Australasian College of Road Safety Policy Principles

This set of policy principles underpins the position taken by the ACRS on policy in road safety. They draw inspiration from good practice in the safest countries and the safest industries, are designed to provide an overview of our fundamental values and are the foundation of our advocacy work.

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.

Adopted at ACRS AGM - May 2022