assist them in conducting road safety programs. A similar number of Councils made use of “seminars/courses” in 1998 and 2000. Training in “accident analysis” and “promoting road safety” were common requests in 1998 and 2000, although somewhat more common in 2000.

### **5.2.6 Road safety-related activities**

About one-quarter of Councils indicated that they had a policy of conducting regular safety audits of the existing road system in both 1998 and 2000. On both occasions approximately a further third of Councils indicated that they were considering or developing a procedure of regular safety audits of the existing road system.

Fewer Councils reported auditing of new works in 2000 than in 1998. A larger number of Councils now say that no new works are audited (36 versus 28 Councils). In 1998 a substantially larger number of Councils said that all new works were audited – 13 versus 2 Councils in 2000. This may reflect a change in the wording of the item in the questionnaire rather than a real decrease in the amount of auditing.

Most Councils considered that parking officers played some role in road safety, and the most common role indicated in both surveys was enforcement – of parking restrictions, Council by-laws and animal control measures. However, other roles were also identified, such as providing feedback to Council about hazards, educating the public, and school-related activities such as traffic control around schools, crossing guard training and supervision, safety promotion and education, and liaising with the school community. With the wide range of roles for parking inspectors provided by respondents, it may be useful to provide road safety training for these staff members, given that they work amongst the community on a daily basis.

In both surveys almost all Councils reported regularly pruning trees to maintain clear visibility for safety reasons. However, on both occasions only about one-quarter of responding Councils indicated that they had a policy for planting only frangible trees to minimise the collision hazard for motorists.

A majority of Councils indicated that they worked with the Police on enforcement issues related to road safety, however a much smaller proportion actually assist Police with in-depth accident analysis. Several Councils pointed out their assistance was not requested by the local Police.

Councils were asked about their involvement in a range of road safety issues related to pedestrians. A majority of Councils are involved or are considering or developing programs or policies in pedestrian safety in areas such as considering pedestrian needs when planning traffic control devices, providing medians and malls, and investigating traffic light walk phases and bus stop suitability. The only activity where the number of Councils who responded that they had no involvement exceeded those who had some involvement was minimising the number of intoxicated pedestrians.

In both 1998 and 2000 most Councils indicated that they consider the effects on motorcyclists of proposed traffic management devices and specify that contractors sweep up loose material left on roadways after construction or maintenance.

About two-thirds of both the 1998 and 2000 respondents reported that they had a Bicycle Plan or Strategy.

### **5.2.7 Council as a fleet operator**

The 2000 survey included several questions related to policies and procedures that Council had in place regarding the operation of its passenger vehicle fleet. These questions were not included in 1998, but given the importance of this issue they should be incorporated into any future surveys.

A majority of Councils did not have a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions. Those that did have a policy or procedure generally offered an alternative such as light alcohol and/or soft drink.

More than half of the Councils responding required a driver's side airbag, ABS brakes and cruise control in passenger vehicles that Councils purchase. About a quarter of Councils also specified that cars should have a passenger side airbag.

Most Councils had a system in place to ensure that Council vehicles are regularly checked and maintained. In terms of driver behaviour, two-thirds of Councils monitored the driving record of employees, one-quarter of Councils had some sort of driver training, and less than 10% of Councils had a Safe Driving Policy.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS/ISSUES FOR FUTURE SURVEYS**

The 2000 survey was conducted as a follow-up to a 1998 baseline survey. There were some changes in wording between the questionnaires and the addition of several questions regarding Council as a fleet operator in the 2000 version. Both surveys were conducted towards the end of the year. There are a range of issues to be considered in regards to

future surveys of Local Government road safety issues, including the questionnaire items and timing of the survey.

### **5.3.1 Changing questionnaire items**

Changing questionnaire items may produce a conflict between improving quality and maintaining comparability between the two surveys. For example, while most of the items in the current questionnaire allowed for a comparison between 1998 and 2000 data, the fleet operation questions were not asked in 1998. Some multiple-choice questions also had additional options in 2000. However, the questionnaire must reflect the changing aspects of the Saferoads Initiative and changes in community attitudes towards road safety.

