Submission No 47

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

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Transport for NSW

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Executive summary

Transport for NSW (Transport), has adopted the Safe System approach to reducing trauma, which is comprised of the pillars of Safe Roads, Safe Vehicles, Safe People and Safe Speed. To reduce the impact of crashes involving behavioural factors such as speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving, an integrated approach is taken through the Safe System pillars.

Reducing road trauma in regional NSW is one of Transport's most significant challenges. People living in rural and regional NSW make up only a third of the State's population, but deaths on rural and regional roads account for around two-thirds of the fatalities in NSW.

Crashes on rural and regional roads are more likely to involve factors like higher speeds, fatigue, and illegal drugs and alcohol, resulting in a predominance of single-vehicle, run-off-road and head-on crashes on curves and high-speed roads.

Under the NSW 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, a range of initiatives and countermeasures are being implemented to reduce road trauma in regional NSW involving speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving, distraction, through infrastructure, speed management, enforcement, education, and targeted programs.

Transport employs a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to evaluating the effectiveness of its programs and initiatives aimed at reducing speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving in regional NSW. This includes developing a set of Safety Performance Indicators to measure progress across key focus areas, conducting observational studies to track compliance with safety behaviours, and undertaking detailed evaluations.

In response to the 2023 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on Regional Road Safety, Transport has taken several key actions. Firstly, Transport has developed a regional implementation plan to support the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, which includes frameworks to measure, analyse and publicly report on road safety trends, tailored countermeasures for regional hotspots, the impact of interventions, and funding allocations at the sub-regional level. Transport has also expedited a comprehensive review of the Local Government Road Safety Program, gathering stakeholder feedback to identify opportunities to enhance the program and increase participation by regional councils.

Context

Transport's role in reducing road trauma

Transport develops road safety strategies, policies and programs to reduce trauma on NSW roads. Over the long term, a significant reduction in the loss of life on roads has been achieved through continuous reforms to policy and legislation, continuous improvement in safety standards, investment in road infrastructure, innovation in vehicle design and protective equipment, enforcement of road rules and extensive community engagement, education and behaviour change campaigns. Transport engages and collaborates with other agencies, industry and research bodies to undertake research and analysis and share insights which inform trauma prevention initiatives.

The Safe System approach to road safety

The Safe System approach, comprising Safe Roads, Safe Vehicles, Safe People and Safe Speed, is a method of road safety management based on the principle that life and health should not be compromised by the need to travel.

Originally developed in Sweden and the Netherlands, the Safe System approach has been adopted across Australian jurisdictions to support road safety outcomes in the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030, as well as jurisdictional road safety action plans, including the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan

In April 2022, the NSW Government announced the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. The Plan includes new targets to halve deaths and reduce serious injuries by 30 percent on NSW roads by 2030. It outlines priority initiatives for delivery over the next five years to progress towards achieving the new targets.

In February 2024,[1] Transport hosted the NSW Road Safety Forum on behalf of the NSW Government, to discuss new and evidence-based ideas and initiatives to help NSW get back on track to meet its road safety targets alongside actions in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

Strategically placing safety at the centre of transport in NSW

The NSW Government's Future Transport Strategy sets out an integrated vision for transport in NSW. This includes a vision for zero trauma on the NSW road network by 2050 with the aim of ensuring that every customer enjoys safe travel when moving around our network. As NSW continues to grow, we can make the most of opportunities to change the way our places and transport networks are designed, planned, and delivered for the people of NSW.

[1] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/what-we-do/nsw-road-safety-forum-2024

Research and data on regional NSW-specific factors, characteristics and demographics of road crashes

People living in rural and regional NSW make up only a third of the State's population, but deaths on rural and regional roads account for around two-thirds of NSW road trauma.[2] This is why a key focus of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan is reducing these fatalities.

Road trauma in regional NSW

Road trauma in country NSW areas is dispersed across the entire road network. Between 2019 and 2023, there were 10,297 people killed or seriously injured on country NSW roads, with an estimated cost to the community of around $13.9 billion. Direct community costs include emergency services, hospital and health care and loss of productivity in the workplace. The risk of road trauma is pervasive, and a combination of effective road safety measures is required to systematically reduce this risk.

Between 2019 and 2023, around 207 deaths per year occurred on country roads in NSW.

In 2024 (preliminary), there were 223 fatalities on country roads which is seven percent higher than the previous three-year (2021-2023) average of 208. In 2023, there were 2,132 serious injuries on country roads, which is slightly more than the previous three-year average number of annual serious injuries (1,755). Fatality rates per 100,000 population in country areas are almost 4.5 times that of metropolitan areas in 2024 (preliminary).[3]

Between 2019-2023, half of those killed lived in the same Local Government Area as where the crash occurred, and more than half were the driver. Drivers are over-represented in country road fatalities compared with metropolitan areas. Conversely, pedestrians are very under-represented in country road fatalities compared with metropolitan areas.

A significant proportion of the NSW country road network has a posted speed limit of 100 km/h or greater. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 121 road users were killed each year on country roads with a posted speed limit of 100 km/h or greater. This represents 59 percent of all country road fatalities during this period, which is a significantly greater proportion than metropolitan roads, where the figure is only seven percent.

Fatalities on country roads are most likely to be single vehicle crashes and often occur on higher speed roads. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 110 road users were killed in single vehicle crashes on country roads. Single vehicle crashes are most likely to be a result of a driver losing control, often due to driving at an inappropriate speed for the conditions. This represented 53 percent of all country road fatalities during this period, more than double the percentage for metropolitan roads.

Fatalities on country roads are more likely to occur on curves compared with metropolitan roads. This is typically a result of the vehicle approaching the curve at a speed that is inappropriate for road alignment. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 95 road users were killed in crashes on curves in country areas. This represented 46 percent of all country road fatalities during this period, compared with only 27 percent for metropolitan roads.

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[2] The 2024 preliminary data indicates that 67 per cent of fatalities occur on country roads yet only about 33 per cent of the NSW population live in country areas

[3] The 2024 data is preliminary as of 26 June 2025

Around three-quarters of all fatalities on country roads are a result of run-off-road or head-on crashes. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 138 road users were killed in run-off-road crashes and 56 road users were killed in head-on crashes each year. These crash types represented 74 percent of all country road fatalities during this period, compared with only 41 percent for metropolitan roads.

Some of the main behavioural factors that contribute to road fatalities in NSW are more likely to be present in crashes on country roads than metropolitan roads. These include increased speed, fatigue, illegal alcohol and seatbelt non-compliance. Between 2019 and 2023, speed – both excessive speed and speeding – was a factor in 44% of fatalities on country roads in NSW and 36% of fatalities on metropolitan roads during the same period. Between 2019 and 2023, fatigue was a factor in 20 per cent of fatalities on country roads in NSW compared to only six percent of fatalities on metropolitan roads during the same period. Seatbelt non-compliance is a concerning issue in country NSW. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 27 vehicle occupants per year (13 percent were not wearing a seatbelt when they were killed on a country road.

During the same period, illegal alcohol was involved in 20 percent of fatalities on country roads compared to 10 percent on metropolitan roads.

Drink and drug driving is a serious challenge with illegal levels of alcohol involved in 17 percent of fatalities and illicit drugs present in 24 percent of fatalities between 2019 and 2023 across NSW. Over a five-year period, 67 percent of all illicit drug related fatalities occurred on country roads. In 2023, fatalities from crashes involving the presence of an illicit drug were up by 24 (from 55 to 79) compared to the same period in 2022.

Further data is available in **Appendix A.**

Data from sources outside government for proactive decision-making

Transport has started using data from sources outside government for proactive decision-making on road improvements and predictive analytics (see also **Appendix A**). Transport is beginning to use data such as telematics data and vehicle safety features from commercial sources outside the government to design, prioritise or evaluate its approach to road safety.

Star rating of the road network

Current Transport road safety infrastructure programs (state and federally funded programs) now use data from the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) which rates the safety risk of roads across NSW. This data reports risk factors for 35,000 km of state and regional roads (approximately 20,000km state and 15,000km regional roads).

AusRAP generates star ratings to measure the inherent safety of road infrastructure including features that prevent and/or reduce the likelihood/severity of crashes. This involves assessing almost 80 road attributes for every 100m of road which influences risk including features such as:

- Physical features such as lane width, roadside hazards, conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, speed limits, and road curves
- Risk factors such as: single lanes and undivided roads, poor line markings, trees, poles, and steep embankments close to the edge of the road.

The use of AusRAP is currently facilitating a shift in decision-making in Transport to a more predictive and proactive approach based on risk factors to identify potential crash locations. Previous road projects were funded on a reactionary approach (black spot) by treating roads after crashes and road trauma has occurred.

Effectiveness of current strategies and programs to reduce speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving in regional NSW

Effectiveness of Infrastructure Programs

Between 2018 and 2023, the NSW Safer Roads Program invested $822 million in the delivery of life saving road safety treatments through the Saving Lives on Country Roads, and the Liveable and Safe Urban Communities initiatives. The previous Safer Roads Program is estimated to have saved up to 1550 serious injuries and lives over the lifetime of the program.

The regional-focused Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative aimed to address two key contributors to road fatalities and serious injuries on country roads: high-risk curves and fatigue.

The Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative targets the crash types commonly related to lane departure and driver fatigue by installing a number of key treatments. Treatments include Audio Tactile Line Marking, Wide centre line treatments, Flexible safety barriers, Motorcycle underrun, Sealed shoulder widening, Curve Advisory Signs and Curve Alignment Markers, and Vehicle Activated Signs. The effectiveness of these treatments can reduce trauma by 15-95 percent dependent on the type of treatment and the type of crash being addressed. A detailed description of each is available in **Appendix B.**

Effectiveness of Automated Enforcement Programs

The NSW Automated Enforcement Camera Programs 2023 Review shows that in the five-year period 2018 to 2022, there was a 49 percent reduction in fatalities from crashes involving a heavy vehicle at average speed camera locations, compared to a 28 percent reduction in fatalities from crashes involving a heavy vehicle observed across NSW over the same period. The reduction in road trauma at average speed camera locations represented a saving of $191 million to the community over the five-year period 2018 to 2022.

The NSW Automated Enforcement Camera Programs 2023 Review also shows that in the five-year period 2018 to 2022 there was a 76% reduction in fatalities at fixed speed camera locations compared to a 33 percent reduction in fatalities observed across NSW over the same period. The reduction in road trauma at fixed speed camera locations represented a saving of $756 million to the community over the five-year period 2018 to 2022.

The same Review further shows that in the five-year period 2018 to 2022 there was a 57 percent reduction in fatalities at red-light speed camera locations compared to a 22 percent reduction in fatalities observed across NSW over the same period. The reduction in road trauma at red-light speed camera locations represented a saving of $445 million to the community over the five-year period 2018 to 2022.

Between 1 March 2020 and 31 May 2025, around 602.5 million vehicles have been checked and almost 900,000 fines issued for camera-detected mobile phone offences – a non-compliance rate of 0.15 percent or one in 669 vehicle checks. Camera-detected illegal mobile phone use has fallen from an average of one in every 396 vehicles detected in March 2020 to one in 1,128 vehicles detected in May 2025, an improvement of 65 percent.

