

# ACT Road Safety Strategy 2020-2025

**Road Safety.**  
It's Everyone's Responsibility.



**ACT**  
Government



Zero road deaths



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First published September 2020

[www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)

Produced by Justice and Community Safety.

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Postal address

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2608

Publishing Services Job no: 200542

## Minister's Message

The ACT Government is committed to Vision Zero –that means no deaths or serious injuries on our road transport network. **Vision Zero** acknowledges that deaths and serious injuries on our roads are preventable; they are not an inevitability. It is a bold target, but if we all work together, it is possible to reduce road deaths and serious injuries to zero, and for the community to avoid the terrible heartbreak and costs associated with them. Vision Zero is the central philosophy guiding the ACT Government's approach to road safety, as set out in this Strategy.

Over the past 10 years, the ACT Government has implemented a number of road safety measures aimed at saving lives and reducing injuries, including education and awareness activities and regulatory reform. In pursuit of Vision Zero, we have prioritised the Safe System approach to road safety. The Safe System approach focuses on safe speeds, safe vehicles, and safe people and behaviours.

The implementation of these initiatives has helped us to achieve an overall trend of a reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on ACT roads. The ACT continues to maintain a lower number of road fatalities per capita than the national average. However, minimising the risk of road trauma requires constant vigilance, and there is still much more to do to reach zero injuries or fatalities. Every crash adds a cost to our community in some way; including through heartache to family and friends, loss in productivity to our city's economy and increased pressure on our health system.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility, and efforts are required by government, the community and individuals. This strategy sets out the ACT Government's broad road safety strategy for the next 5 years, including our key goals as a government and guiding principles for achieving Vision Zero. The associated Action Plan outlines the actions we will take as a government and how we will work with the community and help promote individual responsibility.

The goal is improved safety on our road network, a continued reduction in trauma and deaths, and ultimately, the achievement of Vision Zero.



### **Shane Rattenbury MLA**

Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety

## Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future of the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on

which we live and where we conduct our business. We recognise the significant contribution of the Ngunnawal people and neighbouring Nations— the Ngambri, Ngarigo, Wolgalu, Gundungurra, Yuin and Wiradjuri to the Canberra region. For thousands of years these Nations have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to these lands and waters.

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## Introduction

The *ACT Road Safety Strategy 2020-25* outlines the ACT Government's commitment to improving road safety and reducing road trauma.

The Strategy aligns with the framework provided by the National Road Safety Strategy and other ACT Government strategies and policies.

This Strategy builds on the considerable achievements of previous ACT Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans and encompasses the goals and objectives outlined in prior stand-alone strategies: *ACT Road Safety Camera Strategy* and *ACT Road Safety Education Strategy*.

The Strategy provides a whole-of-government approach to addressing road safety in the Territory and subsumes any previous stand-alone road safety strategies.

This Strategy is based around four goals that establish the ACT Government's overarching road safety vision and sets the course for road safety related policy over the next five years. These goals are supported by guiding principles that underpin the implementation of the strategy and road safety related decisions.

This strategy takes a holistic approach to road safety and acknowledges that transport solutions alone are not enough to see meaningful improvements in road safety outcomes. Policies and actions beyond the mandate of the transport sector are needed to influence a significant reduction in road trauma. This aligns with the commitment of national Infrastructure and Transport Ministers to a social model approach underpinning action plans to be issued under the next National Road Safety Strategy.

The ACT Government remains committed to investing in evidence-based road safety measures while being innovative in its policy approaches to road safety and advances in road transport technology.

This Strategy is supported by Action Plans that describe ACT priorities and activities to be progressed within the context of goals and principles outlined in this Strategy. The Action Plans build on existing road safety measures and identify key focus areas for the ACT Government. The first *ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2020 – 2023* under this Strategy has as its key focus areas: distraction, drink and drug driving, vulnerable road users and speeding.

