

ACT Road Safety Strategy 2007–2010

and ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2007–2008





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Foreword

The ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan was prepared by the Office of Transport in the ACT Department of Territory and Municipal Services.

Many stakeholders have an interest in road safety in the ACT, and the particular assistance of the following organisations in developing the Strategy and Action Plan is acknowledged with thanks:

ACT Policing, Australian Federal Police
Australian College of Road Safety, ACT and Region Chapter
Australian Transport Safety Bureau
Motorcycle Riders Association - ACT
NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust
NRMA Motoring and Services
Pedal Power ACT Inc.

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ACT Road Safety Strategy 2007–2010

Introduction

Although the ACT has a very good road safety record in comparison to other parts of Australia, and indeed the world, there is no room for complacency. In 2005 the economic cost to the community of ACT road crashes was estimated to be some \$180 million.

This document outlines the ACT Road Safety Strategy for the period from 2007 to 2010. It follows on from previous ACT Road Safety Strategies, the latest covering the period 2001-2005.

This document also incorporates the ACT Road Safety Action Plan for the two-year period covering 2007 and 2008. It also follows on from previous ACT Road Safety Action Plans, the latest covering the two-year period 2005 and 2006.

These documents outline strategies and actions to address key road safety issues in the ACT. Many of these issues are common to other parts of Australia.

Road safety programs are commonly classified in terms of the “Four Es” – Education, Encouragement, Engineering and Enforcement. They are applied in an integrated way to most of the issues covered in this document.

While the Strategy is intended to be a higher level “policies and principles” document, the Action Plan spells out specific activities designed to achieve the goals and targets outlined in the ACT and National Road Safety Strategies.



National Context

The ACT is a member of forums addressing road safety issues at the national level, including the National Road Safety Strategy Panel and the Austroads Road Safety Task Force.

The National Road Safety Strategy 2001–2010 (the National Strategy) was approved by Ministers of the Australian Transport Council (ATC) in November 2000, and came into effect on 1 January 2001. It provides a framework for coordinating the road safety initiatives of Australian, State, Territory and local governments.

The National Strategy is supported by a series of two-year National Road Safety Action Plans, the most recent covering the two-year period 2007 and 2008. This Action Plan was approved by the ATC in October 2006.

The target of the National Road Safety Strategy is to reduce Australia's annual road fatality rate by at least 40% over the decade to 2010, from 9.3 fatalities per 100,000 population (the benchmark figure based on the 1999 fatality rate) to no more than 5.6.

The national rate as at July 2006 was 7.9, well above the rate required for uniform progress towards the 2010 target. Vigorous action is required in 2007 and 2008 by all States and Territories to achieve a major “step down” in road deaths to get back on track towards the 2010 target.

In a national context, road safety improvements continue to be guided by “safe system” principles. A safe transport system acknowledges that human error is inevitable and makes allowance for this error. It also recognises there are limits to the forces humans can withstand in a crash and limits to the physical energy that can be absorbed by protective systems. An essential element of a “safe system” approach is the design of roads and vehicles to reduce the risk of crashes and to reduce the harm to people if a crash does happen. Speed management is also a critical factor in limiting the impact energy of crashes.

The “safe system” approach therefore relies on the following key elements – **safer speeds, safer roads and roadsides, safer vehicles** as well as **safer road users and safer behaviours**.



Based on the “safe system” approach, the National Action Plan for 2007 and 2008 includes the following key actions:

- best practice speed management and enforcement;
- investment in safety-targeted road programs;
- increased encouragement for manufacturers to develop and include vehicle safety features in new vehicles and for consumers to be aware of their benefits;
- improved vehicle fleet purchasing and use policies; as well as
- initiatives in the areas of drink and drug driving, driver distraction, restraint use and novice drivers.

The ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan adopt and complement the principles and objectives of the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.



Key Issues in the ACT

An analysis of ACT crash data for the last five years (2000 to 2005) shows that the peak times for crashes coincide with morning and afternoon traffic volume peaks. This suggests that national road safety interventions – such as initiatives in the areas of speed management and driver distraction – should be effective in an ACT context.

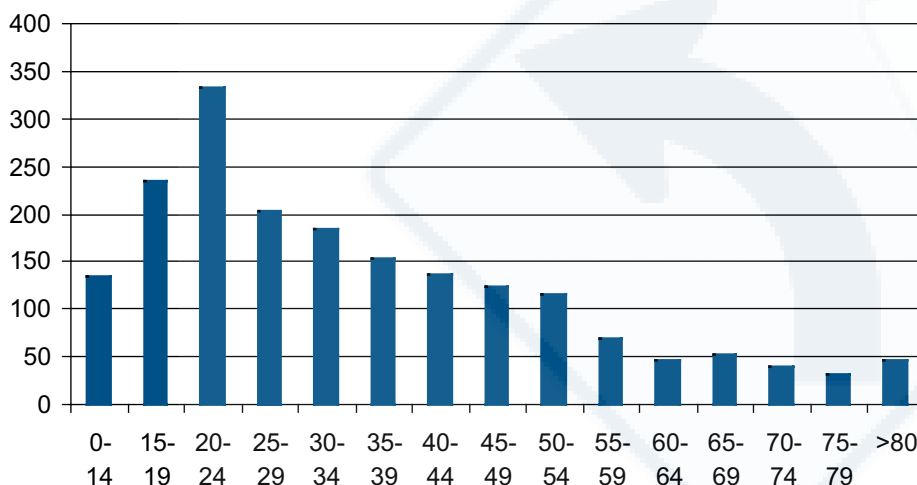
Notwithstanding the above, the following specific issues have been relatively consistent in the ACT over the last five years:

- 15% of all crashes are “single vehicle crashes” (indicative of driver error or actions independent of the road system or other traffic);
- 46% of all crashes are “rear end collisions” (the most frequent crash type); and
- 27% of all casualty crashes are “right angle collisions” (the most frequent type in terms of severity).

