

State Budget Submission 2014-2015



About RAC

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 WA. 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.

We offer motoring services and advice, insurance, travel services, finance, driver training and exclusive benefits for our members and as an integral part of the WA community for more than 100 years we continue to give back to our members and the wider community through our sponsorship programs. The RAC supports several major sponsorship programs including the RAC Rescue helicopter, the annual Perth Christmas Pageant and the Australia Day Council of WA as well as a number of grass roots community projects.



State Budget Submission 2014-2015

Executive Summary	2
Safe	3
1 Renewed commitment to road safety	3
2 Investment in our regional roads	4
3 Making our cars safer	4
4 Sharing our Roads	4
4.1 With Heavy Vehicles	4
4.2 With Motorcycle and Scooters	4
4.3 With Cyclists	4
Accessible	5
5 The cost of motoring	5
6 Reducing the cost of congestion - road, public transport and cycling infrastructure	5
6.1 A better and smarter road network	5
6.2 A better public transport network	5
6.3 A better cycle network	7
7 Delivering a robust transport system	7
Sustainable	8
8 Cars and the Environment	8

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Executive Summary

We face an enormous challenge in delivering the infrastructure and services we need to keep Western Australians moving in a safe, efficient and sustainable way around our communities, cities and towns, and our State.

The 2014-2015 Budget is an opportunity for the State Government to signal its commitment to the essential programs and projects which will help keep road users safe and meet the increasing demands being placed on our road and public transport system.

It has been widely reported that the State is operating in an increasingly constrained fiscal environment which in 2013, culminated in the downgrading of Western Australia's AAA credit rating. However, according to the quarterly State of the State report released by CommSec in early 2014, "*Western Australia remains the top-performing economy in the nation.*"

In this context, it is evident that to meet the challenges ahead, and to offset the escalating economic and social costs brought on by road trauma and congestion, we must step-up rather than scale back our investment in infrastructure and initiatives.

The RAC considers the key priorities for the 2014/15 State budget to be:

- > A renewed commitment to reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads;
- > Sustained and wide spread investment in the public transport network;
- > The accelerated delivery of safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists;
- > Investment in road projects to maximise the capacity of the existing network;
- > A commitment to keep the cost of motoring down.



Safe

1. Renewed commitment to road safety

In 2013 Western Australia's road fatality rate was still higher than the national rate. On average Western Australia recorded one road death nearly every two days. Now is not the time to be complacent in our response to road trauma. Historically Western Australia has been one of the worst performing States. Based on 2013 figures, 33 additional lives would need to be saved each year for Western Australia to come into line with the 2013 national rate.

As a State, we need to ensure we do everything we can to help continue to bring Western Australia's road fatality rate down. There must be a renewed commitment to reducing the number of Western Australians killed and seriously injured on our roads.

The RAC calls on the Government to:

- > Allocate all Road Trauma Trust Account (RTTA) funds each financial year to road safety projects in line with the Road Safety Council Act 2002 and community expectations;
- > Release a complete list of RTTA funded commitments to increase transparency and accountability;
- > Guarantee the RTTA will be administered and evaluated to directly align with "Towards Zero", Western Australia's road safety strategy;
- > Increase the number of random breath tests to meet the best practice benchmarks of one test per driver per year;
- > Increase the number of hours allocated to traffic duties by WA Police;
- > Publish the number of hours spent on traffic enforcement on a quarterly basis;
- > Fund a 'Share the Road' campaign to increase awareness of vulnerable road users; and
- > Increase on-road protection for emergency service, road-side and breakdown response workers.

2. Investment in our regional roads

In 2013, 45 per cent all fatalities in Western Australia occurred on regional roads. This is despite only 22 per cent of the population living in regional Western Australia.

In 2009 the Western Australian Auditor General identified that the State was facing an \$800 million maintenance backlog and it is widely recognised that across the State, the condition of the regional road network is in decline. Narrow seal, poor surface condition and hazardous roadsides are common complaints from regional road users.

While these challenges cannot be resolved within the scope of one budget, the Government must signal its commitment to embark on a major long-term effort to maintain and improve the regional road network.

