

Developing a new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028

Discussion Paper

TOWARDS ZERO

Document title	Developing a new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028
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Acronyms	Full form
AANT	Automobile Association of the Northern Territory
ANCAP	The Australasian New Car Assessment Program
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
C-ITS	Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems
DIPL	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
MACC	Motor Accidents Compensation Commission
NRSAP	National Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2025
NRSS	National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030
NT	Northern Territory
NT POLICE	Police, Fire and Emergency Services
PMD	Personal Mobility Device
RADD	Recording Artists, Actors and Athletes Against Drink Driving
TZ 2018-2022	Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2022

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1 Introduction

Following the [Northern Territory Towards Zero 2018-2022 Road Safety Action Plan](#) (TZ 2018-2022) the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) is developing a new Northern Territory Road Safety Action Plan for 2024-2028.

This Discussion Paper has been prepared to seek further community and stakeholder input to support the development of a new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 (Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan). In developing this Discussion Paper, Northern Territory key road safety stakeholders have been consulted, and analysis of road trauma statistics, research and best practice approaches has been undertaken. Data analysed (unless otherwise noted in this Discussion Paper) is based on ten year crash data 2012-2021.

The new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan will build on the success of TZ 2018-2022, and will support the continued implementation of actions targeting reductions to road trauma.

The development of the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan will be delivered through a partnership between DIPL, the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NT Police), the Motor Accidents Compensation Commission (MACC), other government agencies and feedback from the broader Northern Territory community.

The new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan will sit alongside the [National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030](#) (NRSS), which was launched in December 2021, and the [National Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2025](#) (NRSAP) which provides a national commitment to deliver significant reductions in road trauma, and placing Australia on a path to achieve Vision Zero by 2050.

Background

In March 2018, the Northern Territory Government released TZ 2018-2022, which was developed following a period of community consultation.

TZ 2018-2022 outlined a commitment to create a safer road environment for all users. It included 49 specific actions to address a wide range of road safety issues. A partnership between the NT Police, MACC and DIPL, led an extensive program of work to deliver TZ 2018-2022 actions.

33 actions have now been completed, eight actions are ongoing, and six actions involve complex policy issues with work continuing, and will be considered in the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan. Two actions will continue to be progressed for completion during 2024.

Setting the direction

Within the context of national agreement to Vision Zero by 2050, and through the National Road Safety Strategy, the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan will continue with the Vision Zero concept, which calls for a safer road transport system where no person is killed or seriously injured.

The Vision Zero concept aims to inspire ownership of the Territory's road safety challenges and motivate Territorians to take action to use the road network in a safer way, to protect themselves and other road users from death or injury.

To assist in setting the direction of the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan, Road Safety Round Table sessions were held in Darwin and Alice Springs in May 2023. Key road safety stakeholders were provided with detailed ten year serious injury and fatal crash data, and workshopped actions for consideration in the development of the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan. This Discussion Paper includes feedback and actions identified from the Round Table sessions.

The need for action

Over the decade 2012-2021, on average each year 40 people have died and about 470 people suffered serious injuries on Territory roads each year. The impact of road trauma is felt across the whole Northern Territory community.

In addition to the impacts on family, friends, workplaces, first responders and the wider community, the financial cost of road trauma is substantial. It is estimated that the cost of a single road fatality in the Territory is in the order of \$2.85 million. Based on the 35 fatalities in 2021, this represents an annual cost of around \$99 million. Nationally, this cost is estimated at \$30 billion.

Significant progress has been made to deliver reforms and various interventions to lower the rate of road trauma, including safer vehicle technology, road infrastructure improvements, road safety education and awareness programs, enhanced technological enforcement options and strengthened legislation.

However, there is an ongoing need for a whole-of-community commitment to targeting priority areas such as reducing alcohol-related crashes, speed, non-wearing of seat belts, driving to conditions and driver distraction.

2 Road trauma in the Northern Territory

Fatal crashes

Over the decade from 2012-2021, 401 people have died on Northern Territory roads.

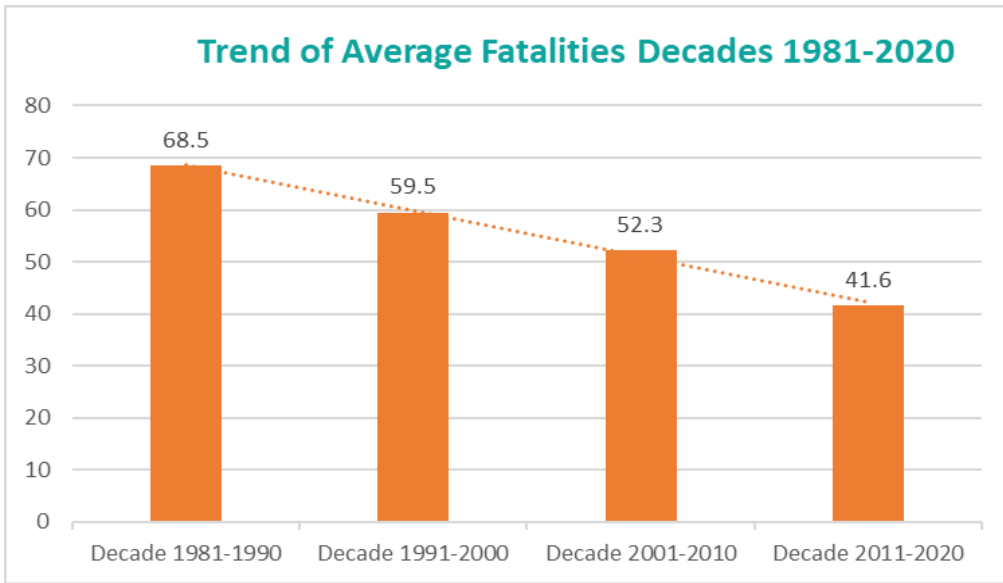
The Northern Territory has the **highest** rate of road deaths when compared with all Australian jurisdictions (on a [per capita basis and per 100,000 head of population](#)):

- The Northern Territory rate of fatality per capita is at least 3.2 times the national rate.
- The Northern Territory rate of fatality based on vehicle km travelled is 3.5 times the national rate.
- The Northern Territory rate of fatality based on registered vehicles is 3.6 times the national rate.

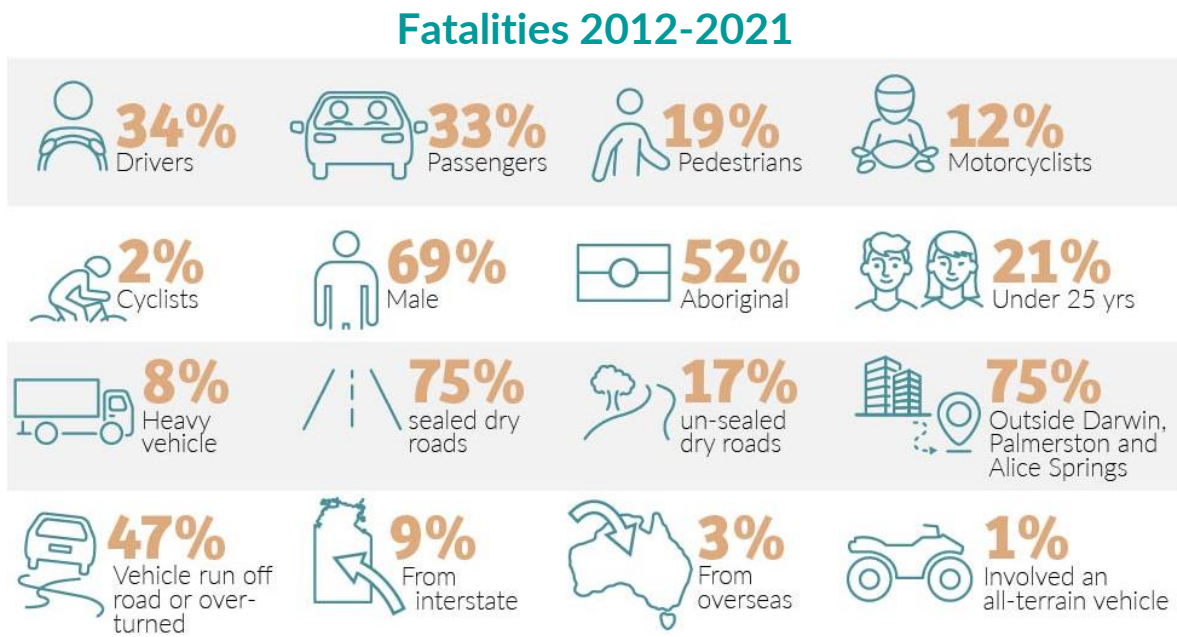
However, over the last four decades, the average annual fatality rate has decreased from 68.5 to 41.6. Although the Northern Territory's average fatality rate has decreased, regional and remote areas remain a major challenge, where approximately 70 percent of fatal crashes occur.

Between 2001 and 2010, an average of 52.3 fatalities per annum occurred on Territory roads, compared to an average of 41.6 per annum between 2010 and 2020. This represents a significant decrease of 18 percent.

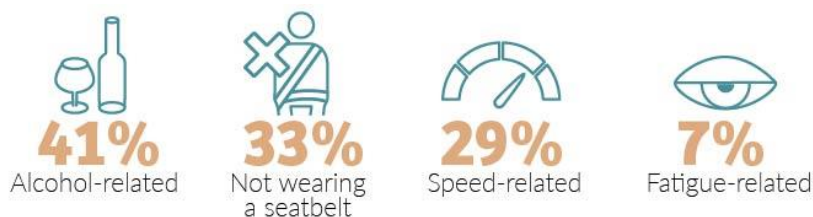
Graph 1: identifies a decreasing trend of road fatalities over the last four decades in the Northern Territory.



