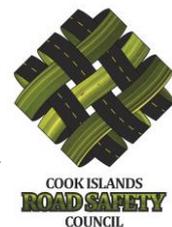


Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020

“Keep me Safe”



Foreword

The burden of road traffic crashes in the Cook Islands is significant and unacceptable. In the absence of a coordinated national road safety plan, the Cook Islands will continue to experience comparatively high rates of road traffic crashes, and crash-related deaths, injuries, and disability.

On Friday 28 August 2015, the Minister of Health, Cook Islands Police, Infrastructure Cook Islands and the Cook Islands Road Safety Council hosted a meeting for road safety stakeholders - the inaugural Cook Islands Road Safety Summit. This meeting provided a forum to discuss and develop a strategy to address the increasing number of road crash-related deaths in particular those which involve youth and/or associated with alcohol. Stakeholders examined key drivers and preventative measures for road crashes and incidents.

A draft Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy was developed following the summit, and extensive community consultation undertaken regarding its intent and objectives. The **Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020** is a result of this process. The Strategy is aligned to global and regional strategies and identifies key priorities and areas of investment required to address road traffic incidents/crashes and related injuries and disability in the Cook Islands. This Strategy has been designed to reflect the Cook Islands context and incorporates pragmatic, affordable and sustainable solutions.

We look forward to ensuring a safer road system for the Cook Islands.

Kia manuia,

Hon. Teariki Heather
Deputy Prime Minister

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the collective efforts of the Cook Islands road safety stakeholders including officials of the leading governing bodies of the Cook Islands – Religious Advisory Council, House of Ariki and the Cook Islands Government, as well as the Cook Islands Road Safety Council. We also thank Dr Aumea Herman for her contribution to this process through her postdoctoral research on Injuries and injury-related disability in the Cook Islands (INDICO) with funding support from the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

Introduction

The social and economic burden of road traffic incidents and crashes and crash-related injuries and disability in the Cook Islands is significant (WHO Global status report on road safety).

Transport Act 1966, Transport Amendment Act 2007, and Section 33(3) of the Ministry of Health Act 2013 (“the Acts”) places the responsibility on the Ministry of Police, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health to ensure the safety of all road users and to minimise the impact of road crashes or incidents.

The **Cook Islands Road Safety 2016-2020** (Strategy) is a five-year plan which outlines the road safety priorities and key activities that the road safety community will undertake in order to establish safer road systems in the Cook Islands. The Strategy is aligned to the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, as well as the action priorities identified in The World Health Organization Regional Action Plan for Violence and Injury Prevention in the Western Pacific (2016-2020).

This Strategy is purposely time-limited and places emphasises on clarifying the legislative framework which underpins all road safety measures including the identification of the main regulatory agencies and their functions; as well as initiating safer road system improvements. This time period will also incorporate planning for a longer term Cook Islands Road Safety strategy.

With strong Government and community support, this Strategy will set the Cook Islands on a path towards safer road systems, and a sustainable social, cultural and economic future.

Development of the Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy 2015

On Friday 28 August 2015, the Minister of Health, Cook Islands Police, Infrastructure Cook Islands and the Cook Islands Road Safety Council hosted a meeting for road safety stakeholders - the inaugural Cook Islands Road Safety Summit (Summit).

This meeting included senior representatives of the House of Ariki/Koutu Nui, Religious Advisory Council and the Government of the Cook Islands. Non-government agencies were also represented through the Cook Islands Road Safety Council, Cook Islands National Disability Council and Te Vaerua. Youth representatives included secondary school college students.

This meeting provided a forum to discuss and develop a strategy to address the increasing burden of road crash-related deaths including those which involve youth and/or associated with alcohol. High-level road safety approaches informed discussions in particular the Global Plan for the Decade of Action on Road Safety 2011-2020 which provides a framework for countries to mount an effective response. The World Health Organization Regional Action Plan for Violence and Injury Prevention in the Western Pacific 2016-2020 has also provided pragmatic options for the Cook Islands to consider in the design and implementation of context-specific road safety initiatives.