The RAC calls on the Government to:

- > Fund a rolling program of Road Safety Audits so that every major regional road is audited at least every five years;
- > Reverse the decision by the State Government to cap the level of road funding provided to local governments;
- > Address the road maintenance backlog; and
- > Continue and expand investment from the State's Royalties to Regions to fund regional road improvements.



3. Making our cars safer

The RAC supports the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) and the Used Car Safety Ratings program. ANCAP is an independent vehicle safety advocate which crash tests and rates new vehicles to provide consumers with transparent advice on vehicle safety. According to ANCAP vehicle occupants have twice the chance of being killed or seriously injured in a vehicle rated 1 star compared to a 5 star rated vehicle.

By supporting ANCAP, the RAC encourages vehicle manufacturers to incorporate safety features into new car design and educates consumers to prioritise safety when they are purchasing a new car.

To demonstrate our own commitment to vehicle safety, the RAC will not insure or finance any 2012 and beyond manufactured vehicles which have been rated by ANCAP and don't achieve safety ratings of 4 or 5 stars.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Introduce the mandatory display of ANCAP vehicle safety ratings at the point of sale; and
- > Identify and fund initiatives that will encourage businesses to purchase five-star rated passenger vehicles for their vehicle fleets.

4. Sharing our Roads

4.1 With Heavy Vehicles

Heavy vehicles are an important part of the Western Australian economy. As the State's economy and population grows so does the necessity to move freight. In Western Australia, economic and population growth has generated additional freight faster than the rate at which the transport infrastructure required to shift it has developed.

The mix of heavy and light vehicles on major metropolitan arterial, as well as regional, roads is a concern. In the 12 months ending June 2013, there were six fatalities in crashes involving articulated trucks in Western Australia, 13 fatalities involving heavy rigid trucks and one fatality involving a bus¹.

Driver fatigue is an area of particular concern and providing adequate road side amenity and rest stops for truck drivers, for whom driving long distances is an imperative, is vital.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Provide funding for additional truck driver stops and road side amenities.

4.2 With Motorcycle and Scooters

Between 2008 and 2013, Western Australia recorded a 47.8 per cent increase in motorcycle registrations. This was the highest rate of increase in Australia². Overall, motorcycles make up 5.5 per cent of licensed motorised vehicles, yet in 2013 they accounted for 15 per cent of the States fatalities. In the metropolitan area 20 per cent of fatalities were motorcycle related.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Ring-fence black-spot funding for road safety treatments targeted at improving motorcycle safety; and
- > Fund public awareness and education campaigns on motorcycle and scooter safety.

4.3 With Cyclists

According to the 2013 Austroads National Cycling Participation Survey, 405,000 Western Australians ride a bike each week. Cyclists remain a highly vulnerable road user group and for cycling to remain a safe and viable option, accelerated investment in infrastructure and behavioural programs that facilitate safer cycling is vital.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Fund public awareness and education campaigns on sharing the road to highlight cycling safety; and
- > Increase funding to expand active transport initiatives at the Department of Transport.

Improvements to cycling infrastructure are also critical to improve cycling safety (refer to section 6.3 *A Better Cycling Network*).

¹BITRE, April-June 2013

²ABS 93090 - Motor Vehicle Census, Australia, 31 Jan 2013

Accessible

5. The cost of motoring

In addition to other transport modes, motoring is and will remain integral to the mobility of Western Australians and, not surprisingly, the cost of motoring is a 'high priority' issue for RAC members. Increases in the cost of motoring add pressure to household budgets which are already under strain from the high cost of living brought on by Western Australia's poor housing affordability.

From July 1, 2013, motor vehicle registration and drivers licence fees increased by 5 per cent and compulsory third party vehicle insurance has increased by 4.1 per cent since January 1, 2014.

Between 2008 and 2013, Western Australia recorded a 14 per cent increase in registered passenger vehicles³. In 2012, the RAC forecast that there would be an additional one million vehicles in Western Australia by 2020. In this context, the total State Government revenue received from vehicle registration and licence fees will continue to rise.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Cap any increase to passenger vehicle registration, licence and compulsory third party (CTP) fees to the rate of inflation; and
- > Guarantee that in moving to a 'no fault' scheme, any increases in the cost of CTP will be independently validated.

