



BENCHMARKING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

MARCH QUARTER 2024



Australian
Automobile
Association

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Key changes

Key changes since December 2023

In the 12 months to 31 March 2024, road deaths rose by 8.2 per cent compared to the previous corresponding period—1,286 deaths up from 1,188 deaths in the 12 months to 31 March 2023.

Road fatalities fell by 5.6 per cent from the December quarter (339 deaths) to the March quarter (320 deaths). But this must be seen in context, as the second half of 2023 saw 681 road deaths recorded. This makes the six months to December 2023 the deadliest consecutive quarters on Australian roads since the first half of 2010.

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

The unavailability of data 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	Red	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.

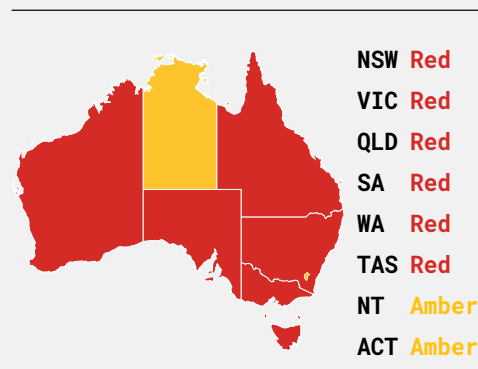
Red

Road crash deaths are above the pro rata NRSS target.

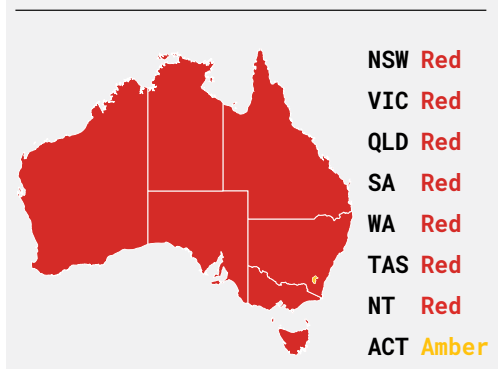
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NRSS target progress cannot be measured due to a lack of data availability.

Previous: Jurisdictional status



Current: Jurisdictional status



User groups

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

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

Australia's road deaths: March 2024

Road fatalities surge as data remains hidden

In the 12 months to 31 March 2024, 1,286 people died on Australian roads. That's 98 deaths more than in the previous corresponding period—a rise of 8.2 per cent.

The growing national toll was driven by big increases in NSW (33.3 per cent), Victoria (13.2 per cent), Queensland (3.6 per cent), South Australia (4.2 per cent) and the Northern Territory (21.6 per cent).

The last 12-month period with a similar number of road deaths was the 2016 calendar year, which had 1,294 fatalities.

These latest figures confirm that the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030 is veering further off-track from achieving its target of halving road deaths by 2030. In the 12 months to the end of March, Australia's annual road deaths were 17.2 per cent higher than when the strategy began and were 34.5 per cent above the trajectory they should be following to achieve the 2030 road deaths target.

Unfortunately, the NRSS is more of a wishlist than a real plan, and governments will not take the steps needed to make it effective. Three of the strategy's five headline targets remain either unmeasured or unreported—a problem identified early in the life of the NRSS 2011–2020 that remains unrectified more than a decade later. And governments continue to withhold crucial data that could reveal the causes of our rising road deaths.

Every state and territory government has valuable data on road quality assessments, crash causes, and the effectiveness of law enforcement measures, including involvement of speeding, drink driving, drugged driving, and mobile phone use in crashes. But they do not make this data 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 agree governments must share data to reduce road deaths.



Michael Bradley

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Section One

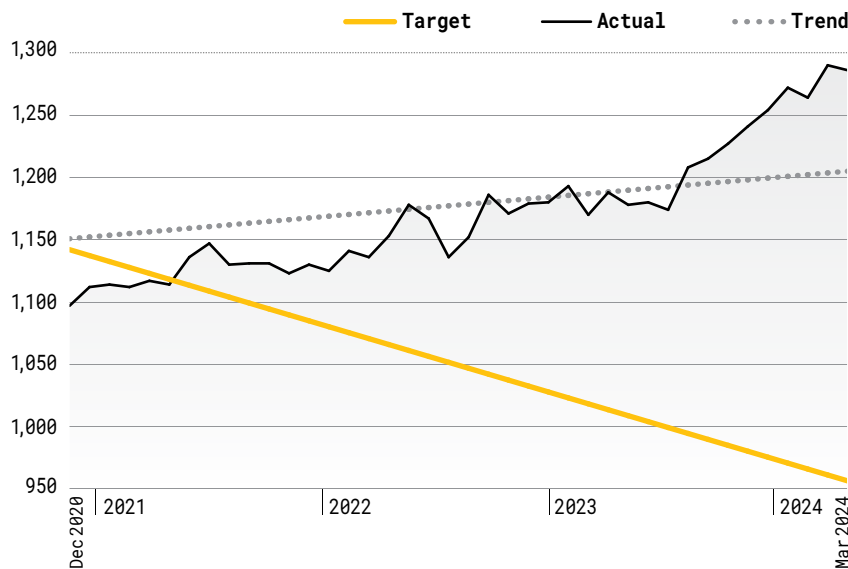
National overview

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. Trend lines 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

