



DISCUSSION PAPER

Week beginning 18 May 2007

Saving lives – real Driver Education

Bob Le Febvre from Erindale College in Canberra has submitted this discussion paper, and would welcome your comments. His contact details are given at the end of this document.

Background

According to the Australia Automobile Association, 1602 people died from car crashes in Australia in 2006. A further 22,000 people are seriously injured (paraplegia, quadriplegia, limb amputations and brain damage) each year.

We have lost more people to road deaths than in battle in two world wars.

This means that 31 people die every week, or one person dies every 5 and a half hours; and that 423 people every week are severely injured, or one person seriously injured every 24 minutes.

Key identified Causal factors

Driver risk taking behaviour, speeding or travelling too fast, complacency, driver distraction, fatigue and alcohol/drug use are the key causal factors relating to road death and serious injury.

Costs

Cost from crashes - E\$17 billion/year. Economic analysis cited by the Australia Automobile Association states that this costs the Australian economy E\$17 billion per year. Features of this analysis include insurance, vehicle repairs, emergency services, medical support and human capital costs (from loss of earnings and traffic delays).

Proposal: Government offers compulsory but free subsidised training “Defensive Driver Training”, or “Advanced Car Control” or such like that covers the Key identified Causal factors – including accident avoidance and skid pan experience (theory and practical components).

(At present, this total course already is developed and runs over one day. But its attendance is optional, costs the consumer directly, is not well known or easily accessible (through lack of demand). Thus is currently not well used.)

Cost to the community for compulsory training: No charge.

Current cost for undertaking course is \$300 (as identified, for example, by Safe Drive Training www.sdt.com.au)

Each course is undertaken and completed by all drivers irrespective of age every 4 years.

Estimated number of (licensed) drivers in Australia (2007) is 13 000 000.

Cost to tax payer/government for driver training every 4 years

13 000 000 drivers x \$300 for course training = \$3.9 billion in total for course training (attendance required every 4 years).

Current estimated cost from road fatalities and serious road accidents = \$17 billion every year.

Saving lives and serious injuries

IF this training reduces the fatalities and serious accidents by 20%, then this will save (1602 x 0.2 =) 320 lives each year and prevent a further (22,000 x 0.2=) 4400 people from serious injury in the form of paraplegia, quadriplegia, limb amputations and brain damage in Australia.

Financial saving from saving lives and serious injuries

Cost to community minus lives saved and serious accidents not occurring:

I.e. \$17 billion x 0.2 = \$3.4 billion saved per year in insurance, vehicle repairs, emergency services, medical support and human capital costs (from loss of earnings and traffic delays). After 4 years this equates to (\$3.4 billion x 4 years=) \$13.6 billion saved. This represents a return on investment every 4 years of (\$13.6 - \$3.9 billion =) \$9.7 billion, and this figure includes that no driver pays for the course, as it is paid for through public expenditure (tax).

Conclusion

With the assumption being that with the implementation of a compulsory attendance of a one day accredited "Defensive Driver Training" program, this would stop one in 5 serious accidents and fatalities from occurring and therefore realise enormous benefits to Australian society and the Australian economy. i.e.

With our 13 million drivers fulfilling the requirements of a one day "Defensive Driver Training" program, with the estimates I have used, **it would save:**

1. the tax payer a NET \$9.7 every 4 years (or NET \$2.4 billion each year) i.e. after training costs have been taken out.
2. 320 lives per year
3. 4400 serious injuries each year
4. the enormous rippled trauma to over 4720 families every year.

Why not strive to be the best, most knowledgeable and safest drivers in the world, leading by example?

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www.erindalecep.com.au (winners of 11 local and national adult education awards in the 2005/6!)

Check out our cracking new web site for all of the latest course outlines!

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