



# The Coalition's Policy to Improve Road Safety

August 2013

## Key Points

The Coalition believes our nation's roads should be safer and that more can be done to prevent accidents and deaths on our local roads and national highways.

We will reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety by building the nationally significant roads our cities and regions need.

The Coalition will also provide \$10 million to support the 'Keys2Drive' programme. Since its introduction in 2008, the Keys2Drive programme has delivered more than 200,000 driving lessons to learner drivers and their parents.

We will support improvements to road safety for motorists and cyclists by:

- ensuring the continuation of funding for the *Roads to Recovery* programme, which provides approximately \$350 million a year in improvements to local and State or Territory roads;
- ensuring the continuation of funding for the *Black Spot* programme, which provides approximately \$60 million a year to address road sites that are high risk areas for serious crashes; and
- supporting the development of designated cycling paths and delineated cycling lanes where appropriate and increased awareness of safety issues for all road users.

As a first step to developing more effective and more targeted approaches to improving road safety, we will task the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) with undertaking a review of the full impacts of road trauma. The review will evaluate the benefits and costs associated with the different road safety approaches adopted by various jurisdictions, both domestically and internationally.

Under a Coalition government, the Infrastructure and Transport Minister will work closely with all stakeholders and encourage a collaborative approach to research, innovation and the delivery of new programmes to help save lives and reduce injuries on our roads.

We will also engage with relevant State ministers through the COAG process and through Ministers' meetings of the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure, to investigate harmonisation of road safety practices, graduated licensing systems and other measures, including public information campaigns, to ensure the best possible practices are rolled out across Australia.



# Introduction

Every life lost on our roads is a tragedy.

The horrific personal toll of road injuries and deaths is first and foremost an emotional cost to families and the community. Road accidents and deaths affect families and communities in ways that cannot be reversed and which often lead to significant ongoing emotional trauma.

Road accidents and deaths are also an avoidable economic cost.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport has found that:

*“The annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia is enormous—estimated at \$27 billion per annum—and the social impacts are devastating.”<sup>1</sup>*

While the nation’s road toll has steadily fallen from nearly 2,900 deaths in 1982, to 1,300 in 2012, there is growing concern that the rate of progress has slowed in recent years. Australia’s relative performance in comparison to other OECD nations has slipped.

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport, and Regional Economics (BITRE) found in 2006 that:

*“The cost of road crashes is important to the safety debate in Australia, and the unit values particularly for a fatality, injury or cost of a fatal crash are key inputs into policy development and cost-benefit analysis for safety programmes and infrastructure projects. The social cost of road crashes in 2006 was an estimated \$17.85 billion (1.7 per cent of GDP).*

*This was a real decrease of 7.5 per cent compared to 1996 (2006 dollars). Estimated human losses were approximately \$2.4 million per fatality, losses for a hospitalised injury were approximately \$214,000 per injury (including disability-related costs), and losses for non-hospitalised injury were approximately \$2,200 per injury.”<sup>2</sup>*

Road safety should not be a political issue.

Everyone wants to ensure we do all we reasonably can to prevent road accidents and road deaths.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2010/report\\_118.aspx](http://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2010/report_118.aspx)



# The Plan

## 1. Better Roads That Will Boost Productivity and Improve Road Safety

Research under-pinning the National Road Safety Strategy found that 50 per cent of the anticipated reduction in road fatalities will come from safer roads. This is consistent with earlier work by AusRAP that found building safer roads will save more lives than the combined impacts of improved driver behaviour and increased law enforcement.

Under the Coalition, vital transport projects will be underway across the country within twelve months of an election.

