

Public Policy

2014



For the better

About the RAC

The RAC represents the interests of more than 800,000 Western Australians and is the leading advocate on the mobility issues and challenges facing our State. Drawing on our heritage, a key role for the RAC is to act as a voice for our members and as a strong public advocate on the mobility issues which affect Western Australia (WA).

Our economy and the quality of life Western Australians enjoy are inextricably linked to the performance of our transport system. Federal, State and Local Governments have a responsibility to ensure appropriate investments are made to maintain the quality, safety and efficiency of the transport network.

To ensure the broader mobility of Western Australians, sensible planning and investment in roads, public transport, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is required to keep our community connected.

The RAC collaborates with Government and other organisations to ensure safe, accessible and sustainable mobility options are available for our members and the community.

The RAC aligns its activities with the following three themes:

» **Safety** - A safe mobility system can be defined as a system that outperforms national and international safety benchmarks. It encompasses safer drivers in safer cars on safer roads.

» **Accessibility** - To have a cost efficient, convenient and reliable commuter network is an essential part of personal mobility.

» **Sustainability** - Sustainable mobility is broader than the environmental aspects of mobility: it encompasses the mobility needs of current and future generations.

As an integral part of the WA community for more than 100 years we continue to invest in the community through our sponsorship programs.



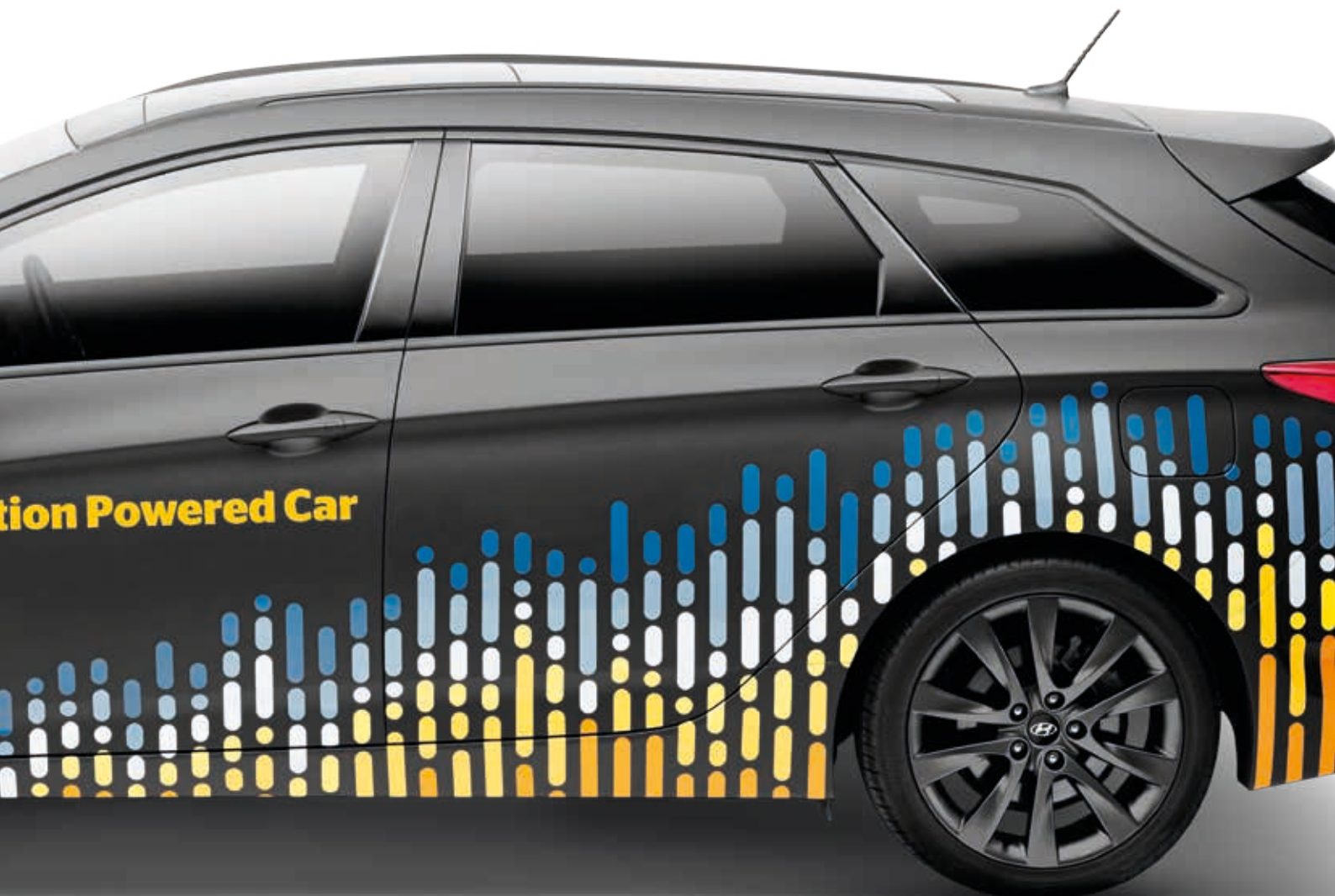
About our Public Policy

This document outlines the RAC's advocacy position under three key themes: Safe, Accessible, and Sustainable mobility.

The policies outlined in this document are approved by the RAC Council and form the basis of our efforts to deliver a better world of mobility to our members.

The RAC continues to advocate for Western Australians and their right to move around their community to do the things they need or wish to do.

The RAC is also a signatory to a number of policies published by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA).



Contents

