

# Victoria's Road Safety Strategy

2013  
2022

*Safe  
roads  
for all  
Victorians*

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# The road safety landscape

Road trauma costs all Victorians. It costs lives, with around 280 people a year or more than five people a week dying on our roads.

It costs wellbeing and happiness, where every day 15 people are seriously injured so their lives and the lives of those who love them are severely changed, and it costs money. Road trauma costs Victoria over \$3.0 billion dollars a year.<sup>1</sup>

These costs are unacceptably high and we all need to work together to reduce this trauma.

Victoria has already made significant improvements, leading the world with high-impact measures such as seatbelts in the 1970s, random breath testing in 1976, and speed cameras in 1985, as well as with big infrastructure improvements such as the \$240 million statewide Blackspot Program started in 2000 and more recently the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) funded Safer Road Infrastructure Program.

These high-impact measures, amongst others, make Victoria one of the best performing jurisdictions in the world on a per capita basis for road safety. And it's these bold measures that have dramatically reduced the annual road toll from 1000 people in the 1970s to under 300 today – that's a difference of 700 lives every year.

But the road toll has started to plateau. And while Victoria has continued to deliver record low road tolls year on year, it's only achieved an eight per cent reduction in the annual road toll since 2008.

This strategy outlines an approach that will lead to major improvements in safety on our roads – improvements that will make a dramatic difference, reducing the Victorian road toll by more than 30 per cent to below 200 deaths per year, a number which was thought impossible less than a decade ago.

Just as importantly, we're also tackling the difficult issue of the 'hidden road toll' of serious injury. Like other jurisdictions in the world, Victoria has not been able to reduce serious injury to the same extent as it has reduced deaths.

While Victoria has almost halved the number of serious injuries since 1987, when we had 10,000 people injured in crashes, 5,500 people are still seriously injured every year with anything from a broken arm through to permanent brain damage and quadriplegia.

Six hundred of these people are hospitalised for at least a month recovering from or learning to live with their injuries. Apart from the human tragedy for those affected and their family and friends, serious injury costs Victoria \$2.4 billion a year.





***When Simon Van Beest was just eight his life changed forever. He survived a car crash but with a serious brain injury and partial paralysis.***

***He had to re-learn all the basic life skills starting with simple things like how to swallow, crawl, stand, and then on to walking, talking and dressing himself.***

***It took years, and it radically changed not only his life but the lives of those closest to him. Now at 33 he can live independently with support and is part of the community but it isn't the life he or his family thought he would live.***

This strategy includes an Australian first commitment to developing a specific target to dramatically reduce the most severe forms of injury, such as quadriplegia and brain injury.

This will mean developing a new severe injury category and definition that will cover anybody who suffers some form of permanent and life-changing injury. The new definition of severe injury will differentiate between those relatively minor injuries and severe life-changing injuries. The impact of these injuries is terrible and if we turn deaths into severe injuries, we have only done part of the job.

Alongside our existing death and serious injury measures this new severe injury category will give us more accurate and sophisticated knowledge so that we can improve our safety response to reduce the numbers of those most severely injured, while also contributing to our target of reducing all serious injuries by more than 30 per cent.

We are setting these two major targets in an environment where road safety is becoming even more challenging:

- There are more people. Victoria's population is booming, with a predicted population of 6.5 million people in Victoria within ten years, a 12 per cent jump.<sup>2</sup> This means more cars, more cyclists, more motorcyclists, and more pedestrians. If we take no further action, instead of the road toll going down, by 2022 the road toll for the year would increase by 38 and the seriously injured by over 600.
- There's more freight – more people means more goods to be moved by road. It's estimated that the number of kilometres trucks will travel will increase by 70 per cent by 2025.<sup>3</sup> This increases the risk to road users because trucks are currently involved in about 15 per cent of all fatal crashes and 70 per cent of these are in country Victoria.
- There are more older people – it's forecast that by 2022 Victoria will have more than half a million people above 75 years old, a 42 per cent increase since 2011.<sup>4</sup> Because older people can be more frail, they are three times more likely to die if they're involved in a crash, so we'll have a lot more vulnerable people on our roads to care for.

