

# Safer Roads, Safer Queensland

Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015–21





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# Contents

Foreword	<b>2</b>
Introduction	<b>4</b>
Strategy foundations	<b>6</b>
Guiding principles	<b>7</b>
Making it happen	<b>12</b>
The system we want – by 2021	<b>13</b>
Monitoring performance	<b>14</b>
Reference list	<b>16</b>

# Foreword

We should all look to the future and imagine a time when death and serious injury on our roads is a thing of the past.

Road safety is a critical issue in Queensland and one demanding further public attention and action. While many people think of road crashes as something that happens to other people, the truth is one in two Queenslanders have either been involved in a road crash or know somebody who has.

Last year, 223 people lost their lives on Queensland roads. While this was a record 'low' for road fatalities – it is still 223 lives too many. Also, focusing on this figure belies the true magnitude of serious road trauma in Queensland and how it impacts everyone in our community.

The number of hospitalised casualties is on the rise. Police reports indicate that nearly 7,000 Queenslanders are taken to hospital year-on-year as a result of serious road crashes. So while fewer Queenslanders are being killed on the roads, more Queenslanders than ever before are in our hospital system. The total economic, social and emotional costs of serious road trauma are enormous and enduring.

The good news is that there is something we can do to address this situation. Serious casualties on our roads can be prevented, and everyone has an important role to play. Improvements can be made through the combined actions of the community, business, government, and everyday Queenslanders.

The importance of working together was a key theme of the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland forum held by the Queensland Government in April 2015. A wide range of experts contributed their thoughts about how to improve road safety, which are reflected in this strategy and the two-year action plan. The key themes from the forum highlight that:

1. Road safety reflects our social and transport context.
2. The true road toll is broader than fatalities.
3. Road trauma is economically and socially expensive; addressing it is an investment.
4. The 'Fatal Five' are still relevant, with driver distraction and fatigue growing concerns.
5. Communities must be part of the solution.
6. Whole of life education and skills development help people to make safer on-road decisions.
7. Investing in a protective road environment saves lives.
8. Enforcement is effective.
9. Technology solutions are already here to be harnessed.
10. Data tells the full story of road trauma.

This government is committed to eliminating serious trauma on Queensland roads over the long term. This strategy commits all of us to a vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on Queensland roads as our ultimate goal, with interim targets along the way.

The strategy is based on the Safe System framework, applied with a renewed level of ambition, and incorporates research and ideas from international and local road safety experts and practitioners.

As ministers for our respective portfolios, we believe this is the necessary path to achieving success and we encourage every Queenslanders to play their role and do what must be done to work toward achieving this vision.



**Hon. Jo-Ann Miller MP**

Minister for Police,  
Fire and Emergency Services  
and Minister for Corrective Services



**Hon. Mark Bailey MP**

Minister for Main Roads,  
Road Safety and Ports  
and Minister for Energy and Water Supply

# Introduction

Almost every day, people die or are injured on Queensland roads. Most are not ‘bad people doing mad things’, but are everyday people doing everyday things – using the road as part of their daily life but making a mistake or having a lapse in attention or judgment. Sometimes, they are simply at the receiving end of somebody else’s error. Many road crash victims will not work again, some will not walk again, and many will never live their lives in the way they had imagined. There can also be a terrible impact on family members, friends and the community.

Crashes have far reaching and enduring impacts on entire communities. Serious injuries can create life-long difficulties and a range of costs, borne by the individual, their families and friends, their workplaces and communities (see Figure 1).

A sample of crashes by the University of Adelaide suggested that fewer than half of fatal crashes and a minority of non-fatal crashes were caused by ‘extreme behaviour’.<sup>1</sup>

Further, one of the cruel features of road crashes is that they afflict healthy people without warning. Many are at the outset of their working lives. Due to a combination of inexperience and age, young drivers are one of the most at-risk groups on the road and are 60% more likely to be involved in serious crashes than mature adults.<sup>2</sup>

*Figure 1: Cost components of road crashes (Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished, adapted from Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2009)*



Eliminating death and debilitating injury on the road is an investment that also makes financial sense. For 2014 alone, the economic cost of fatalities and hospitalised casualties as a result of crashes in Queensland is estimated at over \$5 billion.<sup>3</sup>

Individual costs of medical care, lost productivity and diminished quality of life are steep. Across Australia, the lifetime costs per case of moderate and severe traumatic brain injury have been estimated at \$2.5 million and \$4.8 million respectively, and paraplegia and quadriplegia at \$5.0 million and \$9.5 million respectively.<sup>4</sup>

This is the human ‘toll’ we all currently pay on the road. It demands attention and action.

