

Darwin SaferRoads Launch



Nearly 40 representatives from NT Government, local councils, emergency services, transport industry, road safety and business, attended the Darwin launch of *SaferRoads*. Speakers included Chairman of the Road Safety Council of the NT Peter Poole (inset), Peter Goed of the Australian Trucking Association NT and AAA

President Tony Stacey, who said “Improvements to the road toll are possible. That’s the biggest message of *SaferRoads*. In the past 12 months the Territory has seen a 35% drop in the number of people killed on roads compared to this time last year. It can be done.”

Peter Poole made the following observations:

- NT crash statistics are the highest in Australia, 26.1 per 100,000 population compared to 9.5 for Australia as a whole;
- Seat belt wearing by victims is only 40%;
- Alcohol is a factor in 50% of fatalities and 10% of injury crashes;
- Aboriginal people are overrepresented in proportion to their population.

Peter Poole also highlighted the challenge, which is faced by most road safety practitioners, of finding the right balance between road safety regulation and the perceived need to maintain “the Territory way of life as we know it”.

ANOP Road Safety Survey

As part of the *SaferRoads* project, ANOP has recently undertaken a national survey of motorists’ attitudes to road safety on behalf of the AAA. The survey produced some very interesting results.

Nearly six in ten drivers believe road deaths are stable or decreasing and there is a dramatic underestimation of the national road toll—with the median estimate of about 500, being less than a third of reality. As Lauchlan McIntosh of the AAA said “the results show that the extent of the carnage on our roads is not resonating with the general public.”

In a telling finding, when asked about the causes of road crashes, 100% of the sample spontaneously mentioned one or other aspect of driver behaviour as one of three biggest causes of road accidents, whereas a lowly 13% included roads among their three. And as consistently found in AAA research, it is other drivers that are held to blame.

Overall, the findings suggest that projects designed to build awareness and understanding of road safety issues in the community are sorely needed. For more information on the national survey, visit www.aaa.asn.au

ANCAP

The July ANCAP report was excellent, with many new cars receiving a 4 or 5 star rating. However, more needs to be done, especially in the area of head protection in side impact crashes. With the polarization of the Australian new vehicle fleet into passenger 4WDs and smaller cars, this is especially important. Over the next few months, ANCAP will be conducting pole collision tests on large 4WDs. This severe test allows ANCAP to assess how well a vehicle protects a driver’s head in this type of impact. We will bring you the results as soon as they are available.

For more information on ANCAP visit www.aaa.asn.au/ncap

