ACRS POLICY PLATFORM
New Zealand General Election 2023

Every day on New Zealand roads:

1 person dies[1]

6 people are seriously injured[2]

Worse, while we have been making some progress with saving lives, serious injuries are increasing, and in the past 12 months, the number of deaths has also increased.

● **This is preventable**   ● **We can do better**   ● **We must**

The Australasian College of Road Safety calls on the next New Zealand Government to:

1. Fully implement the Speed Management Guide to ensure safe speeds on all New Zealand roads.
2. Increase and improve enforcement and penalties.
3. Improve detection of and responses to drink driving.
4. Improve infrastructure and road conditions to prevent crashes.
5. Make the transport system safe for everyone to use.

ACRS AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF ROAD SAFETY

Fully Implement the Speed Management Guide to Ensure Safe Speeds on All Roads

Speeding remains one of the major contributing factors to road crashes in New Zealand, particularly in rural areas, creating high economic and social costs to government and communities. To reduce fatal and serious injuries on our roads, the management of speed limits in line with the road environment is key. Safe and appropriate speed limits to match the conditions of the road have been proven to save lives without adding significantly to travel times[3]. We must build on the work done so far, and fully implement the Speed Management Guide. A reduction in speed limits across different zones nationally, following Safe System principles is essential, along with implementation of regional speed management plans.

Increase and improve enforcement and penalties

Enforcement is proven to save lives[4], and currently too many New Zealanders believe the risks and penalties for unsafe behaviours on the roads are low[5]. Increased enforcement through speed cameras, point to point cameras, mobile phone and seatbelt cameras is essential. This must be supported by effective penalties. A review of fines and the benefits of demerit points must be completed and acted upon.

Improve detection of and responses to drink driving

A zero-tolerance approach to drink-driving can lead to a safer environment for all road users, as well as provide better health and economic outcomes for both government and communities. As well as making our roads safer, there are economic and health benefits to a strong and clear focus on drink driving through, increased enhanced enforcement through targeted and random breath testing, increased fines for offenders and the mandatory use of alcohol interlock systems, and health responses for repeat offenders[6]. Implementing these measures, while also focusing on public awareness and education about the dangers of drink-driving, will pave the way for more responsible road behaviour.

Improve Infrastructure and Road Conditions to prevent crashes

The nature of road safety problems differs between rural and urban areas, however the same principles around infrastructure and road conditions apply to both. The road environment and supporting infrastructure must be designed to prevent crashes, deaths and serious injuries. They should be seen to be intuitive and "self-explaining" and where this is not possible, speed reduction measures must be installed. An increased emphasis on building and maintaining road networks in line with the Safe Systems principles, encompassing safety and resilience improvements is crucial. Properly funded and well-designed measures such as median and roadside barriers, audible edge marking, raised safety platforms, maintenance, and resilience to withstand extreme weather are all essential to ensuring safe infrastructure to save lives.

Make the transport system safe for everyone to use

Cars and their drivers are often prioritised, however everyone has the right to get where they are going safely, regardless of whether they are using a car, truck, caravan, bus, train, motorcycle, bicycle, scooter, or walking. Enhancing multi-modal and vulnerable road user safety measures not only ensures the well-being of these groups but also has ongoing benefits for the entire transport ecosystem. This requires: 30 km/hr speed limits in built up areas, dedicated footpaths, separated cycle lanes, crossings, lighting, and other infrastructure improvements, as well as safe, affordable, reliable and accessible public transport. These measures reduce interactions between vehicles and vulnerable road users, provide healthier and more sustainable options, decrease emissions and congestion, and improve safety for everyone.

References

1. NZ Transport Annual Crash Statistics for 2021 (www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/safety-annual-statistics/)
2. NZ Transport Annual Crash Statement 2021 - Injury data (https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/safety-annual-statistics/crash-and-injury-data/)
3. The Impact of Change in Speed Limit at Three Sites (https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/speed-management-guide-road-to-zero-edition/wsp-the-impact-of-change-in-speed-limit-of-three-sites-report.pdf)
4. Speed Limit Enforcement (https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Speed-Limit-Enforcement.pdf)
5. Public Attitudes to Road Safety 2022 (https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/public-attitudes-to-road-safety/public-attitudes-to-road-safety-report-2022.pdf)
6. The effectiveness of alcohol interlocks in reducing repeat drink driving and improving road safety (https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-08/apo-nid318986.pdf)

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

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
- and 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.
- Promotion and advocacy of policies and practices that support harm elimination.
- Improvement of relative safety outcomes for vulnerable demographic and user groups within the community.
- Promotion of post-crash policies and practices.
- Promotion of a collegiate climate amongst all those with responsibilities for and working in road safety.