In terms of road user casualties over the last five years, 71.6% were car drivers or passengers; 12.3% were motorcycle riders or pillions; 7.0% were bicycle riders; and 7.0% were pedestrians.

In terms of the age profile of total casualties during this period, 37% were aged under 30. This indicates a continued need to pay attention to issues affecting younger drivers and younger road users. Although casualties tend to decline with age, perhaps reflecting a reduction in mobility with age, a considerable number of middle-age persons become ACT road casualties.

Figure 1 – Casualties by Age Group 2001-2005



Outline of key national and ACT-specific road safety issues:

- Speeding
- Lack of care and driver distraction
- Single vehicle crashes; rear end crashes and right angle crashes
- Motorcyclists
- Novice drivers

Road safety programs addressing national, and ACT-specific, issues are necessary. These would include engineering improvements, awareness campaigns, education and enforcement efforts. More details on these programs are provided in the ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2007–2008.



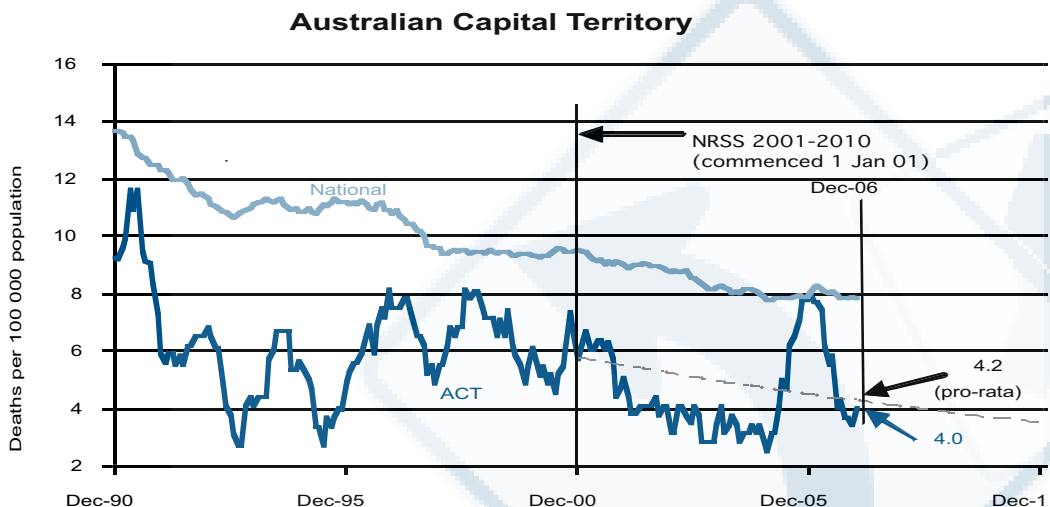
The Challenge for the ACT

Like other Australian States and Territories, the ACT relies heavily on motor vehicles for transport. As at 30 June 2005, the ACT had an estimated population of 325,000 and over 219,500 registered motor vehicles. In the 12 months ended 31 October 2004, vehicles registered in the ACT for road use travelled a total of 3.2 billion km.¹

Unlike other Australian jurisdictions, the ACT has an established and well-designed road system, a general urban environment and a small, well-defined, geographic area. Nevertheless, road crashes remain a significant issue for ACT residents. In 2005 there was a total of 7003 “on road” crashes, made up of 6,560 property damage crashes, 418 injury crashes and 25 fatal crashes. It is estimated that the economic cost of these crashes was some \$180 million.

The ACT consistently records low crash rates compared with other jurisdictions. Apart from a “spike” in the 2005 population fatality rate, the ACT rate is consistently lower than the national average for this indicator. Similarly, ACT rates for persons hospitalised per 100,000 population and per 100 million vehicle kilometres of travel are also lower than the national average.

Figure 2 – National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) - Deaths per 100,000 Population



Source: Australian Transport Safety Bureau

This data indicates that previous road safety interventions have been effective in reducing ACT crash rates despite steady increases in the ACT population.

However, this does not reflect the whole picture of the impact of road trauma on the ACT community. Recent research has established that the number of fatal crashes in NSW involving ACT vehicles or controllers is approximately the same as the number of fatal crashes in the ACT.² While these crashes, quite correctly, do not appear in the ACT crash data, it is recognised that appropriate interventions for ACT drivers travelling interstate also need to be part of ACT road safety strategies and programs.

The ACT should, therefore, make every effort to contribute to an overall reduction in the national fatality rate.

The challenge for this current Strategy and Action Plan is to:

- achieve better than the national target of 5.6 fatalities per 100,000 population;
- maintain ACT crash rates, both for fatalities and casualties, at a level lower than the national average; and
- reduce fatalities and casualties occurring to ACT drivers travelling interstate.



Strategic Goals for Road Safety in the ACT

The ultimate ACT road safety objective is that even one death should be seen as unacceptable in our community. This vision for road safety can be outlined in three strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1

Road trauma rates continue to be reduced despite increases in population and travel.

To move towards the above ultimate objective, the ACT should endeavour to continue to reduce road trauma levels as referred to in the previous section – The Challenge for the ACT.

Strategic Goal 2

The community shares the responsibility for road safety.

Road safety is not only the government's problem. It is an issue for the whole community. Although road transport in Canberra is dominated by the private motor car, other vehicles including taxis, buses, heavy vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles have a legitimate right to use the road system. Pedestrians have a need to cross roads or share other areas, such as car parks, with motor vehicles.

All road users have a responsibility to share the road infrastructure, and to be alert and careful while doing so. Previous ACT road safety strategies have emphasised the importance of community involvement and stakeholder coordination to address road safety issues. This was to be achieved through targeted education and publicity programs, public consultation and partnerships with road safety groups and stakeholders.

This goal remains important to this current strategy. The ACT should continue efforts to create community responsibility for road safety.



