

Fostering communication, networking, professionalism and advocacy in road safety

2017 ACRS Submission to Federal Parliamentarians



ACRS presents the way forward to reduce road trauma

Support for the 2017 ACRS Submission to Federal Parliamentarians

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons President, Dr Philip Truskett AM, strongly supports a concerted effort towards reductions in road trauma:

"Each week there are 25 deaths and 700 serious injuries on our roads (that's 1,300 deaths and 37,000 hospitalised injuries per year). Seen first-hand by our surgeons, this has an enormous impact on Australia's health system as a whole. The College supports all evidence-based initiatives that assist in the prevention of road trauma and the reduction of the devastating effects of injury".

Dr Philip Truskett AM

President, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, 2017

Carers Australia CEO, Ara Cresswell, strongly supports The Australasian College of Road Safety in its aim to reduce the level of deaths and serious injuries from road trauma in Australia through evidence-based strategies:

"Families experience firsthand the tragedy of these deaths and the impact of the serious injuries sustained in these accidents. Every day too many ordinary Australian families will become a caring family – this means that one or more family members will need to change their own way of life to provide support (including emotional, personal, clinical and financial) to the injured person. Australian and international research indicates that these carers are likely to have significantly lower health and wellbeing (including social and financial) than non-carers and that this impact increases with the duration of their caring responsibility.

Carers Australia strongly supports The Australasian College of Road Safety in its aim to reduce the level of deaths and serious injuries from road accidents in Australia through evidence-based strategies."

Ms Ara Cresswell

CEO, Carers Australia, 2017

The Australian Automobile Association CEO, Mr Michael Bradley, reaffirms that making roads safer is central to the work of the AAA along with the College:

"In 2011 all Australian governments agreed to the National Road Safety Strategy to reduce road deaths and trauma by 30% by 2020. But with 1,300 killed on Australia's roads in 2016, a 7.9% increase, AAA analysis shows that almost no progress has been made in reducing deaths since the Strategy was agreed.

"At a time when new vehicles and roads have never been safer, we need to understand why 40 years of improvement is being reversed. With 1,300 dead and tens of thousands more now dealing with life-changing injury as a result of crashes in 2016, the human cost is immense. Additionally, the annual cost to our economy is around \$34 billion.

"This level of death, injury, and cost cannot be accepted and we must continue to work to uncover the causes of the rising levels of road trauma and reverse this trend."

Mr Michael Bradley

Chief Executive, Australian Automobile Association, 2017

C Political will is needed at the highest level of government to ensure appropriate road safety legislation and stringent enforcement of laws by which we all need to abide.

If this cannot be ensured, families and communities will continue to grieve, and health systems will continue to bear the brunt of injury and disability due to road traffic crashes.

Dr Margaret Chan Director-General, World Health Organization



The Australasian College of Road Safety was established in 1988 and is the region's peak membership association for road safety professionals and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads. A list of members can be found at Appendix 4. The College Patron is His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The College supports the recent initiation of a series of meetings of the Federal and State and Territory Road Safety Ministers to discuss ways all jurisdictions can increase efforts to reduce the unacceptable increase in road deaths and injuries.

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Key Points - The way forward to reduce road trauma - Breaking the fatal Australian condition of road trauma

Road trauma is one of the biggest public health issues we face as a nation today. Federal government estimates put the annual socio-economic cost of road trauma to our economy at \$27b in 2010 (\$32b+ in today's dollars).

This is likely to be an underestimate.¹ Deaths and serious injuries are on the increase. With 25 people dying and 700 being seriously injured each week in Australia, the ripple effect of each road trauma event to our families and communities is enormous.

Although Australia has some proud road safety achievements at a global level, we are slipping further behind other OECD countries, punching below our weight. We were ranked 11th out of 24 comparable nations in 2004. Our current (12 months to October 2016) performance of 5.3 fatalities per 100,000 population means we now have the 19th lowest rate out of 32.

The Global Burden of Disease Study has estimated that in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 road traffic injury in Australia was:

- The number one killer of all Australians aged 5-14 years old.
- The number two killer of all Australians aged 15-49 years old.²

Australians have been conditioned to accept these persistent losses.



2 Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2016. Available from http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare. Accessed February 2017).

¹ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (2014) *Impact of road trauma and measures to improve outcomes* Report 140, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development Canberra, Australia, identifies that the average cost of a fatality is estimated at less than half the value the internationally accepted method which ACRS is pleased to see is being advanced by National Road Safety Action Plan 2015-17.

Key Point 1

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on all Federal Parliamentarians to unanimously reject the current increasing rate of road death and injury, and commit to the ultimate goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on the road.

The burden of road trauma is striking the most productive part of our community.

Key Point 2

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on the Federal Government to task the Productivity Commission with undertaking a full enquiry into the impact of road trauma on Australia's productivity, and the national investment and policy decisions required to achieve the nation's policy goals of a safe road transport system.

