# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key changes</td>
<td>Key changes since September 2020 report</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>Lessons to learn from Strategy’s failure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section One</td>
<td>National overview</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Two</td>
<td>Analysis: States and territories</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Three</td>
<td>Analysis: Road user groups</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Four</td>
<td>Analysis: Road deaths by population</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key changes since September 2020 report

In the 12 months to December 2020, road fatalities decreased by 80 compared to the previous corresponding period: there were 1,106 deaths, compared to 1,186 deaths in the 12 months to December 2019.

Road fatalities increased by 9.7 per cent from the September quarter to the December quarter of 2020.

This final report shows that Australia did not achieve the targets for a reduction in fatalities and serious injuries set by the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) 2011–2020.

Analytical key

**Pass**
- Total road deaths in 2020 met or exceeded the target of a 30% reduction on the NRSS baseline.

**Fail**
- Total road deaths in 2020 did not meet the target of a 30% reduction on the NRSS baseline.

**Green**
- On track to meet or exceed NRSS target. The reduction in road crash fatalities is equal to or greater than the rate required to achieve NRSS target.

**Amber**
- Currently ahead of (notional) target but a faster rate of improvement is required to achieve NRSS target by 2020.

**Red**
- Road crash fatalities are above the notional NRSS target.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current national status</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous national status</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
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<td>QLD</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
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<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Green</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User groups</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Current</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
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<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrians</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcyclists</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The data used to produce this information were sourced from the Australian Road Deaths Database: [https://bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal_road_crash_database.aspx](https://bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal_road_crash_database.aspx), accessed on 14 January 2021; and Road Deaths Australia December 2020 monthly bulletin ISSN 1449-1168. Data on severe injuries were obtained from the Australian Trauma Registry.
Foreword

Lessons to learn from Strategy’s failure

At the conclusion of Australia’s 10-year National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020, its core objectives to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by the end of 2020, have not been met.

Moreover, the most recent available data showed that almost half the Strategy’s 33 targets were not on track to be met, many agreed targets could still not be measured, while for several safety indicators targets were not even set.

Over the course of the decade-long Strategy, total road deaths fell by only 22.4 per cent, and based on our analysis, if Australia had managed to meet the progressive notional targets of the Strategy over the whole ten years, another 522 lives could have been saved on our roads.

It is critical that the lessons of recent years be learned: the main one being that a national emergency requires a national response, with a clear leadership role for the Commonwealth Government.

The first finding of the federal government’s own 2019 Review of Road Safety Governance Arrangements was that: “The Australian Government has not provided sufficiently strong leadership, coordination or advocacy on road safety to drive national trauma reductions”.

In this respect, the AAA has strongly endorsed the Government’s initiatives of the October 2020 federal Budget, including a major new Road Safety Program, with infrastructure funding made conditional on the states and territories providing essential road safety data, and funds provided on a ‘use it or lose it’ basis.

Funding for a new National Road Safety Data Hub should fill critical gaps in our knowledge, leading to consistent collection and timely reporting so that we can compare and improve performance across jurisdictions and develop evidence-based interventions.

The AAA looks to a bolstered Office of Road Safety for national coordination around key targets and performance measures leading progressively to the realisation of the vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2050.

Finally, we hope and expect that the learnings from the collective response of governments to the COVID-19 crisis find their expression in the next National Road Safety Strategy to be implemented from this year.

Michael Bradley
Managing Director
Australian Automobile Association
Section One

National overview

National (Australia) fatalities and severe injuries per annum

As of December 2020, fatalities have reduced by 22.4 per cent against the agreed National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) baseline. (The baseline number is the average of road fatalities across the three years 2008 to 2010.)

The Strategy aimed to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent from the baseline by 2020.

Compared with 2011, when the Strategy began, the 12-month road toll has decreased by only 18.3 per cent.

**Fatalities**

There were 304 fatalities in the quarter ending December 2020; this was 9.7 per cent higher than the 277 deaths recorded in the previous quarter.

In the 12 months ended December 2020, there were 1,106 deaths on Australian roads. This was a 6.7 per cent decrease from the 1,186 road deaths in the 12 months ended December 2019.

At the conclusion of the NRSS, the 2020 road toll 108 deaths above the Strategy’s target of 998.

**Severe injuries**

The Benchmarking Report also includes data on severe injuries from on-road crashes. Severe injuries are a subset of serious injuries. The Australian Trauma Registry (ATR) provides national injury statistics to the AAA. The number of reported severe injuries in the 12 months to December 2019 was 3,379.

The ATR notes that variations in data may be due to improved data completeness and quality and this must be considered when interpreting the data.

Annual figures for severe injuries between the June 2016 and March 2018 quarters are directly comparable as the number of reporting trauma sites was consistent for that period. One site has been unable to submit data since the June 2018 quarter, while another commenced reporting in the December 2018 quarter, which affected overall numbers for those quarters. As such, annual figures for severe injuries in the September 2019 and December 2019 quarters are also directly comparable as the number of reporting centres was consistent for that period.

