



# **ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2009–2010**

ISBN 0-642-60406-1

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Produced by Publishing Services

Publication No 09/0693

<http://www.act.gov.au>

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# Foreword

Road safety is an issue for the whole ACT community. Each year, about 14 people are killed and 500 people are injured on ACT roads.

This level of death and injury is a tragedy for, and a significant burden on, a great number of ACT families. Unfortunately, we as a society often take this level of suffering for granted.

The two most common factors leading to road crashes and road deaths in the ACT are speed and alcohol. Yet the general community perception is that it is OK to speed, and drivers continue to be caught for drink driving.

The ACT Government is committed to achieving a cultural shift in order to reduce the deaths and injuries on our roads.

The Government is exploring whether the Swedish Government's "Vision Zero" policy could be implemented in the ACT in the years ahead. Zero is not a target to be achieved by a certain date, but an aspirational target which ultimately aims for no one being killed or seriously injured within the road transport system. This will take a change in mindset for all of us.

The current framework for addressing road safety issues in the ACT is provided by the ACT Road Safety Strategy covering the period 2007-2010, and supporting Action Plans.

This Action Plan provides more detail on ACT road safety concerns, and a list of specific actions to address them over the next two years. Efforts under this Action Plan have a particular focus on speed management and drink driving, and will also support work to develop a new ACT Road Safety Strategy for the years from 2011, in line with Vision Zero principles.

The ACT Government will continue to work with the community to convince drivers that one road death in the ACT is one too many. Work under this Action Plan is an important part of this process.

Jon Stanhope MLA  
Chief Minister and Minister for Transport



# Acknowledgements

The ACT Road Safety 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 Action Plan is acknowledged with thanks:

ACT Policing, Australian Federal Police

Australian College of Road Safety, ACT and Region Chapter

Canberra Pedestrian Forum

Kidsafe ACT Inc.

Motorcycle Riders Association - ACT

NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust

NRMA Motoring and Services

Pedal Power ACT Inc.

Road Safety Branch, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development  
and Local Government

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# 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, and follows on from the ACT Road Safety Action Plan for 2007 and 2008.

These documents can be found at:

[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/roads/road\\_safety/act\\_road\\_safety\\_strategy](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/roads/road_safety/act_road_safety_strategy)

The Vision in the ACT Road Safety Strategy outlined three strategic goals. These strategic goals give rise to a set of strategic objectives which reflect 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.

A wide range of interventions are needed to improve road safety in the ACT, and these are set out in this document. However, this Action Plan has a particular focus on two key areas, speed management (pages 2-6) and drink driving (page 12).

## Safer Speeds

Moderation of speeds chosen by drivers and riders is critical in establishing a safer road system. At lower speeds there are fewer crashes because road users (including pedestrians) have more time for decision making, motorists are less likely to lose control, and vehicles have much shorter stopping distances. Also, crashes that do occur result in less severe injuries because of the lower impact energies involved.<sup>1</sup>

Depending on the nature of the collision, the chances of surviving a crash decrease rapidly after certain impact speeds, as shown below:

- car/pedestrian collision: 20-30 km/h
- car/motorcyclist collision: 20-30 km/h
- car/tree or pole collision: 30-40 km/h
- car/car side impact: 50 km/h
- car/car head on impact: 70 km/h<sup>2</sup>

Research has shown that small reductions in average speeds (even 1 or two percent) result in substantially greater percentage reductions in deaths and injuries. For example, a 5% reduction in speed has been shown to typically result in a 14% reduction in serious injuries and a 21% reduction in deaths.<sup>3</sup>

More extreme speeds involve much higher risks and higher mortality. However, because low-level speeding is much more common it accounts for a substantial proportion of the total harm associated with speeding.<sup>4</sup>

Based on studies carried out in the ACT, speeding is common. Anyone who uses the road can see that a proportion of motorists regularly speed. This has been confirmed by both speed measurements and community attitude surveys.

Speed surveys undertaken by Roads ACT during 2008 indicated that traffic speeds were contained within the posted limit at only 31% of surveyed sites. Although this information is site specific, and difficult to generalise, it does indicate that a proportion of traffic in the ACT continues to travel well in excess of the speed limit.

A strong focus on speed management is also in line with national developments. The National Road Safety Action Plan for 2009 and 2010 notes that a national best practice speed management strategy is being developed.<sup>5</sup> This strategy will be considered by the Australian Transport Council in 2009. The ACT is involved with this work, which will inform future ACT speed management initiatives.