Every federal and jurisdictional road safety strategy and planning document is based on the Safe System approach, including Australia's National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 (NRSS, 2011). This approach is founded on the notion that road users should be able to expect a safe road transport system (OECD/ITF 2008), just as we expect safe rail and air transport.

There are many strategically oriented, evidence-based and cost-effective steps which can be taken towards the ultimate road safety goal of zero harm on our roads. These have been well documented by the College and others, including through the formal review of the NRSS. The NRSS review reported that the Austroads Safety Task Force had some concern that the strategy is insufficiently focussed to produce real change and that more action is required at the federal level. Following on from this, national expert stakeholders canvassed during the review expressed concern about limited engagement in the implementation of the NRSS as well as a perceived lack of national leadership.

Significant additional investment and national policy leadership is needed. Aside from its important and vital national convening and leadership role, the Federal Government controls the level of safety technology in our cars, vans, motorcycles, buses and trucks, and allocates billions of dollars of road user revenue to road transport projects.

Much more can be done to use the levers which are available to the Federal Government. Many of these levers can synchronise with State and Territory Governments which are responsible for delivering a safe main road network, licensing motor vehicle drivers, enforcing road traffic law and caring for crash victims. Safety can also be better addressed in relation to local governments having responsibilities for funding, planning, designing and operating the road networks in their local areas.

The single biggest lever the Federal Government has is road investment. Over the five years from 2010-11, more than \$25 billion was invested by the Commonwealth in local and state road networks³. The NRSS review noted the common view held by stakeholders that even if the total rate of funding remains largely the same, stronger safety performance could be adequately funded and leveraged. The simplest way to start this is to require objective safety performance to be regularly published, through road star-rating systems which are available through AusRAP (Australian Road Assessment Program) or ANRAM (Australian National Risk Assessment Model).

7

³ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), 2016, Key Australian infrastructure statistics 2016, Canberra ACT.

Key Point 3

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on the Federal Government to:

- Make the publication of targeted safety star ratings on the National Road Network a condition for any Commonwealth investment in the network, from 2017/18 onwards; and
- Undertake a full policy review in 2017/18 of how to leverage greater safety results from its current investment in road transport.
- Ensure all new vehicles (cars, vans, motorcycles, buses and trucks) are equipped with world best practice safety technology and meet world best practice crashworthiness.

It is important to build a consensus across the whole community to recognise and implement the many evidence-based programs which can significantly reduce trauma while maintaining personal mobility.

Aside from Federal, State and Territory and Local Governments, there are a number of government transport entities operating at a national level with major road safety roles: Austroads, the National Transport Commission, and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. There are also road safety research institutions and consultancies, and a variety of non-government organisations focusing on specific issues such as work-related road trauma, and representing specific user/operator interests, such as drivers, transporters, cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists.

There is however no national mechanism through which the wide group of national stakeholders are brought together to address issues of national significance in road safety.

The lack of national leadership, coordination and engagement was addressed directly in the review of the NRSS. Since then, Austroads has increased its capacity to act nationally for its member organisations, but a much more strategic effort is needed nationally if Australia is to actually improve its sluggish and unacceptable road safety performance in the immediate and longer term.

Key Point 4

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on the Federal Government to establish a six-monthly forum for national stakeholders seeking to support significant improvements in road safety. The purpose of the forum would be review progress in road safety at a national level, and discuss key initiatives for significantly improving results.

⁴ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), 2016. *Developing national road safety indicators for injury 2016*, Canberra ACT.

⁵ D'Elia, A. et al. (2011). Alternative Measures of Serious Injury for National Road Safety Strategy Target Setting. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from http://arsrpe.acrs.org.au/index.cfm?action=main.paper&id=2252

Other national actions proposed by the College include:

