

**INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA IN REGIONAL NSW CAUSED  
BY SPEEDING, FATIGUE, DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING**

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## Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety NSW

Interventions to reduce road trauma in regional NSW caused by speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving

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Speeding and fatigue on regional and remote roads would be greatly improved if the roads were in a better state of repair. Roads that should be repaired annually are going for 4 + years without maintenance grading.

Current funding of unsealed shire roads is not adequate to ensure their upkeep. The accountability for that repair should not be left solely with the local shire which, without adequate funding, is responsible for decision making that can cause road trauma.

When gravel and dirt roads are poorly maintained and fall into disrepair, drivers are forced to greatly reduce their speed to safely traverse the road. Driving safely on those unsealed roads, when in a state of disrepair, can mean the driver needs to drive off the edge of the road or on the other side of the road. The traction difficulties of an unsealed gravel road are worsened when that surface is irregular, corrugated or broken. Unsealed roads are built in a way that should allow water to drain to the sides of the road from the peak in the centre. When the centre peak of the road becomes dug out with wheel tracks, the driver is forced to drive on the edge of the road, placing the vehicle on a greater angle and on a surface that allows for less traction.

In a metropolitan area this would be like driving against speed bumps that regularly fluctuate in size and location, in an area undergoing roadworks. Some frustrated drivers may reason that they then need to speed to make up for the time lost.

The long distances and the time taken to travel those distances in remote areas contribute to the fatigue experienced when driving. When extra time is added to the journey because the quality of the road is so poor, this worsens the experience of fatigue. It takes a significant level of concentration and skill to drive safely on dirt and gravel roads that are in a state of disrepair. That driving is more difficult in darkness and low light when visibility is reduced, and wildlife is more active. The lengthy experience of tension created by the poor-quality road surface contributes to fatigue.

When researching data on the factors of road crashes, it will be productive to consider the quality of the road surface in each instance. I look forward to reading the research that includes that and recommendations that proactively offer ways to accountably fund roads that are safer to drive on.

Please find photos attached, of poor road quality. These were taken after rain as this makes it more obvious where the damage is on the road surface.











