

RAC Federal Budget Submission 2022-23

Priorities for a safer, sustainable and connected WA

This year's Federal Budget presents an opportunity to prioritise funding which will deliver critically important programs and projects to not only save thousands of lives and serious injuries, but also create thousands of jobs and help safeguard WA's productivity and liveability into the future.

! An unforgivably high number of people continue to be killed and seriously injured every day on WA's roads - with our regional roads and metropolitan intersections being the two biggest road safety issues faced by our State. Apart from the immeasurable personal and social impacts, the financial cost to the nation's economy was estimated to be approximately two per cent of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (or \$33.16 billion) in 2016¹.

RAC considers the **top three priorities for the 2022-23 Federal Budget** to be:

- 1. Full funding for the regional road safety program to save thousands of lives and serious injuries on WA's regional roads;**
- 2. Funding for the metropolitan intersections program to deliver highly effective, low cost, life and serious injury-saving treatments; and**
- 3. A program of safe and connected active transport infrastructure and enhanced streets and places for cycling and walking in WA.**

These programs comprise lower-cost and smaller-scale projects that can be mobilised to and through construction, quickly. They are scalable and can create significant employment and training opportunities from the outset, many of which would draw on different skillsets to those required for major infrastructure projects, aiding delivery to occur in tandem with other commitments. They will inject significant investment into communities throughout the State.

In addition to these top three priorities for funding in the next Federal Budget, RAC has several longstanding strategic infrastructure and policy priorities which remain important for ensuring a safe, sustainable and connected future for WA. These are set out at the end of this submission.

Our key priorities

1. Regional Road Safety Program

The challenge:

- » Regional WA presents a significant challenge to saving lives and reducing serious injuries on our roads - over five years, more than 500 people have been killed and over 2,800 seriously injured on WA's regional roads.
- » Of the 156 fatalities on WA's roads in 2020, almost 65 per cent (or 101 deaths) occurred on regional roads, despite only 21 per cent² of the population living there.
- » Over 70 per cent of all fatal and serious injury crashes in our regions were the result of run-off-road or head on crashes - deaths and serious injuries that could be avoided through implementation of effective low cost safety treatments.
- » Regional road safety has been recognised as an issue of national significance by Infrastructure Australia and despite a solution being identified by the State Government, funding is yet to be committed to deliver it in full.

The opportunity:

Of highest importance is the strategic Regional Road Safety Program (RRSP) - a landmark State Government initiative to deliver effective, low cost safety treatments such as sealing shoulders, installing audible edgelines, medians and/or centrelines to address run-off-road and head on crashes across 17,000km of the State's regional road network.

The program, announced by the State Government in August 2019, has been costed at \$900 million over nine years. However, in line with delivery timescales for major road projects and given the nature of the works involved, this should be delivered in four years.

¹ Litchfield, F. (2017). *The cost of road crashes in Australia 2016: An overview of safety strategies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=a37c13ee-72d4-47a9-904b-360d3e635caa>

² ABS. (2021). Population estimates by selected Non-ABS Structures, 2010 to 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population/latest-release#data-download>

State Government modelling has demonstrated the RRSP is expected to:

- » save more than 2,100 people from being killed or seriously injured;
- » reduce regional road trauma by 60 per cent;
- » create thousands of direct and indirect jobs over the life of the program, which would likely result in skilled and non-skilled, as well as regional employment and training opportunities; and
- » yield a strong return on investment with a high Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 4.05 (to put this into context, in a post implementation evaluation of 19 national road investment projects delivered between 2008-09 to 2012-13, the average BCR was 1.82³, and the Morley-Ellenbrook Line which was endorsed by Infrastructure Australia in May 2020 has a BCR of 1.1⁴).

To date, a total of \$669 million has been committed towards the program by the State and Australian governments. While the existing commitments are welcomed, we are yet to see the Australian government commit full funding to deliver this crucial program.

RAC calls on the Federal Government to:

- » Commit funding so that the \$900 million Regional Road Safety Program is delivered in full over four years by the end of 2023-24 (\$231 million outstanding).