- Develop a nationally agreed 'serious injury' definition & data collection method in relation to road trauma. We note the work in progress on this issue and reiterate the urgency of implementation.⁴ Serious injury definitions and data collection methods currently differ across jurisdictions, making recording and tracking of injuries very difficult, if not impossible.⁵ A cohesive monitoring system is particularly relevant in terms of ensuring progress against serious injury reduction targets outlined in Australia's NRSS.
- 2. Strengthen the national road safety approach to reducing road trauma, including consideration of the development of an umbrella organisation to coordinate the recognition of the issue across all portfolios. This could be modelled on similar bodies funded by the Commonwealth in areas such as defence, health, and workplace safety or it could be developed to support and enhance the resourcing of existing bodies. This would:
 - a. **Help to focus attention and enhance resource coordination**, and would complement the work of the federal government and Austroads in managing the national reduction target for deaths and serious injuries
 - b. **Help promote an integrated approach**, led by a Federal Minister, bringing Local, State and Federal Government road safety programs together with business, professional and community groups in cities, rural and regional Australia
 - c. Help facilitate more effective action on:
 - i. **National safety technologies** to facilitate the introduction of safety technologies across vehicles and infrastructure;
 - ii. **National road safety promotions** to ensure that all stakeholders are promoting the same message, and reduce the possibility of duplication or misinformation;
 - iii. **Implementing the National Road Safety Research Framework** which has been developed with all stakeholders, including the NHMRC and the College;
 - iv. **Building on existing training programs** such as in management, road and vehicle engineering, behavioural science, policing and trauma care.
 - v. **Utilise and extend existing proven or promising non-regulatory programs** such as ANCAP, AusRAP, KEYS2DRIVE, the Naturalistic Driving Study, TruckSafe, AutoCRC programs and P Drivers Project
- 3. Continue and potentially increase our level of commitment to the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 by making road safety an investment priority in Australia's aid budget. The benefits of linking Australian road safety projects, researchers and practitioners to international programs, as is well recognised in other areas, are valuable not only to low-andmiddle-income countries but to assist in adding skills, experience and knowledge.
- 4. **Develop and implement new road trauma reduction funding opportunities** from new sources and from current road, industry, transport, insurance and health-related areas. Such a national budget led by a National Minister should recognise the size of the problem (i.e. the annual cost to the community of at least \$27 billion in 2011 (NRSS), now \$32b+) and the scale of the response needed to achieve effective results. The funding is not simply expenditure it is investment with a real return.

Road trauma must be clearly articulated by our federal government as a vital factor in the Australian national economy, national budget, and public health system, recognising the true scale of the problem. This will in turn ensure that significant reductions to road trauma are made.

The benefits will be lives saved and reduced trauma, savings to the health and legal systems and vastly improved national productivity.

2

Road deaths and injuries – the current status

Road trauma is one of the highest ranking public health issues we face as a nation today, and the numbers of people being killed and injured on our roads is staggering – 1,300 deaths and 37,000 injuries per year, and rising. We are falling well behind the 30% reduction aim of the NRSS (Figures 1-3).

Figure 1: Deaths from Road Trauma in Australia 2010-2016 Comparison with NRSS targets and current trend (Source data: BITRE, 2017, Chart ACRS)



Figure 2: Australian road fatalities and injuries Historical and modelled: 1965-2030 (Source: BITRE, 2016)



Figure 3: Hospitalised Injuries from Road Trauma in Australia 2001-2013 Comparison with NRSS injury targets and current trend (Data: BITRE, 2015, Chart source: ACRS)



The causes and consequences of road trauma continue to have a serious impact on Australia's productivity, estimated by the federal government to cost our economy \$27bn per year in 2011 (\$32bn in today's dollars) – similar to Australia's annual Defence Budget of \$31.9m for 2015/16 (DoD, 2015) and equivalent to 18% of health expenditure (BITRE, 2014) and 1.8% of the national GDP (OECD, 2016).

- Road trauma in rural and regional Australia is over-represented in the statistics, in 2015 accounting for around 65% of all trauma (Transport and Infrastructure Council Communique, 2016).
- Over the 2003 to 2015 period, 2081 (65 per cent) worker fatalities involved vehicles. Of these, almost half (49 per cent) occurred on a public road. (Safe Work Australia, 2016).
- Transport crash injury cases increased from 12% to 13% of all injury hospitalised cases during the periods 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 (AIHW, 2016).

While the majority of road safety improvements are implemented and seen as the responsibility of State, Territory and Local Governments, the impact of road trauma is evident in programs across all Federal portfolios, in business, and of course across the community.

Imagine the consequences...



Imagine if our nation was providing a defence force to combat war overseas, and that 25 soldiers were dying and 700 were being seriously injured **each week** - week after week, year after year. Imagine if there was no end in sight, and the wartime fatalities had increased in the last calendar year compared to the year before. The public and political pressure to end these mass casualties would be immense.

Imagine if there were 5 Boeing 737 crashes every week in Australia, with *25 passengers dying and 700 being seriously injured each week*. The public outcry would be enormous, the effects on our nation soul destroying. Every effort would be made to stem this tide of death and injury.

Imagine if there was an epidemic that consistently, year after year, was the leading cause of casualty in our population for 1-14 year olds. Imagine if it was the 2nd highest cause of death and injury in our young people between the ages of 15-24. The forces mobilised to counteract this epidemic would be enormous.

Imagine the effects on health systems if our hospitals were dealing with the injured from these plane crashes, war events or epidemics – 700 people each week - reaching the emergency doors with serious injuries, enduring lengthy hospital stays and for some a lifetime of disability.

Imagine the strain on our disability services and community support structures if our communities were dealing with these injured people –700 people per week - some requiring extensive and costly lifetime support.

Imagine the consequences of these deaths and injuries on our communities – the 25 deaths each week resulting in outpourings of grief from our families and communities, and the 700 people each week who are released from hospital, some to be cared for by families and communities over the longer term.

