

MEDIA RELEASE

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Call for a National Road Crash Investigation Agency

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is calling on the Australian Government to take urgent steps to address the persistently high rates of road trauma across the country. ACRS urges the Government to legislate and appropriately resource a national road crash investigation agency, like the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), which currently investigates air, marine, and rail incidents but is prevented by law from examining road crashes.

With over ten times more fatalities on Australian roads each year than in air, marine, and rail transport combined, a dedicated, independent, no-blame investigative body is essential. Investigations by the ATSB have been instrumental in identifying systemic safety risks and driving industry and government action to prevent further tragedies. Applying this model to road safety would allow for targeted investigations, providing critical insights into the factors contributing to severe crashes.

“Road trauma continues to devastate Australian communities, with over 1,300 fatalities¹ and tens of thousands of serious injuries occurring annually,” said Dr Ingrid Johnston, CEO of the ACRS. “When there’s a crash on a plane, boat or train, we do an in-depth investigation to find out why it happened and how we can prevent it from ever happening again, road users deserve the same level of investigative oversight to reduce these tragedies.”

The most recent Transport Safety data² from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) highlights the urgent need for change. While road safety experts continue to address preventable causes of crashes, such as speeding, drink-driving and driver fatigue amongst others, the absence of comprehensive, systematic crash investigations means we are missing valuable opportunities to identify and mitigate additional factors contributing to road trauma.

ACRS stresses that the creation of a national road crash investigation agency would complement existing efforts, including state-based crash analyses and local road safety initiatives. By fostering collaboration and evidence-based recommendations, such an agency would strengthen Australia’s capacity to achieve its National Road Safety Strategy targets and, ultimately, save lives.

ACRS calls on all levels of government, industry stakeholders, and the broader community to support this critical initiative. The time for decisive action is now.

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Source:

1. [BITRE: Road Deaths Australia – Monthly Bulletins](https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/road_deaths_australia_monthly_bulletins) (https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/road_deaths_australia_monthly_bulletins); and [Road Safety Data Hub](https://datahub.roadsafety.gov.au/) (<https://datahub.roadsafety.gov.au/>)
2. <https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2023/australian-infrastructure-and-transport-statistics-yearbook-2023/transport-safety>

About the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS)

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is the region's peak membership association for road safety professionals, advocates, and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads. The College provides an inclusive, collaborative environment promoting communication, networking, professionalism, and advocacy across all spheres of road safety including policy, advocacy, research, innovation, technologies, and management. ACRS membership includes experts from all areas of road safety including policy makers, academics, community organisations, researchers, federal, state, and local government agencies, private companies, and members of the public. **More Information:** www.acrs.org.au