

Media Release

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AUSTRALIANS URGED TO REFLECT AND REMEMBER AS ROAD TOLL SOARS

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims serves as a reminder to save lives

In the lead-up to World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims this Sunday (19 November), Australians are being implored to remember, support and act on road trauma.

First launched 30 years ago, World Day of Remembrance is a global initiative designed to remember those killed and seriously injured on the road while also acknowledging the crucial work of the emergency services, advocating for better road outcomes and support for victims as well as promoting action to stop further tragedy.

The 2023 World Day of Remembrance comes as Australia records a 6.5 per cent rise in fatalities over the past 12 months.¹

Approximately 1.35 million road traffic deaths occur each year and a life is lost on the world's roads every 24 seconds.

More than 44,000 lives have been lost on Australian roads over the last 30 years. In the past year alone, more than 1,250 people have been killed in road traffic incidents.

Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) Founder and CEO Russell White said the alarming rise in road fatalities was cause for concern and required immediate community action.

"Marking initiatives such as World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is so important to help people remember the consequences of poor choices or even just complacency on the road," Mr White said.

"The ripple effect of road trauma is far-reaching, extending from the immediate families and friends of victims to their places of work, schools and to the wider community."

"We need to recognise that road trauma is also experienced by the first responders, the emergency crews, the police, the fire brigade and the medical professionals who are called upon in the event of road incidents daily," he said.

ARSF is asking all Australians to light a candle this Sunday as a means of reflecting upon road safety and remembering the thousands upon thousands of Australians whose lives were tragically taken too soon, who have suffered life-changing injuries and all those who must face the aftermath of road trauma, including the first responders.

Labor Senator for Western Australia and Co-Chair Parliamentary Friends of Road Safety Glenn Sterle urged all Australians to stand together in solemn solidarity this World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

¹ Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Road Deaths Australia, October 2023

“Let us remember and pay tribute to those we've lost on our roads. This day of remembrance marks a crucial moment for us to reflect on the impact of road tragedies and reinforce our collective commitment to safety. Each one of us plays a role. Drive with care, look out for one another, and let's create a safer future for our communities. This Sunday, let our actions on the road echo our shared responsibility for one another's well-being.”

Federal Member for Wide Bay and Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Road Safety Llew O'Brien said recognising the role individuals play in preventing road trauma was particularly critical in the face of Australia's rising road toll.

“The alarming statistics underscore the urgency for collective action. Road safety is everyone's responsibility. All road users need to choose road safety when they're on the road. Governments must invest in safer roads, vehicle manufacturers must engineer safer vehicles, and legislators must ensure laws and regulations help keep people safe on the road. Together, we can all foster a culture of responsible driving, heighten awareness, and prioritise safety. Every piece of the road safety puzzle can fit together to reduce the road toll and create an environment where every journey is a safe journey.”

Current road toll figures:

January – October

State / Territory	2022	2023	Variance (%)
National	975	1042	+6.9
New South Wales	230	298	+30
Victoria	205	238	+16
Queensland	240	229	-5
South Australia	58	98	+66
Western Australia	134	125	-7
Tasmania	46	28	-39

Northern Territory	44	25	-43
Australian Capital Territory	18	3	-83

Source: BITRE, Australian Road Deaths Database, as at 14 November 2023

For further information about the Australian Road Safety Foundation, visit www.arsf.com.au

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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 outcomes and reducing the rates of death and the mental and physical injuries that result from road crashes. It achieves this through innovative road safety awareness programs, education, advocacy, research and community engagement.