

SOME CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON THE ROAD TO ZERO

There has been a major slowdown in the rate of road safety improvement, suggesting that we need to think again about what we are doing and how we are leading change in this area. The “safe system” approach has been an important advance in road safety, but twenty years on, it is time to discuss the limitations of this approach as it has been typically described and applied. We have a long way to go and we need to consider how to broaden and deepen our approach to safety. Some questions to consider: Is “zero” a number or a philosophy? How does safety fit within other societal imperatives? Should we simply accept human error? Who is sharing responsibility for what aspect of safety? Are “pillars” useful in addressing complex interactions within the road traffic system? Why do we make such little use of safety management systems? We need to challenge what we are doing and prioritising, and re-energise our safety thinking and practice. Some great safety initiatives are underway, but they need to be followed through, further developed and added to on a Road to Zero which is part of an accessible, equitable and ultimately sustainable transport system.