Imagine if the annual cost to our economy of these plane crashes, wartime efforts or epidemics was estimated to be over \$27 billion in 2011, and had risen to at least \$32b by 2016, and continued to increase each year over and above CPI. This is more than Australia's current annual defence budget of \$31.9b (Department of Defence, 2015). The political and social pressure to solve this problem would be enormous.

The impact of road trauma is all-encompassing, impacting the full spectrum of the political agenda. A much stronger focus on saving lives and injuries on our roads, covering all age groups and user groups, all the factors in roads and vehicles, and including all facets of road crashes such as trauma services and post-crash care, would have a major impact on Australia's economic and social well-being. There are many simple and cost-effective solutions.

The College urges all federal politicians to raise the profile of road trauma across our nation and internationally, and provide strong leadership and support for a coordinated approach towards road trauma reductions.

The road trauma ripple effect - an Australian story

The Australasian College of Road Safety urges all federal politicians to reflect on the personal impact of the road trauma ripple effect through your family, friends and community and provide strong leadership and support for a coordinated approach towards road trauma reductions.

This is one account - a middle aged Australian who grew up in rural Australia, attended high school in a capital city, attended university, is working in a capital city, married with 3 children, and who is an average Australian, living an average life.

Born 1967

Family friend's young son killed when a brick from a passing truck went through the car window.

RIPPLE 1 - 1978

FATALITY

RIPPLE **5 – 1985** Fellow student's grandmother killed in collision at a highway intersection.

FATALITY

RIPPLE **9 – 2008** 2-car crash on local community roads seriously injured a

community roads seriously injured a primary school student at a local school.

LIFELONG INJURIES

RIPPLE **13 – 2014** Children's teacher killed in pedestrian bus run-over.

FATALITY

FATALITY

RIPPLE 2 - 1983

in highway collision

through a red light.

Family friend's son killed

after other driver went

RIPPLE 6 – 1998 Friends son left quadriplegic and brain injured after being hit by a vehicle while crossing a street at a pedestrian crossing. LIFELONG INJURIES

RIPPLE **10 – 2009** 15-year old niece killed in collision at a poorly marked intersection, in

marked intersection, in a car being driven by a young driver.

FATALITY

RIPPLE EFFECT **14 – 2015** Colleague involved in crash as a passenger. Driver not wearing a seatbelt.

ATALITY

RIPPLE EFFECT **3 – 1984** Past fellow primary school student (now

school student (now aged 17) killed in head on collision with a truck.

FATALITY

RIPPLE **7 – 2003** Family friend's son killed in highway collision.

FATALITY

RIPPLE **11 – 2010** Colleague's young friend left permanently paralysed after motorbike crash.

LIFELONG INJURIES

RIPPLE **15 – 2016** Colleague's friend killed by drowning after car slid off wet road into river.

TALITY

RIPPLE **4 - 1984**

Fellow year 12 student left a permanent quadriplegic after a roll-over when travelling with 11 others in a 4 wheel drive after a party.

RIPPLE 8 – 2005 Aunt and cousin

seriously injured in a crash on a rural highway.

LIFELONG INJURIES

RIPPLE **12 – 2012** Colleague's friend killed in a fiery crash on a rural highway.

FATALITY

RIPPLE **16 – 2016** Colleague's friend killed in a in a petrol tanker rollover.

ATALITY

We experience this ripple effect from an early age, and have been conditioned to accept road trauma as an inevitable side-effect of road travel. We don't have this subconscious expectation when we board an aeroplane or a train.

The Australasian College of Road Safety is committed to the ultimate goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on the road thereby ending the impact of the ripple effect.

Federal Government decline in road safety spending

Annual Reports from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport from the years 2009/10 to 2015/16 show a reduction in spending for:

"Outcome 2: An efficient, sustainable, competitive, safe and secure transport system for all transport users through regulation, financial assistance and safety investigations."

There has been a reduction of around 3% (excluding inflation) for federal government spending (actual expenses) on road safety management between 2009/10 and 2015/16 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development Expenditure on Road Safety 2009-10 – 2019/20 (\$'000) (Data: DIRD, 2009-2016, Chart source: ACRS)



Whilst the reduction in road safety management spending may partly reflect the global financial situation over the last few years, it is imperative that this decline in support is reviewed to ensure that this critical public health issue is not underfunded relative to others.

The College strongly supports a review of road safety management spending across federal and State/Territory governments. Particular consideration should be given to how this reduction in spending is affecting our collective ability to reduce Australia's road trauma rate.

The College urges all politicians to consider how external agencies can assist in collaboratively funded and managed efforts to reduce the road toll.

Federal Government portfolios impacted by the causes and consequences of road trauma:

A. Endorsement and implementation of a 'whole of Government' approach to reduce road trauma

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET & COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

"The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is the primary source of advice on government and parliamentary policy matters covering such issues as Cabinet processes, accountability and the management of the public service." (PM&C Website, 2017)

"The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments." (COAG Website, 2017)

A realisation that road trauma is one of the biggest public health issues facing this country, and providing whole-of-government support for improvements through a coordinated national approach, would lead to significantly increased positive outcomes for Australia's collective well-being.



