

# **RAC submission to the Joint Select Committee Inquiry into Road Safety in Australia**

January 2020



# About RAC

RAC is a voice for more than 1.1 million members across more than 60 per cent of Western Australian households and speaks out on the road safety, transport, land use and air quality challenges facing Western Australia (WA). 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 deliver safe, easier and more sustainable transport to better connect Western Australians and their communities now and in the future. RAC is an active participant on the WA Road Safety Council, as the representative of all road users.



## RAC submission to the Inquiry into Road Safety in Australia

In this moment, our nation has an exceptional opportunity to reshape the next decade in terms of the lives lost and serious injuries needlessly occurring on Australian roads. This inquiry must not only identify impactful recommendations but, most importantly, lead to urgent action by all levels of government to drive a significant reduction in road trauma and the devastating impact it has on our communities, as well as the nation's economy.

Preventable road trauma has a devastating impact on communities and is, unacceptably, the second most common reason for injury-related hospital admissions in Australia (first in WA)<sup>1</sup>. Apart from the immeasurable personal and social impacts, the financial cost of road trauma to the nation's economy was estimated to be \$33 billion in 2016<sup>2</sup>. Sadly, the nation, its governments and many of its communities have become desensitised to these impacts.

WA, once a leader, has one of the poorest road safety performances of all Australian States. Just aiming for the Australian average would save 42 lives each year, and if WA were to match Victoria's record in 2018, 66 lives could be saved annually.

Sadly, by the end of the current State *Towards Zero* strategy period (2008-2020), the Road Safety Commission forecasts WA will have fallen short of achieving the target of a 40 per cent reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on WA roads by 2020, meaning an additional 283 people will have been killed or seriously injured; their own and their loved ones lives irrevocably changed forever. Similarly, progress reports by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) demonstrate that **almost all our nation's States and Territories are not on track to meet the majority of 30 per cent reduction targets** set within the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020* (NRSS).

In recent years our road safety progress has stalled<sup>3</sup>. Every day people are dying as a result of political inaction and it is essential all levels of government do better and more to tackle the unforgivably high number of people being killed and seriously injured on our roads. It is unclear why, and unacceptable that, following the *2015 Senate Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia* and then recent *2018 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy* (the 2018 Inquiry) and *2019 Review into National Road Safety Governance Arrangements* (the Governance Review), there has been limited action against the recommendations agreed to by government and yet another inquiry is underway.

The Committee is not due to report its findings from the current inquiry until July 2020, and the new National road safety strategy will not be released for some time after. There is a real risk that impactful action could be years away and, in the meantime, thousands of preventable deaths and serious injuries will occur on our roads. All levels of government need to do more, today.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). *Trends in hospitalised injury, Australia 2007-08 to 2016-17*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/6cef34e22422-4f11-a9f3-06e336edac3f/aihw-injcat-204.pdf?inline=true>.

<sup>2</sup> 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>.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Automobile Association. (2019). *Benchmarking the performance of the national road safety strategy*. Retrieved from: [https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AAA-Benchmarking-Report\\_Q1-2019.pdf](https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AAA-Benchmarking-Report_Q1-2019.pdf).

## Feedback on the Inquiry's terms of reference

- » **The impact of road trauma on the nation, including the importance of achieving zero deaths and serious injuries in remote and regional areas.**
- » **Measures to ensure State, Territory and local government road infrastructure investment incorporates the Safe System principles.**

Each year across Australia more than 1,200 people are killed and at least 36,000 are hospitalised on our roads<sup>4</sup>. Apart from the immeasurable personal and social impacts, the financial cost of road trauma to the nation's economy was estimated to be approximately two per cent of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (or \$33.16 billion) in 2016<sup>5</sup>. For WA this has been estimated to be \$900 million per annum<sup>6</sup>, although it could be closer to \$2 billion per annum<sup>7</sup>.

Regional road safety presents a significant challenge for Australia, with almost two thirds of road fatalities occurring in regional and remote areas<sup>8</sup>. In WA in 2019 alone, almost 60 per cent of all road fatalities occurred on regional roads, despite only around 20 per cent of the population living in regional WA.

In recognition of the National significance of the problem, Infrastructure Australia has identified "regional road network safety improvements" as a "High Priority Initiative" in the Infrastructure Priority List<sup>9</sup>. While little detail is provided and except for in New South Wales, proponents and programs are "to be identified", the proposed initiative recognises the need to "continue identifying, assessing and prioritising high-risk sections of regional roads across Australia" which "could be addressed through targeted infrastructure improvements".

