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for NSW

Regional and Rural Road Safety

WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST 2020



ABOUT ROADS AUSTRALIA

[Roads Australia](#) (RA) is the peak body for roads within an integrated transport system, representing an industry that contributes \$207 billion annually to the economy and supports 1.3 million jobs.

RA brings industry, government and communities together to lead the evolution of Australia's roads, integrated transport and mobility.

The nation's only roads champion, RA's 150+ members includes all of Australia's road agencies, major contractors and consultants, motoring clubs, service providers and other relevant industry groups.

RA's current [policy](#) focus extends across five activity streams: Safety; Capacity; Transport Reform; Journey Reliability; and Sustainability with Diversity and Inclusion an underlying commitment across each stream.

Register for [upcoming policy events](#) to contribute to the debate.

BACKGROUND

Despite making up only 17% of the nation's population, deaths on regional roads account for two in every three of the lives lost nationally.

This webinar continues the discussions around regional road safety and follows on from an RA webinar in July 2020, which focused on [low-cost, high-gain infrastructure treatments](#) to improve road safety.

EVENT SUMMARY

Over 120 attendees joined RA's webinar on 19 August 2020 to hear from:

- [Russell White](#), CEO, Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF)
- [Rob McInerney](#), CEO, International Road Assessment Program (iRAP)
- [Catherine Vick](#), Team Leader Highways and Principal Transport Engineer, AECOM.

Speaker presentations are available on the RA [website](#).

The webinar was moderated by [Tara McCarthy](#), Safety Policy Stream Chair, Roads Australia and Deputy Secretary, Safety, Environment and Regulation, Transport for NSW.

POLICY INSIGHTS

The webinar brought together experts from across Australia.

Russell White, CEO of the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) highlighted the significant issue of regional and rural road safety, with 835 lives lost on Australian regional roads in 2019 alone.

Mr White presented the results of ARSF [research of Australian driver attitudes](#) on rural roads. The research was conducted online in April 2020 with 1,001 licenced Australians, nationally representative by gender, age and location.



The ARSF research showed:

- 1 in 5 drivers admit they are more likely to break a road rule when driving on rural roads;
- Drivers are 1.5 times more likely to speed on rural roads than on city or suburban streets;
- Drivers are twice as likely to overtake across a double line when driving on a rural road, compared to city or suburban streets;
- More than half of drivers who admit they are more likely to break rules on rural roads would do so because they believe they are less likely to be caught by police; and
- 1 in 3 believe that a shift in driver attitudes and behaviours would have the biggest impact on the rural road toll.

There are, however, also risky behaviours being reported by residents in regional areas as they are also more likely to ride bicycles and scooters without a helmet, as well as ride them after consuming alcohol.

Mr White highlighted that August is Rural Road Safety Month, a national awareness campaign targeting regional and rural road safety. He reinforced the importance of personal responsibility when driving, and reminded attendees that everyone has a role to play in making Australian roads safer.

ARSF encourages groups from local road safety advocates, communities, schools, and sporting groups through to workplaces to support the month. This may be through hosting a local event or sharing road safety information.

For more information on Rural Road Safety Month visit the [ARSF website](#).

Rob McInerney, CEO of the International Road Assessment Program (iRAP) highlighted the star rating targets that have been embedded in policy, both globally and across Australia. This includes the [United Nations Global Road Safety Performance Targets](#):

- Target 3: 'By 2030, all new roads achieve technical standards for all road users that take into account road safety, or meet a three star rating or better'; and
- Target 4: 'By 2030, more than 75% of

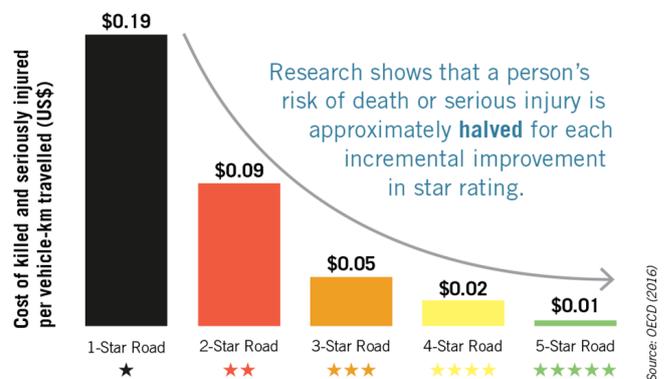
travel on existing roads is on roads that meet technical standards for all road users that take into account road safety.'