Stakeholders identified key drivers and preventative measures for road crashes and incidents applying Haddon's framework for injury prevention to the Cook Islands context. This helped prioritise activities for action based on the matrix of risk factor categories: Humans (Host), Vehicles and Equipment (Agent), and Environment (Physical and Social); and phases (pre-crash, crash and post-crash). Important discussion points included the physical road environment, increasing traffic volume, composition of the vehicle fleet, safety of vehicles, use of safety equipment such as helmets,

seat belts and car seat restraints, as well as the social and cultural norms which influence road user behaviour.

Following the Summit, the draft Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy was developed and extensive community (Vaka) consultation undertaken regarding its intent and objectives. This Strategy is the result of this process.

Road Safety in the Cook Islands

The Cook Islands consists of 15 islands and atolls spread over two million km² of the South Pacific Ocean. The main island of the Cook Islands is Rarotonga (capital is Avarua), a volcanic island with two parallel roads (coastal and inland) encircling most of the perimeter of the island. While most roads are tar-sealed, in comparison to roads in New Zealand, road conditions in Rarotonga are poorly maintained. The speed limit is 50km/hr and reduces to 30km/hr in the main city centre, Avarua.

Of the 16,297 registered motor vehicles in the Cook Islands, about 60% are motor bikes while the remainder are four-wheel cars and trucks. Despite legislative measures and high rates of two-wheel motorbike head injury-related fatalities, helmet uptake is poor and enforcement of speed limits less than satisfactory.¹⁰ Driving under the influence of alcohol is relatively better enforced compared to helmets and speed; however, there is no legislation relating to seat belts, car restraints, and the use of mobile phones while driving.

The resident Cook Islands Māori population is approximately 15,000 and relatively young with a median age of 29 years, 29% of Cook Islands Māori are aged less than 15 years, and 58% aged 15 to 59 years. At least 70% of residents live on Rarotonga. As citizens of the Realm of New Zealand, Cook Islands Māori travel frequently between the Cook Islands and New Zealand with some 70,000 residing in New Zealand. Cook Islands Māori

also access free publically funded health care services in the Cook Islands and New Zealand. Medical referrals to the New Zealand health system for further investigations and management relating to serious road traffic crash-related injuries, are not uncommon.

The burden of road traffic injuries in the Cook Islands is significant but poorly quantified, and the cost of referrals of crash injuries to the New Zealand health system is unknown but likely to be high. The Cook Islands Ministry of Health funds air travel costs (seat or stretcher) for the transfer of seriously injured cases (and parents of dependants) to New Zealand.

Hospitalisation data suggest alcohol use is associated with at least half of all motor vehicle crash-related hospitalisations (n=46 in 2010) with 90% involving motorbike riders and at least half aged 15 to 24 years (Cook Island Ministry of Health Statistical Bulletin 2011). Despite comparatively low road traffic crash numbers, the small population base is likely to be more sensitive to crash-related injuries and disability with considerable social and economic consequences for surviving crash victims and their families. Importantly, there is significant cost borne by the Ministry of Health as well as attending family members for serious injuries requiring additional health care and subsequent transfer to New Zealand.

The overall social and economic impact of road injuries on the people of the Cook Islands is unacceptable. The implications for the premature loss of young Cook Islands men and women to road traffic injuries is devastating with the loss of income and interruption in lineage and the transfer of 'te Reo Maori e te Peu Kuki Airani' to the next generation.

Enough is enough – its time for the Cook Islands to implement a safer roads system.

Implementing the Cook Islands Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020

Implementing the Strategy requires Champions, the Steering Committee, and funding resources:

Cook Islands road Safety Champions:

- House of Ariki/Koutu Nui
- Religious Advisory Council
- Cook Islands Government
- Children and Youth
- Families affected representatives

Cook Islands Road Safety Steering Committee:

- Ministry of Health (Chair)
- Cook Islands Police
- Ministry of Transport
- Infrastructure Cook Islands
- Ministry of Justice
- Te Aponga Uira
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
- Cook Islands Road Safety Council
- Office of the Prime Minister
- Community-based emergency rescue/responders
- Youth – three college representatives/Youth Counsellor/Council
- National Environment Service
- Ministry of Internal affairs
- Tourism
- Office of the Government Opposition
- Media

Cook Islands Road Safety Budget: (\$1,000,000)

