



**Embargoed until 00:01 on Friday, 2 September 2022**

## **RURAL ROAD SAFETY MONTH - NATIONAL FACT SHEET**

### **RURAL ROAD TOLL DISPARITY IS CAUSE FOR NATIONAL CONCERN:**

- Despite less than a third (28%) of Australia's population residing in rural areas, rural road deaths account for almost two thirds of the road toll.
- In fact, of the 1,122 road deaths across 2021, 730 (65%) occurred on rural roads, and 392 (35%) were recorded in metro areas.

### **ALL AUSTRALIAN DRIVERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALARMING RURAL ROAD TOLL<sup>1</sup>:**

#### ***Rural roads are used by all Australian drivers, not just those living in rural areas:***

- More than a third of Australian drivers are using rural roads at least once a week, with an additional 4 in 10 (42%) doing so multiple times a year. Less than 1 in 10 (9%) never use rural roads.
- The main reasons Australians are using rural roads:
  - Holidays and personal reasons (60%)
  - Visit family and friends (46%)
  - Because they live in these areas (27%), or
  - For work (23%)
- This volume of rural road usage will rise, with 85% of Australians planning a road trip within the next 12 months, and more than half of these (54%) planning multiple trips in the year ahead.

#### ***The research raises cause for concern that road trippers' unpreparedness is putting lives at risk:***

- Road trippers are not ensuring that their vehicle can safely go the journey:
  - 60% of drivers don't put their car in for a service before heading on a road trip
  - More than 7 in 10 (72%) do not have fuel stops planned out

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<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation to a sample size of n=1512 Australians 18 years and over who currently hold a drivers licence



- Road trippers demonstrate lack of resilience if faced with unexpected dangers:
  - More than 4 in 10 (45%) don't check the weather forecast ahead of their trip
  - Almost 9 in 10 (88%) don't have a plan for what to do if faced with an extreme weather event
  - Additionally, 8 in 10 (80%) haven't planned an alternative route for possible road closures
- This unpreparedness is despite more than 6 in 10 road trippers experiencing some form of dangerous situation while on rural roads in the past. In fact:
  - More than a quarter (26.5%) have had a warning light appear, or broken down while road tripping
  - 3 in 10 have faced unexpected road closures
  - Almost 3 in 10 have faced dangerous weather conditions

***The danger of unpreparedness is most prevalent across those who live in metro areas visiting rural areas:***

- Metro residents are 10% *less* likely than regional residents to ensure their car is serviced before heading for a road trip on rural roads. Metro drivers are also less likely to map out fuel stops, check upcoming weather, check that their roadside assistance is up to date, and have a plan in place for if their car breaks down
- Metro residents are more likely than regional residents to drive more dangerously on rural roads, specifically - slipping into bad habits such as speeding, driving fatigued and breaking road rules simply because they believe they are less likely to get caught or hit something

***Bad behaviour continues to be a concern on high risk rural roads:***

- 4 in 10 drivers admit they drive *more* dangerously on rural roads. The most prevalent bad behaviours include:
  - More than 6 in 10 don't take fatigue breaks (61%)
  - More than a third admit to speeding on rural roads (37%)
  - More than 1 in 10 admit to using a mobile phone when behind the wheel (11%)
  - More than 1 in 10 admit to crossing double lines on rural roads (11%)
- The main reasons that drivers are more likely to break a road rule when in rural areas:
  - Believing it was safe to do so (21%)
  - Being distracted (14%)
  - Trusting they won't get caught by police (6%)



**Rural  
Road Safety  
Month**



**Australian  
Road Safety  
Foundation**

**About Australian Road Safety Foundation:**

The Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) is a not for profit organisation dedicated to improving road safety awareness, enhancing driver education and reducing the impact of road trauma. The Foundation strives to improve road safety outcomes, develop research and education programs and work to inform policy makers on methods to address road safety issues. It also provides an umbrella organisation for other road safety programs and community groups. ARSF is helping to develop a sustainable strategy for reducing the social and economic costs of road crashes, as well as providing a platform for future research and advocacy programs.