Strategic Goal 3

Road safety coordination and support arrangements are improved.

The ACT Government is responsible for administering issues at both a territorial and municipal level. In comparison to other jurisdictions, this avoids the need for linkages between the State Government and local councils on road safety matters.

It is crucial to consult with, and engage, the public and road safety stakeholder groups to address ACT road safety issues. Sound linkages need to be in place between the various Government agencies and groups undertaking road safety tasks. In some cases this will involve the Federal and State Governments as well national stakeholders such as vehicle manufacturers, government agencies, and motorist organisations.

Actions to address these Strategic Goals are outlined in the ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2007-2008.





ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2007– 2008

Introduction

This Action Plan provides further information on the key road safety issues affecting the ACT and provides a list of actions designed to address them. It should be read in conjunction with the ACT Road Safety Strategy for 2007–2010.

The Vision for Road Safety in the ACT outlined three strategic goals. These strategic goals give rise to a set of strategic objectives which, mostly, follow the national approach of ‘safe system’ principles. These Strategic Objectives are discussed in detail later in this document.

STRATEGIC GOALS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Education	Encouragement	Engineering	Enforcement
Road trauma rates continue to be reduced despite increases in population and travel	Safer speeds	•	•	•	●
	Safer roads and roadsides			●	
	Safer vehicles		•	●	●
The community shares the responsibility for road safety	Safer road users and safer behaviours	●	●		●
Road safety coordination and support arrangements are improved	Improved coordination and consultation processes	Support measures			
	Improved support processes	Support measures			

- denotes primary relationship
- denotes secondary relationship

Action Plan items are classified in terms of the “Four Es” – Education, Encouragement, Engineering and Enforcement (refer to the list at the end of this Action Plan) – and to achieve the above strategic objectives, an integrated approach to the application of the “Four Es” will be used.

Safer Speeds

Speed is a factor in most traffic crashes. The chances of surviving a crash decrease rapidly above certain impact speeds, depending on the nature of the crash. Without high impact speeds, damage or injury would be minimal. Even small reductions in average speeds result in substantially greater percentage reductions in deaths and injuries.³

Speed limits are provided in order to regulate traffic flow and promote safety for all road users. Roads ACT has a systematic approach for determining, and where necessary reviewing, appropriate speed limits for roads in the ACT. It is also proposed to review current arrangements for speed limit signage, including the possible use of pavement markings.

Speed surveys undertaken by Roads ACT during 2005 indicated that 85th percentile speeds were contained within 10 km/h of the posted speed limit in 82% of cases and that mean speeds on many residential streets continue to be higher than the 50 km/h default speed limit.⁴ (If all speeds are ranked from slowest to fastest, the “85th percentile speed” separates the slower 85% from the faster 15%). This indicates a need to reinforce compliance with the default speed limit introduced in June 2003.

Speed enforcement by ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office is a key element in encouraging motorists to travel at safer speeds. Some 6,480 traffic infringement notices were issued by ACT Policing for speeding offences during 2006. Over the same period, over 27.6 million vehicles were checked and some 38,800 infringement notices were issued by ACT fixed and mobile speed cameras.

Interaction between ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office already occurs in relation to speed enforcement. It is proposed to maintain and enhance this interaction to ensure that the police and camera programs work together.

The National Action Plan for 2007 and 2008 outlines measures for best practice speed enforcement, including “anytime anywhere” enforcement, a mix of unmarked and high visibility approaches and tight enforcement tolerances.

Currently, the ACT has 11 fixed red light/speed camera sites, and five mobile camera vans using laser-based camera technology. A procurement process is underway to gradually increase the number of fixed red light/speed camera sites and introduce

fixed speed-only cameras at mid-block locations. The mobile speed camera program in the ACT also continues to expand, with the declaration of additional sites across the ACT. All arterial, major collector and minor collector roads may now be assessed for the placement of a mobile speed camera and the number of mobile sites was increased from 99 to 120 in December 2006. The ACT will also further examine the issue of appropriate ACT speed enforcement tolerances.

All jurisdictions have a public relations challenge in explaining the road safety benefits of automated speed enforcement in terms of reducing speeds and crashes. Many motorists see speed cameras as simply revenue raising, despite fines only being incurred if speed limits are exceeded. Consideration will be given to addressing this issue through focussed awareness campaigns.

Roads ACT has obtained a grant from the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust to examine the potential for introducing a Speed Awareness Course, as used in Lancashire UK, for drivers with multiple speeding offences. On the basis of UK reports, such a course could be expected to have a small but significant effect on drivers' attitudes to speeding and their actual behaviour.

Action Plan Items

- Develop and implement an awareness campaign to reinforce the 50 km/h default urban speed limit.
- Review the appropriateness of speed limits for particular lengths of roads as and when required.
- Review current arrangements for speed limit signage, including the possible use of pavement markings.
- Maintain and enhance interaction between ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office in relation to speed enforcement.
- Maintain levels of traffic enforcement by ACT Policing, with a continued focus on speeding.
- Continue to expand the number of fixed red light/speed cameras and mobile camera van sites and introduce fixed speed-only cameras on midblocks.
- Review the level of enforcement tolerances for speeding offences in the ACT.
- Investigate ways to counter the public perception of enforcement only being "revenue raising".
- Undertake a consultant study to examine the potential for introducing a Speed Awareness Course for drivers with multiple speeding offences.

Safer Roads and Roadsides

The ACT has benefited from previous planning, which has resulted in a well defined hierarchy of roads (excluding pre-1960s districts) and a limited amount of “ribbon development” on main roads. This has contributed to the very good traffic crash rates in the ACT. Road safety should continue to be a consideration in the planning, design and construction of new roads.