Research conducted in 2024 among a representative sample of the NSW population, showed that 75% of respondents believed seatbelt detection cameras are an important measure in making our roads safer (Ipsos, 2024). Between 1 July 2024 and 31 May 2025, over 129 million vehicles were checked and 119,726 fines issued for camera-detected seatbelt offences – a non-compliance rate of 0.09 percent or one in 1,078 vehicle checks. Camera-detected seatbelt non-

compliance has fallen from an average of one in every 736 vehicles detected in July 2024 to one in 1,613 vehicles detected in May 2025, an improvement of 54 percent. Drivers (rather than passengers) have shown the greatest improvement. After six weeks of camera enforcement, the non-compliance rate for drivers not buckling up correctly had halved and has since remained steady between 0.02 percent and 0.04 percent of vehicles checked.

The NSW mobile speed camera program is effective at reducing vehicle speeds in the immediate vicinity of the enforcement camera, at times when the camera is present. During 2024, over 165,000 hours of mobile speed camera enforcement was undertaken across regional NSW and over 32 million motorists had their speed checked. This resulted in almost 20,000 motorists being issued a fine for a speeding offence. This represented an offence rate of 0.06 percent or 1 in every 2,404 motorists found speeding.

The effectiveness of the NSW Mobile Speed Camera program at reducing speeding generally across the road network, is more difficult to measure due to the many complementary road safety initiatives Transport has implemented. The 2022 NSW speed survey results show that there was a decrease/no change in the proportion of light vehicles exceeding the speed limit compared with the previous year and that there has generally been a decrease in the proportion of vehicles exceeding the speed limit for all speed zones, since the mobile speed camera program was reintroduced to NSW in 2010. 2023 and 2024 speed survey data are expected to be published in 2026.

Transport is currently undertaking an independent evaluation of all its Automated Enforcement Camera programs which will including assessing the effectiveness of the NSW mobile speed camera program under the current program settings that have been in place since 1 January 2023.

Evaluations of key programs and initiatives

Transport has a comprehensive evaluation program which assesses processes and outcomes associated with a range of road safety interventions.

The Safer Drivers Course (SDC) is designed for learner drivers under 25 years of age who have completed at least 50 hours on road driving experience. The SDC seeks to address behavioural choices, underpinned by factors such as knowledge, awareness, attitudes, decision-making and general resilience. The SDC is one of several programs for young driver road safety in NSW.

An outcome evaluation of the SDC is currently underway to assess its impact on illegal and unsafe driving behaviour and road trauma among young novice drivers, including those in regional areas. The insights from this evaluation will inform adjustments and improvements to the program to maximise its impact and enhance road safety for all NSW road users.

The evaluation commenced in May 2025 and is due for completion by June 2026. It involves qualitative and quantitative research with program participants together with an analysis of program data, driving infringements and crash outcomes.

The Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) is a key program under a Transport and NSW Police Force partnership. The EEP aims to enhance the level of visible Police enforcement activity, over and above baseline hours and normal operating requirements. An independent review of the EEP completed in 2017 made a number of recommendations to improve outcomes, many of which were implemented at that time.

An evaluation of the EEP is planned to commence in the 2026 financial year to gauge the extent to which it is meeting its road safety objectives, and to inform future iterations of the program, including in regional areas. The evaluation will likely involve qualitative and quantitative research with stakeholders and an analysis of program data, driving infringements and crash outcomes.

Outcomes of the evaluation will support consideration of enhancements to NSW's drink and drug driving enforcement strategy.

The Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP) program supports road users to obtain a licence, providing a range of services and resources to help participants build road safety skills and navigate the licensing system. The Program is available to communities who have limited access to transport options or who are geographically disadvantaged, together with Aboriginal communities, refugee and resettlement communities, vulnerable young people and those experiencing social and economic hardship.

An evaluation of the impact of the DLAP is planned to commence in the 2026 financial year. This will help to shape the future expansion of the program, ensuring that any future iterations are evidence-based. The evaluation will likely involve a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the impact of the program on licensing, road safety behaviours and outcomes for the program participants.

NSW Safer Roads Program (SRP) focuses on targeted high-benefit engineering treatments to reduce the occurrence and severity of crashes in NSW. The SRP strategically targets areas with a history of avoidable crashes and emerging crash trends to proactively prevent future crashes. An outcome evaluation of the SRP is currently underway, involving an analysis of crash outcomes at treated sites. The evaluation commenced in April 2025 and is due for completion by December 2025.

Safety Performance Indicators

The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan has a laid out a number of Safety Performance Indicators, which set out known countermeasures that will reduce trauma. Examples include share of country roads with median barriers and share of country roads with audio tactile line marking. The set of indicators are set across the safe system pillars and Transport is progressively quantifying these. Recent examples of work are outlined below.

2020 and 2023 Safety Performance Indicator Observational Study Findings

These projects deliver roadside observations of the targeted behaviours and provide insights into the compliance levels of those behaviours by NSW road users. The statewide nature of these projects means that findings can be analysed by metropolitan and regional observation locations. Transport has published the 2020 and 2023 project reports and the findings from the observational studies are used to support an understanding NSW road network safety.

In 2020, observed seatbelt compliance was lower in metro locations (99.1 percent) compared to Regional locations (99.6 percent) but the 2023 finding was the reverse, with metro seatbelt compliance (99.5 percent) higher than regional (98.9 percent).

Observed motorcycle helmet wear rates were high across the state in both 2020 and 2023.There was minimal change observed over time at regional sites, from 99.7 percent in 2020 to 99.8 percent in 2023. Metro observations were similar, 100 percent in 2020 to 99.9 percent in 2023.

Observed bicycle helmet wear rates were lower at regional sites than metro sites. In 2020, bicycle helmets were observed to be worn by 82.2 percent of riders in regional areas compared with 93.3 percent in metro locations. In 2023, helmet wear rates increased in regional locations to 84.3 percent but decreased in metro locations to 91.4 percent.

Transport is currently delivering this statewide observational research, which is being conducted for the third time, following previous iterations that were delivered in 2020 and 2023. The purpose of this work is to monitor and track compliance with several indicators, including light

vehicle seatbelt compliance, helmet and protective gear use by motorcycle riders and bicycle rider helmet use. The current project is expected to be completed by December 2025.

Proposed measures to reduce road trauma in regional NSW

Development of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan was underpinned by Australian-first in-depth road trauma modelling, applying validated methods used in other best-performing countries, to estimate NSW trauma levels in the future. Long-term strategic trauma modelling shows that continued delivery of the key evidence-based measures that are already being delivered will be critical to achieving sustained road trauma reductions into the future. This highlights that more expansive and enhanced delivery of safety infrastructure, vehicle safety technology advances, speed management, as well as Police and automated enforcement, must remain a cornerstone of the road safety delivery to reduce road trauma in regional NSW. An overview of the modelling is shown in **Appendix C**.

Safety infrastructure in regional NSW

Two thirds of all fatalities on our roads occur in regional NSW and around three-quarters of deaths on high-speed country roads involve a vehicle leaving its path. Many country roads can lack the safety features that help prevent a crash or protect road users if a crash occurs, especially at higher speeds. Many country roads include curves that make it harder to negotiate when driving in higher speed environments. There are also more roadside hazards, such as trees, which increase the severity of a crash on a curve. Many of these crashes can be prevented, or the harm reduced, with implementation of proven safety infrastructure treatments.

NSW has a hierarchy of six sub-network rural road classes for State roads. The classification system adopted by NSW for State rural roads assists defining the design characteristics of different roads based on the intended function within the network. In terms of road safety, this includes setting network performance targets for road elements as well as the intended movement and place function of each of the sub-network rural road classes. Data that is captured for each of the sub-network rural road classes include average crash rate, carriageway arrangement (i.e. divided vs. undivided), lane and shoulder width, design speed, the use of edge lines and safety barriers. This data captured is used to support safety infrastructure programs including the NSW Towards Zero Safer Roads Program.

NSW Towards Zero Safer Roads Program

The Towards Zero Safer Roads Program, is Transport's major mechanism for investing in safety infrastructure, and has a 10-year assured business case. The opening round one of the Towards Zero Safer Roads Program[4] started in 2023 and prioritised the planning and development of 27 projects and the completion of a further 11 safety upgrades in regional NSW.

In 2023-24, a total of $177 million was invested in safer road infrastructure for completed and commenced projects, comprising of $136 million for continuing the completion of creating safer country roads, $34 million for continuing the completion of creating safer urban places and $7 million on safety infrastructure and support programs across the network.

[4] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/programs/towards-zero-safer-roads-program

By the end of 2023-24, 74 projects were completed including 67 projects completed in Regional and Outer Metropolitan areas. The 74 projects completed by the end of 2023-24 delivered the following treatments[5] across the State (lengths are approximate pending project completion report finalisation):

- 650 kilometres of audio tactile line marking
- 614 kilometres of wide centre line treatment
- 103 kilometres of safety barrier, of which 87 kilometres is flexible barrier
- 502 kilometres of new or improved sealed shoulder
- 84 metres of motorcycle underrun barrier
- Six urban intersections upgraded with treatments such as roundabouts, upgraded signal displays, close intersection, raised islands with additional Stop or Give Way signage, removing filtered right turns at signalised intersections and raised safety platforms
- Seven urban pedestrian locations upgraded with treatments such as pedestrian refuges, traffic calming devices, kerb blisters, pedestrian protection at signalised intersections, raised pedestrian crossings and two expansions of existing High Pedestrian Activity Areas including traffic calming.

In 2025-26 Transport is focusing on delivering cost-effective programs, such as the Mass Action Programs, to deliver safe system treatments at high-risk locations on the rural high-speed network and urban high-risk areas.

Up to 2026-27, the Towards Zero Safer Roads Program continues to invest in regional NSW. Round two will invest $202 million in regional NSW to deliver targeted road infrastructure upgrades at high-risk locations to help save lives and reduce road trauma, supporting 72 road safety projects across regional, rural and remote parts of the state. A further $80 million will also be provided to progress successful council-nominated road safety projects. It will allow for the delivery of more than 45 road safety projects and progress the implementation of five High Pedestrian Activity Areas on roads maintained by local councils. From the $80 million, more than $45 million will go to local council-nominated road safety projects in regional NSW.

Safer Country Roads - Saving Lives on Country Roads program delivery of rural infrastructure and speed management initiatives.

The Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative delivers route-based, mass action road safety engineering treatments and targeted crash location treatments that reduce road fatalities and serious injuries on high-speed roads in country/rural areas. This includes reducing high-risk crash types commonly related to lane departure, through the delivery of flexible safety barriers, audio-tactile line marking, wide centre lines, improved curve signage, shoulder widening, sealed shoulders, vehicle activated signs and speed management with a heavy focus on speed limit reduction on high-speed, high-risk rural roads.[6]

As noted above, in 2023-24, $136 million was invested for continuing the completion of the Safer Country Roads. A list of NSW Government investment through the 2023-24 Creating Safer Country Roads initiative is available at **Appendix D**.

[5] The completed projects also delivered other engineering safety measures not limited to the types listed

[6] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/Towards-Zero-Safer-Roads-guidelines.pdf

Vehicle Safety

The NSW Government is a founding member of the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP). ANCAP crash test cars and conduct independent performance assessments on safety features and technologies in vehicles to promote safer choices for consumers. Analysis by ANCAP shows vehicles built before 2000 made up 20 percent of the Australian vehicle fleet but featured in 33 percent of fatal crashes. In NSW, 41 percent of cars and light trucks involved in fatal crashes in the period between 2019 and 2023 were manufactured before 2008. Newer vehicles (cars and light trucks) built between 2014 and 2019 were involved in 24 percent of fatal crashes during 2019-2023.

