

Inquiry into the effectiveness of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020

18 months on



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Seven of our nation's eight states and territories are unlikely to meet the 30 per cent road trauma reduction targets in the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020* (NRSS)¹.

Following several inquiries over the period of the NRSS, including:

- » the 2015 Senate Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia;
- » an inquiry into the effectiveness of the NRSS (the 2018 Inquiry);
- » the 2019 Review into National Road Safety Governance Arrangements; and
- » the recent 2020 Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into Road Safety in Australia (the 2020 Inquiry);

there has been limited action against the recommendations agreed to by government.

This scorecard tracks progress made by the Australian Government (and where applicable the Western Australian State Government) over the 18 months since the 2018 Inquiry². Recommendations were presented at Parliament House in September 2018. It was more than 12 months later (November 2019) that the Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC), on behalf of Australian governments, released its final response and implementation arrangements.

Even after the NRSS has concluded and a new strategy takes its place, 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.

As a voice for its more than 1.1 million members, RAC champions change that will deliver transport options that are safe, more sustainable and that better connect Western Australians and their communities now and in the future. This scorecard includes examples of relevant activities undertaken by RAC on behalf of its members to help tackle the unforgivably high number of people being killed and seriously injured on roads in our State.



Figure 1: Australia's progress against 2020 NRSS targets³.

¹ Australian Automobile Association. (2020). *March 2020 progress report. Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy Q1 2020*. https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AAA_QBR_March_2020.pdf.

² The 2018 Inquiry included four broad points in its Terms of Reference. First, to identify key factors involved in killed and serious injury trends; second, review the effectiveness of the NRSS and supporting 2015-2017 Action Plan; third, identify issues and priorities for post 2020 NRSS and 2018-2020; and finally, to advise on the arrangements for the management of road safety and the NRSS.

³ Australian Automobile Association. (2020). *March 2020 progress report. Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy Q1 2020*. https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AAA_QBR_March_2020.pdf. In the report green means "on track to meet or exceed NRSS target (i.e. the reduction in road crash fatalities is equal to or greater than the rate required to achieve NRSS target)"; amber means "currently ahead of (notional) target but a faster rate of improvement is required to achieve NRSS target by 2020"; and red means 'road crash fatalities are above the notional NRSS target'.

 Implemented in full  Partially implemented  Not yet implemented

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
1 Create strong national leadership by appointing a Cabinet Minister with specific multi-agency responsibility to address the hidden epidemic of road trauma including its impact on the health system.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is both a Minister and Assistant Minister responsible for Road Safety. » There is a Cabinet Minister with specific multi-agency responsibility to address the hidden epidemic of road trauma, including its impact on the health system, and who additionally has responsibility for multiple transport agencies which have specific road safety functions. However, neither the Minister nor Assistant Minister have responsibility for other critical disciplines such as health. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is (and has for many years been) a Cabinet Minister responsible for Police and Road Safety, however this is limited in addressing the road safety epidemic and its impact on the health system given the separate Ministerial portfolio responsibilities for health, and transport and planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » N/A.
2 Establish a national road safety entity reporting to the Cabinet Minister with responsibility for road safety.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Office of Road Safety commenced on 1 July 2019. » Consideration of the role of this Office, to ensure its effectiveness, was however one of the Terms of Reference for the 2020 Inquiry. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To enhance bipartisanship, in its response to the 2020 Inquiry, RAC is calling for the Office of Road Safety to report to a joint standing committee for road safety. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has also called for the Road Safety Commission to report directly to a standing parliamentary committee for road safety.

