

Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy March Quarter 2026



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In 2021, Australia's federal, state and territory governments agreed to the 10-year National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30 with new life-saving targets.

The NRSS has five headline targets that it aims to achieve by 2030:

- reducing road deaths by 50 per cent from a 2018–2020 baseline
- reducing serious injuries by 30 per cent from a 2018–2020 baseline
- zero road deaths of children aged seven years and under
- zero road deaths in city CBD areas zero road deaths on all national highways and on high-speed roads covering 80 per cent of travel across the network.

Key changes since December 2025

In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, road deaths were 3.0 per cent higher than in the previous corresponding period – 1,326 deaths, up from 1,287 deaths.

Road fatalities fell by 4.5 per cent from the December 2025 quarter (335 deaths) to the March 2026 quarter (320 deaths).

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 (7 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.

Black

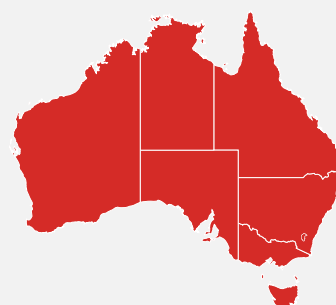
NRSS target progress cannot be measured due to a lack of data availability.

Previous: Jurisdictional status



NSW	Red
VIC	Red
QLD	Red
SA	Red
WA	Red
TAS	Red
NT	Red
ACT	Red

Current: Jurisdictional status



NSW	Red
VIC	Red
QLD	Red
SA	Red
WA	Red
TAS	Red
NT	Red
ACT	Red

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 headline targets by 2030.

Australia's road deaths: March 2026

The federal government must use its 2026 Budget to fund a pilot study for no-blame investigations into road deaths.

Australia's National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30 aims to halve road deaths through the decade to 2030. Yet more than halfway through its lifespan, the March 2026 12-month road toll is 20.9 per cent higher than when the strategy began.

In the 12 months to 31 December 2026, 1,326 people died on Australian roads. This is 3 per cent higher than in the previous corresponding period.

This was the 34th consecutive month that the 12-month road deaths total rose. The last time it was lower than in the previous corresponding period was May 2023.

No state or territory is on track to meet its NRSS targets.

The numbers in this report show Australia's current approach to road safety and trauma reduction is simply not working. They underscore the nation's need for a more data-driven approach to a crisis that kills more Australians every year.

The Commonwealth conducts no-blame investigations of aviation, rail, and maritime incidents. It must use the upcoming federal Budget to extend these powers to also assess the factors driving ongoing increases in road deaths.

The government could start by funding a targeted pilot focusing on one of the road safety issues of greatest concern, such as fatalities involving heavy vehicles, pedestrians or e-mobility devices.

Lessons from a pilot project would not only show how no-blame investigations can help identify the underlying causes of road crashes, but also what could be done to reduce future deaths and injuries.

Reducing road trauma requires better roads, regulatory change and public education campaigns. All of these would be better targeted, more evidence-based, and more effective if informed by a national no-blame investigation approach. The federal Budget must not ignore this opportunity to save Australian lives.



Michael Bradley

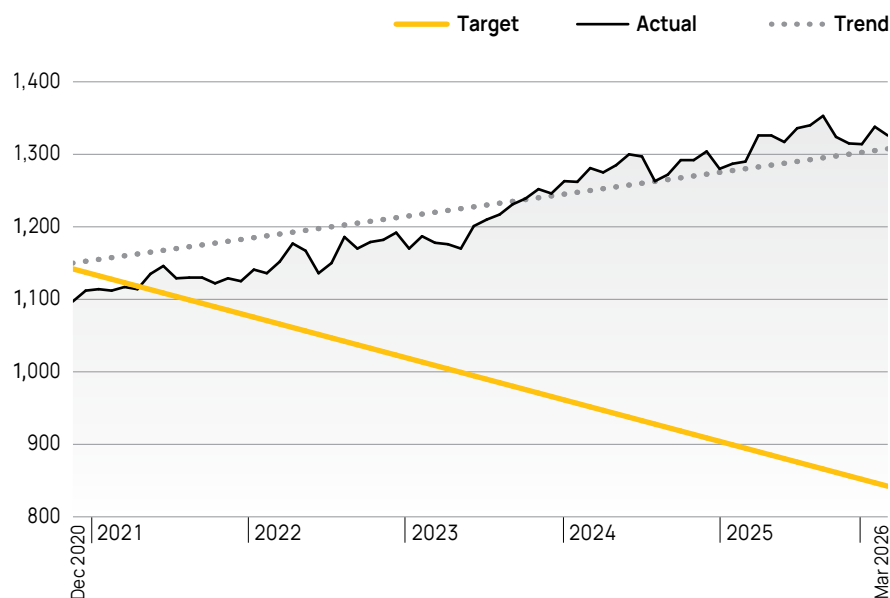
Managing Director
Australian Automobile
Association