Roads ACT has existing programs to manage and improve the ACT road system. During 2005–06, funding allocated to road safety improvements was a total of \$550,000 under a number of programs. Funding is also provided by the Australian Government for the Federal Black Spot Program, with between \$455,000 and \$602,000 annually being provided since 1996–97. This is in addition to safety improvements funded under minor new works programs.

Black spot programs address problems in particular locations, and evaluations have shown them to be highly effective with a very favourable cost benefit ratio. Some safety problems in the road environment are more diffuse, but can be improved by “mass application” of remedial measures. Compared with new road construction, remedial measures can be low cost, but highly effective in safety terms.

Frequent crash types in the ACT include “right angle collisions” (representing around 27% of all casualty crashes), “rear end collisions” (46% of all crashes) and “single vehicle crashes” (15% of all crashes). The mass application of engineering treatments to address the top ACT locations with these crash types would contribute to an overall improvement in road safety.

Roads ACT intends to undertake a number of further engineering consultancies to enhance the development and evaluation of ACT road safety programs.

Action Plan Items

- Manage road safety improvements under the Federal Black Spot Program and ACT Black Spot program.
- Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address the safety of all road users including motorists, pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists.
- Examine “low cost” treatments for sites that do not warrant major engineering solutions and implement improvements as part of the Minor New Works Program.
- Develop specific engineering programs to address frequent crash types in the ACT such as right angle crashes, rear end crashes and single vehicle crashes.
- Examine the possibility of applying road safety ratings to road sections in order to develop a new road safety audit and improvement program.
- Evaluate the benefits gained from the ACT Black Spot and other programs.

Safer Vehicles

The ACT participates in national forums developing and maintaining standards for new vehicles entering the Australian market. The *Australian Design Rules* (ADRs) are rules for designing and building vehicles and are developed through a consultative process involving government and industry representatives.

The *Australian Vehicle Standards Rules 1999* set standards that vehicles must comply with before being driven on public roads and road related areas. These Rules require that a vehicle that is subject to an ADR when built or imported must continue to comply with that ADR. These national standards are adopted in the ACT through the *Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2000*.

There is also scope for vehicle safety improvements – such as curtain airbags and Electronic Stability Control – to be adopted by manufacturers and importers on a non-regulatory basis. Encouraging private and fleet purchasers to be aware of, and specify, vehicle safety features is one mechanism to encourage a greater take up of this technology.

There is also scope to raise the safety awareness of young people purchasing their first (usually second-hand) vehicle. The safety performance of vehicles within various classes and price ranges can vary significantly.

The ACT has a continuing vehicle inspection program, which includes random on-road and car park vehicle inspections. Some 50,000 random inspections were undertaken in 2005–06. Vehicle inspections are also required on first registration in the ACT, to clear a defect notice, on transfer of registration for light vehicles over six years of age, for heavy vehicles (every two years) and for taxis and hire cars (annually).

Light vehicle inspection arrangements were reviewed during 2004. Following this review process, which included an opportunity for public and stakeholder comment, the ACT Government decided that there were no changes required to the current arrangements.

Most vehicle crashes can be attributed to driver error, rather than vehicle defects. Australian research has shown that less than 3% of fatal crashes could be attributed to vehicle condition, and half of these were related to tyre faults, a type of defect which can be readily identified in random inspections of the type undertaken in the ACT.⁵

Action Plan Items

- Continue to participate in national forums relating to the regulation and encouragement of enhanced vehicle safety features.
- Improve awareness of vehicle safety features to ACT motorists and fleet managers.
- Develop an awareness campaign for young people purchasing their first vehicle.
- Continue ACT vehicle inspection arrangements.

Safer Road Users and Safer Behaviours

The ACT Road Safety Strategy emphasises the need to create community responsibility for road safety. Road safety is not only the government's responsibility. It is an issue for the whole community.

The ACT Road Safety Strategy suggests that general road safety interventions, such as targeting speeding and driver distraction, should be effective in an ACT context. Other specific key issues were also identified in the ACT context.

Traffic enforcement by ACT Policing covers a range of offences under the Australian Road Rules and plays an important role in encouraging safe driving behaviour.

Action Plan Items

- Highlight community responsibility in all road safety awareness campaigns.
- Develop an awareness campaign to encourage motorists to share the road with other road users.
- Develop awareness campaigns targeting speeding and driver distraction.
- Develop an awareness campaign to address the causes of right angle, rear end and single vehicle crashes.
- Maintain levels of traffic enforcement by ACT Policing for all traffic offences.

The National Road Safety Action Plan 2007 and 2008 identifies several other areas that warrant particular attention under the above heading, some of which also warrant attention in the ACT context. These are covered in the following sections.



Fatigue and Distracted Driving

Fatigue is a known contributing factor to road crashes, but the number of crashes in which fatigue plays a part is difficult to determine.

Fatigue does not appear to be an issue in ACT road crash statistics. However, recent research found that the number of fatal crashes in the ACT is approximately the same as fatal crashes in NSW involving ACT vehicles or controllers. This research found that 8% of ACT controllers involved in these interstate crashes were fatigued.⁶

Fatigue issues affecting heavy vehicle drivers are being addressed by the National Transport Commission. The ACT continues to be involved in this work, despite the lack of formal driving hours regulations in the ACT. ACT involvement is to ensure that ACT heavy vehicle drivers are covered, and that the ACT does not become a loophole for national fatigue management measures.

Sources of driver distraction, both inside and outside the vehicle, have increased substantially in recent years. Many modern vehicles are fitted with sophisticated entertainment and communication systems, adding to the possible distractions from children and other passengers. Studies indicate that the use of both hand-held and hands-free mobile phones impair driver performance and increase crash risk. Many ACT motorists continue to use hand-held mobile phones while driving despite this being an offence. ACT Policing issued 1,020 traffic infringement notices for this offence in 2006.