In both the 1998 and 2000 surveys many Councils experienced difficulty in estimating the resources allocated to road safety in terms of both dollars and staffing commitments. As such, the usefulness of both of these measures provided in 2000 and 1998 are questionable. The multiple-choice format for expenditure on particular activities appeared to be easier for respondents to answer (there were fewer missing values) and may have yielded data as accurate as the point estimates. Conversion of some expenditure items to multiple-choice may be helpful for any repeat surveys. In addition, it is recommended that the item about overall annual budget be deleted since accurate information is available from the MAV.

Many questions in the baseline survey were open-ended and the responses were categorised and coded for presentation of the results. The option exists to present at least some of these questions as multiple-choice items in repeat surveys, utilising the categories derived from both the 1998 and 2000 questionnaires. This would reduce the resources needed for data entry and processing, particularly in terms of making comparisons between surveys. This measure would probably also result in a questionnaire that was easier for Council staff to complete, and so the response rate may also improve.

### **5.3.2 Methods of comparison between surveys**

Not all Councils responded to the 1998 survey and not all (and not the same) Councils responded to the 2000 survey. However, while there was some change in the actual Councils that did respond, the response rate both overall and within Council categories was similar.

In this analysis, overall comparisons were made between the 1998 and 2000 responses. Individual Councils were not tracked to determine the changes that had occurred at this level. In this way the analysis is more general and preserves the confidentiality and anonymity of the individual respondents. There is also a question as to whether the data from individual tracking would be any more useful than categorical comparisons, except possibly to those individual Councils who may like to have an independent comparison made of their responses in 1998 compared with 2000, and compared with Council responses within the same category and overall.

### **5.3.3 Timing of repeat surveys**

The questionnaire for the baseline survey was posted in October 1998 and replies were received until 28 January 1999. The 2000 questionnaire was posted in September 2000 and replies were taken up until 28 February 2001. Unavailability of some staff over summer holidays may have contributed to delays in receiving the replies, but it is unlikely that the response rate would have been higher if the questionnaire had been conducted at a

different time of the year. The 2000 survey gave respondents one to two months additional time over that provided for completion of the 1998 version, however the response rate was no higher than in 1998.

The issue of whether to repeat the survey in the future and the time that should elapse must be considered. In its infancy in 1998, the Saferoads Initiative can be evaluated to some extent in terms of whether Councils are treating road safety any differently. However, any conclusions need to consider changes in community attitudes towards road safety. It might be argued that changing community attitudes and behaviours is the most important aim for all road safety programs, and so the survey reflects more than an evaluation of the Saferoads Initiative. Given the timeline of most Council documents such as Corporate Plans, it is suggested that a two-year gap between surveys is probably satisfactory. However, as 24 Councils indicated that their current Corporate Plans expire in 2003 a slightly longer gap may be preferable.

The Saferoads Initiative will continue to evolve and should have an increased impact across all municipalities in Victoria over time. As such, both its impact and reach need to be evaluated to determine which aspects are effective and which areas need attention. An updated version of this questionnaire should provide evaluative data to examine these issues.



## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

In 1998 a partnership was formed between the MAV, LGPro, Victoria Police, RACV, Transport Accident Commission and VicRoads to develop the Saferoads Initiative. One of the primary purposes of this program was to increase the involvement of Victoria's local governments in road safety issues within individual municipalities. To provide an objective evaluation of the effects of this initiative, a survey was conducted to gain an understanding of the status of road safety within municipalities and to determine what activities and procedures were already in existence at a local level. Questionnaires were distributed to each of Victoria's 78 Councils by mail in late 1998 and the results published in 1999 (Haworth and Kowaldo, 1999).

With some changes to the 1998 questionnaire, the survey of local government was repeated in a mail-out in late 2000. There were two primary aims to the second survey; to gain a snapshot of local government activity in road safety at that time, and to make comparisons with the baseline survey carried out in 1998. In order to make comparisons, Victoria's 78 Councils were categorised according to a metropolitan versus regional variable. The regional Councils were further classified according to their budgets in 1998 – those with a budget in excess of \$20 million were grouped as "Large Regional Councils" and those with budgets less than \$20 million "Small Regional Councils". These categorisations were used for the analyses of both surveys.