Effective low-cost safety treatments such as sealing shoulders, installing audible edgelines, medians and/or centre-lines are critical to reduce regional road trauma on a larger scale. The Governance Review noted: "expenditure on retrofitting low-cost, high-return environment measures to reduce the severity and frequency of crashes on existing road infrastructure is a priority to reduce National road trauma"<sup>10</sup>. Existing and previous programs (e.g. Blackspot and Regional Run-Off Road Crashes programs) have funded such treatments for priority sections of the network however for a larger reduction in trauma, these treatments need to be applied on a far greater scale than they are currently.

In August 2019, the WA State Government announced it had determined a significant opportunity to reduce regional KSI by an unprecedented 60 per cent (saving more than 2,100 KSI crashes) through a \$900 million package of low-cost treatments to address run-off-road and head-on crashes along more than 17,000 kilometers of WA's regional road network (96 per cent of the State-owned network)<sup>11</sup>.

If implemented in full, the package is expected to save 2,100 KSI crashes over nine years, at a 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 1.8<sup>12</sup>).

One year of the package represents just 3.4 per cent of the State Budget spending allocated towards transport, rail and roads in 2019-20 (\$2.917 billion)<sup>13</sup>. Further, in 2019-20, the State and Federal governments are expected to have collected around \$4.6 billion in taxes from WA<sup>14</sup>; it would take just two per cent of this to fully fund this crucial package. Yet to date the State Government has outlined its intention to provide just 20 per cent of the required funding from the Road Trauma Trust Account (RTTA), subject to a funding partnership with the Australian Government committing the remaining 80 per cent. Alarming there has been no further commitment by the State and/or Federal governments toward this life-saving program - with such a compelling and indisputable case, why not?

In Australia, road infrastructure funding is not conditional on the inclusion of Safe System treatments in every project and road safety teams at all levels of government lack influence across the Safe System pillars and within their own organisation (e.g. over transport infrastructure design; planning; operation; maintenance and funding teams)<sup>15</sup>.

Shifting infrastructure investment to prioritise safety above network efficiency at all levels of government would demonstrate commitment to the embedding of Safe System principles in accordance with UN targets 3 and 4<sup>16</sup>, and also the following NRSS targets:

- > All levels of government to accept accountability and responsibility for the road safety performance of their networks in accordance with Safe System principles.
- > The adoption of improved standards for road design, construction and operation to reflect Safe System principles.
- > All new roads and upgrades of existing roads would be designed, built and operated in accordance with Safe System principles.

The *National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020* aims to achieve 3-star AusRAP ratings or better for 80 per cent of travel on State roads, including a minimum of 90 per cent of travel on National highways. As identified within the AAA's report *Reviving Road Safety*, there is no transparency over how this is being measured or whether this is being achieved. If Australia is to achieve these targets and overcome existing challenges, we need to set plans for improving the safety of roads in regional Australia, informed by safety assessments (e.g. AusRAP) of the network that are made available to the public.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics 2018 and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018 in the Inquiry into the *national road safety strategy 2011-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NRSS-Inquiry-Final-Report-September-2018.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Supra Note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Estimate provided by MRWA.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. (2019). Road trauma Australia 2018 statistical summary. Retrieved from: <https://www.bitre.gov.au>.

<sup>9</sup> Infrastructure Australia (2019). *Infrastructure Priority List, Australian Infrastructure Plan Project and Initiatives Summaries, February 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development. (2019). *Review of national road safety governance arrangements: final report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.roadssafety.gov.au>.

<sup>11</sup> WA State Government. (2019, August 1). *Federal backing sought for WA road safety initiative*. [Media statement]. Retrieved from: <https://www.mediament.wa.gov.au>.

<sup>12</sup> BITRE. (2018). *Ex-post economic evaluation of national road investment projects*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bitre.gov.au>.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Treasury. (2019). *WA State Budget 2019-20. Where the money comes from and where it goes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au>.

<sup>14</sup> A report to RAC by Acil Allen.

<sup>15</sup> Supra note 10.

<sup>16</sup> Globally, UN member nations agreed to the following road safety targets:

- Target 3. By 2030, all new roads achieve technical standards for all road users that take into account road safety or meet a three-star rating or better.
- Target 4. By 2030, more than 75% of travel on existing roads is on roads that meet technical standards for all road users that take into account road safety.