The following diagram shows an analysis of various factors involved in fatalities from 2012-2021:



While more than one factor may contribute to a fatality, key contributing factors include:



Despite increased investment in road infrastructure, a consistent focus on educating road users and increased enforcement and penalties, it is clear that non-compliance and intentional risky road use remains a challenge in the Northern Territory. Alcohol-related crashes, speed, non-wearing of seat belts and not driving to conditions, remain significant contributing factors in fatal crashes in the Northern Territory.

Serious injury

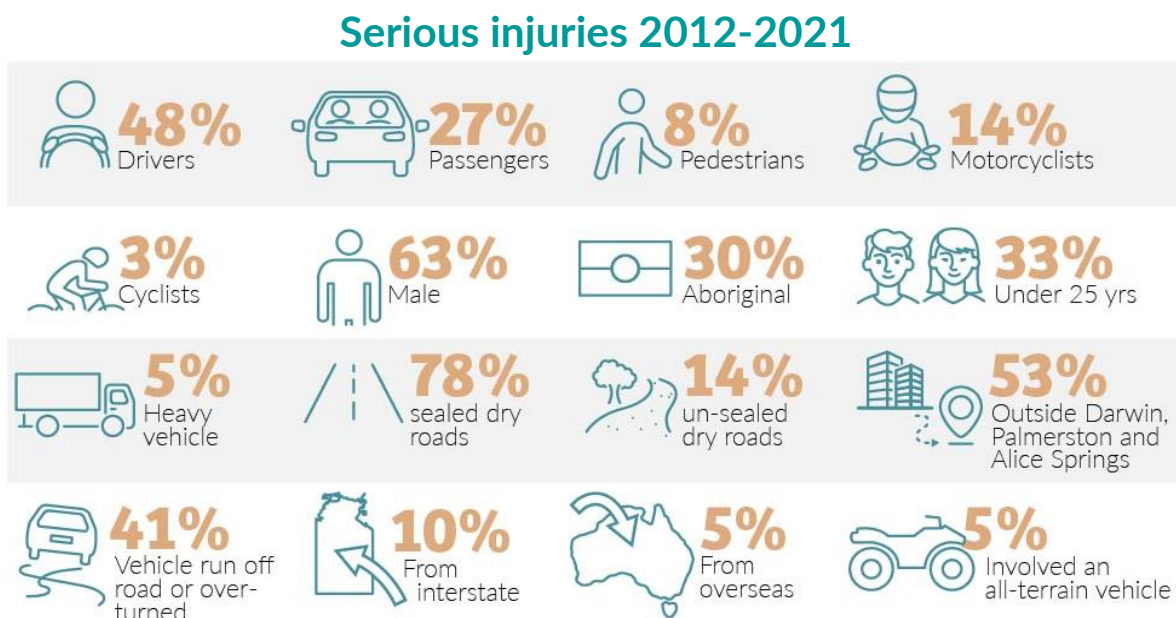
Whilst fatal crashes gain wide public attention through the media, court processes and coronial inquiries, serious injury crashes often have a lower profile; however, these crashes have incredibly significant implications and extensive ongoing physical, emotional and financial costs for individuals and the community.

A serious injury is defined as those who are admitted to hospital with a crash-related injury. These figures do not include injury which is not presented at hospital, and results in an under-representation of the actual volume of serious injury relating to road crashes.

In Australia in 2021-2022, The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare quoted that there were 61,500 people hospitalised with serious injuries from transport crashes. Fractures are the most common physical injury, with open wounds, intracranial, soft tissue and internal organ damage being major causes for hospitalisations.

In the Northern Territory, over the decade 2012-2021, 4,789 people were seriously injured on Territory roads. Pedestrian and cycling crashes and crashes involving personal mobility devices such as e-scooters, may be under-reported in the NT serious injury crash figures as these crashes may not be reported to Police which means that they won't be officially recorded.

The following diagram shows an analysis of various factors involved in serious injury from 2012-2021:



Above figures have been rounded to the nearest whole value.

3 Building on the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2022

The Northern Territory has successfully implemented key road safety policy measures including:

- Increasing alcohol and drug testing
- Introducing road safety (red light and speed) cameras
- Removing open speed limits
- Implementing higher penalties for speed, drink driving and non-wearing of seatbelts
- Introducing a demerit points system
- Introducing child restraint legislation, and
- Expanding public transport in urban, regional and remote areas.

Building on past years of road safety reform, TZ 2018-2022 set out 49 priority actions for delivery over the course of 2018-2022.

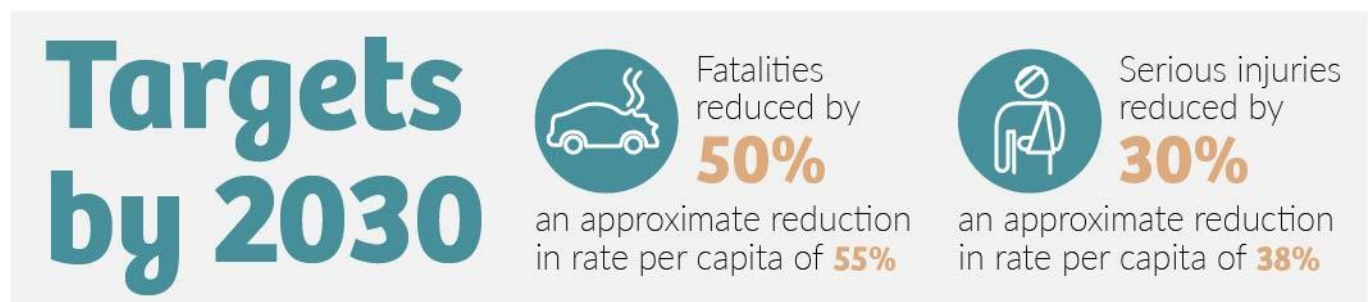
Some key actions from TZ 2018-2022 will continue to be developed and delivered under the new Action Plan due to their complex nature and the need for more comprehensive public consultation, policy development and legislative reform. These include the implementation of a revised graduated licensing system for car drivers and motorcyclists, implementation of new speed enforcement technology and implementation of a repeat offender regime.

4 Developing a new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028

The National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan

The Northern Territory is a signatory to the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) 2021-2030 which was released in December 2021 and the National Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2025 (NRSAP). The NRSS aims to reduce death from road crashes by 50 percent and serious injuries by at least 30 percent by 2030. These ambitious targets are being supported with an Action Plan to 2025, which was released in May 2023.

Fatality and Serious Injury targets agreed under the NRSS 2021-2030:



During the timeframe of the previous NRSS from 2011-2020, there was a 22.5 percent reduction in national fatalities, this was below the target of a 30 percent reduction. During this period the rate of serious injury also increased.

The current NRSS also draws on direction from the United Nations' decision to declare a second decade of action on Road Safety and release of an action plan 2021-2030 as a guiding document to support the Vision Zero theme and call to further action.

The NRSS has continued the commitment to the Safe System approach, which recognises that road safety is not just a transport problem. The NRSS also introduces the Social Model approach to road safety for the first time. This model identifies the need for long-term cultural change towards road safety, making road safety 'business as usual' through fostering a road safety culture across society. This includes public policy development at all levels of government as well as addressing issues at the community, organisational, interpersonal and individual level.

The NRSS also introduces a Movement and Place approach to infrastructure planning, through understanding the interaction of people on roads, streets and public places in designing roads and establishing road treatments and speeds.

The new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan will recognise the foundation and key themes of the NRSS, and will incorporate the principles of the vision to reduce death and serious injury.

While road safety innovations and reforms have reduced the number of fatalities and injuries over the last few decades, significant and further action is required. The Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 will have an ongoing focus on a number of key priority areas, and will align with the current NRSS and NRSAP.

To drive improvement, the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 is based on two important underlying foundations of the NRSS: the Social Model and the Safe System approaches to road safety.

The Social Model

The Social Model of Road Safety differs from the traditional approach to road safety, which tends to focus on engineering and enforcement measures to reduce the risk of crashes and injuries. The Social Model approach emphasises the importance of understanding human behaviour and the role of social factors in shaping road user behaviour and calls for a more holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to road safety involving collaboration across different sectors and levels of governance. The Social Model recognises that the whole community must take ownership of the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan vision to reduce the high levels of road trauma in the Northern Territory.

SOCIAL MODEL



Moving towards the goal of reducing fatality and serious injury on Territory roads, requires collaboration and partnerships between all levels of government, industry partners, workplaces, road safety stakeholders and every member of the community. These partnerships and commitments play a critical role in delivering road safety benefits which can impact positively and quickly on the whole community.

The Social Model recognises that all elements of the road transport system must be addressed to achieve better outcomes, encompassing the following elements:

- **System and public policy:** gearing policy settings, laws, regulation and investment through all levels of government.
- **Community approach:** addressing issues from a grass roots level to facilitate positive road safety culture.
- **Organisational approach:** developing policies and systems to ensure safe road travel.
- **Interpersonal functions:** delivering / driving road safety focus and prevention of injury through effective leadership.
- **Individual functions:** working with individuals to find approaches that resonate with all individuals agreeing to take responsibility for their own safety.

