

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

Organisation: National Roads and Motorists' Association (NRMA)

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ROAD
TRAVEL
REWARDS

25 July 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)
staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Committee

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

As the largest mutual in Australia with more than 3.4 million Members, the NRMA works with government, industry and community to advocate for continued improvements to Australia's road and transport networks to ensure safety, efficiency and equitability.

Independent advocacy was our foundation activity and remains critical today.

As at 23 July 2025, 210 lives have been lost on NSW roads this year, with 136 fatalities occurring on country roads.¹ With regional communities bearing the brunt of the road toll, urgent action is needed to address the growing crisis of road trauma in the bush.

High Visibility Policing

We firmly believe that high visibility policing is critical to saving lives and reducing the road toll, particularly in regional NSW. A combination of enforcement, penalties and education is effective in changing driver behaviour.

Anecdotally, there is a perception that drivers in regional areas may feel they can evade detection due to the lack of visible police presence. It is important to increase enforcement in these communities to not only target speeding, drink and drug driving, but all forms of bad driver behaviour.

Drink Driving

Drink driving is a major contributor in crashes in regional NSW that must be addressed. From 2019 to 2023, 257 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes, of which 205 were on country roads.²

We've long advocated for an increase in Random Breath Tests (RBTs) in NSW to curb drink driving. Visible RBTs on the side of the road is one of the ultimate deterrents to drink driving.

Our [Bust the Boozers](#) report outlined that the Austroads best practice model is for at least 1.1 RBTs to be conducted per licence holder, per year – or over 7.6 million tests across NSW. Last year, only 3.4 million tests occurred, down from over 3.5 million the previous year. This is well short of best practice.

It is important to note that the propensity to drink and drive in rural areas is far greater compared to urban areas due to geographical, social and environmental factors. Rural areas often have limited alternative transport options connecting hospitality establishments, transport hubs and local residences. Coupled with the perception of a lower detection rate, this may lead to a greater number of motorists driving drunk.

¹ NSW Government. (2025). [Road fatalities for NSW up to and including 23 July 2025](#). Available online.

² NSW Government. (2025). [Interactive crash statistics](#). Available online.

Drug Driving

Drug driving contributes to 24 per cent of road deaths in NSW. It has become the second leading factor in fatalities in NSW surpassing drink driving, fatigue and non-seatbelt use. Drug driving is also not a city issue. Nearly 70 per cent of illicit drug-related fatalities occur on country roads.

Roadside drug testing plays a vital role in catching drug drivers. Pleasingly, last year the NSW Police exceeded its critical annual target of 200,000 roadside drug tests. We believe that increased roadside drug testing is required, especially in regional communities.

Currently, regular reporting of drug driving fatalities is not publicly available. Given the significant involvement of illicit drugs in crashes, it is crucial to include this data alongside other behavioural factors in road toll reports. Our [Driving High](#) report contains information on our recommendations to tackle drug driving.

Fatigue

Fatigue-related crashes are trending in the wrong direction. More needs to be done to address this growing issue. Last year, there was a significant rise in fatigue-related crashes, with 77 lives lost – an increase of 24 compared to the previous year. Around 90 per cent of all fatigue-related fatalities and 60 per cent of serious injuries occur in regional NSW.

A safe road environment is crucial in helping to reduce fatigue-related crashes, which tend to be run-off-road and head on. More investment is needed in road treatments such as audio tactile line markings, wide centre lines and flexible barriers to mitigate and prevent. Priority should be given to high-risk rural roads known for fatigue-related crashes.

Given the sharp increase in fatigue-related crashes, all current fatigue countermeasures should be reviewed for their effectiveness. New initiatives should also be considered. It is important that more be done to incentivise and encourage young drivers into safer cars, especially in regional communities. Young drivers stand to benefit from advanced safety features found in newer vehicles such as lane departure warning systems, which can help prevent fatigue-related crashes. Newer, safer vehicles also provide greater protection in the event of a crash.

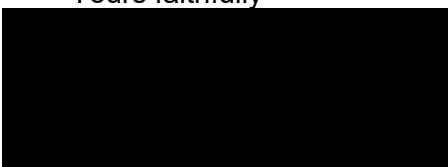
We also recognise that new parents experiencing less sleep represent a significant yet potentially underreported cohort more susceptible to a crash or near miss due to fatigue. Very little has been done to educate new parents of the dangers of driving tired.

Speeding

Speeding continues to be a factor in crashes across NSW. There has been a growing emphasis on automated enforcement over traditional police enforcement to tackling speeding. However, we believe more high visible policing is needed across NSW to curb speeding.

The NRMA does not support arbitrary changes to speed limits or speed zones on roads. Any provisions relating to speed limit settings must be underpinned by a clear, evidence-based framework. Any decisions on speed limits should be informed by detailed assessments of road performance, including crash history, traffic volumes, engineering design, safety ratings and congestion.

Yours faithfully



Robert Giltinan
Director of Policy & Public Affairs