



BENCHMARKING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

DECEMBER QUARTER 2023



Australian
Automobile
Association

Released January 2024



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Key changes since September 2023

In 2023, road deaths rose by 7.3 per cent compared to the previous corresponding period — 1,266 deaths up from 1,180 deaths in the 12 months to 31 December 2022.

Road fatalities fell by 1.5 per cent from the September quarter (341 deaths) to the December quarter (336 deaths). But the three months to September 2023 was the worst quarter for road deaths in almost 11 years — the 2012 December quarter's 347 deaths was the last time it was this high.

Australia remains off-track to achieve National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) targets for reducing total deaths or deaths of children.

Poor data availability still makes it impossible to track progress on serious injuries, deaths on city CBD streets, and deaths on national highways and high-speed roads.

Strategy targets

	Previous	Current
National deaths	Red	Red
National serious injuries	Black	Black
Children (seven years and under) deaths	Amber	Red
City CBD area deaths	Black	Black
National highway and high-speed road deaths	Black	Black

Analytical key

Green

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

Amber

Currently ahead of pro rata target but a faster rate of improvement is required to achieve NRSS target by 2030.

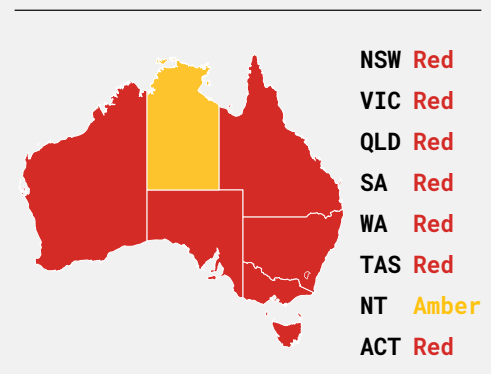
Red

Road crash deaths are above the pro rata NRSS target.

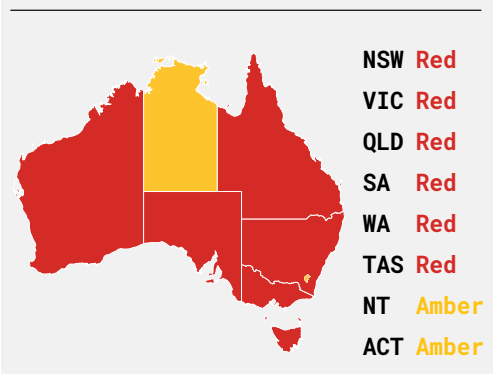
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NRSS target progress cannot be measured due to a lack of data availability.

Previous: Jurisdictional status



Current: Jurisdictional status



User groups	Previous	Current
Drivers	Red	Red
Passengers	Red	Red
Pedestrians	Red	Red
Motorcyclists	Red	Red
Cyclists	Red	Red

The data indicate no jurisdiction or road user group is on track to achieve any of the National Road Safety Strategy headline targets by 2030.

Australia's road deaths: December 2023

We need data to curb deadly surge

Latest figures confirm that the National Road Safety Strategy remains off-track to achieve its target of halving road deaths by 2030.

The 2023 calendar year had the worst 12-month national road toll in almost seven years — and the numbers grew worse as the year progressed.

In 2023, 1,266 people died on Australian roads. That's up 7.3 per cent from 2022's 1,180 road deaths, and almost as high as the 1,288 deaths recorded in the 12 months to January 2017.

The second half of 2023 had 677 road deaths — the highest fatalities in two consecutive quarters since the first half of 2010 when 688 people died on our roads.

The rising national toll was driven by big increases in NSW (24.9 per cent), Victoria (22.5 per cent) and South Australia (64.9 per cent). Road deaths fell in Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, but this followed big fatality increases in 2022, and those states' 2023 figures were close to their 2020 and 2021 fatality numbers.

Australia's annual road deaths are now 15.4 per cent higher than when the National Road Safety Strategy began. A lack of data remains a critical barrier to understanding the factors driving the increase. Indeed, three of the strategy's five headline targets remain either unmeasured or unreported.

Every state and territory government has valuable data on road quality assessments, crash causes, and the effectiveness of their law enforcement measures, including involvement of speeding, drink driving, drugged driving, and mobile phone use in crashes. But the data is not made public.

Sharing it would reveal valuable insights to guide road investment, law enforcement, and policy changes. It would also provide much-needed accountability that would increase public confidence that road funding is being spent where it can be most effective in saving lives.

The AAA's Data Saves Lives campaign — launched in October — is asking the Commonwealth to use its \$10 billion in annual road funding to compel the states and territories to release existing data on road quality, crash causes, and key law enforcement issues.

Data Saves Lives partners include Australia's motoring clubs and 17 national organisations representing motorists, motorcyclists, truckers, pedestrians, doctors, insurers, road engineers and safety advocates. In December, the Australian Medical Association voiced its support for the campaign.

These groups aim to reduce the nation's shocking road toll. They agree it is time to end the secrecy.