The Safe System approach

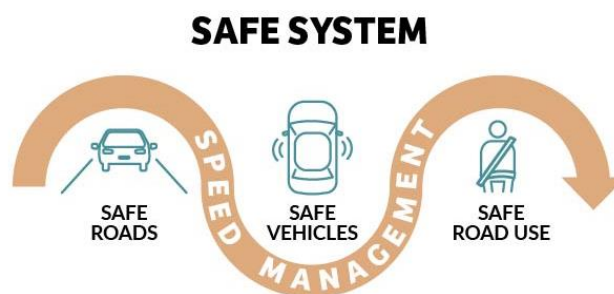
The Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 will continue to adopt the Safe System approach to improving road safety. The Safe System approach is a holistic view of the road transport system, which recognises that if people make mistakes or poor choices which may lead to crashes, the system is protective enough to ensure those actions do not result in road trauma.

The Safe System approach is built on the key principles of:

- People make predictable mistakes that can lead to road crashes.
- The human body has a limited physical ability to tolerate crash forces before harm occurs.
- A shared responsibility exists amongst those who plan, design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles to prevent crashes resulting in serious injury or death.
- All parts of the system must be strengthened to multiply their effects; and if one part fails, road users are still protected.

Safe speeds underpins the three priority areas, highlighting the importance of speed management in reducing fatality and serious injury.

All new actions in the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 are grouped under the Safe System priority areas of:



5 Key priority areas

The new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 will be guided by the NRSS key priority areas. These identified priorities, while based on the NRSS, are only included where considered relevant to the particular needs of the Northern Territory.

The plan will be structured to set out the Safe System key themes of Safe Road Use, Safe Roads and Safe Vehicles, with the key priority areas grouped under the Safe System Key Themes.

The NRSS nine priority areas under the Safe System key themes:



It is proposed that the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 will focus on a number of targeted actions guided by the Safe System and the Social Model approaches.

The ten identified key road safety priority areas for the NT are:

Safe Road Use

- Alcohol and drugs
- Seatbelts and child restraints
- Driver distraction
- Excess and inappropriate speed
- Vulnerable road users
 - Pedestrians
 - Aboriginal people
 - Novice drivers
 - Motorcyclists
 - Cyclists

Safe Roads

- Infrastructure

Safe Vehicles

- Heavy vehicles
- Connected and automated vehicles
- Personal Mobility Devices
- Workplace safety

Have Your Say question:
Are we focussing on the right priority areas? Have we missed any priorities?

5.1 Safe Road Use

Overarching actions

Encouraging all road users to use the road network responsibly is essential to reducing the number of lives lost and serious injuries on Northern Territory roads. Every road user can make a difference by taking responsibility and understanding that their choices and actions can be fatal or cause life changing serious injury to themselves or other innocent road users.

There are a number of actions including road safety education and awareness, digital technology/police enforcement and legislation/reform, which span all of the identified road safety key priority areas. Focus on these actions will contribute to reducing lives lost and serious injuries.

Road safety education and awareness

School-based education continues to be an effective way of providing consistent age-appropriate messaging from pre-school visits to delivering a range of education sessions to high schools. Additionally, targeted road safety education is delivered to participants outside of school networks including at corrections facilities, sporting clubs and workplace tool box meetings.

In the NT community, there is a need for road safety education and awareness campaigns to renew driver and rider road rule awareness and increase awareness of current and targeted road safety issues. For many drivers and riders, knowledge of road rules diminishes over time, even though on road driving experience has been gained.

Legislation and reform

Penalties and fines are one the most important tools to deter unsafe and illegal behaviours on Territory roads.

Several actions in the TZ 2018-2022 required significant policy work and legislation change to review and implement more effective and targeted penalty regimes. Development of an appropriate repeat offender regime was included in TZ 2018-2022; however, due to the complex nature of this issue and the need for comprehensive public consultation, policy development and legislative reform, it is proposed that this action be carried over for consideration in the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028.

Digital technology and Police enforcement

For some road users, deterrence through the highly visible presence of police is an effective management tool. Technology developments in digital camera enforcement allow this type of enforcement to be a more suitable option to detect illegal behaviours of non-seatbelt wearing, illegal phone use and speeding, all of which contribute to a higher risk of crashing.

Automated and digital enforcement through road safety cameras has become commonplace in other Australian jurisdictions. TZ 2018-2022 included two specific actions relating to road safety cameras and the use of technological solutions to support increased enforcement. These two actions require complex policy and legislative change and it is proposed that these actions are carried forward to the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

There was a high level of support for road safety education and awareness campaigns to address issues such as driving with heavy vehicles, speed, pedestrians, driving to conditions, fatigue, towing caravans and fitness to drive.

As acknowledged in the TZ 2018-2022, identifying road safety champions who can assist with delivering road safety messaging across communities was supported. However, targeting champions can potentially result in over reliance on a limited number of individuals to deliver messages and model road safety behaviours.

Police presence and enforcement were considered a significant element in achieving improved road safety compliance. New speed detection vans and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras have been delivered and these will enable more efficient enforcement in both urban and regional areas.

Providing rewards to encourage safer road use, rather than punitive measures, was raised as a potential action; however, TZ 2018-2022 research suggested that this approach targets an already largely compliant section of the driver / rider cohort. Although the Northern Territory provides a free license for Probationary (P) drivers/riders who are offence free when they apply for an open licence, providing free or discounted driver and rider licenses more broadly as an incentive was found to have a very limited net benefit to road safety behaviour.

Vehicle insurance incentives were discussed; however, insurance rates are set on commercial terms which includes a risk assessment of vehicle type and driver history. Safer drivers are rewarded with lower premiums through safer driving and riding records.

Increasing road safety education in schools was proposed, including delivering more drug and alcohol education and road safety messaging at a younger age. However, the availability of time for road safety education in the school curriculum is limited due to many other competing priorities. Road safety resources for schools were reviewed under the TZ 2018-2022 and DIPL's road safety team continues to work with schools and the Department of Education to maximise the impact of school-based road safety programs.

What has been achieved to date?

- Work has progressed on developing a repeat offender penalty regime for consideration by government. The regime may include: vehicle clamping / seizure and / or other penalties for repeat drink / drug drivers, seatbelt offences, speeding, mobile phone offences, driving unregistered / unlicensed (TZ 1.1). It is proposed that work will continue on development of this regime through the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028.
- A review of penalties for drug driving and the process for prosecution was completed (TZ 2.2).
- A Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limit for supervising drivers was implemented in 2019 (TZ 2.1).
- The benefits of incentive programs to reward positive driver / rider behaviour were explored (TZ 1.4).
- Dedicated police resources to support priority road safety areas have been increased (TZ 1.2).
- Road safety education resources for school students have been strengthened (TZ 1.3).
- Since 2018, 1,157 road safety school education programs have been delivered to 46,681 students. The [Senior School Choices Program](#) was delivered to 4,552 students in 80 sessions, over the last five years.

- The AANT, in conjunction with MACC and DIPL delivered the Street Smart High road safety event annually in 2021, 2022 and 2023, reaching over 1000 students each year.

What new actions could be considered?

Road safety education and awareness

<p>Develop road safety awareness and marketing led strategies to address key road safety issues in a culturally appropriate format, using relevant role models, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting other road users • Driving to conditions • Driving on unsealed roads • Vehicle roadworthiness • Pedestrian safety • Driving with heavy vehicles • Speed • Seatbelts • The impacts of driving under the influence of drugs • Towing trailers and caravans • Fatigue and fitness to drive • Drink driving
<p>Work with other jurisdictions and the national Office of Road Safety to develop nationally coordinated road safety campaigns.</p>
<p>Review and update the ‘Check. Plan. Go.’ campaign with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle roadworthiness • Road conditions • Planning a journey
<p>Investigate the benefits of targeted courses to improve driving skills.</p>

Legislation and reform

<p>Implement a Towards Zero package of legislation reform to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug driving and other traffic penalties • A Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs) legislative reform package • Graduated Licencing reform for car drivers and motorcycle riders • Increased penalties for unlawful vehicle use including vehicle confiscation.
<p>Continue to develop a repeat offender regime for consideration by government.</p>

Digital technology and Police enforcement

<p>Develop and implement an NT digital technology and road safety camera strategy that explores and delivers innovative, technology solutions, including road safety cameras, average speed, driver distraction, seatbelt detection and vehicle registration checks.</p>
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Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

Safer Road Use Priority areas

Further to the overarching areas of safer road use discussed above, the following Safer Road Use key priorities have been identified including: Alcohol and Drugs, seatbelts and child restraints, Driver Distraction, Excess and inappropriate speed and Vulnerable Road Users.

5.1.1 Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol is the most significant contributing factor to road crashes in the Territory, with alcohol involved in at least 41 percent of fatalities and at least 27 percent of serious injuries between 2012 and 2021. Due to a continual process of refining road crash data, statistics for alcohol involvement in fatal crashes are routinely updated following further investigations.

Alcohol involvement in pedestrian fatalities also continues to be a very challenging issue, with pedestrian road fatalities often involving high levels of intoxication.

When alcohol and drugs are a contributing factor in crashes, often speed and not wearing a seatbelt are also highly likely to be contributing factors in those crashes.

Misuse of alcohol, including heavy drinking, casual attitudes to drink driving and taking risks to evade enforcement, is a wider community issue. In March 2017, the Northern Territory Government commissioned the Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review to deliver a cohesive approach to alcohol harm reduction. It was noted in the Review that the total social cost of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory was estimated to be \$642 million or \$4,197 per adult, compared with a national cost estimate of \$943 per adult. The Northern Territory Government introduced a suite of measures since 2017 to address alcohol misuse including risk based licensing of alcohol outlets, a Banned Drinkers Register, a minimum floor price for alcohol, Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors and recent trading of alcohol restrictions in Alice Springs.

