

# RAC State Budget Submission 2022-23

## Priorities for a safer, sustainable and connected WA

This year's State 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 WA's economy is estimated to be \$2.4 billion per annum<sup>1</sup>.

RAC considers the **top four priorities for the 2022-23 State Budget** to be:

- 1. Fully funding the Regional Road Safety Program to save thousands of lives and serious injuries on WA's regional roads;**
- 2. Further funding for the metropolitan intersections program to deliver highly effective, low cost, life and serious injury-saving treatments;**
- 3. A program of safe and connected active transport infrastructure and enhanced streets and places for cycling and walking in WA; and**
- 4. Freezing motor vehicle registration fees and public transport fares for three years to make the cost of transport more affordable.**

The three programs above 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.

The fourth priority, will help to alleviate the growing financial burden of transport on households and to bring these costs back in line with inflation.

In addition to these top four priorities for funding in the next State 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 cent<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> WA Government. (2020). *Driving Change: Road Safety Strategy for Western Australia 2020-2030*. Retrieved from: [https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/Driving-Change-Road-Safety-Strategy-2020\\_2.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/Driving-Change-Road-Safety-Strategy-2020_2.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> 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 1.82<sup>3</sup>, and the Morley-Ellenbrook Line which was endorsed by Infrastructure Australia in May 2020 has a BCR of 1.1<sup>4</sup>).

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 State or Australian governments commit to fully fund this crucial program. The remaining \$231 million, if committed over two years (to end 2023-24), represents just 3.8 per cent of the State Budget spending on transport, road and rail<sup>5</sup>.

#### RAC calls on the State Government to:

- » Commit funding to roll out the \$900 million Regional Road Safety Program in full by the end of 2023-24 (\$231 million outstanding). Delivery of the RRSP should be prioritised to maximise the opportunity to secure further funding through the Australian Government's Road Safety Program (this could include expansion of the program to priority local government roads with a high crash record).

## 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 billion<sup>6</sup> (or around \$320.2 million per annum).
- » Side-impact and rear-end crashes are the most common crash types at intersections<sup>7</sup>, 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 dispersed<sup>8</sup>. 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;

<sup>3</sup> BITRE. (2018). *Ex-post economic evaluation of national road investment projects*. Retrieved from: [https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2018/rr\\_145](https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2018/rr_145)

<sup>4</sup> Infrastructure Australia. (2020). *Project business case evaluation summary. METRONET: Morley-Ellenbrook Line*. Retrieved from: [https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/morley\\_ellenbrook\\_project\\_evaluation\\_summary.pdf](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/morley_ellenbrook_project_evaluation_summary.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Based on half the outstanding program cost as a proportion of expenditure towards transport, road and rail in the WA State Budget 2021-22 of \$3,004m. Retrieved from: <https://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au/2021-22/fact-sheets/moneyinout.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Calculated based on an average cost per fatality of \$7.8 million, and \$310,094 per serious injury (see Litchfield, 2017), and KSI data supplied by Main Roads WA.

<sup>7</sup> 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>

<sup>8</sup> 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 million<sup>9</sup>.

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 State Government's 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 State Government to:

- » Commit further 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 5km<sup>10</sup>, 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 centres<sup>11</sup>, including several within Perth's inner area, currently exhibit low accessibility by public transport<sup>12</sup>, 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 infrastructure<sup>13</sup>.
- » 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 quality<sup>14</sup>) 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 2031<sup>15</sup>. 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 freeway<sup>16</sup>, in October 2021 volumes on Perth's freeway network had increased by seven per cent above 2019 levels<sup>17</sup>.

#### 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.

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.

<sup>9</sup> 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>

<sup>10</sup> 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](https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/active-transport/AT_CYC_P_WABN_Plan.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Important hubs for employment, retail, education, as well as residential activity.

<sup>12</sup> 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?1a=en&modified=20161003120527&hash=A7845C62E3F36D75E35ECD8E8AC6BB91F09BA277>

<sup>13</sup> RAC. (2020). *RAC Member Priorities Tracker - Cycling*. Retrieved from: <https://rac.com.au/about-rac/advocating-change/reports/-/media/8062c2119a324f7e8d9611fb24ce88b7ashx>

<sup>14</sup> 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>

<sup>15</sup> Infrastructure Australia. (2019). *Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/australian-infrastructure-audit-2019>.

<sup>16</sup> 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>.

<sup>17</sup> Update provided by MRWA at an AITPM event on 28 October, 2021.

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 cent<sup>18</sup>.**

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 State 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).