Rural areas are falling behind in the uptake of five-star ANCAP rated light vehicles. The average age of a light vehicle within NSW urban areas is ten years old, and 13 years in regional areas based on registration data in December 2024. In metropolitan areas, 62 percent of registered light vehicles manufactured after 2000 have a five-star rating, compared to 56.5 percent in regional areas. At the current rate of turn-over, it will take about two decades before the fleet is completely replaced. The life of heavy vehicles is even longer.

Growth of advanced safety features in the NSW fleet

Mandated technology such as electronic stability control has reached a large and increasing proportion of the light vehicle fleet in NSW. Technologies that are not mandated but are desirable and common in five-star vehicles, remain in a small proportion of vehicles. Transport previously provided input on vehicle technology and speed limits in a Submission to the 2022 ‘Speed limits and road safety in regional NSW’ inquiry.[7]

Driver Monitoring Systems

Driver monitoring systems (DMS) offer significant safety benefits for rural drivers, who often face long, monotonous journeys on isolated roads. These systems can detect signs of driver fatigue, distraction, or inattention—common risks in rural settings—and issue timely alerts to help prevent accidents. By continuously assessing driver behaviour through eye movement, head position, and steering patterns, DMS enhances situational awareness and supports early intervention. This is especially valuable in areas with limited access to emergency services, where preventing a crash is far more critical than responding to one.

According to ANCAP’s updated protocols from 2023, both direct and indirect driver monitoring systems are evaluated under the Safety Assist pillar of the rating system. These systems are tested for their ability to detect driver fatigue or inattention and issue appropriate alerts. The scoring for DMS is part of the broader occupant status category, which includes seatbelt reminders and can contribute up to three points toward the overall safety rating for a vehicle.

Occupant protection

Occupant protection includes a vehicle’s structure and safety features that protect its occupants during a crash. It encompasses a vehicle’s structure, crumple zones, seatbelts, airbags and similar equipment that absorb impact forces and safeguard passengers, making modern vehicles much safer than older models not fitted with these features. It is particularly important in helping to mitigate the effects of high-speed crashes.

[7] https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/submissions/79300/Submission%2069.pdf

Speed Management

Each year, around two-thirds of fatalities on NSW roads occur in country areas. Of these, 60 percent occur on high-speed roads (100km/h or more). With over 80 percent of the rural road network made up of roads with a speed limit of 100km/h, reducing risks on high-speed rural roads remains a key challenge and priority in NSW.

NSW crash data shows that a total of 638 people were killed and 5,247 seriously injured between 2019 and 2023 from crashes involving excessive speed. The below graph shows the split between urban and rural total fatalities from speeding related in NSW between 2015 to 2023. In the last 10 years this equal 1,245 lives lost, with 892 people in rural environment and 353 people in urban environments.

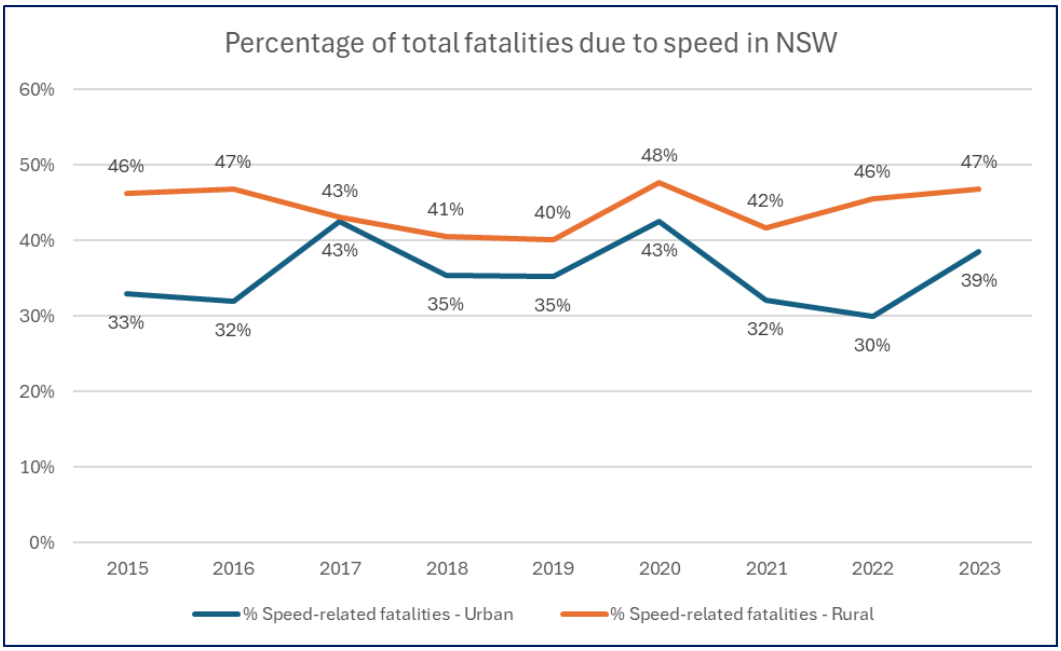

Figure 1: Percentage of total fatalities from speeding related crashes in NSW (2015-2023)

Evidence demonstrates that speed is the most critical risk factor in road crashes because it influences the likelihood of being involved in a crash, as well as the severity of the crash outcome.

Speeds need to be at or below the Safe System survivable impact speeds to reduce the risk of road death or serious injury. If higher speeds are required, then better-quality road infrastructure is necessary to protect road users. This can include separation and crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, or barrier protection systems to prevent head-on crashes. Research and modelling conducted within Transport displayed that the majority of the existing speed limits on NSW roads may not be consistent with the Safe System approach.

Speed management is one of the most proven cost-effective solutions to managing road trauma.

In July 2023, Transport released an updated NSW Speed Zoning Standard. The updated standard sets out principles and the technical information for reviewing, determining, and implementing speed zones on NSW public roads. It enables practitioners to make recommendations that promote the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, facilitate people-centred environments and connect places.

The principles ensure that the objectives of the standard are aligned and promote the intended outcomes. The six principles that underpin the standard include, speed zones should be set to

minimise harm, speed zones should align with surrounding environments to support liveability, amenity and successful places, speed zones should ensure safe, efficient and reliable travel on roads that have a primary movement function, speed zones should be self-explanatory, consistent and support compliance, speed zones should mitigate environmental impacts of road traffic and that Local government and the community engagement is engaged as part of the speed zoning process.

Transport recently completed an analysis of speed zone reviews that resulted in a decrease in speed limit from 100 km/h to 80 km/h. The analysis utilised finalised and preliminary data. The data shows that nine of the 12 locations had a reduction in Fatal and Serious Injury (FSI) crashes. With the average reduction across the 12 locations equalling a 38 percent reduction in FSI crashes.

The Towards Zero Speed Management program is a sub-program of the Towards Zero Safer Roads Program. The speed management program aims to deliver sustainable and long-term reduction in road trauma through the setting of safe and appropriate speed limits on the existing NSW road network, including on regional roads where higher levels of speed related fatal crashes are recorded.

The Towards Zero Speed Management Program in 2023-24 has delivered a range of initiatives in regional NSW to support safer speeds, including speed zone reviews on high-risk country roads and the development of speed zones in High Pedestrian Activity Areas (HPAA). In partnership with local councils during 2023-24, 30 km/h and 40 km/h speed zones were introduced and expanded in 10 HPAAs across the Regional and Outer Metropolitan area.

One of the 10 regional HPAA installed included a 30 km/h speed limit within Cootamundra's town centre. The change was led by Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council with positive support from NSW Police Force and community members. The change in speed limit from 50 km/h to 30 km/h is estimated to have a 33 percent reduction in fatal crashes as well as 26 percent reduction in serious injuries based on the Global Road Safety Facility – Speed Impact Tool.

Speed zone reviews completed from 2019 to present are provided below. This information is sourced from the Speed Management Portal. The data shown is for all completed reviews, as of 16 June 2025. Note a speed zone review can contain multiple speed zone changes.

Table 1: Speed zone reviews completed from 2019 to present (2019-2025)

Speed zone review outcomes by program year	Decrease		Increase		No change		Total Speed Zone Reviews completed	
	Regional	Metro	Regional	Metro	Regional	Metro	Regional	Metro
2019-20	186	144	23	1	56	3	195	49
2020-21	189	100	9	0	69	15	202	61
2021-22	115	119	3	2	52	14	130	42
2022-23	307	16	11	0	115	24	296	42
2023-24	339	89	18	8	182	33	331	98
2024-25	356	92	9	3	111	48	436	80

Enforcement Programs

Random Breath Testing (RBT) is a proven measure to deter drink driving with efficient, high-volume testing which means that drivers can be detected anywhere, anytime. In NSW, RBTs combined with education and other initiatives has been highly successful as a deterrence to drink driving.

Transport provides additional funding to the NSW Police Force through the Community Road Safety Fund to support the Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP). This program supplements police baseline enforcement hours and enables targeted road safety operations across both state-wide and regional areas.

The EEP is strategically supporting an uplift in RBT across NSW through targeted, high-visibility operations. Central to this initiative is Operation RAID, which delivers high-volume, stationary and mobile RBT as well as roadside drug testing across the state, leveraging the program's Statewide operating model to ensure broad coverage and deter drink and drug driving.

During the 2023–24 financial year, NSW Police Force delivered over 169,000 hours of operations under the EEP, comprising more than 101,000 hours statewide and over 68,000 hours regionally.

EEP included six statewide operations, often aligned with double demerit point periods, alongside numerous targeted regional operations conducted throughout the year. This significant investment of police resourcing hours demonstrates the NSW Police Force's ongoing commitment to road safety, particularly in regional NSW and during high-risk periods such as long weekends and holidays.

Under the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, NSW Police Force deliver roadside drug testing through the Mobile Drug Testing Program (MDT), with an annual target of 200,000. This initiative aims to detect and deter drug driving and reduce drug-related road trauma across NSW. EEP and the MDT programs form part of a coordinated approach to addressing road safety between Transport and the NSW Police Force. In addition to these programs, a range of other joint initiatives, such as high-visibility enforcement operations, speed compliance activities, and campaigns targeting impaired and distracted driving, are delivered in partnership to improve road user behaviour and reduce serious injuries and fatalities on NSW roads.

The Mobile Drug Testing Program

The NSW Mobile Drug Testing (MDT) program detects the presence of four illegal drugs: ecstasy, THC (the psychoactive component of cannabis), cocaine, and methamphetamine (including speed and ice) that are commonly identified in fatal crash data. MDTs are designed to deter drivers from getting behind the wheel if they have recently taken drugs.

MDT can be conducted at roadside operations along with RBT, or by the NSW Police in vehicles patrolling our roads. Oral fluid wipes screen for presence of illicit drugs. If the screening test is positive, a saliva sample is sent for laboratory analysis and drivers are only charged with an offence if the presence of an illegal drug is confirmed by the laboratory.

Over a 12-month period to the end of the 2024 financial year, the NSW Police Force delivered around 216,000 MDTs. This saw the highest volume of roadside drug testing conducted in NSW since the program's inception. This initiative aims to detect and deter drug driving and reduce drug-related road trauma across NSW.

Figure 2 shows the overall increase in MDT in regional NSW between 2018 and 2024.

