



POLICY PLATFORM

Australian Federal Election 2025

EVERY DAY ON AUSTRALIA'S ROADS

on average, **3** people are killed; and **100** are seriously injured¹.
more than

Worse, for the past few years deaths have been going up, not down.

- This is preventable
- We must do better

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on the next Australian Government to urgently take immediate action:

1. Ensure all new housing developments connect to safe active travel routes and public transport, and road infrastructure can support increased traffic volumes.
2. Legislate and appropriately resource an agency like the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, with powers to investigate road crashes.
3. Ensure safe design of roads:
 - Make sure all new roads are designed for usability and managed to at least three (3) safety stars for all road users.
 - Publish State and Territory road infrastructure safety star ratings or equivalent for all existing roads.
 - Develop a regulatory impact statement on reducing the urban default speed limit and associated traffic calming treatments.
4. Align vehicle safety standards with Europe.
5. Create a well-supported Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety.
6. Assist neighbouring countries to improve road safety that accelerates economic development.



Ensure all new housing developments connect to safe active travel routes and public transport, and road infrastructure can support increased traffic volumes.

Decisions made in land use planning directly impact road trauma through the design and provision of infrastructure and connection to services. In addressing Australia's housing crisis with sustainable and coordinated growth, we must ensure land use and transport planning are integrated and properly consider road safety, at the conception stage. This is an opportunity to make sure that new developments adhere to strong principles for a zero-harm transport network.

Legislate and appropriately resource an agency like the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, with powers to investigate road crashes

The ATSB's independent, no-blame investigations of air, marine and rail crashes are used to help us understand better why crashes occur. This provides a stronger foundation for action by industry and Government to reduce the risk of future crashes. But current ATSB legislation prevents investigation of road crashes. We need an ATSB for roads to allow targeted investigations of systematic safety issues on our roads where about 10 times as many people die every year compared to air, marine and rail crashes combined².

All new roads designed to be usable and managed to at least three (3) safety stars or better for all road users

To reduce fatal and serious injuries on our roads, safety must be fully incorporated into the engineering design and management processes of new roads. To enhance safety, new roads should be designed to be predictable and easy to use for road users and should be built to at least a three (3) Star AusRAP safety level³. This provides a simple and objective measure of the level of safety which is 'built-in' to the road for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians

Publication of State and Territory road infrastructure safety star ratings or equivalent

Publication, and regular updating, of star ratings for rural and urban main road networks, for all road users, ensures the public is aware of the safety of the roads they are travelling on and shows whether the billions of taxpayer dollars spent on our roads are in fact prioritising safety. Publication of the star ratings for all State and Territory roads provides a simple overview of where infrastructure investment is most needed to improve the safety of our roads.

Develop a regulatory impact statement on reducing the urban default speed limit


Evidence from the world's leading road safety countries show significant benefits of reducing speeds in built-up areas. This includes decreasing the likelihood and severity of a crash, improving travel time, encouraging use of active and public transport, improving air quality and reducing noise pollution⁴.

Align vehicle safety standards with Europe

Australia is falling behind the European Union on vehicle safety standards. In 2019, the EU mandated safety improvements for all motor vehicles including advanced emergency braking system and intelligent speed assistance and event data recorders, which came into effect in 2022. Australia has not yet followed suit, so we are missing out on consequent safety benefits. We must address this.

Create a well-supported Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Our progress in improving road safety has stalled, we have failed to achieve our previous road safety targets⁵, and we are on-track to fail again in 2030. Road trauma remains the leading cause of death and serious injury among Australia's children and youth, and in the top three causes for everyone aged 1-45 years⁶. A properly resourced Australian Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, mandated with broad terms of reference and authority would help to ensure this issue is given the priority and oversight needed to turn this around.





Improve road safety to accelerate economic development in neighbouring countries

Enhancing road safety can help reduce poverty in neighbouring low—and middle-income countries, which account for roughly 90% of global road fatalities. These fatalities, along with costly hospitalisations, disabilities, and job losses, exacerbate poverty in these regions. Australia should boost aid and development funding to strengthen road safety management and programs in these countries.

References

1. Bitre - Road Deaths Australia - Monthly Bulletins (https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/road_deaths_australia_monthly_bulletins (<https://www.officeofroadsafety.gov.au/data-hub/serious-injuries-data>)
2. Bitre - Transport Safety data (<https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2023/australian-infrastructure-and-transport-statistics-yearbook-2023/transport-safety>)
3. iRAP - 3-star or better (<https://irap.org/safety-insights/how-safe-are-our-roads/>)
4. Review of City-Wide 30km/h Speed Limit Benefits in Europe (<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/11/4382>)
5. National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 (NRSS) (<https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/nrss>)
6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (aihw.gov.au/reports/injury/injury-in-australia/contents/injury-causes-and-age)

The Australasian College of Road Safety believes:

We should prevent all fatal and serious injury on our roads

It is never acceptable that people are killed or seriously injured in the road traffic system. The causes of road trauma are predictable and it is possible to eliminate fatal and serious injury on the road. Road traffic crashes may still occur, but no crash should be so severe that it results in fatal or serious injuries. Road trauma can be prevented through rational analysis of the causes and consequences (systemic risk) of crashes and evidence-based countermeasures.

The road traffic system must be made safe for all road users

The risk of road trauma is not equal across the community. Non-motorised users like pedestrians and cyclists, users with disabilities and lower socio-economic power, and First Nations users, bear a disproportionate share of the injury burden due to road crashes. Equal protection should be afforded to all. People of all ages, backgrounds and abilities should be able to access the road network without being exposed to hazards that carry the risk of fatal or serious injury, irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or use private motor vehicles.

System designers should aim to prevent human error and mitigate its consequences


Those who regulate, design and manage the road traffic system (governments, road authorities, vehicle manufacturers, organisations which provide or procure transport services) are responsible for the level of safety of the entire system. In undertaking all of these activities the aim should be to minimise the potential for road-user error and to protect users from fatal or serious injury when errors do occur.

Life and health are not exchangeable for other benefits in society

The unacceptability of fatal and serious injuries means that safety and health are more important outcomes of the road traffic system than efficiency or cost. Other community benefits of safer roads should also be considered such as encouraging physical activity, reducing air and noise pollution, and lower levels of stress.

Policy positions must be evidence based

All ACRS policy positions will be adaptive and demonstrably evidence based to ensure that our work is credible, reliable, informed and current, and assist in translating research into evidence-based policy and practice. We are committed to sharing knowledge and expertise through our work with a range of audiences, including the road safety community, policy makers and the general public. We help build capacity and skills in road safety among researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Australasia and globally.



About the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS)

The ACRS is the region's peak membership association for road safety with a vision of eliminating death and serious injury on the road.

Members

Our members include experts from all areas of road safety including:

- Policy makers
- Health and transport professionals
- Academics
- Community organisations
- Researchers
- Federal, state, and local government agencies
- Private companies
- Members of the public

Purpose

The purpose of the College is to support our members in their efforts to eliminate serious road trauma through knowledge sharing, professional development, networking and advocacy.

Objectives

Our objectives include the promotion of:

- Road safety as a critical organisational objective within government, business and the community.
- Advocacy of policies and practices that support harm elimination.
- Improvement of relative safety outcomes for vulnerable demographic and user groups within the community.
- Post-crash policies and practices.
- A collegiate climate amongst all those with responsibilities for and working in road safety.

Contact us

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