### **6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

Both the 1998 and 2000 surveys produced high return rates, with 81% (63 Councils) of all 78 Councils responding in 1998 and 80% (62 Councils) returning questionnaires in 2000. The response rates were similar between the Council budgetary categories in both surveys. Sixty-three percent of Councils responded to both surveys, and these Councils were most likely to be Large Regional, followed by Small Regional with Metropolitan Councils least likely to respond twice.

### **6.2 COUNCIL STAFF AND DEPARTMENTS**

In both surveys the questionnaires were generally completed by up to three individuals, usually from an engineering- or infrastructure-type business unit or department. These particular business units were also indicated to be the most likely to have primary responsibility for road safety within the Councils.

The number of other business units or departments that respondents said had some responsibility for road safety was substantially higher in 2000 compared to 1998, with "engineering" the most frequent choice in both surveys followed by "local laws". "Works" was equally frequent in 2000 as "local laws", however the third most common item selected in 1998 was a "traffic"-type business unit or department. The increases in these responses may indicate an increased responsibility for road safety, a broadening of the responsibility across more Council departments, or increased specialisation amongst some departments. It may also mean that the respondents in 2000 were more likely to be aware that a greater variety of departments may be contributing to road safety.

Few council staff receive any formal training in road safety, and safety audit training is the most likely training that they do receive. Safety audit training was identified as the type of training that a majority of Councils wanted indicated would assist them in conducting road safety programs. Other than enforcement, parking inspectors were indicated to have a wide range of other roles and functions in road safety throughout the Council. It may be useful to provide road safety training for these staff members, given that they work amongst the community on a daily basis.

### **6.3 ROAD SAFETY IN COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION**

There were substantial increases in the number of Councils who indicated that road safety was mentioned in Council Corporate Plans, Municipal Strategic Statements and Municipal Health Plans in 2000 compared with 1998. In 1998 “safety of infrastructure” was the most common way that road safety was mentioned in Corporate Plans, followed by the development or use of a Road Safety Strategy. In 2000 the most common choices were the same but the order was reversed.

There were few Councils with a Road Safety Plan or Strategy in 1998 and 2000, and the number of Councils considering a Plan was identical. However, nine times as many Councils were developing a Plan in 2000 compared to 1998. “Lack of resources” was the most common reason given in both surveys why Councils did not already have a Plan.

### **6.4 ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES**

Twice as many Councils had set a road safety target in 2000 compared with 1998, and there was a large variation in what these targets were. Community feedback and accident records were acknowledged as the most likely way of identifying road safety issues in both surveys.

A larger number of Councils indicated that they had spent money on various road safety projects in 2000 compared with 1998, with “road construction/realignment” being the largest and most common expenditure item both times. “Local area traffic management”, “pedestrian needs”, “bicycle facilities”, and “removal of roadside hazards” were also common responses.

The number of road safety activities on which expenditure occurred in the previous year was greater in 2000 than in 1998 (151 versus 116). In both surveys “speeding in local streets” was the most common item and received the most funding both times. “Road safety promotion”, “child restraint use” and “bicycle safety promotion” were the next most common items in order of the number of instances of expenditure in both surveys.

“Level of community concern” was the most likely factor that led to the development of individual road safety programs, while involvement of other groups such as VicRoads, crash data, and pressure from user groups were also common drives for road safety activities in both 1998 and 2000.

A slightly larger number Councils said that they had evaluated road safety activities in 2000, with twice as many actual instances of evaluation in 2000. Community feedback, traffic surveys and crash data were all frequently used as evaluation tools.

A greater number of Councils were planning road safety activities in 2000. Planned activities were most likely to be “improvement of infrastructure” in 1998 and development of a Road Safety Strategy or Plan in 2000.

