

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday, 28 October 2024**

**Driving Safety Forward: Urgent Call to Address Leading Cause of Workplace Fatalities**

*Australian Road Safety Foundation leads united action to put the brakes on road trauma rates*

The Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) will unite government agencies, regulators, industry leaders and advocates in an urgent mission to curb the rising toll of road-related workplace fatalities as part of National Safe Work Month, and beyond.

Vehicle-related incidents are the leading cause of workplace fatalities, occurring almost three times more than the second largest cause, falling from a height (15%). Last year, they were responsible for 42 per cent of all lives lost in Australian workplaces<sup>1</sup>.

Although general workplace safety has improved over the years, fatalities from vehicle-related incidents rose by 3.7 per cent last year and were five per cent higher than the five-year average (2019 - 2023).<sup>2</sup>

The ARSF will be joined by almost 30 fellow road stakeholders at a crucial roundtable this week (Thursday, October 31) as part of its year-round calendar of activity designed to put the brakes on road related death and injury in the workplace.

ARSF Founder and Chair Russell White said the consequences of work-related road trauma are devastating and widespread.

“In the past decade, more than 1,880 road trauma related fatalities have occurred in Australia, and over 1.1 million employees have filed compensation claims for injuries resulting in more than a week’s absence from work.”

Mr White emphasised that these figures represent more than just statistics: “Each number reflects a life severely impacted, sometimes tragically lost, affecting not only the individual but also their families, colleagues, emergency services and broader community.”

“Every single Australian has the right to a healthy and safe working environment, and that requires a unified approach, ” Mr White said.

The ARSF calls for the support of all Australian road users in driving change, and advocates for integrating workplace-related safety initiatives with broader public road safety campaigns.

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<sup>1</sup> Key Work Health and Safety Statistics Australia 2024." *Safe Work Australia*, Our Data. Your Stories., 2024, [https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Final%20-%20Key%20WHS%20Stats%202024\\_18SEP.pdf](https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Final%20-%20Key%20WHS%20Stats%202024_18SEP.pdf). Accessed October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Key Work Health and Safety Statistics Australia 2024." *Safe Work Australia*, Our Data. Your Stories., 2024, [https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Final%20-%20Key%20WHS%20Stats%202024\\_18SEP.pdf](https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Final%20-%20Key%20WHS%20Stats%202024_18SEP.pdf). Accessed October 2024.

“Our most recent research showed that more than half (54%) of Australian road users admit to taking risks on and around the road”, said Mr White<sup>3</sup>.

“Encouragingly, however, the research also showed that road safety campaigns have the power to fuel positive change, with more than 8 in 10 Australians (82%) reporting that messaging has directly impacted their behaviour on the road.”

National Safe Work Month, held annually in October, is an initiative of Safe Work Australia. The ARSF’s Work Related Road Safety campaign is a key milestone within a year-round calendar of work-related road safety events and forms a key pillar in its mission to achieve a goal of zero road deaths and serious injury by 2050.

The discussion will address key areas of workplace road safety, including the role of near-miss data, the importance of corporate leadership, safety culture and language, as well as education and training. Insights gathered from the event will be leveraged to inform, educate and make recommendations on workplace safety change, as well as providing a positive ripple effect for the public.

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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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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