

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC TOILETS

Organisation: Australasian College of Road Safety

Date Received: 18 October 2024

Legislative Council Portfolio Committee 8 – Customer Service
NSW Parliament
Portfoliocommittee8@parliament.nsw.gov.au

18 October 2024

Dear Committee Members

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is the region's peak membership association for road safety with a vision of eliminating death and serious injury on the road. Our members include experts from all areas of road safety including policy makers, health and transport professionals, academics, community organisations, researchers, federal, state and local government agencies, private companies and members of the public. The purpose of the College is to support our members in their efforts to eliminate serious road trauma through knowledge sharing, professional development, networking and advocacy.

ACRS believes that we should prevent all fatal and serious injuries on our roads; the road traffic system must be made safe for all road users; system designers should aim to prevent human error and mitigate its consequences; life and health are not exchangeable for other benefits in society; and that all ACRS policy positions must be evidence based.

The NSW Road Safety Action Plan 2026¹ is the strategic direction for reducing road trauma in NSW and identifies tired driving as a behavioural factor in 17% of NSW fatalities (page 12). The document contains NSW Government targets to reduce road trauma which apply to all road users and industries.

ACRS believes the provision of safe and clean rest areas, including public toilets, for all road users is critical if NSW is to reduce fatigue-related crashes.

The 2024 Australasian Road Safety Conference heard that "fatigue crashes were predominantly on roads with high-speed limits, in regional areas at midblock locations (non-intersection) and were single vehicle crashes²." Analysis found 93% of fatigue crashes in South Australia occurred within 20km of a rest stop.

Transport for NSW has an online map of light and heavy vehicle rest areas³ and their facilities. Not all rest areas have public toilets, and those that do have may not have flushing toilets or potable water which can discourage use.

1

https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/2026_road_safety_action_plan.pdf

² Identifying the contribution of fatigue to injury crashes, Wundersitz, L, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide, 2024

³ <https://maps.transport.nsw.gov.au/egeomaps/rest-areas/index.html>

Initiatives that encourage motorists to plan their journeys and take regular rest breaks would be enhanced by improvements to highway rest area public toilets.

In regard to heavy vehicles, access to suitable rest areas where drivers can take prescribed rest breaks can be impacted by the presence of caravans⁴. The formation of groups such as Women in Trucking Australia highlights the need for such rest areas to provide equitable treatment for all drivers⁵.

In addition to highway rest areas, service stations and food outlets should provide another avenue for light and heavy vehicle drivers to access privately-owned public toilets. However, specialist heavy vehicle publications reported that truck drivers faced difficulties accessing public toilets during the pandemic⁶.

ACRS has previously recommended that heavy vehicle service stations/roadhouses should offer a choice of healthy meals, exercise equipment, showers, laundry facilities, secure internet connection, electric heavy vehicle charging points/hydrogen filling stations and other facilities requested by drivers. The proposed western Sydney truck rest area is likely to be near an existing motorway which would enable CCTV monitoring from the nearest motorway control room for the safety of drivers⁷.

Road safety affects our lives in many ways. ACRS appreciates the opportunity to engage in a public discussion on broader road safety issues. Please do not hesitate to contact us at should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael Timms
NSW Chapter Chair
ACRS

Dr Ingrid Johnston
Chief Executive Officer
ACRS

⁴ [Road safety plea as caravans occupy truck rest stops and impact vital driver fatigue breaks - ABC News](#)

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/WomenTruckingAustralia>

⁶ [Turnout Troubles – the impact of poorly maintaining Australia’s truck stops | News \(fullyloaded.com.au\)](#)

⁷

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/submissions/81946/0010%20Australasian%20College%20of%20Road%20Safety.pdf>