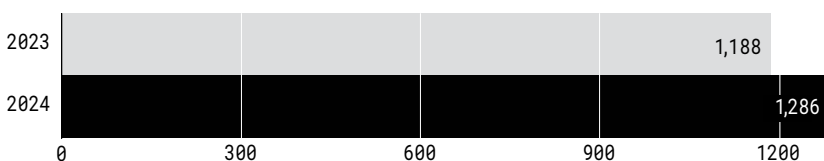
RED



In the 12 months ended March 2024, 1,286 people died on Australian roads. That is 12.6 per cent higher than the NRSS baseline, and 17.2 per cent higher than the 12-month road deaths to December 2020.

The latest 12-monthly figure is 330 more road deaths than the notional pro rata target of no more than 956 fatalities, which would have been the road toll in the 12 months to March 2024 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 March 2024 were 8.2 per cent higher than in the previous corresponding period.

Road deaths by state and territory

State/ Territory	Road deaths 12 months to 31 March 2023	Road deaths 12 months to 31 March 2024	Change	Difference from NRSS March 2024 pro rata target*
NSW	273	364	33.3%	30.9%
VIC	257	291	13.2%	50.8%
QLD	280	290	3.6%	40.1%
SA	95	99	4.2%	22.2%
WA	181	162	-10.5%	21.8%
TAS	48	31	-35.4%	14.8%
NT	37	45	21.6%	40.6%
ACT	17	4	-76.5%	-33.3%
Australia	1,188	1,286	8.2%	34.5%

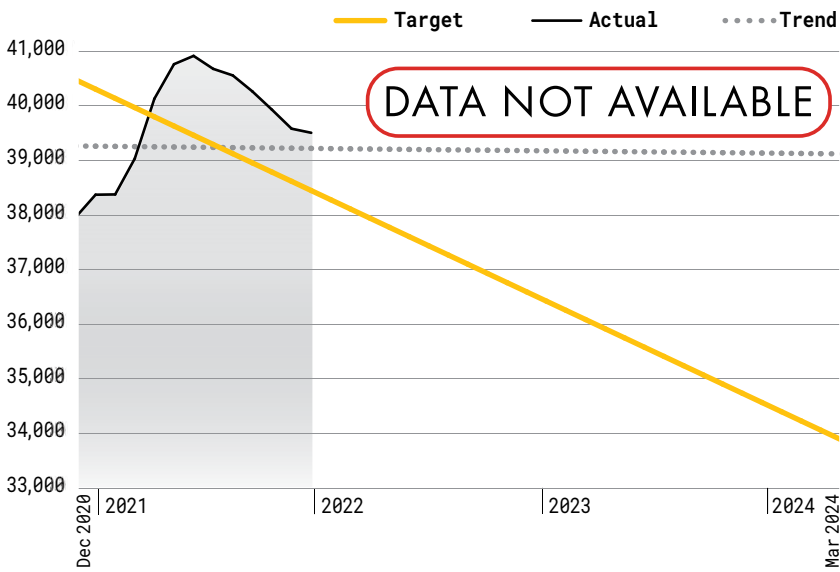
* The notional target for the 12 months to 31 March 2024 if the NRSS was on a smooth trajectory towards its 2030 target. (Source: Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics Australian Road Deaths Database, accessed 15 April 2024.)

Section One

National overview

National serious injuries per annum

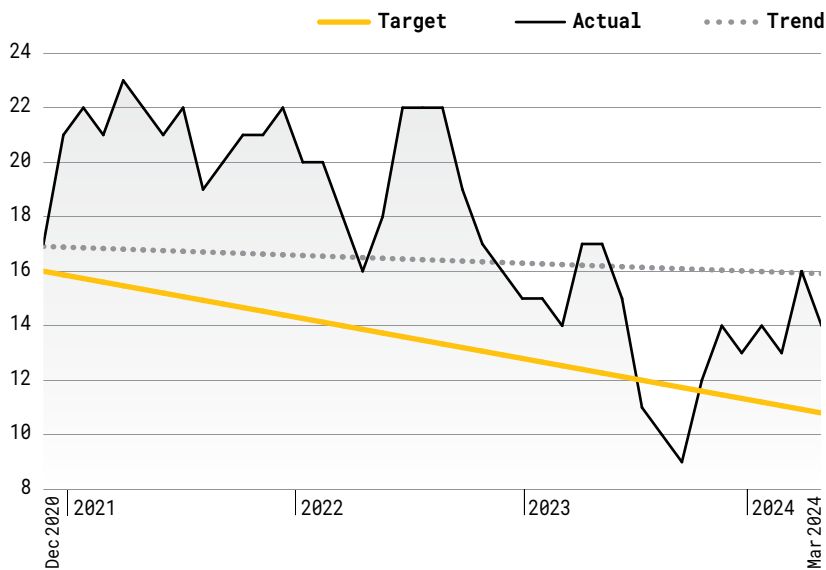
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Limited data availability makes it impossible to track the incidence of serious injuries—let alone progress on this target—since 2021.