1. Safe mobility	5	2. Accessible mobility	8
1.1 Safe road users	5	2.1 Cost of motoring	8
1.1.1 Education	5	2.1.1 Taxation/funding	8
1.1.2 Post-licence education	5	2.1.2 The user pays principle - road user charges	8
1.1.3 General education/community awareness	5	2.1.3 Fuel	8
1.2 Safe road use	5	2.1.4 Insurance	8
1.2.1 Alcohol	5	2.1.5 Right to repair	8
1.2.2 Drugs	5	2.1.6 Motorists as consumers	8
1.2.3 Licensing	6	2.1.7 Towing - right to choose	9
1.2.4 Older motorists and impaired motorists	6	2.2 Congestion	9
1.2.5 Inattention and distraction	6	2.2.1 Transport and land use planning	9
1.2.6 Enforcement	6	2.2.2 Road design	9
1.3 Safe vehicles	6	2.2.3 Intelligent Transport Systems	9
1.3.1 General	6	2.2.4 Public transport	9
1.3.2 Vehicle standards	6	2.2.5 Cycling/walking	9
1.3.3 New vehicles	6	2.2.6 Parking	9
1.3.4 Used vehicles	7	2.2.7 Demand management	9
1.3.5 Fleet and commercial vehicles	7	3. Sustainable mobility	10
1.3.6 Seatbelts/child restraints	7	3.1 Planning	10
1.4 Safe roads and roadsides	7	3.2 Vehicle emission standards	10
1.5 Safe speeds	7	3.3 Alternative vehicles/fuels	10
1.5.1 General	7	3.4 Eco-driving	10
1.5.2 Enforcement	7	3.5 Public transport	10
1.6 Safe public transport	7	3.6 Cycling/walking	10
		3.7 Areas of high conservation value	10

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1. Safe mobility

No matter how we choose to move around Western Australia, we should be safe in doing so. » No-one should be killed or injured on roads. We need to have safer drivers in safer cars on safer roads at safer speeds. » All road users have a responsibility to ensure our roads are safe for everyone. » The personal safety of commuters on public transport is also essential in encouraging greater use of buses and trains.

1.1 Safe road users

1.1.1 Education

Driver and road safety education should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

Primary school road safety education should focus on safe road use as pedestrians and cyclists. Secondary school education should focus on preparing young people to become responsible road users.

Secondary school education should focus on traffic safety and driver education as part of pre-licence preparation. This should include instruction in basic driving skills, driver behaviour, attitude development and the consequences of irresponsible road use.

Teachers should receive appropriate training to deliver road safety education.