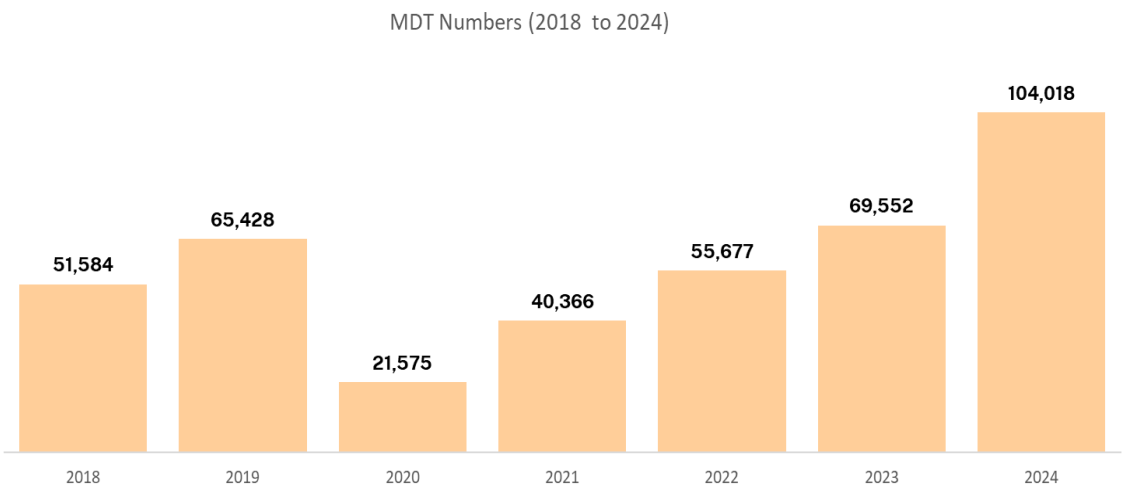

Figure 2: Mobile drug testing – regional NSW 2018 to 2024

Note: MDT numbers for the regional areas are sourced from the Northern, Southern, and Western police regions. The South West, North West, and Central Metropolitan police regions are excluded.

Automated Enforcement Strategy

The NSW Automated Enforcement Strategy for road safety provides an overarching framework to manage the automated enforcement programs used in NSW which continue to help reduce road trauma in NSW. It also assists to guide innovation and continue to help reduce NSW road trauma.

Technology-based automated enforcement to improve road safety outcomes is a feature in all national and leading international jurisdictions. It is proven as a high value measure to tackle persistent risky road user behaviours and reduce road trauma. In NSW, we have been delivering automated enforcement since 1988, having been introduced primarily to target speeding and red-light running to reduce crashes at high-risk locations. More recently, this has been expanded to include average and mobile speed camera enforcement and most recently, mobile phone and seatbelt detection cameras. Cameras also assist with fatigue compliance among heavy vehicle drivers and detecting unregistered driving.

Following the NSW Auditor-General's audit of speed cameras in NSW in 2011, Transport developed an evidence-based Speed Camera Strategy (2012) to ensure the various types of cameras being used were effective in reducing road trauma. Since this Strategy, speed cameras used in NSW have continued to deliver road safety benefits. The NSW Automated Enforcement Strategy for road safety is a replacement for the NSW Speed Camera Strategy (2012).

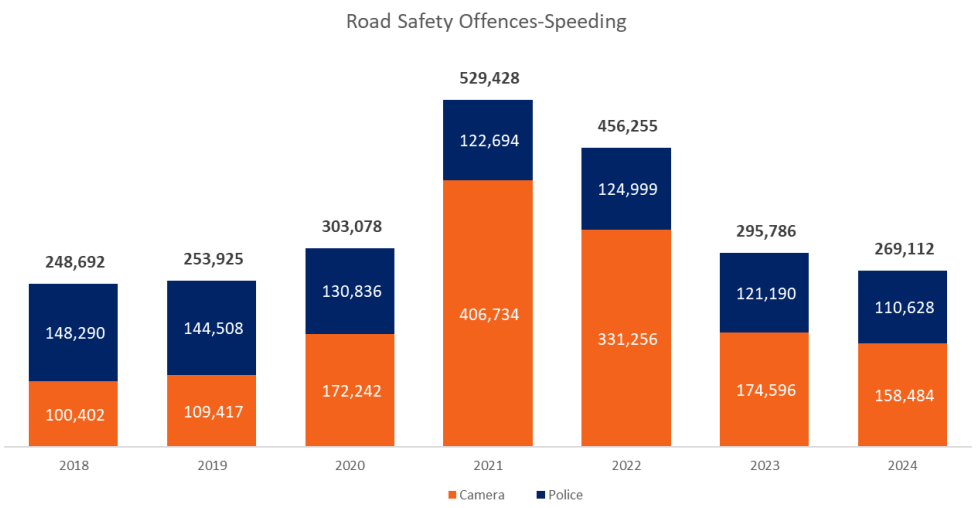

Figure 3: Road Safety Offences – Speeding – regional NSW 2018 to 2024

The NSW Automated Enforcement Camera Programs: 2023 Review monitored automated enforcement cameras in NSW to ensure they are having a positive road safety effect. The 2023 report was prepared using data up until the end of the 2022 calendar year. Transport reviewed all NSW automated enforcement camera programs (fixed, red-light, average, mobile speed cameras and mobile phone detection cameras) in line with both the NSW Auditor General's recommendations and the NSW Automated Enforcement Strategy for road safety.

In 2019, NSW introduced the world-first Mobile Phone Detection Camera program to enforce illegal mobile phone use while driving from 1 March 2020, following a comprehensive pilot of new technology. These same cameras now also enforce seatbelt non-use as part of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

On the following page, Figure 4 shows road safety offences in regional NSW from 2018 to 2024, categorised by enforcement type: camera, police, and court-based interventions.

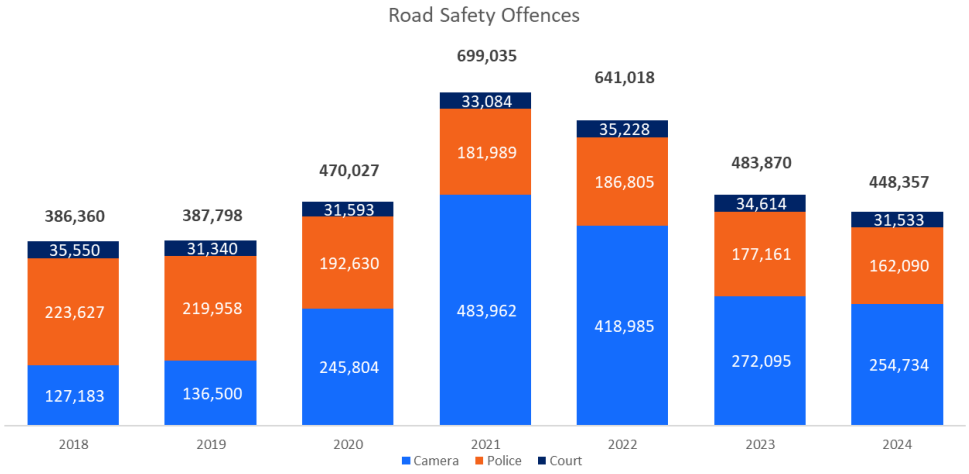

Figure 41: Road safety offences – regional NSW 2018 to 2024

Average Speed Cameras (ASCs)

The New South Wales Average Speed Camera (ASC) Program commenced in 2010. It is the most extensive network of average speed cameras in Australia currently with 32 active ASC lengths in place. Unlike other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally, the NSW program currently only enforces heavy vehicles, with the exception of a trial of light vehicle enforcement at two regional locations from 1 May 2025 to 30 June 2026. Twenty-five of the 32 existing enforcement lengths are in regional NSW, since most crashes on high-speed roads occur overwhelmingly in regional areas.

NSW Average Speed Camera Trial for Light Vehicles

On 8 September 2024, the NSW Government announced a trial of average speed cameras (ASC) to assess the road safety benefits in NSW of expanding their use from heavy vehicles to all vehicles.

The trial is currently being conducted in two locations over 14 months with a two-month warning letter period from 1 May to 30 June 2025. Enforcement commenced on 1 July 2025 and will run for 12 months until 30 June 2026. The trial locations are:

- Pacific Highway between Kew and Lake Innes (Port Macquarie) – 15kms between cameras.
- Hume Highway between Coolac and Gundagai – 16kms between cameras.

The two locations have been selected based on several factors, including known crash history and ability to make the technical changes required to enforce light vehicles for the trial. The trial is supported by a comprehensive communications and media campaign including radio, print, web based and social media, as well as a proactive traditional media strategy.

Warning signs at both locations have been updated and additional signs installed to notify drivers that their speed is being monitored by the cameras on the trial stretches, giving them the opportunity to adjust their speed.

The Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) has been engaged to conduct an independent evaluation of the trial. The evaluation will assess how effective average speed cameras can be at the trial locations in changing speeding habits of light vehicle drivers, improving safety and preventing injuries and fatalities. In line with legislation, passed in October 2024; to enable the enforcement of light vehicles, the NSW Government will report back to the NSW Parliament on the outcomes of the trial.

Fixed Speed Cameras (FSCs)

The NSW Fixed Speed Camera (FSC) program commenced in 1997. As of 30 June 2025, there are 108 locations across NSW with one or more FSCs installed. While most fixed speed cameras in NSW are installed in metropolitan areas, there are still 37 locations in regional NSW with one or more FSCs installed. These FSCs are typically installed on major regional roads.

Red-light Speed Cameras (RLSCs)

The NSW Red-light Speed Camera (RLSC) program commenced in 2009. As of 30 June 2025, there are 246 intersections across NSW with one or more red-light speed cameras installed. While most fixed speed cameras in NSW are installed in metropolitan areas, there are still 33 intersections in regional NSW with one or more RLSCs installed. These RLSCs are typically installed in major regional town centres.

Mobile Speed Cameras (MSCs)

The NSW Mobile Speed Camera (MSC) program commenced in 2010. As of 30 June 2025, there were 2,427 locations approved for MSC enforcement and approximately 3,600 active MSC enforcement sites in regular operation across these locations, delivering 21,000 hours of enforcement per month. The MSC program is the most regionally focused speed camera program, with two thirds of all enforcement hours occurring in regional NSW.

Mobile Phone and Seatbelt Detection Cameras (MPSDCs)

The Mobile Phone Detection Camera (MPDC) Program commenced in enforcement mode from 1 March 2020, detecting drivers illegally using a mobile phone in NSW, after a three-month warning letter period. The Seatbelt Detection Camera Program commenced in enforcement mode from 1 July 2024, to detect drivers and passengers incorrectly wearing a seatbelt or not wearing a seatbelt. There was no warning letter period for enforcement from seatbelt detection cameras.

The same cameras enforce both illegal mobile phone use and seatbelt non-compliance at the same time. Since 1 July 2024, the cameras have been known as Mobile Phone and Seatbelt Detection Cameras (MPSDC).

The MPSDC Program's primary objective is to enforce at a wide geographic spread of camera sites to cover a substantial proportion of the State's population, thereby aiding in greater deterrence of illegal mobile phone use and seatbelt non-compliance. The program aims to reach close to 100 percent of the NSW population of drivers and riders through a mix of both metropolitan and regional deployments.

The program comprises fixed location cameras at eleven sites and ten trailer-mounted transportable camera units (transportable cameras). The locations of the enforcement sites and the cameras are not publicly disclosed as the program aims to achieve general deterrence by promoting that the cameras operate anywhere, anytime.

The NSW Government has committed to facilitate at least 135 million vehicle checks per annum from 2022-2023 onwards.