Safer Roads, Safer Queensland calls on everyone in our community – government, business and citizens – to:

- reject the notion that death and serious injuries are simply ‘part and parcel’ of using the roads
- consider all road activities from the viewpoint of safety
- understand that road safety is everyone’s issue and everyone’s responsibility
- take action, whenever and wherever, to improve safety on our roads.



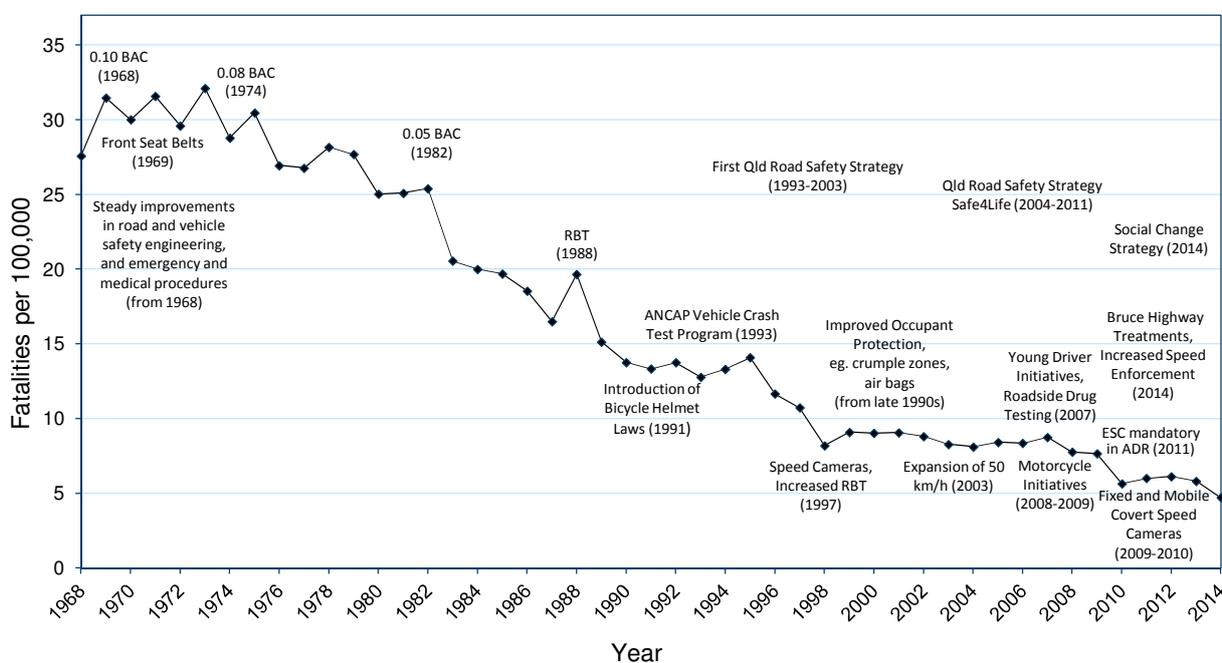
# Strategy foundations

## Where are we today?

A look back at the history of road safety in Queensland shows that lives have been saved and injuries prevented through seatbelts, improvements in the crashworthiness of vehicles, enforcement initiatives such as random breath testing and speed cameras, and improvements to roads and roadsides through targeted engineering treatments (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Road fatalities per 100,000 population in Queensland: 1968 – 2014 (Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished)*

Many of these seemed ambitious at the time, but are now widely accepted as normal and beneficial. Measures that have been implemented by stakeholders throughout the system – police, road authorities and engineers, regulators, vehicle manufacturers and road users – have worked to drive the road toll down dramatically.