Outcomes	Outputs	Inputs	Funds NZD
Effective Road Safety Management	Good Governance	Policy/legislative review and drafting	150,000
Safer Roads and Mobility	Quality Road Design	Review road design and high risk priority areas	400,000
		Road furniture/ signage	150,000
		Access for disabled persons	50,000
Safer Vehicles	Road-safe Vehicles	Review and establishment of vehicle standards	10,000
		Vehicle safety equipment	50,000
Safer Road Users	Informed Road Users	Design road safety curricula and awareness campaigns	100,000
		Review and establish graduated driver licensing protocols and defensive driving programmes	40,000
Effective Road Incident/Crash response	Responsive Services	Improve trauma emergency response services capacity and coordination	50,000
TOTAL			1,000,000

Cook Islands Road safety Strategy 2016-2020

Vision

A safer Cook Islands road system, increasingly free of death, serious injury and disability.

Mission

To minimise the number and social and economic impact of road traffic incidents, crashes and crash-related injuries, fatalities and disability.

Values

Leadership
Collaboration
Inclusiveness
Accountability

Goals

<p>Zero road incident/crash-related deaths A 50% reduction in the number of serious injuries by 2020</p>
--

Priority Areas

Effective Road Safety Management
Safer Roads and Mobility
Safer Vehicles
Safer Road Users
Effective Road Incident/Crash response

1. Effective Road Safety Management

Aim: to provide leadership regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of road safety strategies

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
1. Establish national road safety body	a. Establish Steering committee membership and Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define steering committee membership, legislative mandates, roles and responsibilities • Identify regulatory institutions responsible for road safety standards • Lead implementation of the road safety strategic plan • Oversee the development of medium to long term road safety strategies • Progress plans to establish a national body with clear objectives and is adequately resourced 	Ministry of Health (Chair), Infrastructure, Transport, Media, Police, Road Safety Council, Disability Council	\$15,000	Feb 2016

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
	b. Support national road safety champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify national champions for road safety • Build a road safety culture with role models 	Road Safety Steering committee		
2. Improve road safety-related policy and legislative framework to international standards	a. Review existing road safety-related policy and legislation, sentencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve road safety-related policy and legislation • Clarify road safety stakeholder regulatory roles and responsibilities • Promote community awareness of road safety policy, legislative, and regulations • Review the number and geographical distribution of licensed alcohol outlets to establish supply systems • Review the number and composition of the motor vehicle fleet including age, 	Crown Law Road Safety Steering committee Alcohol Licensing Authority, Transport Licensing Authority Health, National Environment Service	\$50,000 for drafting	Dec 2016

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		right/left hand drives, and essential safety technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the road safety requirements for new business licenses in particular for those involved in carrying passengers or heavy loads 			
	b. Establish legislative measures relating to alcohol and driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update alcohol blood (0.08g/dl) and breath concentration limits • Explore opportunities to regulate for zero breath/blood alcohol concentration 	Police Road Safety council Ministry of Justice, Health, Education		Dec 2016
	c. Establish legislative measures relating to speed and driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update speed limits • Develop and introduce a guideline for establishing safe speed limits 	Police Road Safety council Ministry of Justice, Health, Education		Dec 2016

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
3. Increase capacity for road safety legislation enforcement	a. Increase the presence and effectiveness of enforcement agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a mechanism for police to enforce legislation compliance • Update police regulatory processes and investigation of legislative breaches • Police to collaborate with the community to support community policing 	Police Road Safety council Ministry of Justice, Health, Education, Disability Council Community	\$50,000 for enforcement	Dec 2016
4. Establish a national road safety database	a. Identify crash and crash-related injury data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key crash and crash-related injury data collection systems to inform policy and practice • Establish Memorandums of Understanding for between agency information sharing • Establish a national road safety database/system and lead agencies to manage this 	Ministry of Health, Police, Justice, Infrastructure, Community-based rescue services	\$15,000	Dec 2016