We need to work differently to meet these new challenges and stop this avoidable death and injury. We need to take serious action to tackle a serious problem.



*We need to take serious action  
to tackle a serious problem*



# Our approach

Government taking action on its own is not enough. Government can make roads and roadsides safer, set safe speed limits, promote the development and purchase of safer vehicles as well as encourage people to behave more safely on the roads, but this will only get us so far. The community needs to be involved.

That's why we're calling on everybody on the roads to play their part. Whether somebody is behind a wheel, on the seat of a motorbike or bike or walking across a road, they need to make sure that they and the others around them stay safe. It's the choices we all make every day on the roads that will make the difference.

That's why this strategy takes a new collaborative approach. Government commits to making roads, vehicles and roadsides safer through engineering safer infrastructure, and creating a strong safety environment, but everybody needs to commit to making the right choices and doing the right thing to stay safe. Government will support the community to meet this commitment through engineering, education and enforcement.

- **Engineering** – government will make safer roads, vehicles and roadsides, by providing a \$1 billion commitment over the next decade to improve roads and roadsides under the Safer Roads Infrastructure Program, and fast-tracking the latest safety technology.
- **Education** - government will make sure people know how to stay safe, with our internationally-awarded public education programs continuing with a campaign on the risks of distraction in 2013.
- **Enforcement** – where people refuse to do the right thing and place the lives of others at risk by speeding, drink or drug driving, hooning or driving without a licence, we'll come down hard and they'll face tougher sanctions than ever before.

Government will invest in developing a safe system. But this system will only be truly safe if we work together so that everyone makes the right choices to use the road system responsibly to keep themselves and others safe.

**Whether somebody is behind a wheel, on the seat of a motorbike or bike or walking across a road, they need to make sure that they and the others around them stay safe.**

**It's the choices we all make every day on the roads that will make the difference.**



**This strategy has been developed by listening to Victorians and testing their views against the evidence.**



## **How we developed the strategy**

Because we're serious about everybody making a stronger commitment to road safety, one of our first steps in developing this strategy was to ask people and key community groups to tell us what they thought would save lives and stop injuries on our roads.

Victorians responded strongly and we received more than 16,500 replies. These responses called for more enforcement and a stronger approach to those doing the wrong thing, recommended more education – especially for younger drivers – and they showed concern about older drivers. These responses underpin the approach we have taken in this strategy.

This strategy is informed by research which provides the evidence for which initiatives will save lives and prevent serious injuries.

It is based on the proven Safe System approach, which recognises that human error is inevitable, that there will be crashes and that there's a physical limit to the amount of force that the human body can withstand.

This approach means that we work in a number of areas such as roads, vehicles, speeds and people's behaviour so that when a crash does happen it doesn't result in people dying or being seriously injured.

This strategy has been developed by listening to Victorians and testing their views against the evidence. In some cases there is a difference between what people have asked for and what the evidence shows works.

For instance, while there is strong community support for driver education programs, evidence shows that these programs are of limited effectiveness. For example, teaching advanced skills such as skid control to learner drivers may contribute to increased crash risk, particularly among young men.

These results have been confirmed across numerous studies in Australia, New Zealand, North America, Europe and Scandinavia over the last 30 years.

Where there is a difference between public and expert opinion, we have chosen to support initiatives that have been proven to save lives.

Meeting our ambitious targets requires a coordinated approach at the highest level. That's why we have established a Ministerial Council for Road Safety chaired by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and including the Attorney General, the Minister for Roads, and the Assistant Treasurer who has responsibility for the Transport Accident Commission.

This Council is supported by all of the agencies involved in road safety: VicRoads, which coordinates development of Victoria's Road Safety Strategy and Action Plans and has responsibility for the road network, speed limits, licensing and vehicle registration; Victoria Police, which enforces the road rules and along with the TAC conducts public safety campaigns; the Department of Justice which is responsible for road safety cameras and the Transport Accident Commission which conducts education campaigns and invests in major safety programs like the Safer Road Infrastructure Program.

