Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy, July 2021 to June 2024

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We are committed to keeping the community safe on our roads.

Our roads network can be a risky and dangerous place. For most, it provides us access to our family, friends and enjoying all Victoria has to offer. For many, it is a workplace. In recent years, great strides have been made to improve Victoria’s road safety, however too many people are killed or seriously injured each year. Serious injury and fatal crashes have devastating effects on those involved as well as their family, friends, and the broader community. These crashes can have a major impact on frontline police, affecting the health and wellbeing of our people. Preventing serious injury and fatal crashes is vital in keeping everyone safe and well.

Throughout the bushfire and COVID-19 emergencies we have witnessed the power of Victorians when we band together. The approach to road trauma reduction should be no different. Road safety is everyone’s responsibility, and with our road safety partners; Department of Transport, Department of Health, Department of Justice and Community Safety, and Transport Accident Commission, we can educate and empower the community to make better decisions on the road and encourage people to self-regulate their behaviour. Community safety is more than reducing crime. It is also doing everything in our power to keep people out of harm’s way. It is making sure that every time someone uses our roads, they make it home safely.

Victoria Police’s enforcement of unlawful road user behaviour has been critical to the reduction of road trauma.

We will remain focused on intentional high risk driver behaviour, rural roads, speeding, impaired driving, wearing of seatbelts and restraints, distraction and unauthorised driving. Police will continue to be highly visible on major arterials as well as back streets, holding those who choose to do the wrong thing to account.

The importance of an active and visible police presence cannot be underestimated. We know more than 90 per cent of all lives saved will be due to enforcement-focused actions. Whether you are in general duties, a road policing specialist or a detective, your policing acts as a deterrent for unlawful road user behaviour.
This strategy acknowledges that road safety is complex. A multi-faceted approach is required to create a safer road environment and reduce the opportunity for poor decision making. Enforcement efforts will continue to be supported by new initiatives, policy, education and infrastructure developments. However, through general and specific deterrence models and a high visible police presence, we can prevent trauma and make Victorian roads a safer place. I challenge every person to play their part.

Glenn Weir APM, Assistant Commissioner Road Policing.

Introduction

Deaths and serious injuries are not inevitable – they are preventable.

Each year Victoria records more than 200 lives lost to road trauma, around 8,000 people are hospitalised for serious injuries, and a further 12,000 are injured\(^i\).

Road trauma impacts the everyday lives of crash victims, their families and the wider community and often leads to a series of negative outcomes that can change the course of a victim’s life.

It also impacts the economy. The economic cost of road trauma in Victoria is estimated at more than $6 billion per year. That’s approximately $16.5 million per day\(^ii\).

This three-year Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy has been developed in alignment with The Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 and supports a 50 percent reduction of road fatalities by 2030.

Safe System

The ‘Safe System’ approach recognises that road safety is a shared responsibility. Victoria Police and our partners work in close affiliation so that we have safer roads, safer speeds, safer vehicles and safer road users in Victoria.

Under the Safe System approach, we work collaboratively with the community to ensure a holistic approach to the road transport system and the interactions among roads and roadsides, travel speeds, vehicles and road users.

The Safe System approach recognises that the human body has physical limits and, although people make mistakes, it shouldn’t cost anyone their life.

Our guiding principles

The delivery of our organisational priorities is based on the following key principles: engage, enhance and enforce. These principles will guide our road policing activities towards achieving our objectives and supporting a reduction in road trauma.

- Engage — we will increase our engagement with road safety partners and the community, building effective relationships to collaboratively influence road user behaviours and focus on our organisational priorities.
• Enhance — we will enhance the capacity of our workforce through training and technology, recognising and developing member skills and capabilities whilst promoting professional development.

• Enforce — we will strengthen our enforcement activities through intelligence-led, evidence-based methods, leveraging technology to ensure our resources are directed to where they are needed most.

These guiding principles align with the Victoria Police Capability Framework 2016–2025.

Our role in road safety

Road safety is everyone’s responsibility.