National overview

The federal, state and territory governments have endorsed the NRSS 2021–30. 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 and injuries 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

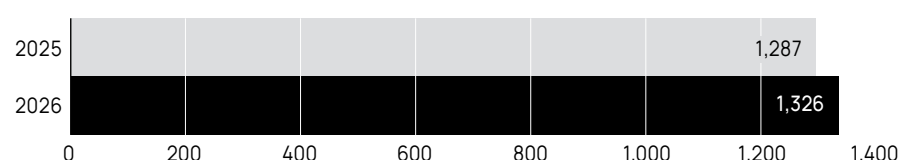


RED

In the 12 months ending 31 March 2026, 1,326 people died on Australian roads. That is 16.1 per cent higher than the NRSS baseline (1,142 deaths), and 20.9 per cent higher than the 12-month road deaths to 31 December 2020.

The latest 12-monthly figure is 484 more road deaths than the notional pro rata target of no more than 842 fatalities, which would have been the road toll in the 12 months to March 2026 if the NRSS was following a smooth trajectory towards its 2030 target.

Comparative performance: Road deaths in the past 12 months

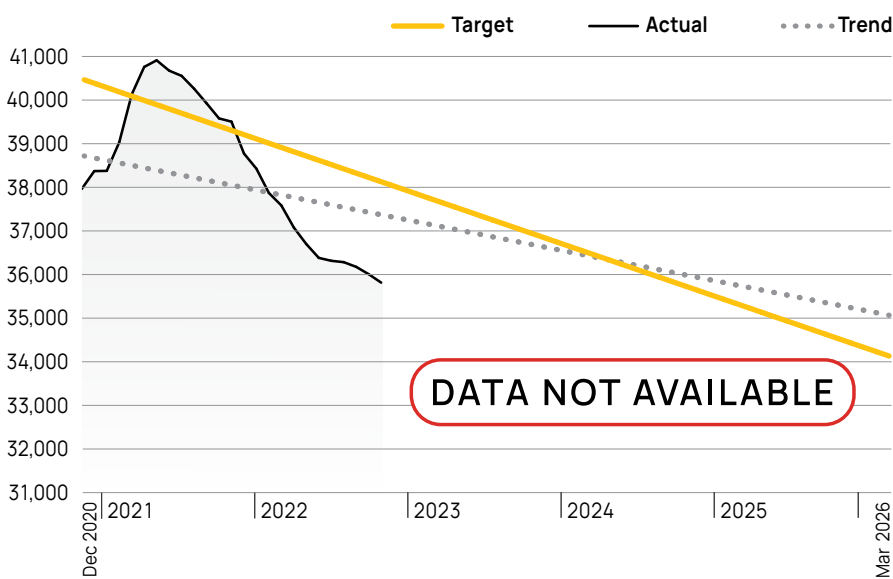


National road deaths for the 12 months ending March 2026 were 3.0 per cent higher than in the previous corresponding period.

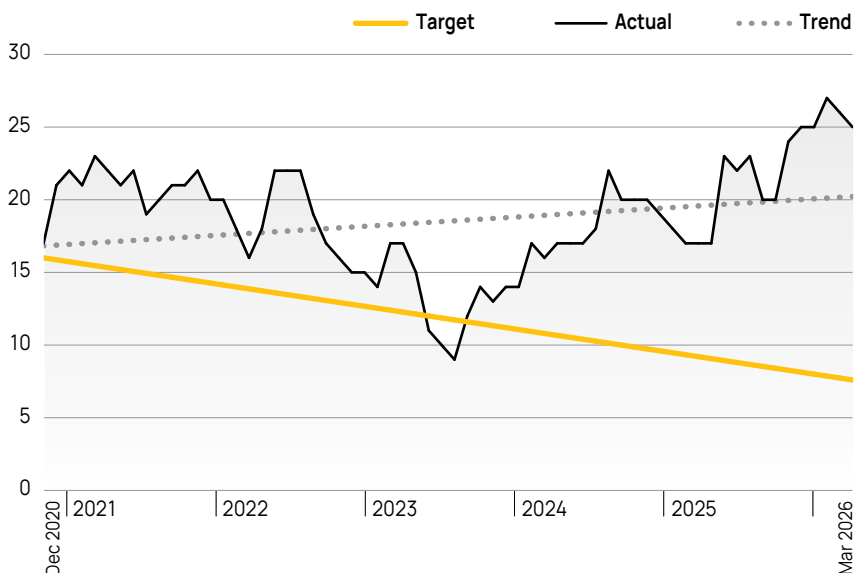
Road deaths by state and territory

Jurisdiction	Road deaths 12 months to 31 March 2025	Road deaths 12 months to 31 March 2026	Change	% change	Difference from NRSS March 2026 pro rata target*
NSW	334	365	31	9.3%	49.0%
VIC	286	276	-10	-3.5%	62.4%
QLD	290	322	32	11.0%	76.9%
SA	89	95	6	6.7%	33.8%
WA	194	175	-19	-9.8%	49.6%
TAS	34	44	10	29.4%	83.3%
NT	48	36	-12	-25.0%	28.6%
ACT	12	13	1	8.3%	160.0%
Australia	1,287	1,326	39	3.0%	57.5%