Michael Bradley

Managing Director
Australian Automobile
Association

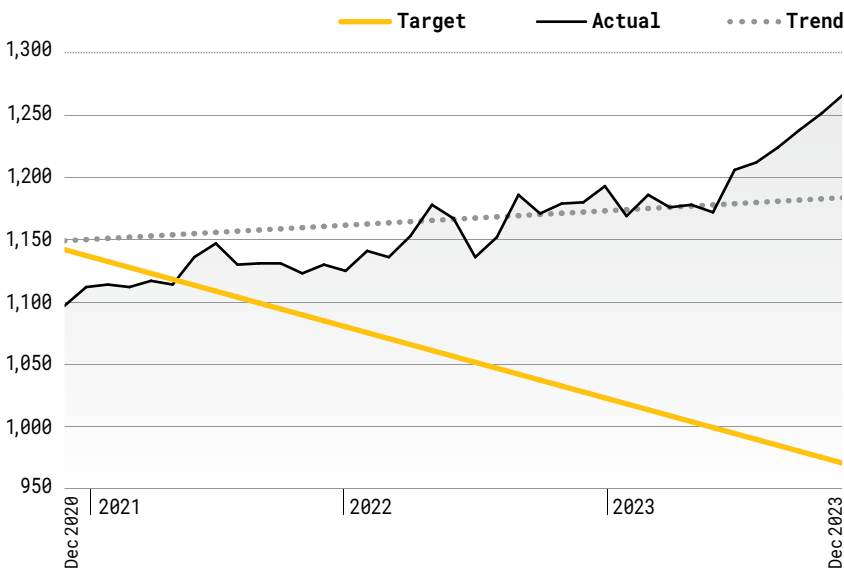
National overview

The federal, state and territory governments have endorsed the NRSS 2021-2030. The strategy aims to reduce road deaths by 50 per cent and serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030, compared to the baseline, which is the average of road deaths between 2018 and 2020. Trendlines shown in graphs throughout this report were calculated using data on fatalities since December 2018.

The NRSS also aims to, by 2030, achieve zero road deaths among children aged seven years and under; in city CBD areas; on all national highways; and on high-speed roads covering 80 per cent of travel across the network.

National deaths per annum

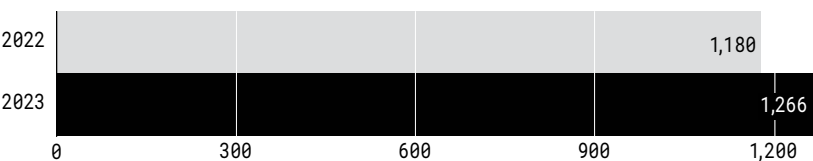
RED



In the 12 months ended December 2023, 1,266 people died on Australian roads. That is 10.9 per cent higher than the NRSS baseline, and 15.4 per cent higher than the 12-month road deaths to December 2020.

The latest 12-monthly figure is 295 more road deaths than the notional pro rata target of no more than 971 fatalities, which would have been the road toll in the 12 months to December 2023 if the NRSS was following a smooth trajectory towards its 2030 target.

Comparative performance: Road deaths in the past 12 months



National road deaths for the 12 months ending December 2023 were 7.3 per cent higher than in the previous corresponding period.

State/ Territory	Road deaths 12 months to 31 December 2022	Road deaths 12 months to 31 December 2023	Change	Difference from NRSS December 2023 pro rata target*
NSW	281	351	24.9%	24.5%
VIC	240	294	22.5%	50.0%
QLD	297	277	-6.7%	31.9%
SA	71	117	64.8%	42.7%
WA	175	158	-9.7%	17.0%
TAS	51	34	-33.3%	25.9%
NT	47	31	-34.0%	-6.1%
ACT	18	4	-77.8%	-33.3%

* The notional target for the 12 months to 31 December 2023 if the NRSS was on a smooth trajectory towards its 2030 target. (Source: Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics Australian Road Deaths Database, accessed 15 January 2024.)

