# ACT Chapter Report to the 2024 Australasian College of Road Safety Annual General Meeting

## Context

The ACT is a small jurisdiction. It has long prided itself on being a high performing jurisdiction for road safety. However, this pride has been challenged in recent years with spikes in fatalities, particularly in 2022. Due to the size of the ACT, assessing safety performance using fatality figures can be deceptive with significant percentage variations occurring due to normal variation. This supports the view that we need better data on serious road crashes and other measures of conflict on our roads. It is thus good to see the Federal Government getting behind the idea of better data collection and sharing.

The ACT has a history of supporting research into road safety through the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust and subsequently the ACT Government Road Safety Grants program. The ACT Chapter has been heavily involved in both these programs with many members of the Chapter benefiting from grants and using the fellowship of the ACRS to develop proposals, carry them out, and share the findings and results of projects with other members. Many ACRS members outside the Chapter have also benefited from these programs and contributed to road safety in the ACT and more broadly.

The ACT does not have its own LGAs however it welcomes participation from surrounding LGA Road Safety Officers and traditionally these have been a significant part of the Chapter’s active membership. The formation of the Local Government Network (LGN) recognises the special needs of LGA RSOs and will possibly have an impact on the membership and direction of the ACT Chapter.

## Priorities

During the last year, the ACT Chapter has been assessing its capacity and its priorities. The two are closely related in that the activities of the Chapter are determined by who attends meetings, who participates in the channels of communication and the benefits that sharing ideas among the fellowship can entail.

As mentioned, the development of the LGN has seen some shift in the participation of local government and how it interacts with the Chapter. This has seen us make an increased effort to cultivate membership in other areas where the ACT has a strong contribution to make in road safety. These include industry associations and tertiary education institutions. Outreach to associations and universities will remain priorities in the future.

## Activities

During the 2023/24 year the Chapter has held five face-to-face meetings. These have been generally well attended. We have been attempting to make the meetings more engaging through minimising administrative aspects and using each meeting to address a particular topical safety issue with a presentation by a member followed by discussion.

A Chapter highlight has been the forum organised by the Chapter in October to showcase successful grants under the ACT Road Safety Grants program. This was the second of these fora and it is expected that the Chapter will have a role in facilitating future similar events. These rely on the excellent collaboration we have enjoyed with ACT Government Road Safety personnel.

As part of our outreach to universities we have fostered a relationship with the Canberra campus of UNSW which has a strong interest in road safety, particularly speeding and effective countermeasures.

We have also engaged with the University of Canberra and are pleased to welcome them as a new member. Academics from UC have been active in the Chapter’s activities and we are confident that there will be more opportunities for collaboration across projects that have a particular application to the ACT and require research with a local expertise.

Industry associations and other organisations we have been engaging with in the past year include driving instructors, active transport and trucking groups.

During the past year, the ACT has had a number of inquiries especially relating to dangerous driving. The Chapter has participated in these inquiries through submissions and round tables.

As the home of the federal parliament, Chapter members have also participated in discussions with Federal Ministers and representatives including Carol Brown and David Pocock. These have been excellent opportunities to press the case for more effort to make Vision Zero a reality.

## Future

The Chapter has been addressing future activities in meetings and discussions since the end of 2023. One focus has been the need to review road safety education, training, and licensing processes in the jurisdiction. While this is a perpetual issue, we believe that more can be done now.

We are currently investigating the possibility of developing a Road User Assessment Program (RUAP) analogous to the vehicle and infrastructure rating programs of ANCAP and IRAP respectively. The feasibility and scope of such a program requires considerable research however we are excited by the potential to use such a tool to help shape policy and assist stakeholders to understand where improvements can be made to the system for road user education, training and licensing.

We believe that future success will depend on improved engagement with members and prospects. For this reason we have been exploring what communication tools can be most effective. This is a work in progress.

## Thanks

The Chapter is nothing without its members. Particularly active this year have been:

* Tracey Norberg
* Frances Stanford
* Eddie Wheeler
* Keith Wheatley
* Lauchlan McIntosh
* Lesa O’Leary
* Steve Lake
* Jen Woods
* Anne Napier
* Trisha Brown
* Amanda George
* Oleksandra Molloy
* Jo Wilson-Ridley
* Kate McDougal