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
5. Ensure sustainable resourcing	a. Establish baseline funding and resource requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine funding and resourcing requirements for priority areas including ongoing road maintenance 	Road Safety Steering committee, International partners	\$1,000	Dec 2018
6. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation	a. Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework with mid- term review in August 2017 and end term review in June 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design protocols and processes to evaluate road safety outputs, and outcomes Establish systematic reporting mechanisms Establish a framework to capture input from the community 	Road Safety Steering committee Community	\$10,000	Aug 2018

2. Safer Roads and Mobility

Aim: to optimise safety measures in the planning and design of road networks

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
1. All road networks incorporate road safety protocols	a. Ensure road engineering is evidence-based, and considers relevant international transport standards b. Establish periodic communication with road safety stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine road engineering capability and responsiveness Incorporate transport and land use into road network planning Identify and mobilise resources for affordable engineering solutions for high risk areas for road traffic crashes, and crash –related injuries and deaths (black spots) Review and update Road Construction standards 	Infrastructure, Police, Transport, Community Fire and Rescue, Road Safety Council, Land Owners, Disability Council	\$550,000	Dec 2017
	c. Ensure the design of road signage, barriers, and footpaths considers relevant international transport standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a land survey/stocktake of road signage, barriers and footpaths identify mitigating factors Prioritise and address high risk areas including those for 	Infrastructure Police Road Safety Council		Dec 2017

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		vulnerable road users as well as unrestrained animals			
	d. Increase traffic calming measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use geographical mapping tools to identify high crash risk areas and implement setting-specific traffic calming measures, and safe pathways for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users • Establish area-specific speed limits and signage 			Dec 2017
	e. Ensure road safety measures consider vulnerable road users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish road safety measures which accommodate human error, pedestrians, motorbike/cycle riders, those with disabilities, and young and elderly 			Dec 2017
2. Increase road visibility	a. Improve road markings and lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure road markings adopt international standards and responsive to availability of road space. 	Infrastructure Te Aponga Uira Police		Dec 2017

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map road networks and areas requiring lighting 			
3. Maintain road quality to ensure safety	a. Support ongoing road maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a work plan for implementing ongoing road maintenance 	Infrastructure Police		Dec 2017
4. Improve access to roads	a. Introduce effective and safe traffic and parking management measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 'no parking' areas Assign dedicated 'bus and taxi bay' areas 	National Environment Services Infrastructure Ministry of Health, Education Disability Council		Dec 2017
	b. Safe access for emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure existing building and new building permits consider emergency access issues. 			
	c. Safe access for those with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, map and address high risk areas for road traffic crashes which involve people with disabilities 		\$50,000	Dec 2017

3. Safer Vehicles

Aim: to ensure all vehicles meet minimum standards for design and safety features

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
1. Establish national vehicle standards	a. Review national and international vehicle standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update national vehicle standards • Update the national vehicle fleet database and reporting requirements 	Transport Licensing Authority, Police, vehicle importers, Disability Council		Dec 2016
	b. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of vehicle standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all vehicles comply with the Warrant of Fitness requirements as well as the purpose they are licensed for • Ensure all vehicles have baseline safety features such as functioning brakes and protective 	Transport Licensing Authority, Police, vehicle importers	\$10,000	Dec 2020

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		devices such as seatbelts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards establishing international minimum vehicle and protective standards 			
2. Increase visibility of vehicles	a. Ensure vehicles have high visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider initiatives to improve vehicle visibility for e.g. colour of vehicles and headlights on cycles 	Police Transport authority Road Safety council		Dec 2020
3. Adopt the use of safety equipment on all motorised and non-motorised vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All safety equipment meet international safety standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate compulsory use of approved vehicle safety equipment 	Police, Transport Road Safety council Ministry of Health, Education, Tourism National disability Council	\$50,000	Dec 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce Helmet use legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce legislation on compulsory helmet use for all those travelling 	Police Transport Road Safety council Ministry of Health, Education Tourism		Dec 2016