## Engineering

Roads ACT uses existing engineering approaches to assist with speed management, including a systematic approach for determining, and where necessary reviewing, appropriate speed limits for roads in the ACT. Speed limits are provided in order to regulate traffic flow and promote safety for all road users.

Roads ACT uses a warrant system to identify the need and priority of traffic calming measures in residential areas. The warrant system takes into account traffic volume, speed, accident history and land use, and is used to prioritise works under the Residential Street Improvements Program.

In March 2009, the ACT Government made a commitment to consult on reducing speed zones around shopping and community facilities, and to report back to the Legislative Assembly with a plan of action by the end of 2009. Roads ACT has been requested to undertake this study.

Roads ACT will complete a consultant review of speed limits and signage on arterial roads by mid 2009. This work includes the consideration of the possible use of pavement markings to reinforce speed limit signage. Outcomes from this review will be implemented as part of the Roads ACT Minor New Works program.

To this point, the ACT has relied on traditional metal signs to provide speed limit information to motorists. Variable speed limits, where electronic signs are used to vary speeds according to traffic or weather conditions, have been installed at certain locations in other jurisdictions, and this work will continue to be monitored through ACT involvement in Austroads and other forums.

Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) is an in-vehicle system that uses GPS information to indicate and/or adapt to the speed limit in force at a particular location. ISA complements the use of traditional speed limit signs, and can support drivers in helping them to comply with speed limits. Australian trials of advisory ISA systems are progressing, and have shown promising results.

The ACT will closely monitor the emergence of national best practice in relation to ISA technology and increase its participation in national ISA forums. Based on this, it would be appropriate to develop an ACT position and, if appropriate, commence preparations for implementation in the ACT. ACT electronic maps of speed zones will need to be prepared for this purpose in line with nationally agreed standards.

Roads ACT will also monitor best practice developments in relation to speed perception treatments. Innovative linemarking and signage treatments can assist motorists in judging safe speeds in particular locations, such as tight curves.

## Enforcement

The National Action Plan outlines measures for best practice speed enforcement, including automated speed enforcement technologies, a mix of unmarked and high visibility approaches and tight enforcement tolerances.<sup>6</sup>

Speed enforcement by ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office is a key element in encouraging motorists to travel at safer speeds. ACT Policing issued 6,833 traffic infringement notices for speeding offences during 2007. Over the same period, over 40 million vehicles were checked and 57,571 infringement notices were issued by ACT fixed and mobile speed cameras.

ACT Policing will continue to maintain, and if possible increase, levels of traffic speed enforcement.

The ACT safety camera program has been gradually expanded over the last 10 years. Currently, the ACT has:

- 13 intersection locations with fixed red light/speed cameras;
- 9 midblock locations with fixed speed-only cameras (some locations have cameras monitoring both directions); and
- 5 mobile camera vans.

During the period of this Action Plan, the future direction for the ACT safety camera program will be refined and agreed with the ACT Government. The Chief Minister has also indicated his support for the early installation of “point to point” cameras in the ACT. Point to point cameras measure average speed over a set distance, rather than at one fixed point.

The ultimate objective should be to achieve broad coverage on arterial roads by fixed speed and point to point cameras, allowing the mobile cameras to focus on the non-arterial road network. Currently, only main highways and the Tuggeranong Parkway are covered by fixed speed only cameras. Some 54% of ACT arterial roads have at least one fixed red light/speed camera, or are approved for mobile speed camera operation.

At present, there are 120 sites on the ACT mobile speed camera network specified under ACT legislation. The Government has agreed that all remaining arterial and collector roads will be assessed in a staged process to identify suitable sites for mobile speed camera use. Further road assessments and declarations will be made to expand the mobile camera network.

Interaction between ACT Policing and the Traffic Camera Office (TCO) already occurs in relation to speed enforcement. ACT Policing provide an officer to act as a liaison point with the TCO, and TCO rosters are provided on a daily basis so that police are aware of camera van activities. It is proposed to maintain and enhance this interaction to ensure that the police and camera programs work together.

There is scope for improved and expanded Roads ACT traffic data to be provided to ACT Policing to assist with “intelligence led” speed enforcement. This could include a combination of crash, speed survey and traffic warrant information that identifies problem areas. Complaints from the public received by Canberra Connect, Roads ACT and ACT Policing could also be collated and evaluated to guide speed enforcement activity.

There is evidence that the enforcement strategies used in Victoria, based on a decreased tolerance and increased risk of detection, have assisted in changing speeding behaviour. Currently, speed enforcement tolerances vary between jurisdictions and there would be benefit from the ACT moving towards a nationally consistent level. The development of the national speed management strategy is likely to include further national consideration of the harmonisation of speeding penalties, breakpoints and tolerances.

