



**ACT**  
Government

Justice and Community Safety

# ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2011-20



**ROAD SAFETY**  
It's Everyone's Responsibility



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# Foreword

Road safety affects the whole ACT community. Each year, an average of 14 people are killed and 565 people are injured on ACT roads.

This level of death and injury impacts many ACT families. Unfortunately, we often take this level of suffering for granted.

The two most common factors leading to road crashes and road deaths in the ACT are speed and alcohol. Yet the general community perception is that it is OK to speed, and drivers continue to be caught for drink driving. Driver distraction is also an emerging issue.

The ACT Government is committed to reducing the deaths and injuries on our roads.

This *ACT Road Safety Strategy for 2011-2020* is influenced by the Swedish Government's *Vision Zero* policy, which ultimately aims for no one being killed or seriously injured within the road transport system.

This Strategy complements work at the national level under the *National Road Safety Strategy*, and builds on previous work under the *ACT Road Safety Strategy 2007-2010*. It is supported by an *Action Plan for 2011-2013*, which provides more detail on specific actions to address ACT road safety issues over the next three years.

Road safety has been identified as a major global problem, particularly in developing countries. In March 2010 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed a Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 with a goal of stabilising and then reducing the forecasted level of road traffic fatalities around the world. This Strategy provides a local ACT response to the Decade of Action.

The ACT Government will continue to work with the community to convince drivers that one road death in the ACT is one too many. This Strategy is the next important step in the ACT journey towards *Vision Zero*.

Simon Corbell MLA  
Attorney General

# Executive Summary

The ACT has a good road safety record in comparison to other parts of Australia, and indeed the world. The ACT has the benefit of an established and well designed road system, a general urban environment and a small, well defined geographic area.

Despite this, there is no room for complacency. In the last five years (2006-2010) an average of 14 people were killed and 565 people were injured on ACT roads each year.

Advice from ACT Policing is that the main causal factors for serious injury and fatal road crashes in the ACT are alcohol and/or drugs, speeding, failure to wear a seat belt and driver distraction. Often these factors occur in combination. For ACT drivers travelling interstate, fatigue is also a factor.

The ACT Government is committed to reducing the deaths and injuries on our roads. This *ACT Road Safety Strategy for 2011-2020* is influenced by the Swedish Government's *Vision Zero* policy, which ultimately aims for no one being killed or seriously injured within the road transport system.

This Strategy also complements work at the national level under the *National Road Safety Strategy* which seeks to **reduce the annual number of road crash fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30%** over the period 2011 to 2020.

While no injury is acceptable a 30% reduction would equate to less than 10 people being killed and less than 400 being injured in the ACT annually by 2020.

Australia's approach to road safety improvement is guided by the "Safe System" approach. A safe transport system requires responsible road user behaviour, but also makes allowance for human error and recognises that there are limits to the forces that humans can withstand in a crash.

An essential element of the Safe System approach is the design of roads and vehicles to reduce the risk of crashes and to reduce the harm to people if a crash does happen. Speed management is also a critical factor in limiting the impact energy of crashes. The Safe System approach relies on – **safe speeds, safe roads and roadsides, safe vehicles, as well as safe people and safe behaviours.**

These two approaches, *Vision Zero* and Safe System, complement each other. Whereas *Vision Zero* is the goal, the Safe System approach provides the technical methodology to move towards that goal.

The vision for this Strategy is:

***Towards Vision Zero – Improving road safety in the ACT.***

The three Strategic goals for this Strategy are:

1. Reductions in ACT road trauma that meet *National Road Safety Strategy* objectives
2. An ACT community that shares the responsibility for road safety, and
3. Agencies and stakeholders working together to improve road safety.

**The following directions form the basis of this Strategy:**

- Support cultural change in the community towards road safety, and subsequently improve behaviour.
- Emphasise speed management as a critical component of the Safe System approach.
- Expand engineering measures to support speed management initiatives.
- Implement safe system solutions, and best practice engineering technology, covering both new and existing roads.
- Encourage best practice in adopting vehicle safety technology.
- Implement an educational approach to road safety for all road users, with investment in strategic awareness campaigns and lifelong learning measures.
- Support this broad educational approach with targeted, effective and sustained enforcement measures, including an increased focus on visible police enforcement of all traffic offences.
- Use stringent controls to remove repeat and high end traffic offenders from the road system.
- Focus on impaired driving as a priority area.
- Obtain strong alignment with key road safety stakeholders on the overall approach to road safety in the ACT.
- Strengthen synergies between road safety, land-use planning and sustainable and active transport policy and planning.
- Implement best practice data, performance monitoring and evaluation processes.