## Key Goals

The key goals of this strategy are:

### **Goal 1: Reduce serious and fatal crashes**

This goal targets the ACT Government's commitment to Vision Zero.

Deaths and serious injuries on our roads are preventable. As a Government and a community, we cannot accept that death or serious injury is an inevitable consequence of having a road transport system, and it is imperative we take all necessary steps to prevent any further crashes.

Every life matters.

### **Goal 2: Build a community that shares responsibility for road safety**

Everyone in the community has responsibility for road safety and everyone has an important role to play in ensuring the road environment is a safe and respectful place for all road users. Our goal is to ensure that everyone has a shared awareness and understanding of road safety and their individual and collective role in addressing road safety.



### **Goal 3: Change road user attitudes and behaviour through education and compliance activities**

This goal addresses the importance of education and compliance activities in addressing road safety.

The ACT Government is committed to the lifelong learning approach to road safety: education for road users of all ages throughout their life.

Lifelong learning is diverse, flexible and available at different times and places. It is learning that occurs in formal, informal and social settings.

A lifelong learning approach to road safety education means that all road users, from birth to old age need to be provided with opportunities to learn to be a safe road user and for this learning to be delivered in a wide range of ways.

### **Goal 4: Strengthen collaboration across Government and with stakeholders to improve road safety in the ACT**

This goal addresses the national commitment that road safety is not solely a transport problem. The ACT Government is committed to enabling everyone in the community to build road safety into their 'business as usual' and ensuring that road safety is not seen solely as a transport issue.

The ACT Government will work together to identify how education, land use and transport planning, road safety and transport regulation, health, justice, industry and community sectors can leverage what they do now to improve road safety.

The ACT Government commits through this Strategy, and the guiding principles outlined to work across Government, to build a road network that is safe for all users, embrace innovative and sustainable technologies and support an enforcement approach that deters unsafe behaviours.

The success of adopting a whole of government approach to road safety can be demonstrated by various programs and projects undertaken in partnership across agencies and stakeholders, including the Learn to Ride Centres, the Active Streets and Slower Streets initiatives, the Smiley Face signs, graduated licensing scheme reforms, the Fitness to Drive Medical Clinic, and the Kings Highway Partnership.

## **Guiding Principles for Road Safety in the Territory**

The ACT Government remains committed to Vision Zero and the Safe System approach to road safety. These principles are the foundation for all ACT Government efforts to improve road safety and transport policy making. Other guiding principles include:

- > Road safety efforts and transport policy decisions need to be evidence based. Programs and policy will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness in improving road safety.
- > New road safety measures implemented nationally and internationally will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and those that are shown to be effective will be considered for their application in the ACT.
- > The ACT Government recognises the important role played by sustainable transport policies in improving road safety and the important advances that are being made in vehicle technology. Policies that aim to reduce car traffic and prioritise sustainable transport – walking, cycling and public transport – are valuable in their own right, but also have measurable road safety benefits.
- > The ACT Government remains committed to enforcement of road transport laws in a manner that deters unsafe behaviours and is premised on changing driver behaviours through an “anytime, anywhere” approach to enforcement.

## **Vision Zero**

It is acknowledged that Vision Zero is an ambitious goal. Ambitious goals push us as a Government and a community to strive to do and be better.

Australians should not regard death and serious injury as an inevitable cost of travelling on the road network.

Vision Zero acknowledges that people make mistakes, reinforcing the idea that the system must be created for humans, instead of trying to adapt and adjust humans to the system.

It is the role of Government to lead reforms and advances in infrastructure, regulatory frameworks and awareness activities, that bring community organisations and road users along to create a safe and respectful road environment.

## **Safe System**

The Safe System approach provides the technical methodology and policy framework for achieving Vision Zero. The Safe System approach means that efforts must be made to manage the combined effects of the speeds at which we travel, the safety of the vehicles we use, and the level of protection provided by our roads – not only to minimise the number of crashes, but to ensure that when crashes do occur, they do not result in death or serious injury.