To achieve our vision of zero deaths and serious injuries, every Victoria Police employee needs to play an active role in road safety and contribute to a strong road safety culture across our organisation and within the community.

How you contribute to road safety

Whether you work in general duties, crime or road policing, it’s everyone’s responsibility to keep the community safe on our roads.

Every member should:

• Actively enforce road laws every shift every day.
• Ensure effective daily tasking and resourcing to address local, regional and statewide road safety issues and risks.
• Understand and apply the Safe System, embedding a culture of road policing as a shared responsibility.
• Work in partnership with local communities utilising engagement as an effective tool in addressing road safety.
• Utilise intelligence to target local road safety issues.

Road Policing Command is constantly evaluating our policies, processes, technology and training to ensure we support frontline members to reduce road trauma.

Over the next three years under this Road Safety Strategy, we will introduce innovative road policing equipment, technology and intelligence capabilities, with improved tasking and coordination, to reduce death and serious injury on our roads.

What police say about road safety

• “I really don’t enjoy giving out tickets, but I know every ticket I give out could be the thing that stops me from standing on another doorstep and telling a family their loved one has died.” – Senior Constable Uniform
• “I always consider any appropriate driving offences when laying criminal charges. They often carry minimum penalties and provide the judiciary with a more complete picture of a suspect’s disregard for community safety.” – Detective
• “The best part about road policing is that it involves all aspects of the policing environment from investigation and enforcement to proactive community engagement and strategy development.” – Sergeant HWP
• “It is imperative that road policing becomes and remains a key priority for supervisors and decision makers. We owe it to the community!” – Inspector T&C

Working together

Victoria Police and our road safety partners are committed to a shared vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on Victorian roads.

As road safety partners, our collective focus is to:

• Ensure all Victorians feel safe on and around our roads.
• See a progressive reduction in fatalities and injuries from road trauma.
• Embed a culture of road safety within the Victorian community.

Victoria Police activities are focused on prevention and enforcement, designed to deter offending and prevent death and serious injury. We work with partners to educate the community and reinforce the importance of road safety.

Our partners in road safety

In conjunction with road safety partners this multi-agency approach supports the objectives within the Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 and continues to see Victoria recognised as a world leader in road safety.

Department of Transport

The Department of Transport plans, delivers and operates Victoria’s transport system. It integrates departments including Transport for Victoria, VicRoads Registration & Licencing, Road Safety Victoria, Regional Roads Victoria and Freight Victoria.

Department of Health

The Department of Health provides post-crash trauma care and support along with the provision of injury data for analytical purposes and Traffic Incident System (TIS) integration.

Department of Justice and Community Safety

The Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) co-ordinates the courts and infringements systems and manages the road safety camera program.

Transport Accident Commission

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) is responsible for promoting road safety, improving the states’ trauma system and supporting those who have been injured on our roads.
Our commitment to road safety

Our vision: Zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

Our road safety mission: Keeping the community safe on our roads.

How? Our principles will guide how we work:

- Engage
- Enhance
- Enforce

What? Our areas of focus describe what we will target to keep the community safe on our roads:

- Intentional High Risk Driving
- Rural Roads
- Speed
- Impaired Driving
- Seatbelts & Restraints
- Distraction
- Unauthorised Drivers

Who? We will focus on the following cohorts:

- People who use the roads for work or at work. Who: heavy vehicles and freight industry, light commercial vehicles, commercial passenger vehicles, sales, shift workers, big build, roadwork and building sites, delivery drivers.
- People who are at higher risk of being injured. Who: vulnerable road users (cyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists, older people, children, inexperienced drivers), people travelling in vehicles with less safety features, people travelling on remote and rural roads.
Overview of our strategy

Intentional high risk driving (IHRD)

Why we are focusing on intentional high risk driving

Intentional high risk driving is anti-social behaviour that compromises road safety and adversely affects the safety of the general community. IHRD can include, but is not limited to behaviours of excessive and dangerous speeding; engaging in drag racing; the intentional loss of traction (burnouts); inciting, encouraging or organising any of the above; planning or organising unlawful events or gatherings, including where spectators may be present.

