

RELEASE OF NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY WELCOMED BY PEAK ROAD SAFETY ORGANISATION

Thursday, December 23rd, 2021

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) welcomes the release of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 by Commonwealth, state and territory Infrastructure and Transport Ministers yesterday, as an opportunity to refocus the way we think about road transport - from how fast we get there, to how safely we get there. A national strategy is crucial to address the impact of road trauma in Australia, with 3 people dying, and more than 100 people hospitalised from using our roads every day.

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The Strategy commits governments to achieve 'Vision Zero', the elimination of deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2050, including targets of a reduction in fatalities by 50 per cent and a reduction in serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030. The Strategy commits to a significant increase in road transport infrastructure funding going to targeted road safety improvements.

ACRS President, Mr Martin Small expressed his support stating "We are heartened to see agreement on an overall vision, and ambitious and achievable targets for the next 10 years. The overall approach is sound and there are important new emphases including work-related road trauma and the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

"We are pleased to see a commitment to significant additional safety targeted funding, but we are disappointed to see that the publication of infrastructure safety star ratings is still not included in the Strategy. The public have a right to know how safe the roads they are travelling on are, through this simple and objective measure, and see whether the billions of taxpayer dollars spent on our roads are in fact prioritising safety."

"Having strong accountability mechanisms in place will be crucial to the success of the Strategy, and the first Action Plan and related budgets will be critical. For now, we are pleased to see the commitment to a Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety to monitor progress, and to better public reporting." Mr Small continued.

With 55 per cent of road crash deaths occurring on regional roads and another 10 per cent of deaths occurring on remote roads the role of speed in deaths and serious injuries on these roads needs to be understood. The Strategy includes the development of a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) on reducing the open road default speed limit as well as the default speed limit for unsealed roads in remote and regional areas.

"We applaud the development of a RIS to examine default rural and remote speed limits." said ACRS CEO, Dr Ingrid Johnston. "However, we note that the Strategy does not include the same investigation of default speed limits in built up areas."

“The Strategy recognises that roads must be safe for everyone who uses them, not just those in cars. An examination of default speed limits in urban areas, where high numbers of cyclists and pedestrians are seriously injured, should be included.” Dr Johnston continued.

“As the Strategy acknowledges, the previous strategy suffered from implementation failure. A strong Action Plan will be crucial to ensure that the strategy is fully funded, implemented and monitored with transparency.” Dr Johnston concluded.

About the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS)

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is the region’s peak membership association for road safety professionals, advocates, and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads. The College provides an inclusive, collaborative environment promoting communication, networking, professionalism and advocacy across all spheres of road safety including policy, advocacy, research, innovation, technologies, and management. ACRS membership includes experts from all areas of road safety including policy makers, academics, community organisations, researchers, federal, state and local government agencies, private companies and members of the public.

More Information

ACRS Website: <https://acrs.org.au/>