## **Education and Encouragement**

A media strategy to support the awareness elements of the ACT Road Safety Action Plan has been completed and will inform the development and implementation of road safety awareness campaigns in 2009 and 2010. A campaign to reinforce compliance with speed limits, particularly the 50 km/h urban default speed limit introduced in June 2003, is planned for 2009.

In addition, there is scope to better integrate police and traffic camera speed enforcement with media and public awareness campaigns. This will include improved alignment of TAMS road safety advertising with targeted traffic enforcement campaigns; and the continued and expanded use of Variable Message Signs with speed related messages.

A simple education initiative that could be considered is to develop a pamphlet for motorists pulled over by police as a result of a speeding incident. This pamphlet could outline the role speed enforcement plays in ensuring a safer road environment.

The use of electronic speed feedback signage will also be considered as a component of speed related media and public awareness campaigns, for example in relation to the safety camera program.

In summary, there is a critical need to change the public perception of “safe speeding” through enforcement and education. There is a need to make speeding an unacceptable driving behaviour, like drink driving; to improve public understanding of speed and associated issues, and to counter the public perception that speed enforcement, particularly by camera technology, is only “revenue raising”. It is recognised that this will be very challenging and require significant effort.

## Data issues

There is also a critical need for continued development of speed and crash data to inform speed management initiatives in the ACT. This would include improving the technology for the collection and analysis of speed and crash data, including data from speed surveys, camera and police enforcement, and GIS sources. This information needs to feed into evaluation of speed management initiatives.

### Action Plan Items

- Contribute to the development of a national speed management strategy to inform future ACT speed management initiatives.
- Undertake traffic calming projects as part of the Residential Streets Improvements Program.
- Seek the community's views on reducing speed zones around shopping and community facilities, and provide a report to the ACT Legislative Assembly.
- Complete a review of speed limits on the ACT arterial road network and implement agreed recommendations.
- Complete a study of the use of pavement markings to reinforce speed limit signage, and implement agreed recommendations.
- Continue to monitor interstate best practice in relation to, and if appropriate commence implementation of:
  - the use of variable speed limits:
  - Intelligent Speed Adaptation;
  - speed perception treatments; and
  - speed feedback signage.
- Maintain, and if possible increase, levels of police traffic speed enforcement.
- Continue the expansion of the camera enforcement program, to be agreed with the ACT Government, including:
  - the development of a program for the implementation of "point to point" safety cameras in the ACT; and
  - undertake further road assessments and declarations to expand the ACT mobile speed camera network.
- Review ACT speeding penalties in conjunction with national efforts to harmonise penalties, breakpoints and tolerances.
- Develop and implement an awareness campaign about the need to reduce speeding in the ACT and to reinforce the 50 km/h default urban speed limit.
- Implement an ongoing program of Variable Message Signs to support police traffic enforcement.
- Develop and implement a pamphlet for motorists pulled over by police as a result of a speeding incident.
- Develop and implement a program of more detailed analysis of ACT speed and crash data to inform ACT speed management initiatives.

## Safer Roads and Roadsides

The ACT has benefited from previous planning, which has resulted in a well defined road hierarchy (excluding pre-1960s districts) and a limited amount of “ribbon development” retail centres. This has contributed to the 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 2007/08, funding allocated to specific road safety improvements was a total of some \$300,000 under a number of Roads ACT programs.

Funding is also provided by the Federal Government for the Nation Building Black Spot Program. Some \$600,000 annually has been provided in recent years, and this will increase to some \$966,000 annually from 2009/10. In addition, the Federal Government will be providing one-off funding for ACT Black Spots totalling \$2.4 million.

Black spot programs address problems in particular locations, and evaluations have shown them to be highly effective with a very favourable benefit cost 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 is progressing a number of engineering consultancies to enhance the development and evaluation of ACT road safety programs. In line with the National Road Safety Action Plan, this includes work on examining risk assessment and treatment programs for potential use in the ACT.

### Action Plan Items

- Deliver the Nation Building Black Spot Program and ACT Black Spot program.
- Investigate “low cost” treatments for sites that do not warrant major engineering solutions and implement improvements as part of the Minor New Works Program.
- Develop, and implement, specific engineering programs to address frequent crash types in the ACT such as right angle crashes, rear-end crashes and single vehicle crashes.
- Apply 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.

The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) is a mechanism to give consumers information about vehicles that exceed the minimum safety standards in the ADRs. As a small jurisdiction, the ACT does not currently contribute to this program. Consideration will be given to broader involvement, subject to budget priorities.