What we are doing

Engage

• Engage with and educate repeat offenders to increase awareness of the dangers of intentional high-risk driving;
• Engage with our road safety partners to investigate new vehicle immobilising technologies for the interception of high risk vehicles;
• Target harden gathering areas in consultation with local councils and community groups.

Enhance

• Intelligence led Person of Interest identification (POI);
• Detection capabilities of IHRD through the Mobile Automatic Number Plate recognition software;
• Co-ordinate responses to unlawful gatherings with support from specialised areas including Air Wing, Dog Squad, Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), and Public Order Response Team (PORT).

Enforce

• Promote general deterrence through highly visible patrols;
• Promote deterrence through vehicle impounds, forfeitures and immediate licence suspensions;
• Prosecute high risk offenders with relevant criminal offences which can result in imprisonment
• Hold perpetrators to account.

Did you know?

• Over 56 percent of vehicles are impounded for unlicenced, disqualified or suspended driving offences.
• Police have impounded more than 71,000 vehicles in the past 10 years.
• In 2016 a driver was sentenced to more than 10 years imprisonment when the car he was racing against lost control and crashed resulting in two deaths.
• First offence notifications rose from 5,822 in 2019/2020 to 8,100 in 2020/2021, that is an increase of 38 percent.
Rural roads

Why are we focusing on rural roads

Rural road users are four times more likely to be killed than road users in metropolitan Melbourne. That is why we are focusing on enhancing our visible presence and enforcement in rural areas identified as high risk, and targeting emerging trends affecting rural road safety. We will work collaboratively with our road safety partners and the community to understand and address the unique challenges faced in rural areas.

What we are doing

Engage
- Engage with our road safety partners and industry to explore emerging road safety technology for rural areas and road infrastructure (e.g. township entry treatments, point to point cameras);
- Collaborate with local media to support rural road safety campaigns;
- Promote education and awareness of road safety risks associated with rural road use

Enhance
- Expand our road policing capabilities in rural areas through intelligence-led deployment;
- Expand our technology capabilities in rural areas (e.g. mobile cameras).

Enforce
- Expand our use of mobile Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to enforce road rules;
- Support DJCS to expand their mobile road safety camera enforcement capability;
- Expand drug and alcohol testing activities;
- Conduct high visibility patrols to support general deterrence.

Did you know?
- In 2020 there were 126 lives lost on Victorian rural roads.
- Rural Victoria is overrepresented in alcohol and illicit drug related collisions.
- Research has consistently identified speeding, drink driving and seatbelt/restraint non-compliance as the key behaviours behind rural road trauma.
- For every 100 kilometre stretch of high speed, high volume road in Victoria, 17 people are killed or seriously injured each year.
- Fatalities involving heavy vehicles are most likely to occur on high speed rural roads.
- A 50 per cent increase in enforcement hours on these roads is projected to reduce around 90 casualty crashes per year.
Speed

Why are we focusing on speed

Speed contributes to approximately one third of road trauma in Victoria and is a key contributor to collision risk and severity\textsuperscript{xv}. Even just a small increase in speed can significantly increase the risk of a crash. That’s why speed management is so crucial in reducing road trauma.

What we are doing

Engage

- Engage with community to educate and generate awareness of the impact of speeding;
- Conduct a marketing campaign in collaboration with our road safety partners;
- Engage with road safety partners to identify alternative methods to generate speed awareness (such as speed awareness courses).

Enhance

- Deliver more speed enforcement training;
- Investigate new speed detection technology;
- Support fixed road safety camera expansion;
- Enhance understanding of speed management and how it impacts road trauma.

Enforce

- Enforce speed limits targeting high risk areas;
- Promote general deterrence through high visibility patrols;
- Promote deterrence methods such as vehicle impounds, forfeiture and immediate licence suspension;
- Improve and integrate speed detection technology;
- Take a collaborative approach to target persons of interest, high risk and recidivist drivers.

Did you know?