## The challenge from here – and a new vision for the future

In Queensland, many of the ‘low hanging fruit’ in road safety have already been picked, and the next major improvements may be more challenging. Road transport and its users are also changing, so our response should too. Queenslanders are getting older, and more are choosing different forms of transport – such as walking and cycling – which are healthy but carry different risks.

This strategy introduces a new vision for the future: **zero road deaths and serious injuries**. The vision is undeniably ambitious. However, visions serve to guide, inspire and motivate action over the long term, rather than limit and discourage efforts today. By adopting this vision, in partnership with stakeholders, we sign up to a new level of ambition to guide action today, and signal to Queenslanders that none of us should accept serious road trauma as an inevitable part of using the roads.

This is consistent with Australia’s vision for road safety set out in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 – ‘No person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia’s roads’. To move towards our vision, we need to do things differently. Under this strategy, four guiding principles will be adopted.

# Guiding principles

## 1. The true road toll is broader than fatalities

*We will expand our understanding of the 'road toll' to all fatal and hospitalised casualties.*

Traditionally there has been a strong focus on fatalities in road safety strategies and the media. However, this presents an incomplete picture of the scale of the road safety problem.

Thinking about the road toll in terms of all serious casualties more accurately captures the social and economic burden our communities bear. It also provides greater context and assists a deeper understanding of potential solutions.

A key part of the challenge will be to consider the data we collect and how it could better capture and help us respond to the true story of road trauma.

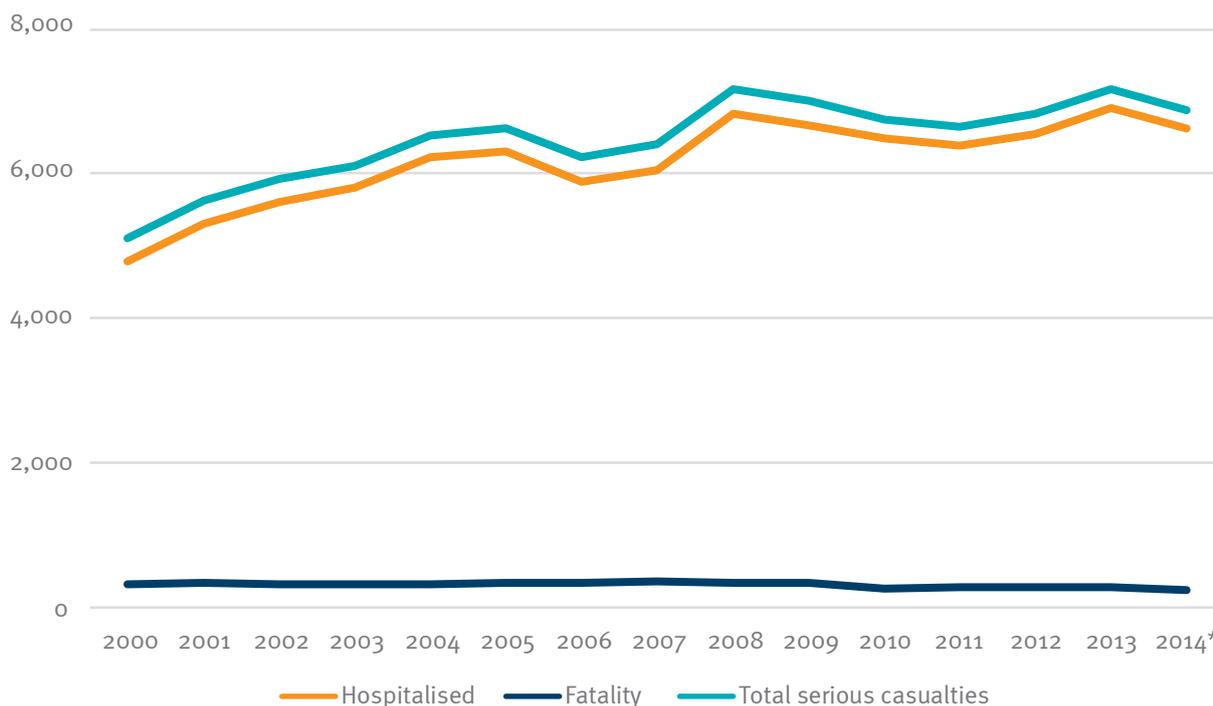
Figure 3 contrasts the recent downward trend in fatalities with the upward trend in serious casualties over a fifteen-year period.