In both 1998 and 2000 one-quarter of Councils indicated that they had a policy of conducting regular safety audits on the existing road system, with approximately a further third considering or developing such a procedure or policy. Fewer Councils reported audit new works in 2000 although this may have resulted from rewording the questionnaire item.

Almost all Councils regularly prune trees for visibility reasons, but only about one-quarter of responding Councils have a policy for planting frangible trees to minimise the collision hazard for motorists. Most Councils considered the effects on motorcyclists of proposed traffic management devices and specified that contractors sweep up loose material left on roadways after construction or maintenance.

A majority of Councils work towards pedestrian safety in areas such as considering pedestrian needs when planning traffic control devices, providing medians and malls, traffic light walk phases, and bus stop location suitability. The only activity where the number of Councils with no involvement exceeded the number with some involvement was minimising the number of intoxicated pedestrians. About two-thirds of both the 1998 and 2000 respondents reported that they had a Bicycle Plan or Strategy.

## **6.5 ROAD SAFETY COLLABORATIONS**

Both surveys indicated that Councils were most likely to collaborate with VicRoads or the Police to improve road safety. In 2000 more Councils indicated that they were involved in collaborative activities with a variety of organisations.

A majority of Councils worked with the Police on enforcement issues related to road safety, however a much smaller proportion assist Police with in-depth accident analysis.

## **6.6 COUNCIL AS A FLEET OPERATOR**

The 2000 survey included several additional questions related to the operation of Council’s passenger vehicle fleet. It was found that a majority of Councils do not have a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions. More than half of the Councils require a driver’s side airbag for their fleet cars, along with ABS brakes and cruise control. About a quarter of Councils specify that their cars should have a passenger side airbag. Most Councils have a system in place to ensure that Council vehicles are regularly checked and maintained. Two-thirds of Councils monitor the driving record of employees, one-quarter have driver training, and less than 10% have a Safe Driving Policy.

## **6.7 CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, there seems to be increased activity in road safety across all Councils, regardless of budget. One may have expected that such an increase in activity should have been reflected in a higher questionnaire return rate for the 2000 survey, however the response

rate was equivalent (although quite high for questionnaire-based research) for the two surveys. Additionally, the particular Councils responding do not seem to be a factor as there were a substantial number of Councils who responded to one survey and not the other, and there did not seem to be a pattern to the non-responding Councils.

One of the principle aims of the Saferoads Initiative was to increase the number of Councils with a Road Safety Plan through directly targeted funding. The number of Councils with a Plan was not substantially different between the surveys, however many more Councils were at the development stage in 2000.

Other potential funding opportunities include provision of safety audit training and encouragement of an increased level of infrastructure auditing. However, a completed safety audit does not necessarily make a particular road any safer. Once the problem has been identified the issue needs to be rectified, usually at financial cost.

While responsibility for road safety has spread across a large number of Council departments or business units, there may be some benefit in encouraging a more centralised focus for co-ordination of activities and programs. This measure should assist in increasing the profile of road safety both within Council and between Councils and their constituents.

As the Saferoads Initiative evolves to meet the needs of Councils and local government assumes further responsibility for road safety within its municipality, it is suggested that the survey be repeated in 2002 or 2003. The 2000 questionnaire should be modified to remove some of the open-ended questions and other questions related to specific amounts of money spent and staff hours dedicated to road safety activities removed as they proved to be difficult for respondents to answer in both 1998 and 2000. There is also the opportunity to add or modify questions to take account of any specific Saferoads measures that are implemented in the interim.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the local government officers who completed the questionnaire.

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## APPENDIX ONE: 2000 QUESTIONNAIRE



## **SURVEY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROAD SAFETY**

### **PLANNING AND ACTIVITIES**

This questionnaire has been designed to survey current road safety planning and activity at local government level, and has been sent to all Councils. The Monash University Accident Research Centre is undertaking this study as part of the Saferoads Initiative.

The information collected will be compared with a previous survey to assess the success of the Initiative. Completing this survey may also assist your Council in assessing its current level of activity in road safety.