Data quality is consistent across all quarters with the same quality checks applied.

Numbers may change slightly for the most recent quarters as sites identify further patients for inclusion/exclusion in future data submissions to the ATR.

Comparative performance: Road fatalities in the past 12 months

The national road toll for the 12 months ending December 2020 was 6.7 per cent lower than in the previous corresponding period.
Section Two

Analysis: States and territories

New South Wales fatalities per annum

Fail

- In the 12 months ending December 2020, 297 people died on NSW roads, compared to 353 in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 15.9 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in NSW was a reduction of 27.7 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 411. This was 10 deaths above the Strategy's target of 287.

Victoria fatalities per annum

Fail

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 212 people died on Victorian roads, compared to 266 in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 20.3 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in Victoria was a reduction of 27.9 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 294. This was 6 deaths above the Strategy's target of 206.
Section Two

Queensland fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 276 people died on Queensland roads, up from 219 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is an increase of 26 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in Queensland was a reduction of 8.9 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 303. This was 64 deaths above the Strategy's target of 212.

South Australia fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 95 people died on South Australian roads, compared to 114 in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 16.7 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in South Australia was a reduction of 15.2 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 112. This was 17 deaths above the Strategy's target of 78.
Section Two

Analysis: States and territories

Western Australia fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 154 people died on Western Australian roads, compared to 163 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 5.5 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in Western Australia was a reduction of 21.4 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 196. This was 17 deaths above the Strategy's target of 137.

Tasmania fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 36 people died on Tasmanian roads, compared to 29 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is an increase of 24.1 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in Tasmania was a reduction of 18.2 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 44. This was 5 deaths above the Strategy's target of 31.
Section Two

Northern Territory fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 29 people died on Northern Territory roads, compared to 36 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 19.4 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in the Northern Territory was a reduction of 43.1 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 51. This was 7 deaths below the Strategy's target of 36.

Australian Capital Territory fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to September 2020, 7 people died on ACT roads, compared to 6 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is an increase of 16.7 per cent.
- The total road deaths for 2020 in the ACT was a reduction of 53.3 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 15. This was 4 deaths below the Strategy's target of 11.
### Analysis: Road user groups

#### Drivers fatalities per annum

- **Baseline number (average fatalities 2008-10)**
- **Target**
- **Actual**

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 545 drivers died on Australian roads, compared to 570 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 4.4 per cent.
- The total road deaths in 2020 for drivers was a reduction of 18.8 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 671. This was 75 deaths above the Strategy’s target of 470.

#### Passengers fatalities per annum

- **Baseline number (average fatalities 2008-10)**
- **Target**
- **Actual**

- In the 12 months to December 2020, 188 passengers died on Australian roads, compared with 205 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 8.3 per cent.
- The total road deaths in 2020 for passengers was a reduction of 38.4 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 305. This was 26 deaths below the Strategy’s target of 214.
Section Three

Pedestrians fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, there were 136 pedestrian deaths on Australian roads, compared to 159 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 14.5 per cent.
- The total road deaths in 2020 for passengers was a reduction of 26.1 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 184. This was 7 deaths above the Strategy's target of 129.

Motorcyclists fatalities per annum

- In the 12 months to December 2020, there were 190 motorcyclist deaths on Australian roads, compared to 210 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is a decrease of 9.5 per cent.
- The total road deaths in 2020 for motorcyclists was a reduction of 17.7 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 231. This was 28 deaths above the Strategy's target of 162.
Analysis: Road user groups

Cyclists fatalities per annum

In the 12 months to December 2020, 42 cyclists died on Australian roads, compared to 39 deaths in the previous corresponding period. This is an increase of 7.7 per cent.

The total road deaths in 2020 for cyclists was an increase of 31.3 per cent on the NRSS baseline of 32. This was 19 deaths above the Strategy's target of 23.
The National Road Safety Strategy does not include any fatality rate targets based on deaths per head of population in different jurisdictions. But fatality rates are still useful for determining priority areas. The data show that Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have more road deaths per head of population than the national average.

### Analysis: Road deaths by population

**Annual road deaths per 100,000 population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Current fatality rate per 100,000 population</th>
<th>Number of fatalities at 3.17 per 100,000 population</th>
<th>Potential lives saved*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>6.66</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In this scenario, any jurisdiction with a rate already lower than Victoria’s (3.17) would not reduce its fatality rate.

If the other jurisdictions matched the Victorian fatality rate of 3.17 per 100,000 population, 299 lives could have been saved across Australia in the 12 months to December 2020:

- 38 in New South Wales
- 112 in Queensland
- 39 in South Australia
- 70 in Western Australia
- 19 in Tasmania
- 21 in the Northern Territory.