Road fatalities dropped from 317 in 2000 to 223 in 2014. However, hospitalised casualties climbed from 4,791 to 6,612. This means that, overall, annual serious casualties increased from 5,108 to 6,835 over the period – in Queensland alone.<sup>5</sup>

In Queensland, the term 'hospitalised casualties' refers to people who are transported to hospital for treatment. The term 'serious casualties' combines both fatalities and hospitalised casualties.

At the end of 2014, an average of nearly 20 people each day had been killed or taken to hospital as a result of a crash, or the equivalent of nearly 20 Jumbo Jets over the year.

*Figure 3: Serious casualties as a result of crashes on Queensland roads, 2000-2014, by year and casualty severity*



## 2. We need an ambitious vision with interim targets to inspire and motivate action

*We will adopt an ambitious long-term vision, supported by interim targets.*

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has consistently recommended that jurisdictions adopt targets because they communicate that road safety is important, they motivate stakeholders to act individually and together, and they increase accountability.<sup>6</sup>

The National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 has set the target to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2020 (relative to the baseline in 2008–2010).

In Queensland, we will aim to:

- reduce fatalities from **303** (average 2008-2010) to **200** or fewer by 2020
- reduce hospitalised casualties from **6,670** (average 2008-2010) to **4,669** or fewer by 2020.

The Queensland Government will work to communicate our vision and targets to all stakeholders we engage with, monitor progress and adjust actions and interventions to stay on track.



### 3. Safe System principles are the foundation for action

*We will entrench the mindset that the whole system must be safe at every level of road safety management, and develop solutions based on evidence and innovation.*

*Figure 4: The Safe System approach (Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished, adapted from WA Government, 2008)*

Rather than simply ‘blame’ crashes on individual behaviour and choices, the Safe System approach places human frailty at the centre (see Figure 4) and observes that there is a limit to the physical forces the human body can withstand before debilitating injury or death results.