* The notional target for the 12 months to 31 March 2025 if the NRSS was on a smooth trajectory towards its 2030 target. (Source: National Road Safety Data Hub, accessed 17 April 2026)

National serious injuries per annum**BLACK**

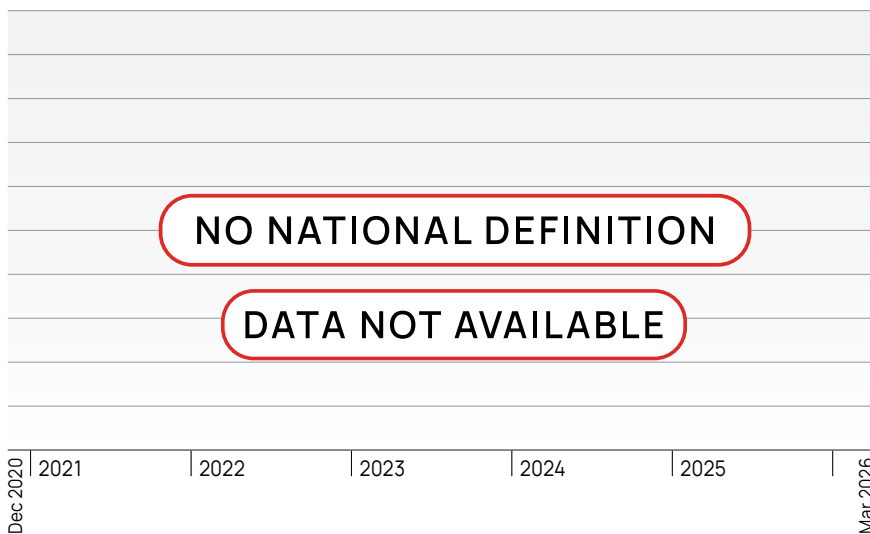
Limited data availability makes it impossible to track the incidence of serious injuries – let alone progress on this target – since 2022.

Children (seven years and under) deaths per annum**RED**

In the 12 months ended 31 March 2026, 25 children (seven years and under) died on Australian roads. This is an increase from 17 deaths in the previous corresponding period, a 47.1% increase

Deaths in this category are higher than they were when the NRSS 2021–30 began. The latest 12-monthly figure is 17 deaths more than the notional pro rata target for this stage of the NRSS, which is no more than eight deaths.