This Strategy is supported by an *Action Plan for 2011-2013*, which provides a list of specific actions over the next three years.

This Strategy and the Action Plan provide an integrated approach to improving road safety using a range of education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, evaluation and support measures.

## Acknowledgements

This ACT Road Safety Strategy has been prepared by the Transport and Road Safety Policy Business Unit in the ACT Government's Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS).

Many stakeholders have an interest in supporting road safety in the ACT, and their assistance in developing this Strategy is acknowledged. Particular thanks are extended to representatives on JACS road safety consultative committees, attendees at road safety roundtables hosted by the Chief Minister and NRMA Motoring and Services, and those providing comments on the *Vision Zero* Discussion Paper.

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### Key Points

- This ACT Road Safety Strategy outlines key goals and objectives for road safety in the ACT over the next 10 years.
- It is supported by multi-year Action Plans with the first being for 2011-2013.
- The Strategy and Action Plan address strategic road safety goals and objectives through an integrated approach using a range of education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, evaluation and support measures.
- These documents complement the principles and objectives of the *National Road Safety Strategy*.



# Introduction

The ACT has a good road safety record in comparison to other parts of Australia, and indeed the world. The ACT has the benefit of an established and well designed road system, a general urban environment and a small, well defined geographic area.

Despite this, there is no room for complacency. Each year an average of 14 people are killed and 565 people are injured on ACT roads. In the five years 2006 to 2010, 71 people were killed and 2,827 people were injured.

However, this does not reflect the whole effect of road trauma on the ACT community. The number of fatal crashes in NSW involving ACT motorists is about the same as fatal crashes within the ACT.<sup>1</sup> These crashes are reported in NSW, rather than ACT, crash data.

The economic cost to the community of ACT road crashes has been conservatively estimated at \$224 million per annum.<sup>2</sup>

Advice from ACT Policing is that the main causal factors for serious injury and fatal road crashes in the ACT are:

- Alcohol and/or drugs
- Speeding
- Failure to wear a seat belt, and
- Driver distraction including mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Often these factors combine with each other, so it is not possible to categorically state that one or other is the sole cause of any particular crash. For ACT drivers travelling interstate, fatigue is also a factor.

An analysis of ACT crash data for the last five years (2006-2010) shows that the peak times for crashes is the morning and afternoon traffic peaks. This suggests that national road safety interventions – such as initiatives in the areas of speed management and driver distraction – should be effective in an ACT context.

Notwithstanding the above, the following specific issues have been consistent in the ACT over the last five years:

- 11% of all crashes are “single vehicle crashes” (indicative of driver error or actions independent of the road system or other traffic)
- 45% of all crashes are “rear end collisions” (the most frequent crash type), and

- 35% of all casualty crashes are “right angle collisions” (the most frequent type in terms of severity).

In terms of road user casualties over the last five years:

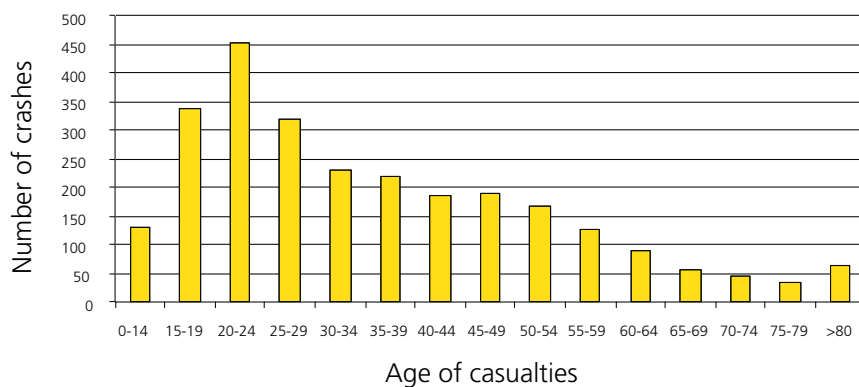
- 68.5% were car drivers or passengers
- 15.3% were motorcycle riders or pillions
- 10.1% were bicycle riders, and
- 5.6% were pedestrians.