This collaboration and co-operation by all road safety partners has led to a more integrated strategy and will mean more lives saved and trauma avoided.

Our road safety strategy also complements the objectives set out in 'Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017',<sup>5</sup> and 'Cycling into the future 2013-2023: Victoria's cycling strategy'.<sup>6</sup> The road safety partners will continue working in collaboration with other departments, agencies and across all levels of government towards the common goals in these strategies.

We're also aligning our strategy and action plans to the National Road Safety Strategy, which sets a target of reducing deaths and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent.

Our collective efforts in Victoria will help meet these national targets.



## Vision and targets

Our vision is ZERO deaths and ZERO serious injuries on our roads.

To achieve this vision, our target for the next ten years is to:

- further reduce the number of people who die on our roads by more than 30 per cent.
- further reduce the number of people who are seriously injured on our roads by more than 30 per cent.

Meeting these targets will bring our annual road toll to fewer than 200 people, and save more than 90 lives every year. This means reducing deaths from 5.0 per 100,000 Victorians in 2012 to 3.3 per 100,000 population.

Meeting these targets will also reduce our serious injury toll from 5,500 to fewer than 3,850 people a year, meaning a reduction from 98 people seriously injured per 100,000 population to below 60 people per 100,000 population.

## The way forward

The following matrix outlines the direction Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2013-2022 takes to reduce death and injury on our roads, particularly in key areas such as speed, drink driving, and drug driving. It also outlines our approach to improve safety for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

This strategy is accompanied by the first Action Plan, which outlines the priority actions we will take in the first four years to meet our targets and the actions and decisions everybody on the road needs to take so we are all working together.

The strategy's ambitious targets will require further action beyond the immediate priorities, so we will continue to research and develop new initiatives and monitor world's best practice.

Two more action plans will be released over the 10 years of the strategy. We will also continue to seek community views so that everybody continues to play their part in keeping our roads safe to save lives and stop serious injury.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Costs indexed to June 2011 based on Austroads, 'Guide to Project Evaluation Part 4: Project Evaluation Data', prepared by J Perovic, C Evans, B Lloyd, D Tsolakis, Austroads Inc, Sydney, 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> Department of Planning and Community Development, *Victoria in future 2012: Population and household projections for Victoria and its regions 2011-2031*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, 2012.
- <sup>3</sup> Department of Transport (DoT), *Freight Future: Victorian Freight Network Strategy*, DoT, Melbourne, December 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> Department of Planning and Community Development, *Victoria in future 2012: Population and household projections for Victoria and its regions 2011-2031*, Victorian Government,
- <sup>5</sup> *Cycling into the future 2013-23, Victoria's Cycling Strategy*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, viewed December 2012, <http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/projects/cycling/cycling-strategy>
- <sup>6</sup> *Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017*, Department of Health, Melbourne, viewed January 2013, <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aod/strategy/Melbourne>, 2012.
- <sup>7</sup> Coroners Prevention Unit (2012) *Presence of alcohol and drugs amongst deaths from on-road transport crashes in Victoria 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2011*. Melbourne: Coroners Court of Victoria.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> E Ogden, C Morris, T Frederiksen, C Stough, R King, *Do minor tranquilisers (benzodiazepines) increase risk of collision in which the driver is injured*, Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference, Perth, 2011.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 'New data from Virginia Tech Transportation Institute provides insight into cell phone use and driving distraction', viewed November 2012, <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2009/07/2009-571.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 'Transportation Institute releases findings on driver behavior and crash factors', viewed November 2012, <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2006/04/2006-237.html>
- <sup>13</sup> K Dobbie, 'Fatigue-related crashes: An analysis of fatigue-related crashes on Australian roads using an operational definition of fatigue', Road Safety Research Report OR23, Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Canberra, 2002. EducationConference, Canberra, September 2010.
- <sup>14</sup> National Transport Commission, 'National Road Safety Partnership Draft Strategy', Melbourne 2012
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.