- Speed contributes to 30 percent of fatalities each year and 25 percent of serious injuries\textsuperscript{xv}.
- 25 percent of drivers believe “it is okay to speed if you are driving safely”\textsuperscript{xvi}.
- In 2019 the Victorian Government increased mobile speed camera hours by 75 percent which is estimated to save 23 lives and prevent 172 serious injury collisions\textsuperscript{xvii}.
- A substantial number of motorists believe it is not dangerous to exceed the posted speed limit by 30 kilometres per hour\textsuperscript{xviii}.
Impaired driving

Why are we focusing on impaired driving

Driving a vehicle safely requires a high degree of attention and vigilance. It is important that drivers and riders do not use their vehicles when their performance is impaired through alcohol, fatigue or the presence of drugs.

Drink and drug driving will continue to be a major contributor to collisions, that is why we need to focus on impaired driving.

What we are doing

Engage

• Working with local media and other stakeholders to identify strategies to raise awareness of impaired driving;
• Engage with our road safety partners and industry to identify and evaluate technologies to detect and prevent impaired driving (e.g. retina scanning);
• Work with TAC to conduct targeted operations that drive down impaired driving.

Enhance

• Expand our roadside drug testing capacity across the state;
• Research best practice approaches for impaired driver detection;
• Enhance intelligence-led deployments to target high risk drug and drink driving.

Enforce

• Conduct targeted enforcement initiatives on high risk drivers and areas;
• Continue our Roadside Infringements for drug drivers;
• Increase the banning periods for impaired drivers.

Did you know?

• Cannabis use can increase the chance of a motor vehicle crash by up to 300 per cent.xix.
• Drug driving contributes to 30 per cent of deaths and its involvement in road trauma is increasingxx.
• Methamphetamine is the most common drug detected in roadside drug testingxxi.
• Five per cent of drivers admit to driving while over the legal blood alcohol concentrationxxii.
• The extent and location of roadside enforcement for both drugs and alcohol, plays a key role in detecting impaired drivers (specific deterrence) as well as deterring passing drivers from future impaired driving (general deterrence)xxiii.
Seatbelts and restraints

Why are we focusing on seatbelts and restraints

In 1970 Victoria became the first jurisdiction in the world to make it compulsory to wear a seatbelt. Since then, seatbelts and other restraints have been shown to save lives and limit serious injuries from a collision.

What we are doing

Engage

- Engage with community to educate and raise awareness of the increased dangers of failing to wear a seatbelt.

Enhance

- Explore new technology to detect and enforce seatbelt and restraint use;
- Advocate for new vehicle technology to ensure seatbelt and restraint use.

Enforce

- Conduct targeted operations to detect seatbelt offences;
- Promote general deterrence through high visibility patrols;
- Conduct intelligence-led enforcement activities by identifying high risk locations, times and cohorts.

Did you know?

- Common reported reasons for restraint non-use include comfort factors, habit, only travelling a short distance, impairment, culture and peer pressure among young malesxxiv.
- Seatbelts help to reduce the risk of death by up to 50 per centxxv.
- In 2020 18 per cent of vehicle occupants who died were not wearing a seatbeltxxvi.
- Potentially 170,000 Victorian drivers do not always wear a seatbelt when they get in the carxxvii.
- Commercial vehicle drivers (light and heavy) are less likely to wear seatbeltsxxviii.
Distraction

Why are we focusing on seatbelts and distraction

Keeping your attention on the road is essential for safe driving. When drivers are distracted, they are unaware of what’s going on around them, and that increases the likelihood of a collision.

Mobile phone distraction is a major contributing factor in death and serious injury collisions, with drivers ten times more at risk of a crash if they are using their mobile phone while driving.

What we are doing

Engage

- Engage with the community to educate and generate awareness of the impact of distraction;
- Continue media campaigns in partnership with our road safety partners.

Enhance

- Support the expansion of camera enforcement to capture driver distraction;
- Continue to monitor new technologies focused on preventing driver distraction offences.

Enforce

- Identify high risk areas for mobile camera enforcement;
- Promote general deterrence through high visibility patrols;
- Conduct targeted enforcement initiatives focusing on distraction.

Did you know?