Children (seven years and under) deaths per annum

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In the 12 months ended March 2024, 14 children (seven years and under) died on Australian roads, down from 17 deaths in the previous corresponding period.

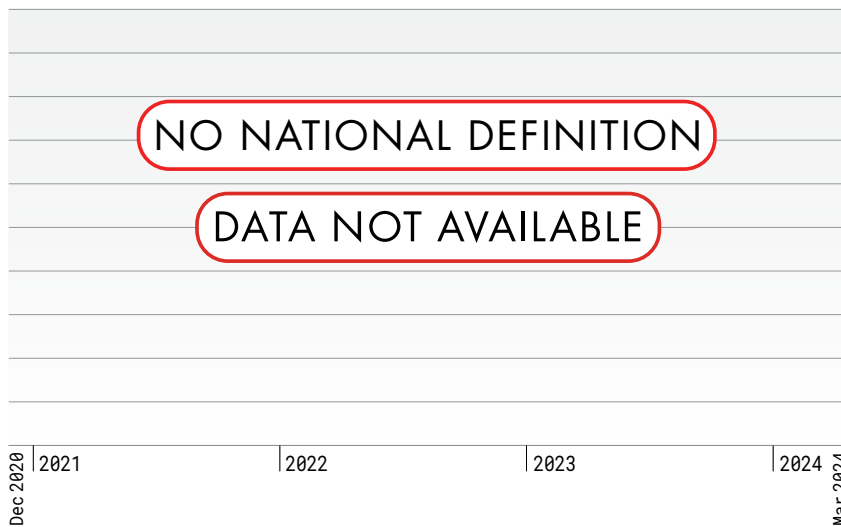
This is a 17.6 per cent decline.

Since the NRSS 2021–2030 began, deaths in this category have decreased by 12.5 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

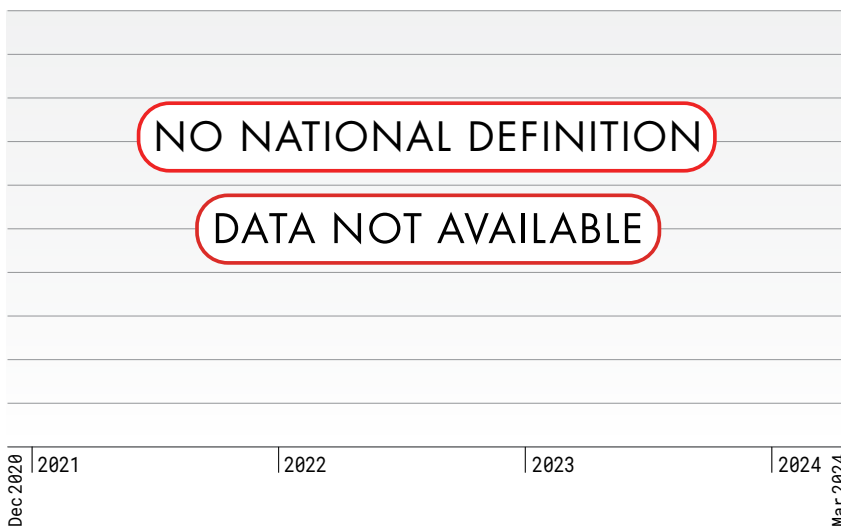
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The relevant data is unavailable, and Australia has no national definition of city CBD areas. Therefore, it is impossible to track road deaths in city CBDs and the progress towards the target.

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.