1.1.2 Post-licence education

Those who are required to drive as part of their employment should be made aware of their responsibility to drive in a safe and legal manner. This should include instruction on fatigue, distraction, speed, and the effects of alcohol and/or drugs.

Where possible, additional practical training to employees who drive as part of their employment is encouraged.

Road users should be encouraged to undertake courses aimed at improving their awareness of safe road use.

Road users should be encouraged to undertake courses covering basic first aid procedures relevant to road crash events.

Courts specialising in traffic offences should have statutory powers to require post-licence education courses for offenders.

1.1.3 General education/community awareness

Government should fund community education campaigns which raise awareness of major road safety issues such as driver inattention and focus on the shared responsibility of road users.

Road safety campaigns should highlight the dangers faced by specific at-risk groups such as vulnerable road users and people in regional areas.

Governments should explore and implement measures which incentivise responsible road use, particularly for novice motorists.

1.2 Safe road use

1.2.1 Alcohol

Motorists who drive whilst impaired by alcohol place themselves and other road users at increased risk.

Such behaviour should be subject to rigorous enforcement and strong penalties to reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Penalties for drink driving should reinforce the message that such behaviour is unacceptable. The RAC supports the continued assessment of current strategies and encourages community discussion on these matters.

Government should adequately resource the WA Police to allow them to undertake continuous, high-profile drink driving enforcement campaigns.

WA Police should be resourced to test a minimum amount equal to 1.5 breath tests per licenced driver per year. WA Police should be resourced to conduct targeted enforcement campaigns to suit rural and regional settings.

The use of personal breath alcohol concentration testing devices should be discouraged.

Government should fund regular, high profile community awareness campaigns and school education programs about the dangers of drink driving.

Repeat offenders should face stronger penalties and be required to undertake counselling and/or education before being permitted to return to the roads.

The use of alcohol interlocks for drink driving offenders is supported with the cost preferably to be borne by the offender.

1.2.2 Drugs

Legal and illegal drugs can affect driving ability placing motorists and other road users at increased risk.

Driving whilst impaired by illegal substances should be subject to enforcement and strong penalties.

WA Police should be resourced to increase the volume and range of drug testing. Until a national consensus is developed on the number of tests per licensed driver per year, the WA testing rate should be no lower than the national average.

Government should fund regular, high profile community awareness campaigns and school education programs

about the dangers of driving whilst under the influence of drugs.

Repeat offenders should face stronger penalties and be required to undertake counselling and/or education before being permitted to return to the roads.

1.2.3 Licensing

All motorists have a legal obligation to hold a current licence to drive. The carrying of a driving licence should be compulsory. Motorists who drive without a valid driver's licence should be subject to penalties which reflect the seriousness of the offence.

The loss of driver's licence as a result of unpaid fines and infringements is supported as long as there are a range of options to repay fines and infringements.

The system for learner and novice motorists should be built around the principle of ensuring young people become responsible motorists.

A graduated licensing process including graduated demerit points for young motorists is supported.

The RAC recognises the importance of learner motorists undertaking supervised driving under a range of conditions and acknowledges that increased supervised hours in the learner phase reduces crash risk when a full licence is gained. The logbook system of supervised driving is supported but learner motorists and their parents should be encouraged and supported to go beyond the mandated minimum hours.

Driving school instructors should be required to undertake mandatory training to a minimum Certificate IV standard.

Extraordinary licences should only be issued in exceptional circumstances.

The owner of the vehicle should identify the driver of that vehicle at the time a traffic offence was detected by photographic evidence.

1.2.4 Older motorists and impaired motorists

The RAC recognises driving ability is not determined by the age of the motorist but the ability of the motorist to drive in a manner which does not place themselves and other road users at increased risk.

It is acknowledged the physical and cognitive abilities required for safe driving decline with age but the rate of decline varies from person to person.

The criteria for assessing a person's ability to drive should be determined by their physical and cognitive ability.

Persons with a medical condition or disability which could affect their ability to drive should be required to advise the appropriate authorities of this condition. Medical practitioners should ensure where a patient has developed a condition which would preclude them from driving the appropriate authorities are informed.

Older and impaired motorists should be supported in their efforts to maintain their driver's licence as it underpins their personal mobility and access to health, social and community opportunities.