## Drink Driving

## Drug Driving

## Speeding

## Distraction

### Strategic Direction

Reduce road trauma from drink driving through a focus on vehicle technology, education and a zero tolerance enforcement regime.

Adopt a much tougher and more sustained approach to detecting and penalising drug drivers. Work with the community to strengthen the management of prescription medications to support safe mobility.

Help drivers comply with speed limits through vehicle technology and the setting of clear and simple speed limits, as well as increased enforcement of speed limits.

Introduce initiatives that reduce the risks associated with distraction and inattention. Implement strict enforcement measures that deter illegal mobile phone use. Improve people's understanding of the risks of distraction.

### The facts

Drink driving accounts for more than a quarter of all deaths on Victoria's roads.<sup>7</sup>

Repeat drink drivers make up about 30 per cent of drink drivers detected, and are often alcohol-dependent.

If alcohol interlocks were standard in all cars in Victoria, around 50 deaths and 500 serious injuries would be prevented every year.

Almost 20 per cent of motorists (including motorcyclists) killed had illicit drugs in their blood.<sup>8</sup>

The road safety risks associated with taking prescription drugs that contain benzodiazepines is becoming increasingly apparent.<sup>9</sup>

Drivers with three or more drugs in their blood (alcohol, illicit drugs and inappropriate levels of prescription drugs) are found to be at fault in more than 95 per cent of crashes.<sup>10</sup>

Speeding and inappropriate travel speeds contribute to almost a third of all Victorian road deaths.

Drivers travelling at 65km/h in a 60km/h zone double their risk of being in a crash. The risk increases even more at higher speeds.

Speed cameras / red light cameras have reduced injury crashes by up to 47 per cent at Victorian intersections.

Texting increases the risk of a crash or near-crash by up to 15 times for car drivers and more than 20 times for truck drivers.<sup>11</sup>

A comprehensive US study showed that 80 per cent of crashes and 65 per cent of near-crashes involved driver inattention in the few seconds before the onset of the crash or near-crash.<sup>12</sup>

### What you told us you wanted

Stronger penalties including longer bans on driving or owning a car and using more alcohol interlocks.

More drug testing, more penalties and more education.

More education, new cars to be fitted with Intelligent Speed Assist and tougher penalties.

Tougher penalties for texting

### What we'll do

Boost our enforcement so drink drivers will be far more likely to be caught.

Toughen sanctions for drink drivers.

Make greater use of alcohol interlocks.

Toughen laws applying to drink and drug driving.

Do research so we can adopt more effective sanctions against drink drivers.

Increase random drug testing.

Do more research on how prescription drug abuse contributes to road trauma.

Provide education on how people can take prescription medicine and stay safe on the roads.

Make people aware of the risks of taking illicit drugs, or unsafe levels of prescription medication, or combining either with alcohol.

Increase speed camera enforcement.

Develop a strategy to roll out and increase awareness of Intelligent Speed Assist that provides drivers with the speed limit on the road along which they are travelling.

Simplify speed zoning, making speed limits easier to see and comply with.

Continue to deliver effective media campaigns that improve people's understanding of the risks of speeding.

Stronger enforcement.

Targeted mass media and education campaigns.

Research to better understand the relationship between distraction and road crashes.