Further and as noted in the 2018 Inquiry, at the local government level, capability and capacity constraints that limit expeditious Safe System improvements must be addressed (in WA local government manages nearly 90 per cent of the road network<sup>17</sup>). Local governments are largely dependent on State legislation for their authority and revenue and so, despite a significant proportion of serious crashes occurring on their roads, they are constrained to commit to sustained road safety outcomes in their areas.

To achieve the inclusion of Safe Systems principles in infrastructure investment by State, Territory and local governments, the 2018 Inquiry Recommendation 10, agreed to by the Federal Government, proposed the following actions:

- > The appropriate minister to instruct Infrastructure Australia to make safety a governing criteria for its assessments, with road safety specific applications encouraged.
- > All Commonwealth infrastructure funding to include star rating and safety performance criteria with Safe System Assessments to be used at the planning and completion stages on all projects.
- > Network risk assessments to be published for each jurisdiction with associated network and corridor safety plans, as specified in the *National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020* (State/Territory and local government).

RAC supports these measures, along with Recommendation Two of the AAA *Reviving Road Safety* report regarding the linkage of Federal infrastructure funding to road safety outcomes.

#### **RAC calls on the Committee to recommend:**

- » the Regional Road Safety Package for WA be acknowledged as a significant opportunity to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in remote and regional areas and funding for its full implementation be supported;
- » the new Office of Road Safety and the Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC) ensure transport planning and road design guidelines for each State and Territory reflect Safe Systems principles;
- » a rolling program to rate the safety of higher volume arterial regional roads across the country; and
- » the Office of Road Safety work in collaboration with agencies at the State and Territory levels to address capacity and capability constraints faced by local governments.

<sup>17</sup> Main Roads WA (2020). *Local Government*. Retrieved January 20, 2020 from: <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/BuildingRoads/LocalGovernment/Pages/localgovernment.aspx>.

» **The possible establishment of a future parliamentary standing committee on road safety and its functions.**

Bipartisanship in road safety, is critical to ensure it is sustained as a government priority with adequate levels of investment. On 29 March 2019, the Australian Government “committed to working in a bipartisan spirit to progress the 12 recommendations made by the National Road Safety Strategy Inquiry in September 2018”, and this is strongly supported.

Joint parliamentary committees provide an opportunity to enhance road safety bipartisanship and clearly identify the extent to which government agencies with road safety responsibilities are or are not meeting those responsibilities effectively. Furthermore, having other members of Parliament involved can achieve greater action, coordination and commitment at a whole-of-government level, place emerging issues on the government radar, and explore new ideas without the political cost to government<sup>18</sup>.

The Governance Review noted: “there is a gap in all jurisdictions to ensure accountability for not meeting interim targets”<sup>19</sup>. Further in 2014, the *Browne Review of Road Safety Governance in WA* identified a clear flaw in the current reporting relationship where some recipient agencies are reluctant to comply with monitoring and evaluation requirements and suggested bipartisan support and involvement are significant in contributing to successful road safety outcomes. Through their powers, parliamentary committees may call for people, including public servants, and documents to come before them, and in so doing, thoroughly investigate questions of government administration and service delivery. A standing committee for road safety must monitor the progress of government agencies in working together to achieve shared Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are supported by clearly defined responsibilities and established milestones. This is crucial to ensure accountability for meeting ambitious targets to drive a reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. At a State level, RAC has been calling for the WA Road Safety Commission to report directly to a joint standing committee to enhance bipartisanship and would support this at the Federal level also.

**RAC calls on the Committee to recommend:**

- » the establishment of a parliamentary standing committee on road safety;
- » the Office of Road Safety report directly to a standing committee rather than a Minister; and
- » at the WA State level, a realignment of the WA Road Safety Commission so that a Commissioner reports to a joint parliamentary standing committee rather than a Minister.

» **Recommending strategies, performance measures and targets for the next National road safety strategy.**

The 2018 Inquiry made several recommendations for the next strategy having found “the past decade represents an implementation failure”<sup>20</sup> and so it is critical the next National road safety strategy drives immediate action to achieve a longer term and globally-aligned target of zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads. It follows that if we are to achieve “vision zero”, where no lives are lost on Australian roads, the Federal Government must take the lead on bolder and more decisive road safety regulation and policy, and in setting ambitious KSI reduction targets to ensure Australia not only catches up with leading OECD countries but becomes a leading nation.

To demonstrate a genuine commitment to saving lives and reducing the impact of road trauma in WA, RAC is seeking that the next State road safety strategy set an ambitious target to halve the current KSI rate over the next five years.