Education and engagement programs and safety campaigns

Transport engages with the community across a range of platforms to educate road users about safe driving behaviour. Effective community engagement:

- raises awareness and understanding of on issues that contribute to death and serious injury on the roads including drink driving, fatigue, speeding, mobile phone use, and seatbelt use
- fosters positive community and stakeholder involvement in trauma reduction measures such as enforcement and infrastructure treatments, and
- contributes to better acceptance of, and compliance with behavioural measures including speed limits.

Transport continues to develop public integrated communication campaigns that are based on audience insights and trauma data, and which are consistent with the NSW Government Advertising Guidelines. The development of campaigns and engagement programs is a multidisciplinary effort, with agencies such as NSW Health providing clinical context and data to campaigns and programs focused on reducing preventable harm.

Continuing to educate and inform the community is an important commitment in the 2026 Plan.

In 2023-24, regional communities were targeted with creative materials that depict drivers in regional locations and appear on regional media including TV, digital video, outdoor, radio, social and regional press.

Driver Fatigue

Research has shown that fatigue can be as dangerous as other road safety issues, such as drink driving. Drivers in regional and rural parts of NSW often find themselves driving longer distances for work, health or recreation purposes which puts them at risk of becoming fatigued while driving.

There is no evidence that increasing speed limits would reduce fatigue related crashes. Travelling at higher speeds requires more concentration and alertness from the driver, given the reduced time and shorter distance over which a driver has to react to hazards or correct a mistake, which builds up the driver's cognitive load over longer journeys and, thus possibly increasing increases driver fatigue. As the research in the previous section indicates, journey travel times only increase a very small amount with a downward change in the speed limit.

Research evidence shows there are a number of other risk factors that increase the chances for driver fatigue including:

- sleep loss/sleep deprivation
- long hours of wakefulness
- driving during normal sleeping hours (disrupting circadian rhythms)
- sleep disorders
- time spent driving without rest, and
- alcohol consumption.

Fatigue can occur on journeys of any length. What the driver brings to the road, including physical exhaustion before commencement of driving, is as great a risk factor as time spent driving without rest. Regarding journey length, it is not so much the length that increases fatigue risk but lack of breaks on that journey. To avoid fatigue-related crashes, drivers need to ensure they are well rested before driving and take regular rest breaks to avoid becoming fatigued while driving.

The NSW Government encourages drivers to appropriately manage their fatigue. Transport provides information and resources on how to manage fatigue and stay safe. These include:

- the 'Don't trust your tired self' public education campaign, which educates drivers on the risks and the signs of fatigue and encourages them to act
- campaigns, presentations and activations delivered to at-risk groups including heavy vehicle drivers at harvest and shift workers (miners, health workers)
- the 'Test your tired self' interactive test (www.testyourtiredself.com.au), which allows motorists to see how tired they might be before driving. It provides useful tips on what drivers need to do before getting behind the wheel to avoid driving tired, as well as during their drive
- supporting Driver Reviver, which operates during peak holiday periods and encourages motorists to take a break, and
- rest areas across the road network, which allow motorists to park safely, walk around and refresh themselves or have a short nap before continuing their journey. They are

available 24 hours a day year-round and are clearly signposted. Rest area locations are published to assist motorists in planning breaks on their trip.

Drink and Drug Driving

Regional drivers are the focus of the 'Say “Yeah Nah” to Drink Driving' campaign, which delivers targeted messaging specific to regional communities. The campaign reinforces the strong social unacceptability of drink driving while also highlighting its serious impact on regional motorists. By increasing awareness of the issue, the campaign aims to further strengthen the importance of responsible driving choices in these communities. Quantitative tracking shows a strong long term positive campaign impact on future intentions and past behaviours, with 72 percent of those who recognise the campaign suggesting they will never drive or ride after drinking alcohol, when they are probably or definitely over the legal limit.

Additionally, regional communities across the state have been targeted by Transport in the ‘Plan B Win a Swag’ activation where licensed premises conduct in-venue promotions to discourage drinking and driving. In Region West over the 2024/25 December January period, more than 340 hotels, clubs and bottle shops participated.

The ‘Stop it or cop it’ campaign is part of Transport’s partnership with the NSW Police Force to reduce risky behaviour and improve road safety. High visibility enforcement combined with the perceived certainty of enforcement and immediacy of a penalty is known to provide a strong deterrent to illegal road user behaviour including drink and drug driving.

The results show that those who have seen the ‘Stop it or cop it’ campaign are much more likely to notice the NSW Police on the roads, versus those who have not seen it.

Campaign media placements are upweighted in locations where police undertake road safety operations, so that drivers see both the advertising as well as the police presence.

A partnership with the Australian Alcohol and Drug Foundation to deliver the Good Sports Program to over 3,700 NSW sporting clubs (over 2,300 regional and over 1,400 Sydney metro-based). The program delivers road safety messaging direct to local sporting clubs while also focusing on addressing alcohol consumption, drink driving, safe transport planning as well as mental health and violence prevention.

Seatbelt safety

Since mobile phone detection cameras commenced enforcing seatbelt offences in NSW, Transport has developed and run communications and campaigns to educate the community on correctly wearing a seatbelt and their responsibility as a driver to ensure their passengers are wearing their seatbelt correctly, including informing them they may be fined if their passengers are not wearing a seatbelt correctly.

Information about seatbelt safety is available on the Centre for Road Safety website[8] including information for taxi and Rideshare drivers, as well as in-language information for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

Seatbelt messages are also one of the key messages included in the Enforcement ‘Stop it...or Cop it’ campaign which is run across TV, radio, digital video, outdoor and social channels. The campaign runs in addition to other channels including media, variable message signs (VMS)

[8] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/topics-tips/seatbelts

and community engagement. Seatbelt safety flyers are also included in camera-detected penalty notices for seatbelt offences and are included in learner driver kits provided to learner drivers by Service NSW.

Rural Road Safety Month

In September 2024, the NSW Government supported the Australian Road Safety Foundation's Rural Road Safety Month. The initiative highlights the level of road trauma in country NSW and encourages local road users to adopt safer behaviours. The 2024 theme was "Help sow the seeds of change; road safety starts with you".

A paid media campaign ran from 12 September to 7 October 2024 in social media, digital display and VMS, covering speeding, fatigue, and drink and drug driving. The campaign delivered 3,845,470 impressions in social media, and 398,451 impressions in digital display that targeted Aboriginal audiences.

Animals on Country Roads

This campaign directly supports trauma reduction by encouraging motorists to take extra care when driving or riding around animals on country roads, especially at dusk and dawn when they can be more active and harder to see. It promotes key behaviours like slowing down and staying alert to help prevent serious injuries and deaths. The campaign annually runs from around May to June, timed to coincide with higher wildlife activity.

In 2024, the campaign comprised a paid media campaign including geographically targeted Facebook posts, digital display and radio advertising, a media announcement, variable message signs (VMS) and resources for partners and stakeholders to share. The campaign delivered 3,102,506 impressions via Facebook and 3,126,672 impressions via digital display advertising.

Transport's regional teams supported the initiative with local messaging and variable message signs on high-risk roads.

Seasonal and event related road safety messaging

Various seasonal and event related factors can influence road trauma by changing road conditions and drawing additional traffic to the road network. These can be effectively targeted through localised promotions and activations. These include:

- winter weather campaign in the south and western tablelands
- fatigue and 'Sharing the Road' messaging around grain, cotton and fruit harvest
- activations at major sporting events including Bathurst V8 Races and Koori Knockout
- messaging around music and cultural festivals, commercial expos and agricultural field days, and
- general awareness around long weekends and holiday periods.

Local Government Road Safety Program and Road User Safety Behavioural Program

The Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) is a partnership between Transport and local councils to co-fund Road Safety Officer (RSO) positions and contribute funding to road user safety initiatives at a local level. It is a subprogram of the Road User Safety Behavioural Program (RUSBP). The RUSBP is delivered by Transport Sydney Integration and Regional Integration delivery partners across NSW and is funded by the Community Road Safety Fund. Both programs aim to reduce the incidence and severity of crashes in the NSW road

environment by improving road user behaviour. Both programs support the objectives of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan (2026 RSAP).

The programs deliver a range of initiatives under a number of behavioural sub-programs targeting key road safety behavioural issues and at-risk road user groups with a focus on engagement and education. These include:

- key behavioural issues - speeding, drink and drug driving, distraction including mobile phone use, fatigue, restraint use, and
- key road user groups – motorcycle riders, young drivers, pedestrians, bicycle riders, older road users and heavy vehicle drivers.

As at June 2025, 51 out of 96 local councils in regional NSW were participating in the LGRSP, with Transport co-funding 42 RSOs to develop and implement local road safety plans. In the 2026 RSAP there is a commitment to review and expand the LGRSP to ensure every local council has access to a RSO to better resource their road safety planning and integration into their local communities. The review has been completed by a consultant and Transport is currently considering the recommendations.

Aboriginal Road Safety Programs

Aboriginal road trauma data for 2019-2023, indicates that Aboriginal people are six times more likely to be killed on a country road than a metropolitan road. In alignment with the increase in Aboriginal road trauma rates, Transport has a number of Aboriginal road safety programs in regional areas including workshops on bike, scooter, and skateboard safety, the Child Car Restraints program and participation by Transport in local community events to promote positive road safety behaviours.

Since July 2024, 39 engagement activities on road safety with Aboriginal communities have been delivered. These community engagement activities are complimented by regionally targeted community education and advertising campaigns to promote safe behaviours in Aboriginal communities.

Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP)

Established in 2015, the Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP), is a free program providing support to people in NSW who face extra challenges in getting a licence. It aims to increase access to licensing, safe and legal driving and improve social outcomes by expanding support and mentoring programs for disadvantaged people. DLAP is available to: Aboriginal communities, refugee and resettlement communities, vulnerable young people, social or economic hardship or geographically disadvantaged.

Research shows that unlicensed drivers are significantly more likely to be involved in crashes compared to correctly licensed drivers. Tragically, in 20-40 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fatal crashes, the driver is unlicensed. This is a significantly higher number compared to other Australians at five percent. Aboriginal people are over-represented in road trauma, and many Aboriginal people are known to experience poor access to the licensing system. Currently, approximately 54 percent of eligible Aboriginal people in NSW hold a driver's licence, compared to 88 percent of eligible non-Aboriginal people The DLAP was originally conceived as a program for Aboriginal communities but has been broadened to include other communities experiencing disadvantage throughout NSW. Similar financial, cultural, and literacy barriers are faced by other communities – including those in regional and remote parts of NSW.

There are currently 19 DLAP service providers across NSW, servicing over 130 communities. Of those providers, 17 provide services outside of the Greater Sydney region. In the last financial year, 73 percent of participants in the DLAP were outside the Greater Sydney region, highlighting the need for this program in those communities.

Community Road Safety Grants

Transport's Community Road Safety Grants program provides community groups and charity/not-for-profit organisations across NSW with the opportunity to deliver local safety projects. These projects help increase road safety awareness and contribute to moving towards zero fatalities and serious injuries on NSW roads. Since 2015, the program has funded more than 260 projects.

The most recent round was announced in December 2024, where 18 out of the 35 successful applications, were for grants in regional areas.

Younger drivers

The NSW Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) has been in place since 2000 and is based on world's best practice in the licensing of novice drivers, through a staged approach that builds on-road experience in a range of conditions.