While the financial costs associated with alcohol and drug misuse are considerable, the social costs are just as considerable and very complex. Where misuse of alcohol and drugs is related to entrenched and/or normalised behaviour, education and health interventions are essential to removing alcohol and drug involvement in road trauma.

The following diagram shows factors relating to alcohol and drugs in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

At the Round Tables, there was in-depth discussion on the very harmful effects of alcohol misuse on road safety outcomes and this was reflected in the wide range of potential actions suggested. It was acknowledged that an across-government approach and community buy-in to alcohol and drug policy, is required to address alcohol and drug harm reduction more broadly.

Road Safety Round Table participants suggested that simplified information explaining the Back on Track alcohol and drug driving program would enable participants to better understand the program requirements, leading to improved compliance and success. A review of the program was undertaken through TZ 2018-2022. Information on the program is available on the Northern Territory Government website and information is mailed to participants which is specific to their enrolment in the program.

Increased and more targeted media campaigns, as well as education and awareness at an earlier age regarding the impacts of alcohol and drugs on road safety were raised. Acknowledging that drug driving is an increasing issue across Australia, including in the Northern Territory, prompted suggestions regarding drug driving media campaigns, lower cost and random drug testing. At the national level, a Drug Driving Working Group has been formed to review the issue of drug driving, including the availability of lower cost drug tests.

What has been achieved to date?

- The [Who's Your Sober Bob](#) campaign has been running in the Northern Territory since 1997 to reduce and prevent alcohol-related road trauma.
- The [MACC Enough's Enough](#) drink driving campaign was launched in December 2016 to highlight drink driving issues in urban and remote areas.
- The targeted MACC [Sorry Business Stories](#) drink driving campaign, was launched in December 2016 to reduce Aboriginal drink driving in urban and remote areas.
- In 2019, a Blood Alcohol Concentration limit for supervising drivers was implemented.
- In 2019, further changes to legislation included:
 - Amending maximum penalties for failure to undertake a breath or saliva test.
 - Providing police with the power to request a breath or saliva test if they are pulled over if there is suspicion that an offence has been committed against the *Northern Territory Traffic Act 1987* and *Northern Territory Motor Vehicle Act 1949*.
 - Allowing police to require a blood sample for analysis when a breath analysis machine malfunctions or when breath alcohol content is too high to measure.
- A review of the Northern Territory drink driver education [Back on Track](#) program was undertaken to maximise accessibility for participants.
- A review of penalties for the drug driving and processes for prosecution has been completed.
- Drug testing commenced in the Northern Territory in 2020.

What new actions could be considered?

Investigate strengthening the penalty regime for drink driving offences.
Review the Alcohol Ignition Lock program's effectiveness.
Continue to deliver culturally appropriate education and awareness campaigns focussing on the impacts of alcohol use on road safety outcomes.
Detailed investigation into drink driving in fatal and serious injury crashes to inform targeted road safety strategies.
Increase random breath testing for alcohol.
Increase random drug testing.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

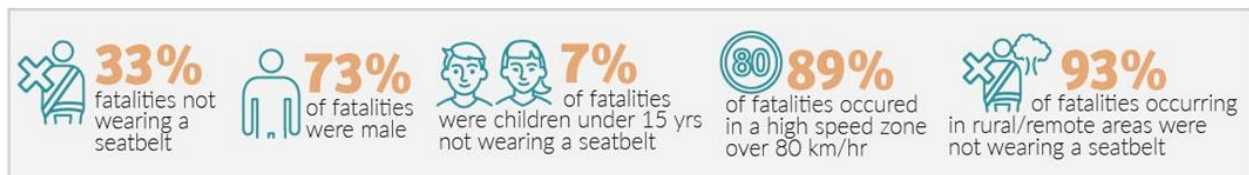
5.1.2 Seatbelts and child restraints

Wearing a seatbelt doubles the chance of surviving a serious crash, which is why encouraging the use of seatbelts and child restraints remains an ongoing priority.

One third of people who lost their lives in fatal crashes in the last 10 years in the Northern Territory were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. There is also a link with the non-wearing of seatbelts in crashes to other dangerous behaviours such as drugs, alcohol and speed.

The correct restraint of children in vehicles is an ongoing concern especially where children are passengers in overcrowded vehicles, where there is no child seat in the vehicle, or passengers who are seated or standing outside of vehicles whilst it is moving.

The following diagram shows factors relating to seatbelt wearing in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

Despite ongoing seatbelt education and awareness campaigns, the use of seatbelts and child restraints remains an issue particularly in regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory, due to the prevalence of older vehicles, limited access to child restraints, casual attitudes to seatbelt safety and lower levels of individual car ownership. Availability of child restraints and services to assist with fitting of restraints was raised as an issue. Stronger penalties were suggested to encourage compliance.

Establishing local champions in remote communities was suggested as an option to reinforce the safety benefits of seatbelt wearing. This approach was also raised during TZ 2018-2022 consultation. However, relying on local champions can be difficult, as pressure is often placed on a small number of community members to promote and be responsible for multiple community health and safety messages and burn-out can be an issue.

Feedback from the Round Table sessions suggested that the MACC [Always Wear Your Seatbelt](#) campaign had good recall by stakeholders and was perceived to be making an impact. It was suggested that an updated version, including a separate remote campaign to target specific areas of non-compliance, would be beneficial. Since 2017, this media campaign has been delivered to remote and regional areas and is broadcast in 6 Aboriginal languages.

Technological solutions including seatbelt locks and camera enforcement were raised as options to facilitate enforcement in remote areas. Infrastructure solutions included targeted signage reminding road users to wear a seatbelt on remote roads across the Territory.

Information on requirements for child restraints for taxis was raised at the Round Tables. Requirements in the Northern Territory are included in a series of Frequently Asked Questions regarding child restraints are included on the Towards Zero website [Child Car Restraints Frequently Asked Questions](#).

What has been achieved to date?

- Seatbelt penalties were doubled in 2007.
- Demerit points for not wearing a seatbelt were introduced in 2007 (three points).
- In 2016, legislation was amended to clarify requirements for children under 16 regarding wearing seatbelts.
- In 2019, child car restraint laws for taxis came into effect in the Northern Territory.
- Continued seatbelt education is delivered through the Senior School Choices Program, school classroom education and the DriveSafe NT programs.
- The [Always Wear Your Seatbelt](#) media campaign launched in 2019 in regional and remote areas and continues to be implemented.
- In 2021, [What If, the Brandon Wilson Story](#), was released and associated materials have been developed to support the Senior School Choices Program and educating pre-learner and provisional drivers to wear a seatbelt.
- The MACC Child Restraint program distributed 2016 child restraints to remote communities. Thirty-six communities participated in restraint fitting days and 126 “seat champions” were trained by Kidsafe to fit seats. Hundreds of families received instruction on how to refit their own seats.
- Ongoing enforcement, for example, 13,634 Infringements issued to adult drivers for child-related seat offences from 2012–2022.

What new actions could be considered?

Investigate and implement solutions to facilitate increased access to, and use of child restraints in remote areas.
Review penalties for not wearing a seatbelt.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

5.1.3 Driver distraction

Driving is a complex task, requiring attention to a quickly changing road environment. Technology advancements have made connectivity to a range of devices easier, allowing us to be more connected to our communication networks. However increased connectivity competes with attention required for the driving task.

Drivers are 10 times more at risk of crashing if they are texting, viewing media, browsing or emailing on their mobile phone. One-third of pedestrians admit to looking at their phone while crossing the road.

Distracted driving is any activity that takes attention from the driving task. Eating, drinking, using navigation devices, passing objects to passengers, outside vehicle distraction and emotional stress, can all take a driver’s focus off interactions with other vehicles and vulnerable road users.

Research indicates that taking your eyes off the road for more than two seconds doubles the risk of a crash.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Discussion at the Road Safety Round Tables focussed on the wider causes of driver distraction including in-built car technology, lack of focus when driving and emotional distraction. A renewed focus on education of young people approaching driving age and learner drivers was also highlighted.

New media campaigns by MACC and Recording Artists, Actors and Athletes Against Drink Driving (RADD) remind drivers and riders about the possibly fatal outcomes of not focusing on the road environment.

What has been achieved to date?

- In 2019, mobile phone and visual display unit penalties doubled from \$250 to \$500.
- In May 2023, the new MACC urban and regional [Driver Distraction](#) campaign was launched.
- RADD driver distraction advertisements were launched in December 2022.
- Continued education through [DriveSafe NT](#) programs and school classroom education programs.
- Police road enforcement of drivers illegally using a hand held mobile.

What new actions could be considered?

Review the penalty for illegal use of mobile phones and electronic devices.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

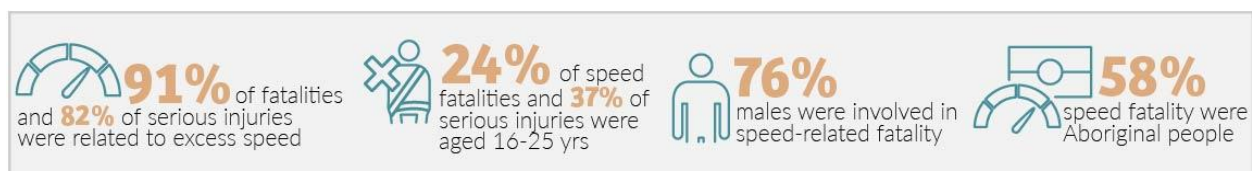
5.1.4 Excess and inappropriate speed

Inappropriate or excess speed is a contributing factor in more than 30 percent of fatal crashes in the Northern Territory. Excess speed is travelling above the posted speed limit. Inappropriate speed choice is speed that is too fast for the prevailing conditions, for example not altering travel speed on a wet or gravel road, in areas where there may be unpredictable pedestrian movement or unsuitable speeds in dense traffic.