## 4. Taking action to make the cost of transport more affordable

### The challenge:

- » WA households spend almost 15 per cent of their income on transport, which equates to more than \$20,000 per year for those in Perth and \$18,000 for those in our regions<sup>19</sup>.
- » The cost of transport is rapidly growing, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics reporting an 11 per cent increase in the last 12 months<sup>20</sup>.
- » The community has indicated that rising costs have affected them personally with RAC members saying they spent more than \$200 extra on average in the last year to run their car. Two-thirds of members say they have taken action in the last year to try to reduce their motoring costs – an increase of 11 per cent from 2020<sup>21</sup>.
- » Motor vehicle registration fees have increased by over 80 per cent in the past 10 years – almost five times the rate of inflation<sup>22</sup>. These fees were increased again by four percent in the most recent State Budget, more than twice the rate of inflation<sup>23</sup>.
- » A single car household would have saved more than \$900 over the past decade if registration fees had increased at the rate of inflation<sup>24</sup> and more could have been saved had fee increases been kept below inflation.
- » Perth is the most expensive capital city in Australia to catch public transport, with the typical Perth household paying more than \$1,000 above the average per year<sup>19</sup>.
- » In the last five years the cost of a two-zone public transport fare has increased by 14 per cent, nearly twice the rate of inflation<sup>25</sup>.

### The opportunity:

Ensuring that transport remains affordable is one of the highest priorities for RAC members. More than seven in ten say it is very or extremely important for government to take action to keep the cost of motoring down and to ensure public transport is affordable<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Transport. (2020). Three month data snapshot of COVID-19 impacts on active transport in Perth, WA: April - June 2020.

<sup>19</sup> AAA. (2021). *Transport Affordability Index - Q3 2021*. Retrieved from: <https://data.aaa.asn.au/transport-affordability/>

<sup>20</sup> ABS. (2021). *Consumer Price Index, Australia*. Transport component of CPI for Perth. September 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/latest-release>

<sup>21</sup> RAC. (2021). *RAC Member Priorities Tracker - Cost of Transport*. 308 respondents from the Perth and Peel region, 75 from regional WA. Age, gender, and location sampling quotas were applied, and data has been post-weighted to be representative of RAC's membership (which is broadly consistent with the WA population profile) - the margin of error at total sample level is +/-5% at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>22</sup> RAC analysis of registration fees in WA based on previous State Budget papers, assuming a sedan with tare weight of 1,600kg. The analysis excludes motor Injury Insurance, recording and driver's licence fees. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdn.rac.com.au/-/media/files/rac-website/about-rac/advocacy/rac-analysis-of-registration-fees-in-wa-july-2021.pdf?modified=20210804015026&ga=2.9956355010186284551636985540-4228460121586310574>

<sup>23</sup> Department of Treasury. (2021). *WA State Budget 2021-22. Budget Paper no. 3*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au/2021-22/budget-papers/bp3/2021-22-wa-state-budget-bp3.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> RAC. (2021). *Decade of rising rego fees hits motorists hard*. Media Release 4 August 2021. Based on the analysis referenced in footnote 22.

<sup>25</sup> Assumes a two-zone fare using SmartRider Autoload and ABS June quarter CPI increases

<sup>26</sup> RAC. (2021). *RAC Member Priorities Tracker - Transport choices and priorities*. Retrieved from: <https://rac.com.au/about-rac/advocating-change/reports/-/media/a8679755f14447b3ba0fac4e3b9c6210ashx>.

Furthermore, confidence in government to keep costs down is extremely low. Less than one in five members say they have confidence<sup>27</sup> in government keeping the cost of motoring down, and less than one in three have confidence the government will ensure public transport is affordable<sup>21</sup>.

RAC welcomed the decision by the WA Government to freeze motor vehicle related fees in 2020-21 and public transport fares again in 2021-22 – proving it can be done.

Given the record surplus delivered in the latest State Budget, there is an opportunity for the State Government to take action to ensure transport remains affordable by implementing a three-year freeze on increases to motor vehicle registration fees and public transport fares. This would help to alleviate the growing financial burden of transport on households and to bring these costs back in line with inflation<sup>28</sup>.

#### **RAC calls on the State Government to:**

- » Commit to making transport in Western Australia more affordable by implementing a three-year freeze on increases to motor vehicle licence fees and public transport fares to help bring them back in line with inflation.

## **Other strategically important priorities**

In addition to these four 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:
  - > exploring and implementing tax incentives and subsidies to support uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles;
  - > increasing procurement of low and zero emission vehicles across the State Government fleet (exceeding the target for EVs in its fleet of at least 25 per cent of eligible vehicles by 2025-26);
  - > 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;
  - > working with the Federal Government to ensure introduction of impactful national vehicle emission standards for vehicles, including light vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> and Euro 6 vehicle emissions standards; and
  - > working with the Federal Government to deliver an effective rating system to ensure consumers have access to user-friendly emissions and fuel consumption information when purchasing a new vehicle.



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.

<sup>27</sup> Members who said they were very or extremely confident in government plans to do this.

<sup>28</sup> With reference to increases made from the commencement of the first term of the current government, including the 2017-18 State Budget.

**! 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’<sup>29</sup>.**

- » Commit to resourcing and funding the development of a speed management plan, including a framework and near-term deadlines for reviewing and setting speed limits across the road network. The plan and framework should reflect the tolerances of the human body, prioritise safety performance above network efficiency and apply road/street design and enforcement strategies in support of safer speeds.
- » 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).
- » 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/State_Electric_Vehicle_Strategy_for_Western_Australia_0.pdf)

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