ROAD SAFETY: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

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WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING

We acknowledge the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their culture and to Elders past and present.

Thank you to all of the consumers and community members who attended the event. We couldn't have done this without any of you.

We'd also like to acknowledge the team from the Curtin University and the Consumer and Community Health Research Network (CCHRN) support team for their hard work in successfully delivering the Community Conversation. Our heartfelt thanks.
WHAT IS THE CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK?

The Consumer and Community Health Research Network (CCHRN) supports consumer and community involvement across the Western Australian Health Translation Network (WAHTN) partner organisations.

CCHRN's Vision is to improve lives by ensuring the community's voice is heard and understood in health research.

CCHRN's Mission is enabling consumer and community involvement in health research by supporting and connecting community with researchers, partners and policy makers.

In order to achieve CCHRN's Vision we:

- Are inclusive
- Trust, respect, support and value each other and those we work with
- Work as a team
- Are relevant and sustainable
  so as to make a difference
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION?

A community conversation is an event using an abridged version of the World Cafe Method, known internationally as an easy-to-use format for creating open conversations around questions of importance to a specific topic.

To effectively capture what’s discussed, around 6-10 community members are grouped at tables with a facilitator who directs the conversation. Specific questions relevant to the subject matter are discussed in an open and friendly environment.

All comments are written on butchers paper and used to develop a report from the conversation.

The benefits of using this method include:
- Everyone having an opportunity to answer all questions
- Community members are encouraged to engage in conversations in a comfortable space
- Having diverse perspectives which are valued and respected
- Community members are encouraged to hear and explore different ideas
- The opportunity to build a foundation of trust among community members and facilitators
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION?

Sometimes the community conversation method is also used in conjunction with an additional tool known as a Dotmocracy.

This tool is used to help community members to vote on their chosen options using a limited number of dot stickers. This is a quick and simple method for prioritising a long list of options. Community members are given a set number of stickers and asked to vote by placing the dots next to the answers or ideas they believe are the most important. Community members can spread their stickers across multiple ideas or place all of the stickers against one item.

The options with the most stickers at the end of voting 'win'. This helps the researchers identify the community members' priorities relating to the community conversation subject.
THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION TEAM

Deb Langridge, CCHRN Head: Has worked in the public health and prevention space at all levels of government - Federal, State and Local - and the not for profit sectors to contribute to the health and well-being of communities. She has worked to capture the voices of all parts of the community including access and inclusion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Culturally and Linguistically diverse communities, children and young people, mental health and community services. Deb has been the chair of Advisory Groups both in NSW and WA connecting community, government and well-being and was a member of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People’s work with the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry on Children and the Built Environment. She was also a representative for WA Local Government on the recent WA Sustainable Health Review.

Professor Torbjorn Falkmer, Lead Researcher: Is the Dean of Research at Curtin University and a passionate researcher in the field of injury, disability and participation. After decades of research into road safety for children and adults with disabilities, he was recruited to Curtin University from Sweden in 2009 to start up an Autism Research Group, now comprising of more than 100 researchers. Over the years of research, relevance has been key in his projects, in terms of rapid translation and impact in the community.

Thanks also to Ben Horgan, Matt Albrecht and Melissa Black for their support of the community conversation
ABOUT THE ROAD SAFETY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Tuesday 12th March, 2019 24 people from the broader Perth and Western Australian community gathered at Curtin University to participate in a Community Conversation on road safety. A wide range of road safety issues were raised by community members. Attendees were also canvassed for their opinions on solutions to the problems outlined in the session, as well as who might be good groups or organisations to approach to effect these changes.

Unfortunately, our summary cannot be exhaustive as there were over 200 unique suggestions for only three questions! We thank each and everyone of our attendees for contributing.