6. Reducing the cost of congestion - road, public transport and cycling infrastructure

It has been forecast that congestion will cost the Western Australian economy \$2.1 billion by the 2020. Congestion is harming the State's productivity and profitability, and is taking a toll on commuters and families.

In 2013, a survey of nearly 700 RAC members on the impact of congestion revealed that most respondents reported a loss of family time, increased stress and lower productivity at work. Similarly, in 2013, the second survey of more than 400 businesses by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA) and RAC revealed 83 per cent of respondents believe traffic congestion is having a negative impact on their operations.

It is clear that there is no single solution to fix congestion and that a suite of measures will be needed - sustained and widespread investment in public transport, better cycling infrastructure, continued investment in our road network and the evolution of a more compact, consolidated and connected city.

³Source: ABS 93090 - Motor Vehicle Census, Australia, 31 Jan 2013

6.1. A better and smarter road network

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Perth's population will overtake Brisbane just before 2030. In addition it is estimated that at least 3.9 million, or a maximum of 5.4 million people, could call Perth home by 2050.

Our road network will always be critical to facilitating mobility in the State. However, the reality is that the road network alone cannot accommodate the demand being placed on it. It is well understood that the necessary expansion of the road network must be balanced against the need to make better use of the infrastructure we already have.

To reduce congestion and road crashes, and to improve fuel efficiency, more needs to be done to better utilise new and emerging technology solutions in concert with better coordinated traffic management and road works planning.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Provide funding to enable Managed Motorways principals and technologies to be trialled in Western Australia;
- > Increase funding to better resource traffic signal operations, including funding to expand traffic modelling capacity;
- > Continue the successful upgrade of the Great Eastern Highway as far as the Great Eastern Highway Bypass;
- > Construct the Reid Highway grade separation at Malaga Drive; and
- > Construct the Mitchell Freeway extension north of Burns Beach Road.

Improvements to regional roads are also critical (refer Section 2 *Investment in regional roads*).

6.2. A better public transport network

Good cities need effective public transport. It allows people to interact, to work, to study and to play, all of which directly impact on health and wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

By 2031 Perth's public transport system will be required to carry more than twice as many people as it does now. However, there is a significant gap between the community's growing appetite for public transport and the capacity of the existing funding approaches to deliver this infrastructure.

Increasing Employment Self-Sufficiency - or locating jobs near to where people live - is identified in *Directions 2031*, the State Governments spatial framework and strategic plan, as a key strategy to reduce the distance people need to travel. However, a recent report by the RAC highlighted

that a lack of rapid transport connections to activity centres is acting as a major barrier to the decentralisation of workplaces.

Investment in public transport has been demonstrated to create jobs, and training and business opportunities for companies of all sizes, in all types of sectors. The expansion of public transport connects people and puts workers within easier reach of new or existing labour markets; the pressure on existing road and rail networks is relieved and the associated near-station regeneration has the potential to leave a legacy of economic sustainability.

Light Rail

The State Government's Public Transport Plan described the MAX light rail as 'transformational' and the RAC believes that city-shaping infrastructure projects like MAX are critical for the future of Perth. Given the long lead-in and delivery time for major public transport projects the decisions we make now are crucial.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Reinstate the \$2b MAX light rail project in the forward estimates.

Heavy Rail

The only heavy rail line expansions planned by the State Government before 2021 are the Airport Rail Link and a 7.5km extension of the Joondalup Line to Butler. Heavy rail is an integral component of the public transport system and expansion of the network is vital.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Guarantee funding and timeframes for the \$1.9b Airport Rail link;
- > Allocate funding to the Thornlie Line extension to Cockburn Central via Canning Vale;
- > Fund a program to upgrade the accessibility, amenity and security at existing train stations;
- > Purchase new rolling stock to enable trains to move longer trains at closer headways; and
- > Allocate funding to extend the Joondalup Line to Yanchep.