The Australian Transport Council has an agreed program to introduce an ANCAP “Stars on Cars” education tool to inform car buyers on the relative crash ratings of new vehicles. An awareness campaign to support this issue will be considered as part of a two-year program of targeted awareness campaigns in 2009 and 2010, as covered in the next section of this Action Plan.

The ACT has a continuing vehicle inspection program, which includes random on-road and car park vehicle inspections. Some 46,200 random inspections were undertaken in 2007/08. Vehicle inspections are also required on first registration in the ACT, to clear a defect notice, on transfer of registration for light vehicles over 6 years of age, for heavy vehicles (every 2 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.

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.<sup>7</sup>

### Action Plan Items

- Continue to engage in national reforms relating to vehicle standards, and implement agreed changes in ACT road transport law.
- Consider broader ACT involvement in the ANCAP Program.
- 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.

### Encouragement and Education

As previously mentioned, a media strategy to support the awareness elements of the ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2007 and 2008 was completed, and will inform the development and implementation of a two-year program comprising a number of targeted road safety awareness campaigns in 2009 and 2010. It is intended that these campaigns will have strong links with police enforcement programs.

Priority campaigns are expected to include:

- Speeding, particularly in residential areas;
- Drink driving;
- Sharing the road – pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists;
- ACT drivers travelling interstate, particularly at holiday periods;
- Driver distraction – use of mobile phones while driving; and
- Bicycle helmet wearing and lighting.

The Chief Minister has directed that these campaigns focus on changing culture so that the Canberra community takes road safety more seriously. The Government is keen to develop road safety messages around the community accepting that speeding and drink driving will not be tolerated, and that we should aspire to people not being killed on the roads.

As recommended in the media strategy report, the Roads ACT website will continue to be developed to form a central hub for ACT road safety information. It is planned to develop a suite of brochures on key road safety issues in the ACT, in both hard copy and downloadable formats.

An initial series of road safety message signs was implemented in early 2008, focusing on key road safety issues in the ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan. The Chief Minister has directed that these signs be reviewed, to improve awareness of the risks of speeding and drink driving. Funding has been secured to update these signs and also commence a program of installing permanent variable message signs on the ACT network for road safety, traffic flow and incident management purposes.

There is a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies providing road safety education to children, novice drivers and adults, and the role of Roads ACT in overseeing these programs. It is proposed to engage a consultant to develop an ACT Road Safety Education Strategy, with the objective of clarifying roles and responsibilities, reviewing best practice and ensuring ACT priority needs are met.

## Enforcement

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. ACT Policing will maintain the level of traffic enforcement for all traffic offences during the life of this Action Plan.

TAMS has regularly provided assistance to ACT Policing traffic operations, for example by associating vehicle inspections with police operations and joint activities at Summernats. More recently, there have been joint activities involving Variable Message Signs provided by TAMS, and joint activities involving traffic camera vans are planned. These examples of cooperation and alignment will be expanded and further developed.

### Action Plan Items

- Develop and implement a two-year program of priority road safety awareness campaigns.
- Update the Roads ACT website to form a central hub for ACT road safety information.
- Develop a suite of brochures on key road safety issues in the ACT, in both hard copy and downloadable formats.
- Implement a program of revised road safety message signs to improve awareness of the risks of speeding and drink driving.
- Commence a program of installing permanent Variable Message Signs on the ACT road network.
- Develop an ACT Road Safety Education Strategy.
- Continue to coordinate vehicle inspection, Variable Message Sign and traffic camera van activities with ACT Policing traffic operations.

The National Road Safety Action Plan 2009 and 2010 identifies a number of priority areas under the heading of Safer Road Users and Safer Behaviours, some of which also warrant attention in the ACT context. These are covered in the following sections.



## Drink and Drug Driving

Nationally, drink driving continues to be an issue. Over 1 in 5 drivers/riders killed have a blood alcohol concentration exceeding the legal limit. Random breath testing results typically show that about 1 in 150 drivers tested exceed the legal limit.<sup>8</sup>

Drink driving is also an issue of concern for the ACT. ACT Policing continues to treat roadside breath testing as a priority, targeting the times and locations drink drivers are likely to be found. During 2007/08, 1,584 persons were apprehended for drink driving. This was 231 more than in 2006/07.

Despite numerous warnings and targeted police operations, a proportion of ACT motorists continue to drink and drive. There is a need for a targeted awareness campaign to support police enforcement and improve community understanding of drink driving issues and their consequences. This will be included in the two-year program of campaigns implemented during 2009 and 2010.

The ACT appears to be less advanced than NSW in having partnerships between licensed premises and road safety, police, liquor licensing and health agencies to address drink driving issues. A review is planned to investigate options for improvement in this area.