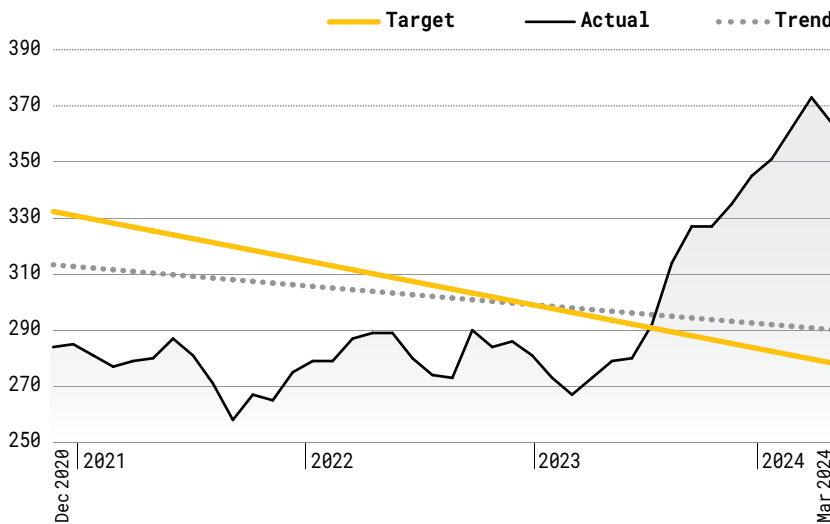
Section Two

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

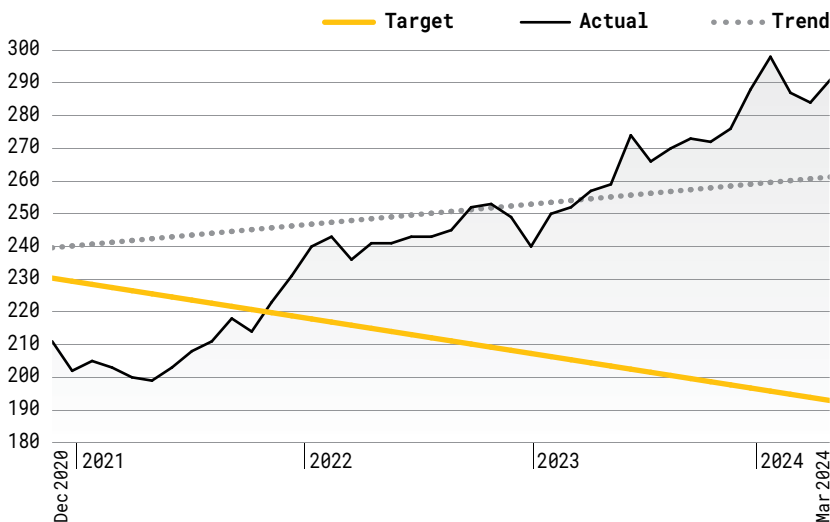
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 364 people died on New South Wales roads, compared to 273 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an increase of 33.3 per cent in only 12 months.
- That is 86 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 278 for this stage of the NRSS.

Victoria deaths per annum

RED

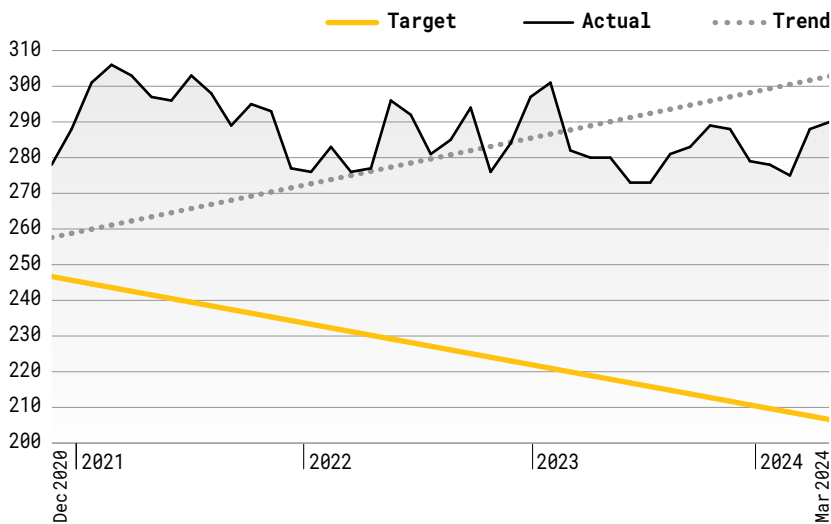


- In the 12 months to March 2024, 291 people died on Victoria's roads, up from 257 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a rise of 13.2 per cent.
- It is 98 more road deaths than the pro rata target of no more than 193 for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Queensland deaths per annum