Governments should take an active role in supporting the older community to continue having an active and independent lifestyle particularly if driving ceases to be an option.

1.2.5 Inattention and distraction

Inattention, be it deliberate or unintended, is a significant contributor to road trauma and the number of deaths and serious injuries is comparable to speeding and drink driving.

Road users can be distracted when using in-car technology, mobile phones or hand-held electronic devices. All road users should act to minimise any in-vehicle distraction and obey laws relating to the use of hand-held mobile phones.

Penalties for the use of devices which cause driver inattention and distraction should be reviewed regularly and updated accordingly.

Emerging technologies which can compensate for inattention and distraction, such as autonomous braking, should be progressively introduced. Vehicle manufacturers and after-market equipment suppliers should consider the road safety implications when designing and placing new technology which could potentially distract motorists.

1.2.6 Enforcement

Enforcement of the *Road Traffic Act 1974* and other related legislation contribute to making the road network safer.

Double demerit point periods targeting holiday periods of high traffic volume and associated increased road trauma are supported. Such periods should be actively communicated in advance.

The list of double-demerit offences should be regularly reviewed.

1.3 Safe vehicles

1.3.1 General

All vehicles, whether new or old, should meet certain standards if they are to be driven on Western Australian roads for the safety of all Western Australian road users.

Advancements in vehicle safety technologies which help avoid crashes or reduce the severity of crashes will help reduce road trauma and congestion.

1.3.2 Vehicle standards

Australia's vehicle safety standards are outlined in the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) and apply to all new vehicles. These standards should reflect a reasonable level of vehicle safety in line with the availability of affordable vehicle safety technologies and expectations from consumers.

ADRs should be regularly reviewed and the performance requirements updated in the context of vehicle safety and emissions research and industry developments.

1.3.3 New vehicles

The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) tests the safety features of new vehicles. Governments should fund ANCAP to assess the safety features of new vehicle models coming onto the Australian market.

No new vehicle should be allowed to be introduced to the Australian market unless it has undergone testing by ANCAP or a comparable international testing regime.

It should be mandatory for all vehicles tested by ANCAP to display their ANCAP star rating at the point of sale. The RAC supports the mandatory display of ANCAP star ratings in associated promotional material.

Motorists should be encouraged to purchase vehicles with a 5-star ANCAP safety rating.

As a minimum, all new passenger vehicles on sale in the Australian market should have ABS, ESC and front airbags and head-protecting side airbags as mandatory safety features. Seatbelt reminders for all seating positions should be standard. Rear view cameras should be progressively introduced for all passenger vehicles. These requirements should be actively reviewed and upgraded as new safety features are introduced.

1.3.4 Used vehicles

Used cars should undergo an independent vehicle inspection when there is a change of ownership.

When purchasing a used vehicle, buyers should be encouraged to purchase vehicles with a minimum 4-star Used Car Safety Rating.

Commercially imported late-model vehicles must meet Australia's standards for safety and emissions.

1.3.5 Fleet and commercial vehicles

Governments should help accelerate the introduction of safer vehicles in the passenger fleet by continuing to require all government fleet purchases of passenger and light commercial vehicles to have an ANCAP rating of 5 stars.

Industry should be encouraged to implement fleet policies which require that all passenger and light commercial vehicles are 5-star ANCAP rated.

Professional driving instruction should be provided only in vehicles with a minimum four-star ANCAP safety rating.

1.3.6 Seatbelts/child restraints

All vehicle occupants must wear an appropriately fitted seatbelt and all children under the age of seven must be restrained in an appropriate child restraint device. Penalties for failing to comply with this requirement should reflect the seriousness of the offence and the heightened road safety risk.

Government should promote the importance of proper use of seatbelts and child restraints through regular community awareness campaigns and the provision and promotion of child restraint fitting and checking services.

1.4 Safe roads and roadsides

Safety for all road users must be a core element of all road design. Roadside design must provide adequate protection for vulnerable road users.

All levels of government should invest and commit to long term programs to raise safety standards across the road network with funding guaranteed for the life of the program.

Road maintenance must be timely and be of the required standard to maintain the safety standards of roads.