...the possibilities if the highest levels of Australian government provided coordinated support to reduce road trauma. The positive outcomes for our nation would be immense, and would ensure Australia is recognised as a global leader in road trauma reductions.

B. National budget

TREASURY PORTFOLIO

"The Treasury Department aims to improve the wellbeing of the Australian people, by providing sound and timely advice to the Government based on thorough analysis of options, and by assisting the Treasury Ministers in the administration of their responsibilities and the implementation of Government decisions." (Treasury Department, 2017)

With a 2016 estimated annual cost to the economy of \$32b+, the cost of road trauma to the Australian community exceeds Australia's current national Defence budget. The NRSS sets out a process to reduce road trauma by 30% in a decade, a saving of \$55b. This would have a significant impact on the national accounts. It is critical that a national investment budget is proposed/ approved by Treasury to help ensure that the savings are achieved.

A realisation that road trauma is one of the most significant unrecognised public health issue facing this country, and providing whole-of-government support for improvements through a coordinated national approach, would lead to major positive effects on Australia's national economy.



...the possibilities if the Australian economy was able to significantly reduce the annual \$32b cost of road trauma – greater than Australia's national defence budget.

C. National public health

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

"The Department of Health seeks to provide better health and healthier ageing for all Australians through a world-class health system." (Health Department, 2017)

"We have a public health crisis which is claiming more than 1,200 lives and seriously injuring tens of thousands of Australians each year ... "

(Federal Minister Darren Chester, ARSC Conference, 2016)

With 25 people killed, and 700 people seriously injured and entering our health system every week, the implications for our health system are enormous. The potential benefit to our health system for reductions in these levels is also enormous.



D. Road safety management, regional health, vehicle safety, infrastructure & transport

INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

"The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development contributes to the wellbeing of all Australians by assisting the Government to:

- promote, evaluate, plan and invest in infrastructure;
- foster an efficient, sustainable, competitive, safe and secure transport system; and
- ensure a strong and liveable Australia

...by focusing on effective local government and external territories administration and regional development that enables communities to achieve economic and social dividends." (Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, 2017)

The outcomes from the recent inaugural (road safety) Ministerial meeting are encouraging, particularly the recognition that the recent increase in road deaths, and longer-term and more significant increase in injuries, is unacceptable. Outcomes from this meeting included the following, in addition to the current NRSS Action Plan items:

- Increase emphasis on achieving road safety benefits from infrastructure investment programs at the Commonwealth, state and territory levels
- Investigate measures that will address the disproportionate number of deaths and injuries occurring on regional and remote roads, where two-thirds of road deaths occurred in 2015
- Improve the effectiveness of road safety treatments on local roads
- Reduce the cost of drug testing
- Improve community awareness about the risks of death and injury from mobile phone use while driving
- Increase sharing of data and analysis nationally, particularly regarding
 - drug testing,
 - regional casualties and >
 - mobile phone use (including increased access to mobile phone data for accident investigation)

(Transport & Infrastructure Council Communique, Nov 2016)

Whilst the outcomes from the inaugural road safety Ministerial meeting are encouraging in terms of consolidating current and emerging areas of influence over road trauma outcomes, a much broader funding base - consistent with the \$32b annual cost to the economy and effect across many portfolios - would greatly assist in achieving real long term benefits in terms of lives and injuries saved.

Our rural and remote communities are disproportionately affected by road trauma, with two thirds of road deaths occuring in these regions during 2015. A much greater focus on reducing this disparity would see real long-term benefits emerge for our rural and remote communities, who are crucial to the success of Australia.

...if our national road safety leadership was significantly strengthened to harness the combined efforts of not just States and Territories, but the wide range of user advocates, business interests, not-for-profits, and community leaders.

E. Youth

Imagine...

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO

"The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programmes that help Australians access quality early childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research." (Department of Education & Training, 2017)

Youth road trauma is a critical public health issue in Australia and New Zealand. Despite the decline in fatalities and injuries in the last decade (to 2014), the combined cost of crashes for 17-24 year olds is currently close to AUD\$6 billion (including approx. AUD\$800M for NZ), and the social and personal impacts immeasurable. (Paraplegic Benefit Fund, 2016)



...the positive consequences for young drivers (and older drivers - a growing cohort) in our society if road trauma improvements could be implemented immediately. The positive ripple effects for our families and communities would be immense.

F. Workplaces

EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO

"The Australian Government Department of Employment is responsible for national policies and programmes that help Australians find and keep employment and work in safe, fair and productive workplaces." (Department of Employment, 2017)

Work-related road crashes in Australia account for about half of all occupational fatalities and a significant proportion of all road-related fatalities. Across 13 years of Safe Work Australia data to 2015, 64% of worker fatalities involved vehicles. Of these almost half occurred on a public road. (Safe Work Australia 2016).

The Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–22 includes road transport as a priority interest, but this mixes up workplace injuries in depots and on road, and misses out the wide range of business activities which expose workers and bystanders to road traffic injury.

Employers and fleet managers have a pivotal role in the composition of the vehicle fleet and influence the safety of very high volumes of trips each day, therefore playing an important role in the safety of the road transport system as a whole (Review of the NRSS, 2015). ACRS is pleased to see Austroads initiating the preparation of workplace health and safety guidance on road traffic injury

in consultation with the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities. Promotion and application of this guidance should become a major priority for all involved in workplace health and safety.



...the consequences for our workers if workplace road trauma was recognized as a major contributor to workplace death and injury in Australia and appropriate resources were mobilised to reduce it.

Imagine the positive consequences for all workers in our society if road trauma improvements could be implemented immediately. The positive ripple effects for our workplaces, families and communities would be immense.

G. Disability & community services

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

"The Department of Social Services has responsibility for families, housing, social services and disability services. It is responsible for improving the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia." (Department of Social Services, 2017)

In addition to the 25 people who are killed every week on our roads, there are 700 seriously injured each week. These 700 trauma patients enter our emergency departments and hospitals, and are released to their families and communities, some with considerable disabilities and lifelong health consequences. The cost to our families is immeasurable, and the impact on our community services immense.



...if we could, as a nation, acknowledge this huge burden on our families and communities from road trauma, and work together to achieve improvements. The positive effects for our families and our national well-being would be immense.

H. Health, social and welfare payments and services

HUMAN SERVICES PORTFOLIO

"Delivering social and health-related payments and services through Medicare, Centrelink, Child Support and Australian Hearing."

(Department of Human Services, 2017)

The burden of 700 serious injuries every week significantly impacts our Medicare and Centrelink programs – severely impacting the estimated annual cost of road trauma to the economy. The cost to our government to support the large community of carers responsible for providing support to road trauma victims with lifelong injuries is also immense.

A nationally coordinated approach to reduce the burden of road trauma deaths and injuries would have a significant effect on our nation's human services support mechanisms.



I. Police & Emergency Services, Legal systems

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

"The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department serves the people of Australia by providing essential expert support to the Government in the maintenance and improvement of Australia's system of law and justice and its national security and emergency management systems". (Attorney-General's Department, 2017)

Road trauma incidents inevitably necessitate the presence of police and emergency services, including road/air ambulances. This places significant pressure on our already stressed police and emergency sector work forces.

The rise in the number of injuries, and the number of people entering the legal system, puts an increasing strain on our legal systems, police and emergency services, and incarceration facilities. A concerted effort to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from road trauma would produce a more efficient and cost-effective legal system, and a vastly improved policing and emergency services capability across Australia.

Imagine the possibilities if the Australian legal system no longer had to deal with tens of thousands of road safety/trauma related legal cases each year – the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal system would be boosted enormously.



...the decrease in pressure for our Police and Emergency Services if a significant reduction in road trauma rates could be achieved.

J. Research and Innovation

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE PORTFOLIO

"The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science has four key objectives: supporting science and commercialisation, growing business investment and improving business capability, streamlining regulation, and building a high performance organisation." (Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, 2017)

Australian and international corporations and researchers continue to develop a range of technologies in Australia to reduce and mitigate road trauma. Collision avoidance, fatigue monitoring, smart enforcement as well as post-crash care and injury management are some examples where recognition, coordination and positive encouragement is likely to lead to further improvement and product development. Some already have international commercial acceptance.



...if road safety research and innovation was coordinated and adequately resourced and took into account all stakeholders, all user groups, all advocacy groups, and all Australian government portfolios. Imagine the positive effect on our road toll.

K. International Relations

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

"The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for the Australian Government's international relations, trade and development assistance programs through its offices in Australia and Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates throughout the world." (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017)

Australia is an active supporter of the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety 2010-2020 program, which aims to halt the rise in road trauma within this decade.

The benefits of linking Australian road safety projects, researchers and practioners to international programs, as is well recognised in other areas, are valuable to not only the developing countries but to assist in adding skills, experience and knowledge.

Road safety improvement in other countries also benefits Australian travellers abroad. It is understood that considerable diplomatic resources are committed to assisting travellers affected by road crashes overseas.



...if Australia was even more effective in leading the drive to reduce road trauma, by at least 50% in the next decade, rather than the 30% target outlined in the NRSS. This would meet targets set out in the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, and make us a world leader in this field.

L. Climate Change

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY PORTFOLIO

"The Department designs and implements the Australian Government's policies and programmes to protect and conserve the environment, water and heritage ..." (Department of Environment and Energy Website, 2017)

The incidence of extreme weather (storm intensity) and high temperatures in Australia is expected to increase with global warming (Pittock et al., 1999). "Weather is one environmental risk factor that is known to affect road crash rates in Australia and elsewhere. Weather that reduces road friction, impairs visibility and/or makes vehicle handling more difficult creates a serious road safety threat (Andrey et al., 2001).