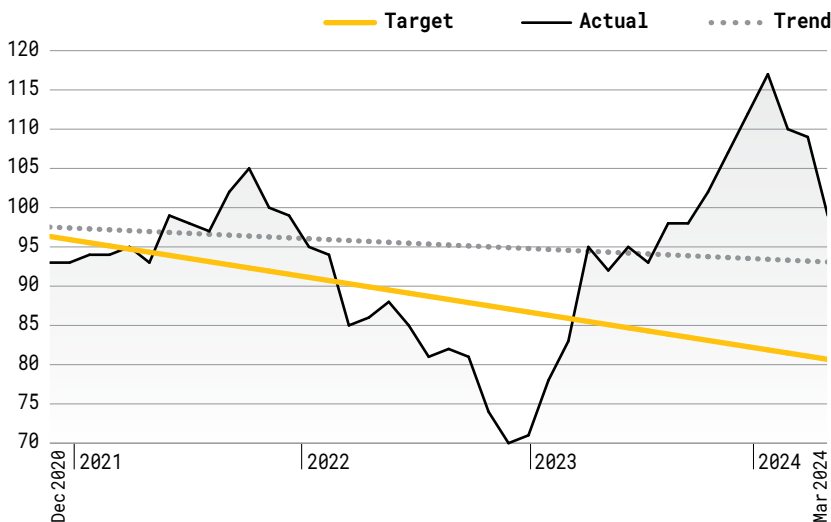
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 290 people died on Queensland roads, up from 280 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an increase of 3.6 per cent.
- Queensland's road toll is 83 more deaths than its notional pro rata target of no more than 207 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

South Australia deaths per annum

RED



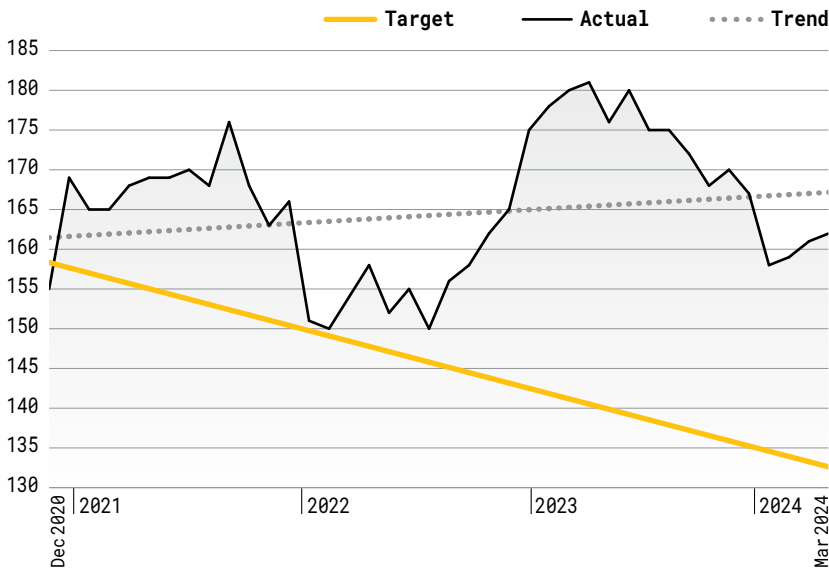
- In the 12 months to March 2024, 99 people died on South Australia's roads, up from 95 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 4.2 per cent increase.
- That's 18 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 81 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Analysis: States and territories

Western Australia deaths per annum

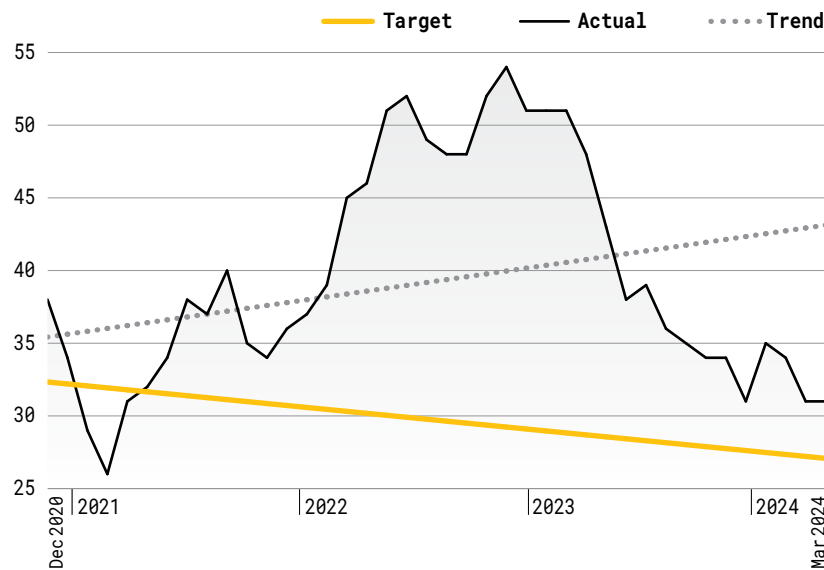
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 162 people died on Western Australia’s roads, down from 181 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a decline of 10.5 per cent.
- The road toll is 29 more deaths than the state’s notional pro rata target of no more than 133 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