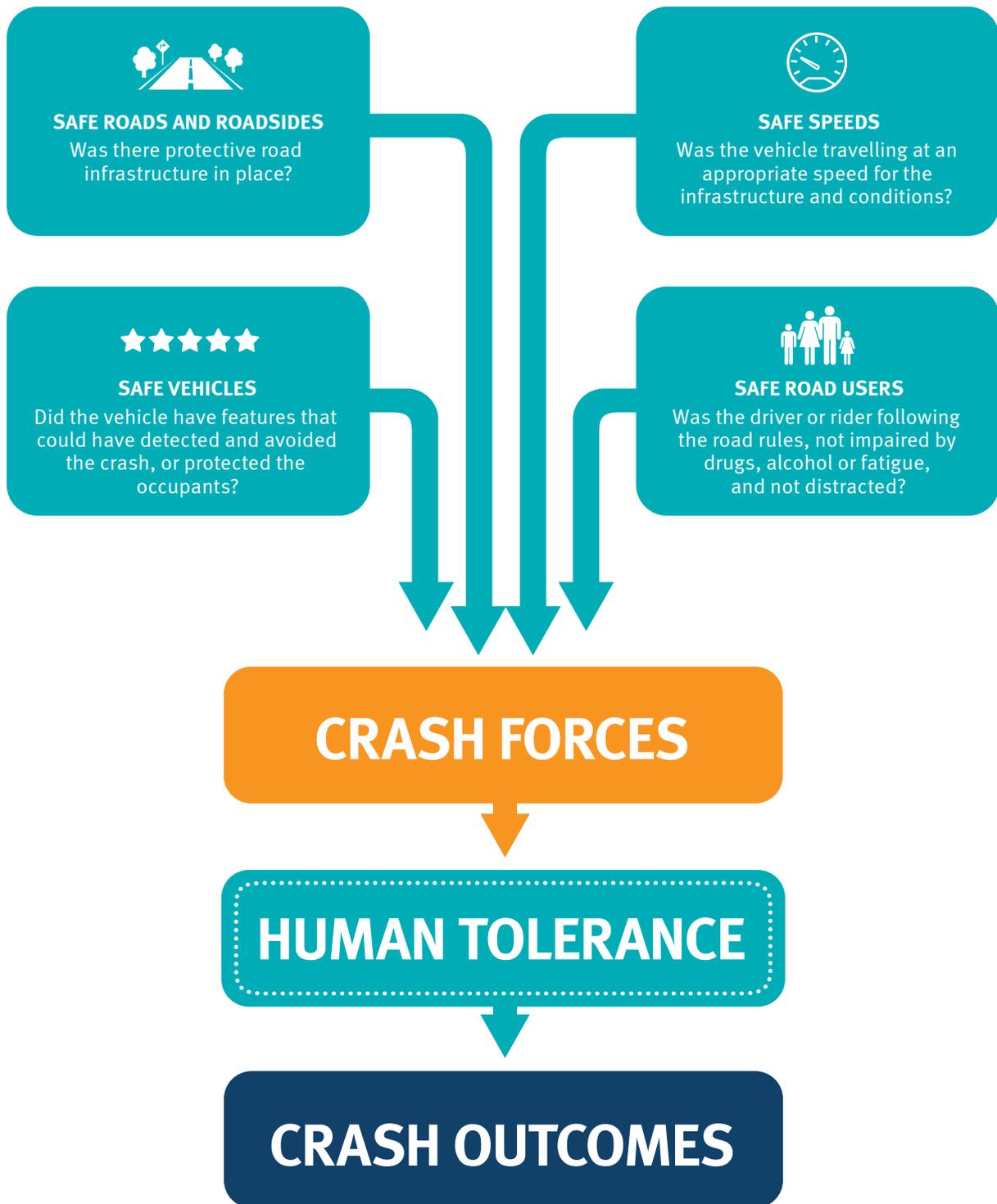
On the road, people will make mistakes, but should not be penalised with injury or death for doing so. This means all elements of the ‘system’ need to be forgiving. The cornerstones of this approach are safe roads and roadsides, safe speeds, safe vehicles and safe road users. These four factors determine the forces exerted during the crash, and therefore the seriousness of the outcome (see Figure 5).

Realising the benefits of the Safe System approach requires everyone involved in each of the elements of the system to understand the importance of their role in saving a life.

Other critical inputs to the Safe System are:

- enforcement strategies to encourage compliance and manage non-compliance with the road rules
- understanding crashes and risks through data analysis, research and evaluation
- managing access to the road through licensing drivers and riders and registering vehicles
- providing education and information
- innovation
- good management, monitoring, communication and coordination.





*Figure 5: System factors and their impact on crash outcomes (Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished)*

## 4. Road safety is everyone's issue and everyone's responsibility

*We will drive a fundamental change in the culture and attitude to road safety.*

Broader social and transport factors influence road safety. Many of the enduring problems in road safety are embedded in people's lives and daily norms. People drive and ride fatigued, busy, distracted by mobile devices, and tempted to speed. They may live far from their places of work or education and be dependent on their private vehicles. Some have alcohol and drug dependency problems. These factors can be difficult to change, but it doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

There are many opportunities throughout people's lives to inform, educate and encourage them to consider how their behaviour could impact their lives and those of others. Ideally, people would not only adopt safer behaviours themselves, but would demand it from everyone involved in the road system.

A cultural shift is required in attitudes towards road safety, so that people reject the notion that death and serious injuries are simply 'part and parcel' of using the roads.

This applies not just to road users, but also those planning the system, designing it, building, maintaining and operating on it. There are also a wide range of people and sectors that have a stake and interest in road safety solutions, including education, emergency services, health and rehabilitation services, infrastructure, insurance, justice, liquor licensing, public transport, urban and regional planning and workplace health and safety. Solutions will be more effective if they are co-designed between agencies, sectors and stakeholders – and may not always involve government.

Stakeholders and communities can achieve change if they are empowered to develop a shared agenda and their own solutions, driven by cohesive values, behaviours and norms.

# Making it happen

## Road safety action plans

Two-year road safety action plans will help to implement and track progress against this strategy in the short to medium term. They will be championed by the key road safety agencies within government, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Queensland Police Service, and will include a snapshot of key initiatives and commitments to be implemented across:

- education and engagement
- enforcement
- road and roadside engineering improvements
- technology
- research and data
- innovation
- governance.