KEY THEMES OF THE CONVERSATION

- Crash prevention through road user abilities and awareness
- Community attitudes towards their own and others’ safety
- Road environment planning
- Cyclist safety
- Motorcyclist safety
- Newer vehicle technologies (including autonomous vehicles)
- Country road conditions
- Variety of other broader socio-economic factors
The primary solution presented from all groups heavily leveraged education possibilities for all people about road safety and driving ability. With a strong focus on interventions during the initial driver learning stage. Other solutions included an array of urban planning ideas, government interventions or strategies, media, and independent (non-government) assessment and enactments of policy.

Overall, there was significant enthusiasm from all participants about the need to deliver better road safety outcomes for Western Australia. We look forward to presenting the outcomes of this consultation to all interested parties and will begin planning our research strategy based on the thoughts and ideas obtained from this conversation.
THE REPORT

In the following pages is a summary of the ideas from the community who were asked a series of questions about road safety:

1) What are the issues concerning road safety?
2) How do we tackle the road safety issues identified?
3) Which people and community members or groups should be involved and how?

In our summary, we’ve attempted to capture issues which were either commonly reported by attendees or reflected a general acceptance by participants, once presented, as being significant issues.
QUESTION 1

What are the issues concerning road safety?

The issues were structured into four main categories:

- Driver / Human
- Vehicle / Equipment
- Road / Physical Environment
- Social / Economic Factors
DRIVER / HUMAN
Category #1

Driver / Human factors contributed to the largest proportion of problems reported by participants concerning the issues around road safety. It was widely accepted by participants that the ability, training and assessment of drivers could be improved across all parts of the community, with some suggesting the failure to re-test drivers may be a significant issue.

While specific behaviours were not generally mentioned, here are some of the factors noted which should be addressed:

- How to respond during emergency situations
- Driving in unfavourable weather
- Merging
- Awareness of local laws for interstate or international drivers
- Negative attitude and culture of drivers
- Tail-gaiting or safe following distance
- Impatience and frustration
- Speeding
- Signalling
- A lack of empathy
Participant also noted a cluster of factors relating to distraction and impairment including:

- Overall mindfulness on the road
- Mobile phone use
- Drugs / alcohol
- Distraction by passengers
- Lack of spatial awareness
- Fatigue
- Health problems

Several issues relating to cyclists were also raised, including shared use of roads, mutually disagreeable attitudes and awareness between cars and bikes. The use and/or lack of bike paths, and a general lack of bike infrastructure.
VEHICLE / EQUIPMENT

Category #2

Issues identified by attendee were often presented as general conceptualisations of potential problems and/or as technologies to solve problems. For example, a number of attendees were interested in the role of autonomous vehicles in our transport future, how safe they would be, and where might they fail.

Similarly, thought was given to technological innovations and existing car designs such as:

- Intelligent Cruise Control
- Interactions between the drivers knowledge of the vehicles capabilities and how to use them (e.g. how to use ABS Brakes
- Understanding of the visual range given a vehicle's dimensions
- Kangaroo deterrent devices
- Location of brake lights

Others focused on existing and potential technologies to handle Driver / Human-related issues which are identified above, examples of these are:

- Interlocks
- In Car phone use Identification
- Horsepower Limits
- Or the lack of regular car inspections may mean that many vehicles may have unsafe faults such as bald tyres
ROAD / PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
Category #3

The issues nested within the Road / Physical environment category can be grouped into four main topics: perceptual and planning, road condition, motorcycle specific factors, and side-walks accessibility.

**Perceptual and planning** issues which attendees brought up included:

- Overwhelming amount of information present on some road sections
- The quality of road signs
- Traffic management around school zones with a significant amount of activity (distracting), and regions where traffic control was generally confusing
- Consistency in road design across councils
- Likelihood of rural road head on collisions
- The need for more preventative road design

**Road condition issues** related to speed focused mostly on identifying whether the designated speeds were conducive to safe travel given the road conditions.