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		on two or three-wheel vehicles • Establish minimum helmet quality standards			
	• Progress legislation for seatbelt and child-car restraints	• Work towards compulsory seatbelt and child-car restraint use legislation	Police Transport Road Safety council Ministry of Health, Education		Jun 2020
	• Investigate alternative motorbike and ute/truck safety equipment	• Explore options for motorbike restraints • Investigate legislative measures for the compulsory use of safety equipment for passengers on back tray of four wheel drive trucks	Police Transport Road Safety council		Jun 2020
3. Review safety features, type, and engine	a. Ensure road safety concerns are considered when determining the motor vehicle fleet tie in	• Establish systems to determine minimum safety standards for all vehicles.	Police, Infrastructure Transport Ministry of Health		Dec 2020

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
rating of motor vehicle fleet	with road safety review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the appropriate number and type of licensed motor vehicles as appropriate to road capacity. • Determine opportunities for improving public transportation networks. • Explore measures to reduce the engine rating of motorbikes as a means to reducing speed 			

4. Safer Road Users

Aim: to equip road users with the knowledge and tools to minimise their crash risk, crash severity, and poor outcome (death/disability)

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
1. Increase road safety knowledge	a. Promote road safety throughout the Cook Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a communication strategy to promote road safety Incorporate road safety in National policy development Incorporate road safety in education curricula 	Ministry of Education, Health, Police, Justice, Tourism, Road Safety council, Office of the Prime Minister, Disability Council	\$100,000	Dec 2017
	b. Develop a comprehensive advocacy programme encompassing risk and mitigating factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote safer road user practices e.g. sober driver, organised/alternative vehicle options for impaired drivers, complying with speed limits, use of protective equipment Educate the community about the risks of speed, alcohol/drug 	Ministry of Education, Health, Police, Justice, Tourism, Road Safety council		Dec 2017

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		impaired driving, other risky driving behaviours and the benefits of using safety equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate community 'Vaka' road safety programmes • Raise road user awareness of different road safety codes such as e.g. left hand driving in the Cook Islands 			
2. Ensure robust driver licensing protocols	a. Ensure driver licensing protocols are clearly defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement a robust graduated driver's licensing system and procedures for training and licencing of new drivers. • Improve driver licensing protocols for existing drivers including visitors. • Develop protocols for vulnerable (young, elderly, pedestrians, motorcycle, motorbike) drivers including those 	Police, Tourism, Road Safety Council	\$25,000	Dec 2017

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
		with serious medical conditions			
	b. Support responsible driving behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the national road safety code to reflect international standards. • Explore options to establish a defensive and advanced driving programme for new drivers context-specific to the Cook Islands 	Police, Tourism, Road Safety Council	\$15,000	Dec 2017
3. Improve road user visibility	a. Improve uptake of road safety reflective wear by vulnerable (young, elderly, pedestrians, motorcycle, motorbike) road users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support road user use of reflective clothing (i.e. pedestrian/cyclist) 	Road Safety council Tourism Police		Dec 2017

5. Effective Road Incident and Crash Response

Aim: to provide timely and responsive emergency services for road crash victims

Priority	Action	Activity	Agency responsible	Costs	Timeline
1. Improve emergency response services	a. Support the coordination of emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify roles and responsibilities of service providers • Establish Memorandum of Understanding between service providers 	Ministry of Health, Police, Emergency response and rescue services		Dec 2015
2. Increase community emergency response capacity	a. Increase the capacity of emergency trained community representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a first aid training programme • Implement first responders trauma course 3 monthly refresher training • Implement a 'train the trainer' programme for community members • Ensure ongoing recertification of first aid skills 	Ministry of Health, Police, Red Cross, Water safety council Emergency response services		Dec 2017

3. Improve emergency services access to road crash sites and victims	a. Ensure efficient emergency response access to crash sites and victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear protocols for the communication and coordination of an emergency response • Ensure there is appropriate equipment to rescue victims 		\$50,000	Dec 2017
4. Improve access to effective emergency services	a. Ensure efficient transfer of crash victims to emergency health care setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish transport protocols to transport victims to health care facilities 			plan to be developed by Jun 2016
	b. Ensure robust trauma health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a costed plan for trauma services • Purchase and install CT scan services 			
4. Strengthen rehabilitative services	a. Improve health and social systems for those with serious crash-related injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop processes and protocols for patients requiring rehabilitation (including alcohol)services in the hospital or community settings 			Dec 2017

COOK ISLANDS ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY RESULTS FRAMEWORK

