



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Communications

## Office of Road Safety: Update Eight – April 2020

### Recent Events

The Office of Road Safety apologises for the long delay in providing an update. Many of you have been talking to Departmental Executive and the Office of Road Safety, so you're aware that things have been moving, but notwithstanding how much the world has changed in recent weeks, it's important to look back at some of the great developments over the last few months as well as foreshadow what's to come.

### Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety – Stockholm

It's hard to believe it's not even two months since Pip Spence, Gabby O'Neill and Mark Ellis attended the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm on 19-20 February. It was great to see so many industry delegates from Australia there, and we were particularly lucky that the new Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety, Mr Pat Conaghan MP, was also able to attend. The conference focused on achieving global goals by 2030 and highlighted that we must use treatments that are fit for purpose and address road safety issues within our own context.

The number of Australians that contributed to the international agenda reinforced the fact that we are world leaders in road safety and have a lot to share with our international counterparts. An informal gathering of "the Australians" was held over breakfast on the first morning of the conference. The breadth of experience and knowledge was impressive and it was a great opportunity to renew existing ties and friendship.

Australia also played a leading role at critical pre events - with Rob McNerney organising the foundational iRap workshop of the conference and Towards Zero represented by Lauchlan McIntosh and Jessica Truong advocating for the universality of vehicle safety. The work of Rob, Lauchlan and Jessica is far reaching, supporting international development where it's needed most as well as advocating for a lift in the standards of our most developed countries.

### Christmas 2019-20 Period

As many of you would be aware, over the 2019-20 Christmas period, there was a reduction in road fatalities from 41 in the year prior to 31 lives lost. This is the lowest since 2014. Data for January also showed a 27.7% decrease in national road fatalities, from 119 lives lost in January 2019 to 86 this year. Whilst this shows improvement, this is still too many.

### National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030

Preparations for the next National Road Safety Strategy are well underway. In early February, the Executive Director of Surface Transport Policy, Jessica Hall, and the Head of the Office of Road Safety, Gabby O'Neill, led discussions with our state and territory counterparts at the Cross

Jurisdictional Road Safety Working Group on the approach to the next Strategy. This is still to be considered by senior officials and ministers, but we remain committed to working with you as we progress the development of the strategy, in particular testing with you some of the ideas, and building on your experience.

## Road Safety Programs

In terms of our programs, there were 20 successful projects announced under the Road Safety Awareness and Enablers Fund in January. The projects selected range in focus from local roads to national education initiatives. Our \$12 million Road Safety Innovation Fund to support road safety research and the development of new road safety technologies and products is expected to open in the coming months, with grants to support research and development across a range of priority areas, including 'mainstreaming' road safety. The Innovation Fund will be complementary to but not duplicate existing research and development investment.

## Department Update

As some of you may be aware, from 1 February this year, the Department merged with the former Department of Communications and the Arts, to form a larger Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. With this development comes some structural change and Pip Spence has moved from the role of Deputy Secretary for the Transport Group to that of Chief Operating Officer. Pip notes:

*While this is an amazing (and challenging) job in the current environment, it's difficult to move away from the work that we are doing on road safety. It's been incredibly rewarding with all of you and my colleagues in the states and territories with a renewed focus on road safety, and I am proud of the progress we have all achieved on this deeply important issue. Jessica and Gabby remain in their roles, and David Hallinan, in his role as Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Surface Transport Policy Group will be taking over from me. With such a great team in place, I am confident in the outcomes that we can achieve.*

## COVID-19

The Office of Road Safety appreciates that the spread of coronavirus is having a significant impact on everyone's lives in an unpredictable way. We hope you can stay informed and work within the guidelines provided by government so that you can minimise health risks for you, your employees and your families.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with Jessica, Gabby and the Office of Road Safety team via [officeofroadsafety@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:officeofroadsafety@infrastructure.gov.au). We hope you have a safe Easter.