Australia’s 2020 target (30 per cent reduction in KSI) is already far behind that of many countries (e.g. 50 per cent by 2020 for the European Union). Norway, one of the world leaders in road safety with a fatality rate of only 2.0<sup>21</sup>, reduced its road fatalities by almost 50 per cent between 2010 and 2017 (compared to 10 per cent achieved in Australia) and has announced its next target to have fewer than 350 people killed and injured on the roads by 2030. This equates to a 60 per cent reduction from a baseline of 2012-2015<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, its capital city, Oslo, reached one road fatality in 2019; and zero pedestrian, cyclist and child road fatalities despite being one of Europe’s fastest growing cities<sup>23</sup>. In 2015, the City announced an ambitious plan to achieve a car-free CBD by 2019; this has not only supported a reduction in road trauma, but commuter traffic has decreased dramatically, commuter bicycle trips have increased, and greenhouse gas emissions are dropping<sup>24</sup>. Measures to achieve this included<sup>25</sup>:

- > the removal of approximately 1,000 parking spaces;
- > an additional 60 kilometers of new and widened bike lanes;
- > greater focus on ensuring efficient rapid transport;
- > increased prices for entry and parking in and around Oslo’s CBD during peak hours;
- > lower city speed limit; and
- > car-free zones around schools.

<sup>18</sup> Hansen, R & Bates, L. (2004) *Mechanisms of Change: The Role of Parliamentary Committees in Road Safety*. [Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference 2004, 14-16 November 2004, Perth], page 8.

<sup>19</sup> Supra note 10.

<sup>20</sup> Woolley, J. & Crozier, J. (2018). *Inquiry into the national road safety strategy 2011-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://www.roadssafety.gov.au/nrss/inquiry/21> OECD. (2019). International Transport Forum road safety annual report.

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/irtad-road-safety-annual-report-2019.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Government.no. (2020). *A National Transport Plan for better and safer daily travel*. Retrieved January 5, 2020 from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/a-national-transport-plan-for-better-and-safer-daily-travel/id2548623/>.

<sup>23</sup> Power, J. (2020, January 13). *Oslo cut road deaths to one in 2019. Can Sydney do the same?* Retrieved from: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/oslo-cut-road-deaths-to-one-in-2019-can-sydney-do-the-same-24-20200111-p53qmqz.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Bliss, L. (2018, May 3). *The War on Cars, Norwegian Edition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/05/oslos-race-to-become-a-major-bike-haven/5593358/>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, and Supra note 23.



**RAC calls on the Committee to recommend that the next road safety strategy for Australia:**

- » is developed by the National Office of Road Safety in consultation with a bipartisan parliamentary reference group or the proposed standing committee (with all sides of government and representative agencies being signatories to the Strategy) and involvement of the States and Territories;
- » demonstrates a genuine bipartisan commitment to saving lives and reducing serious injuries by setting an ambitious target(s) for the life of the strategy (2030);
- » requires a whole of government commitment to road safety, and adoption of performance measures for senior leadership within government agencies, linked with at least annual reporting by Directors General and Chief Executive Officers on outcomes (which are then reported by the Office of Road Safety to a parliamentary standing committee);
- » facilitates a more agile approach and demonstrates a clear commitment to testing and trialling innovations in road safety, capitalising on successes achieved by leading OECD countries;
- » includes a resolute commitment to roll out nationally significant projects, programs and initiatives at the scale necessary to make a tangible impact and includes costed and funded shorter term action plans (for metro and regional Australia) to ensure effective implementation (with these and progress reviews being made public);
- » includes a commitment to public release of reporting on progress against the agreed implementation plans, targets and KPIs; and critically, it must
- » provide a framework and mechanisms to effectively deliver on the recommendations identified by this and previous inquiries and reviews to respond to the identified failing in road safety performance in Australia.



» **The role of the Office of Road Safety.**

Solving the crisis of road related deaths and serious injuries has been a challenge shared by jurisdictions world-wide. In Australia, government agencies responsible for cornerstones of the Safe System framework do not share targets or sufficiently link programs and coordinate efforts that might maximise opportunities to reduce road deaths and injuries. At the State level, RAC has called for government agencies to take a stronger, bolder and more collaborative approach to progress road safety solutions with an effective governance structure, supported by clear, shared and measurable KPIs. At the National level, “there is a clear need for greater leadership, strengthened management, heightened accountability and more effective coordination to reduce road trauma across Australia”<sup>26</sup>.