It is not possible or useful to try to capture every initiative across Queensland that will have a positive road safety benefit. Rather, we encourage everyone with a role to play to draw from the action plan to further develop and refine their own ideas over the coming years.

## Implementation

Our implementation goals for the strategy and action plans are that:

1. everyone owns the vision and it is embedded in planning and decision-making
2. everyone who works on road safety understands the intent of the strategy and applies the Safe System principles
3. communication about road safety is open and transparent to increase public understanding and demand for safety by presenting the full picture
4. efforts are coordinated and collaborative
5. achievement of short term targets is celebrated – we acknowledge that achieving the vision is not going to happen quickly, so we communicate progress regularly.

# The system we want – by 2021

In 2021, there will be...	
On the network	In our culture
<i>More forgiving road and roadside infrastructure</i>	
Greater network-wide implementation of forgiving infrastructure treatments (including marking and minimising hazards and designing intersections to minimise crash forces), and introduction of new vehicle safety technology.	A more embedded culture within road authorities of making infrastructure investment decisions from the viewpoint of safety.
<i>More Queenslanders in safer vehicles</i>	
More Queenslanders driving vehicles with higher safety standards and active safety features, including those using new Intelligent Transport System technologies.	People living, working and doing business in Queensland with a stronger understanding about active and passive vehicle safety features and their relevance for higher risk groups (young drivers and older drivers). Individuals and organisations who more actively seek out and rank safety highly when making purchase decisions.
<i>Safer and more accepted speed limits</i>	
More responsive setting and notification of speed limits for particular locations based on crash risk. Emerging opportunities from technology realised for more targeted and effective enforcement and to support compliance.	Queenslanders understand, accept and comply with safe speed limits. Communities increasingly demand from government safe speeds on the roads.
<i>More road users are alert, compliant and courteous</i>	
More wearing of seatbelts and less drink driving, drug driving, speeding and driving while fatigued or using a mobile phone or other device. Vulnerable road users increasingly accommodated on the network by infrastructure design.	People not accepting deliberate risk-taking by themselves or their family members, friends, colleagues, employees and the community. Road users taking care to share the road with others, especially if they are more vulnerable (for example, motorists sharing the road with cyclists and pedestrians).