In Australia, this has been adopted through the [National Road Safety Action Plan 2018–2020](#), with Action 2 setting a target 'to improve the star ratings across the whole road network, with the aim to achieve 3-star AusRAP ratings or better for 80% of travel on state roads, including a minimum of 90% of travel on national highways'.

Mr McInerney highlighted some of the road attributes that contribute to the high number of deaths on regional roads, including statistics that 91% of high-speed roads assessed across Australia are undivided, 73% of high-speed roads have dangerous roadsides and a small sample showed 76% of roads with a speed above 40km/h have no pedestrian facilities.

He presented research that shows that the risk of being killed or seriously injured (KSI) is approximately halved for each incremental improvement in [star rating](#), as shown in Figure 1 below.

F1. Crash costs (KSI) for each star rating



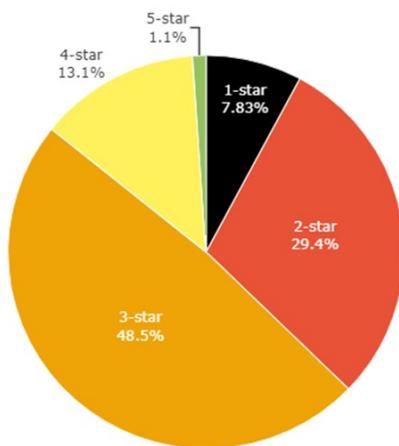
Mr McInerney presented statistics on the current status across Australia using data harnessed from iRAP's [Big Data Tool](#). This shows that of the 111,000 km of road network assessed across Australia, more than 37% of vehicle travel is currently on roads that are rated only 1-star or 2-stars for vehicle occupants. This is shown in Figure 2 on the following page.

Mr McInerney introduced iRAP's recently released [Star Rating for Designs \(SR4D\)](#) tool which offers an evidence-based, standardised process for assessing the safety of road designs for vehicle occupant, motorcycle riders, bicycle riders and pedestrians.



The tool allows design changes to be assessed, and estimates the impact the changes can have in terms of reducing fatalities, serious injuries and fractures over the life of the treatment. The tool can be used by the Government agency procuring the project, the designer, and the construction teams to measure the outcomes of the design, rather than simply designing to the relevant standards. Star rating at the design stage also ensures new designs meet or exceed the Australian and Global policy targets.

F2. Star ratings across Australian rural roads (vehicle occupants)



Source: <https://www.vaccinesforroads.org/irap-big-data-tool/>

Mr McInerney reinforced the importance of celebrating success, and of industry coming together to recognise this, and ensure continued success in saving lives. He highlighted examples including:

- Anglesea Road in Victoria which has been upgraded from 2-stars to 4-stars; and
- [Midland Highway in Tasmania](#) which will be raised to 3-star or better standard; and
- [Bruce Hwy in Queensland](#) which has been improved from 2-stars to 4-stars or 5-stars and achieved an 82% reduction in fatal and serious injuries.

Catherine Vick, Team Leader Highways and Principal Transport Engineer at AECOM presented on the importance of road design and

the factors that should be addressed in the design process.

Ms Vick highlighted that a key challenge for the engineering industry is to make compromises in the design of a road and questioned whether the compromises being made always prioritise the best outcome for the long term.

She reinforced the importance of considering all road users and embedding this process at the start of design phase, instead of them being by way of a design review at the end of the process. This will ensure safer outcomes for all road users.

Ms Vick further highlighted that micro and macro road safety should be a priority throughout the design stage, not just an assessment at the end. This includes measures such as the AusRAP star rating assessments that AECOM are undertaking for Transport for NSW along the Princes Highway. These will be used to inform improved star ratings and indicative investment assessments. The AECOM engineering team are being trained by iRAP to undertake this work in-house.

She noted that there is not a one size fits all solution for treating and preventing crashes on regional roads. Improvements to the process could be made to ensure better data and understanding of the issues, for example, by improved police reports or use of insurance claims.

Improvements could also be made to the current procurement process, including the tender phase, which have limited opportunities for innovation and improved project outcomes as they are often focused on lowest cost and fastest delivery.

EVENT OUTPUTS & NEXT STEPS

A snapshot of the event was promoted through RA's [LinkedIn channel](#).

Looking ahead, RA plans to host further policy [webinars](#) on this and related topics.

