

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia's road toll increases as drivers return to roads

- Latest road safety report shows 12.9% spike in fatalities as people return to roads.
- Australia will fail to meet road safety targets with three months left on existing road safety strategy.
- Federal Budget's renewed focus on road safety can save lives as well as jobs in the year ahead.

Road fatalities have jumped 12.9% in the past quarter as Australians return to the roads during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) Benchmarking Road Safety report.

The AAA's report shows there were 280 fatalities in the quarter ending September 2020 compared with 248 deaths in the previous quarter. The spike reverses a nationwide drop in road fatalities earlier this year, which was attributed to reduced traffic volumes associated with people working and studying from home.

The quarterly Benchmarking Road Safety Report also confirms no state is on track to achieve its National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) target, to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 30 per cent through the decade to December 2020.

AAA Managing Director Michael Bradley said: "The AAA continues to call for a renewed national focus on road trauma and greater clarity regarding accountabilities and compliance measures to be built into the next National Strategy.

"One-quarter of the 2011-2020 Strategy's KPIs are still not being either measured or reported by state governments, or still lack agreed targets," he said. "This is why the recent federal Budget's new \$2 billion Road Safety Program, with its "use it or lose it" provisions and its requirement for state and territory governments to provide safety data as a condition of funding, has received such strong support.

"The nation's rising road toll confirms that this month's Budget was right to prioritise road safety and tie federal payments to state government reporting obligations, as this will do much to improve accountability associated with infrastructure spending and inform future road safety policy priorities.

"Detailed real-time data on road fatalities and injuries will be critical to measuring the success of the next decade's Strategy and to ensuring policies can be adjusted in a timely manner to save lives on our roads."

The AAA represents over 8.5 million motorists through its member clubs – NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAA, RAC, RACT and AANT.

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The Australian Automobile Association is the nation's peak motoring body, representing Australia's state-based motoring clubs and their 8 million members. The AAA is an apolitical and technology-neutral advocate for federal transport policy that improves safety, affordability, and mobility.