On a national basis, motorcycle riders make up 22% of all serious crashes, yet motorcycle usage accounts for less than 1% of vehicle-kilometres travelled.<sup>3</sup> The vulnerability of pedestrians and bicyclists involved in crashes with motor vehicles is also of concern.

In terms of the age profile of total casualties over the last five years, 42.6% were aged under 30. This indicates the need to pay particular attention to issues affecting younger drivers and younger road users. On a national basis, people aged 17 to 25 years make up 25% of drivers killed or seriously injured, but represent 16% of the adult population.<sup>4</sup>

Although casualties tend to decline with age, a considerable number of middle-aged persons also become ACT road casualties.

**ACT Casualties by Age Group (2006 – 2010)**



Source: Roads ACT Reports on Road Traffic Crashes (excludes casualties of unknown age).

## Key Road Safety Issues in the ACT:

- Impaired driving
- Speeding
- Lack of care and driver distraction
- Single vehicle crashes, rear end crashes and right angle crashes
- Vulnerable road users, particularly motorcyclists
- Novice drivers



# Vision Zero and Safe Systems

The Scandinavian *Vision Zero* concept has been identified as a potential model for improving the road safety culture in the ACT.

During 2009 and 2010 a series of roundtables were held with key stakeholders, hosted by the Chief Minister and NRMA Motoring and Services, to consider if and how this concept could be applied in the ACT. As a result of these discussions, a number of key themes were developed for this Strategy and a Discussion Paper on *Vision Zero* was released for public comment in August and September 2010.

## Vision Zero

Swedish road safety legislation is based on *Vision Zero* which aims that 'eventually no one will be killed or seriously injured within the road transport system'. Zero is not a target to be achieved by a certain date. It is, however, a change from an emphasis on fixing current problems, to being guided by what the optimum state of the road transport system should be.

The vision is based on **Ethics**, noting that every human being is unique and irreplaceable. It is also based on **Science** noting that human physical and mental capabilities should form the basis for road design. In particular, knowledge of limited human tolerances in a crash should inform chosen solutions and measures.

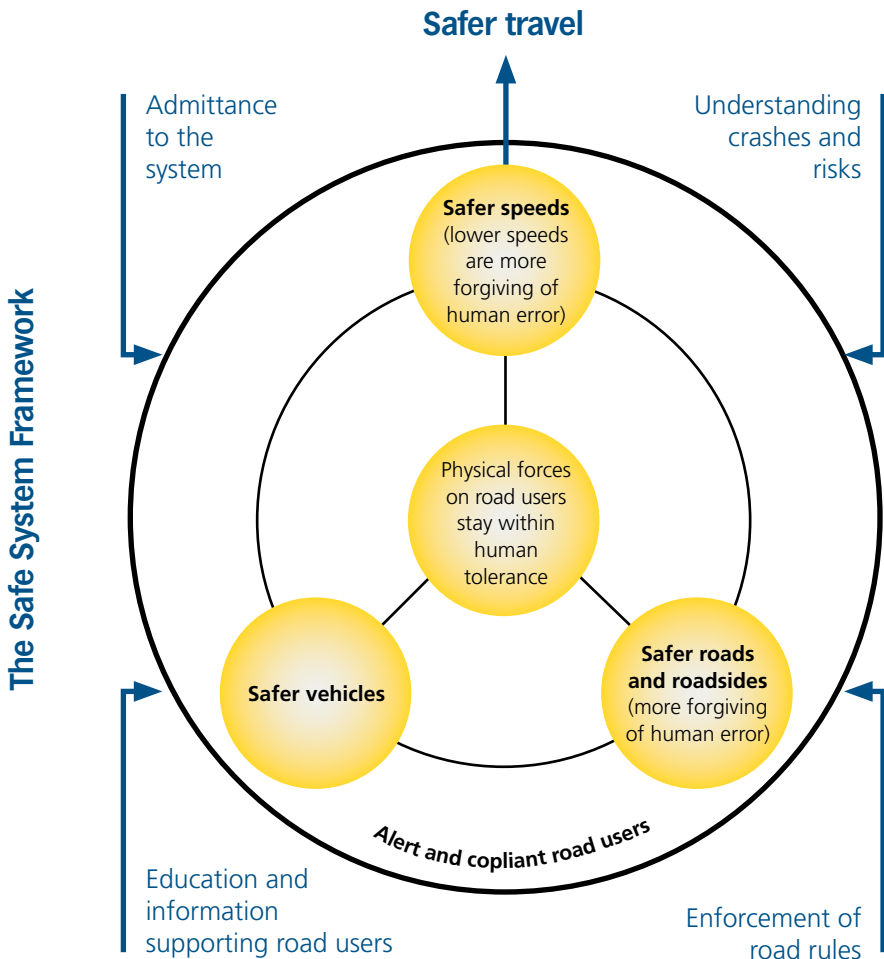
*Vision Zero* also changes the emphasis in responsibility for road safety from the road user only to a **shared responsibility** by all those who have an effect on, or participate in, the road traffic system - politicians, designers, planners, road managers, transport companies, vehicle manufacturers, the police and road users.