Traditionally the Safe System approach to road safety focuses on four pillars: safe speeds, safe roads and roadsides, safe vehicles and safe people and behaviours.

Nationally, Australia is adapting its approach to implementation of safe system principles by focusing on three key themes: Safe Road Use, Safe Roads and Safe Vehicles, with Safe Speeds applying across each of the key themes.

### **Safe Road Use**

Human error and risk taking are factors in most fatal crashes. All road users, including drivers, passengers, motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians have an important role to play. This theme focuses on rewarding safe road use and discouraging high risk behaviour, such as speeding, distraction and drink and drug driving. This includes awareness and enforcement activities that support road users to comply with road transport laws and encourage safe driving behaviours, for example, driving at not only the posted speed limit but adapting their speed within that limit for the conditions.

### **Safe Roads**

The standards of the ACT's roads, the appropriateness of speed limits and the effectiveness of the road environment are critical to road safety. Safe roads, including safe road environments need to be designed to improve safety for all users. This includes ensuring speed limits are set appropriately for the conditions of the road environment (for example, the design and function of the road) and road rules and road signage are appropriate.

### **Safe Vehicles**

Vehicle quality is crucial to road safety outcomes – older and lower ANCAP-star rated cars are overrepresented in serious injury and fatal crashes. The average age of the ACT private light vehicle fleet in 2018 was 7.7 years. Attention must be given to advances in technology that will assist in keeping all road users safe, adopting improved vehicle safety standards and increasing the uptake of safer vehicles.

The ACT Government will design its road transport infrastructure based on safe system principles. Protecting lives is to be at the forefront of government-decision making.

It is also important to ensure that the Post Crash Care component of safe system principles, is incorporated into Government policies and actions across all areas, from the health system to the justice system. Effective post-crash care can help improve quality of life and community engagement.



# Governance Framework

## ACT Government

The Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this Strategy, associated Action Plans and road transport reforms.

The progress and status of the actions and goals within this Strategy and associated Action Plans will be tabled annually, as a Report Card, in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The ACT Road Safety Advisory Board (the Board) is responsible for monitoring progress on the implementation of the ACT Road Safety Strategy.

The Board is a non-statutory body comprising nine members representing:

- > two ACT motor accident injuries scheme insurers,<sup>1</sup>
- > three road user representatives,
- > two road safety experts,
- > an ACT Government Executive representing Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS); and
- > an ACT Government Executive from JACS as chair..

The Board is supported by the Road Safety Taskforce and relevant sub-committees.

The following agencies are represented on the ACT Road Safety Taskforce: ACT Policing, TCCS, Health Directorate (HD), Education Directorate (ED), Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development (EPSDD) Directorate.

## Cross-jurisdictional collaboration

Government partnerships with various road safety bodies, and alignment with other jurisdictions ensures that work to improve road safety is much more effective.

The ACT is represented at the national Infrastructure and Transport Ministers meetings by the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and the Minister for Transport. This forum plays a key role in delivering national reforms to improve the efficiency and productivity of Australia's infrastructure and transport systems, and ensure these systems drive economic growth, increase employment opportunities, support social connectivity and enhance quality of life for all Australians.

The next National Road Safety Strategy is expected to be released in early 2021. Infrastructure and Transport Ministers have agreed that the next National Road Safety Strategy will continue to support Australia in its commitment to Vision Zero and have key focus areas based on the Safe System approach. The ACT will continue to provide input into the development of the next National Road Safety Strategy and Actions Plans and will review the ACT's Road Safety Strategy against the finalised National Road Safety Strategy to ensure alignment.

The ACT also contributes to the work of the National Transport Commission (NTC). The NTC leads national land transport reform in support of Australian governments to improve safety, productivity, environmental outcomes and regulatory efficiency. The NTC reviews, maintains and amends national and model laws, such as the national heavy vehicle law and the Australian Road Rules. The ACT actively participates in the work of the NTC on national reforms through various working groups and preparing submissions. Any reforms proposed by the NTC are considered by the ACT and prior to any adoption in the ACT, the specifics of the ACT road environment and community expectations are taken into consideration.

