

## DEVELOPMENT OF A SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE WORKERS AND INCIDENT RESPONDERS OPERATING ON HIGH SPEED ROADS

### BACKGROUND

Eastlink, in collaboration with the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) and Holmesglen TAFE are designing, implementing and evaluating a training program designed to improve the safety of emergency service workers and incident responders operating on high speed roads. This project has been funded by the Department of Education and Training through their Workforce Training Innovation Fund. The project has been initiated in response to an identified gap in training for emergency service workers and incident responders to develop skills in proactively managing their own and others safety in the complex and dynamic environment of high-speed roads.

The project team has recognized that while enforcement and compliance with legislation are critical for working in high speed road environments, the safety of workers is unlikely to be optimised unless training is aligned with the dynamic and unpredictable nature of high-speed roads. Training that is primarily driven through compliance does not cover all the contingencies associated with the nature of emergency and incident response; thus, training is urgently required to develop workers' skills in being able to anticipate and adapt to unplanned changes efficiently and effectively.

### OBJECTIVES

The following phases will be undertaken to tailor the training to all types of emergency service workers (i.e., police, fire, ambulance) and incident responders operating on high speed roads in Victoria:

- Extend the evidence-base of the key factors supporting and constraining safety working practices to all emergency services and incident responders in Victoria;
- Develop content curriculum for the training program, including training materials and a set of exemplar case studies;
- Delivery of the non-accredited training pilot to 360 workers representing emergency service agencies and incident responders across Victoria;
- A multi-stage evaluation of the non-accredited training pilot, including: (1) a process evaluation (i.e., ensuring the program is delivered as intended), (2) an intermediate outcome evaluation (e.g., awareness, attitudes, behavioural intentions), and (3) a final outcome evaluation (e.g., self-report near crash/critical incident and objective measures where possible, including crashes, injuries, mental health compensation costs); and
- Submission of a proposal for a new accredited training program.

## CONSORTIUM

A co-design model will be adopted in this project. A collaborative working relationship is envisaged over the next two years with Eastlink, MUARC, Holmesglen and the Emergency Service agencies in Victoria. This consortium is an ideal partnership as it brings together expertise of project partners across the key areas of safety/injury prevention, emergency service and incident response management, program development, delivery and evaluation. The hallmarks of this collaboration will be engagement and involvement of all partners in all phases of the project. Co-design, as well as regular harvesting of the outputs, will ensure development of a safety training program that will optimise the safety of workers and, ultimately, reduce injury and death of this important workforce.

As part of this important and innovative project, we are forming an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) which will involve representatives from the Emergency Service agencies in Victoria. This group will meet on a quarterly basis to provide subject matter expertise to the project team on information relevant to the project such as, tailoring the content curriculum, training material and use of data for evaluations. Representatives from the Emergency Service agencies will also play a critical role in helping the project team to navigate their organisational process in the recruitment of participants for the key research components of the project including (i) a survey, (ii) interviews, and (iii) piloting of the training program.

## Key contacts

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