A review of the ACT *Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977* is in progress, and includes consideration of improvements to the drink driving legislation in line with human rights considerations and with national best practice. Issues covered in the review include drug driving, blood alcohol concentration limits, alcohol interlock devices, restricted licences, interventions to prevent drink driving and penalties. Reforms in 2009 and 2010 will focus on the drink driving penalty regime, including investigating the use of infringement notices for some offences, and reviewing the availability of restricted licences.

In line with the overall approach taken in this Action Plan, a more integrated approach to impaired driving issues using a range of enforcement, encouragement, education and regulatory measures is required in the ACT. A discussion paper on this issue will be prepared.

### Action Plan Items

- Continue roadside breath testing operations.
- Develop options for improving current linkages between agencies responsible for managing liquor licensing and drink driving in the ACT.
- Continue to review the Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977 and progress reform in relation to drink driving offences.
- Prepare a discussion paper outlining an integrated approach for addressing impaired driving issues in the ACT.

## Restraint and Helmet Use

Nationally, about 1 in 4 vehicle occupants killed in crashes are not wearing a seat belt. This appears to be a particular issue in rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

Casualty data for 2008 illustrates a high level of compliance with seat belt and crash helmet requirements within the ACT. A seat belt was not worn by 1.4% of total casualties. A helmet was not worn by a further 1.6% of total casualties. However, there have been a number of incidents where persons killed in ACT road crashes were not wearing seatbelts or helmets. Two persons killed in 2008 were not wearing a seat belt.

Despite being compulsory since 1992, the wearing of bicycle helmets is not regular practice by all bicyclists. It would be appropriate to implement awareness and other measures to encourage increased bicycle helmet wearing rates. This will be included in the two-year program of campaigns for 2009 and 2010.

ACT regulations have required the use of suitable infant and child restraints for many years. These requirements will be strengthened as a result of adoption in the ACT of specific changes to the Australian Road Rules during 2009. A process to update the Australian Standard for child restraints is also underway.

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 very satisfactory, and new countermeasures are not considered a priority for this Action Plan. Nevertheless, existing enforcement measures are to be maintained.

### Action Plan Items

- Provide support to Kidsafe for activities in relation to infant and child restraints and other child safety issues.
- Work with Kidsafe to ensure effective implementation of the new Australian Road Rule and Australian Standard requirements in relation to child restraints.

## 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.<sup>10</sup>

Joint awareness and enforcement campaigns, involving NSW and ACT police and a range of other road safety stakeholders, were undertaken for the Christmas 2008 and Easter 2009 holiday periods. These efforts will be continued as part of the two-year program of campaigns implemented during 2009 and 2010.

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.

Recent research indicates that up to 23% of crashes and near crashes are caused by driver distraction, and these figures will likely increase as more and more distractions, both inside and outside the vehicle, compete for driver attention.<sup>11</sup> 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 2,043 traffic infringement notices and 765 cautions for this offence in 2008.

An awareness campaign on driver distraction will be included in the two-year program of campaigns implemented during 2009 and 2010.

## Novice Drivers

Novice drivers are over-represented in national crash data by a ratio of at least 3:1.<sup>12</sup> In the ACT, about 46% of all casualties occurred to people younger than 30 years of age in 2008. The largest number appears to be between the ages of 20 and 24, accounting for about 15% of total casualties. In terms of vehicle controllers, those aged under 25 accounted for 30% 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, competency based training and assessment for learner drivers, 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. Plans to develop and implement an additional module to enhance the *Road Ready Plus* program have been progressed, but not finalised.

A large scale trial of a national novice driver education curriculum is being progressed by a group comprising the Federal, NSW and Victorian governments. The outcomes of this trial could have implications for the ACT's novice driver programs in due course.

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.
- Implement an additional module to enhance the *Road Ready Plus* course.

## Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists face a fatal crash risk about 30 times higher than car occupants. 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. Over the three year period 2004 to 2007 motorcyclist deaths increased by a total of 22.1%.<sup>13</sup>

In the ACT, 3 of the 14 fatalities in 2007 and 4 of the 14 fatalities in 2008 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.<sup>14</sup>

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 and motor scooters on the ACT register in January 2002, growing to 8,700 in January 2007 and 10,860 in January 2009.

National motorcycle crash rates, based on deaths of motorcyclists per 10,000 registered motorcycles, show a steady decrease in the same period, and indeed from 1980.<sup>15</sup> This indicates that motorcycle crash rates are largely exposure driven.