There is a strong relationship between speed, whether excess or inappropriate, and poor road safety outcomes. Increases in travel speed increase both the likelihood of a crash involving a serious injury or fatality occurring and the severity of injuries.

Appropriate travel speed increases the time available for a driver / rider to react to a hazard and correct a mistake, reducing the likelihood of a crash. A December 2021 a survey commissioned by MACC highlighted that speeding is not consistently viewed by the public as unacceptable behaviour. Low level speeding, for example, travelling at 65 km/h in a 60 km/h speed zone or 105 to 110 km/h in a 100 km/h speed zone is considered acceptable by some in the community. However, research has shown that travelling 5 km/h above the speed limit doubles the risk of being involved in a fatal crash. Changing community perception about speed is a critical factor in reducing road trauma.

The following diagram shows factors relating to speed in fatalities for 2012-2021:



Inappropriate speed is often accompanied by other risky driving / riding behaviour, such as non-seatbelt wearing and alcohol / drug involvement.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Re-education of road users through media campaigns and refreshing of road rules was raised as an important action at the Road Safety Round Tables. New technology including the use of mobile and point-to-point speed cameras was acknowledged as having a significant place in managing speed in the Territory. However, it was felt that technology should only form part of an overall strategy to make the road system safer. Solutions such as in-car speed limiting technology was suggested and there was discussion around the potential to reward compliance as an alternative to focussing on fines and demerit points. In remote areas, speed limits on gravel roads were considered to be an issue and the need for awareness of driving to conditions was highlighted.

What has been achieved to date?

- Demerit points for speeding were introduced in 2007.
- Fixed speed and red light cameras were introduced in 2008, now covering 20 sites.
- Speed penalties were revised in 2014.
- Five marked speed enforcement vans were introduced in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.
- From 2022, mobile speed detection devices were installed in police vehicles.
- A project is underway to review the coverage of red light / speed cameras and identify and implement the use of new technology-based speed management tools.
- Speed limit reductions have been implemented to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety at various locations including:
 - Kakadu Highway, Mary River (110 km/h to 100 km/h).
 - Stuart Highway Noonamah, Jenkins Road to Elizabeth Valley Road (110 km/h to 100 km/h).
 - Amy Johnson Avenue from Boulter Road to McMillans Road (90 km/h to 70 km/h).
 - Amy Johnson Avenue from Boulter Road to Stuart Highway (90 km/h to 80 km/h).
 - Stuart Highway from Palmerston interchange to Temple Terrace (100 km/h to 80 km/h).
 - Stuart Highway from Vanderlin Drive to Foundation Road (100 km/h to 90 km/h).
 - McMinn Street from Garramilla Boulevard to Tiger Brennan Drive (60 km/h to 50 km/h).
 - Tiger Brennan Drive outbound from McMinn Street to Garramilla Boulevard.
 - Stuart Highway at Kulgera Roadhouse (130 km/h to 100 km/h).
 - Stuart Highway at Coomalie Creek (130 km/h to 100 km/h).
- Continued education through remote and urban DriveSafe NT programs and school classroom education.
- MACC's [Speeding. There's No Future In It](#) urban speed media campaign was launched in 2019.
- The [Drive to Conditions](#) in regional and remote areas campaign was introduced in 2019, delivered in English and three Aboriginal languages.
- Ongoing enforcement, 317,909 speed traffic infringement notices were issued from 2012-2021.
- A Speed Management Strategy has been developed and is available on the Towards Zero website.

What new actions could be considered?

Trial the use of a speed limit review tool to deliver an evidence-based approach to setting speed limits.
Review speed limits at high speed intersections and implement outcomes where appropriate.
Support local governments to implement safe system speed related improvements and the development of local area traffic management plans.
Develop an educational campaign targeting the community's perceptions and acceptance of safer speeds.
Investigate a reduction of the default speed limit on unsealed roads from 110 km/hr to 80km/h.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

5.1.5 Vulnerable road users

Roads and roadsides are shared by many types of road users including pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists. These road users are considered vulnerable road users as they have the least amount of protection, making them far more exposed to serious or life altering injuries resulting from a crash. Pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists represent 33 percent of lives lost in fatal crashes in the Northern Territory. These vulnerable road users are more likely to be killed or seriously injured in urban areas where there are higher density populations.

Aboriginal people and novice drivers are also vulnerable road users. Aboriginal people in the Territory comprise about 30 percent of the Territory population; however, represent 52 percent of road crash fatalities and serious injuries. From 2012 to 2021, six percent of crashes in the Northern Territory which resulted in serious road trauma involved a provisional driver.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian fatalities continue to represent around 19 percent of lives lost in the Territory. The majority of pedestrian fatalities and serious injury occurs in the urban areas of Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs. However, crashes involving pedestrians occur across the network and often in rural areas where there is no street lighting.

Pedestrian fatalities are most prevalent between 6 pm to 6 am. Alcohol is an involvement factor for both drivers and pedestrians and is attributed to an increasing incidence of hit and run incidents in 2022. In 2022, all of the 11 adult pedestrian fatalities were under the influence of alcohol and most were heavily intoxicated. Where pedestrians are under the influence of alcohol, predictability of movement and the visibility of pedestrians at night is a challenging issue for other road users.

The following diagram shows factors relating to pedestrian fatality for 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

Participants at the Road Safety Round Tables suggested education campaigns are needed for visitors from remote communities planning to visit urban areas. Additionally, a broad awareness campaign to educate all road users on safer behaviour including the impact of alcohol and drugs, the effects of speeding and the need to watch out for pedestrians was raised. Infrastructure upgrades were suggested to address frequently used pedestrian crossing points.

What work has already been done / what work will continue to be done?

- A number of actions have been implemented as a result of the TZ 2018-2022 including a review of pedestrian incidents and implementation of appropriate infrastructure at high risk pedestrian areas, including lighting, fencing and safe crossing options. A program of infrastructure upgrades to improve pedestrian safety is ongoing including use of innovative technology solutions such as pedestrian activated lighting and allowing increased time for pedestrians to cross the road at signalised intersections.
- A Pedestrian Road Safety Working Group has been formed to identify immediate solutions and work towards reducing pedestrian fatalities and injuries.
- New traffic lights have been installed on Trower Road at Rapid Creek markets to enable the safe movement of pedestrians using the bus stop and accessing the weekend markets.
- Signalised pedestrian crossings and paths have been constructed to upgrade the McMillans Road / Kalymnos Drive intersection.
- Pedestrian crossings were installed at the Tulagi Road / Stuart Highway intersection and the slip lanes at the Vanderlin Drive / Leanyer Drive intersection providing protection to pedestrians and cyclists at slip lanes.
- Collaboration with agencies to provide safer road crossing solutions for residents at the Batten Road accommodation facility in Darwin.
- A pedestrian study of Patterson Street in Tennant Creek is underway.
- Speed check signs are being installed in school zones on arterial roads.
- 6,000 high visibility t-shirts and beanies were produced by MACC for distribution to at-risk pedestrians.
- Back to School pedestrian media campaigns highlighting safety around schools are implemented at the start of each term.

What new actions could be considered?

In high risk pedestrian areas, implement technology based solutions which may include detecting pedestrians on roads and adjacent areas and activating warnings to drivers and implementing variable speed limits.
Develop a strategy to address pedestrian safety in areas surrounding bus stops and destinations such as licensed premises on higher speed roads.
Undertake a study of road-related pedestrian deaths and injuries to develop an understanding of key factors and issues associated with pedestrian road trauma in the Northern Territory.

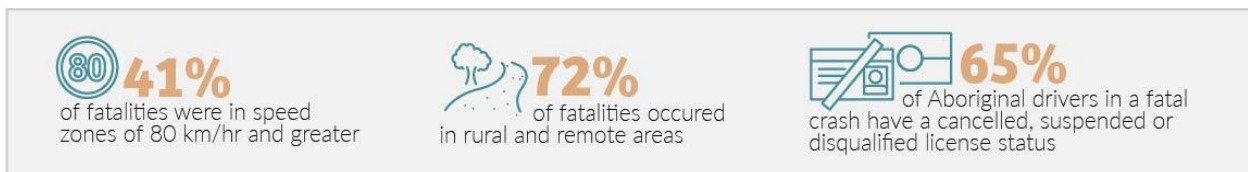
Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

Aboriginal people

Aboriginal people in the Territory comprise about 30 percent of the Territory population, however represent 52 percent of road crash fatalities and serious injuries. This contributes to significant and long-term effects on the well-being of families, communities and culture.

In the road safety context, there are many factors influencing poorer outcomes for Aboriginal people, including not wearing seatbelts or using child restraints, variable road conditions in remote areas, limited public transport options for remote communities, older vehicles and risky driver behaviour involving high levels of alcohol and drugs.

The following diagram shows factors relating to Aboriginal people in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

At the Road Safety Round Tables, there was strong support for retaining a focus on Aboriginal Territorians as a specific road safety priority. The value of the DriveSafe NT Remote program was acknowledged in delivering licensing services, however, the potential for increasing the availability of DriveSafe NT in remotised areas was raised. Additionally, providing driver training / practice in remote areas was considered important to communities and assisted in providing better employment outcomes.

