

# National Road Safety Conference 2024

## Communique

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Infrastructure and Transport Ministers agreed in December last year that Road Safety Ministers would engage with Police Ministers as part of a National Road Safety Conference.

The inaugural Police Ministers and Road Safety Ministers Conference on road safety has concluded and discussions at the conference underscored the collective road safety responsibilities and challenges facing Australia.

Attending Ministers and conference participants agreed that heightened collaboration between the Commonwealth, state, territory, and local governments to advance collective commitments under the National Road Safety Strategy and 2023-25 Action Plan is required.

### Key Messages

People are being killed and injured in increasing numbers on our roads.

During the 12 months ended March 2024, there were 1,286 road deaths. This is an increase of 8.2 per cent from the 12-month period ending March 2023. The Conference discussed challenges and opportunities for vehicles, roads and road users, with a focus on road users.

Road Safety Ministers and Police Ministers affirmed the imperative of jurisdictions working to achieve real change to reduce road trauma. They acknowledged that it was getting harder to reduce the number of people being killed or injured without tough decisions.

Ministers recognised the importance of having safe roads and vehicles but also the changing behaviours of those using the roads and how an increasingly alarming trend in many of these behaviours, such as increased drug driving, excessive speeding, driving without a licence and not wearing seatbelts, are negatively impacting on society's ability to curb the large number of lives lost or permanently damaged due to road trauma. Ministers agreed the need to support deterrence and where appropriate use enforcement and other levers in efforts to change this behaviour.

Road Safety Ministers acknowledged the important steps being taken across jurisdictions to share road safety data but more importantly emphasised the need to use the data to drive initiatives across enforcement, infrastructure investment and engagement.

Road Safety and Police Ministers extended their appreciation to conference presenters and participants for their time, energy and ideas throughout the conference and will consider proposed actions.

### Key Actions

#### Progress on National Road Safety dataset

In a first for Australia, all states, territories and the Australian Government have signed a Data Sharing Agreement. This is a pivotal step towards harmonising, collecting, storing, and sharing road safety datasets through the National Road Safety Data Hub and building data maturity to support evidence-based road safety strategies.

Better national data and monitoring of road safety across the whole system will be key to achieving real reductions in road trauma.

State and Territory Ministers will ensure that this data is used and monitored to support decisions on programs and policies to reduce road trauma.

Ministers also agreed to actively support the development of a National Minimum Data Set and National Data Collection and Reporting Framework. The Australian Government also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the work of the Road Safety Data Hub.

## Road safety infrastructure partnership

Leveraging the data maturity that has been built, participants discussed the opportunity for better partnering on road safety infrastructure funding programs developed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to prioritise the delivery of critical road safety infrastructure across federal, state and local roads.

## Deterrence and Enforcement

Enforcement emerged as a cornerstone theme, with jurisdictions exchanging insights on effective enforcement tools.

Ministers agreed that the National Drug Driving Working Group (NDDWG) will be refocused and meet before 30 June 2024. The group is co-chaired by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and a representative from the Australia and New Zealand Road Policing Network. The group will provide advice to senior government officials on drug driving. The NDDWG will report back to a future meeting of Road Safety and Police Ministers on its findings.

## National Road Safety Education and Insights

Focussing on enforcement is only part of the solution. Strategies discussed include proactive measures to cultivate a culture of responsible road use, with concerning behaviours seen on our roads post COVID.

Central to this approach is the Australian Government's commitment to spearhead the development of a national road safety education campaign to complement, but not duplicate, the campaigns in each of the jurisdictions. Views were sought from Police and State Transport Ministers on the specific behaviours and at-risk demographics to be targeted. It was agreed that there is an opportunity to collaborate to better understand driver attitudes, barriers to adoption of safer behaviours and effective approaches to reach high risk road users – ensuring we all understand our responsibilities on our roads.

It is anticipated that this campaign will spotlight emerging unsafe road safety trends and reinforce good road safety practices by all drivers.

Ministers also affirmed a willingness to share campaign material and related research and evidence among jurisdictions which will be collated by the Office of Road Safety.

## Speed

Ministers noted clear feedback from Conference participants that speed is a key factor in road trauma. Ministers agreed that it is timely given the serious situation with road deaths and road trauma that we engage the Australian community on the implications of speeding and the benefits of lowering speed.

## Vehicles

Ministers sought advice on options to accelerate turnover in the fleet to supply affordable safer vehicles to the second-hand market.

Road Safety Ministers noted the Australian Government's increased efforts to accelerate the ADR making process, with nine new ADRs and 26 ADR updates signed in the last year. Ministers noted that the Australian Government is exploring options to further streamline the adoption of international regulations into Australian standards and supported action to expedite the introduction of ADRs for new technologies with proven safety benefits.