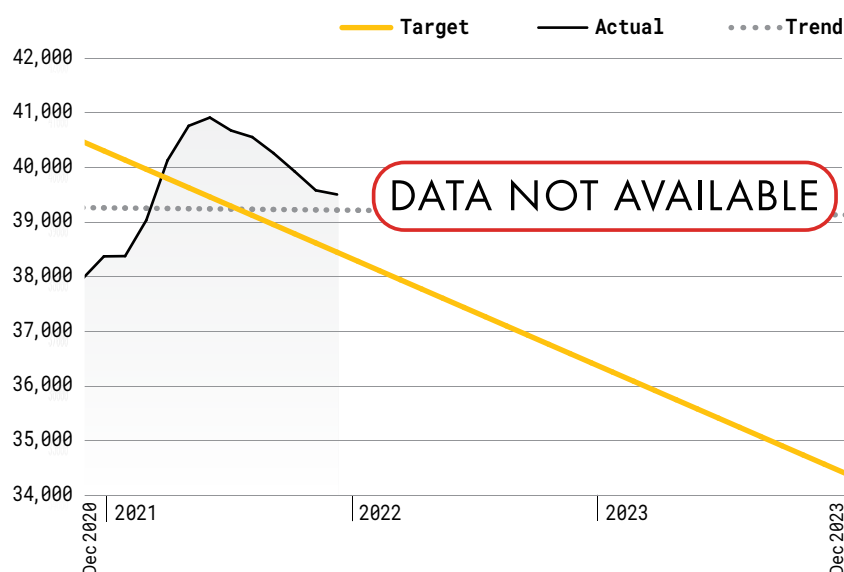


Section One

National overview

National serious injuries per annum

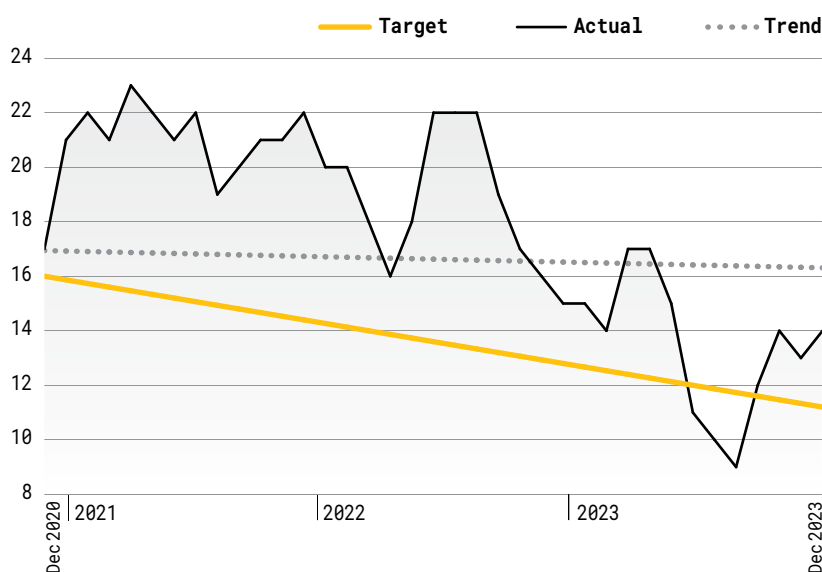
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Limited data availability makes it impossible to track the incidence of serious injuries—let alone progress on this target—since 2021.

Children (seven years and under) deaths per annum

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In the 12 months ended December 2023, 14 children (seven years and under) died on Australian roads, down from 15 deaths in the previous corresponding period.

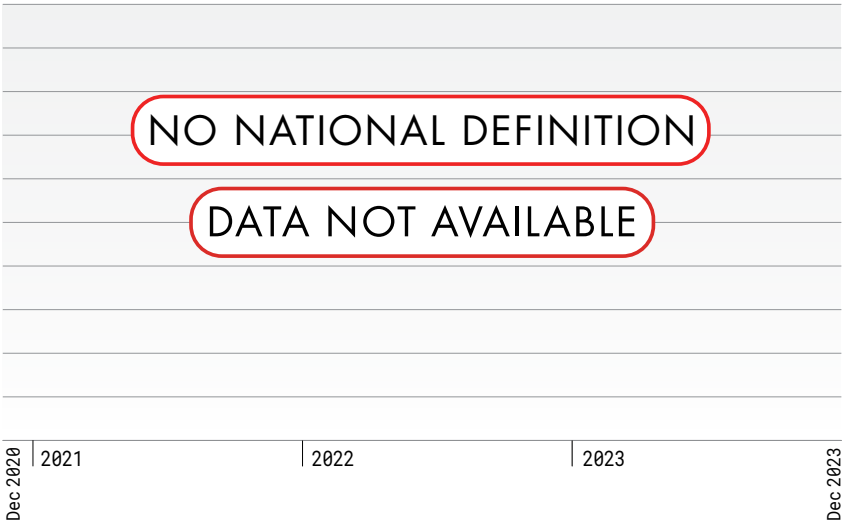
This is a 6.7 per cent decline.

Since the NRSS 2021–2030 began, deaths in this category have decreased by 17.6 per cent. But the latest 12-monthly figure is three deaths higher than the notional pro rata target for this stage of the NRSS, which is no more than 11 deaths.

Section One

City CBD area deaths per annum

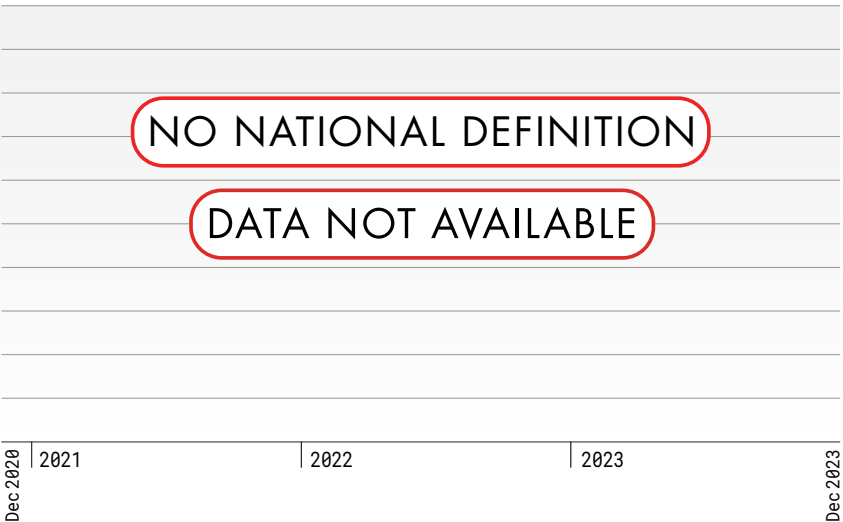
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The relevant data is unavailable, and Australia has no national definition of city CBD areas. Therefore, it is impossible to track road deaths in city CBDs and the progress towards the target.