We would appreciate Council's participation in completing this survey. We have designed the survey so that, in most cases, all that is required is to tick the appropriate responses. If you feel that the options do not allow you to provide an adequate answer, please make a note on the side of the form or on the final page. The responses of individual Councils will not be able to be identified in the published results.

Overall feedback will be provided to Councils who have completed the survey.

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY EITHER BY MAIL TO:**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROAD SAFETY SURVEY

ACCIDENT RESEARCH CENTRE

PO BOX 70A

MONASH UNIVERSITY 3800

**OR FAX TO 03 9905 4363**

**BY 30th OCTOBER 2000**

If you have any queries about the survey, please feel free to contact Mark Symmons:

PH: (03) 9905 4367

FAX: (03) 9905 4363

EMAIL: [mark.symmons@general.monash.edu.au](mailto:mark.symmons@general.monash.edu.au)

1. Name of your Council: .....
2. Which business unit/department of Council has the **major** responsibility for road/traffic safety?  
.....
3. We would appreciate having a list of contact names of those persons who helped complete the survey in case we have any queries. Please record your name and business unit below (*please print*):

Primary person completing survey

(Name and phone number)	(Business Unit)
.....	.....
.....	.....

Other participants in survey

(Name and phone number)	(Business Unit)
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

4. Please tick which business units of Council, or external providers, have responsibility for road safety and briefly describe their roles (*Please feel free to change the names of the business units to suit those of your Council*):

Role

- Administration  .....
- Building  .....
- Community Services  .....
- Engineering  .....
- Finance  .....
- Health  .....
- Human Services  .....
- Local Laws  .....
- Parks and Gardens  .....
- Recreation  .....
- Risk Management  .....
- Town Planning  .....
- Traffic/Parking  .....
- Works & Operations  .....
- Other (specify):  .....

**SECTION 1: COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

***Corporate Plan***

1.1 What period does your Corporate Plan cover? (eg. 2000-2005)

.....

1.2 Are any road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in your Corporate Plan?

Yes

No

1.3 If yes, please describe them:

.....

.....

.....

**Municipal Strategic Statement**

1.4 Are any road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in your Municipal Strategic Statement?

Yes

No

1.5 If yes, please describe them:

.....

.....

.....

**Municipal Health Plan**

1.6 Are any road safety programs or initiatives mentioned in your Municipal Health Plan?

Yes

No

1.7 If yes, please describe them:

.....

.....

.....

**Road Safety Plan/Strategy**

1.8 Does Council have a Road Safety Strategy/Plan?

- Yes
- No
- Under consideration
- Being developed

1.9 If Council does **not** have a Road Safety Strategy/Plan, can you specify the reasons for this?

- Road safety is not a priority
- Hadn't thought of it
- Insufficient resources
- Not in Corporate Plan
  
- Other competing demands (specify) .....
- .....
- Other reason (specify) .....
- .....

1.10 How does Council identify and prioritise road safety issues?

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.11 Has Council set any road safety targets?

- Yes
- No

1.12 If so, please describe them.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Allocation of Resources**

1.13 What was Council's total budget for the 1999/2000 financial year?

\$.....

1.14 Please indicate how much money and time were spent on the following areas during the 1999/2000 financial year. *If no money or time were spent, then please complete 'nil'.*

	Expenditure (\$)	Time (Equivalent Full Time Staff)
- local area traffic management	.....	.....
- road construction/realignment	.....	.....
- road safety auditing	.....	.....
- removal of roadside hazards	.....	.....
- programs to identify high accident risk groups	.....	.....
- bicycle education	.....	.....
- bicycle facilities	.....	.....
- pedestrian needs	.....	.....
- pedestrian awareness programs	.....	.....
- programs for elderly pedestrians	.....	.....
- traffic enforcement	.....	.....
- other (specify):	.....	.....
	.....	.....
<b>TOTAL</b>	.....	.....