We have already committed:

- \$6.7 billion to fix Queensland's Bruce Highway;
- \$1.5 billion to get construction underway on Melbourne's East West Link;
- \$1.5 billion to ensure the Westconnex project gets underway in Sydney;
- \$1 billion to support the Gateway Motorway upgrade in Brisbane;
- \$686 million to finish the Perth Gateway – without the mining tax;
- \$615 million to build the Swan Valley Bypass on the Perth-Darwin Highway;
- \$500 million to support the upgrade of Adelaide's North-South Road Corridor;
- \$400 million to upgrade the Midland Highway in Tasmania; and
- \$5.6 billion to complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway from Newcastle to the Queensland border.

In addition, the Coalition will:

- work with the NSW Government to get Sydney's F3 to M2 started by late 2014, which will mean shorter travel times, reduced congestion and safer roads for the residents of the Central Coast; and
- get the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing underway.

The Coalition has a clear and definitive plan to build the nationally significant infrastructure our cities and country need.



## 2. Continuing the Roads to Recovery and Black Spot Programmes

The Coalition will continue the *Roads to Recovery* programme and look to expand it once the Budget returns to strong surplus.

The Coalition established the *Roads to Recovery* programme in March 2001.

The programme has been incredibly successful in providing funds directly to local councils to improve their local road networks. It has become an essential element in helping local councils across the country to maintain and upgrade more than 650,000 kilometres of local roads.

Between 2001 and 2009 the *Roads to Recovery* programme provided more than \$2.4 billion to support over 15,000 road projects.

Once the Budget position is restored, the Coalition will seek to ensure that *Roads to Recovery* is extended and is adequately funded so that local councils can continue to provide essential transport infrastructure for their community.

The Coalition will also continue the *Black Spot* programme.

## 3. Support the 'Keys2Drive' Programme

The Coalition will provide \$10 million to support the 'Keys2Drive' programme.

Since its introduction in 2008, the Keys2Drive programme has delivered more than 200,000 driving lessons to learner drivers and their parents.

The programme aims to reduce the risk of younger people being involved in a car accident. Research has shown that nearly a third of people killed on Australian roads are aged 16-25 years – yet they represent only 15 per cent of the population.

The Coalition believes that Keys2Drive has been successful in improving driver competence and safety among a high-risk group in the community.



## 4. A Better Approach to Cycling Safety

The Coalition will work with the States and Territories to improve road safety for cyclists.

Most cyclists use local roads, which are a responsibility of the States and Territories.

The Coalition shares the concerns of cycling bodies across the nation that the increased participation in cycling, for health, recreation and transport, has not been matched with the same degree of improvements in infrastructure and community information about sharing the road environment.

The Coalition will support improvements to road safety for cyclists by:

- ensuring the continuation of funding for the *Roads to Recovery* programme, which provides approximately \$350 million a year in improvements to local and State or Territory roads;
- ensuring the continuation of funding for the *Black Spot* programme, which provides approximately \$60 million a year to fix road sites that are high risk areas for serious crashes; and
- supporting the development of designated cycling paths and delineated cycling lanes where appropriate and increased awareness of safety issues for all road users.

## 5. A Review into the Economic and Social Costs of Road Trauma

The Coalition will task the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) with undertaking a review of the full impacts of road trauma.

The review will evaluate the benefits and costs associated with the different road safety approaches adopted by various jurisdictions, both domestically and internationally. The review will include an examination of the whole road safety system, including the benefits and costs of measures designed to encourage safer drivers, build safer roads and drive safer cars.

The review will help to inform further policy development and a collaborative approach to reducing road trauma.

The review is a necessary precursor to developing more effective and more targeted approaches to improving road safety.



## 6. Encouraging the Purchase of Safer Cars

The Coalition will continue to support the Australian Government fleet purchasing policy which mandates that all light passenger vehicles purchased by the Commonwealth must have a five star ANCAP safety rating.

The Coalition will actively encourage all Federal Government contractors to adopt similar policies where practical, and promote the benefits to business and industry leaders.

We will also continue to promote the importance of safer vehicles for private use in the wider community.

The Coalition will task the Department of Infrastructure and Transport with examining whether it is appropriate to stop the importation of cars with less than a four star Australasian New Car Assessment Programme (ANCAP) rating by 2016.

