

**Rural Road Safety Month 2024
National Fact Sheet**

Under embargo until 4:00am AEST on Friday, 30 August 2024

An analysis of last year's road toll¹ has reconfirmed the fact that rural road safety is a cause for national concern:

- Across the 2023 calendar year, there were 1,269 fatalities recorded, almost two-thirds of these (64%) occurred in regional, rural and remote areas
- Of the 811 deaths recorded in regional, rural and remote areas last year:
 - 441 were drivers (54%)
 - 155 were passengers (19%)
 - 131 were motorcyclists (16%)
 - 67 were pedestrians (8%)
 - 11 were cyclists (1%)
 - An additional 6 fatalities were undetermined (1%)

New research from the Australian Road Safety Foundation² (ARSF) has further reiterated the fact that regional, rural and remote road safety is a concern for all Australian road users, not just locals:

- Only 7 per cent of Aussies don't drive on regional roads
- More than half (54%) have driven on regional roads at least monthly over the past year and close to 4 in 10 (37%) drive on regional roads at least weekly
- Almost 9 in 10 (88%) Aussies will use a regional road in the next 12 months with half (50%) planning to do so at least monthly

Amidst a rising road toll, bad behaviour is driving increased risk on regional, rural and remote roads:

- 3 in 10 Aussies (30%) are less vigilant about safety on regional roads

¹ Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Road Deaths, Annual Road Deaths Database, Accessed June 2024

² Research conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of Australian Road Safety Foundation between 5-12 July 2024 with a sample size of n=1504 adults aged 18+ years with a current drivers licence

- However, it's not the locals driving this trend. In fact, metro drivers are the most guilty of this (34% versus 24% respectively)
- Half of Aussies (50%) have broken a road rule in a regional area
- The top three risks that drivers are committing in regional areas are:
 1. Speeding (47%)
 2. Driving fatigued (20%)
 3. Using a mobile phone (14%)

A misconception around risk and consequence are the key factors behind unsafe regional road usage:

- Close to a third (32%) of Aussies believe regional roads are safer than urban streets
- The primary reason Aussies are breaking laws on regional roads is that they believe it's safe (41%) but distraction (18%) and not getting caught (11%) are also key factors
- Metro drivers are more likely to take a risk due to a lack of concern about getting caught (13% v 9%)
- However, distraction is a bigger issue for regional drivers (22% v 15%)

As the heartland for road trips (journeys lasting 2+ hours or more), a lack of road safety resilience appears to also be fuelling risk in regional areas:

- When it comes to preparation for road trips, the vast majority of Aussie drivers (85%) aren't reviewing safety tips or guidelines before setting out
- An alarming number of Aussies are also failing to prepare for road trips with the recommended resilience checks and balances. Specifically:
 - 63% don't bring any emergency supplies (first aid kit or water etc)
 - 51% don't plan any possible rest stops to combat fatigue
 - 46% of Aussies don't check the weather forecast
 - 46% don't plan their route or possible alternatives
 - 37% don't do a pre-journey vehicle check
 - 28% aren't ensuring they have enough fuel or planning refuel stops

However, a continued focus on road safety campaigning can help put the brakes on dangerous behaviour and attitudes:

- Almost half (47%) of Aussies believe improvements in individual behaviour will have the greatest impact on regional road safety
- Similarly, almost half (47%) of Aussies also believe that road safety messaging and campaigns can change road safety outcomes
- When it comes to improving their own individual behaviour, almost 9 in 10 Aussies (89%) say road safety messaging makes them a better road user
- According to Aussie drivers, the most impactful ways road safety messaging is delivered occur:
 - After seeing or hearing about road incidents in the news (72%)
 - After seeing road safety campaigns or community events (47%)
 - When passing road safety signs while they are using the road (49%)
- After seeing or hearing road safety messaging, Aussie drivers improve their attitude or behaviour in the following top five ways:
 - Greater understanding of their responsibility to follow road rules (52%)
 - Greater awareness of their own behaviour and choices that are causing risks (51%)
 - Make an actual change in their behaviour when using the road (40%)
 - Improve their focus on road safety resilience (30%)
 - Are motivated to support safety initiatives (29%)