The transport sector accounted for 18% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions (Department of Environment and Energy, 2016), and road transport is a significant part of that. There are many connections between good road safety and lower greenhouse gas emissions, such as lower speeds in regional environments which reduce fuel consumption, and pedestrian and cyclist focused design in urban environments.



...if the Australian Government recognised the increased pressure climate change will put on road safety. Pre-emptive mechanisms could be researched and implemented to significantly reduce the impact of climate change on road trauma into the future.

M. Digital technologies

COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO

"We are the Australian Government's lead advisor on communications and the arts. We work to promote innovative cultural and communications sectors through policy advice, program implementation and service delivery to the benefit of all Australians.

We advise the Australian Government about the communications industry—television, radio, Internet, phone, post, and the changes in digital technologies. We undertake analysis, provide advice and develop and deliver programmes so Australians can enjoy the benefits of modern communications." (Department of Communications, 2017)

Distraction in vehicles and among pedestrians is a rising problem and is considered to be a growing area of concern in relation to road trauma. Use of a mobile phone whilst driving has been shown to be a major source of distraction.

A coordinated marketing and communications plan, and the associated development of a national policy and action plan around mobile phone use and distraction, would assist greatly in alleviating the current burden on road trauma.

The Australian Government has a clear responsibility for the level of new vehicle safety and the onus is placed on vehicle manufacturers to meet specific standards. The introduction of distracting technologies and the provision of communication licences which allow the use of such distracting technologies similarly should be the responsibility of the Government, setting standards in a chain of responsibility from manufacturers, suppliers to users, so that the user is not seen to be solely responsible.



...if the Australian Government could recognise the significant impact of distraction on road trauma figures. Marketing and communications mechanisms could be researched and implemented to significantly reduce the impact of distraction into the future, underpinning a nationally agreed stance on in-vehicle distraction. Imagine the positive impacts to our communities if we could remove this source of road trauma.

Conclusion

The 2017 ACRS Submission to Federal Parliamentarians informs you all, as Australia's peak policy makers, of the continuing significant impact that road trauma has on our national well-being. This submission outlines the many opportunities that are available to address road trauma in Australia.

Much can be done, and not necessarily requiring a significant outlay from the government. We have successfully reduced road trauma rates dramatically in the last 40 years despite past views that such reductions were not possible. Reduction rates were plateauing and are now rising even though we have better knowledge and better technologies. We need to reignite that past determination to save lives and injuries in the face of growing numbers of deaths and injuries on our roads.

The causes and consequences of road trauma impact many federal departments, and exist regardless of which party makes up the majority in Parliament. Our ability to address road trauma is therefore spread across these many portfolios, meaning a collobarative effort across all portfolios has the greatest potential to increase the wellbeing of our nation.

International studies and well researched recommendations emphasise the value and critical importance of national political leadership in road safety policy. The transport system is a public good, and on that basis alone governments, including the Federal Government, should make the safety of our transport system a priority.

The College urges all federal politicians:

- To reflect on the personal impact of the road trauma ripple effect, and ask all Australians to do the same;
- To provide strong leadership and support for a coordinated, well financed cross-portfolio approach as an investment towards road trauma reduction; and
- To raise our collective level of ambition and commitment to recommended directions as outlined in the body of this report.

The ability for you, both personally and professionally, to 'make a difference' that is felt by all Australians is a real incentive to drive genuine change across many systems and portfolios involved in road trauma - from research, technology, engineering, health and emergency services, to our youth, our senior citizens, disability and community services, and rural and regional communities.

We look forward to continuing to work together to make significant reductions to the level of road trauma experienced in our nation. The wellbeing of our nation as a whole will benefit greatly as a result. In turn, all of you, as determined and committed leaders of our nation, will achieve a high level of personal and professional satisfaction.



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Appendices

Appendix 1

Year	Hospitalised Injuries	NRSS Target	Trend
2001	27,482		
2002	27,958		
2003	28,446		
2004	28,886		
2005	30,597		
2006	32,288		
2007	32,552		
2008	33,524		
2009	33,692		
2010	32,775	32,500	32,500
2011	34,082	31,525	33,250
2012 <i>a</i>	34,091	30,550	34,000
2013 <i>a</i>	35,059	29,575	34,750
2014		28,600	35,500
2015		27,625	36,250
2016		26,650	37,000
2017		25,675	37,750
2018		24,700	38,500
2019		23,725	39,250
2020		22,750	40,000
Total		303,875	398,750

Table 1: Hospitalised injuries from road trauma Australia 2001-2013Comparison with NRSS injury targets and current trend

a 2012 calendar year data is not directly comparable with previous years due to a break in the hospitalised injury series in 2012. A large jurisdiction changed case inclusion criteria to exclude cases cared for solely in Emergency Departments from 1 July 2012. NISU estimates this decreased admitted case counts in Australia by 2000 cases (-5.6 per cent) in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12. The estimated decrease in 2012 was approximately 1000 cases, or -2.8 per cent, with the reduction likely to differ by road user group. (BITRE, 2015)