Tasmania deaths per annum

RED

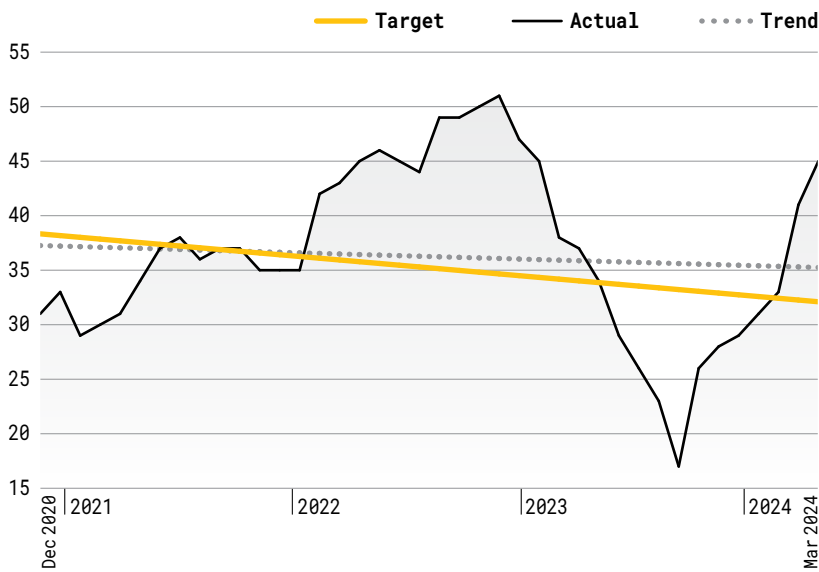


- In the 12 months to March 2024, 31 people died on Tasmania’s roads, down from 48 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 35.4 per cent decrease from the previous corresponding period.
- Tasmania’s road toll is four more deaths than the state’s notional pro rata target of no more than 27 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Section Two

Northern Territory deaths per annum

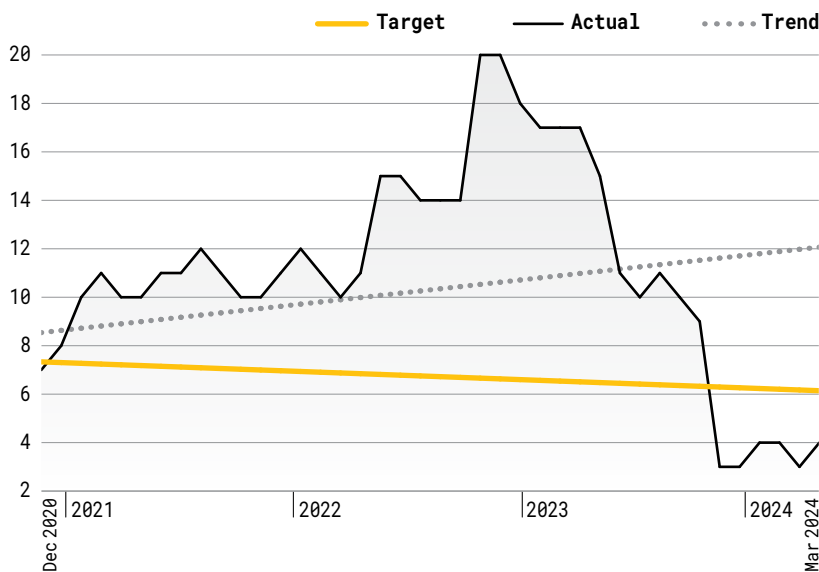
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 45 people died on the Northern Territory's roads, up from 37 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a rise of 21.6 per cent.
- The Territory's road toll is 13 more deaths than its notional pro rata target of no more than 32 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Australian Capital Territory deaths per annum

AMBER



- In the 12 months to March 2024, four people died on the Australian Capital Territory's roads, compared to 17 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 76.5 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.