2. Low cost metropolitan intersection program

The challenge:

- » By nature, urban intersections can be particularly risky as they are places where higher volumes of different road users meet, usually at different speeds; travelling from, and in, multiple directions.
- » Approximately one in two of all crashes in the metropolitan area occur at one of its more than 50,000 intersections and they received almost 60 per cent of the more than 6,000 nominations to the 2018/19 RAC Risky Roads campaign.
- » In just the five years to end-2020, 92 people were killed at metropolitan intersections and 2,849 people were seriously injured (including a total of 959 vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) – with the economic cost equating to approximately \$1.6 billion⁵ (or around \$320.2 million per annum).
- » Side-impact and rear-end crashes are the most common crash types at intersections⁶, with the former having the most severe outcomes as crashes at these angles (particularly at 90°) provide the least opportunity for impact forces to be dispersed⁷. The type of control and design of intersections also has a significant influence on crash likelihood and severity.
- » Major grade-separations and other significant infrastructure works (e.g. installation of traffic signals, construction turn pockets or slip lanes) can greatly enhance safety while maintaining, and even increasing, operational performance when applied in appropriate situations. However, these can be costly with longer lead times, limiting the number of intersections that can be treated and the lives and serious injuries saved each year.

The opportunity:

Of highest importance to saving lives and serious injuries on Perth's roads is to scale up efforts to make intersections safer for all road users through installing effective, low cost treatments. Treatments, which can be implemented for as little as \$20,000 to \$50,000 per intersection, include:

- » painted mini-roundabouts and turning lanes where carriageway space permits;
- » minor geometry improvements such as tightening turning radii to slow vehicle speeds and reducing crossing distances;

³ BITRE. (2018). *Ex-post economic evaluation of national road investment projects*. Retrieved from: https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2018/rr_145

⁴ Infrastructure Australia. (2020). *Project business case evaluation summary: METRONE T: Morley-Ellenbrook Line*. Retrieved from: https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/morley_ellenbrook_project_evaluation_summary.pdf

⁵ Calculated based on an average cost per fatality of \$78 million, and \$310,094 per serious injury (see Litchfield, 2017), and KSI data supplied by Main Roads WA.

⁶ Chow, K., Manners, S. & Meuleners, L. at CMARC. (2017). *Risk Factors for Killed and Serious Injury Intersection Crashes in Metropolitan Perth: 2006 - 2015*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/Stage-3.pdf>

⁷ Candappa, N., Logan, D., Van Nes, N., & Corben, B. (2015). *An exploration of alternative intersection designs in the context of Safe System*. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 74, 314-323. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2014.07.030>

- » installation of speed cushions and raised platforms;
- » modified signal timings and phasing; and/or
- » other lining, signing and speed management measures.

Over several years, Main Roads WA has been implementing the Metropolitan Intersection Crash Program (MICP), delivering targeted improvements at several high-risk intersections across Perth. A recent evaluation of the MICP revealed that over the period from 2012-13 to 2018-19, a total of 10 projects were completed at a cost of \$31.9 million. The total budget allocation from 2021-22 to 2024-25 is \$32.6 million⁸.

While important to continue investing in such major upgrades, given the limited number of intersections that can be treated due to the scale and nature of works involved, an opportunity exists to take a new approach and do more, with less.

In the 2020-21 State Budget the State Government committed \$16.1 million over four years towards the roll out of a program targeting 'low cost treatments at metropolitan intersections' which was welcomed.

However, the program could be applied more widely across the network to address common challenges at different intersection types (e.g. rear-end and right turn-through crashes at built-up signalised intersections, right angle crashes at built-up non-signalised intersections and right angle crashes at low speed non-signalised intersections).

An expanded program would allow a greater number of intersections to be remedied, more quickly, maximising the safety benefits for all road users and value of investment.

RAC calls on the Federal Government to:

- » Commit funding towards a rolling program to deliver lower cost, network-wide treatments to address common challenges at different intersection types, particularly focusing on speed management to create a safer road network across metropolitan Perth (ongoing program cost of at least \$10 million each year).