RAC welcomed the reinstatement of the Federal Office of Road Safety as a first step in addressing both the Governance Review’s and 2018 Inquiry’s recommendations. To support the next strategy, the Office of Road Safety must be responsible for monitoring and coordinating progress against an implementation plan that recognises and supports the varied (and somewhat complex) responsibility arrangements at the State and Territory levels. Insufficient focus on monitoring and evaluating expenditure on, and the outcomes of infrastructure improvements, programs and initiatives with a road safety focus, greatly hinders the ability of all States and Territories to benefit from lessons learned and identify and apply National and international best practice. The Office must be resourced and have appropriate authority to drive meaningful mainstreaming of road safety and integration of Safe System principles within all States and Territories.

**RAC calls on the Committee to recommend that the Office of Road Safety:**

- » develops a whole-of-government approach to road safety to deliver better, more cost-effective outcomes;
- » develops and oversees a road safety research and capacity building program, complementing existing research programs being delivered through Austroads and others, to inform evidence-based policy, infrastructure and vehicle design;
- » establishes more formal arrangements to facilitate effective information sharing between jurisdictions;
- » deals with long standing and pervasive data collection and reporting problems e.g. through establishing a consistent framework to capture the value and outcomes of road safety expenditure across the States and Territories; and
- » oversees the development and implementation of the next National road safety strategy, ensuring it is well-resourced, drawing on the expertise of road safety professionals and technical experts.

<sup>26</sup> Supra note 10.

### » Road trauma and incident data collection and coordination across Australia.

It is well accepted that to fully understand the extent of the road safety problem, we need to analyse (at a minimum) the thousands of serious injuries occurring on our roads. To this end, in 2011 the NRSS set targets for a reduction in serious injuries and to allow these to be monitored road transport agencies, as a matter of priority, would “work towards the adoption of nationally consistent road crash classification definitions and an improved National serious injury database”. While actions were proposed within the first three-year action plan, almost a decade later we are yet to settle a National framework for comparing serious injury data across jurisdictions.

In February 2019, shortly after the 2018 Inquiry found the current state of serious injury data was “poor”, Hon. Michael McCormack MLP advised “in 2019-20 we will have—for the first time—a National baseline to measure progress against the agreed target of a 30 per cent decrease in serious injury on our roads”<sup>27</sup>. We acknowledge the current Austroads projects to achieve this baseline however note Stage Two<sup>28</sup> has yet to be released and Stage Three<sup>29</sup> has not yet commenced<sup>30</sup>. Work to improve the accuracy and therefore reliability of datasets across the nation is far from complete and will always require ongoing commitment and coordination to continue to deliver reliable data for interjurisdictional (and international) comparisons.

In support of this, RAC notes the recommendation made by the 2018 Inquiry that “a National data observatory be created and resourced to address the nation’s long standing and embarrassing data issues in road safety”. Similarly, this role could be performed by the Office of Road Safety and should emphasise transparency and data sharing beyond government.

#### RAC calls on the Committee to recommend the Office of Road Safety:

- » deals with long standing and pervasive data collection and reporting problems including requiring State and Territory government agencies to adopt more robust approaches to track and measure reduction in road trauma statistics, consistent with a National framework (comprising agreed metrics, reporting formats, data sharing arrangements, etc.); and
- » beyond serious injuries, considers the future benefit of reporting on all crashes, whether or not they result in injury to create a more complete picture of road safety risks to inform decision-making.

### » Other measures to support the Australian Parliament’s ongoing resolve to reduce incidents on our roads, with a focus on the recommendations from the Inquiry into the effectiveness of the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020*.

In its November 2019 Communique, the TIC noted it has “framed the next [road safety] strategy around three key themes: Safe

Roads, Safe Vehicles, and Safe Road Use... with speed to be considered within each of these themes”<sup>31</sup>. The 2018 Inquiry recommended the next strategy accelerate the adoption of speed management initiatives that help eliminate harm. Speed impacts all crashes for all road users and RAC strongly believes the Australian Government, through the Office of Road Safety, must take leadership on this contentious cornerstone to meaningfully progress the 2018 Inquiry’s recommendation.

In 2016, Soames Job, Global Lead for Road Safety at the World Bank, and Chika Sakashita, International Road Safety Consultant and Senior Project Leader at Global Road Safety Solutions, wrote: “speed is the single element of road safety that, with management, can drive down the number of deaths and serious injuries sufficiently to allow a chance to deliver the global road safety targets within existing time frames and budgets” in part, because it is such an important element of all crashes across all countries, and because reductions are possible within limited budgets.