Action Plan Items

- Cooperate with NSW road safety agencies in awareness and enforcement campaigns to address issues affecting ACT drivers travelling interstate.
- Continue to participate in national fatigue management initiatives for the heavy vehicle industry.
- Develop and implement enhanced awareness and enforcement programs to reduce the use of mobile phones while driving.



Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists face a fatal crash risk about 20 times higher than drivers. The severity of injuries faced by motorcyclists is higher than for other road user groups. Data from all jurisdictions indicates that serious crashes involving motorcyclists have increased in recent years. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau reports a 33% increase in motorcycle deaths from 1999 to 2005.⁷

In the ACT, eight of the 26 fatalities in 2005 and three of the 13 fatalities in 2006 involved motorcyclists. Research by the ANU Medical School indicates that a large proportion of motorcycle injuries, even those occurring on roads, are not reported to the police.⁸

There has been a growth in the popularity of motorcycling over recent years, which is reflected in the figures for national motorcycle sales and registrations. There were 6,500 motorcycles on the ACT register in January 2002, growing to 8,700 in January 2007.

Although many road safety countermeasures apply to both drivers and riders, there is also scope for motorcycle-specific countermeasures, including awareness campaigns and engineering treatments. One example would be encouraging the use of protective clothing.

The ACT system of rider training requires the learner to either hold a current driver licence or to complete the *Road Ready* program and pass the road rules knowledge test. A nine-hour learner rider course must be completed before a learner motorcycle licence is issued. The provisional licence assessment can be undertaken after holding a learner licence for at least three months. If the applicant fails the provisional licence assessment test, they are required to undertake a seven-hour pre-provisional licence training course subsidised by the ACT Government. Learner motorcycle riders can choose to undertake this course to enhance their skills and road craft awareness.

It is proposed to review current licensing and training requirements, in liaison with motorcycle training and user representatives. One option to be explored is making the pre-provisional licence training course mandatory for all novice riders.

Action Plan Items

- Establish regular meetings between Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) officers and motorcycle groups, such as the Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT, on road safety issues.
- Develop and implement public education campaigns on motorcycle safety issues.
- Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address motorcyclists' safety.
- Review ACT licensing, training and testing requirements for novice riders.

Novice Drivers

Nationally, novice drivers are over-represented in crash data by a ratio of at least 3:1.⁹ In the ACT, about 37% of all casualties occurred to people younger than 30 years of age in 2005. The largest number appears to be between the ages of 20 and 24, accounting for about 16% of total casualties. In terms of vehicle controllers, those aged under 25 accounted for 27% of casualties.

The ACT already has a number of interventions for novice drivers, including the mandatory *Road Ready* program delivered through the ACT education system, and the voluntary *Road Ready Plus* program for provisional drivers.

The *Road Ready* program was introduced in the ACT in 2000 and the materials used are due to be reviewed and updated. Development of an additional module to enhance the *Road Ready Plus* program is underway. It is proposed to evaluate a trial use of this module, and if successful, seek the ACT Government's agreement to implement it on a permanent basis. It is also proposed to review and update Departmental websites containing information relevant to learner and provisional drivers.

The ACT also has graduated licensing arrangements for learner and provisional drivers. Licensing arrangements and novice driver restrictions vary between the jurisdictions, and there is no established best practice for this issue at the present time. This issue is receiving increased attention by road agencies, and the ACT will monitor interstate developments for improvements that can be applied in the ACT.

Action Plan Items

- Review and update the materials used in the *Road Ready* course.
- Develop, evaluate and implement an additional module to enhance the *Road Ready Plus* course.
- Review and update Departmental websites containing information relevant to learner and provisional drivers.
- Continue to monitor developments in other jurisdictions for potential novice driver initiatives.



Drink and Drug Driving

Nationally, drink driving continues to be an issue. Over one in five drivers/riders killed have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) exceeding the legal limit. Random breath testing results show that on average one in 300 drivers tested exceed the legal limit.¹⁰

ACT Policing continues to treat random breath testing as a priority, targeting the times and locations drink drivers are likely to be found. During 2005-06, the AFP conducted 77,594 breath tests that returned 1,213 (or 1.56%) positive readings.

A review of the ACT *Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977* will assist in identifying national best practice in a number of areas. Following the completion of the review, recommendations will be put before the ACT Government.

Repeat drink-drivers remain a concern to road safety authorities nationally, and countermeasures such as alcohol (ignition) interlocks are being used in some Australian States. The ACT will continue to monitor emerging best practice in relation to these issues.

The ACT continues to monitor random roadside drug testing initiatives in other jurisdictions (with implementation in Victoria, Tasmania, SA and NSW, and proposals in Queensland and WA) and has established a Drug Driving Working Party to consider ACT implications. There are a number of administrative, technical, financial and legal issues that would need to be considered prior to the introduction of a similar program in the ACT.

Action Plan Items

- Continue an appropriate level of random breath testing operations.
- Complete a review of the *Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977* and provide advice to Government.
- Monitor emerging best practice in relation to initiatives addressing repeat drink drivers, such as alcohol interlocks.
- Continue to monitor interstate experience with the implementation of random roadside drug testing.



Restraint and Helmet Use

Nationally, about one in four vehicle occupants killed in crashes are not wearing a seat belt. This appears to be a particular issue in rural areas.¹¹

Casualty data for 2005 illustrates a high level of compliance with seat belt and crash helmet requirements within the ACT. A seat belt was not worn in approximately 1% of casualty crashes. A helmet was not worn in a further 0.9% of casualty crashes.

Despite being compulsory since 1992, the wearing of bicycle helmets is not regular practice by all bicyclists. It would be appropriate to examine possible measures to increase bicycle helmet wearing rates. Further research is needed into the effect of bicycle helmet wearing rates on ACT road trauma, as Roads ACT crash data does not cover off-road bicycle incidents.

ACT regulations have required the use of suitable infant and child restraints for many years. The non-use of such restraints does not appear as a concern in ACT road crash statistics. Existing programs, by organisations such as Kidsafe, encourage the correct use of infant and child restraints, for example the Infant Restraint Loan Service. Efforts in this area should be maintained.