Other identified road condition issues included:

- Hazard removal (including road shoulder clean up)
- Street lighting
- The poor state of country roads
- Safety of passing where there is street side parking
ROAD / PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Category #3

Road and physical environment issues specific to motorcycles included concerns about:

- Wire rope barriers and motorcycle safety
- Square gutters
- Whether motorcycles should be allowed in bus/emergency lanes
- Increased risk of road debris

A series of issues were brought up concerning the accessibility of sidewalks.

Attendees reported issues including:

- Irregularity with the placement of accessible pathways, causing significant issues for pedestrians and particularly for individuals with disability or mobility impairments
- Significant number of cracked or under repair side-walks forcing pedestrians and wheelchairs onto roads
- Parking access for wheelchair transfer
- Steepness of crosswalks
- Lack of lighting
- Cars parking on paths
Several groups highlighted the generally poor urban planning by government and councils which prioritises vehicle travel at the expense of other modes of transport. Related to this was:

- There are not enough trains plus stations, buses, and school buses to serve the community.
- Concerns about how the cost of replacing a car precludes newer safety features being accessible to younger people and lower income earners.
- Appropriate levels of current penalties and fines for driving infractions.
- Enforcement should be better targeted due to perception enforcement agencies are "revenue raising" rather than focusing on safety.

SUMMARY REPORT
QUESTION 2

How do we tackle the road safety issues identified?
It was clear that all groups considered that education should be a central aspect of any improvement in road safety. This took on many forms, for example:

- Some attendees argued for mandatory advanced driver training which adequately covered complex and dangerous driving scenarios or vocational courses with training provider to gain a certificate in driver education. These notions were underpinned by the idea of ensuring good teaching practices and teaching culture to facilitate improvements in driving culture
- Others suggested that road safety education should be increased in schools
- There was a suggestion for the inclusion of a "road safety audit" following every crash. Related to this was the idea that crash investigations should inform policy change, which was to be driven by independent analysis, with a degree of separation from government decision making
- Other interesting ideas targeted urban planning and government interventions, including enhancements in public transport infrastructure to provide legitimate alternatives to cars, various cultural and urban design shifts away from vehicles, autonomous transport, and the general desire to see more government action on road safety (acknowledged with a request to take politics out of road safety)
QUESTION 3

Which people and community members or groups should be involved and how?
COMMUNITY MEMBERS OR GROUPS INVOLVEMENT AND HOW?

One attendee made the comment that many crashes are driven by the failure to adequately acknowledge road users will inevitably make mistakes. A systems-based approach which acknowledges this makes road safety everybody's responsibility requiring a significant cultural shift.

Given the strong focus on education as a targeted solution and the necessity of a deeper level change, traditional education institutions (schools, TAFEs, universities, Dept of Education) and groups which could also play a role in education (automotive clubs, road safety council, paraplegic benefit fund, police, nurses, crash survivors, and various media options for education) were strongly represented.

Other groups included government body's that legislate planning, safety, health, licensing.
ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

Overall attendee feedback trended towards the positive about how useful the Communication Conversation was, how informative and participative the event was.

The variety of people, views, and diversity of opinions were all seen as healthy and positive overall. The educational presentations and hearing the diversity of opinions and ideas were also seen as the best things about the event.

The areas of improvement revolved around including government representatives in the conversation, having more time to complete discussing all points, and having a table introduction session at the beginning - as people didn't feel like they knew everyone's name.

Other points of interesting feedback was the theme of continuing involvement - the people in the room want to continue to be involved and to be included in the outcomes of the research. A country / regional / rural challenges differing from metro areas - interestingly (and not surprising) was the idea around conducting a separate Community Conversation for people living outside the metro area. An education piece around informing drivers of any changes to policy was also mentioned as an additional outcome.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can email Professor Torbjorn Falkmer for further information at t.falkmer@curtin.edu.au

Visit the Consumer and Community Health Research Network at https://www.involvingpeopleinresearch.org.au

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