

## **Roads authorities focus on pedestrians, cyclists, the Vulnerable Road User**

### **SARF, SANRAL inaugural non-motorised transport (NMT) seminar convenes engineering community to engage on policy, funding and guidelines.**

*Pretoria, 19 May 2017:* Pedestrians and cyclists should receive a strong focus in the planning, design and implementation of road infrastructure.

This was the resounding message from the recently-held seminar of the South African Road Federation (SARF) in partnership with the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL).

Speaking to **90** delegates, SANRAL Provincial Coordinator and SARF National Road Safety Chairperson Gail Bester said: "Over the decades, the industry has made significant strides in designing infrastructure that is faster, wider and more efficient for motorised transport; whilst non-motorised transport has not received the focus it deserves. It cannot be treated as an add-on at the risk of being ad hoc and fragmented."

It is for this reason the SARF Road Safety Committee saw the need to host its first seminar dedicated to promoting the non-motorised transport agenda.

In South Africa, non-motorised transport (NMT) is a reality as it is either the only available mode of transport or the most affordable. According to the National Household Travel Survey, 2.9 million workers walk all the way from home to places of employment and 12.7 million learners walk to school daily.

Yet, pedestrians are the most vulnerable road user considering this group accounts for 1 456 of the 3 904 fatalities recorded by the Road Traffic Management Corporation between 1 October to December 2016. Together with cyclists, at 115 fatalities in the three-month period, this is 40% of all fatalities.

"The fact that motor vehicles have been the dominant mode of transport in road designs is apparent in the high crash fatalities involving pedestrians. It was therefore necessary that we initiated dialogue amongst us as industry professionals to mainstream NMT considerations in the planning, design and implementation of road infrastructure.

"This is aligned with the resolutions of the National Road Safety Strategy, the vision of the United Nations Decade of Action, and the recently formalised NMT Guidelines developed by the National Department of Transport," Bester said.

SANRAL Project Manager Siveshni Pillay was one of 11 speakers and she delivered a presentation focused on the recently-developed draft pedestrian and public transport facility guidelines document for national roads.

Pillay explained that historically, SANRAL managed mainly high mobility corridors including freeways. Since taking over additional routes from the provinces, with substantial public transport and pedestrian activities and facilities, SANRAL had to manage the balance between freeway mobility, public transport and the accommodation of pedestrians.

"SANRAL's guidelines provide guidance to designers and decision makers on design principles for the development of an integrated roadway that ensures the safety and mobility of all road users," explained Pillay.

The SANRAL guideline draws on lessons learnt on the routes taken over by SANRAL such as the R573 Moloto Road from Gauteng to Mpumalanga and Limpopo, R71 in Limpopo and R61 in the Eastern Cape. Engineering solutions took into account rural settlements and schools along these routes which means a high number of pedestrians, as well as informal trading on the road reserve which add to the number of pedestrians on the national roads.

Presented on a public platform for the first time, the SANRAL guidelines will be piloted to test the practicalities and workability of some of the proposed solutions. The guidelines will also be shared with industry players for comment.

The line-up of speakers included amongst others, Abram Chego from the National Department of Transport, Dr Marianne Vaderschuren from the University of Cape Town, and Dr Pieter Venter from the

Global Road Safety Programme. Presentations covered a broad range of issues from the Draft Green Paper on Roads Policy for South Africa, funding options for implementing NMT infrastructure including existing DOT grants, to NMT appraisal and assessment tools. There was also a focus on the use of technology to monitor, detect, track and count pedestrians for safety and security benefits, as well as lessons learnt on several NMT case studies.

“As SARF, we are committed to rolling out similar seminars nationally. It is time to transform our space, change our thinking and promote the NMT agenda,” Bester ended.

Ends///

**Caption 1:** SARF National Road Safety Chairperson Gail Bester (far left) and SARF Operations Director Basil Jonsson (far right) with Abram Chego (National Department of Transport), Dr Marianne Vaderschuren (University of Cape Town) and Siveshni Pillay (SANRAL).



**Caption 2:** SARF National Road Safety Chairperson Gail Bester and SARF Operations Director Basil Jonsson are committed to rolling out similar NMT seminars throughout the country.

