



The Hon Michael McCormack MP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Leader of The Nationals
Federal Member for Riverina

The Hon Scott Buchholz MP

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport
Federal Member for Wright

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIANS URGED TO CONSIDER RIPPLE EFFECT THIS FATALITY FREE FRIDAY

The Australian Government joins the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) in urging all road users to consider the devastating ripple effect of road trauma this Fatality Free Friday.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said research released by the ARSF reveals that speeding remains by far the highest broken road rule and jaywalking the second highest, which shows that both Australian drivers and pedestrians need to step up their road safety skills.

“The recent findings revealed 78 per cent of Australians admit to being heavy footed and more than two thirds admit to having broken a road rule, with a quarter of people doing so at least once a week,” the Deputy Prime Minister said.

“These findings are a harsh reality and is why this Government is taking a strong leadership role and making significant investments in road safety.

“This includes our \$3 billion Road Safety Program that has seen almost \$1 billion already allocated through tranche 1 for nearly 700 road safety projects due for completion by June this year.

“Even one death on our roads is one too many, which is why it is vital we continue delivering priority upgrades to get motorists home sooner and safer.”

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport, Scott Buchholz, said the findings also importantly highlight why drivers are breaking the road rules.

“When it came to the reasons for undertaking these potentially life-threatening behaviours, half of Australian drivers said it was due to inattention, while one third said they believed it was safe to do so,” Assistant Minister Buchholz said.

“Fatality Free Friday brings us together to focus on how all of us can step up and play our role to move towards Vision Zero – zero deaths or serious injuries on our roads.”

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ARSF founder and Chief Executive Officer Russell White said the research highlights the need for further education around driver risk-taking behaviour and the far-reaching consequences of their actions. .

“Tragically, 1,108 people lost their lives on Australian roads last year. The research shows that 84 per cent of road users falsely believe that drivers make up the majority of the road toll, when in fact more than half are passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists,” Mr White said.

“We want to increase awareness of the devastating ripple effect that road trauma creates beyond fatalities, as the impact of road trauma is far-reaching and does not discriminate.

“Road users need to understand the long-lasting impact on families, friends, schools, workplaces, first responders and emergency services.

“Individuals have a responsibility to make the right choices when using the roads and it is imperative they understand the devastating consequences their choices can have not just on other road users, but on the wider community.”

The ARSF today announced it has funded a PhD scholarship with Queensland University of Technology’s (QUT) Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland, which has seen more than 75 graduates fulfil roles within government and industry that inform road safety practices since the program’s inception in 1996.

Through the Ainsworth 4 Foundation, the ARSF has funded QUT psychology graduate Glenn Mullins who will investigate how to better understand the entire footprint left on society by road traffic crash trauma.

“I have a personal interest in the ongoing impact of road trauma on family members and friends. This project seeks to give value to these personal life changes, as well as understanding how these changes permeate through communities and society at large,” Mr Mullins said.

“It is our hope to explore these impacts comparatively across urban and rural settings.”

The ARSF is calling on individuals to #ChooseRoadSafety and demonstrate their commitment to reducing the road toll by taking the Fatality Free Friday pledge.

Taking the pledge means promising to always be fit to drive, stay focused on the road, scan the road ahead, keep a safe distance and to drive in a way that suits the conditions.

Since its inception in 2007, Fatality Free Friday has grown to become Australia’s largest national community-based road safety program.

While the target is to have zero fatalities on Australian roads on Friday 28 May, the initiative is much more than just a single day, ultimately aiming for long-term community change.

Ends.

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