# Monitoring performance

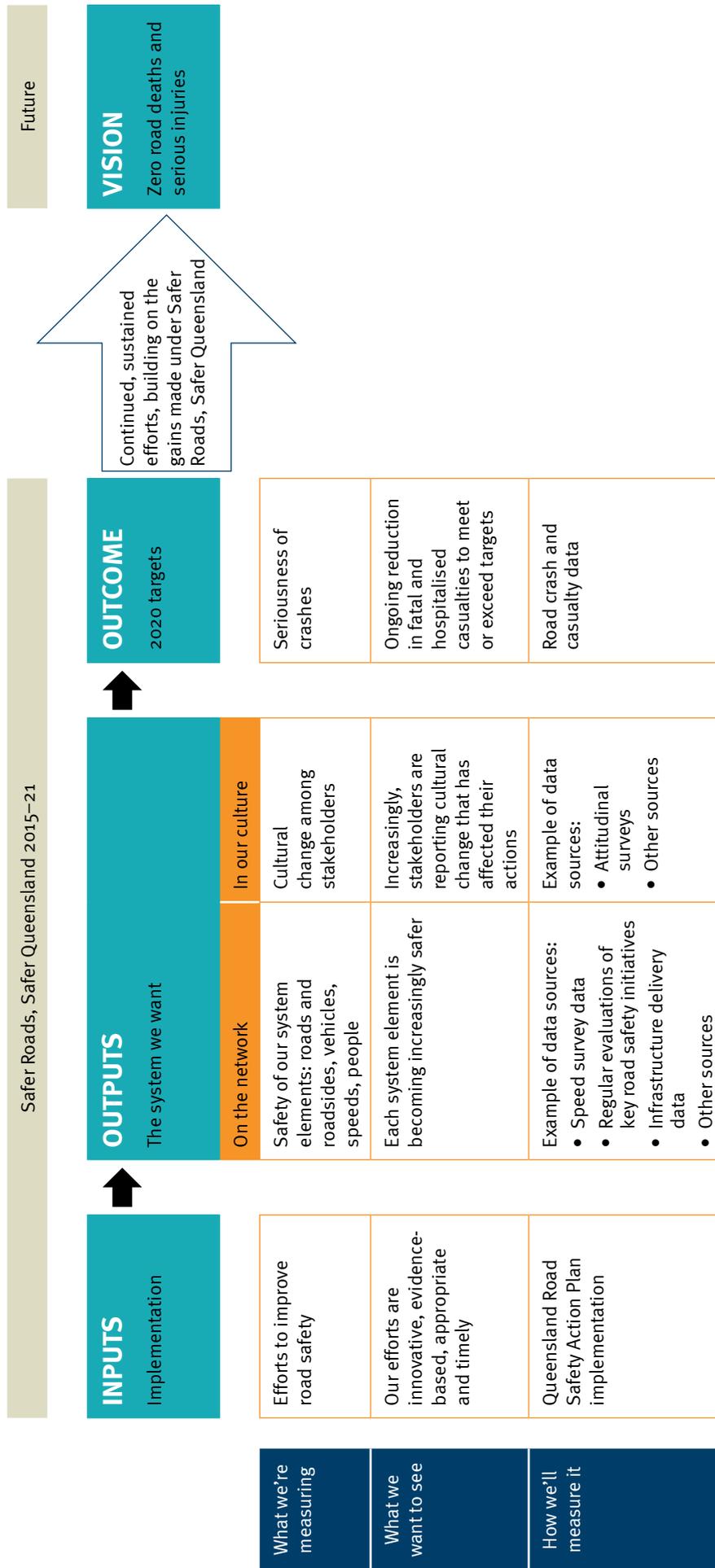
Regular monitoring and reporting on progress in road safety is critical to building momentum, interest and enthusiasm, improving and sharing understanding about the problems and solutions and ensuring that a 'results focus' is maintained.

The delivery of this strategy will be guided by a monitoring framework (see Figure 6) informed by data about performance (outputs) in addition to data about crashes (outcomes). It will monitor efforts (inputs) on the ground, the safety of our system and cultural change among all stakeholders and the comparative seriousness of crashes (outcomes).

As this strategy is implemented, the framework and performance indicators will be further developed and published regularly. The framework and indicators will also be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain relevant as data sources and capability improves.



Figure 6: Safer Roads, Safer Queensland monitoring and implementation framework



# Reference list

<sup>1</sup>Wundersitz, L.N., Baldock, M.R.J. 2011. *The relative contribution of system failures and extreme behaviour in South Australian crashes* (CASR092). Adelaide: Centre for Automotive Safety Research.

<sup>2</sup>Data Analysis, Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished. Economic cost estimated using values derived from the inclusive willingness-to-pay methodology and expressed in 2014 dollar values.

For more information about the methodology used, please refer: Transport and Infrastructure Council. 2015. *2015 National Guidelines for Transport System Management in Australia: Road Parameter Values [PV2]*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. Available at: <http://ngtsmguidelines.com>.

<sup>4</sup>Access Economics. 2009. *The economic cost of spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury in Australia*. Report prepared for the Victorian Neurotrauma Initiative. Available at: <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/about-the-tac/our-organisation/research/tac-neurotrauma-research/vni/the2oeconomic2ocost2oof2ospinal2ocord2oinjury2oand2otraumatic2obrain2oinjury2oin2oaustralia.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>Data Analysis, Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished. Data extracted 9 July 2015.

\* NB. The hospitalised casualties figure for 2014 is preliminary and subject to change.

<sup>6</sup>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2002. *Safety on roads: what's the vision?* Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Internal Transport Forum (ITF). 2008. *Towards zero: ambitious road safety targets and the safe system approach*. Paris: OECD/ITF.

Wong, S. C, Sze, N. N., Yip, H. F, Loo, B. P. Y., Hung, W. T. and Lo, H. K. 2006. 'Association between setting quantified road safety targets and road fatality reduction'. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 38: 997-1005.

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