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
3 Commit to a minimum \$3 billion a year road safety fund.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is no hypothecated road safety fund. » The TIC's response to the 2018 Inquiry recommendations notes: "Government commits to invest an average of \$3 billion per year to road infrastructure that will have a safety benefit. The Commonwealth will continue to work with other jurisdictions to identify priorities for investment and ensure that investment has regard to the safe system principles in accordance with the recently signed National Partnership Agreement"⁴. » In 2017-18, total Commonwealth road-related expenditure was \$6.1 billion⁵. As infrastructure funding is not conditional on the inclusion of safe system treatments in every project it is difficult to ascertain the amount that delivered road safety benefits. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The State Government has not committed a specific amount to reducing road trauma, some funds are allocated from the Road Trauma Trust Account. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To highlight the significance of WA's road safety and transport challenges and infrastructure priorities to attract increased funding, RAC makes a number of submissions, for example to Infrastructure Australia through its responses to the Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 and 2020 Infrastructure Priority List, and the Australian Government through its Federal Priorities document, inputs to the AAA's pre-budget submissions and submission to the 2020 Inquiry. » RAC commissions an annual report on motorist taxation revenue and spending to inform its advocacy, and calls on the Australian Government to provide a fairer distribution of revenue collected from WA motorists to remediate WA's \$845m road maintenance backlog and tackle the increasing costs of congestion and road trauma. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has, and continues to advocate strongly for investment to accelerate the delivery of crucial road safety projects and initiatives, for example through its State Budget Submission each year. Of greatest importance to saving lives and serious injuries in WA is a \$900 million Regional Road Safety Package. The package, announced by the State Government in August 2019, would reduce regional road trauma by 60 per cent, saving more than 2,100 people from being killed or seriously injured (KSI)⁶. Despite this, the potential to create more than 500 jobs annually and a high Benefit Cost Ratio of 4.05, to date, no funding has been committed. The State Government has signalled its intention to just provide 20 per cent of the funding subject to the Australian Government committing the remainder. » RAC has also called for improved transparency around funding decisions.
4 Set a vision zero target for 2050 with an interim target of vision zero for all major capital city CBD areas, and high-volume highways by 2030.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Work to develop the new NRSS has commenced but there is currently no information available on the proposed target(s); targets are being considered through the Terms of Reference for the 2020 Inquiry. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Work to develop the next State Road Safety Strategy is well underway. It is expected that zero will be the ultimate vision, but the targets and timeframes are yet to be confirmed. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC's submission to the 2020 Inquiry highlights the need for the next NRSS to demonstrate a genuine bipartisan commitment to saving lives and reducing serious injuries by setting an ambitious interim target for 2030. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC's submission to the WA State Road Safety Strategy called for an interim target of a 50 per cent reduction in KSI⁷ per 100,000 persons by 2025 in working towards a vision zero target, and set out a series of key recommendations to help achieve this.

⁴ Transport and Infrastructure Council. (2019). *Final response and implementation arrangements for the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy* (2018). https://www.officeofroadsafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/final_response_nrss_inquiry.pdf?ga=2.2381747841307662967158018874216456016491579854240

⁵ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics. (2019). *Australian infrastructure statistics - yearbook 2019*. https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/BITRE_2019_YEARBOOK.pdf

⁶ KSI refers to the number of people killed or seriously injured on WA roads.

⁷ Ibid.

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
5 Establish and commit to key performance indicators (KPIs) in time for the next strategy that measure and report how harm can be eliminated in the system, and that are published annually.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Work to develop the new NRSS has commenced but there is currently no information available on the proposed KPIs and how progress will be measured and reported on. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » KPIs are being considered as part of the development of the next State Road Safety Strategy but are yet to be confirmed. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC's response to the 2020 Inquiry called on the Select Committee to recommend the next NRSS 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 joint parliamentary committee). <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has called for shared and measurable KPIs with clear responsibilities. » RAC has recommended that the next State Road Safety Strategy requires a whole of government commitment to road safety, and adoption of performance measures for senior leadership within government agencies, linked with six-monthly reporting by Directors General and Chief Executive Officers on outcomes (as recommended by the 2014 Review of Road Safety Governance in Western Australia).
6 Undertake a national road safety governance review by March 2019.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Review of National Road Safety Governance (the Review) was announced on 4 October 2018 and endorsed for publication on 2 August 2019. » The Review provided eight high-level findings about system-wide gaps and opportunities for road safety governance; to date, there has been limited action against these and no formal response from government. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » State and local government road safety experts were interviewed as part of the governance review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Although no public consultation was conducted, the Review included analysis of submissions made to the 2018 Inquiry. In its submission, RAC made the following recommendations to improve governance and accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > reinstate the Office of Road Safety; > establish road safety KPIs across senior leadership at Ministerial and departmental level for all three levels of government; > establish cohesive and comparable data collection mechanisms allowing state and territory government agencies to benchmark both statistics and programs against shared KPIs and metrics to explicitly track and measure reduction in KSI⁸; and > re-align the WA Road Safety Commission so that a Commissioner reports to a joint parliamentary standing committee rather than a Minister.

⁸ Supra note 6.