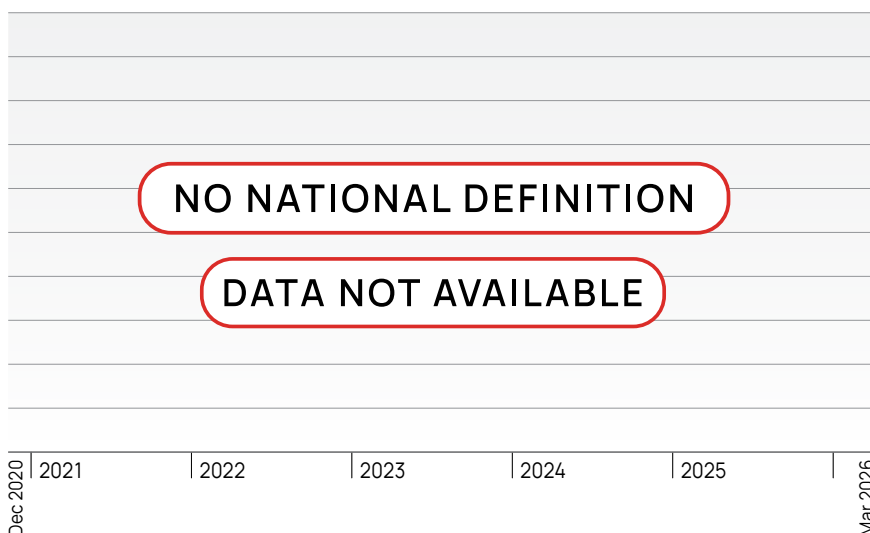
City CBD area deaths per annum



BLACK

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

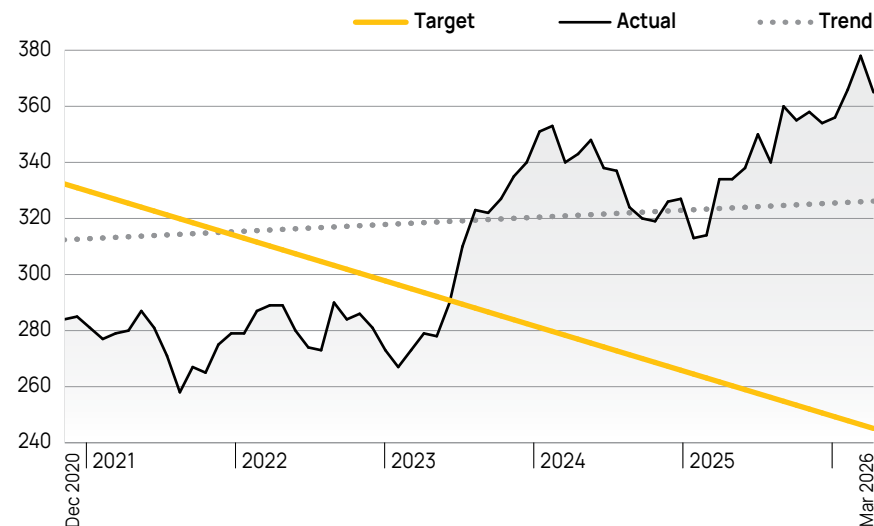
It is not possible to track road deaths on all national highways and high-speed roads covering 80 per cent of travel across the network. The relevant data is unavailable and there is no national definition of national highways and high-speed roads.

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.

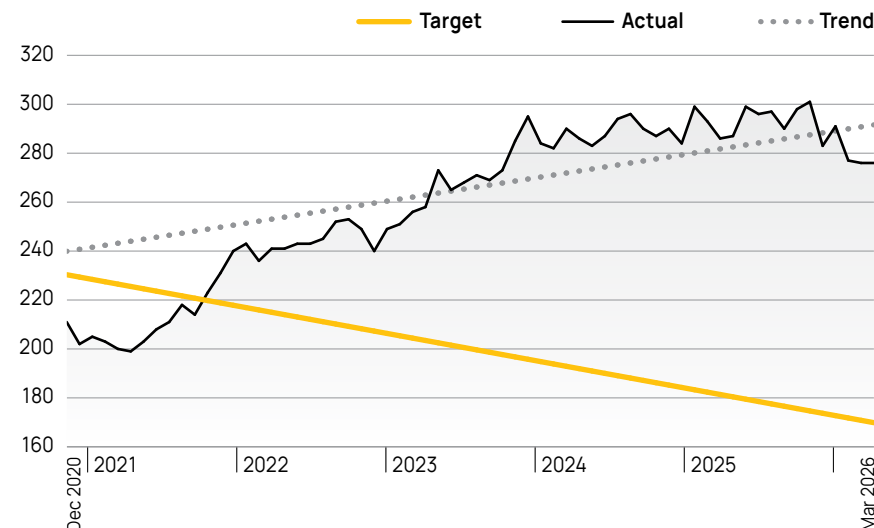
New South Wales deaths per annum



RED

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 365 people died on New South Wales roads, 31 more than in the previous corresponding period – a 9.3 per cent increase.
- This is 120 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 245 for this stage of the NRSS.

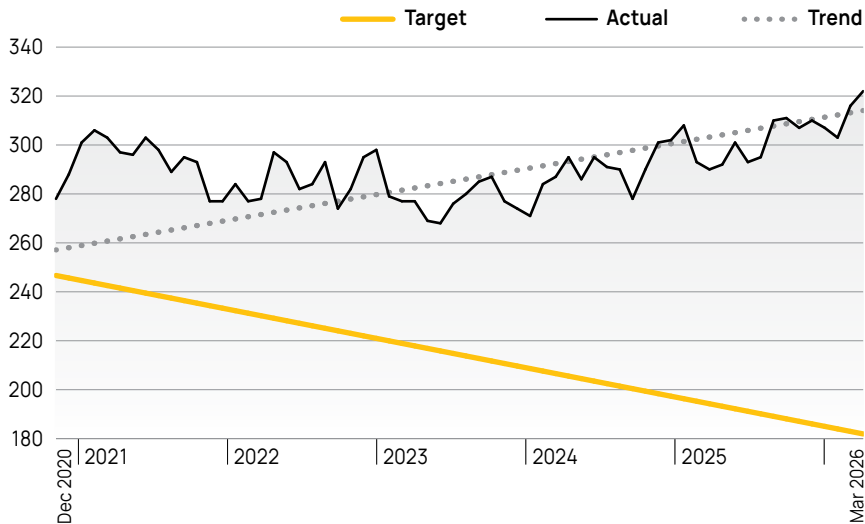
Victoria deaths per annum



RED

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 276 people died on Victoria's roads, down from 286 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 3.5 per cent decrease, and it is 106 more road deaths than the pro rata target of no more than 170 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

