

**MEDIA RELEASE – Tuesday 15 April 2025**



## **Three-Star or Better Road Design Needed Now Across Australia**

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is calling on the Australian Government to urgently implement measures to address persistently high road trauma rates nationwide. In 2024, 1,300 people were killed on Australian roads - the highest number since 2012<sup>1</sup> and thousands of people seriously injured. A bold and evidence-based approach must be implemented now.

The ACRS recommends three critical actions to ensure the safety of all road users and reduce death and serious injuries:

### **1. Design and manage new roads to a minimum three (3) star safety rating**

The Australian Government (AG) has committed to ensuring that all new roads achieve a three-star safety rating or better, as outlined in the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 (NRSS)<sup>2</sup>. At a minimum, new roads must meet a three-star AusRAP (Australian Road Assessment Programme) safety rating. Research by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP)<sup>3</sup> highlights that roads built to this standard reduce fatal and serious injuries by making road environments more predictable, easy to use, and safer for all road users, including vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, cyclists, and pedestrians. By embedding high safety standards into road design and management, Australia can continue to reduce road trauma and move towards a safer road network.

### **2. Publish State and Territory road infrastructure safety star ratings**

Transparency regarding the safety of road infrastructure is essential. ACRS calls for the regular publication of road safety star ratings for both rural and urban networks in all Australian States and Territories. These ratings provide an objective measure of road safety, helping the public understand the risks associated with different road networks. Additionally, they serve as a vital tool for governments to identify where infrastructure investment is most urgently needed, ensuring taxpayer funds are used to save lives.

### **3. Develop a regulatory impact statement on reducing urban default speed limit and associated traffic calming treatments**

The NRSS highlights the AGs commitment to reviewing rural default speed limits to improve road safety outcomes. In alignment with this focus on evidence-based speed management, a review (regulatory impact statement) should also be developed on reducing urban default speed limits and associated traffic calming treatments.

Research consistently demonstrates that lowering speed limits in urban areas significantly enhances road safety by reducing both the likelihood and severity of crashes. Additionally, lower urban speed limits contribute to improved air quality, reduced noise pollution, and better conditions for active and public transport use. On average, cities that adopted a 30km/h speed limit experienced a 23% decrease in road crashes, 37% reduction in fatalities, and a 38% decline in injuries<sup>4</sup>.

"The current road trauma rates in Australia are unacceptable and avoidable. We have evidence and tools to make our roads safer, but immediate action is needed to prioritise safety at all levels of government. Designing roads to be safer, publishing safety ratings, and reducing speed

limits in built-up areas are proven strategies that will save lives," said Dr Ingrid Johnston, CEO of the ACRS.

The ACRS urges the Australian Government to act now to protect the lives of all Australians on our roads.

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**Source:**

1. <https://datahub.roadsafety.gov.au/progress-reporting/monthly-road-deaths#anchor-download-data>
2. <https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/National-Road-Safety-Strategy-2021-30.pdf> - Page 5.
3. Source: International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), "How Safe Are Our Roads?" (<https://irap.org/safety-insights/how-safe-are-our-roads/>)
4. Review of City-Wide 30km/h Speed Limit Benefits in Europe (<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/11/4382>)

#### **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:** [www.acrs.org.au](http://www.acrs.org.au)