## 7. Greater Collaboration and Better Communication

Under a Coalition government the Transport Minister will work closely with all stakeholders to encourage a collaborative approach to research, innovation and the delivery of new programmes to help save lives and reduce injuries on our roads.

This will include existing road safety researchers and bodies such as the Australian Research Council, the National Health and Medical Research Council, and the Australasian College of Road Safety to build scale in research and assist in the development of road safety initiatives.

The Coalition will promote collaboration and coordination of:

- data collection by health authorities, enforcement agencies, road safety agencies and other stakeholders;
- marketing of messages for roads, vehicles, drivers and all road users;
- relationships with other safety agencies, disability assistance, alcohol use educators and related groups;
- the assessment of national road infrastructure ratings; and
- the introduction of new communications technologies and hardware to reduce crash rates.



An evidence-based road safety communications plan will be developed by the Minister for Transport to help ensure that key stakeholders are promoting the same message from the grassroots community organisations, through to other relevant ministers.

The Minister for Transport will seek to build bipartisan support for road safety measures wherever possible.

As a practical example, all Members of Parliament will be provided with non-partisan road safety information for optional inclusion in their printed material which may be distributed to every household in Australia at no additional cost to taxpayers.

## 8. Work with Motoring and Motorcycling Organisations

The Coalition believes there is an expanded role for the nation's key motoring organisations - the Australian Automobile Association and the State and Territory Motoring Clubs - in promoting road safety, driver and passenger responsibility, risk management and safe road use.

With more than seven million members, the motoring organisations are in direct contact with a large cohort of regular road users and we will endeavour to support the dissemination of important messages as part of a national communications plan.

Just as importantly, the Coalition values feedback from roads users and will work with motoring organisations to assess and evaluate the road safety concerns and ideas generated by its membership.

The Coalition will continue to work with peak bodies representing the interests of motorcyclists to ensure that the needs of this segment of road users are properly represented and reflected in all road safety decision-making.

We recognise the growth in motorcycle and motor scooter use in Australia and believes more can be done to support this legitimate transport choice to ease urban congestion and for recreational purposes.

We will work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop and implement a motorcycle safety strategy.

The safety of motorcyclists remains an issue of national importance with riders vastly over-represented in accident statistics. Again, improvements in technology have a role to play in reducing road trauma, along with promoting the need for riders to remain visible, increasing awareness among other vehicle drivers and providing the safest possible road environment.



## 9. Increased cooperation through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

The Coalition will seek to engage with relevant State ministers through the COAG process and through Ministers' meetings of the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure, to investigate harmonisation of road safety practices, graduated licensing systems and other measures, including public information campaigns, to ensure the best possible practises are rolled out across Australia.

The Coalition will seek to establish the optimal graduated licensing system for Australian conditions and encourage a consistent system across state borders.

Many Australians are employed in workplaces with a strong focus on occupational health and safety but they do not necessarily apply those standards to their after-hours driving habits. Developing a 'culture of road safety' around private and professional vehicle use will require a concerted effort across all levels of government and within the private sector.

## 10. Support Successful State-Based Programmes to Encourage Safer Driving

The Coalition supports state-based incentive programmes, like a reduction in licence renewal costs for drivers with a good driving record, insurance industry bonuses, and the use of new technology that can encourage good driving behaviour.

We also support efforts to establish the best practice interventions for high risk and repeat traffic offenders to minimise the risk they pose to themselves and others. Again, there are inconsistencies across state boundaries and greater effort needs to be made to research effective measures and implement them on a more consistent basis.

## Cost

The Coalition's *Policy to Improve Road Safety* will provide \$10 million to support the 'Keys2Drive' programme



Hope.  
Reward.  
Opportunity.



**THE NATIONALS** *for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to  
[www.realsolutions.org.au](http://www.realsolutions.org.au)