3. Safe and connected active transport infrastructure program

The challenge:

- » Car is by far the dominant method of travel to work in WA and around half of all car trips are less than 5km⁹, with many being under 1km – most people can ride 5km in around 15-20 minutes or walk 1km in around 10 minutes.
- » 13 of Perth's 34 strategic activity centres¹⁰, including several within Perth's inner area, currently exhibit low accessibility by public transport¹¹, increasing the importance of active transport connections.
- » Dissatisfaction with existing cycling infrastructure is high and fear of sharing the roads with motorists is a main reason for not cycling more often – Western Australians want more investment in on and off-road cycling infrastructure¹².
- » Currently, insufficient priority and support is given to the reallocation of road space for active (and public) transport, critical gaps remain in the Principal Shared Path (PSP) network and there is a need to maintain existing paths (not least lighting quality¹³) to enhance amenity and safety.
- » Pre-COVID-19, it was forecast that the cost of congestion in Perth will more than double from \$1.5 billion in 2016 to \$3.6 billion per annum by 2031¹⁴. While traffic volumes on the State road network reduced by as much as a third in April 2020, and much more on key corridors such as the freeway¹⁵, in October 2021 volumes on Perth's freeway network had increased by seven per cent above 2019 levels¹⁶.

The opportunity:

Of high importance to reducing the cost of congestion in Perth and supporting thriving, healthy and active communities now and into the future is scaling up action and investment to accelerate the delivery of safe and connected active transport infrastructure.

Increasing levels of cycling and walking has wide-ranging benefits applicable to many government sectors, including health and of course transport. RAC's 2012 Cycling Business Case demonstrated that the returns on investment in cycling projects are between 3.4 and 5.4 times the costs incurred, higher than many other urban transport investments.

⁸ Department of Treasury. (2021). *Western Australia State Budget 2021-22 (Part 9 – Transport)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au/2021-22/budget-papers/bp2/2021-22-wa-state-budget-bp2-vol2.pdf>

⁹ Department of Transport. (2017). *Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan – 2017 Update*. Retrieved from: https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/active-transport/AT_CYC_P_WABN_Plan.pdf

¹⁰ Important hubs for employment, retail, education, as well as residential activity.

¹¹ RAC. (2016). *Transport accessibility of Perth's activity centre*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdn.rac.com.au/-/media/files/rac-website/about-rac/community-programs/publications/reports/2016/transport-accessibility-of-perth-activity-centres-final.pdf?la=en&modified=20161003120527&hash=A7845C62E3F36D75E35ECD8E8AC6BB91F09BA277>

¹² RAC. (2020). *RAC Member Priorities Tracker - Cycling*. Retrieved from: <https://rac.com.au/about-rac/advocating-change/reports/-/media/8062c2119a324f7e8d9611fb24ce88b7ashx>

¹³ RAC. (2018). *Shared path lighting review*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdn.rac.com.au/-/media/files/rac-website/about-rac/media/2018/rac-shared-path-lighting-review-2018.pdf>

¹⁴ Infrastructure Australia. (2019). *Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/australian-infrastructure-audit-2019>.

¹⁵ Based on RAC analysis of data from the Main Roads WA traffic data API to compare traffic volumes on comparable days during the first weeks of April 2020 and April 2019. Retrieved from (accessed on 24 April): <https://portal-mainroads.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/ed270d2c2ef649ac99172d14879283fd>.

¹⁶ Update provided by MRWA at an AITPM event on 28 October, 2021.

The creation of safe, active streets and expansion of cycling infrastructure are being seen by many authorities globally as a key opportunity to reimagine their cities and streets, support economic growth and enhance liveability.

Since July 2020, RAC has partnered with local governments from across the state as part of the \$2 million Reconnect WA initiative to deliver lower cost and innovative community-based projects which revitalise streets and public spaces and connect people and places. Safer and more vibrant streets for walking and cycling and pop-up plazas are amongst the projects that RAC has worked with local governments to help bring to life.

There is a need to accelerate the delivery of shovel-ready smaller-scale infrastructure projects and quick-win, temporary treatments to support increased levels of cycling and walking in WA.

! Perth Cycle Network Counters indicate that in June 2020 total cycling trips had grown by 62 per cent compared to 2019 levels, with Perth Central Business District (CBD) commuter trips by bike having grown by 42 per cent¹⁷.

Funding for such projects could be used to:

- » bring forward committed and currently unfunded projects to accelerate delivery of the Long Term Cycle Network for WA, with a focus on delivering primary and secondary routes. This includes completion of gaps in the PSP network, as well as those as part of the Safe Active Streets program;
- » maintain and upgrade existing shared paths, particularly within 15km of the Perth CBD, to improve surface and lighting quality (including trialling smart path lighting solutions);
- » enable local governments to deliver active transport infrastructure projects already in the pipeline but which are yet to receive funding through the Western Australian Bicycle Network Grants Program;
- » enable trialling of innovative approaches to rapidly reallocate road space, expand provision for pedestrians and cyclists and create safer streets (including temporary measures like pop-up bike lanes); and
- » deliver travel behaviour change programs in parallel with investment in public transport infrastructure and services (e.g. Your Move Metronet) to encourage active transport and help boost public transport patronage.

