



MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN ROAD USERS HOLD THE KEY TO A FATALITY-FREE FUTURE

New research points to dangerous behaviour amidst the nation's climbing road toll

The Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) has today launched its annual Fatality Free Friday initiative with new data suggesting that a focus on individual behaviour can dramatically drive down road trauma.

The alarming research shows that more than two-thirds (68%) of Australian drivers admit to breaking road laws, with 4 in 10 (42%) drivers committing an offence at least monthly¹.

The top three road laws broken by drivers included speeding (48%), driving fatigued (32%) and using a mobile phone (27%).

The launch of Fatality Free Friday, which is Australia's largest community-based road safety initiative, comes as the nation faces bleak road trauma statistics.

Last year, Australia recorded its third straight annual rise in road fatalities with 1,273 deaths, which was almost 8 per cent (7.9%) higher than in 2022².

This worrying trend has continued into 2024, with the current road toll up another 7 per cent on last year (207 deaths at the end of February compared to 193 for the same period last year).

However, in a positive sign of hope for curbing this upward trend in fatalities, the ARSF research indicated the power of heightened road safety awareness has on individual behaviour.

According to the research, 8 in 10 Australians say road safety messages have had a positive impact on their behaviour. Specifically, almost half (49%) believe this has had a lasting impact, while an additional third (33%) say it's improved their behaviour at least short-term.

¹ Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 12-27 March 2024 with a sample size of n=1513 adults aged 18+years

² Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Road Deaths, Annual Road Deaths Database, Accessed February 2024



Even just being confronted with the road toll numbers inspires 3 in 4 Australians (75%) to think or act more responsibly.

ARSF Founder and Chief Executive Officer Russell White said the research reiterated that a future free from road fatalities could only be achieved if people acknowledged their role within the bigger picture. "At the end of the day, the fatal five - speeding, driving inhibited, driving fatigued, not wearing a seat belt and being distracted - are choices that an individual makes," Mr White said.

"The majority of our road crashes are the result of unsafe choices, so we need all Australians to take responsibility, put safety first and help us save thousands of families from the heartache of road trauma."

"Fatality Free Friday works to tackle the big picture vision of an Australia where not one person has their life cut short because of a preventable road crash."

The ARSF research also pointed to the potential impact of driving home the responsibility of protecting others' lives as a key to positive change.

An overwhelming majority of Australian drivers (87%) admit to being a safer driver when they have passengers in the car. Furthermore, more than half (51%) said that they would be more cautious still if their passenger was destined to achieve something great.

As part of this year's Fatality Free Friday initiative, the ARSF is focused on helping road users understand what the road fatality statistics truly represent - human lives that have been tragically cut short - and start to be a part of the bigger picture by choosing road safety.

Fatality Free Friday is supported by Suncorp whose Commercial & Personal Injury Insurance CEO Michael Miller said, "Fatality Free Friday is about making a commitment to yourself, your family, friends and the local community to do your best to use our roads safely."

"The current road statistics tell us that we need safer roads, and by each of us making the promise to drive safely on Fatality Free Friday, we are one step closer to achieving that," said Mr Miller.

Fatality Free Friday is a national initiative that operates on the belief that if we can go one day without a death on the road, we can create a long-lasting culture that will drive us towards a fatality-free future, ultimately saving thousands of lives and preventing countless others from serious injury.



Road users looking to support a fatality-free big picture vision can share their personal commitment by visiting arsf.com.au or via ARSF's Instagram (@ausroadsafety) and Facebook (@fatalityfreefriday) channels.

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About the 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.