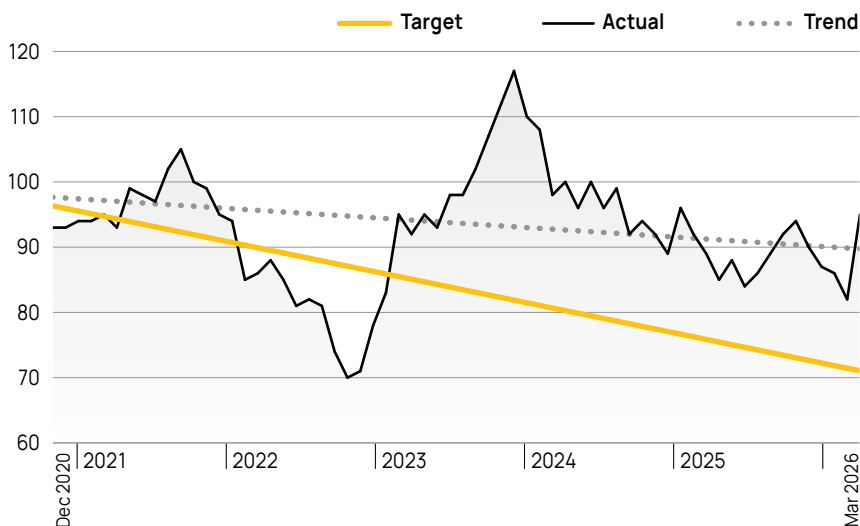
Queensland deaths per annum



RED

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 322 people died on Queensland roads, up from 290 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an 11.0 per cent increase.
- Queensland's 12-month road toll is 140 more deaths than its notional pro rata target of no more than 182 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

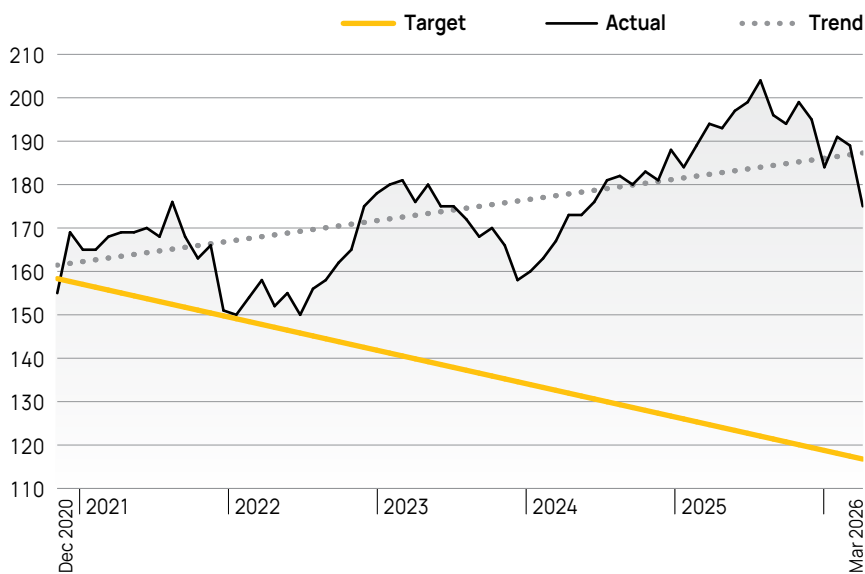
South Australia deaths per annum



RED

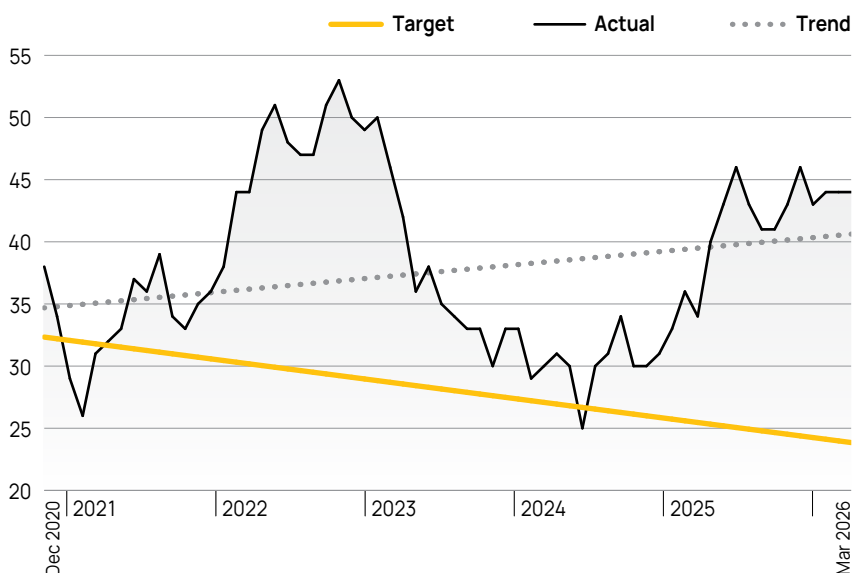
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 95 people died on South Australia's roads, a 6.7 per cent increase from 89 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is 24 more road deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 71 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Western Australia deaths per annum