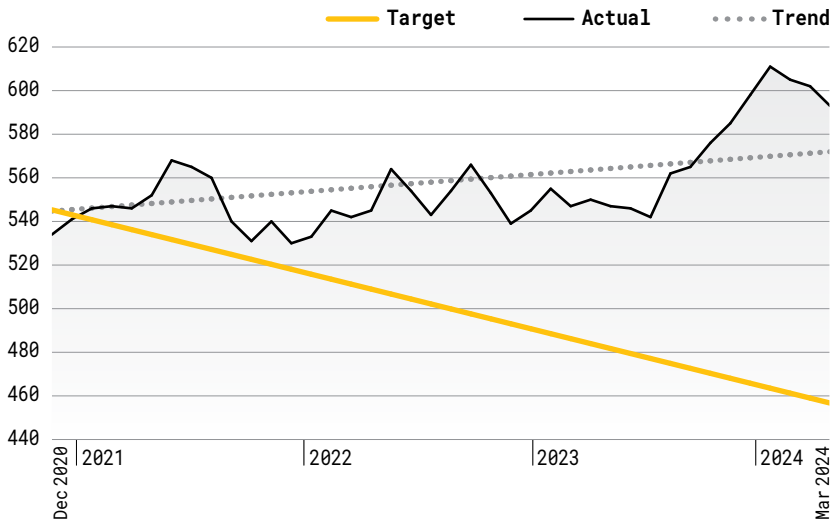
Section Three

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

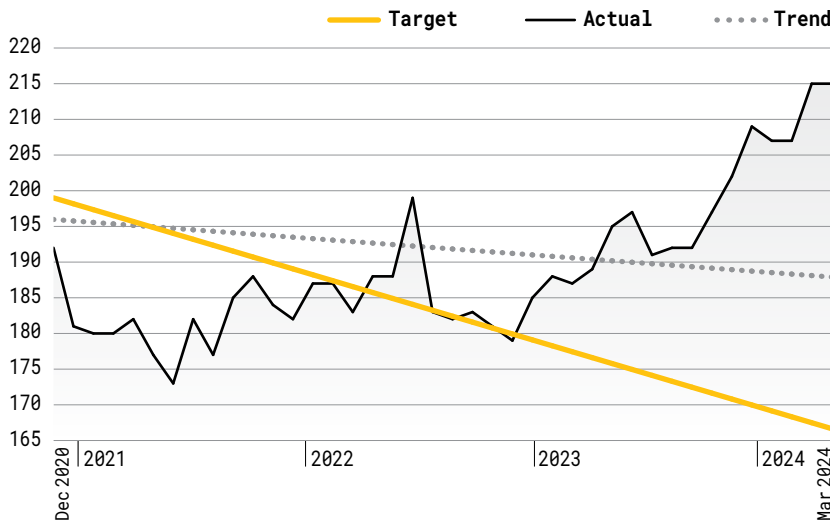
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 593 drivers died on Australian roads, up from 550 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 7.8 per cent rise.

Passenger deaths per annum

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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 215 passengers died on Australian roads, up from 189 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 13.8 per cent increase.

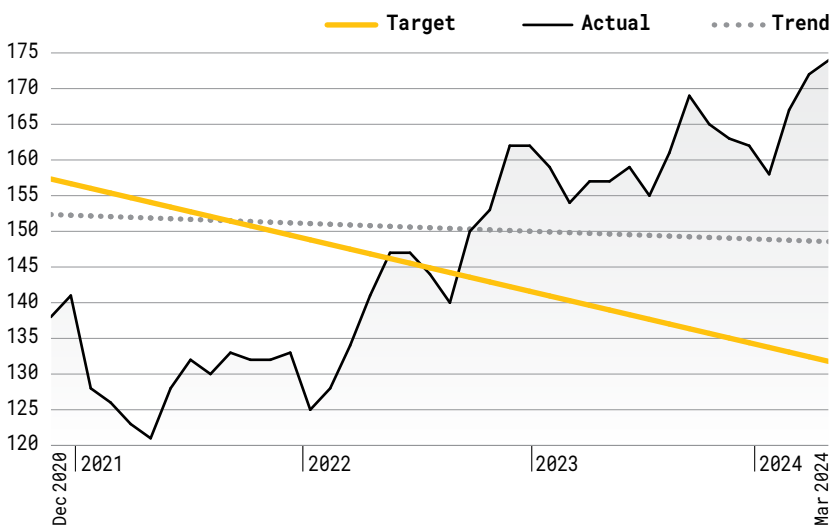


Section Three

Analysis: Road user groups

Pedestrian deaths per annum

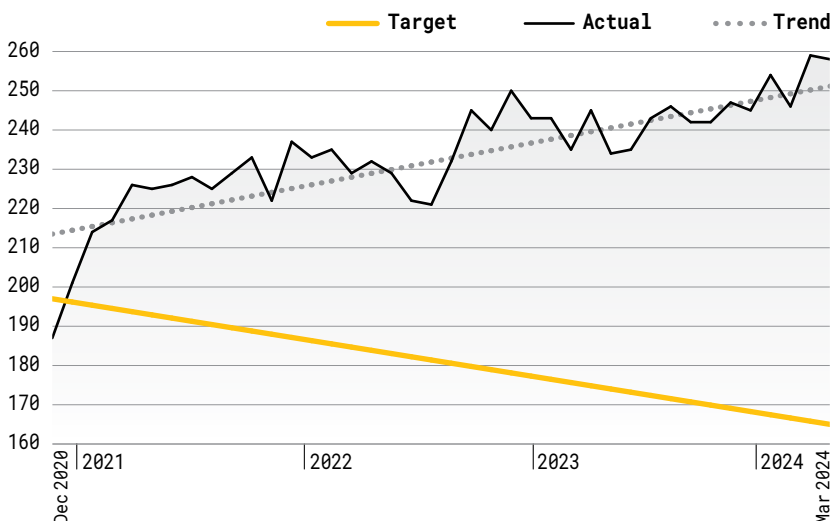
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 174 pedestrians died on Australian roads, up from 157 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 10.8 per cent increase.