1.15 How many equivalent full-time staff are involved in road safety in your Council? .....

**SECTION 2: ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES**

2.1 What was the total amount spent by Council on the following road safety activities during the 1999/2000 financial year?  
Please also briefly describe the road safety activities in the spaces provided, under each sub-heading.

	<u>Total program cost (including salaries)</u>			
<b>Seatbelt wearing</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....				
.....				

			<u>Total program cost</u> <u>(including salaries)</u>	
<b>Child restraint use in vehicles</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Drink driving</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Speeding in local streets</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Providing road safety information for the community</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Bicycle safety programs</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Fatigued-related programs</b>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

<b>Other (please specify):</b> .....	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1,000 - \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$1 - \$999	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

.....

2.2 What led to the development of these programs? *(Please tick items which apply)*

- numbers of crashes/injuries
- level of general community concern
- pressure from specific road user groups
- outcome of safety audit
- encouragement by MAV/VicRoads
- other (specify) .....

2.3 Were any of the activities evaluated? Yes  No

2.4 If yes, how were they evaluated and what were the outcomes?

.....  
.....  
.....

2.5 List any proposed road or traffic safety programs or activities for the 2000/2001 financial year.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2.6 Which organisations do you collaborate with to improve road safety?

- Community Road Safety Council
- Police
- VicRoads
- Transport Accident Commission
- Local Safety Committee
- Safer Cities and Shires
- Other local Councils
- Other (please specify) .....

2.7 What training do personnel receive in order to deliver road safety programs?

.....  
.....

2.8 Indicate which training courses would assist your Council in conducting road safety programs.

- road safety audit
- accident analysis and identification
- promoting road safety in the community
- other (please specify) .....

**SECTION 3: ROAD SAFETY-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Council as a fleet operator**

3.1 Does Council have a policy regarding the serving of alcohol at Council functions?  
Yes   
No

3.2 If yes, briefly describe the policy:  
.....  
.....

3.3 What safety features does Council specify for fleet vehicles? *(Please tick items which apply)*

driver side airbag   
passenger side airbag   
ABS   
cruise control   
other (please specify) .....

3.4 Is there a system operating that ensures that fleet vehicles are regularly checked and maintained? Yes  No

3.5 What procedures does Council have in place to ensure safe operation of Council vehicles? *(Please tick items which apply)*

driver training programs   
implementation of a "Safe Driving Policy"   
monitoring of accident involvement   
other (please specify) .....

**Safety audits**

3.6 Does Council have a policy of conducting regular safety checks of the existing road system? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

3.7 What percentage of new works are currently independently audited?

- none   
- less than 50%   
- 50% or more   
- all

**Enforcement**

3.8 What role do parking officers play in road safety?  
.....  
.....

3.9 Do Council staff assist Police with in-depth investigations of serious crash sites? Yes  No

3.10 Does Council work with Police to target enforcement to hazardous areas? Yes  No

### Street trees

3.11 Does Council:

- regularly prune trees by footpaths/cycle tracks/ roadways, etc. to maintain clear visibility for users? Yes  No

- have a policy of planting only frangible trees in clear zones to minimise the collision hazard for motorists? Yes  No

### Pedestrians

3.12 Does Council:

- examine the safety consequences for pedestrians when planning traffic control devices? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- provide accessible pedestrian refuges and painted medians where appropriate? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- provide pedestrian malls where appropriate? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- investigate the adequacy of walk phases at signalised intersections used by the elderly and those with children? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- investigate the safety of bus stopping locations for boarding/alighting passengers? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- have programs to provide alternative transport for the elderly? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

- provide programs to minimise the number of intoxicated pedestrians? Yes  No   
Under consideration   
Being developed

**Motorcyclists**

- 3.13 Does Council consider the potential effects on motorcyclists whenever installation of traffic management devices are proposed? Yes  No
- 3.14 Do Council contracts specify that contractors must sweep loose material left on roadways after construction or maintenance? Yes  No

**Bicycles**

- 3.16 Does Council have a Bicycle Plan or Strategy? Yes  No
- 3.17 In your municipality, how many kilometres are there of bicycle paths or lanes:
  - on local roads? .....
  - off road? .....
  - shared with pedestrians? .....