**RED**

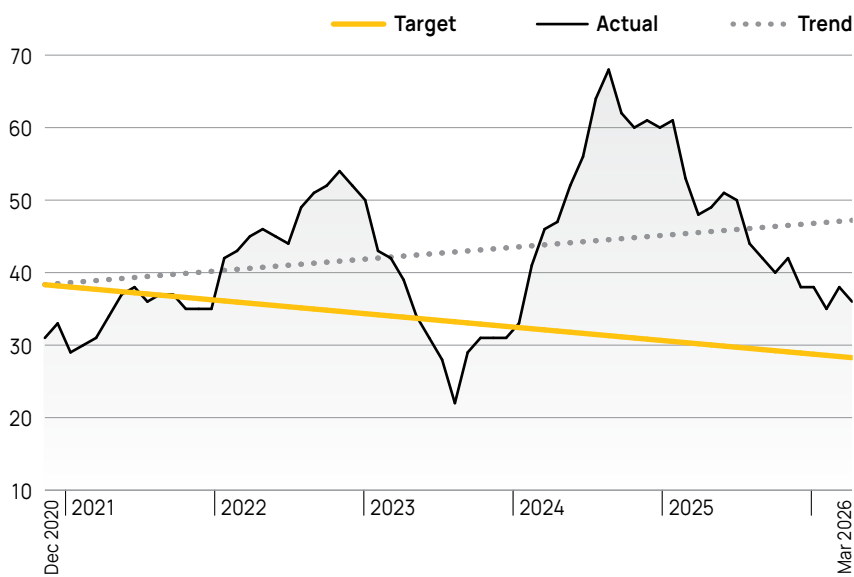
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 175 people died on Western Australia's roads – down from 194 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 9.8 per cent decrease.
- WA's road toll for this period is 58 more deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 117 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

Tasmania deaths per annum

**RED**

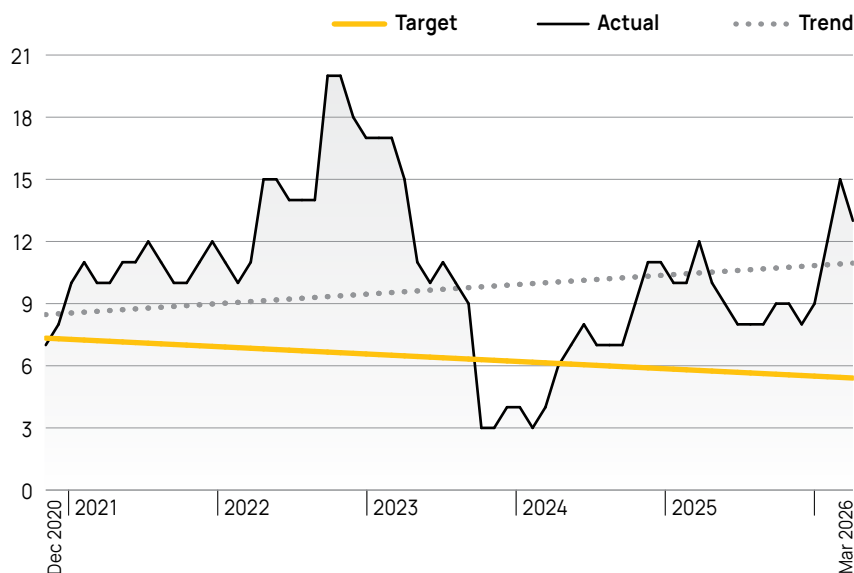
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 44 people died on Tasmania's roads – up from 34 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 29.4 per cent increase.
- Tasmania's 12-month road toll is 20 more deaths than the state's notional pro rata target of no more than 24 fatalities for this stage of the NRSS.

Northern Territory deaths per annum

**RED**

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 36 people died on the Northern Territory's roads – down from 48 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 25.0 per cent decrease.
- But the Territory's road toll for 2025 is eight more road deaths than its notional pro rata target of no more than 28 deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Australian Capital Territory deaths per annum

**RED**

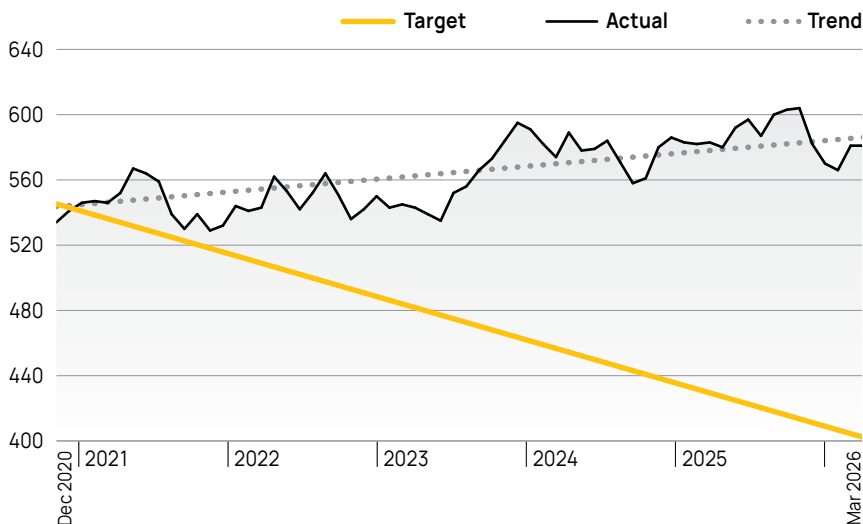
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 13 people died on the Australian Capital Territory's roads, up from 12 deaths in the previous corresponding period, an 8.3 per cent increase.
- This is eight more road deaths than the ACT's notional pro rata target of no more than five deaths for this stage of the NRSS.