The GLS is designed to maximise the development of safe driving skills of novice drivers, via staged training and practice over a protracted period of time. Under a GLS, driving and riding restrictions (including speed limit restrictions) are gradually lifted to allow experience to be gained in lower risk situations. In turn, drivers experience more complex conditions over time as restrictions are gradually lifted to allow driving experience under more challenging conditions before obtaining an unrestricted licence.

The GLS includes the Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) Online, a computer-based Hazard Perception Test (HPT) as well as a practical driving test to assess safe driving and the practical application of the NSW Road Rules to obtain a P1 provisional licence.

The DKT Online was, in part, developed to improve accessibility of the licensing system for people across NSW, including those in regional areas. Being an online program, the DKT Online can be accessed by anyone anywhere in NSW with an internet connection. This represents a substantial accessibility improvement for residents of regional NSW who previously only had the option of sitting the in-person driver knowledge test at the nearest Service NSW service centre.

Since the GLS was introduced, fatalities for young drivers (25 and under) have reduced by 64 percent. Notwithstanding this, young drivers continue to be over-represented in casualty crashes in NSW. Despite making up only around 13 percent of all licence holders, younger drivers represent around 21 per cent of annual driver road fatalities.

Transport, in partnership with councils under the Local Government Road Safety Program, delivered free Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Driver (HLDBSD) workshops for parents and supervisors of learner drivers. In 2023-24, 109 workshops were delivered across NSW to 2112 attendees. The Supervising learner drivers online course was launched 1 March 2025, the five e-learning modules provide advice and guidance to increase supervisors' confidence when supervising learner drivers. This online course was developed to help expand the reach beyond what that the HLDBSD workshops offer,

The Safer Drivers Course continues to be delivered in regional NSW through an extensive network of Providers. The SDC curriculum is based on adolescent cognitive developmental principles and best practice in young driver education that highlight the importance of extended

supervised driving experience and low risk driving strategies for young learners, including driving to conditions and appropriate speed selection. Over 65,000 young Learner drivers participated in the Safer Drivers Course regionally, since July 2021.

NSW Road Safety Education Program

The NSW Road Safety Education Program[9] is the NSW Government's leading model of support for educating children and young people about road safety. NSW leads national and international jurisdictions in this comprehensive, collaborative, long-term model of support.

Transport works in a close, collaborative partnership with the NSW education sectors. The partnership, led by Transport, enables the Department of Education,[10] Catholic Schools NSW,[11] the Association of Independent Schools of NSW[12] and the *Kids and Traffic*[13] Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program, to provide best practice professional development support to teachers and other educators, and road safety education advice to all NSW early learning services, primary and secondary schools.

Each education sector employs a team of road safety education specialists. These specialists are qualified teachers with additional expertise in delivery of the NSW curriculum and road safety education. They provide professional development to teachers and educators about road safety as part of the curriculum and help guide early learning services and schools to plan, teach and develop policy and strategies about road safety as part of whole school or service programs.

In NSW, road safety is taught in schools as part of the Personal Development, Health, and Physical Education K-10 Syllabus (PDHPE). All students study PDHPE from Kindergarten to Year 10. Road safety content is included as part of the PDHPE K-10 Syllabus. NSW is fortunate to be the only state to specifically include road safety as part of the PDHPE K-10 syllabus.

Students in Years 11 and 12 learn about road safety issues and consequences through the mandatory Life Ready Course in NSW Government schools, and through student wellbeing programs in Catholic and Independent Schools.

Transport has developed Safety Town[14] for primary school teachers, students and families. The On the Move[15] website supports secondary PDHPE teachers with lessons and resources to support the teaching of road safety.

Towards Zero TAFE Road Safety Partnership

This program targets trade apprentices studying at TAFE NSW. The program was established in the State's west in 2016 as an acknowledgement of the long distances travelled by young drivers, mostly males, for work and training. Today the program is delivered face to face across all regions with over a thousand students attending each year. The program covers the issues of speed, fatigue, animals, in-car distraction (mobile phones) and alcohol/drug driving. Feedback through exit surveys shows strong support for the program from the target audience, TAFE, parents and employers.

[9] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/community/schools/road-safety-education
[10] https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/road-safety-education
[11] https://www.csnsw.catholic.edu.au/learning-and-wellbeing/wellbeing/road-safety
[12] https://www.aisnsw.edu.au/teachers-and-staff/funded-programs-and-projects/road-safety-education
[13] https://kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/
[14] https://www.safetytown.com.au/
[15] https://onthemove.nsw.edu.au/

Partnership with the Road Trauma Support Group NSW

The NSW Government provides funding for the Road Trauma Support Group through the Community Road Safety Fund. The Road Trauma Support Group NSW partnership provides support services for families affected by road trauma death in NSW. In 2024, the Group have expanded their trauma services through a regional outreach program expanding services into regional areas, supported by Transport delivery teams.

Sponsorships

Transport has partnered with NSW Rugby League (NSWRL) since 2017 to encourage safer driver behaviour in regional NSW through the 'Knock-on Effect' campaign. Rugby League passion is significantly higher in regional areas compared to any other sport in NSW. The partnership enables Transport to reach key regional audiences in high-risk groups through leveraging rugby league legends and players in content and at regional community events to drive engagement in a way that appeals to fans and ultimately delivers important road safety messaging.

In addition to the NSW Road Safety Education Program, Transport sponsors three organisations that deliver road safety programs directly to students:

- bstreetsmart – an annual large-scale event for students in Years 10 to 12, led by Western Sydney Local Health District. The aim is to reduce the fatality and injury rates of young people from a health consequence perspective by promoting safe behaviour as drivers, riders and passengers
- Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA) – a program led by Road Safety Education Ltd, that delivers road safety messages to high school students via guest speakers and activities, and
- Wheelchair Sports Road Show – a program led by Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT that raises awareness of road safety for primary and high school students through a presentation that focuses on risk taking behaviours.

Implementation of relevant recommendations from the 2023 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, entitled 'Regional Road Safety', dated 30 November 2023

In March 2023, the Audit Office of NSW commenced a Performance Audit into Regional Road Safety. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of Transport's delivery of Towards Zero in regional areas. The audit focused on the policy and strategies employed by Transport to manage road safety in regional areas. The audit did not evaluate individual road safety programs or initiatives.

The Audit Office Final Report into Regional Road Safety outlined three recommendations that Transport should action by November 2024:

1. Develop a regional implementation plan to support the NSW 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, including an integrated and systematic accountability framework to measure, analyse and publicly report annually on:
    a. road safety trends and insights on a sub-regional level
    b. specific countermeasures that are tailored to the road safety needs of regional communities and to particular sub-regional 'hotspots'
    c. the impact of countermeasures against road trauma reduction targets specific to regional NSW
    d. funding that is allocated to achieving road safety outcomes at a subregional level.
2. Develop and implement a plan to measure and mitigate the known and emerging risks causing underspends in the Community Road Safety Fund.
3. Expedite the review of the Local Government Road Safety Program and make recommendations to government aimed at increasing the uptake of the Program by councils in regional NSW.

Transport supported all three recommendations, noting that it remains committed to the current statewide trauma reduction target approach to ensure road safety strategies reflect the jurisdictional accountability for management of safety systems at the national, state or local government level. This is best practice internationally, and NSW's trauma reduction targets align with National Road Safety Strategy targets, and this alignment supports NSW to achieve its targets.

Transport provided updates on the implementation of the recommendations to the Public Accounts Committee via the Secretary of Transport in March 2025.

Regional Implementation Plan to support the NSW 2026 Road Safety Action Plan

In alignment with the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, Transport has developed a regional implementation plan that introduces a framework to measure, analyse, and publicly report on:

- road safety trends and insights at a sub-regional level, identifying emerging risks and key areas of concern
- targeted countermeasures tailored to specific regional communities and sub-regional hotspots to address critical safety concerns
- impact assessments of interventions in reducing road trauma, ensuring that implemented strategies are achieving the intended outcomes, and

- funding allocations and transparency measures to ensure resources are directed towards achieving measurable road safety improvements.

Road safety trends and insights on a sub-regional level

The Audit Office recommended that specific countermeasures be applied to sub-regional 'hotspots' on an annual basis. Transport has developed a methodology to identify annual road safety Focus Areas in each of its three operational regions[16] at a Local Government Area (LGA) level which includes a multi-variable analysis based on various data sources. This data includes trauma outcomes, offenses, and other key road safety indicators. This methodology ensures that interventions are evidence-based and responsive to local conditions.

The variability of LGA population size has been accounted for in the analysis method so that there is an equitable analysis of which LGAs require additional focus.

Using a safe system analysis, some Focus Areas may require multi-year investments with implementation spread over a number of years depending on the problem identification, scope, the need for education, enforcement, planning, or infrastructure projects on state or local roads will all be assessed.

Transport will identify three LGAs per year for further analysis, one in each of the three Transport regions. The LGAs identified as Focus Areas for the first tranche are:

- North Region: Clarence Valley
- West Region: Lithgow
- South Region: Yass Valley

Hotspots and tailored countermeasures

Transport is currently undertaking a detailed analysis of crashes in each of the three Focus Area LGAs listed above and is reviewing opportunities to introduce further treatments over a three-year period, commencing in the 2025-26 financial year.

In accordance with the framework laid out in the Regional Implementation Plan, potential countermeasures suited to the hotspot will be developed via a staged process that involves a combination of desktop analysis, consultation with Transport's internal regional teams and local councils, assessment of existing counter measures and consideration of funding.

As the Regional Implementation Plan is in its first year of implementation it is expected that these steps will be refined over time in partnership with local councils and other stakeholders.

Measurement, analysis and public reporting

The Regional Implementation Plan provides a structured evaluation process, where the outcomes of road safety countermeasures will be assessed three years after their implementation to provide a clear understanding of their effectiveness in improving road safety and reducing road trauma.

Public reporting on the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan will be via inclusion of information in the NSW Road Safety Progress Report, which is tabled in the NSW Parliament before being published on the Transport website. The first public reporting regarding this will be

[16] Under Transport's operating model, operations across regional NSW are divided into three sub-regions (North, South and West).

made part of the NSW Road Safety Progress Report 2024 and will highlight the above LGAs. The NSW Road Safety Progress Report for 2025 will include more detail around the specific countermeasures for each LGA, as well as a new tranche of LGAs that have been selected for a three-year program.

Review of the Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP)

In response to concerns regarding the Local Government Road Safety Program, Transport expedited a comprehensive review to better understand barriers to participation and opportunities for program enhancement.

Independent consultants were engaged to assess program uptake and effectiveness, gathering insights through 194 stakeholder survey responses and consultations (interviews and group sessions) with local councils, including Road Safety Officers, Supervising Managers, General Managers, Joint Organisations, and non-participating local councils.

Feedback was sought from multiple stakeholder groups, including Department of Education, NSW Police, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA), Local Government NSW (LGNSW), Office of Local Government (OLG), Australasian College of Road Safety. Local government stakeholders including participating and non-participating councils, and Transport representatives connect to the program.

A targeted review of road safety programs of other jurisdictions and internationally and review of good practice was also conducted.

The review has identified a number of recommendations including funding incentives to encourage more regional councils into the program, improving program governance and opportunities to better tailor road safety programs for regional audiences. Transport is currently considering these recommendations and the development of potential enhancements for improving and expanding the LGRSP.