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
7 Implement rapid deployment and accelerated uptake of proven vehicle safety technologies and innovation.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ongoing updates to, and inclusions within, the Australian Design Rules (ADRs). » Discussed at the August 2019 TIC, the Australian Government is investigating options to streamline regulatory processes and embed these into the upcoming NRSS. However, due to the lack of information around the development of the NRSS, it is not clear whether this will lead to "rapid deployment and accelerated uptake of proven vehicle safety technologies and innovation". » Ongoing work undertaken by the National Transport Commission to prepare a framework for the transition of automated vehicles onto Australian roads. » The Australian and State Governments actively support ANCAP to encourage consumers to prioritise safety in their vehicle purchasing decisions and manufacturers to incorporate safety features into new car design. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Some consideration of safety technologies and innovations during development of the next State Road Safety Strategy. It is currently unclear how it would deliver on this recommendation. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC actively supports ANCAP to encourage consumers to prioritise safety in their vehicle purchasing decisions and manufacturers to incorporate safety features into new car design. » RAC has called for enhanced vehicle safety standards and accelerated uptake of safer vehicles, including through measures such as the removal of tariffs and charges to reduce the cost and therefore improve access to vehicles with 5-star ANCAP safety ratings. » RAC's Federal Priorities submission calls on the Australian Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > reduce the time taken to implement safety technology through the ADRs so that Australian road users receive the full benefit of safer vehicle features widely available in other markets; and > make the display of ANCAP star ratings mandatory at the point of sale across all Australian states, ensuring consumers have access to the vehicle safety information. » On behalf of its member clubs, including RAC, the Australian Automobile Association⁹ has advocated that Australia should take an active role in developing UN vehicle safety standards (which it is entitled to do). Taking an active role would ensure global standards recognise Australian needs and mean that Australia could adopt and implement new standards quicker¹⁰. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In its State Budget Submission RAC has called for the State Government to introduce initiatives to increase uptake of safer vehicles such as investing in and supporting trials of new driver assist technologies and activities to plan for connected, automated vehicles (CAVs), mandatory display of ANCAP ratings at point of sale and ensuring the Government fleet comprises newer, 5-star rated vehicles. » RAC will not insure or finance any vehicles manufactured in 2012 or later (i.e. since RAC introduced the policy) which have been rated by ANCAP and do not achieve safety ratings of 4 or 5 stars. » RAC's Automated Vehicle Program is helping to increase community awareness of rapidly advancing vehicle safety technology and will help prepare a roadmap for changes to support and safely transition to the technology.

⁹ The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) is the peak organisation representing Australia's motoring clubs (including RAC) and their eight million members. The AAA advances the interests of all road users to ensure transport systems are safe, affordable and transparent.

¹⁰ Australian Automobile Association. (2019). Reviving Road Safety. <https://www.aaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AAA-Reviving-Road-Safety-2019.pdf>

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
8 Accelerate the adoption of speed management initiatives that support harm elimination.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In its November 2019 Communiqué, 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"¹¹ but there has been little action to date. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The next State Road Safety Strategy is expected to highlight the need for speed management and to engage further with the community on this issue, but the extent of actions proposed to accelerate this is not yet known. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » As speed impacts all crashes for all road users, RAC strongly believes and has called out in its response to the 2020 Inquiry that the Australian Government, through the Office of Road Safety, must take leadership on this contentious Safe System cornerstone to meaningfully progress the 2018 NRSS Inquiry's recommendation. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has recommended the next State Road Safety Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ sets out a framework and near-term deadlines for reviewing and setting speed limits across the road network that reflect the tolerances of the human body, prioritises safety performance above network efficiency and applies road/street design and enforcement strategies in support of safer speeds; ➢ includes a commitment to support a reduction in the default 110km/h speed limit to 100km/h to target fatalities and serious injuries on regional roads and bring WA into line with the rest of the country. Where road design and conditions are appropriate, a posted 110km/h limit could remain in place for selected roads; and ➢ more personally engages communities in understanding the need for safer speeds through ongoing, high profile and wide-reaching education.

¹¹ Transport and Infrastructure Council. (2019, November 22). Communiqué. <https://www.transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au>

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
9 Invest in road safety focused infrastructure, safe system and mobility partnerships with state, territory and local governments that accelerate the elimination of high-risk roads.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In its response to the 2018 Inquiry recommendations, the TIC notes options to implement this recommendation are to be considered in the development of the next NRSS. Due to the lack of public information about the strategy development, it is difficult to track this commitment. » In its response to Recommendation 3, the TIC notes a National Partnership Agreement has recently been signed¹², however the extent to which included projects prioritise the elimination of high-risk roads is unclear. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » N/A. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC is strongly advocating to secure \$900 million for the delivery of the life-saving Regional Road Safety Package for WA. » Rating and improving the safety of WA's regional roads has been a long-standing RAC Federal Priority for WA. » RAC supported several measures within the 2018 Inquiry and the submission to the 2020 Inquiry specifically called for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 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 TIC to 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. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has recommended the next State Road Safety Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > commits to funding the Regional Road Safety Package in full; > commits to a rolling program to rate the safety of higher volume arterial regional roads across WA; > focuses on network-wide solutions for metropolitan intersections; and > supports a review of urban road and street design standards and guidance.