Sweden has backed up the *Vision Zero* concept with strong government support and considerable investment in infrastructure and enforcement.

## The National "Safe System" Approach

Australia's approach to road safety improvement, as agreed by Federal, State and Territory Transport Ministers, is a "Safe System" approach. A safe transport system requires responsible road user behaviour, but also makes allowance for human error and recognises that there are limits to the forces humans can withstand in a crash.

An essential element of the Safe System approach is the design of roads and vehicles to reduce the risk of crashes and to reduce the harm to people if a crash does happen. Speed management is also a critical factor in limiting the impact energy of crashes. The Safe System approach relies on – **safe speeds, safe roads and roadsides, safe vehicles, as well as safe people and safe behaviours.**



Source: National Road Safety Action Plan 2009 and 2010, page 7

The two approaches, *Vision Zero* and Safe System, complement each other. Whereas *Vision Zero* can be seen to be the “public face” of providing an aspirational goal, the Safe System approach provides the technical methodology to move towards that goal.

# Vision Zero for the ACT

The previous *ACT Road Safety Strategy 2007-2010* was based on safe system principles. *Vision Zero* requires further proactive and continuous improvement of safe system elements in an attempt to ultimately eliminate crashes causing death and serious injury.

It is recognised that the community has mixed views on the appropriateness or otherwise of using *Vision Zero* terminology. While the concept of *Vision Zero* is generally supported, concerns have also been expressed that it is meaningless without strong commitment to action. It can also be argued that aiming to eliminate all road deaths is unrealistic, and that larger gains could be made by balancing road safety improvements with reducing deaths in other priority areas such as preventable disease.

However, the *Vision Zero* concept is consistent with a landmark road safety report by the OECD that recommends that all countries adopt and promote a level of ambition that seeks in the long term to eliminate death and serious injury arising from use of the road transport system. It notes that adopting such an ambition is necessary to alter the community's view of the inevitability of road trauma, alter institutional and societal responsibilities and accountability, and change the way in which road safety interventions are shaped.<sup>5</sup>

The *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020* adopts an ambitious vision that "No person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia's roads." It states that Australians should not regard death and serious injury as an inevitable cost of road travel. Crashes will continue to occur on Australian roads because humans will always make mistakes no matter how informed or compliant they are. But we do not have to accept a transport system that allows people to be killed or severely injured as a consequence.<sup>6</sup>

The ACT *Vision Zero* Discussion Paper recommended that a term such as "Towards Zero" (as used in the WA Road Safety Strategy and the OECD Report) be used for this Strategy.<sup>7</sup>

# The vision for this Strategy is:

## Towards *Vision Zero* – Improving road safety in the ACT



# Targets and Performance Indicators

The 2008 OECD report notes that any long term road safety vision needs to be complemented with targets for specific planning periods up to a decade or so.<sup>8</sup>

The vision in the *National Road Safety Strategy* is similarly backed by ambitious but realistic targets and performance indicators. The National Strategy seeks to **reduce the annual number of road crash fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30%** in the period 2011 to 2020.<sup>9</sup>

A performance management framework to support the National Strategy is under development, and the ACT will continue to contribute to this process.