The risk or severity of a crash can increase if obstacles such as poles, trees, embankments, and ditches are in areas adjacent to the roadway. Preventative or mitigation measures should be implemented in areas where there is a record of road crashes or in high risk areas.

1.5 Safe speeds

1.5.1 General

The setting of speed limits should be transparent and consistent with road safety outcomes. Speed zones should be clearly signed at regular intervals.

Motorists should be able to understand why speeds have been set for different road types and situations which, in turn, will help them drive to the conditions. Efforts should be made to avoid frequent changes in speed zones.

Targeted reductions of speed limits are supported for urban areas of high pedestrian/bicycle activity or for roads with a known road safety problem.

The temporary reduction of speed limits for roads with an identified road safety problem is supported but should not be used as a long term alternative to resolving the specific problem by way of remedial works.

A speed limit of 50km/h in residential areas is supported.

A speed limit of 40km/h for roads around schools is supported.

1.5.2 Enforcement

Fines and demerit point penalties for speeding offences should reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Speed limits should be rigorously enforced to ensure compliance and the safety of all road users.

Speed enforcement requires a range of strategies including fixed and mobile, overt and covert, as well as dual red light-speed cameras and point to point technology.

Speed cameras should only be placed in areas with an identified road safety problem, high pedestrian activity or a history of speeding behaviour. Cameras should not be positioned to maximise revenue.

Penalties for speed offences up to 9km/h should include one demerit point.

Signs should be placed after the speed cameras to alert motorists to modify their behaviour including dual red light speed cameras.

Motorists who exceed the speed limit should receive notification of the offence in a timely manner.

All revenue from speed and red light cameras infringements should be re-invested into road safety.

The sale and use of radar detectors should be banned with sufficient penalties in place to discourage their use.

Overtaking on double lines and the use of mobile phones while driving should be included on the list of double-demerit point offences.

1.6 Safe public transport

The safety of commuters using the public transport system is paramount. Perceptions of a lack of public safety also restrain many commuters from using the system. Improving the public safety of the public transport system must be a priority for government.

2. Accessible mobility

Western Australians need to be able to move efficiently around their community. » We need to ensure our road network and public transport system can meet the increasing demands of a growing population. » To have a cost-efficient, convenient and reliable commuter network is an essential part of personal mobility. » A core element of accessible mobility is to ensure that the cost of motoring does not become prohibitively expensive for Western Australians. » An efficient and reliable transport network is required to support economic growth of the State.

2.1 Cost of motoring

2.1.1 Taxation/funding

All levels of government share the responsibility to provide a safe, well-designed, well-maintained and efficient road network.

Revenue raised from motorists through tariffs, stamp duties, registrations, licence fees, fuel excise, GST and the like should be reinvested in improving the safety and efficiency of the road network. Such investments should include public transport projects.

The allocation of Federal funds to Western Australia should recognise the unique challenges faced in building and maintaining the road network in this State due to the large land mass and dispersed population.

2.1.2 The user pays principle - road user charges

Governments should work toward the development of a road user charge to replace the existing revenue raising fees and charges. A road user charge should reflect the cost of road use, including road maintenance costs, impact on the environment and congestion. A road user charge should only be implemented as a part of genuine reform of taxation on motorists.

Congestion charges and/or toll roads should only be considered as part of a broader reform of taxation on motorists and should not be imposed on top of the existing fuel excise charges. A rigorous cost-benefit analysis of the social and economic impact of any congestion charge/toll road should be undertaken before such a charge is considered.

Federal fuel excise should be reformed as part of the broader reform of taxation on motorists.

2.1.3 Fuel

A free and open competitive market for petroleum products best serves the interests of consumers.

Governments should monitor the industry and relevant markets to protect the interest of consumers and guard against anti-competitive behaviour.

Legislation and policy should be directed towards ensuring that all sections of the industry (refining, wholesaling, distribution and retailing) operate in a transparent and competitive manner.

The State government should continue to provide the FuelWatch scheme to monitor prices and empower consumers to make the best choice on when and where to purchase fuel. FuelWatch should also be resourced to provide detailed research on petrol pricing behaviour over longer periods of time on a more regular basis.