Provision of reliable and frequent public transport options for regional and remote communities to provide an alternative to private travel was raised as a potential action. However, it was noted that degraded infrastructure and extreme weather conditions impact on the delivery of transport services in remote areas.

There were suggestions to provide more road safety information in relevant local language and promote improved understanding of road rules and licensing.

What has been achieved to date?

- Since the commencement of the [DriveSafe NT Remote Driver Program](#) in 2012, 74 community clusters have been visited.
- Since 2012, DriveSafe NT Remote has delivered 9,995 'L' licences and 2,940 'P' licences.
- [The Aboriginal Justice Agreement](#) has focussed on improving road safety outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

- Place-based strategies and initiatives have been developed to create positive road safety culture in partnership with remote communities. For example, a child restraint program was delivered in Ntaria which involved the provision of child restraints and education to mothers participating in [Families as First Teachers](#) programs.
- DriveSafe NT is working with the Clontarf Academy to assist young Aboriginal men to obtain their drivers licences.
- From 2018 to 2022, 61 Sessions have been held at the [Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre](#) educating youth from remote locations.
- Targeted and culturally appropriate road safety campaigns and education resources have been developed and delivered, with messaging in language.
- Targeted MACC regional and remote road safety campaigns have been developed in language for Drink Driving, Seatbelts and Drive to Conditions.

What new actions could be considered?

Work with the national Office of Road Safety to explore alternative transport options for remote communities.

Provide Road Safety information resources on regional and remote public transport services.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

Novice drivers

From 2012 to 2021, three percent of crashes in the Northern Territory which resulted in serious road trauma (fatalities and serious injuries) involved a learner driver.

Licensing data indicates that from 2012 to 2021, 34.9 percent of applicants applied for a learner licence at the current minimum learner age of 16 years. Licensing data for this same period, also provides that 52.0 percent of applicants who applied for a learner licence were aged between 16 and 19 years and 48.0 percent of applicants were over the age of 20 years.

From 2012 to 2021, six percent of crashes in the Northern Territory which resulted in serious road trauma involved a provisional driver. Drivers aged 16 years were involved in one percent of serious trauma crashes, drivers aged 17 years were involved in two percent of serious trauma crashes, and drivers aged 18 to 19 years were involved in 7 percent of serious trauma crashes.

The Northern Territory Government has reviewed existing licencing processes and is developing graduated licencing systems for motorcyclists and drivers.

The following diagram shows factors relating to novice drivers in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

Issues raised at the Road Safety Round Tables included the extended time taken for drivers in remote communities to progress from “L” to “P” within the DriveSafe NT program. The need for dedicated remote programs allowing learner and probationary drivers to have access to supervised driving practice, including vehicle use was highlighted.

Monitoring of novice driver performance through phone app technology was raised for consideration, as well as access to driving courses to increase skill levels. Use of driving simulators was also mentioned as a potential tool to increase skills; however, recent research suggests that there is not clear evidence that gamification and simulators provide greater benefits in assisting learner drivers.

What has been achieved to date?

- Graduated driver licencing schemes are under development for motorcyclists and drivers.
- Road safety school education resources and programs have been reviewed and updated.
- Work is being progressed with the Department of Education to deliver driving lessons credited towards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training.
- Since 2018, 1,157 [road safety education sessions](#) have been delivered to 46,681 students.
- DriveSafe NT Urban assists novice drivers to become licensed drivers by receiving subsidised driving lessons and face-to-face educational sessions. In 2022-2023, through the DriveSafe Urban Program, 2454 learner licences and 742 provisional licences were issued. Through DriveSafe NT Remote 1544 remote learner licences were issued and 416 provisional licences were issued in 2022-23.
- The [Senior School Choices Program](#) was delivered to 4,552 students in 80 sessions, over the last five years.
- The AANT, in conjunction with MACC and DIPL delivered the Street Smart High road safety event in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

What new actions could be considered?

Implement a Driver Graduated Licencing System.
Investigate the expansion of supervising driver programs in remote communities including potential alternative options.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists are approximately 3 percent of the registered vehicles in the NT; however, over the last decade, motorcyclists have accounted for 12 percent of lives lost and 14 percent of serious injury crashes. Behavioural factors such as an inappropriate or invalid licence, speed and alcohol remain common contributing factors in crashes. Motorcyclists do not have the benefit of crash protection and are prone to sustaining multiple injuries to the head, chest and legs either from direct contact with solid objects or as a result of crash forces.

Eight percent of motorcyclist fatalities held a learner’s licence, and approximately 60 percent of crashes occurred during daylight hours. Young riders aged 19 to 25, were involved in 25 percent of fatal crashes. Riders over 40, were involved in 42 percent of fatal crashes.

In recent years, all-terrain vehicle (quad bikes and off road buggies) riders have also been involved in a number of fatal crashes on roads and areas open to the public. Unlike motorcycles, quad bikes and off-road buggies are not manufactured for road use and do not meet national vehicle safety standards for road vehicles. As such, these vehicles cannot be registered for road use (unless they are approved for conditional registration) and use on public roads is an offence under the *Northern Territory Traffic Act 1987*.

The following diagram shows factors relating to motorcycle riders in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

At the Road Safety Round Tables, access to additional motorcycle training was suggested for all riders. Safe infrastructure for motorcyclists was also discussed including safer barriers and wider road shoulders.

Mandating protective motorcycle clothing was also raised as a potential action as currently in the Northern Territory, there are no mandatory protective clothing requirements. In 2022, a media campaign targeting protective clothing was released - [Dress for the Ride and the Slide](#).

Blind spot monitoring on vehicles to increase visibility of motorcycles was also raised for consideration.

What has been achieved to date?

- In 2019, legislation was amended to require a learner rider licence (and not a learner driver licence) to ride a moped.
- In 2020, a campaign was delivered outlining [Safety Tips for Quad Bikes Riders and Off-Road Buggy Drivers](#).
- Lane filtering regulations for motorcyclists was introduced in 2019.
- A Graduated Licensing System for motorcyclists is in development.
- A media campaign [Dress for the Ride and the Slide](#) to promote the wearing of protective motorcycle clothing was released in 2022.
- A motorcycle awareness media campaign is in development for delivery in 2024.

What new actions could be considered?

Implement a Motorcycle Graduated Licensing System.
Investigate the benefits of mandating protective motorcycle clothing or high visibility wear.
Investigate the benefits of motorcycle rider courses to refresh and improve riding skills.

**Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?**

Cyclists

Cycling for transport and recreation is a popular choice for people in urban centres in the Northern Territory. The 2023 annual National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey continues to identify that the Territory has one of the highest participation rates in Australia for cycling. The survey notes that cycling participation increases where there are safer separated riding options.

Serious injury for cyclists is higher than cycling fatalities in the Northern Territory representing three percent of serious injury over the last ten years.

The following diagram shows factors relating to cyclists in fatalities from 2012-2021:



Road Safety Round Table feedback

Road Safety Round Tables suggested that a mandatory requirement for helmet use could be considered. Infrastructure which separates cyclists and vehicles was also supported as well as potential identification and promotion of safer cycling routes.

What has been achieved to date?

- Over the last five years, more than 11 kilometres of shared paths have been constructed across the Territory, including construction of shared paths on Herbert Heritage Drive to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, Stott Terrace, Garramilla Boulevard, Undoolya Road, Chung Wah Terrace and Vanderlin Drive.
- A review of shared path infrastructure was completed for networks in Alice Springs, Greater Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Community feedback has identified and prioritised upgrades for inclusion in infrastructure planning.
- Over the last five years, approximately 156 school visits delivered bike safety theory and bike safety practical sessions in schools and at the Newland Park Bicycle Centre in Alice Springs and the Parap Road Safety Centre in Darwin. 88 community events were attended to promote safe bicycle use.
- In 2019, the 1 metre rule for overtaking cyclists was introduced. The road rules were also amended to permit a cyclist to ride slowly across a pedestrian crossing without dismounting.

What new actions could be considered?

Promote the benefits of wearing a bicycle helmet.
Continue to upgrade and extend the shared path network in major urban centres across the Northern Territory.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

5.2 Safe Roads

5.2.1 Infrastructure

Under the Safe Systems approach, roads and roadsides are designed to avoid the risk of crashes occurring or reduce the impact of a crash so that road users are not killed or seriously injured.

Over 70 percent of the Territory’s vast 36,000 km of road network is unsealed and is subject to extreme weather conditions. Remote Territorians rely on this network to travel long distances to access other communities or services in major towns. Remoteness and the high cost of maintenance and construction is an ongoing challenge in improving and maintaining road standards.

Over 73 percent of Northern Territory fatal crashes occur in rural and remote areas. Nearly 18 percent of crashes are on dry unsealed roads in remote areas, and this is an increasing trend. On rural and remote roads, “over-turned” and “run-off road” incidents account for 47 percent of crashes.

There are different challenges on urban road networks including higher traffic volumes and a greater number of vulnerable road users. The majority of pedestrian fatalities and 45 percent of motorcycle fatalities occur in urban centres.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Consistent themes emerged at both Road Safety Road Tables with a focus on audio tactile strips, widening of road shoulders, providing more overtaking opportunities and ensuring roads are fit for the speeds which are posted. Audio tactile strips are increasingly being implemented where appropriate on the road network. Overtaking opportunities have been assessed on the Stuart Highway corridor between Darwin and Katherine, with southbound overtaking lanes situated every 16.5 km or less and northbound overtaking lanes on average 22km apart. Speeds on unsealed roads and posted limits were raised as issues for further consideration.