Analysis:

Road user groups

While 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 in line with the headline NRSS target.

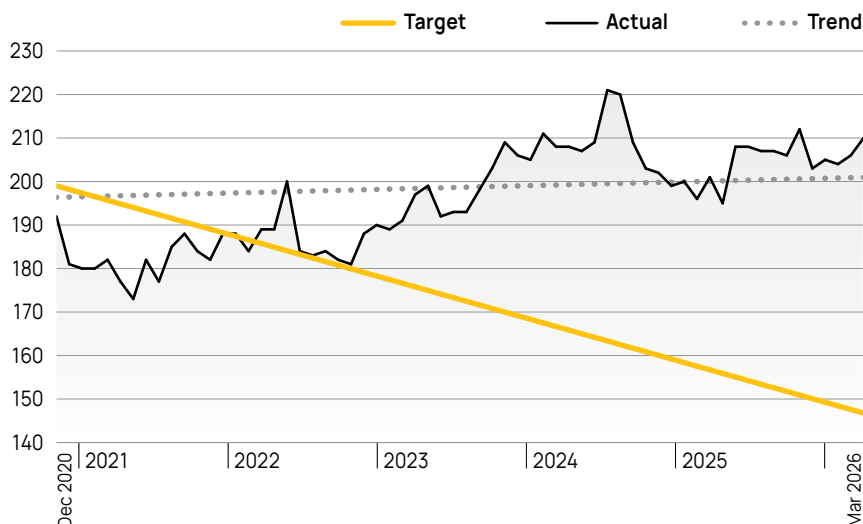
Driver deaths per annum



RED

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 581 drivers died on Australian roads — down from 583 deaths in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 0.3 per cent decrease.

Passenger deaths per annum

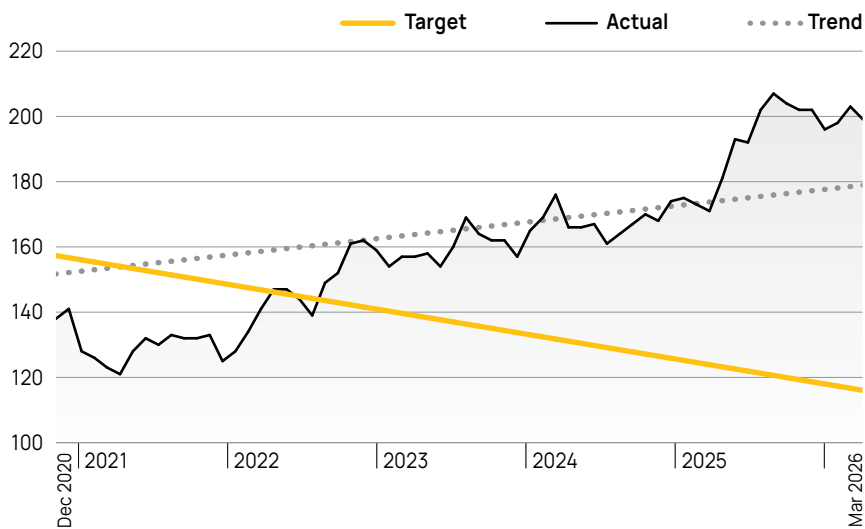


RED

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 210 passengers died on Australian roads — up from 201 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 4.5 per cent increase.