RAC calls on the Federal Government to:

- » Commit funding towards a program of safe and connected active transport infrastructure and enhanced streets and places for cycling and walking in WA (total initial program cost of \$80 million over two years).

Other strategically important priorities

In addition to these three crucially important priorities, RAC has several longstanding strategic infrastructure and policy priorities which remain important for ensuring a safe, sustainable and connected future for WA. These are for government to:

- » Commit funding to accelerate the transition to clean transport to reduce harmful vehicle emissions and the impacts on human health and the environment. This should include actions such as:
 - > enabling wider roll out of charging infrastructure in WA;
 - > exploring and implementing tax incentives and subsidies to support uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles;
 - > accelerating the uptake of Euro VI or above standard buses and expand the trial of cleaner alternative-fuelled buses, such as fully electric and hydrogen fuel cell;
 - > introduce impactful national vehicle emission standards for vehicles, including light vehicle CO₂ and Euro 6 vehicle emissions standards; and
 - > delivering an effective rating system to ensure consumers have access to user-friendly emissions and fuel consumption information when purchasing a new vehicle.

! State Government estimates suggest simply 'accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles in Western Australia will provide public health benefits of over \$20 million each year by reducing air pollution'¹⁸.

- » Show leadership on safer speeds by setting out specific, measurable, and near-term actions to reduce the impact of speed on crash outcomes. The proposal to develop a Regulation Impact Statement on reducing the open road default speed limit, as proposed within the draft new national road safety strategy, should be made a priority.
- » Continue to commit funding towards the rolling program of intersection grade separations and upgrades to improve safety on strategically important corridors, such as WA's major highways to bring these up to freeway standard (\$250 million).
- » Commit funding for green bridges to address severance issues and increase cycling catchments for the Perth CBD and major activity centres, delivering safety, health and productivity benefits (\$250 million).
- » Commit funding to prepare for a future with automated and connected vehicles, helping to position WA and the nation to capitalise on advancements in technology and future proof new infrastructure (\$50 million).

¹⁷ Department of Transport. (2020). Three month data snapshot of COVID-19 impacts on active transport in Perth, WA: April - June 2020.

¹⁸ Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. (2020). *State Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia*. Retrieved from: https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/State_Electric_Vehicle_Strategy_for_Western_Australia_0.pdf

- » Commit funding to implement a program of measures to optimise Perth's heavy rail system (including lengthening of remaining platforms on the Midland/Fremantle/Armadale lines to accommodate 6-car train operations) to make the best use of existing rail assets and cater for increasing demands (\$500 million).
- » Commit funding towards a rolling program of road/rail grade separations and other solutions to remove level crossings. This should prioritise William Street and Kelvin Road on the Armadale Line, Collier Road and Meadow Street on the Midland Line, and Victoria Street and Jarrad Street on the Fremantle Line and deliver associated urban realm enhancements, improving safety, road, and public transport efficiency and amenity (\$1.1 billion).
- » Commit funding towards planning and delivery of a mid-tier rapid transit network, prioritising connections between the University of Western Australia/Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and Canning Bridge (via the CBD and Bentley/Curtin), and also between Scarborough Beach/Stirling to Glendalough and onto the Perth CBD, to enhance access to strategically important centres for employment, retail and tourism (\$2 billion).

About RAC

RAC is a voice for almost 1.2 million Western Australians. Since our foundation more than 115 years ago, RAC has existed to be a driving force for a Better WA by championing change that will create a safer, sustainable and connected Western Australia.

Our purpose

The driving force for a better WA.

Our vision

2030: A safer, sustainable and connected future for Western Australians.

Our mission

Delivering great member services and experiences, while inspiring positive community change that makes life better in WA.



To significantly reduce serious crashes occurring on poor quality roads such as this, the Regional Road Safety Program if fully funded, would treat 17,000km of the State network with effective low-cost safety treatments including sealed shoulders and audible edge lines.

For further information please contact advocacy@rac.com.au