	<b>Pedestrians</b>	<b>Cyclists</b>	<b>Country road users</b>	<b>Roads and speed limits</b>
<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Provide pedestrians with improved infrastructure and safer vehicle speeds to reduce their risk and support the uptake of sustainable travel modes.</b>	<b>Provide cyclists with improved infrastructure and safer vehicle speeds to reduce their risk and support the uptake of sustainable travel modes.</b>	<b>Improve the safety of Victoria's rural and regional roads and roadsides. Target unsafe driving/riding in country Victoria through intelligence-led enforcement and targeted education.</b>	<b>Incorporate safe system principles into the design of roads and roadsides and the setting of speed limits and develop innovative infrastructure solutions.</b>
<b>The facts</b>	<p>A pedestrian or cyclist hit by a vehicle travelling at 50km/h is four times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than if hit at 40km/h.</p> <p>Older people, children under 14 years and intoxicated pedestrians are at greatest risk on our roads.</p>	<p>Cyclists crash most frequently at intersections, when leaving a path or driveway to enter a road or when a car door is opened in their path.</p> <p>Wearing a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of a cyclist incurring a head injury in the event of a crash by up to 60 per cent.</p>	<p>Country drivers are four times more likely to be killed and 40 per cent more likely to be seriously injured in road crashes than drivers in metropolitan Melbourne.</p> <p>Nearly two thirds of those who die on rural and regional roads are locals.</p>	<p>Road deaths and serious injuries happen most often at intersections and on rural and regional roads of 100km/h where a single vehicle runs off the road and collides with a roadside object such as a tree or pole.</p>
<b>What you told us you wanted</b>	<p>More education for drivers, policing unsafe pedestrian behaviour and education about the dangers of using headphones or being on the phone while crossing the road.</p>	<p>Higher penalties including fines the same as drivers, more bike lanes and paths and education for drivers.</p>	<p>More protective barriers, remove hazards, better maintenance like wider shoulders on roads and sealed edge lines and more education through trusted organisations like sport clubs.</p>	<p>New and better roads, better maintenance of rural roads, more wire barriers and remove hazards from roadsides.</p>
<b>What we'll do</b>	<p>Improve pedestrian safety by developing a new pedestrian/cyclist 'black area' program</p> <p>Deliver a new grants program for local government to provide safer walking and cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>Develop guidelines to enable greater use of 40km/h zones where and when the risks of pedestrian or cyclist crashes are high.</p>	<p>Improve the safety of on and off road cycling paths, reduce vehicle speeds around cyclists and remind everybody to share the road safely through education and enforcement.</p> <p>Improve cyclist safety by developing a new pedestrian/cyclist 'black area' program</p> <p>Deliver a new grants program for local government to provide safer walking and cycling infrastructure.</p>	<p>Improve road and roadside design to reduce the most common crash where a single vehicle leaves the road and collides with a roadside object such as a tree or pole.</p> <p>More detection and tougher penalties for drink driving and speeding.</p> <p>Develop guidelines to enable greater use of 40km/h zones where and when the risks of pedestrian or cyclist crashes are high.</p>	<p>Unprecedented investment into raising the safety of our roads, roadsides and intersections.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for technologies that communicate between vehicles and road infrastructure.</p> <p>Create safe urban environments where road safety and planning will be key partners in the design of new residential suburbs.</p>
				

	Young Drivers	Older road users	Motorcyclists	Unlicensed driving
Strategic Direction	Continue to improve the safety of young drivers through stronger enforcement, incentives and countermeasures that target the road safety hazards that put young drivers at particular risk.	Support the safe mobility of all older people through information to support safe travel choices and by improving infrastructure design for older drivers and pedestrians.	Make greater use of motorcycle safety technology and protective clothing. Better prepare new riders to be safe and target enforcement of unsafe road use among all motorists.	Remove unlicensed drivers from our roads through targeted, technology-driven enforcement.
The facts	<p>Road trauma is the single biggest killer of young Victorians aged 18 to 25 years.</p> <p>Young drivers are at greatest risk of dying or being seriously injured in the first six months of probationary driving.</p> <p>Mobile phones and other personal technology devices are becoming an increasing road safety risk and are particularly hazardous for less experienced younger and novice drivers.</p>	<p>Drivers aged 75 years and above have a higher risk of dying in a crash than any other age group when the relatively short distances they travel are taken into account.</p> <p>The number of Victorians aged 75 years and above is forecast to increase by 42 per cent by 2022.</p>	<p>Motorcyclists are four times more likely to be killed than other people on Victoria's roads.</p> <p>Motorcyclists represent 20 per cent of TAC costs, with costs about five times higher per vehicle than for all other vehicles.</p> <p>Nearly 60 per cent of speeding motorcyclists do not get fined because speed cameras are not able to identify them.</p>	<p>Unlicensed drivers are involved in approximately eight per cent of all fatal crashes. Unlicensed drivers pose a safety risk to other road users.</p> <p>Technological advances present significant opportunities to prevent and enforce against unlicensed driving.</p>
What you told us you wanted	More education, more enforcement and stronger penalties.	Education for older drivers to assess their ability to drive safely, alternative transport and simplified roadsides and signs.	More driver education about the safety needs of motorcyclists, more enforcement and a requirement that motorcyclists wear protective clothing.	
What we'll do	<p>Support young drivers to gain vital driving experience.</p> <p>Improve young drivers' understanding of risks through targeted and innovative communication and education initiatives.</p>	<p>Give older drivers, their family, friends and medical practitioners improved information to assess road safety risks and identify the safest and most practical travel choices.</p> <p>Providing a less complex road environment that will better serve the safety needs of older drivers and pedestrians.</p>	<p>Increase the number of motorcyclists wearing protective clothes.</p> <p>Improve detection of non-compliant motorcyclists, including through speed cameras.</p> <p>Design roads and do maintenance to remove hazards for motorcyclists.</p>	Take a zero tolerance approach. Use technology to improve enforcement.
				