¹² Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (2019). *National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects - Western Australia*. http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/infrastructure/national-partnership/WA_Schedule_2019-20_Budget.pdf

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
10 Make road safety a genuine part of business as usual within Commonwealth, state, territory and local government.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Although this recommendation has been flagged to be a key feature of the next NRSS (as discussed at the August 2019 TIC), there is no publicly available information to track progress. » The Office of Road Safety commenced on 1 July 2019; the role of the Office is currently being considered and it must have the necessary authority to act as the primary policy advisor to Federal Ministers, and work with expert agencies to provide leadership and coordination of best-practice interventions across the Australian Government and between other jurisdictions, as was the original objective¹³. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Unable to assess. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In its submission to the 2020 Inquiry RAC supports the proposed actions under this recommendation of the 2018 Inquiry, including that all Australian infrastructure funding should include star rating and safety performance criteria with Safe System Assessments to be used at the planning and completion stages on all projects. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC's submission to the WA State Road Safety Strategy highlighted the need for road safety to be made the foremost priority of the Transport Portfolio (the Department of Transport, Main Roads WA and the Public Transport Authority) and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and be effectively engrained within the priorities of other government departments and agencies with an opportunity to influence outcomes.
11 Resource key road safety enablers and road safety innovation initiatives.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Funding allocated in the 2019-20 Budget for a Road Safety Innovation Fund (\$12m over 4 years) and Road Safety Awareness and Enablers fund (\$4m over 4 years). It is unclear whether these funds will continue beyond the forward estimates. » The Australian Government continues to support ANCAP and MotoCAP which encourage the latest safety technologies in new vehicles and protective equipment. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In December 2019, the State Government awarded a \$4.6m, five-year contract to the University of Western Australia to establish a WA road safety research centre to conduct planned and reactive research programs to reduce road trauma. » The State Government supports several programs with a road safety focus (e.g. School Drug and Road Aware, and Roadwise Programs) and some departments have innovation resourcing, however the extent of resourcing and road safety focus is unclear. 	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC is calling for a demonstrated commitment to testing and trialling innovations in road safety, capitalising on successes achieved by leading OECD countries. » RAC provides financial support to ANCAP. » RAC supports the AAA Road Safety Research Program, which commissions research and translation activities to help reduce road trauma in Australia. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » RAC has also called for road safety innovations at the state level e.g. trialling innovative and lower-cost approaches for intersections. » RAC's Automated Vehicle Program is helping to accelerate understanding of this rapidly advancing technology. » RAC resources road safety enablers such as through its sponsorship program including the RAC Rescue helicopters¹⁴ that attend to crashes occurring in our regions; its community education program which provides free information and interactive sessions for everyone from community groups, to school students, to seniors' clubs; and its annual bstreetsmart and Project Road Smart events¹⁵ which educate and demonstrate the consequences of risk-taking while driving to the next generation.

¹³ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. (2019). *Road Safety*. <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/>¹⁴ The RAC Rescue helicopters are sponsored by RAC, funded by the State Government and managed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.¹⁵ These events are run by RAC with the support of the WA Police Force, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and St John Ambulance.

NRSS Inquiry recommendation	Details of government progress	Related RAC activities
12 Implement life-saving partnerships with countries in the Indo-Pacific and globally as appropriate to reduce road trauma.	<p>National level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Australian Government has stated¹⁶ it has engaged with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the first instance and has also provided sponsorship funding to the 2019 Australasian College of Road Safety for the Low and Middle Income Countries Scholarships Program. » In February 2020 the Australian Government was represented at the Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety to endorse the Stockholm Declaration which sets goals for 2030. Australia did not sign up to it at the conference and the extent of support is still unclear. » RAC cannot find details of any partnerships within COAG/TIC communique or the Australian treaty database¹⁷. <p>State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » N/A. 	<p>National and State level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In its responses to the 2020 Inquiry and State Road Safety Strategy, RAC called out the importance of establishing more formal arrangements to identify best practice, collaborate with national and international road safety experts and facilitate more effective information sharing (including leveraging opportunities through the Office of Road Safety, Austroads Safety Task Force and partnerships with academic institutions). » RAC has engaged and collaborated with a range of technology providers and organisations nationally and internationally (and facilitated connections with government) in progressing RAC's Automated Vehicle Program.

Summary

While there has been some progress over the past 18 months in response to the 2018 Inquiry, the NRSS has not achieved what it set out to and progress in road safety in Australia has been unforgivably slow over the past decade. 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. While both the next NRSS and State Road Safety Strategy do present an opportunity, bipartisanship will be essential in delivering the real change we so desperately need.

 **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?**

¹⁶ Supra note 4.

¹⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (n.d). *Treaties*. <https://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/treaties/Pages/treaties.aspx>

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