Motorcyclist deaths per annum

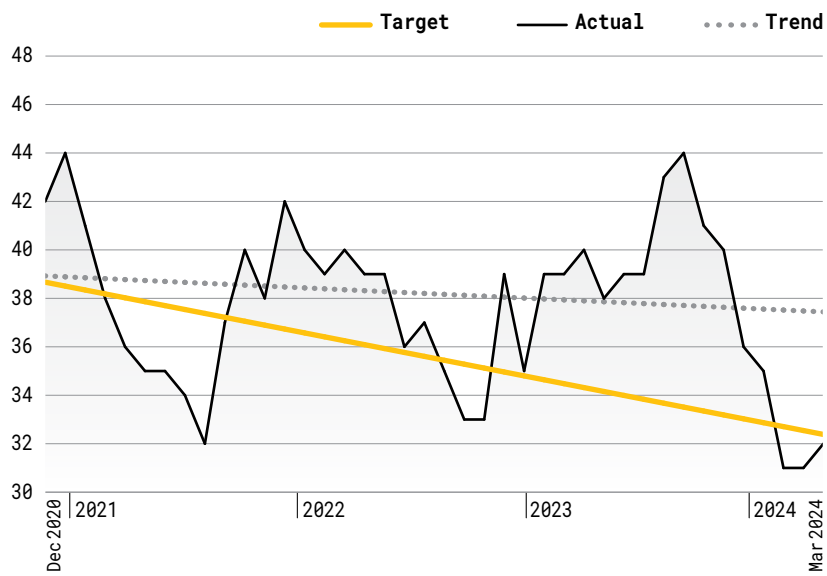
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- In the 12 months to March 2024, 258 motorcyclists died on Australian roads, up from 245 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 5.3 per cent rise.

Cyclist deaths per annum

AMBER



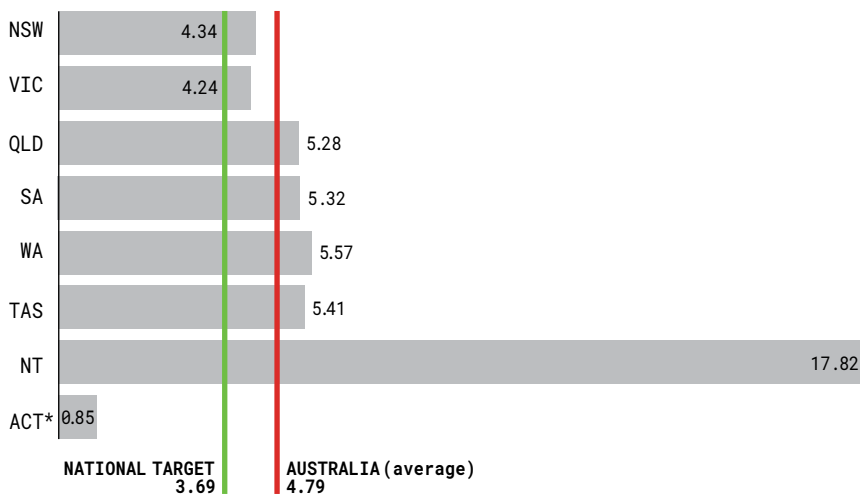
- In the 12 months to March 2024, 32 cyclists died on Australian roads, down from 40 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 20.0 per cent decrease.

Section Four

Analysis: Road deaths by population

Annual road deaths per 100,000 population (12 months to Mar 2024)

RED



The NRSS targets include an approximate 55 per cent reduction in the national fatality rate fewer 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 Mar 2024)

	Current number of deaths	Current fatality rate per 100,000 population	Number of deaths at 4.24 per 100,000 population	Potential lives saved*
NSW	364	4.34	356	8
VIC	291	4.24	291	0
QLD	290	5.28	233	57
SA	99	5.32	79	20
WA	162	5.57	123	39
TAS	31	5.41	24	7
NT	45	17.82	11	34
ACT*	4	0.85	4	0
National	1,286	4.79	1,121	165

If all other jurisdictions (excluding the ACT) had matched the VIC fatality rate of 4.24 per 100,000 population, 165 lives could have been saved across Australia in the 12 months to March 2024.

- 8 in New South Wales
- 57 in Queensland
- 20 in South Australia
- 39 in Western Australia
- 7 in Tasmania
- 34 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 Australian states and territories.

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