Upgrading of rest stops was suggested to encourage drivers / riders to stop and rest and increased mobile connectivity at rest stops was considered important. Providing separate, heavy vehicle only, rest areas was also raised.

Management of active and passive rail crossings was raised as an issue. In the Northern Territory, there are 221 level crossings of which 35 are active (flashing lights and booms) and 174 passive (stop or give way) crossings, many of which are located on private roads. At the national level, options for improving train visibility are being investigated.

What has been achieved to date?

- A comprehensive risk assessment of the Northern Territory Government road network has been undertaken, commencing with high risk areas and urban areas.
- A Territory-wide policy to manage access on flooded roads is nearing completion.

- Ongoing implementation of Blackspot funding projects on Northern Territory and local government roads including guardrail barriers, lighting and intersection upgrades.
- Implementation of a \$203 million road safety program including shoulder widening and sealing, culvert extensions, guardrail barriers, audio tactile edge lines, intersection upgrades, truck parking bays, variable message signs and street lighting.
- Implementation of a \$55 million COVID Stimulus package including shoulder widening and sealing, culvert extensions, guardrail barriers, audio tactile edge lines, intersection upgrades, truck parking bays, and street lighting at roadhouses.
- Upgrade to seal standard on various sections of the Tanami Road, the Central Arnhem Highway, Port Keats Road, Maryvale Road, Litchfield Park Road, Gunn Point Road, Keep River Road and Tjukururu Road and the Plenty, Roper and Buntine Highways.
- Upgrade to two-lane seal standard on various sections of the Carpentaria, Tablelands and Buntine Highways.
- Construction of new bridges on Port Keats Road, Keep River Road, Litchfield Park Road, the Arnhem Highway and the Roper Highway to improve flood immunity.
- Commencement of the construction of the Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road intersection overpass to improve road safety and traffic flow.
- Construction of the Truck Central Transport Hub in Darwin to assist with the management of driver fatigue.
- Implementation of 28 variable message signs displaying road safety and traffic messages across the Northern Territory.

What new actions could be considered?

Implement a risk-based program of targeted works to identify road safety upgrades across the Northern Territory road network.
Support local governments to implement safe system infrastructure improvements including development of local area traffic management plans.
Review and implement overtaking lanes on the Stuart Highway between Darwin and Katherine and Katherine and the Carpentaria Highway intersection.
Implement a smart controller lighting program.
Work with other jurisdictions to investigate the potential road safety benefits of Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS).
Implement the NT Flooded Roads Policy.
Implement the NT Rest Area Strategy.
Develop a Road Safety Signage Strategy targeting safety messages on regional and remote roads.
Deliver training on the Safe System approach to road safety to NT road owners and managers.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

5.3 Safe Vehicles

Vehicle manufacturers are increasingly focusing on incorporating crash avoidance technology into vehicles as standard features, including lane keeping support, adaptive cruise control, blind spot detection and auto braking. The Australian Government has responsibility for ensuring that national standards through the Australian Design Rules, adopt the latest technology.

Recently mandated Australian Design Rules such as pole side impact protection, motorcycle anti-lock braking, and heavy vehicle stability control are expected to save an estimated 850 lives Australia-wide, over the next 15 years. However, to realise the benefits of these changes, uptake of new vehicles, often at increased cost, is required.

New vehicle purchases, including those with advanced road safety features, are expensive and generally out of reach for those who are financially disadvantaged. Access to vehicle service centres for those in remote areas, and the high cost of vehicle maintenance are further barriers to keeping a vehicle in safe working order.

Sixty five percent of fatalities involved a light vehicle (such as a sedan, station wagon and utility). Typically, crashes in more remote areas of the Northern Territory involve older vehicles without advanced safety systems.

[The Australasian New Car Assessment Program](#) (ANCAP) is an independent vehicle safety authority. ANCAP safety ratings are published for a range of new passenger, sports utility and light commercial vehicles entering the Australian and New Zealand markets, using a rating system of zero to five stars. ANCAP star ratings indicate the level of safety a vehicle provides for occupants and pedestrians in the event of a crash, as well as its ability, through technology, to avoid or minimise the effects of a crash.

The Northern Territory Government's NT Fleet has a minimum five star ANCAP rating for passenger and sports utilities vehicles. The resale of NT Fleet vehicles allows newer cars with enhanced safety features to be deployed into the local market, enhancing the overall fleet safety.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Round Table participants suggested that new technologies could be considered for new vehicles such as seatbelt locks and alcohol ignition interlocks and an older vehicle buy-back scheme was proposed, such as the Victorian [Unsafe2safe](#) program.

The ability of NT Police to remove un-roadworthy vehicles was raised as an issue and it was suggested that mechanisms to improve access to, and maintenance of vehicles in remote communities could contribute to safer driving outcomes.

What work has already been done / what work will continue to be done?

- The NT Fleet network purchasing policy requires all passenger vehicles and sports utilities to have a minimum five star ANCAP rating.
- Ongoing promotion of five star ANCAP rated vehicles and vehicle safety features.
- Implementation of the [Check.Plan.Go](#) campaign which promotes the importance of checking that your vehicle is well maintained and checking road conditions before embarking on road trips.
- The safe introduction of automated vehicles is being considered at the national level, which may have the potential to significantly reduce crashes caused by human error.

What new actions could be considered?

Investigate the road safety benefits of incentive schemes for increasing the uptake of safer vehicles.
Investigate options for servicing and maintaining vehicles in remote areas.
Investigate options for vehicle impounding and confiscation for un-roadworthy vehicles.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

5.3.1 Heavy vehicles

The Northern Territory relies on the heavy vehicle industry to move a significant proportion of freight, intrastate and interstate. Heavy vehicles (including light rigid to heavy articulated trucks and buses) represent about 6 percent of the registered fleet of vehicles in the Northern Territory and all categories of heavy vehicles have an average age of 13 years. Of the 401 fatalities between 2012 and 2021, 7 percent of these were heavy vehicle related.

Heavy vehicles operate under an open access regime in the Northern Territory on a vast network of roads, of which 75 percent are unsealed. These roads are through some of the most remote areas in Australia and are subject to varying and extreme weather conditions at any time of the year. Road conditions and remoteness can play a major role in influencing vehicle crashes and outcomes.

In remote areas of the Northern Territory, heavy vehicle drivers are often the first on the scene at a road crash and are called on to provide interim, often lifesaving first aid. The trauma effects of being a first responder can be lifelong and training and support for heavy vehicle drivers has been provided by industry associations.

In the Northern Territory heavy vehicle fatigue management is managed through a Work Health and Safety approach and implemented by NT Worksafe. Updated guidelines for heavy vehicle fatigue management are currently in development.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Road Safety Round Table participants raised the issue of heavy vehicle driver experience as a factor in crashes. An education and awareness campaign specifically targeting road use interactions with heavy vehicles was also suggested. Potential infrastructure solutions discussed included widening of shoulders and increasing overtaking opportunities.

What has been achieved to date?

- Supporting the uptake of newer, safer heavy vehicles by reviewing potential regulatory barriers.
- Ongoing implementation of infrastructure upgrade programs across the Northern Territory.
- Updated guidelines for heavy vehicle fatigue management are in development.

What new actions could be considered?

Monitor the development, implementation and operation of amendments to the National Heavy Vehicle fatigue management framework and consider the potential for strengthening the Territory’s framework, recognising the Territory context.

Relevant Government agencies work together to increase awareness of heavy vehicle fatigue management and strengthen coordinated enforcement activity.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

5.3.2 Personal Mobility Devices

Personal Mobility Devices include a range of innovative devices such as electric scooters (e-scooters), electric skateboards and self-balancing one-wheel or two-wheel devices. In 2020, the City of Darwin commenced a trial to operate a fleet of e-scooters in a defined area within the city and surrounding suburbs.

In 2021, model Australian Road Rules were developed, with some states and territories adopting a modified set of rules which define the safe and legal use of PMDs. The Northern Territory has yet to implement the rules and is working at the national level to review road rules for PMDs and achieve a consistent and evidence based approach to regulation across all jurisdictions.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

New technologies were supported by Road Safety Round Table participants, however, the need for rules around how and where the devices operate was identified. Education and awareness campaigns were suggested as well as providing appropriate infrastructure to support safe riding. The role of the Australian Government in controlling the import of devices was also discussed as well as promotion of safe riding by local champions or ambassadors.

What has been achieved to date?

- Introduction of a framework which allows for a trial of e-scooters by the City of Darwin.
- Ongoing development of policy at the local and national level for the safe and legal use of PMDs in the Northern Territory.
- Ongoing development and maintenance of separated infrastructure to support PMD use.

What new actions could be considered?

Develop a PMD legislative reform package.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

5.3.3 Connected and automated vehicles

Automation of the driving task is evolving rapidly and has the significant potential to reduce road trauma. Whilst almost all new passenger vehicles will include advanced safety features by 2030 and some elements of automation, mass deployment of autonomous vehicles on public road networks is expected to come later.

At the national level, work continues to progress a new regulatory framework and to prepare the road network for connected and automated vehicle developments. This includes planning for supporting infrastructure, technologies and safety regulations to enable the safe adoption of automated vehicles. Work is also continuing to understand potential risks associated with autonomous vehicle use as well as the potential benefits that these vehicles can deliver, such as crash reduction relating to human error.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

At the Road Safety Round Tables, it was felt that uptake of connected and automated vehicles in the Northern Territory would be slow, due to the nature of the Territory's road infrastructure and remote context.

