



MEDIA RELEASE

Australasian College of Road Safety

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Look out for solutions not blame in Christmas road safety messages

The Australasian College of Road Safety is encouraging everyone in the community to not only listen and respect the many messages they will hear about staying safe on our roads over the Christmas break, but to look beyond the simplistic media message of crash drama and of finding driver blame.

ACRS President, Mr Lauchlan McIntosh, says “the latest issue of the ACRS journal is a Special Issue that focuses on ‘*Communications, media and road safety messages*’. This issue shows how critical a role the media play in influencing public opinion on road safety on a broad scale. Crashes occur for many reasons. Recent research from the Centre of Automotive Research in Adelaide has found that the majority of crashes do not involve extreme behaviour, but involve people making minor mistakes or simple errors.’

“Injuries and deaths can occur in such crashes when the road infrastructure or the vehicles are unforgiving. Recognising all the factors rather than simply blaming all drivers would be a good step forward. Motorists need to be aware of all the factors that can save lives and injuries in road crashes.”

Dr Stephen Jiggins, in the latest ACRS Journal asks ‘*How important is community support to the success of the National Road Safety Strategy?*’.

Dr Jiggins says that “News media tend to normalise the ‘crash as accident’ scenario whereby road users are killed by seemingly unpredictable events. What is missing from these narratives is a discussion of risk factors and possible solutions – information that could improve community understanding of these issues”

There are precedents for positive engagement of the community as we have seen with the marketing and sale of safer new motor vehicles and with reporting on other important social issues such as mental health and suicide. Dr Jiggins has suggested there should be less emphasis on the human drama of crashes and more focus on all risk factors and broader safety messages.

Contacts:

Lauchlan McIntosh, ACRS President 0418 424 886