	Trucks	Vehicle safety	Fatigue/drowsy driving	Corporate responsibility
Strategic Direction	Safely accommodate the increase in trucks on Victoria's roads using technology and effective management of Victoria's road network. Introduce initiatives to encourage everybody to share the road safely.	Increase the availability of vehicle safety features in the Victorian car market and encourage the uptake of these features.	Increase understanding of the role of fatigue in road trauma and assist drivers to use fatigue detection technology to mitigate risks associated with drowsy driving, particularly among heavy vehicle drivers.	Support the public and private sectors to proactively develop systems and policies that will improve the safety of their employees and other people on the roads.
The facts	<p>The number of trucks on Victoria's roads is projected to double by 2025.</p> <p>One in three fatal heavy vehicle crashes is estimated to involve fatigue. This compares to one in six for non truck involved crashes.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>Tailgating is a major cause of rear end crashes and is a particularly dangerous practice for heavy vehicle drivers.</p>	<p>On average, people involved in crashes with vehicles made in 2007 are half as likely to die or be seriously injured than those in vehicles made in 1987.</p> <p>The Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) is Australasia's leading independent vehicle safety advocate that provides consumers with transparent advice on vehicle safety through its safety rating program. ANCAP recommends purchasing vehicles with 5-star safety ratings.</p>	<p>Fatigue is estimated to be a contributing factor in around 20 per cent of road deaths in Victoria.</p> <p>Fatigue-detection technology offers significant potential to effectively tackle the problem of drowsy driving.</p>	<p>Work-related road crashes in Australia account for about 50 per cent of all occupational fatalities and 15 per cent of national road deaths.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>Over the last seven years, one third of worker fatalities arose from injuries sustained in a vehicle incident on a public road.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Businesses that support road safety have significant advantages such as reduced operating costs as well as reduced numbers of deaths and serious injuries.</p>
What you told us you wanted	More enforcement, more driver education about the safety needs of trucks and a requirement that trucks be fitted with fatigue detection devices.	Require manufacturers to incorporate all safety technology into Australian models and provide incentives to encourage young drivers to buy cars with higher star safety ratings.		
What we'll do	<p>Improve fatigue management.</p> <p>Improve truck safety standards.</p> <p>Educate others on the needs of trucks on the road.</p> <p>Stronger enforcement.</p> <p>Reduce tailgating through improved enforcement and technology.</p>	<p>Encourage people to buy cars with high-standard safety features.</p> <p>Work with vehicle manufacturers to include proven safety features as standard in all vehicles sold in Australia.</p> <p>Introduce a new government vehicle purchasing policy requiring all light vehicles to have a minimum 5-star ANCAP safety rating.</p>	<p>Research effective and practical measures to reduce risks.</p> <p>Educate people about risks.</p> <p>Trial new technology to detect fatigue.</p>	Foster an environment that shares information and knowledge about work-related road safety and encourages the adoption of higher safety standards, safer driving and fleet policies by organisations both large and small.
				

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