National highway and high-speed road deaths per annum

BLACK



It is not possible to track road deaths on all national highways and high-speed roads covering 80 per cent of travel across the network. The relevant data is unavailable and there is no national definition of national highways and high-speed roads.

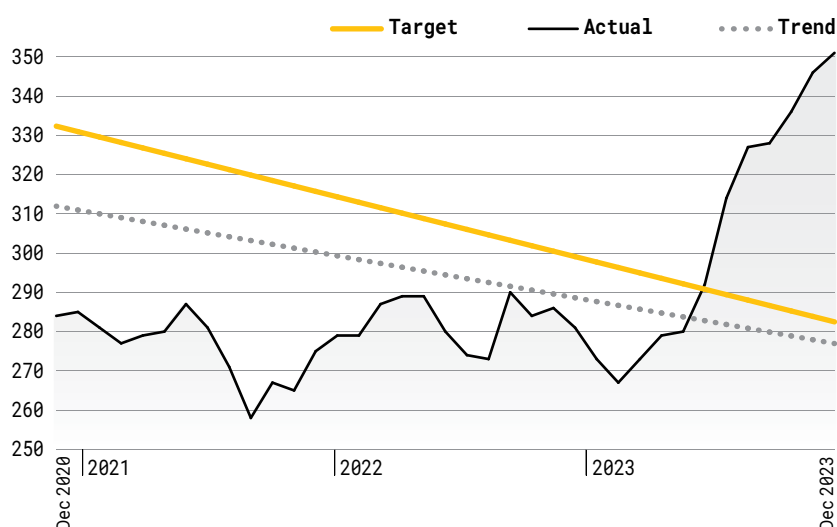
Section Two

Analysis: States and territories

While the NRSS has no specific target reductions for individual states and territories, this report measures jurisdictions' progress in achieving a 50 per cent reduction in road deaths by 2030 in line with the headline NRSS target.

New South Wales deaths per annum

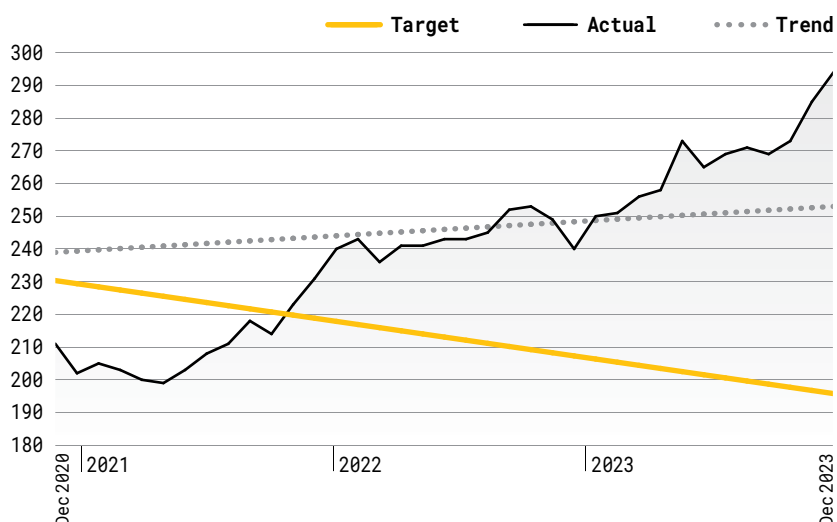
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 351 people died on New South Wales roads, compared to 281 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an increase of 24.9 per cent in just a year.
- That is 69 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 282 for this stage of the NRSS.