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 to encourage the use of appropriate protective clothing for motorcycle and motor scooter riders. Specific campaigns will be considered in the context of the two-year program of awareness campaigns for 2009 and 2010.

The ACT follows current Australian practice in relation to vehicle safety barriers. Roads ACT is aware of concerns raised by motorcycle groups in relation to certain barrier types and barrier terminals and is committed to adopting revised Australian Standards once they are finalised.

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 3 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. Specific issues in relation to motor scooter riders will also be considered.

#### **Action Plan Items**

- Review ACT licensing, training and testing requirements for novice riders.

## **Pedestrians and Bicyclists**

Pedestrians accounted for 9.6% of ACT casualties in 2008, including 3 fatalities. Of these pedestrian casualties, 34.1% were less than 20 years old. Older pedestrian safety is likely to become an emerging issue as the ACT population ages.

Bicyclists accounted for 14.8% of on-road ACT casualties in 2008. 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.<sup>16</sup>

Existing ACT engineering programs are used to maintain and improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Additional funding has been provided in the 2009/10 Budget for cycling and footpath works, amounting to \$8.4 million over 4 years. This is in addition to paths provided as part of the capital works program or as part of new developments. Roads ACT liaises closely with cycling groups in relation to these programs.

There is scope for specific countermeasures addressing issues of concern to bicyclists and pedestrians. A number of specific awareness campaigns will be included in the two-year program covering 2009 and 2010.

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**

- Continue to implement pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the capital works and minor new works programs.

## Older Drivers and Older Road Users

Drivers aged 70 or more do not show up as a particular problem in ACT crash statistics at the present time. In terms of ACT vehicle controllers, there were 309 casualties in 2008. Of these, 11 (3.6%) involved a driver 70 years of age or older.

In terms of older road users (drivers, passengers and pedestrians) persons aged 70 or more represented 4.7% of total casualties in the five year period 2004 to 2008.

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. It is thought that this relative increase in risk is largely due to different exposure patterns, such as more frequent short trips in an urban environment. Older drivers, passengers and pedestrians are also more fragile (prone to injury in a crash) than younger people.

Although there are higher priority road safety concerns at the present time, road safety and driver licensing authorities are aware of the emerging issues of older drivers and older road users. With changing demographic patterns, this group may present a major challenge for road safety over the next 10 to 20 years. This will require a better understanding of 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 assessments 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), who also have their own programs such as the Livedrive website.

Funding has been provided by the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust for a number of initiatives relating to older road users, including the development by COTA of an ACT Older Road User Media Strategy to complement awareness initiatives under this Action Plan. TAMS will continue to liaise with, and support, stakeholders on these issues.

### Action Plan Items

- Continue with the current approach, and monitor developments in other jurisdictions, in relation to existing and potential initiatives for older road users, including awareness initiatives.

## Wildlife Crashes

Crashes involving wildlife are a small proportion, around 2%, of all casualty crashes in the ACT and accordingly this issue is not addressed as a key priority in this Action Plan. Nevertheless, engineering treatments (such as wildlife underpasses) and awareness campaigns will continue to be used as appropriate. Also, general road safety interventions such as speed management are applicable to a range of crash types, including wildlife crashes.



## Improved Coordination and Consultation Processes

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;
- improved coordination between government agencies;
- partnerships with road user stakeholder groups such as NRMA Motoring and Services, Motorcycle Riders' Association, Pedal Power and Canberra Pedestrian Forum; 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);
- ACT Treasury (ACT Compulsory Third Party insurance policy);
- Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (national road safety linkages);
- Australasian College of Road Safety – ACT and Region Chapter; and
- Specific road user groups, such as motorists, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

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 \$18.6 million towards innovative road safety initiatives since 1992. The Trust supports research and other initiatives through a targeted grants program.

In 2007, the ACT established the 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 for Transport 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 supported by an officer-level Road Safety Task Force (RSTF). Members of this group:

- 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 consist of the key government agencies responsible for implementing the various engineering, enforcement, education and awareness elements of the ACT Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Separate consultative processes have been established with key road safety groups and stakeholders to allow a range of issues of interest to that group to be discussed and acted upon.

The Road Users Working Group, which complements these bilateral liaison arrangements, comprises representatives of NRMA Motoring and Services, the Motorcycle Riders' Association, Pedal Power and Pedestrian Forum.

In addition, the Chief Minister and NRMA Motoring and Services jointly chaired a road safety roundtable in May 2009. The purpose of the roundtable was to bring together key stakeholders and explore how the ACT can adopt a cultural change for the next ACT Road Safety Strategy. Future roundtables are also envisaged.