## The overall targets for this Strategy are to:

1. Contribute to a national **reduction in the annual number of fatalities and serious injuries of at least 30% by 2020**, by achieving a similar improvement in ACT fatalities and serious injuries. This would equate to less than 10 people being killed and less than 400 being injured in the ACT annually by 2020.
2. Reduce fatalities and casualties involving ACT drivers travelling interstate.

### STRATEGIC GOAL 1

**Reductions in ACT road trauma that meet National Road Safety Strategy objectives.**



# Integrated Approach

Road safety is a shared responsibility. Achieving lasting change requires governments, industry and the broader community to work together.

From a government perspective, the *National Road Safety Strategy* notes that jurisdictions need to explore opportunities to secure alternative sources of funding or shared funding arrangements for road safety activities in order to achieve the target reductions in fatalities and serious injuries.<sup>10</sup> Additional budget bids for road safety will be prepared and considered in the context of future ACT budget deliberations.

Efforts will continue to be made to ensure that agencies responsible for items in the Road Safety Action Plan work together to integrate efforts and reduce duplication of effort. As part of this, other ACT Government strategies which have relevance to road safety, such as the *ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy*, the *ACT Children's Plan* and the *ACT Young People's Plan* will be drawn upon.

Similarly, the *National Road Safety Strategy* notes that road safety has close links with policies in a range of other disciplines, including transport, police, health, education, youth and justice, among others.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, road safety is about personal responsibility in relation to sharing the road infrastructure, and being alert and careful while doing so. Community engagement efforts should include programs explaining the *Vision Zero* and safe system concepts. Culture change is a gradual process, so continuity and consistency in effort is required.

- Support cultural change in the community towards road safety, and subsequently improve behaviour.

## Safe Speeds

Public consultation on the *Vision Zero* Discussion Paper suggested that ACT road safety policies had an over-emphasis on speed and speeding. It was also suggested that more emphasis should be placed on inappropriate speed, rather than exceeding a "fixed and often irrelevant" limit.

Achieving safe speeds is an essential component of the Safe System approach. National research indicates that speed management will provide a significant gain in improving road safety in Australia.<sup>12</sup> However, it is also a difficult issue to address, given our fast paced culture and the Australian mindset in relation to speed enforcement.

Integrated speed management measures will be progressed under this Strategy to establish safer speeds on the ACT network. These will include awareness, enforcement, in-vehicle and engineering measures.

Further details are contained in the *ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2011-2013*.

- Emphasise speed management as a critical component of the Safe System approach.
- Expand engineering measures to support speed management initiatives.

## Safe Roads and Roadsides

The ACT will take a proactive approach to building a safe system, rather than reacting to crashes after they occur. Safe system solutions could include reduced speed zoning to minimise conflicts with bicyclists and pedestrians, median barriers on two-lane undivided roads to eliminate the possibility of head-on crashes, wider shoulders on rural roads to reduce run off road crashes, and calming treatments at signalised intersections to reduce speeds and the impact energies involved in right angle crashes.

There will also be a strong focus on addressing the risks posed by non-frangible roadside furniture on new and existing roads, and developing safe system engineering solutions to support sustainable transport goals.

Further details are contained in the *ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2011-2013*.

- Implement safe system solutions, and best practice engineering technology, covering both new and existing roads.

## Safe Vehicles

Issues relating to safer vehicle technology (including for motorcycles) are primarily addressed at a national level, and the ACT continues to be involved in national vehicle standards setting processes.

The ACT will strengthen its involvement with national efforts encouraging the take up of safer vehicles by fleet and private purchasers.

Further details are contained in the *ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2011-2013*.

- Encourage best practice in adopting vehicle safety technology.

# Safe People and Safe Behaviours

The Safe System approach acknowledges that human error occurs and makes allowance for this error in the design of vehicles and roads. However, it also relies on road users being responsible.

This requires efforts to educate and encourage road users to obey the road rules and to be unimpaired and alert when sharing the road with others. It also requires the use of enforcement and penalties to deter road users from breaking the rules, including removing the privilege of road use from those who do not, or can not, comply.

A “lifetime learning” approach to road safety is a key action to be progressed under this Strategy. This approach reinforces good behaviours, as well as changing attitudes to lead to these behaviours. Proposed actions include improving linkages with child injury prevention efforts, linking road safety into the school education curriculum, continuing to improve ACT novice driver and rider programs, improving general and targeted road safety awareness programs, and providing information at registration and licence renewal regarding safe driving practices.