Victoria deaths per annum

RED

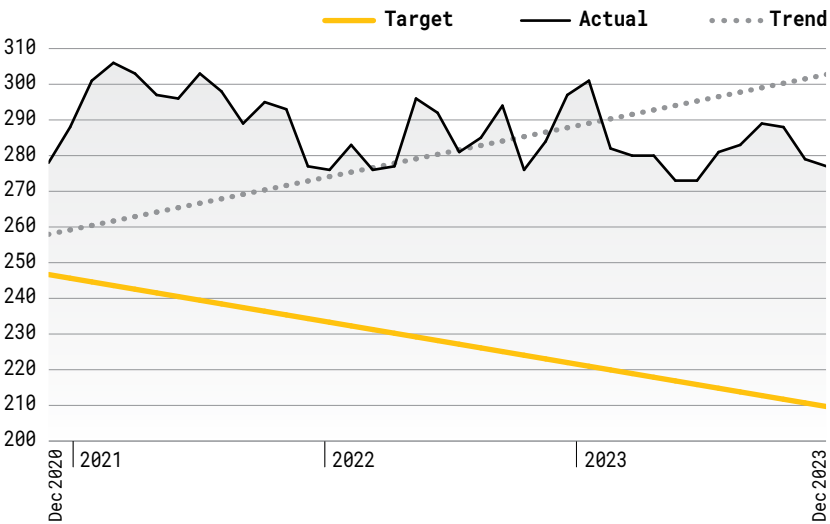


- In the 12 months to December 2023, 294 people died on Victoria's roads, up from 240 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an increase of 22.5 per cent in only a year.
- It is 98 more road deaths than the pro rata target of no more than 196 for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Queensland deaths per annum

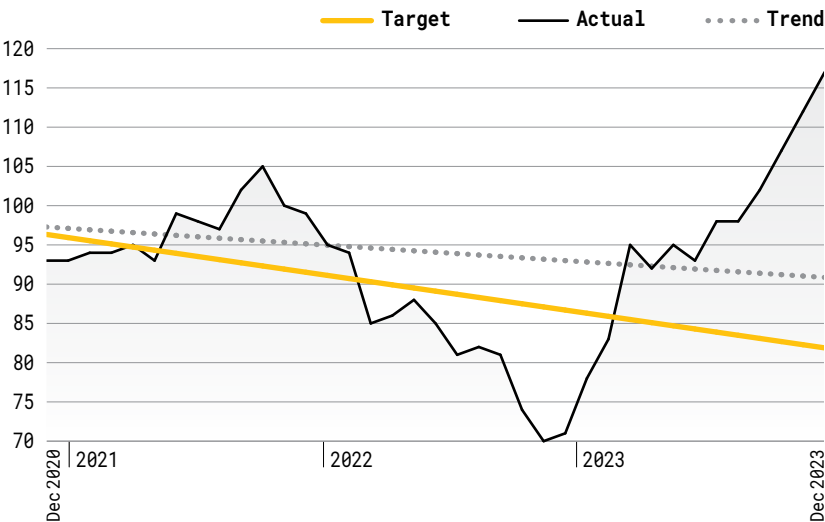
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 277 people died on Queensland roads, down from 297 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 6.7 per cent decrease. But 2023 road deaths are equal to the state's 2021 road toll and one less death than its 2020 road fatalities.
- Queensland's 2023 road toll is 67 more deaths than its notional pro rata target of no more than 210 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

South Australia deaths per annum

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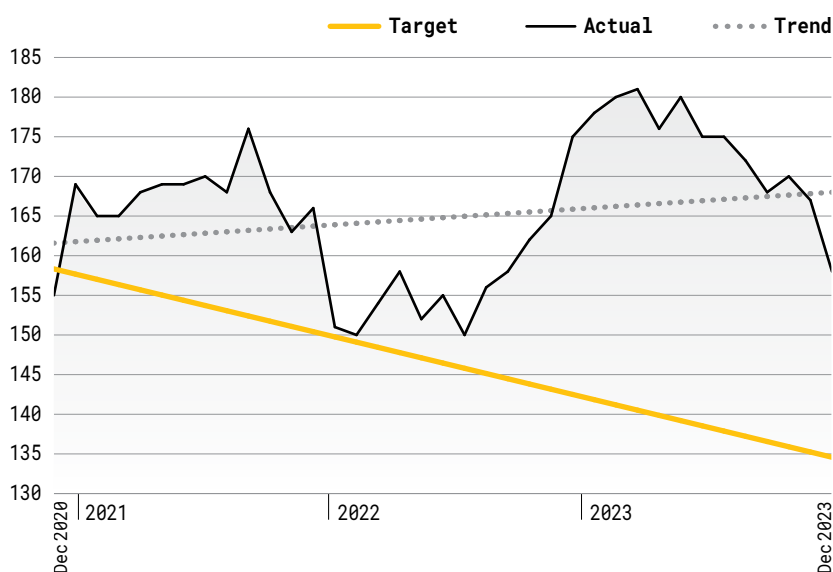
- In the 12 months to December 2023, 117 people died on South Australia's roads, up from 71 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 64.8 per cent increase in only 12 months.
- That's 35 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 82 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Analysis: States and territories