**Figure 1 – Arrangements for ACT Road Safety Liaison**



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

### **Action Plan Items**

- Maintain the current liaison arrangements and meetings with all stakeholder groups on road safety matters.
- Undertake follow up actions arising from road safety roundtables chaired by the Chief Minister and NRMA Motoring and Services.
- Develop, implement and maintain consultation processes to engage the community 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 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 TAMS crash database. TAMS will continue to maintain and enhance this database to inform the development of road safety initiatives.

ACT crash data is used for analysis of road safety engineering and policy issues. For example, it is proposed to undertake more detailed analysis of the involvement of speeding and drink driving in ACT crashes.

A project to implement a computerised SmartForm to replace the existing paper based process is continuing. This project has a particular focus on reducing the resource requirements at police stations and TAMS data entry points from the current arrangements. A computerised system will also make it easier for the public to report crashes and improve data quality.

There has also been a valuable data-matching study of police and hospital data covering crashes occurring in the years 2001 to 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.

### Action Plan Items

- Analyse the extent of involvement of speeding and drink driving in ACT crashes.
- Implement a computerised SmartForm to allow electronic reporting of ACT traffic crashes.



## 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). This relates to both engineering and non-engineering actions. In particular, a study should be undertaken in the ACT to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented speed management measures.

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 Executive Group and the Austroads Road Safety Task Force, that provide invaluable access to information on new developments and best practice. This will include work to develop the next National Road Safety Strategy covering the period from 2011.

It is proposed to have tighter "targets" for the next ACT Road Safety Strategy covering the period after 2010. International research indicates that countries with quantitative road safety targets perform better than countries without targets. Some countries use empirically derived targets, based on quantitative modelling of intervention options. This approach will be explored and developed in the lead up to preparing the next ACT Road Safety Strategy.<sup>17</sup>

### Action Plan Items

- Undertake a program of evaluation of road safety engineering treatments and policy initiatives.
- Undertake a consultant study to evaluate the effectiveness of speed management initiatives implemented in the ACT.
- Undertake research to develop empirically derived targets for the next ACT Road Safety Strategy.

A consolidated list of Action Items under the ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2009 and 2010 is provided in the table below.



ACT ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2009 and 2010 CONSOLIDATED LIST OF ACTION ITEMS					
Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
<b>Safer Speeds</b>					
Contribute to the development of a national speed management strategy to inform future ACT speed management initiatives.	✓	✓	✓	✓	TAMS
Undertake traffic calming projects as part of the Residential Streets Improvements Program.			✓		TAMS
Seek the community's views on reducing speed zones around shopping and community facilities, and provide a report to the ACT Legislative Assembly.			✓		TAMS
Complete a review of speed limits on the ACT arterial road network and implement agreed recommendations.			✓		TAMS
Complete a study of the use of pavement markings to reinforce speed limit signage, and implement agreed recommendations.			✓		TAMS
Continue to monitor interstate best practice in relation to, and if appropriate commence implementation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of variable speed limits;</li> <li>Intelligent Speed Adaptation;</li> <li>speed perception treatments; and</li> <li>speed feedback signage.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		TAMS
Maintain, and if possible increase, levels of police traffic speed enforcement.				✓	AFP
Continue the expansion of the camera enforcement program, to be agreed with the ACT Government, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development of a program for the implementation of "point to point" safety cameras in the ACT; and</li> <li>undertake further road assessments and declarations to expand the ACT mobile speed camera network.</li> </ul>			✓	✓	TAMS, AFP
Review ACT speeding penalties in conjunction with national efforts to harmonise penalties, breakpoints and tolerances.				✓	TAMS, AFP
Develop and implement an awareness campaign about the need to reduce speeding in the ACT and to reinforce the 50 km/h default urban speed limit.		✓			TAMS
Implement an ongoing program of Variable Message Signs to support police traffic enforcement.		✓		✓	TAMS, AFP
Develop and implement a pamphlet for motorists pulled over by police as a result of a speeding incident.		✓		✓	TAMS, AFP
Develop and implement a program of more detailed analysis of ACT speed and crash data to inform ACT speed management initiatives.	Support measure				TAMS

Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
<b>Safer Roads and Roadsides</b>					
Deliver the Nation Building Black Spot Program and ACT Black Spot program.			✓		TAMS
Investigate "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, and implement, specific engineering programs to address issues of concern in the ACT, such as right angle crashes, rear-end crashes and single vehicle crashes.			✓		TAMS
Apply 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
<b>Safer Vehicles</b>					
Continue to engage in national reforms relating to vehicle standards, and implement agreed changes in ACT road transport law.			✓		TAMS
Consider broader ACT involvement in the ANCAP Program.		✓			TAMS
Continue ACT vehicle inspection arrangements.				✓	TAMS
<b>Safer Road Users and Safer Behaviours</b>					
<b>General Measures</b>					
Develop and implement a two-year program of priority road safety awareness campaigns.		✓			TAMS
Update the Roads ACT website to form a central hub for ACT road safety information.	✓				TAMS
Develop a suite of brochures on key road safety issues in the ACT, in both hard copy and downloadable formats.	✓				TAMS
Implement a program of revised road safety message signs to improve awareness of the risks of speeding and drink driving.		✓	✓		TAMS
Commence a program of installing permanent Variable Message Signs on the ACT road network.		✓	✓		TAMS
Develop an ACT Road Safety Education Strategy.	✓				DET, TAMS
Continue to coordinate vehicle inspection, Variable Message Sign and traffic camera van activities with ACT Policing traffic operations.				✓	TAMS

Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
<b>Safer Road Users and Safer Behaviours cont.</b>					
<b>Drink and Drug Driving</b>					
Continue roadside breath testing operations.				✓	AFP
Develop options for improving current linkages between agencies responsible for managing liquor licensing and drink driving in the ACT.	Support measure				TAMS
Continue to review the <i>Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977</i> and progress reform in relation to drink driving offences.				✓	TAMS
Prepare a discussion paper outlining an integrated approach for addressing impaired driving issues in the ACT.	Support measure				TAMS
<b>Restraint and Helmet Use</b>					
Provide support to Kidsafe for activities in relation to infant and child restraints and other child safety issues.	✓	✓			TAMS
Work with Kidsafe to ensure effective implementation of the new Australian Road Rule and Australian Standard requirements in relation to child restraints.	✓	✓			TAMS
<b>Novice Drivers</b>					
Review and update the materials used in the <i>Road Ready</i> course.	✓				TAMS, DET
Implement an additional module to enhance the <i>Road Ready Plus</i> course.	✓				TAMS
<b>Motorcyclists</b>					
Review ACT licensing, training and testing requirements for novice riders.	✓				TAMS
<b>Pedestrians and Bicyclists</b>					
Continue to implement pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the capital works and minor new works programs.			✓		TAMS
<b>Older Drivers and Older Road Users</b>					
Continue with the current approach, and monitor developments in other jurisdictions, in relation to existing and potential initiatives for older road users, including awareness initiatives.	✓	✓			TAMS
<b>Improved Coordination and Consultation Processes</b>					
Maintain the current liaison arrangements and meetings with all stakeholder groups on road safety matters.	Support measure				TAMS
Undertake follow up actions arising from road safety roundtables chaired by the Chief Minister and NRMA Motoring and Services.	Support measure				TAMS
Develop, implement and maintain consultation processes to engage the community on ACT road safety issues.	Support measure				TAMS

Action	Educ.	Enco.	Eng.	Enf.	Agency
<b>Improved Support Processes</b>					
Analyse the extent of involvement of speeding and drink driving in ACT crashes.					TAMS
Implement a computerised SmartForm to allow electronic reporting of ACT traffic crashes.					TAMS, AFP
Undertake a program of evaluation of road safety engineering treatments and policy initiatives.					TAMS
Undertake a consultant study to evaluate the effectiveness of speed management initiatives implemented in the ACT.					TAMS
Undertake research to develop empirically derived targets for the next ACT Road Safety Strategy.					TAMS



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## Footnotes

- 1 National Action Plan 2009 and 2010, p II.
- 2 As above, p 30-31.
- 3 As above, p 30 and Australian Transport Council paper *Potential Road Safety Outcomes from Improved Speed Enforcement* 2008, p 2, 3.
- 4 Australian Transport Council paper, as above, p 3.
- 5 National Action Plan 2009 and 2010, p II.
- 6 As above, p II.
- 7 Road Transport, ACT Government *Review of Vehicle Inspections Outcome Report Aug 2004*, pp 5-6.
- 8 National Action Plan 2009 and 2010, p 41.
- 9 As above, p 42.
- 10 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 33.
- 11 M Regan, J Lee and K Young *Driver Distraction – Theory, Effects and Mitigation* CRC Press, 2008.
- 12 National Action Plan 2009 and 2010, p 46.
- 13 As above, pp 47, 57.
- 14 D Richardson and C Paini *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.
- 15 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government *Road Deaths Australia 2008 Statistical Summary* Canberra, May 2009, p21.
- 16 Richardson and Paini.
- 17 OECD/International Transport Forum *Towards Zero – Ambitious Road Safety Targets and the Safe System Approach* 2008, pp 14, 17.