Appendices

Appendix A: Road trauma data

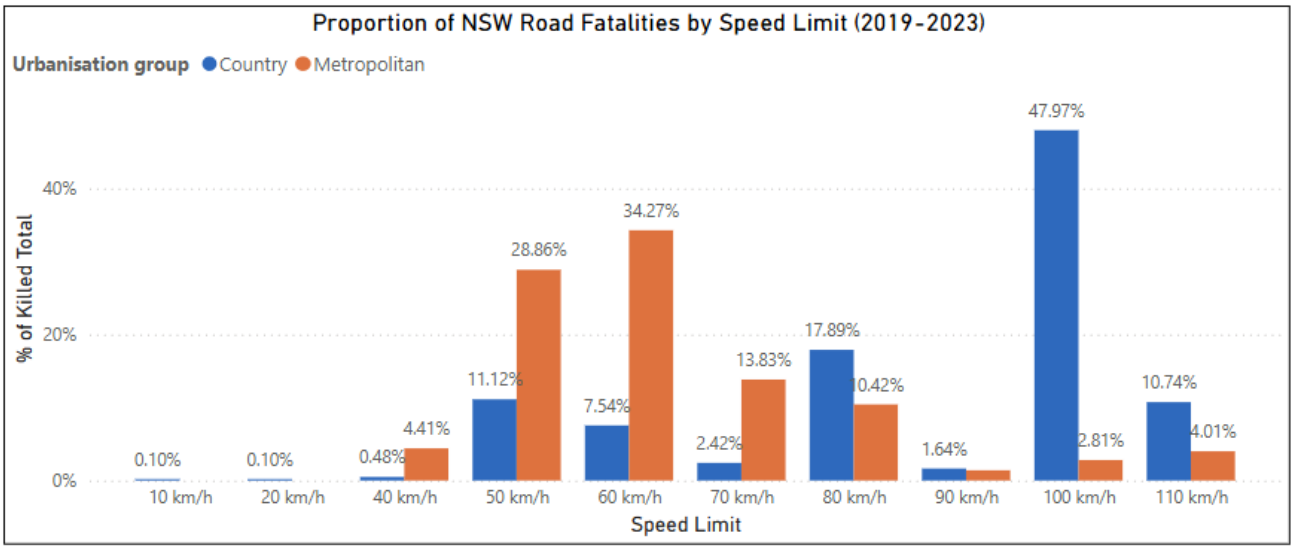

Figure A2: Proportion of NSW Road Fatalities by speed limit (2019-2023)

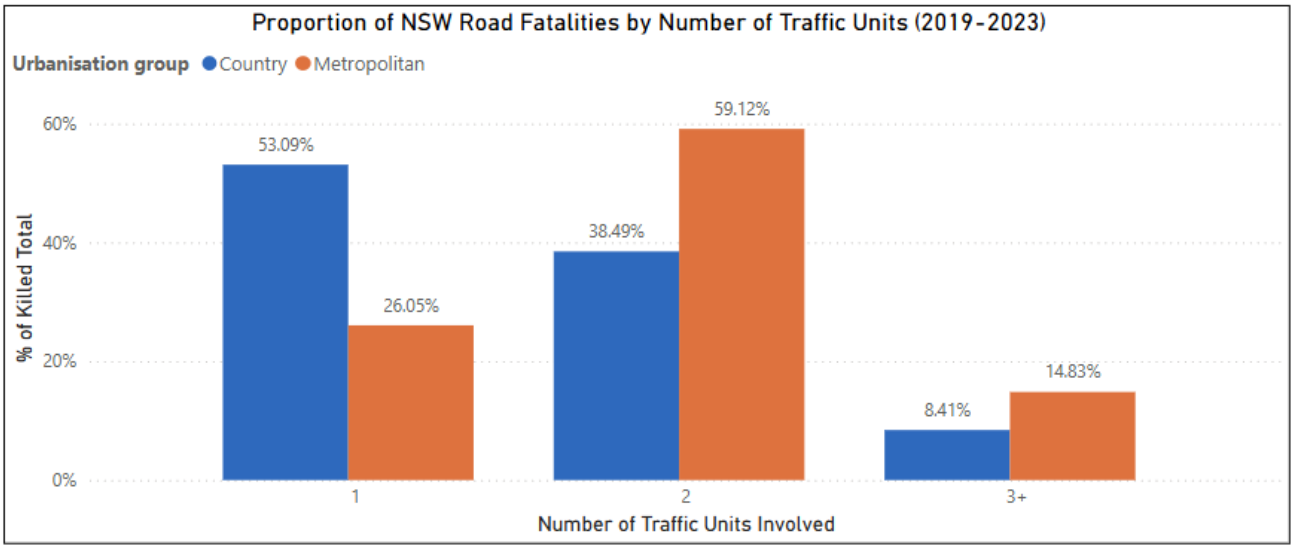

Figure A2: Proportion of NSW Road Fatalities by Number of Traffic Units (2019-2023)

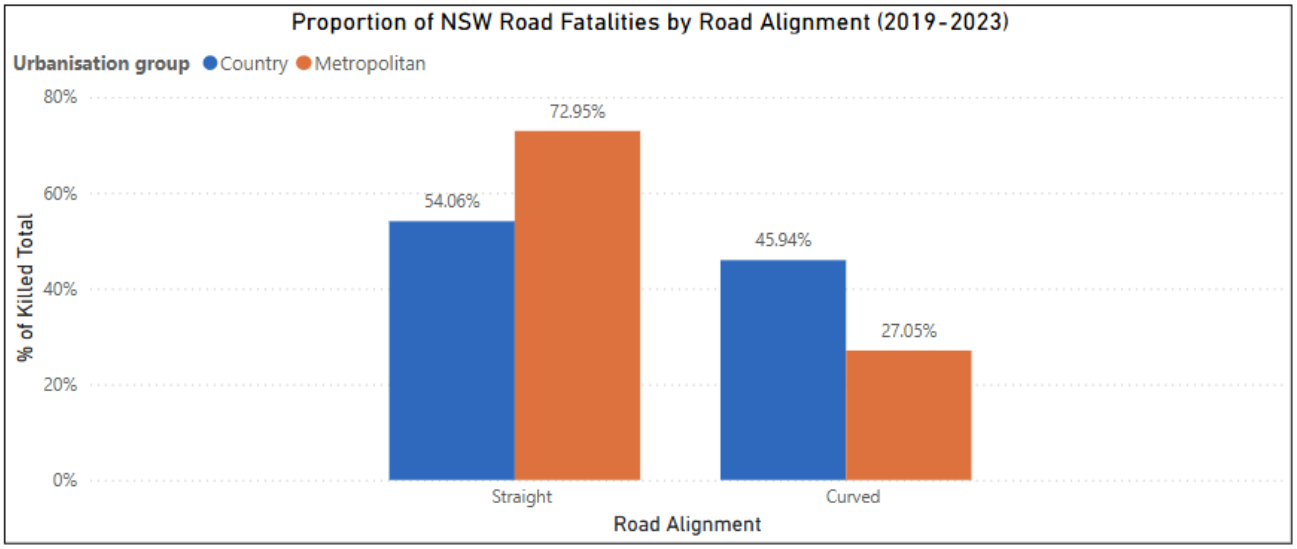

Figure A3: Proportion of NSW Road Fatalities by Road Alignment (2019-2023)

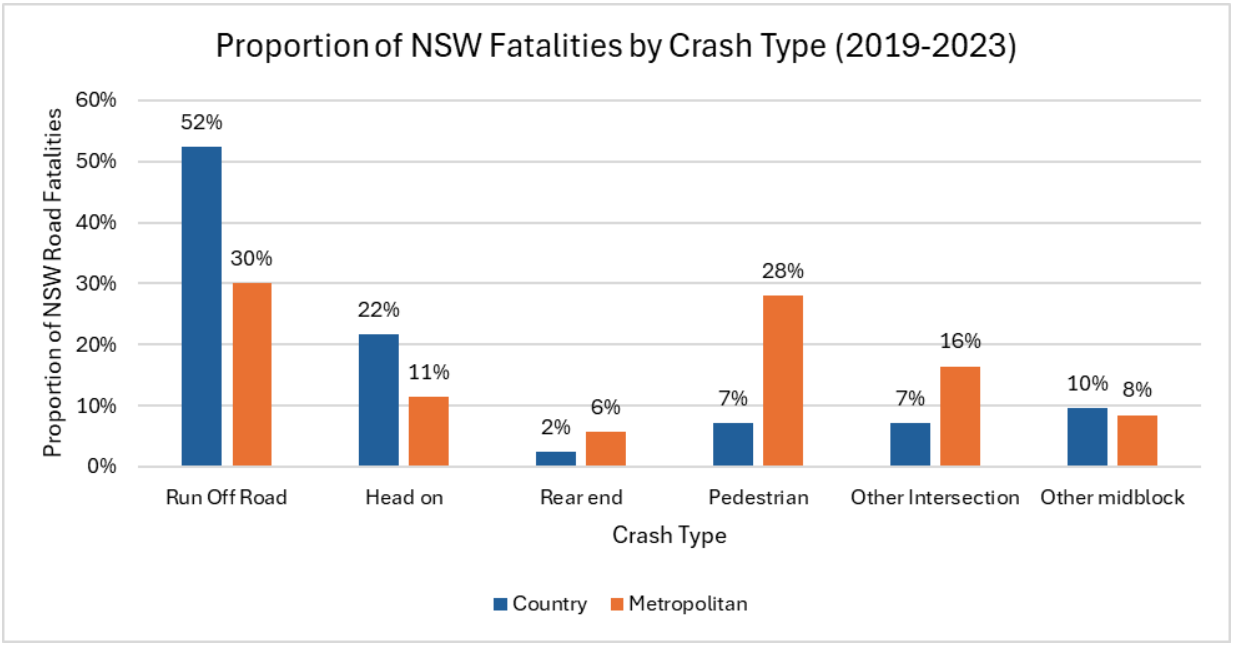

Figure A4: Proportion of NSW Road Fatalities by Crash Type (2019-2023)

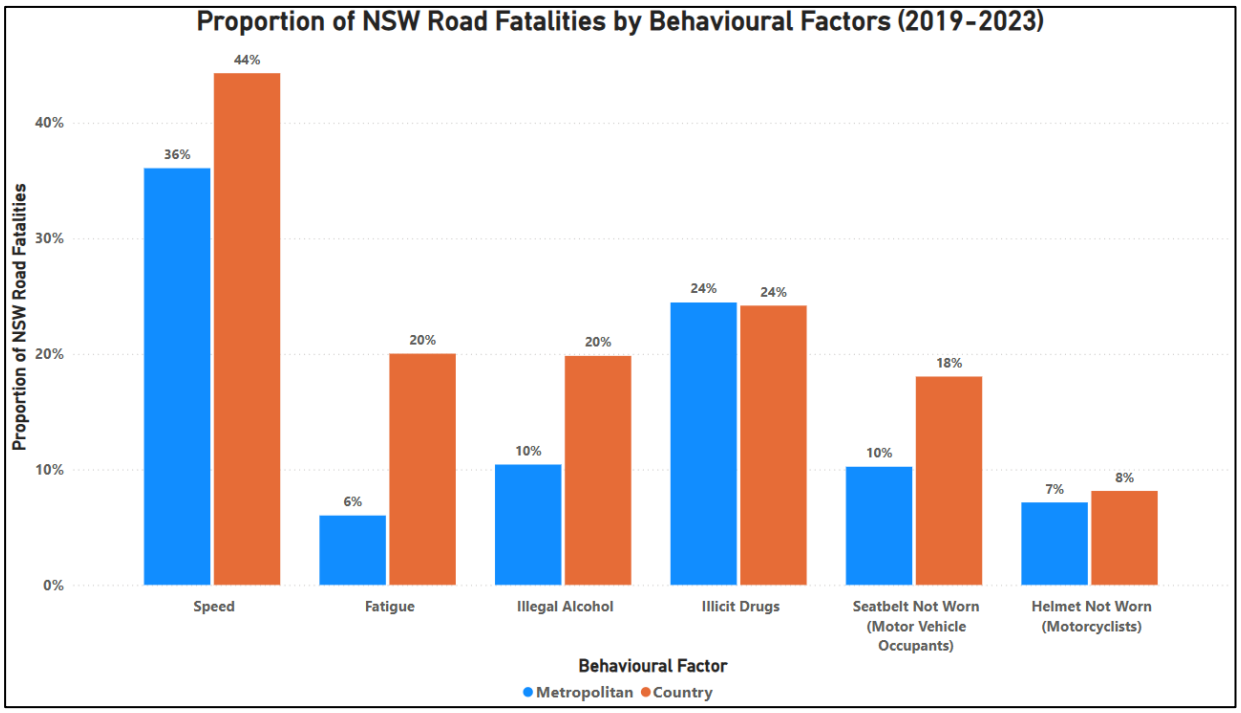

Figure A5: Proportion of NSW Road Fatalities by Behavioural Factors (2019-2023)