Western Australia deaths per annum

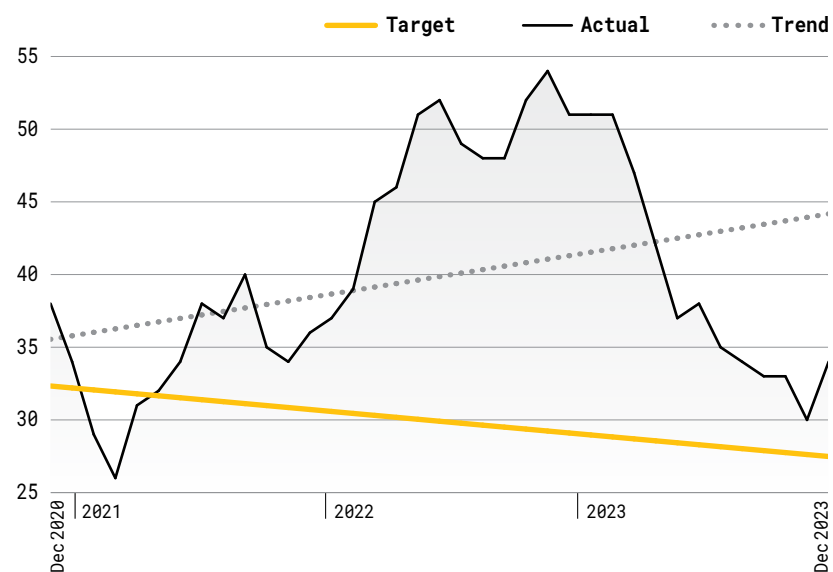
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 158 people died on Western Australia's roads, down from 175 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 9.7 per cent decrease.
- This figure is lower than Western Australia's 2021 road toll of 166 deaths but higher than the 155 road deaths recorded in 2020.
- The 2023 road toll is 23 more deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 135 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

Tasmania deaths per annum

RED

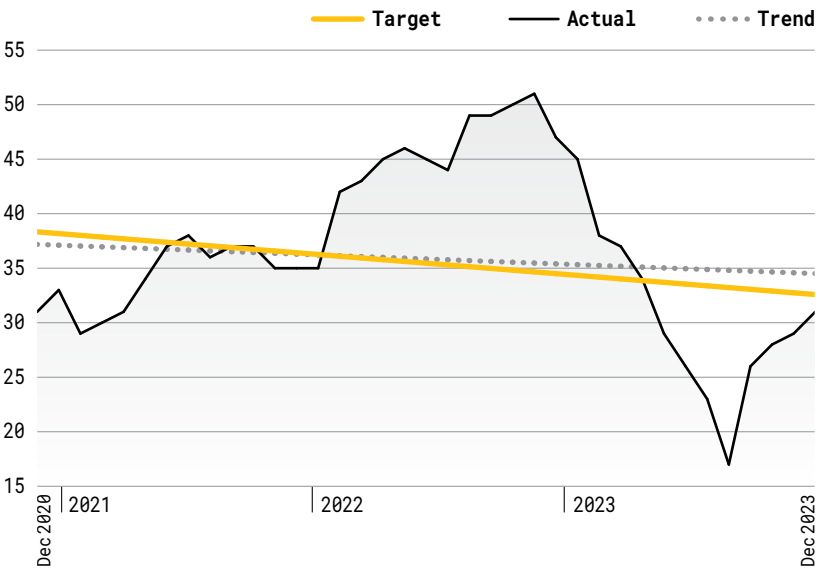


- In the 12 months to December 2023, 34 people died on Tasmania's roads, down from 51 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 33.3 per cent decrease from 2022.
- But it is only slightly lower than 2021's road toll of 36 deaths and 2020's 38 road fatalities.
- Tasmania's 2023 road toll is seven more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 27 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Northern Territory deaths per annum

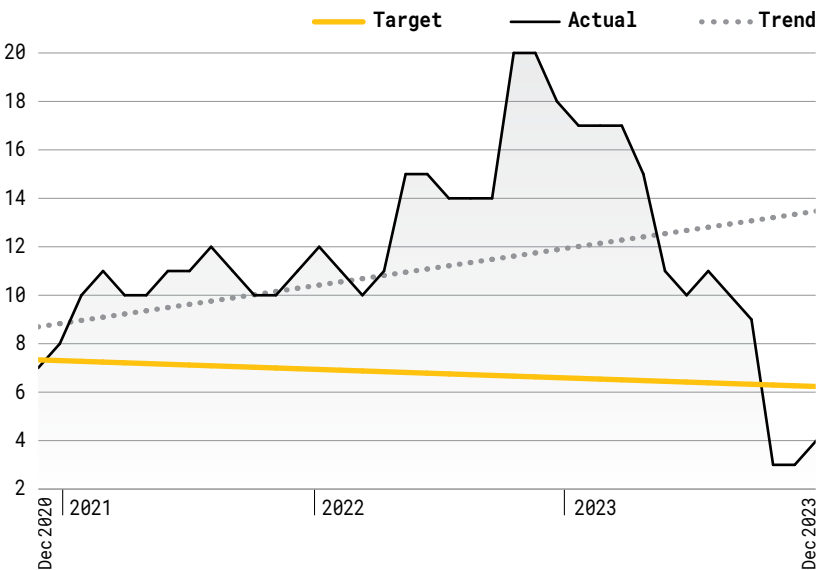
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 31 people died on the Northern Territory’s roads, down from 47 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 34.0 decrease per cent.
- But the improvement is less dramatic when compared to the NT’s 2021 and 2020 road tolls — 35 and 31 deaths respectively.
- The 2023 road toll is two fewer road deaths than the Territory’s notional pro rata target of no more than 33 deaths for this stage of the NRSS. However, a faster rate of improvement would be needed to meet the 2030 target.