- Distraction contributes to 11 per cent of deaths in Victoria and the risk of distraction is increasingxxix.
- 30 per cent of drivers admit to using a mobile phone illegallyxxx.
- Distractions include more than just mobile phones - GPS devices, passengers or eating can also stop you from focusing on the road.
- Driver inattention is a factor in nearly 50 per cent of all serious injury crashesxxxii.
Unauthorised drivers

Why are we focusing on unauthorised drivers

Unauthorised drivers continue to pose a significant risk to road safety, with more than ten percent of fatal collisions in Victoria involving an unauthorised driver. Unauthorised driving is closely linked to criminal offending, recidivist offending and other high risk driver behaviours.

What we are doing

Engage
- Engage with and educate repeat offenders to increase awareness of the risks of unauthorised driving;
- Engage with our road safety partners to identify alternate methods to prevent recidivist offending;
- Facilitate better information sharing with our partner agencies.

Enhance
- Intelligence-led Person of Interest (POI) identification;
- Enhance our detection capabilities through the Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition software;
- Explore new technologies and techniques to identify unauthorised drivers.

Enforce
- Target high risk recidivists through intelligence-led enforcement activities;
- Reduce the ability to re-offend through impounds and forfeitures;
- Conduct high visibility patrols as part of general deterrence activities.
- Investigate new vehicle immobilisation technology.

Did you know?
- Almost 60 percent of disqualified drivers will drive during their period of disqualification.
- Unauthorised drivers are at an increased risk of trauma involvement.
- To enforce against this behaviour, the Mobile ANPR is an effective tool with detections reducing the crash risk of unauthorised drivers by 19 percent for their remaining period of being unlicensed.
Governance and assurance

Our commitment to road safety

Victoria Police is accountable to the community for the use of public funds.

Performance measures indicate whether our activities are achieving our objectives and the progress we are making towards our road safety goal of a 50 percent reduction of road fatalities by 2030 and zero deaths by 2050.

The best performance measures are those which start conversations about organisational priorities, the allocation of resources, ways to improve performance, and can offer an honest assessment of our effectiveness.

Some of the road policing reporting measures include:

- Number of alcohol screening tests to be conducted: 3 million
- Less than 150,000 total persons reported injured in vehicle crashes
- Total reported road fatalities in vehicle crashes: less than 200
- 150,000 annual prohibited drug screening tests to be conducted
- Proportion of successful prosecution outcomes: 92 per cent.
Getting the job done

This Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy will be supported by annual Action Plans. Our Action Plans will outline clear activities for each priority. These action items will set clear targets and ensure every member plays a role in reducing road trauma and keeping our roads safe.

Road Policing Command will work with members of Victoria Police over the next three years to deliver our objectives. Whether members work in general duties, crime or road policing, it is up to everyone to keep the roads safe.

Zero deaths and serious injuries on Victorian roads is an ambitious target requiring genuine cooperation with road safety partners to deliver the priorities outlined within this strategy.
Endnotes

4 Corporate Statistics, Vehicle Impoundment Annual Report (Jan 2011 to Dec 2020)
5 Corporate Statistics, Vehicle Impoundment Annual Report (Jan 2011 to Dec 2020)
6 DPP v Arpaci [2018] VCC 285
7 VISU Monthly Report June 2021
8 Corporate Statistics, Statistical Summary, Lives Lost 2020 pg 1
9 Data Analysis Insight Report Pg 25
12 Data Analysis Insight Report Pg 63
13 TAC LEEP Brief, as cited MUARC Resource allocation
20 Road Safety Strategy – Post 2020 Data Insights Outcomes Key Themes Summary, p 10
21 Road Safety Strategy – Post 2020 Data Insights Outcomes Key Themes Summary, p 85
24 Road Policing Command Intelligence Assessment (Interpose) reference INTMDN0001252123
26 Corporate Statistics, Statistics Summary, Lives Lost, pg 1
Victoria Police respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Elders, both past, present and emerging and continue to recognise and embrace the fact that Aboriginal People are connected to the oldest, continuous history.