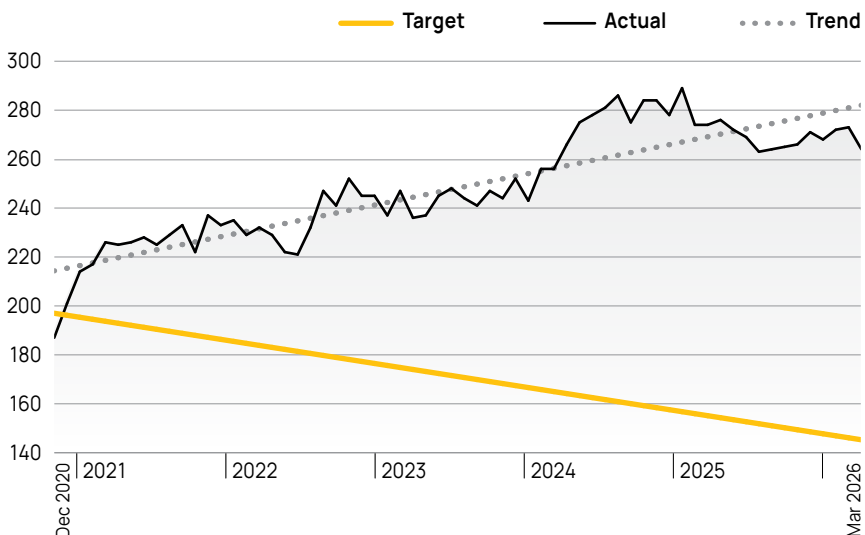
Pedestrian deaths per annum



RED

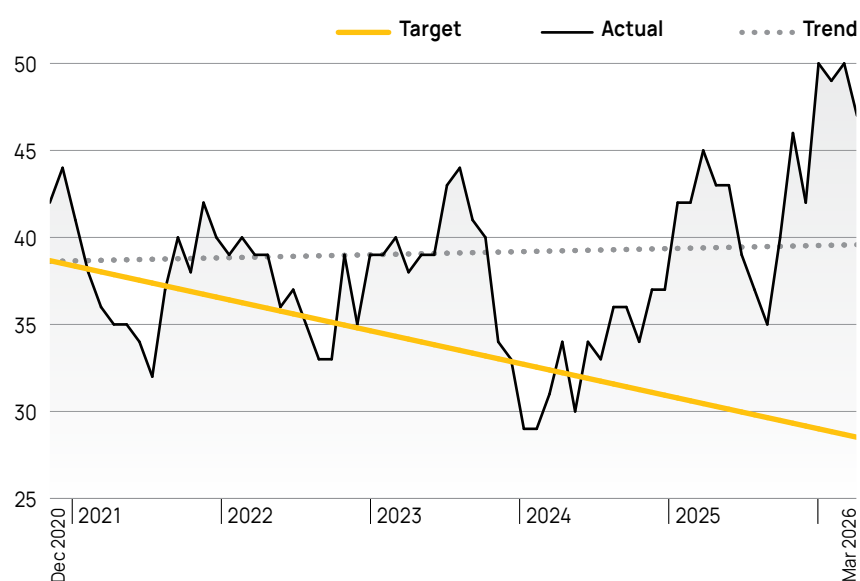
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 199 pedestrians died on Australian roads – up from 171 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is an increase of 16.4 per cent.

Motorcyclist deaths per annum



RED

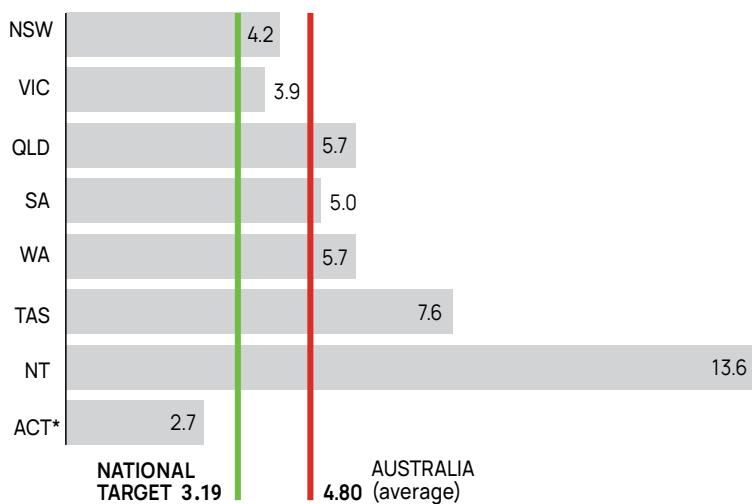
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 264 motorcyclists (including pillion passengers) died on Australian roads – down from 274 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 3.6 per cent decrease.

Cyclist deaths per annum**RED**

- In the 12 months to 31 March 2026, 47 cyclists died on Australian roads – up from 45 in the previous corresponding period.
- This is a 4.4 per cent increase.

Analysis: Road deaths by population

Annual road deaths per 100,000 population (12 months to 31 March 2026)



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 31 March 2026)

	Total deaths	Current fatality rate per 100,000 population	Number of deaths at 3.9 per 100,000 population	Potential lives saved
NSW	365	4.2	339	26
VIC	276	3.9	276	0
QLD	322	5.7	220	102
SA	95	5.0	74	21
WA	175	5.7	120	55
TAS	44	7.6	23	21
NT	36	13.6	10	26
ACT*	13	2.7	13	0
National	1,326	4.8	1,075	251

If all other jurisdictions (excluding the ACT) had matched the Victorian fatality rate of 3.9 per 100,000 population, 251 lives could have been saved across Australia in the 12 months to 31 March 2026.

- 26 in New South Wales
- 102 in Queensland
- 21 in South Australia
- 55 in Western Australia
- 21 in Tasmania
- 26 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.

Note: The data used to produce this information were sourced from the National Road Safety Data Hub database: accessed on 17 April 2026.

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