Australian Capital Territory deaths per annum

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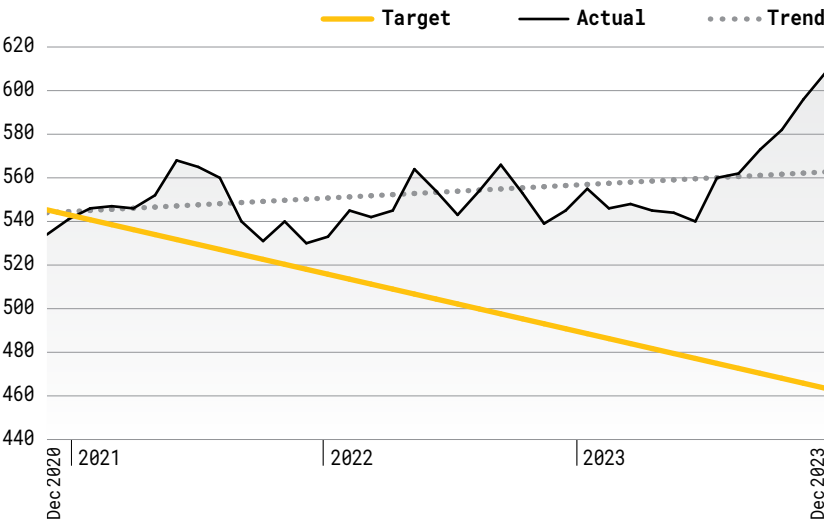
- In the 12 months to December 2023, four people died on the Australian Capital Territory’s roads, compared to 18 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 77.8 per cent decrease.
- It is two fewer road deaths than the ACT’s notional pro rata target of no more than six deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Analysis: Road user groups

Whilst the NRSS has no specific target reductions for individual road user groups, this report measures the progress in achieving a 50 per cent reduction in road deaths by 2030 among various road user groups by 2030 in line with the headline NRSS target.

Driver deaths per annum

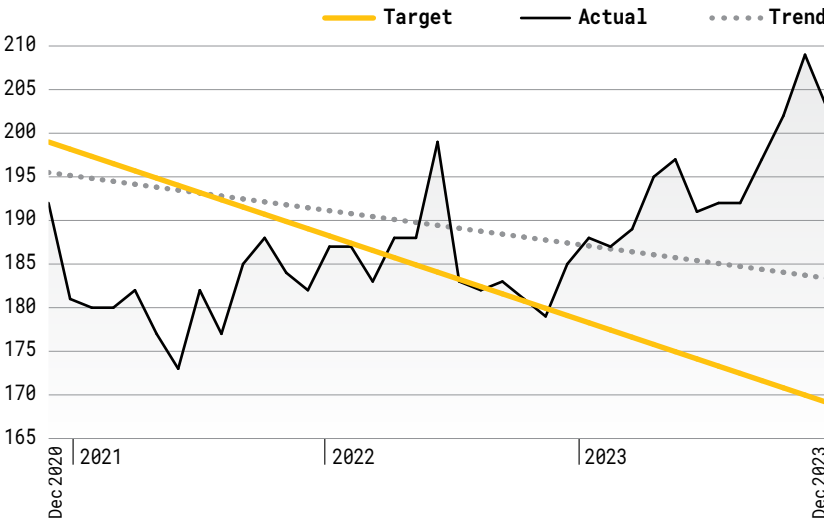
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 608 drivers died on Australian roads, up from 545 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an 11.6 per cent rise.

Passenger deaths per annum

RED



- In the 12 months to December 2023, 203 passengers died on Australian roads, up from 185 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 9.7 per cent increase.