Data sources

Transport uses a range of government data to support decision-making and to report progress against state-wide targets. In addition to its own data on licensing and registration from the Driver and Vehicle System (DRIVES), other government data sources used by Transport include:

Table A1: Government data sources used by Transport

Agency	Specific data source used
NSW Police	Computerised Operational Police System (COPS) (includes self-reported incidents since 2014)
NSW Health	NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection (APDC) Emergency Department Data Collection (EDDC) NSW Trauma Registry Minimum Data Set (MDS) (NSW Health's Institute of Trauma and Injury Management)
NSW Ambulance Service	Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) electronic Medical Record (eMR) Patient Health Care Record (PHCR) data
ACT Health	Admitted Patient Care data (ACT APC) Emergency Department Information System Calvary Hospital data

Agency	Specific data source used
Government Insurance agencies including iCare and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)	Claims Register and Statistical Database Personal Injury Register Universal Claims Database (UCD) WorkCover Workers Compensation Data Set Lifetime Care data
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Data on Population, Vehicles and local government areas
Other agencies	NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages mortality data Cause of Death Unit Record File (COD URF) (previously ABS-NSW Deaths)

Data validation

Transport uses documented procedures to improve the accuracy of data provided by the NSW Police Force.[17] Transport matches the data from the NSW Police Force with data from NSW Health and assesses the accuracy of the data by examining other factors about the crash including:

- location data
- speed limits and school zones
- traffic user type and vehicle details/functions
- Aboriginality of individuals involved in the crash, and
- use of restraints, helmet, airbags.

Transport corrects errors or omissions in the data, if possible, using the other data sources listed above. Data for serious injuries cannot always be matched to a Police record as the police may not have attended an incident where no-one died. In this case, the data is subject to the protocols of the Health Linkage project which was established in 2013.

Transport has started using data from sources outside government for proactive decision-making on road improvements and predictive analytics. Transport is beginning to use data such as telematics data and vehicle safety features from commercial sources outside the government to design, prioritise or evaluate its approach to road safety.

[17] New South Wales Auditor General's Report, Regional Road Safety Performance Audit 30 November 2023, https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/FINAL%20REPORT%20-%20Regional%20road%20safety_0.pdf

Appendix B: Key Road Safety Infrastructure Treatments

Audio Tactile Line Marking

Audio Tactile Line Marking (ATLM), or rumble strips, are raised road markings placed along edge and centre lines to alert drivers through sound and vibration when they drift from their lane. This low-cost safety treatment helps prevent run-off-road and head-on crashes, particularly those caused by fatigue or distraction, and is estimated to reduce related fatalities and injuries by 15–25 percent.

Wide Centre line Treatments (combined with ATLM)

Wide centre line treatments, typically up to 1.4 metres wide, provide increased separation between opposing traffic lanes, giving drivers more time and space to recover if they drift across the centre line. When combined with Audio Tactile Line Marking (ATLM), which adds sound and vibration alerts, this treatment can significantly reduce the risk of head-on and run-off-road crashes. It is estimated to lower fatalities and injuries from head-on crashes by up to 65%, and from run-off-road crashes by up to 25 percent.

Flexible Safety Barrier

Flexible safety barriers are designed to absorb impact and redirect vehicles back into their lane, reducing the risk of collisions with oncoming traffic or roadside hazards. By allowing controlled sideways movement upon impact, they minimise the force transferred to vehicle occupants, significantly lowering the risk of serious injury or death. These barriers can reduce the severity of high-risk crashes by up to 95 percent.

Motorcycle Underrun

Motorcycle underrun, also known as rub rail, barriers are added to standard crash barriers to prevent motorcyclists from sliding underneath and hitting hazardous components like support posts. They help reduce impact forces in a crash, lowering injury severity by around 20 percent.

Sealed Shoulder Widening

Sealed shoulder widening provides additional paved space outside travel lanes, allowing drivers to safely correct their path if they veer off the road. It improves skid resistance, reducing the risk of loss of control or rollover, especially on curves and straight sections.

Curve Advisory Signs and Curve Alignment Markers

Curve Advisory Signs and Curve Alignment Markers (CAMs) help drivers safely navigate horizontal curves by providing clear visual guidance and recommended speeds. Advisory signs use symbolic diagrams and speed indications to highlight changes in road alignment, while CAMs—typically chevron signs—show the curve's direction, giving drivers ample time to adjust speed and positioning. This combination improves awareness and reduces crash risk on curves.

Vehicle Activated Signs

Vehicle Activated Signs are roadside warning devices that activate only when triggered by vehicles exceeding set parameters, such as speed limits. They increase driver awareness and encourage safer behaviour while minimising visual clutter for other road users.

Appendix C: Development of the NSW Government's 2026 Road Safety Action Plan – underpinned by Australian-first in-depth road trauma modelling

A baseline 'business-as-usual' scenario was created to illustrate future trauma trends assuming no interventions are implemented beyond the existing pipeline of key road safety measures (including the impact of ongoing vehicle safety improvements, current safety infrastructure programs, police enforcement activity, speed camera programs and other continuing programs). Then, scenarios to close the gap between the baseline trend and future targets were developed in the form of different packages of evidence-based road safety measures. Scenarios included a 'full force' option, which modelled a long-term vision for our transport system to achieve zero.

Overall, modelling results show the potential to cut deaths by 90 per cent and serious injuries by 80 percent by 2050. This highlights that a low trauma future is achievable, and that NSW can meet ambitious targets by delivering the right combination of high-benefit road safety measures across the NSW network.

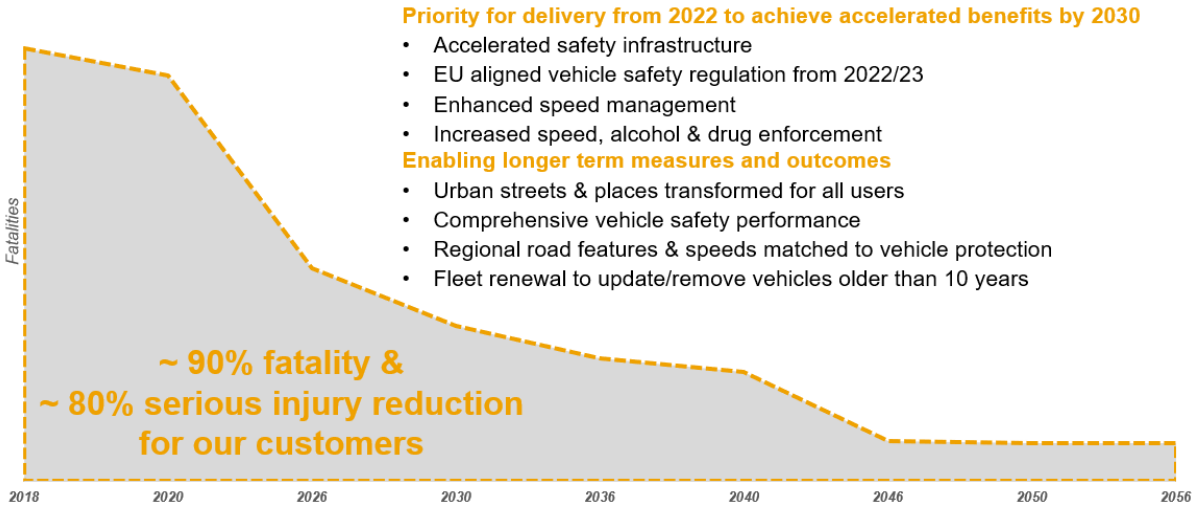

Figure C1: Road trauma modelling

This long-term modelling highlights that, while vehicle automation continues to evolve, the full benefits of technology improvements will not be realised for decades to come. With the average age of a vehicle in NSW currently being 10 years, it takes time for technology to reach a majority of road users.

Currently a third of vehicles involved in NSW fatal crashes are aged 15 years or older, and only 39 percent of the current light vehicle fleet registered in NSW has a 5-star Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) safety rating. This reflects the timeframes involved in the turnover of the fleet, which is even longer for younger, older and regional drivers. Therefore, transformation of the road network with safety infrastructure in the near to mid-term will continue to be critical in reducing road trauma for our customers, while also equipping the network with the right type of features to support advancing vehicle technology. However, this takes time to deliver systematically across the network, which emphasises the need for enforcement measures to play a key role in driving trauma benefits in the near term.

Appendix D: Examples of the NSW Government's investment through the 2023-24 Creating Safer Country Roads initiative

Table D1: Examples of projects delivered under the 2023-24 Creating Safer Country Roads initiative

Project and cost	Measure to reduce road trauma
Hume Highway, Mullengandra Project cost: $1.7 million	A section of the Hume Highway at Mullengandra was upgraded with the widening of 1.8 kilometres of sealed shoulder and the installation of 5.5 kilometres of safety barrier.
New England Highway, Kentucky Project cost: $6.9 million	A section of the New England Highway at Kentucky was upgraded with the installation of wide centre line treatments, shoulder widening and roadside safety barrier.
Bruxner Highway at Tatham Road, Gundurimba Project cost: $1.7million	A section of Bruxner Highway at Tatham Road south of Gundurimba, was upgraded with the installation of an upgraded intersection, traversable shoulders and roadside barrier.
West Parade, Thirlmere to Buxton Project cost: $2.15 million	A section of the West Parade between Thirlmere and Buxton was upgraded with the installation of route-based improvements including ATLM, edge and centre, directional signage, guideposts, reflective raised pavement markers, curve alignment markers, sealed shoulders, curve advisories, traversable clear zone, barrier and delineation improvements.

Over the previous five years 2018-2023,[18] the Safer Roads Program invested $822 million in the delivery of life saving road safety treatments through the Saving Lives on Country Roads, and the Liveable and Safe Urban Communities initiatives. The previous Safer Roads Program is estimated to have saved up to 1550 serious injuries and lives over the lifetime of the program.

The regional-focused Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative aimed to address two key contributors to road fatalities and serious injuries on country roads: high risk curves and fatigue.

[18] https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/programs/towards-zero-safer-roads-program