

AusRAP

In this issue of the *SaferRoads* Newsletter we focus on the recently launched Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP).

AusRAP, an initiative of the Australian Automobile Association, is a sister program to the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), which crash-tests new cars and awards them stars for safety. AusRAP is based on the European equivalent, EuroRAP,

AusRAP has developed two standard protocols—risk mapping of casualty crashes and a star rating system for roads using a Road Protection Score (RPS). To date, the focus has been on mapping the risk of casualty crashes. This risk is the result of interactions between roads, vehicles and road users.

The first AusRAP report, which is now available at www.ausrap.org focuses on the National Highway System, which links Australia's capital cities and many major towns. The NHS is some 18,600km long and was built over 30 years to various standards. AusRAP analysed some 17,500km, or 95%, of the NHS.

This report uses data supplied by the State and Territory road authorities to produce colour coded maps that rate the risk of casualty crashes on the NHS. It also identifies the best and worst sections of the NHS in each State and Territory in terms of safety performance.

Two types of risk maps are presented in the report:

Collective Risk Maps (annual average casualty crashes per kilometer 1998-2002) show the density, or total number, of crashes on a road over a given length. Crashes measured in this map are the result of interaction between all elements of the road system—road users, vehicles and roads.

Individual Risk Maps (annual average casualty crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometers travelled 1998-2002) show the risk rate for individual drivers.

Motorists will be able to use the risk maps to identify areas of the highway where they may need to take extra care. Governments will be able to use the maps to identify how well the road network is performing and in the decision-making process regarding future road investments.

In its next phase, AusRAP will highlight improvements that could be made to roads to reduce the likelihood of crashes—and to make those that do happen survivable

Trials are currently being conducted to develop the Road Protection Score (star rating). The results of these trials, which focus solely on the road, will be reported once research is complete.

However, risk cannot be eliminated from roads through infrastructure improvements alone. The road user must always share responsibility for a safe road system. AusRAP will help to make the connection between infrastructure and personal responsibility by highlighting sections of road where improvements are warranted, but also where road users may need to take extra care to minimise their risk until road improvements are made.

AusRAP is a tool that will vastly improve our understanding of the factors that make a road safe and is set to become a valuable aid in decision making to help ensure that road safety is a part of planning for future investment in Australia's road infrastructure. There is a need to continue to improve the behaviour of drivers but at the same time, we as a community need to invest in roads that are more forgiving of human mistakes.

AusRAP has gained the support of a range of organisations, including the Australian Transport Council. In November 2004, the ATC released its 2005/06 National Road Safety Action Plan which, among other things, identifies the implementation of AusRAP as being a means of achieving the national target of a 40% reduction of the fatality rate by 2010.

As 5 people are killed and more than 60 are seriously injured on Australian roads everyday, AusRAP is both a timely and necessary road safety initiative. The full AusRAP report can be downloaded from the AAA website www.ausrap.org

On behalf of the *SaferRoads* partners - the Australasian College of Road Safety, the Australian Trucking Association, the Australian Local Government Association and the Australian Automobile Association - we wish you a merry Christmas and a safe new year!