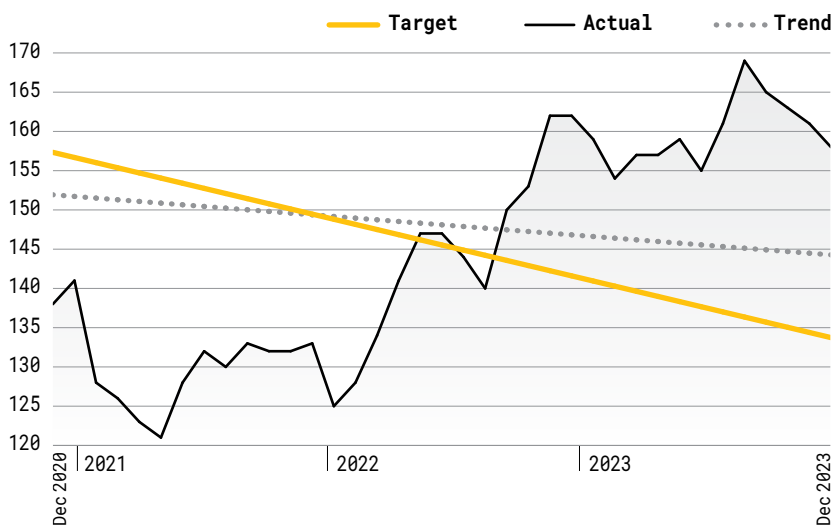


Section Three

Analysis: Road user groups

Pedestrian deaths per annum

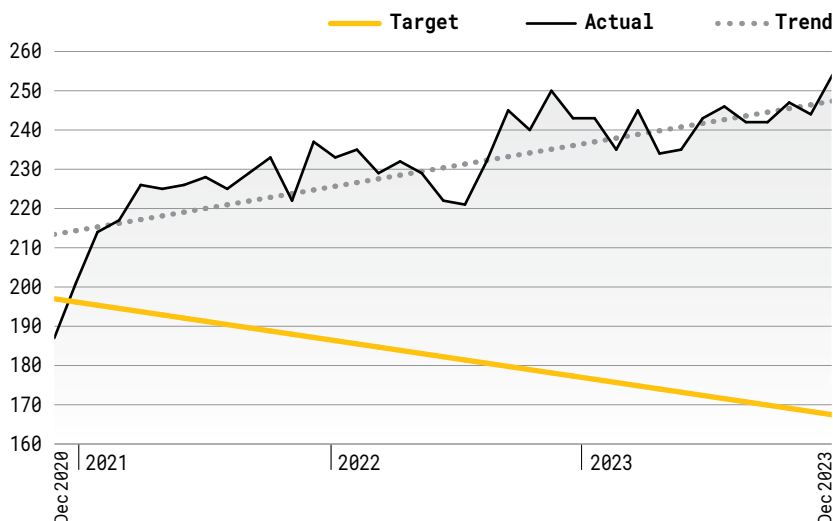
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- In the 12 months to December 2023, 158 pedestrians died on Australian roads, down from 162 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 2.5 per cent decrease.
- But it is worse than the pedestrian road deaths figures for 2021 and 2020—which were 133 and 138 deaths respectively.

Motorcyclist deaths per annum

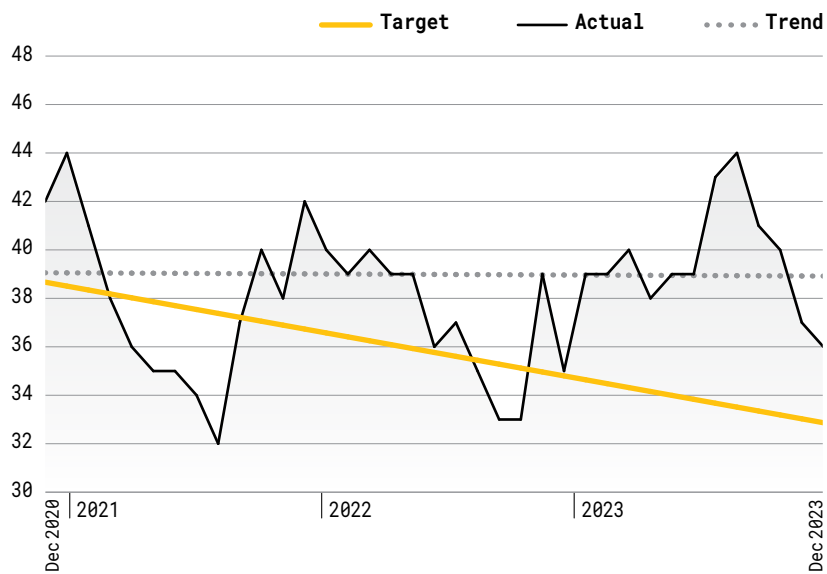
RED



- In the 12 months to December 2023, 254 motorcyclists died on Australian roads, up from 243 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 4.5 per cent rise.

Cyclist deaths per annum

RED



- In the 12 months to December 2023, 36 cyclists died on Australian roads, up from 35 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 2.9 per cent increase.

Analysis: Road deaths by population

Annual road deaths per 100,000 population (12 months to Dec 2023)

RED



The NRSS targets include an approximate 55 per cent reduction in the national fatality rate to less than two road deaths per 100,000 people. The data indicate Australia is not on track to achieve this target.

Fatality rates among individual states and territories are useful in helping determine 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: Potential lives saved

Annual road deaths per 100,000 population (12 months to Dec 2023)

	Current number of deaths	Current fatality rate per 100,000 population	Number of deaths at 4.21 per 100,000 population	Potential lives saved*
NSW	351	4.21	351	0
VIC	294	4.32	287	7
QLD	277	5.07	230	47
SA	117	6.32	78	39
WA	158	5.49	121	37
TAS	34	5.94	24	10
NT	31	12.28	11	20
ACT*	4	0.86	4	0
National	1,266	4.75	1,106	160

If the other jurisdictions had matched the NSW fatality rate of 4.21 per 100,000 population, 160 lives could have been saved across Australia in 2023:

- 7 in Victoria
- 47 in Queensland
- 39 in South Australia
- 37 in Western Australia
- 10 in Tasmania
- 20 in the Northern Territory

* For this analysis ACT is excluded when considering lowest fatality rate jurisdictions as its geography and mix of road types makes it unrepresentative of other states and territories.

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