A clear message arising from the *Vision Zero* Discussion Paper was support for increasing police presence to enforce all types of offences, rather than a perceived over-reliance on speed camera technology.

Efforts will continue to integrate the enforcement, regulatory and awareness activities by road safety agencies, particularly ACT Policing and JACS. Better communication about the aims and objectives of these programs should serve to encourage self-regulation and reduce the need for strict enforcement.

- Implement an educational approach to road safety for all road users, with investment in strategic awareness campaigns and lifelong learning measures.
- Support this broad educational approach with targeted, effective and sustained enforcement measures, including an increased focus on visible police enforcement of all traffic offences.
- Use stringent controls to remove repeat and high end traffic offenders from the road system.

Drink driving continues to be a road safety issue for the ACT. Advice from ACT Policing is that the primary contributing factor to serious and fatal crashes in the ACT is impaired driving, generally involving alcohol, but sometimes in combination with illicit drugs. Impaired driving has been a factor in almost 50% of fatal crashes in the three year period 2007 to 2009. Of major concern to ACT Policing is the high rate of repeat offences for impaired driving.

The ACT has been progressing revisions to ACT drink driving legislation, and legislation for roadside drug testing has been implemented. Further impaired driving reforms are expected, including a need for a stronger focus on the links between enforcement, penalties, offender courses, sentencing and treatment programs.

Impairment issues also result from specific medical conditions which can affect driving ability.

- Focus on impaired driving as a priority area.

Addressing fundamental road safety issues – such as speeding, drink driving and driver distraction – has a positive flow-on effect for the safety of all road users. A range of activities under this Strategy will also address road safety issues of concern to specific road user groups, including motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Further details are outlined in the *ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2011-2013*.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

**An ACT community that shares the responsibility for road safety.**

# Support Measures

Liaison and coordination arrangements have been established under the framework of the previous *ACT Road Safety Strategy 2007-2010*. These arrangements clarify roles and ensure coordination of effort between key road safety stakeholders. While matters of detail will always generate discussion, it is crucial that the overall approach is supported by strong alignment between the major road safety stakeholders.

Road safety programs are commonly classified in terms of the “4 Es” – Education, Encouragement, Engineering and Enforcement. An integrated approach by all road safety agencies is the key to addressing road safety concerns. All measures are subject to a “5<sup>th</sup> E” – Evaluation.

- Obtain strong alignment with key road safety stakeholders on the overall approach to road safety in the ACT.

In addition, there is a need to strengthen synergies between agencies responsible for road safety and sustainable and active transport policy and planning. There is scope to reduce road trauma by encouraging the use of less dangerous forms of transport, such as public transport. Reducing travel speeds provides benefits in relation to emissions, noise and amenity and fuel consumption, as well as safety for vulnerable road users like pedestrians and bicyclists. In this context there are also strong links between road safety and land use planning.

- Strengthen synergies between road safety, land use planning and sustainable and active transport policy and planning.

Road safety efforts need to be evidence based. Efforts are required to improve ACT speed and crash data collection and analysis processes, and to implement evaluation processes for engineering programs and other road safety initiatives. A performance management framework to support the National Strategy is under development, and the ACT will continue to contribute to this work. A suite of robust performance indicators for the ACT will be developed as part of this process.

- Implement best practice data, performance monitoring and evaluation.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3

**Agencies and stakeholders working together to improve road safety.**

# Conclusion

The table below summarises the Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives of this Strategy, noting how they will be addressed by a range of education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement measures. All measures will be subject to evaluation.

The *ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2011-2013* details the proposed actions to address the goals of this Strategy.

Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives	Education	Encouragement	Engineering	Enforcement
1. Reductions in ACT road trauma that meet National Road Safety Strategy objectives	Safe speeds	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe roads and roadsides			✓	
	Safe vehicles		✓	✓	✓
2. An ACT community that shares the responsibility for road safety	Safe people and safe behaviours	✓	✓		✓
3. Agencies and stakeholders working together to improve road safety	Coordination and consultation processes	Support measures			
	Data, performance management and evaluation processes	Support measures			



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