The State government should monitor excessive differences between metro and regional prices with a view to eliminating superficial fluctuations.

All retailing establishments should, as a minimum, clearly indicate the retail prices of ULP, Diesel and LPG sold at the site, not inclusive of any discount. Displaying discounted prices in addition to this minimum is at the discretion of the retailer but a discounted price should not be displayed in a manner which would make a reasonable motorist believe it was the standard price.

Misfuelling can damage vehicles and cause motorists to incur repair costs. Different fuel types should be clearly labelled and consistently colour coded on the bowsers across all fuel brands.

2.1.4 Insurance

Government should provide a compulsory third party insurance scheme. A portion of any profit derived by the scheme should be directed toward road safety initiatives.

Vehicle owners should be encouraged to insure themselves against liability for damage to third party property.

2.1.5 Right to repair

Consumers have the right to choose where to have their vehicle serviced or repaired.

Tools and information required to fully service and repair modern vehicles should be made available by manufacturers to the market at a reasonable price. Failure to do so on a voluntary basis should prompt governments to legislate to protect the rights of motorists.

2.1.6 Motorists as consumers

The rights of motorists as consumers should be protected by appropriate legislation.

All motor vehicle dealers and repairers should be licenced by an appropriate authority.

Manufacturers, importers and retailers of motoring products should be required to ensure that their products meet the claims made for them. These claims should be supported by product testing carried out to appropriate Australian standards.

2.1.7 Towing - right to choose

All motorists should have the right to choose a towing company in the event of a crash or breakdown, except where the vehicle is required for evidentiary purposes by the WA Police or where the driver is incapable of making an informed choice.

Motorists should have the right to choose where their vehicle is towed to.

2.2 Congestion

There is no single solution to fix congestion and in seeking to reduce congestion, a suite of options should be employed.

Measures to improve the efficiency and capacity of the public transport system and the bicycle network should be progressed as a priority.

Continued investment in our road network is essential, particularly in maximising the efficiency of existing infrastructure.

A cost-benefit analysis of these options should be conducted before determining the preferred investment.

2.2.1 Transport and land use planning

Planning undertaken by all levels of Government should recognise the critical link between land use and transport activities.

Planning should ensure the integration of all modes of transport and land use to ensure the mobility of the community and to minimise the environmental impacts of mobility.

Urban planning should improve or enhance access within the community whether it is to employment, leisure, social and health and recreation opportunities by providing transport facilities which cater for both private and public transport.

The use of mixed-use residential and commercial land developments around activity centres and public transport hubs should be encouraged to manage travel demand on routes to and from the city.

The concept of developing new communities which rely less on motor vehicle transport to access these activities is supported.

Strategies such as decentralising employment, to reduce the extent people need to travel for work purposes are supported.

2.2.2 Road design

All new roads should be built to a 5-star AusRAP safety standard.

All existing major regional routes should be upgraded to a minimum 4-star AusRAP safety standard.

Road planning and design should take into account the needs of all road users including cyclists and pedestrians.

Road design must be context sensitive and consider all road users, the street environment and adjacent land use.

Design standards should be regularly updated to reflect the outcomes of new research and technology.

2.2.3 Intelligent Transport Systems

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are a broad range of information and communications technologies that improve safety, efficiency and performance of the transport system.

ITS should be integrated into the state highway, vehicles and public transport network to help reduce congestion, improve mobility, save lives and optimise the value of existing infrastructure.

2.2.4 Public transport

The public transport system should be efficient, reliable and affordable.

Sustained and widespread investment in improving the quality and reach of the public transport system is required.

A multi-tier public transport system should be provided comprising city-shaping infrastructure such as heavy rail, light rail and bus rapid transit as well as local bus priority measures.

Governments should invest in improving the frequency and reliability of station feeder services to help reduce the demand for railway station parking. These services should be actively promoted as an alternative to driving to rail stations.

The use of multistorey car parks for the purpose of park and ride public transport services should only be supported where a business case demonstrates value for money.

Appropriate universal access throughout the public transport system should be provided.