**Additional notes or comments**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

-oOo-

Thank you for your assistance - you have now completed the survey.

Please return the completed survey form to:

Local Government Road Safety Project  
 Accident Research Centre  
 P.O. Box 70A  
 MONASH UNIVERSITY 3800

By **30th OCTOBER 2000**

and please enclose a copy of your **ROAD SAFETY PLAN** (if you have one).



## **APPENDIX TWO: DISCUSSION OF LATE SURVEY RETURNS**

Two Councils returned their questionnaire responses after the data analysis had been completed and the report written – one Metropolitan and one Small Regional Council. The addition of these returns extends the 2000 response rate to 82% (64 Councils) – an identical response rate to the 1998 survey (with the inclusion of a late 1998 return). An examination of their answers is included here to allow comparison to the overall analysis of all Council responses. The two Councils are described separately to enable an easier comparison with the other data.

### **LATE METROPOLITAN RETURN**

A single respondent completed the late Metropolitan return. The response indicated that the department with primary responsibility for road safety was a “Traffic/ transportation” unit (using the categories in Table 3.2). Nine other departments had some responsibility for road safety.

Road safety was mentioned in the Council’s Corporate Plan in terms of developing a road safety strategy. However, there were no mentions of road safety in either the Municipal Strategic Plan or the Municipal Health Plan, except by vague implication. Accordingly, a road safety strategy was in the process of being developed. No reason was given for the lack of a strategy at the time. No road safety targets had been set.

Road safety issues were assessed on the basis of crash data and community feedback. In terms of the expenditure categories in Table 3.14, Council spent money on local area traffic management, road construction/realignment and road safety auditing. “Speeding in local streets” and “providing road safety information for the community” received spending of \$5000 or more and \$1-\$999 respectively. Local area traffic management works had been evaluated, but Council did not indicate how the evaluation was carried out or what the result was.

Council collaborated with the Police and VicRoads. Council staff participated in VicRoads short courses and thought that training in road safety auditing, accident analysis and prevention, and promoting road safety in the community would all be useful to them.

Council does not have a policy regarding the serving of alcohol, but does have a system that ensures that fleet vehicles are regularly checked and maintained. Council also makes use of driver training programs and monitors accident involvement of drivers.

There was no policy of conducting regular safety audits of the existing road system, but the Council was considering developing one. Less than 50% of new works were audited. Council indicated that they did carry out some investigations and works towards pedestrian safety and considered motorcyclists in new traffic management devices. Council has no bicycle plan and no dedicated bicycle tracks.

### **LATE SMALL REGIONAL RETURN**

The late Small Regional return was completed by an individual from an infrastructure unit, which had the primary responsibility for road safety within this Council. Four other business units or departments were indicated to also have some responsibility for road safety.

There was no mention of road safety in this Council's Corporate Plan and no specific mention in either the Municipal Strategic Statement or Municipal Health Plan. Council did not indicate whether they had a road safety plan or strategy. A road safety target had been set – to “maximise funding opportunities from road safety programs to enable identified issues to be mitigated”; specific issues were not specified.

Council used customer feedback, staff observations, Crashstats and other accident records to identify road safety issues. The budget question was not answered, but Council indicated that less than \$1000 had been spent on providing road safety information to the community. In the future Council planned to participate in State and Federal road safety programs to identify and investigate road safety issues.

Council collaborated with the Police, VicRoads and other local Councils in road safety issues. Council staff participated in VicRoads short courses and thought that training in road safety auditing, accident analysis and prevention, and promoting road safety in the community would all be useful to them.

Council indicated that they had a system that ensured that fleet vehicles were regularly checked and maintained. Council also made use of driver training programs and monitored accident involvement of drivers.

Regular safety checks of the existing road system were carried out and 50% or more of new works were audited. Council did carry out some investigations and works towards pedestrian safety and considered motorcyclists in new traffic management devices. Council was in the process of developing a bicycle plan, but did not indicate whether there were any dedicated bicycle tracks.