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1. Formerly referred to as compulsory third-party insurers. On 1 February 2020, the ACT's new motor accident injuries scheme commenced.

Further, the ACT supports the work of Austroads through its membership, participation in various working groups and taskforces and providing input into projects run by Austroads. Austroads is the peak organisation of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies. Its purpose is to support its member organisations to deliver an improved Australasian road transport network. One that meets the future needs of the community, industry and economy.

The ACT Government monitors and reviews reports arising from the NTC, Austroads, national working groups, committees and other road safety bodies to identify any possible measures or initiatives that could be applied in the ACT.

## The Journey So Far

The ACT has achieved significant improvements in road safety through changes in road user behaviours, education and awareness activities and regulatory reform.

Key road safety achievements over the last ten years include:

- > Introduction of roadside drug testing
- > Establishment of the ACT's alcohol interlock program
- > Implementation of flexible payment arrangements for road transport infringement notice penalties
- > Expansion of the ACT's road safety camera program and approval of new traffic offence detection devices as new technologies are available
- > Establishment of the ACT Road Safety Fund and associated community grants program
- > Annual participation in National Road Safety Week since it was established in 2015
- > Introduced the regulatory framework for the operation of the light rail in the territory's road network and as a public passenger service
- > Regulatory reforms to address vehicle safety issues arising from recall notices issued under the Australian Consumer Law
- > Established the regulatory framework for personal use of e-scooters, segway like devices and other similar devices
- > Implemented a total mobile device ban for all learner and provisional licence holders
- > Implemented reforms to the ACT's driver licensing scheme for learner and provisional car licence holders to align with best practice and improve road safety outcomes for young and novice drivers
- > Launched two Learn to ride cycle training facilities
- > Made it illegal to throw objects at, or place objects in the way of, motor vehicles or bicycles so as to risk the safety of drivers, riders or passengers and also to throw objects at other vehicles
- > Conducted Road Safety forums on issues ranging from vulnerable road users to e-scooters to drug driving to driver licence reforms for learner and provisional drivers to achieving Vision Zero through a safe system approach to road network planning, design and maintenance.
- > Implemented separate higher penalties for driving while using a mobile phone for text messaging, using social networking and other mobile applications or accessing the internet.
- > Introduced minimum passing laws for drivers when overtaking a bicycle rider
- > Regulatory reforms to permit motorcycle lane filtering
- > Implemented reforms to support the introduction of ridesharing
- > Reforms to support members of the community to participate in active travel through introduction of an exemption on religious grounds to mandatory helmet laws
- > Partnering with the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) to raise awareness about safer vehicles and provide information about the safety benefits of newer vehicles
- > Partnering with NSW and policing in enforcing and promoting safe road use for travellers on the Kings Highway
- > Trialled interactive Smiley face signs to encourage speed compliance

## Continuing the Journey Towards Vision Zero

Throughout the life of this Strategy, and the associated Action Plans, the ACT Government will continue to strive to achieve Vision Zero and implement safe system principles across all road safety policy decisions and measures.

People by nature make mistakes. When these mistakes occur on the road, they can lead to crashes. Road trauma cannot be eradicated just by improving road user behaviour.

Effective strategies need to be developed and maintained which anticipate the likelihood of human error so that crashes don't result in loss of life or impacted health. Road trauma does not discriminate and subsequently it is critical for everyone to learn and engage in safe behaviours on our roads as early as possible and continue to develop and refresh their understanding and awareness throughout their lives.

To achieve Vision Zero, we need to design and maintain a safe road system with appropriate speed limits, while promoting responsible driving and safer vehicle choices.

The goals in this Strategy and the focus areas in the *ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2020-2023* assist the ACT Government in continuing its journey towards Vision Zero and embedding safe system principles in government decision-making on road safety related policies.