2.2.5 Cycling/walking

Cyclists and pedestrians are vulnerable road users.

For more people to choose cycling as a safe and viable transport option, accelerated investment in infrastructure and education programs that facilitate safer cycling is vital.

The provision of secure end-of-trip facilities for cyclists at public transport hubs and at activity and employment centres is an important step to encouraging alternative mobility options.

The State Government should fund public awareness and education campaigns on sharing the road to highlight pedestrian and cycling safety.

2.2.6 Parking

Parking strategies should provide an appropriate balance between off-street and on-street parking and should encourage off-street parking on roads with high traffic volumes.

Parking should be managed to provide short term access for the community to services and local amenities.

Revenue from government taxes placed on parking spaces and revenue raised from parking charges should be re-invested in providing additional public transport, cycling or walking improvements.

Parking restriction signs should be clearly visible and comprehensible.

Owners of vehicles parked in contravention of signed parking restrictions may be penalised by an appropriate authority but such penalties should not be excessive or inconsistent with comparable penalties for traffic offences.

2.2.7 Demand management

Managing the demand on the transport network at peak times is a way to alleviate congestion.

The Government should provide additional funding to expand programs which evaluate existing programs to make the existing infrastructure more effective and more efficient.

3. Sustainable mobility

The mobility choices we make today should not impact negatively on the lifestyle and choices of future generations.

» As we move around our community, we need to ensure we minimise our impact on the environment. » We also need to manage our fuel sources wisely and develop cleaner, more sustainable fuel and vehicle alternatives.

» Human activity is having a considerable impact on the planet's climate system. It is necessary to have an integrated strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles. » Planning practices should complement not undermine these efforts.

3.1 Planning

The development of new and existing urban areas should be planned to effectively integrate roads, public and active transport and land use to help minimise the impact of mobility on the environment.

Improvements to the management of traffic have the potential to deliver significant reductions in vehicle emissions.

3.2 Vehicle emission standards

Australian vehicle fleet emission standards should be progressively improved with the goal to be equivalent to world's best practice. Measures to reduce motor vehicle carbon dioxide emissions should be introduced.

A system of mandatory annual checks of vehicle emissions should only be introduced if it can be substantiated that the environmental benefits justify the costs involved in establishing and running the scheme.

3.3 Alternative vehicles/fuels

The finite nature of the world's crude oil reserves requires current vehicle technology to be improved in order to maximise energy efficiency and reduce the consumption of petroleum.

Government should have a plan for the development of alternative fuel sources.

The fuel consumption target for new light vehicles should be progressively improved in line with or ahead of European standards and should be broadened to include four wheel drive and light commercial vehicles. The use of alternative fuels should be encouraged where this is sustainable, practical and reasonably affordable.

The uptake of new fuel sources should not be achieved through mandatory measures on motorists.

Motorists should be incentivised to take up alternative fuels and vehicles. Government should plan for and support the provision of the infrastructure required to service alternative vehicle technologies including the expansion of public Electric Vehicle charging stations.

3.4 Eco-driving

Eco-driving initiatives have the potential to lower CO₂ emissions in a cost effective manner. Motorists should be encouraged to reduce vehicle emissions through the uptake of eco-driving principles.

Government should fund public education and awareness campaigns to promote eco-driving principles.

Government should support research to identify the savings to motorists through eco-driving.

3.5 Public transport

The public transport fleet should aim to use environmentally efficient energy sources.

Investments in public transport should reflect the potential environmental benefits from reduced vehicle emissions. These environmental benefits should be captured as part of the cost-benefit analysis behind public transport investment decisions.

3.6 Cycling/walking

The uptake of cycling and walking as alternatives to private vehicles and public transport should be encouraged.

Planning decisions should incorporate the needs of cyclists and pedestrians and infrastructure should be provided to not only ensure their safety but also to increase the attractiveness of cycling and walking as a mobility option.

3.7 Areas of high conservation value

Motorists should be allowed access to areas of environmental significance consistent with the conservation values of the area.

Motorists accessing such areas should be educated and encouraged to conserve and protect the natural, cultural and heritage features of these areas.



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For further info on this policy
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