

Rural Road Safety Month 2025

National Fact Sheet

Regional roads remain deadly: rural communities bear the brunt of Australia's road toll¹:

- Despite being less populated than urban areas, of the 1,297 road deaths recorded in 2024, a staggering 63% (820 fatalities) occurred in regional areas
- Fatalities on regional, rural, and remote roads in 2024 included:
 - 439 drivers (54%)
 - 147 passengers (18%)
 - 142 motorcyclists (17%)
 - 71 pedestrians (9%)
 - 15 cyclists (2%)
 - 6 fatalities were undetermined (1%)

New research from the Australian Road Safety Foundation² shows road users from every corner of the country are contributing to the problem:

- The majority of Australian drivers (92%) use regional roads, and more than half (56%) do so at least monthly.
- While 28% say they become more vigilant behind the wheel in regional areas, this positive outlook is diminished by the 27% of drivers who say they relax their safety standards outside city limits.
- Australian drivers are less likely to bend a road rule on a regional road, but still an alarmingly high number (44%) admit to breaking a road rule while driving on them.
- Our actions don't match our words: despite only 10% of Australians saying they think it's okay to speed on a regional road, almost 4 in 10 (39%) do so.
- In fact, speeding was the most common risk being undertaken on regional roads (39%), followed by driving fatigued (17%) and using a mobile phone (12%).
- Most troubling is that more than a fifth of drivers (22%) who broke a road rule did it because they thought it was *safe to break the law*.

¹ Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Road Deaths, Annual Road Deaths Database, Accessed June 2025

² Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 26 June - 3 July 2025 with a sample size of n=1516 adults aged 18+years with a current drivers licence

- This false sense of reality is likely because almost 3 in 10 drivers (29%) believe rural roads are safer than urban streets.
- This was different to the reason for breaking rules in city areas, where distraction was the number one cause (23%).

Holiday mode is proving particularly hazardous, with a clear lack of road safety resilience fuelling risk:

- Australia's love for the open road is fuelling a dangerous lack of preparation for long journeys. When it comes to trips longer than two hours:
 - 89% don't review safety tips or guidelines.
 - 82% don't consider fatigue or rest breaks.
 - 71% don't check speed limits or local road conditions.
 - 70% fail to pack emergency supplies like water or first aid.
 - 62% haven't shared trip details with a contact.
 - 43% don't ensure their car is roadworthy.
 - 38% forget to check they have enough fuel.

But in good news, Australians are aware that change begins with them:

- Almost half (47%) of drivers believe individual behaviour has the greatest power to improve road safety.
- Encouragingly, almost 8 in 10 drivers (79%) say road safety messaging prompts them to drive more responsibly.
- The top five most effective behavioural prompts include:
 - Roadside signs encouraging care or empathy (39%)
 - News coverage of serious or fatal crashes (37%)
 - Real-life stories of those affected by road trauma (30%)
 - Campaigns across TV, radio, and news media (28%)
 - Community events and tributes (26%).
- The most impactful message appears to be one of human life, so while 43% of Australian drivers admit they don't often think about the lives of others when on the road, knowing that it's someone's child in the car ahead would make more than half (56%) drive more cautiously.
- And in an indication that we can reduce unnecessary loss of life, Australians say that when they are asked to "step up," they do. Specifically:
 - 46% say they change their driving behaviour
 - 43% follow road rules more closely, and
 - 38% become more mindful of how their actions impact others.