

DAYLIGHT SAVING AND ROAD SAFETY IN SEQ

Road safety in Queensland has become a major issue. There are numerous studies from 1995 to 2007 that show that extra light in the early evening **significantly decreases vehicle occupant and especially pedestrian fatalities.**

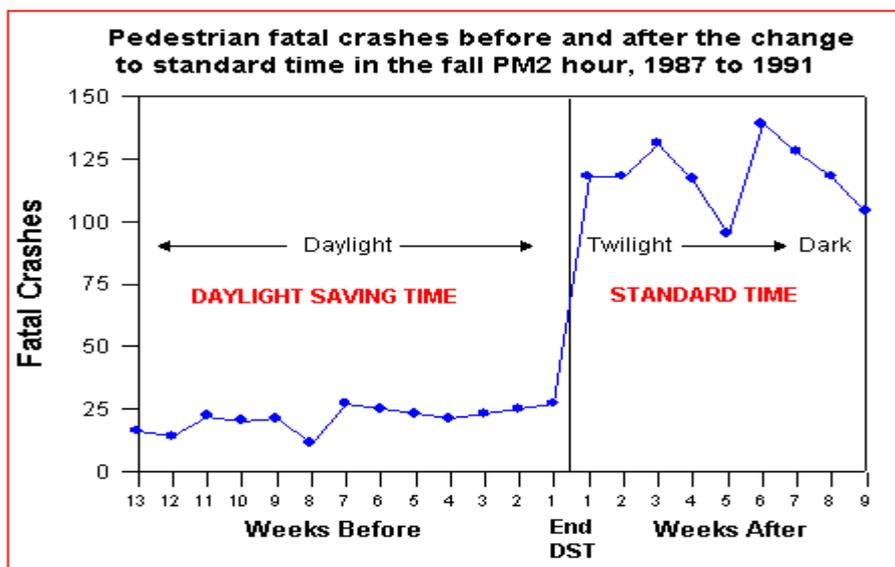
The latest study "Short and long term Effects of Daylight Saving Time on Fatal Automobile Crashes." was published in February 2007 in *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy* (Vol. 7, Issue 1, Article 11). The abstract of the study (www.bepress.com/bejeap/vol7/iss1/art11) states:

1. DST has no significant detrimental effect on automobile crashes in the short term;
2. DST significantly reduces automobile crashes in the long term with an 8-11% fall in crashes involving pedestrians, and a 6-10% fall in crashes for car occupants in the weeks after the spring shift to DST."

Apart from poorer visibility in the early evening, there are also recent neurophysiological studies showing that **reaction times are slower in poor light.** The longer reaction time translates into significantly increased stopping distances or time taken to initiate avoiding action.

2003 Queensland Transport statistics show that the fatal accident rate peaks in the late afternoon/early evening and that most of the fatal accidents (75%) occur in southeastern Queensland. This region would benefit by shifting the first hour of light when few cars are on the road to the evening when the traffic is heavier.

The road safety issue alone is a strong argument for introducing daylight saving to SEQ. Apart from a decrease in fatalities and injuries, there will be savings to emergency (police, ambulance and fire brigade) and hospital services.



In 1995, an article in the *American Journal of Public Health* showed that in the USA from 1987 to 1991 the weekly pedestrian fatality rate in the hour ending at sunset was less than 25 in the 13 weeks before the end of daylight saving and rose to over 100 in the 9 weeks after the end of daylight saving.