At present Australia has some of the highest speed limits in the world, particularly WA and the Northern Territory with rural default limits at 110km/h. There is a significant and continually growing body of National and international evidence around the substantial life-saving benefits of reducing speed limits. Efforts to achieve travel speeds which are safer, and appropriate for the road environment, will require courageous leadership by governments truly committed to saving lives lost in crashes today, not in years to come. To support implementation and effectiveness, speed limit reductions need bipartisan support and to be coupled with efforts to increase community understanding of the impact of speed on crash outcomes and need to deliver safer travel speeds. The use of road and street design practices and measures, as well as enforcement activities to help achieve reductions in mean operating speeds in a timely manner<sup>32,33</sup>, is also important in promoting desired speeds and more consistent road users’ behaviours.

The recent Austroads report *National View on Regional and Remote Road Safety* notes: “There is demand for leadership at the National level around the harmonisation of appropriate speed limits. The safety benefits of reduced speed limits are well known, however there is a perceived lack of leadership in this area, stemming largely from a lack of political will to make unpopular decisions. Leadership at the National level, in collaboration with State and local government, is needed to overcome this barrier”.

#### RAC calls of the Committee to recommend:

- » the Australian Government shows leadership in not just encouraging but actually implementing improved speed management practices, in part by having a plan specific to harmonising them; and
- » the next National road safety strategy recognises the importance of this cornerstone and sets specific and measurable actions to reduce the impact of speed on crash outcomes in our country.

<sup>27</sup> McCormack, M. (2019, February 18). *Speech in the House of Representatives* [Transcript]. Retrieved from: <https://www.aph.gov.au>.

<sup>28</sup> The key objective of Stage Two which is currently planned for release in February, is to provide a consistent, national series by the end of 2019 to support development of next NRSS.

<sup>29</sup> Stage Three is concerned with how best to transition from a development project to an ongoing, routine data process.

<sup>30</sup> Austroads. (2019). *A National Approach to Measuring Non-fatal Crash Outcomes*. Retrieved from: <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-safety/ap-r599-19>.

<sup>31</sup> Transport and Infrastructure Council. (2019, November 22). *Communique*. Retrieved from: <https://www.transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au>.

<sup>32</sup> MUARC. (2008). *The impact of lowered speed limits in urban and metropolitan areas*. Retrieved from: [https://www.monash.edu/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/216736/The-impact-of-lowered-speed-limits-in-urban-and-metropolitan-areas.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/216736/The-impact-of-lowered-speed-limits-in-urban-and-metropolitan-areas.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> Varhelyi, 1996, in MUARC. (2008). *The impact of lowered speed limits in urban and metropolitan areas*. Retrieved from: [https://www.monash.edu/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/216736/The-impact-of-lowered-speed-limits-in-urban-and-metropolitan-areas.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/216736/The-impact-of-lowered-speed-limits-in-urban-and-metropolitan-areas.pdf).

## Summary

Looking back over the last ten years, progress in road safety in Australia has been unforgivably slow. As a result, people continue to die and be seriously injured on our roads and communities continue to be devastated by the catastrophic and life-long impacts of road trauma.

 **We need a real change, driven by bipartisanship. We have a unique opportunity ahead: regardless of agency, organisation or political persuasion, do we want to look back in five or ten years' time and consider all the extra lives that could have been saved if only we had just done more?**

In support of our submission we enclose RAC's previous responses to the:

- > *2018 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020;*
- > *2015 Australian Senate Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety;*
- > *2015 WA Legislative Assembly's Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Inquiry into Methods of Evaluating Police Performance; and*
- > *2014 Review of Road Safety Governance in WA (the Browne Review).*

We also enclose our most recent *Federal Priorities for WA* and *State Budget Submission* publications. These set out broader priorities to reduce road trauma, including: the application of intelligent transport system (ITS) technologies integrated into road / transport networks and vehicles; regulating and planning for automated vehicles (which will be particularly important during the transition period to manage potential safety risks) and measures to reduce exposure to risk by managing traffic demand through encouraging and facilitating shift away from single occupancy car travel. All of RAC's previous submissions and publications are available for viewing and download via <https://rac.com.au/about-rac/advocating-change/reports>.

We thank the Committee for this opportunity to provide input and we look forward to your bold and impactful recommendations to drive a significant reduction in the number of lives lost and serious injuries needlessly occurring every day on our roads.



For further information please  
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