Overall, restraint and motorcycle helmet use is not considered a priority for this Action Plan. Nevertheless, existing enforcement measures are to be maintained.

Action Plan Items

- Maintain existing enforcement levels in relation to the wearing of seat belts and motorcycle helmets.
- Review possible measures to encourage higher levels of bicycle helmet wearing.
- Research the effect of non-wearing of bicycle helmets on ACT road trauma rates.
- Maintain existing levels of support to the encouragement of correct use of infant and child restraints.



Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Pedestrians accounted for 7.2% of ACT casualties in 2005, including five fatalities. Of these pedestrian casualties, 46% were less than 25 years old. Although it is not currently reflected in ACT crash statistics, older pedestrian safety is likely to become an emerging issue as the ACT population ages.

Bicyclists accounted for 7.2% of on-road ACT casualties in 2005, including one fatality. Research by the ANU Medical School indicates that bicycle-related road trauma is under-reported to police. Whereas most bicycling casualties involve persons aged less than 20, there is a peak in serious injuries among bicyclists aged 35 to 49 years.¹²

Existing ACT engineering programs are used to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Roads ACT liaises closely with cycling groups in relation to these programs. There is also scope for specific countermeasures, including awareness campaigns, addressing specific issues of concern to bicyclists and pedestrians.

Road safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists also need to be seen in the context of the significant health benefits from encouraging greater physical activity in the community.

Action Plan Items

- Maintain and enhance regular meetings between TAMS officers and cycling groups, such as Pedal Power, on road safety issues.
- Develop and implement public education campaigns on cycling and pedestrian safety issues.
- Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address pedestrians' and cyclists' safety.
- Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



Older Drivers

Drivers over 70 years of age do not show up as a particular problem in ACT crash statistics at the present time. In terms of ACT vehicle controllers, there were 407 casualties in 2005. Of these, 21 (5%) involved a driver 70 years of age or older.

Although older drivers tend to self-regulate their driving practices, current national crash rates suggest that older drivers may be over-represented in serious injury and fatal crashes per head of population and distance travelled. This is because there are relatively fewer older people in the population, fewer are licensed, and they tend to drive less frequently and shorter annual distances. Older drivers are also more fragile (prone to injury in a crash) than younger drivers.

Although there are higher priority road safety concerns at the present time, road safety and driver licensing authorities are aware of the emerging issue of older drivers. With changing demographic patterns, older drivers may present a major challenge for road safety over the next 20 to 30 years. This will require a better understanding of driving behaviours, travel patterns and crash risk in order to develop effective strategies and programs to support continued mobility and safety.

In terms of existing programs, the ACT requires medical assessment for all licence classes at age 75, and annually thereafter. Medical assessments may also be required where specific medical conditions are reported.

The ACT has existing awareness programs for older drivers. An “Older Drivers Handbook” is sent out with licence renewals at age 70. A “Retiring from Driving” booklet is sent out with licence renewals at age 75. These documents have been developed in conjunction with the ACT Council of the Ageing (COTA).

Funding has been provided by the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust for the Older Person’s Road Safety Needs Analysis project, being undertaken by COTA. This study will provide more relevant and recent data to assist with ACT policy development in relation to older persons and their transport needs.

Action Plan Items

- Continue to liaise with stakeholders, such as the Council of the Ageing and the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, on existing and potential initiatives for older drivers.
- Continue to monitor developments in other jurisdictions in relation to older driver issues.

Improved Coordination and Consultation Processes

A variety of mechanisms are used in interstate jurisdictions for road safety liaison and coordination. All jurisdictions have some sort of “Government Agencies” Road Safety Committee, and mechanisms to include community and stakeholder groups. Some States (Victoria, SA and WA) have a Council at Ministerial level. There are multi-layers of road safety committees in NSW, Victoria and WA.

The ACT Road Safety Strategy identified the importance of community involvement and stakeholder coordination to address road safety issues. There is a need for:

- improved community engagement processes – including public awareness campaigns and consultation processes;
- new arrangements to improve coordination between government agencies;
- partnerships with stakeholder groups such as NRMA, Pedal Power and the Motorcycle Riders Association; and
- consultation with other groups and individuals as the need arises.

In the ACT, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) and ACT Policing are the key agencies with responsibilities under this Action Plan. TAMS is responsible for road safety policy, awareness campaigns, road safety engineering matters, driver licensing and vehicle registration programs, the processing of payments for infringement notices, and the operations of the Traffic Camera Office. ACT Policing is responsible for traffic enforcement programs.

Other road safety stakeholders in the ACT include:

- ACT Department of Education and Training (school based road safety programs);
- ACT Health and the Chair of Road Trauma and Emergency Medicine (trauma care and health data);
- Insurance Australia Group (ACT Compulsory Third Party insurer);
- Australian Transport Safety Bureau (national road safety linkages);
- Australian College of Road Safety – ACT and Region Chapter; and
- Specific road user groups, represented by organisations such as NRMA, Pedal Power and the Motorcycle Riders Association.



An especially important partnership is that between the ACT Government, community groups and the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust. With a charter to enhance road safety for the benefit of the ACT community, this statutory public charitable trust has contributed some \$16.3 million towards innovative road safety initiatives since 1992. The Trust supports research and other initiatives through a targeted grants program.

The Minister for Territory and Municipal Services has agreed to the establishment of a new Executive-level Road Safety Liaison Committee (RSLC) to:

- Monitor the implementation of the ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan;
- Provide quarterly advice to the Minister on matters affecting road safety;
- Consider new road safety initiatives with potential for ACT implementation; and
- Ensure effective linkages with other agencies on road safety matters.