What has been achieved to date?

- Ongoing involvement at the national level to prepare for, and understand the costs and benefits of introducing autonomous vehicles.

5.3.4 Workplace road safety

Vehicles used for work-related travel are considered part of the workplace. It is likely that work-related road trauma is significantly under-reported as crashes involving work-related travel is not recorded in crash data unless the vehicle involved was obviously identifiable as being driven for work (such as a heavy vehicle or bus). Road works zones are also workplaces and appropriate controls are needed to protect road workers.

An emerging issue interstate is the rapid increase in food and other delivery services and crashes involving delivery drivers and riders. The industry is less developed in the Northern Territory's urban centres and consequently the road safety risk is lower.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Road Safety Round Table participants noted that there is a perceived issue with driver compliance with road signs at work zones and questioned if there can be more information provided to road users raise awareness of the issue. Further information about vehicles as a workplace and safe driving around worksites, is available on the Towards Zero website at [Resources - Towards Zero - Road Safety \(nt.gov.au\)](https://resources.towardszero.gov.au/road-safety). Feedback also highlighted that some road work zones appear to not be maintained or have signs removed when works has completed. Nationally, work is proceeding towards a National Registration Framework for temporary traffic management. This framework will provide a consistent and streamlined approach to the registration of organisations seeking to provide traffic management services.

What work has already been done / what work will continue to be done?

- [Safe Driving guidelines for Workplaces](#) have been developed and promoted.
- Resources to promote road safety around roadworks and working on roads have been developed [Resources - Towards Zero - Road Safety \(nt.gov.au\)](#).
- Data has been provided to the Australian Government to assist in the establishment of a baseline for workplace fatalities involving a vehicle.

What new actions could be considered?

Increase the use of C-ITS opportunities for encouraging compliance with speed limits at road work sites.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed action? Are there any actions missing?

6 Data and research

Building capability is a key to understanding the complex and unpredictable nature of road safety data. Improved national and Northern Territory road safety data and reporting will assist road safety practitioners, road safety delivery partners and the community to understand and better respond with more effective, best practice and innovative solutions. At a national level, progress is being made on bringing together more comprehensive national serious injury data.

Research is vital to refining existing approaches to road safety and developing new initiatives. At the national level, a targeted road safety research program is being progressed. As a small jurisdiction, the Northern Territory will focus on identifying issues specifically related to the Northern Territory context for input into the national research program.

Road Safety Round Table feedback

Road Safety Round Table participants highlighted the need for more targeted and comprehensive data to enable and support effective evidence-based decision making.

What has been achieved to date?

- The [TZ 2018-2022 website](#) was created to promote safer road use and road rule awareness, host relevant reports and provide road safety data.
- Data collection and research has been undertaken to inform road safety programs and policy including longitudinal studies into road user attitudes.
- Northern Territory road safety crash data is provided to stakeholders on request. Additionally the most recent Northern Territory crash statistics, Northern Territory annual crash statistics, Australian crash statistics, and Northern Territory driver licensing and registration statistics are published on the [Towards Zero website](#).
- Northern Territory de-identified crash data is provided to complete national crash data sets and is essential for monitoring the performance of road safety measures at the national level.

What new actions could be considered?

Work with the national Office of Road Safety to support development of a National Road Safety Data Collection and Reporting Framework.
Review and improve NT road safety data collection and reporting processes.
Provide access to NT road safety data on the NT Government’s open data portal.
Review driver education programs in response to road safety attitudinal research.
Ensure remote and regional road safety issues are included in the national road safety research program.

Have Your Say question:
Do you agree with the proposed actions? Are there any actions missing?

7 Next steps

This Discussion Paper has been prepared to guide the development of the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028. Following consultation on this Discussion Paper, feedback will inform the development of the new Action Plan. The Action Plan will also be guided by the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Many potential actions have been incorporated into this Discussion Paper. A number of the actions are related to continuing work. Following your feedback, the Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 will highlight the high level, more strategic actions as deliverables, while making reference to a range of ongoing actions which will continue to be implemented for each priority area.

Appendix 1 TZ 2018-2022 ACTIONS

The following 33 actions have been delivered:

- Action 1.2 – Increase dedicated police traffic enforcement activities, to support priority areas.
- Action 1.3 – Evaluate and strengthen road safety education programs including road safety education in the school curriculum.
- Action 1.4 – Explore incentive programs which reward good driver / rider behaviour with other organisations.
- Action 1.5 – Enable expanded transport options including a review of urban and remote transport networks.
- Action 2.1 – Legislation for the implementation of a Blood Alcohol Concentration limit for supervising drivers.
- Action 2.2 – Review penalties for drug driving and the process for prosecution.
- Action 2.4 – Deliver a targeted drug driving community awareness campaign that is aligned with police enforcement.
- Action 3.1 – MACC Aboriginal child restraint program.
- Action 4.1 – Increased penalties for mobile phone use.
- Action 4.4 – Deliver a driver distraction awareness campaign, aligned with police enforcement.
- Action 4.5 – Develop a consistent speed limit policy across the Northern Territory for consideration by Government, including high speed intersections, high volume pedestrian areas, and local government roads.
- Action 4.3 – MACC speed and drive to the conditions campaign.
- Action 5.1 – Complete a comprehensive Safe System risk assessment of the Northern Territory road network, commencing with high risk areas within urban areas.
- Action 5.3 – Review and improve road safety signage across the Northern Territory road network including increase speed awareness signs, distance to destinations, overtaking lanes and rest stops.
- Action 5.6 – Continue to invest in roads infrastructure in the Northern Territory including rest stops, road sealing and river crossing upgrades.
- Action 6.1 – five star ANCAP rating promotion.
- Action 6.2 – Safe Driving Guidelines for Workplaces that guide the development of policies and programs.
- Action 7.1 – Develop place-based strategies and initiatives to create positive road safety culture in partnership with remote communities.
- Action 7.2 – Continue to expand DriveSafe NT Remote to maximise road safety outcomes in communities.
- Action 7.3 – Develop and deliver targeted culturally appropriate road safety campaigns and messaging in language, including school resources.

- Action 8.2 – Strengthening of driver training and testing.
- Action 8.3 – Develop targeted strategies and initiatives to create a positive road safety culture for young Territorians.
- Action 9.1 – Introduction of lane filtering for motorcyclists.
- Action 9.4 – All-terrain vehicles and off-road buggy safety awareness campaign.
- Action 9.5 – Encourage the widespread use of protective motorcycle clothing.
- Action 11.1 – Convert the multilingual travel planner into a user-friendly mobile application.
- Action 11.2 – Improve road safety information on major tourist routes, at rest stops and at points of hire.
- Action 12.1 – Invest in separated cycling infrastructure.
- Action 12.2 – Promote bike education for school students and safe cycling with other groups, such as heavy vehicles.
- Action 12.3 – Introduction of a minimum overtaking distance law for passing cyclists (the ‘1 metre rule’).
- Action 13.1 – TZ 2018-22 website.
- Action 13.2 – Road Safety Community Grants scheme.
- Action 13.4 – Continue the road safety discussion with Territorians to ensure government, business and the community work together to improve road safety outcomes.

The following eight actions are ongoing:

- Action 1.6 – Continually monitor, evaluate, and introduce emerging technology that assists in achieving the vision of the plan.
- Action 5.2 – Develop a targeted road safety infrastructure investment program to target high risk areas, including investing in tactile edging, line marking, shoulder widening, barriers and rest areas.
- Action 5.5 – Continue to lobby the Australian Government for continued funding support for roads investment in the Northern Territory.
- Action 5.7 – Explore the opportunities for the use of Intelligent Transport Systems (I.T.S) and plan for the accommodation of automated vehicles.
- Action 7.4 – Develop strategies to address the over representation of Aboriginal people incarcerated for traffic offences.
- Action 7.5 – Develop targeted and culturally appropriate strategies to minimise possible suspension of licences, as a result of any unpaid fines.
- Action 10.1 – Ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place at all high risk pedestrian areas, including lighting, fencing and safe crossing options.
- Action 13.3 – Undertake research and improve data collection, including longitudinal studies into road use and road user attitudes, to inform the development of targeted initiatives.

The following two actions are being progressed to completion in 2024:

- Action 5.4 – Develop a Territory-wide policy to manage access to flooded roads.
- Action 9.3 – Implement a motorcycle safety community awareness campaign aligned with police enforcement.

The following six actions require additional work and will continue to be progressed in the new Towards Zero Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028:

- Action 1.1 – Develop a repeat offender penalty regime for consideration by government. The regime may include: clamping / seizure and / or other penalties for repeat drink / drug drivers, seatbelt offences, speeding, mobile phone offences, driving unregistered / unlicensed and a review of the Alcohol Ignition Lock program. Impacts on remote communities to be considered.
- Action 2.3 – Develop options for approved drink driver education programs to increase accessibility and maximise uptake.
- Action 4.2 – Review the coverage of red light / speed cameras; identify and increase the use of technological solutions, including ANPR, to support increased enforcement of traffic offences.
- Action 4.6 – Implement new speed enforcement technology including point to point and mobile infringement units.
- Action 8.1 – Develop a revised Graduated Licensing System for car drivers, adopting best practise (where appropriate for the Northern Territory) for consideration by government.
- Action 9.2 – Develop a standalone Graduated Licensing System for motorcyclists (including mopeds and scooters), which considers mandating rider training, for consideration by government.