

## **AUSTRALIANS CALLED ON TO REFLECT AND REMEMBER ROAD TRAUMA VICTIMS**

With the nation facing a horror year of road trauma, the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) is asking Australians to honour *World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims* this Sunday (20 November).

So far this year, 999 people have died on Australian roads, a concerning 7.1 per cent higher than the same time last year (933)<sup>1</sup>.

*World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims* is a global day initiative that honours not just the lives claimed on the world's roads, but also those who are injured, the loved ones facing a lifetime of grief and the emergency responders tasked with cleaning up the aftermath.

With a message to reflect and remember those who have been impacted by road trauma, ARSF is asking Australians to light a candle in honour of the thousands of people touched by road trauma every year.

It is hoped that lighting a candle as a symbol of remembrance for victims, will also serve as a solemn reminder that the difference between life and death is often down to a simple choice.

One such road trauma victim who lives the consequence of road trauma is Kellie Postle, whose 17-year-old daughter Alyssa did not survive a crash in August 2020.

As a passenger, Alyssa's head took the full impact of the crash and due to the trauma sustained, her family had to make the unthinkable decision to take her off life support three days later.

"Alyssa was the sunshine of our life, but crashes as so sudden. Our little girl never gained consciousness, we never got to say goodbye, we never got to tell her we loved her," Ms Postle said.

"I hope that by taking a moment to reflect and remember her, we can remind ourselves how painful the consequence of one wrong decision can be for so many people."

"We hope that every Australian - whether touched by road trauma personally or not - takes the moment to honour her life and the thousands of others impacted," she said.

ARSF founder and CEO Russell White said there was too much tragedy on Australian roads for this issue to be ignored any longer.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communication, BITRE Road Deaths Database, accessed 28 October 2022

“Last year, 1,122 lives were lost and over 40,000 people were seriously injured on Australian roads. Sadly this year things are looking worse as we’re on track to exceed last year’s road toll unless significant action is taken by road users,” Mr White said.

“The reality is that many of these crashes are entirely preventable. Yes, curbing illegal behaviour such as speeding and using a mobile phone are obvious fixes, but choosing road safety is more than that,”

“It’s also about being vigilant about road safety every single time you are behind a wheel, in a passenger seat, on a bike or even on foot. While people don’t go out intending to crash, even switching to autopilot compromises all important reaction times and can be what takes a precious life away, just like Alyssa’s,” he said.

ARSF Ambassador and Supercar Driver for Supercheap Auto Craig Lowndes said he hoped World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims would become more widely recognised in Australia.

“It’s shocking to see the 2022 road toll is currently almost 10 per cent higher than the same time last year,” Mr Lowndes said.

“The road toll is more than just a number, that’s almost 1000 lives taken before their time and tens of thousands suffering as a result of these fatalities.”

“I hope by lighting a candle as a moment to reflect and remember will be the required reminder for all Australian road users to permanently change their attitudes and behaviour well into the future.”

*World Day of Remembrance* takes place this Sunday, 20 November 2022. It comes as the nation is on track for one of the highest roll tolls in five years.

**Current road toll figures:<sup>2</sup>**

*January - October*

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Variance (%)</b>
National	933	999	+7.1
New South Wales	221	245	+10.9
Victoria	183	213	+16.4

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communication, BITRE Road Deaths Database, accessed 28 October 2022

Queensland	241	243	+0.8
South Australia	83	58	-30.1
Western Australia	138	131	-5.1
Tasmania	29	48	+65.5
Northern Territory	29	43	+48.3
Australian Capital Territory	9	18	+100

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**For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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**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.