Appendix 2

Table 2: Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development Expenditure on	۱
Road Safety 2009/10 - 2019/20 (\$'000)	

Program 2.3: Road Safety							
	Budget \$'000	Expenses Actual \$'000	Minimum Spend Expected (With 3% CPI)				
2009/10	30,931	25,396					
2010/11	33,469	24,856					
2011/12	25,527	20,081	23,444*				
2012/13	24,213	23,512	24,148				
2013/14	24,322	23,150	24,872				
2014/15	25,448	25,229	25,618				
2015/16	24,918	24,612	26,387				
2016/17			27,178				
2017/18			27,994				
2018/19			28,834				
2019/20			29,699				
* Average of 2009-2011 figures as baseline							

Appendix 3

Road Trauma cost baseline figures (assuming annual trauma reduction = 0)			30% reduction target against NRSS baseline figures			50% United Nations reduction target against NRSS baseline figures					
Year	Deaths (No.)	Injuries (No.)	Road trauma cost \$b <i>a</i>	% re- duction from baseline	Deaths (No.) <i>b</i>	Injuries (No.) <i>b</i>	Road trauma cost (\$b) <i>a</i>	% re- duction from baseline	Deaths (No.) <i>b</i>	Injuries (No.) <i>b</i>	Road trauma cost (\$b)a
NRSS Baseline	1,400	32,500	27		1,400	32,500	27		1,400	32,500	27
2011	1,400	32,500	27.81	-3%	1,358	31,525	26.98	-5%	1,330	30,875	26.42
2012	1,400	32,500	28.64	-6%	1,316	30,550	26.93	-10%	1,260	29,250	25.78
2013	1,400	32,500	29.50	-9%	1,274	29,575	26.85	-15%	1,190	27,625	25.08
2014	1,400	32,500	30.39	-12%	1,232	28,600	26.74	-20%	1,120	26,000	24.31
2015	1,400	32,500	31.30	-15%	1,190	27,625	26.61	-25%	1,050	24,375	23.48
2016	1,400	32,500	32.24	-18%	1,148	26,650	26.44	-30%	980	22,750	22.57
2017	1,400	32,500	33.21	-21%	1,106	25,675	26.23	-35%	910	21,125	21.58
2018	1,400	32,500	34.20	-24%	1,064	24,700	25.99	-40%	840	19,500	20.52
2019	1,400	32,500	35.23	-27%	1,022	23,725	25.72	-45%	770	17,875	19.38
2020	1,400	32,500	36.29	-30%	980	22,750	25.40	-50%	700	16,250	18.14
Total	14,000	325,000	318.81		11,690	271,375	263.88		10,150	235,625	227.26

Table 3: Australian road trauma costs 2011-2020Comparison of costs (\$bn) - 30% vs 50% reduction targets v actual

a Assumes 3% CPI, and utilises \$27b figure estimate in NRSS 2011-2020 i.e. \$3,180,598 per death and \$316,869 per serious injury (2006 dollars)

b Assumes linear reduction over 10 years i.e. 42 deaths and 975 serious injuries (30%), and 70 deaths and 1,625 serious injuries per year (50%)

Appendix 4

ACRS Membership

The Australasian College of Road Safety membership consists of the following:

- · All Australian and New Zealand road safety research agencies
- Australian and New Zealand universities
- Injury prevention, brain injury and neuroscience research organisations
- · Australasian medical representative groups
- · Australian federal government road safety & health promotion agencies
- · State and Territory road transport agencies
- Local government agencies
- Policing agencies (Australasian, federal and state)
- Emergency services agencies
- Road safety research funding organisations
- Medical associations
- · Safety promotion and training agencies
- · Carer advocacy groups and associations
- Independent road safety consultants
- State vehicle and personal insurance agencies
- · Driving schools and instructor associations
- · Road safety advocacy groups, including motorcycles, children, youth, pedestrians, cyclists
- · Road industry groups, including vehicles, trucks, roads
- International road safety consultants, agencies and advocacy groups
- Fleet safety associations
- · Independent economist consultants and companies
- Engineers & engineering associations
- Legal firms
- Trucking companies
- Vehicle manufacturing companies
- · Vehicle safety advocacy and testing organisations
- Other public or private companies interested in or working in the field of road safety
- Secondary, tertiary and post-graduate students currently studying in the road trauma field
- Interested members of the public

Notes

Notes

Australia's progress against the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 Targets

Deaths from Road Trauma in Australia 2010-2016 Comparison with NRSS targets and current trend (Source data: BITRE, 2017, Chart ACRS)



Hospitalised Injuries from Road Trauma in Australia 2001-2013 Comparison with NRSS injury targets and current trend (Data: BITRE, 2015, Chart source: ACRS)







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