The RSLC is to be supported by an Road Safety Task Force (RSTF). Members of this group would:

- Act as a working, support and advisory group to the RSLC;
- Provide agency input to the development of ACT road safety strategies and action plans; and
- Report on progress against the ACT Road Safety Action Plan, and other road safety initiatives in their agency.

Both of these groups would focus on the key government agencies responsible for implementing the various engineering, enforcement, education and encouragement elements of the ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan. There is also a need for coordination arrangements between TAMS and agencies for more detailed road safety operational issues, which would not need to report formally to the RSTF, unless major changes or initiatives were proposed.

There is a further need for separate consultative processes with key road safety groups and stakeholders, such as the NRMA, Pedal Power and Motorcycle Riders Association, to allow a range of issues of interest to that group to be discussed and acted upon.



Figure 3 – Arrangements for ACT Road Safety Liaison



All of the above mechanisms would be in addition to wider community engagement processes, for example public awareness campaigns and seeking community input and feedback on various issues.

Action Plan Items

- Establish a new Road Safety Liaison Committee and Road Safety Task Force.
- Maintain regular meetings between TAMS officers and stakeholder groups on road safety matters.
- Develop, implement and maintain consultation processes to engage the community and stakeholders on ACT road safety issues.



Improved Support Processes

Data Analysis

Effective data analysis, evaluation and research is crucial for the development of evidence-based road safety countermeasures.

All traffic crashes in the ACT are required to be reported to the police (at a police station), irrespective of the amount of damage or the extent of injury. The police attend the more serious crashes, and prepare a report. Crash data is then entered onto the AFP system for police purposes.

All traffic crash forms are provided to Roads ACT for entry into the Integrated Asset Management System (IAMS) database. This data is used for analysis of road safety engineering and policy issues. Discussions between TAMS and ACT Policing are continuing in an effort to streamline and improve crash data collection processes.

There has also been a valuable data-matching study of police and hospital data covering crashes occurring in 2002 and 2003, undertaken by the Chair of Road Trauma and Emergency Medicine at the ANU with funding from the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust. The combined database provides an important tool in the description of the overall burden of road trauma in the ACT. It is hoped that the database will form the basis of an expanded collection over time.

In addition to this linkage with hospital data, there is scope for future linkages with insurance company databases and the ACT driver licensing and vehicle registration system to enhance the capacity for analysis of road safety issues.

Action Plan Items

- Continue to maintain and enhance the ACT traffic crash database.
- Improve linkages with other databases (eg Health, Insurance) to improve analysis capability.



Evaluation

The maintenance of effective road safety programs requires an ongoing program of monitoring and evaluation. As appropriate, studies will be undertaken to evaluate how the delivery of actions has been carried out (process evaluations) and in order to assess changes to road crash statistics and user behaviours (outcome evaluations). Comprehensive and independent evaluations of the speed camera and *Road Ready* and *Road Ready Plus* programs have previously been undertaken.

Road safety programs must also draw on best practice wherever possible. Australia's federal system allows the States and Territories to benchmark practices and procedures across the nation. In the area of road safety, this provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of relevant countermeasures.

The ACT will continue to participate in activities undertaken by national bodies, such as the National Road Safety Strategy Panel and the Austroads Road Safety Task Force, that provide invaluable access to information on new developments and best practice.

Action Plan Items

- Undertake a program of evaluation of road safety engineering treatments and policy initiatives.
- Continue to participate in national road safety forums.



Regulatory Systems

A variety of regulatory systems are in place to encourage safer behaviour by motorists. These include:

- Monetary fines, which are reviewed on an annual basis;
- Demerit points, which are applied to many traffic infringement notice penalties. Accumulation of a certain number of points, depending on the driver licence class, results in licence suspension;
- Fine default processes, resulting in driver licence, vehicle registration or “right to drive” suspension for non-payment of traffic infringement notice penalties; and
- Court processes for more serious offences, such as drink driving.

These systems generally work well, but can involve complex administrative, computer system and legal processes, for example in relation to the transfer of interstate offences, demerit points and driver licence histories. The Austroads Registration and Licensing Task Force is currently undertaking work addressing these issues.

Action Plan Items

- Maintain and enhance appropriate regulatory systems for traffic penalties, demerit points and court processes.
- Participate in national forums working to improve the transfer of interstate offences, demerit points and driver licence histories.



Consolidated List of Action Items

ACT ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2007-2008					
Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
Safer Speeds					
Develop and implement an awareness campaign to reinforce the 50 km/h default urban speed limit.		✓			TAMS
Review the appropriateness of speed limits for particular lengths of roads as and when required.			✓		TAMS
Review current arrangements for speed limit signage, including the possible use of pavement markings.			✓		TAMS
Maintain and enhance interaction between ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office in relation to speed enforcement.				✓	AFP, TAMS
Maintain levels of traffic enforcement by ACT Policing, with a continued focus on speeding.				✓	AFP
Continue to expand the number of fixed red light/speed cameras and mobile camera van sites and introduce fixed speed only cameras on midblocks.			✓	✓	TAMS, AFP
Review the level of enforcement tolerances for speeding offences in the ACT.				✓	TAMS, AFP
Investigate ways to counter the public perception of enforcement only being "revenue raising".		✓			TAMS
Undertake a consultant study to examine the potential for introducing a Speed Awareness Course for drivers with multiple speeding offences.	✓				TAMS
Safer Roads and Roadsides					
Manage road safety improvements under the Federal Black Spot Program and ACT Black Spot program.			✓		TAMS
Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address the safety of all road users including motorists, pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists.			✓		TAMS
Examine "low cost" treatments for sites that do not warrant major engineering solutions and implement improvements as part of the Minor New Works Program.			✓		TAMS
Develop specific engineering programs to address issues of concern in the ACT, such as right angle crashes, rear end crashes and single vehicle crashes.			✓		TAMS
Examine the possibility of applying road safety ratings to road sections in order to develop a new road safety audit and improvement program.			✓		TAMS
Evaluate the benefits gained from the ACT Black Spot and other programs.			✓		TAMS
Safer Vehicles					
Continue to participate in national forums relating to the regulation and encouragement of enhanced vehicle safety features.		✓	✓		TAMS
Improve awareness of vehicle safety features to ACT motorists and fleet managers.		✓			TAMS

Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
Develop an awareness campaign for young people purchasing their first vehicle.		✓			TAMS
Continue ACT vehicle inspection arrangements.				✓	TAMS
Safer Road Users and Safer Behaviours					
Highlight community responsibility in all road safety awareness campaigns.		✓			TAMS, AFP
Develop an awareness campaign to encourage motorists to share the road with other road users.		✓			TAMS
Develop awareness campaigns targeting speeding and driver distraction.		✓			TAMS
Develop an awareness campaign to address the causes of right angle, rear end and single vehicle crashes.		✓			TAMS
Maintain levels of traffic enforcement by ACT Policing for all traffic offences.				✓	AFP
Cooperate with NSW road safety agencies in awareness and enforcement campaigns to address issues affecting ACT drivers travelling interstate.		✓		✓	TAMS, AFP
Continue to participate in national fatigue management initiatives for the heavy vehicle industry.		✓		✓	TAMS
Develop and implement enhanced awareness and enforcement programs to reduce the use of mobile phones while driving.		✓		✓	TAMS, AFP
Establish regular meetings between TAMS officers and motorcycle groups, such as the Motorcycle Riders Association of the ACT, on road safety issues.	Support measure				TAMS
Develop and implement public education campaigns on motorcycle safety issues.		✓			TAMS
Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address motorcyclists' safety.			✓		TAMS
Review ACT licensing, training and testing requirements for novice riders.	✓				TAMS
Review and update the materials used in the Road Ready course.	✓				TAMS, DET
Develop, evaluate and implement an additional module to enhance the Road Ready Plus course.	✓				TAMS
Review and update Departmental websites containing information relevant to learner and provisional drivers.	✓	✓			TAMS
Continue to monitor developments in other jurisdictions for potential novice driver initiatives.	✓	✓		✓	TAMS
Continue an appropriate level of random breath testing operations.				✓	AFP
Complete a review of the Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977 and provide advice to Government.				✓	TAMS
Monitor emerging best practice in relation to initiatives addressing repeat drink drivers, such as alcohol interlocks.				✓	TAMS
Continue to monitor interstate experience with the implementation of random roadside drug testing.				✓	TAMS, AFP
Maintain existing enforcement levels in relation to the wearing of seat belts and motorcycle helmets.				✓	AFP
Review possible measures to encourage higher levels of bicycle helmet wearing.		✓		✓	TAMS, AFP

Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
Research the effect of non-wearing of bicycle helmets on ACT road trauma rates.			✓		TAMS
Maintain existing levels of support to the encouragement of correct use of infant and child restraints.		✓			TAMS
Maintain and enhance regular meetings between TAMS officers and cycling groups, such as Pedal Power, on road safety issues.	Support measure				TAMS
Develop and implement public education campaigns on cycling and pedestrian safety issues.		✓			TAMS
Ensure new road projects and engineering treatments address pedestrians' and cyclists' safety.			✓		TAMS
Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities.			✓		TAMS
Continue to liaise with stakeholders, such as the Council of the Ageing and the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, on existing and potential initiatives for older drivers.	Support measure				TAMS
Continue to monitor developments in other jurisdictions in relation to older driver issues.	✓	✓			TAMS
Improved Coordination and Consultation Processes					
Establish a new Road Safety Liaison Committee and Road Safety Task Force.	Support measure				TAMS
Maintain regular meetings between TAMS officers and stakeholder groups on road safety matters.	Support measure				TAMS
Develop, implement and maintain consultation processes to engage the community and stakeholders on ACT road safety issues.	Support measure				TAMS
Improved Support Processes					
Continue to maintain and enhance the ACT traffic crash database.	Support measure				TAMS, AFP
Improve linkages with other databases (eg Health, Insurance) to improve analysis capability.	Support measure				TAMS
Undertake a program of evaluation of road safety engineering treatments and policy initiatives.	Support measure				TAMS
Continue to participate in national road safety forums.	Support measure				TAMS
Maintain and enhance appropriate regulatory systems for traffic penalties, demerit points and court processes.	Support measure				TAMS
Participate in national forums working to improve the transfer of interstate offences, demerit points and driver licence histories.	Support measure				TAMS



References

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Australian Transport Council *National Road Safety Strategy 2001–2010* ATSB, Canberra. Available at www.atcouncil.gov.au/documents/atcnrсс.aspx

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Footnotes

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics *Australian Capital Territory in Focus 1307.8*. Canberra 2006 pp 161-163, 170. Figure for registered motor vehicles as at 31 March 2005.
- 2 K Imberger, T Styles and P Cairney *Crashes involving ACT vehicles and ACT controllers in NSW 1999-2003* Report for NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust ARRB Consulting, Melbourne, 2005, p 49
- 3 National Action Plan 2007 and 2008, p 27
- 4 Roads ACT, ACT Government *Traffic Speeds on ACT Roads* Jan 2006, p 4
- 5 Road Transport, ACT Government *Review of Vehicle Inspections Outcome Report Aug 2004*, pp 5-6
- 6 Imberger et al, p 33
- 7 National Action Plan 2007 and 2008, pp 44, 45, 48
- 8 D Richardson and C Painsi *Amalgamation of Police and Hospital Trauma Data in the Australian Capital Territory 2002-2003* Paper to Australian Road Safety, Policing and Education Conference, Gold Coast Oct 2006
- 9 National Action Plan 2007 and 2008, p 43
- 10 National Action Plan 2007 and 2008, p 38
- 11 National Action Plan 2007 and 2008, p 38
- 12 Richardson and Painsi, as above



