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South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031
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South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031

As Livestock SA represents beef cattle, sheep and goat producers across all of South Australia's regional areas, road safety is a major concern for all of our members.

The development of a new Road Safety Strategy for South Australia is welcomed.

The statistics for road accidents in regional South Australia are horrific. As the Issues Paper states, while 22% of the State's population lives in regional South Australia, 56% of crashes where lives are lost on roads occur in regional areas. This equates to an average of 44 lives lost and 206 people being seriously injured each year.

Livestock SA fully endorses the aim of the Strategy to reduce lives lost and serious injuries on South Australia's roads.

It is noted that most of the crashes on regional roads are single vehicle run-off-road incidents, where the vehicle leaves the road at speed and hits the closest fixed object. It is obvious that the widening of rural roads, secure fences on road corridors, and the clearing of bushes and trees that obscure vision are key things that are required. On regional roads, these measures need to be priorities to be addressed in the Road Safety Strategy.

There is the need for continued funding to improve the safety of regional and remote roads. This includes the need to spend more on infrastructure, installing passing lanes and maintaining road verges. In some cases this may be as simple as increasing the bitumen width. There are examples across the State. On Eyre Peninsula, the Flinders Highway is quite narrow from Wangary to Ceduna, and has no overtaking lanes in over 400 km while the Todd Highway between Kyancutta and Port Lincoln is also very narrow in most parts, with no overtaking lanes in 200 km. Shoulder sealing is a cheap and mostly an effective safety method particularly on Eyre Peninsula with many more, and bigger, trucks on the roads now that rail freight is not an option. In the Mallee, road trains are now allowed on the Mallee Highway with no passing opportunities for the 60 km between Peake and Lameroo. This is a notoriously difficult bit of road with many corners. A similar situation can be found on the Riddoch Highway between Keith and Naracoorte.

Livestock SA would be opposed to any suggestions that have been made in the past to improve road safety merely by reducing speed limits and raising the minimum driving age. These are not only simplistic, lazy proposals but have an adverse effect in regional areas.

Behavioural factors commonly seen in crashes where lives are lost include failure to wear a seatbelt, speeding, drugs and alcohol, and distraction (including mobile phone use). What is required is changing the attitude of drivers so that they abide by the current road rules. Driver behaviour needs to change.

As part of this, there does need to be an increased emphasis on driver education and driver safety, and while this needs to start in schools, it is required for all ages. Farm children often gain experience in driving well before turning 16 through involvement with farm vehicles and driving off-road. But even for farm children the safety message needs to be reinforced.

There also needs to be better policing of these rules. Why make more rules when there are difficulties in adequately policing the existing rules?

Any changes to be considered in the new Road Strategy must work for South Australian rural people so they can continue to live safely but also continue their activities.

For livestock producers, it should be noted that property sizes are increasing, and many are purchasing several properties which then require the need to move vehicles, machinery and livestock between these properties. To increase productivity outside the farm gate, livestock and other farm produce (mainly grain and fodder) needs to be transported on bigger trucks (such as B-doubles and triples, and even road trains). All this means more activities on rural roads, many of which are not well-equipped for carrying heavy vehicles, and yet this is happening with more to be required in the future.

The State Government's Improving Road Transport for Primary Production project which ran between 2015 to 2018, through identifying mainly route extensions and last mile access was able to improve efficiency in South Australia's agricultural transport industry. From this project, it was estimated the benefits flowing to transport operators and primary producers was at least \$80 million which is a huge boost to the South Australian economy. All this was done without compromising road safety.

It is noted that once the current consultation is closed, that the development will begin of the draft South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031. Livestock SA understands that there is a working group overseeing this process. We urge the Government to expand this group by including a representative from Primary Producer SA to ensure both primary production and rural representation.

Yours Sincerely,



Andrew Curtis
CEO