Bus

In the urban areas, bus services connect local centres and perform an important feeder service function to the rail network. On another level, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has the potential to meet the growing demand for high-frequency, high-capacity public transport services particularly as suburban activity centres, beyond the CBD, develop.

In regional Western Australia there are fewer public transport options and a greater range of services is required. In a recent survey of more than 300 RAC members in the cities of Albany, Bunbury and Greater Geraldton, 44 per cent of respondents were unable to comment on their satisfaction with public transport services because they do not or have never used them.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Develop and fund a BRT program, focusing on major activity centres as a priority;
- > Continue development of the real-time app to communicate bus arrival information for Perth buses using the existing GPS technology;
- > Develop a bus priority plan to define a network of bus lanes and other facilities; and
- > Investigate and implement new funding models that will support the introduction of services in regional centres.

Demand Management

Making the State's existing infrastructure work harder and smarter is one of the ways to alleviate congestion. Meeting the demand being placed on the network at peak times is difficult and influencing when and how people use our transport network is becoming an increasingly important strategy.

In 2011, an evaluation of the State Government's Workplace TravelSmart Program, of which the RAC is a participant, for the last five years demonstrated:

- > An average 5 per cent reduction in single occupancy car travel for commuting to participating workplaces; and
- > A \$4.50 return in community benefits for each \$1 spent, with net annual benefits of \$2.4m.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Provide additional funding to expand the TravelSmart programs.

6.3. A better cycle network

Given the growing cycling participation rates in Western Australia it is vital cycling infrastructure is improved. Increasing cycling participation has wide-ranging benefits across many Government sectors including health and, of course, transport.

Cycling is undergoing a resurgence in Western Australia. Fixed counters on Perth's Principal Shared Paths show that in 2012/13 the 4 million trips were made - up almost 30 per cent since 2010/11. Now is the time to cater for and capitalise on this demand.

The RAC Cycling Business Case, released in 2012, highlighted that up to \$388 million was needed over 10 years to bring the network up to a standard.

The RAC calls on the State government to:

- > Fund and deliver an audit of on-road cycle routes;
- > Develop WA-specific network planning and design guidelines for bicycle networks;
- > Plan a network of new green mode bridges (public transport, cycle and pedestrian); and
- > Advance completion of the remaining planned, but unconstructed, high standard dual use paths (Principal Shared Paths).

7. Delivering a robust transport system

In previous submissions, the RAC welcomed the release of a number of draft strategic transport plans. However, the Public Transport Plan has remained in draft since 2011, and the Moving People Network Plan is yet to be released, despite its development in 2011, and the RAC has become increasingly alarmed that the plans are yet to be finalised. Without these plans, industries and sectors in Western Australia cannot align to deliver the robust transport system it so desperately needs. Greater strategic direction is needed to give clarity to all agencies involved in planning the State's spatial development and transport networks.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Finalise, fund and release all promised transport plans and strategies.



Sustainable

8. Cars and the Environment

Mobility choices that Western Australians make today should not negatively impact upon the lifestyle and choices of future generations. Our members have indicated they are concerned about the impact of their vehicle on the environment.

The RAC launched the Less Emissions Mission in 2012 to encourage members to reduce their carbon footprint by rewarding those with qualifying lower carbon dioxide emissions vehicles.

The RAC believes that eco-driving initiatives have the potential to lower emissions in a cost effective manner.

An integrated strategy is necessary to reduce CO₂ emissions. Part of the solution is supporting initiatives targeting driving behaviours, vehicle purchasing decisions, reducing congestion and promoting public and active transport options and alternative fuels.

The RAC calls on the State Government to:

- > Expand the rollout of eco-driving programs such as CleanRun EcoDrive;
- > Consider partnerships to highlight the environmental importance and economic benefits of eco-driving;
- > Investigate ways to encourage businesses to adopt low emissions vehicles;
- > Expand public electric vehicle recharging facilities, through rebates or subsidies for businesses installing community facilities;
- > Develop a more detailed transport energy plan for alternative fuels outlining the role of government; and
- > Investigate opportunities for universities and business to partner for research and to foster innovations for cleaner transportation options that reduce net carbon footprint.





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