



South Australia Police

Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2026





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Acknowledgement of Country

South Australia Police acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations, and recognises them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.

Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters.

Why road safety is critical



Grant Stevens APM LEM
Commissioner of Police
South Australia Police

Road safety is important to all people who use the South Australian road network. Why? Because we don't want people to die or be seriously injured on our roads. Having safer roads, safer vehicles and safer road users ensures we can use the road network and arrive at our destination safely. Frustratingly, crashes on our roads are preventable, do not discriminate and the devastating effects are felt long after the initial impact.

Fatal and serious injury crashes have a shattering impact on the people involved as well as families, friends, workplaces and communities. Between 2018 and 2022, there were 457 lives lost and 3,867 people were seriously injured in crashes on our roads. Those 457 South Australians will not be attending family celebrations, workplaces, team sports and community events. It represents thousands of people who suffer ongoing trauma, pain, and physical and mental challenges throughout their lives.

Working together as a community to achieve a reduction in road trauma is part of building 'safer communities'. This will only be achieved through ongoing education, enforcement, partnership development and harnessing technological opportunities in the road safety space. It is not just frontline police officers who can make a difference. It is incumbent upon all SAPOL employees to be proactive in promoting

road safety within both the organisation and the community to make our roads safer. If you are unsure why this is so important, just ask someone who has lost a loved one to road trauma.

We will continue to ensure a coordinated and evidence-based deployment of our people and resources to significantly reduce the incidence and impact of road trauma. Intelligence will be used to ensure we are proactively deployed to the right locations at the most effective time, to enhance enforcement activities and positively influence driver behaviour.

Engaging with the community to provide road safety education, particularly to our vulnerable road users, is a priority. Combining education and enforcement is the optimal approach to positively influencing safer driver behaviour. People know they should behave responsibly on our roads, which is why enforcement is important and necessary as part of influencing change.

Developing and building on existing partnerships will support a collaborative approach to road safety. Partnerships will assist in the development of technological and legislative opportunities to improve road safety and will be developed within the state and nationally. This will ensure SAPOL remains relevant, effective and contemporary in the road safety environment.

What others are saying about road safety

Holly Scott – SAPOL Road Safety Ambassador

Car crashes can happen in a blink of an eye, as it only takes seconds for something to go wrong. Leaving your home and getting back safely is such an underrated blessing many take for granted.

Glynis and Michael Holbrook – Victims of road trauma

As a family affected by road trauma, with the death of our 18-year-old son, we would like to see all of the agencies committed to road safety fall under one umbrella, pooling their resources and knowledge to formulate a solid and sustainable 10-year plan. We believe that zero fatalities on our roads could become not just a target but a realisation.

Steve Dumesy – Victim of road trauma

I lost my daughter Kristalle in a car crash in 2017 and have worked with SAPOL to tell her story in episode 2 of the 'Fatal Five True Stories' podcast. I feel that sharing road trauma in this way brings home a strong road safety message of how a crash can impact so many people, not just the family but the first responders, witnesses, friends and the community. If it helps save one life I'll be so very grateful.

Phillip Wright – Driver involved in a fatal collision

A decision I made on the road when I was 18 years old had catastrophic consequences on not only myself but so many others. Everyone involved in that crash still lives with that trauma today. I feel strongly about sharing my story with others to ensure they don't make the same mistakes I did and they are made aware how important road safety is.

Brevet Sergeant Kirsten McLoughlin – Investigator, Major Crash Investigation Section

Educating road users about the consequences of risk taking or inattentive behaviours on our roads is vital to reduce serious injury and fatal collisions so people don't have to experience the devastation of road trauma.

Jade Wilson – Coordinator, Aboriginal Road Safety and Driver Licencing, Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Without road safety, we will continue to experience the trauma from losing our loved ones from preventable crashes.

Robert Sharp – Community member

Enforcement needs to be a priority to ensure that drug and drink drivers are removed from our roads. I think further development of regional roads and road safety education for those driving on regional roads is important.

Lachlan Cooper - Student

Road safety is important because it prevents accidents and educates people on how to stay safe on our roads. It's important to start learning early.

Fatal Five and crash data 2018–2022

457

Deaths

3,867

Serious injury
crashes



on South Australian roads

318

Deaths occurred
in rural areas

139

Deaths occurred in
the metropolitan area

The breakdown of fatalities

232

Drivers

65

Passengers

76

Motorcycle
riders*

57

Pedestrians

24

Cyclists

* this number includes 3 motorcycle passengers

Fatalities attributed to the Fatal Five

70

Seatbelts

92

Speeding

198

Distraction

156

Drinking/
drug driving

125

Dangerous
road users

73

Alcohol

61

Drug

22

Both drug
and alcohol in
their system

Tested positive for alcohol and
drugs in their system while driving:

22,266

for alcohol

27,121

for drugs



Fatalities by gender

Female
113



Male
344

Our commitment to keeping the South Australian community safe on our roads

Our aim

To stop people dying on our roads and to reduce the incidence and severity of road trauma in South Australia by making the roads a safer place for everyone in the community.

Our road safety target

At least 50% reduction in lives lost and at least 30% reduction in serious injuries (per capita) on South Australian roads by 2030. SAPOL is seeking zero lives lost on our roads by 2050.



Our priority areas

It is a critical part of our core business that every SAPOL employee has a part to play in promoting road safety, not just within our own organisation, but also across the South Australian community, helping in some way to keep everyone safe on our roads. We will continue to target and develop road safety initiatives that are aimed at reducing road trauma across the state.

We have identified nine priority areas that will assist in the reduction of lives lost on South Australian roads. The priority areas for SAPOL are:

- Focusing on the over-representation of First Nations peoples in road crashes.
- Focusing on road safety for people aged 16-24 years.
- Focusing on road safety for people 70 years of age and over.
- Improving safety for people who walk, cycle and use other forms of personal transport.
- Focusing on regional and remote roads.
- Increasing capabilities to conduct research to identify trends in vehicle crashes and driver behaviour.
- Developing targeted road safety campaigns that are aligned with an operational focus.

- Identifying technological and legislative opportunities to improve road safety outcomes.
- Focusing on enhancing enforcement activities.

The Fatal Five causes of road trauma on our roads will continue to direct our operations and advertising campaigns. The Fatal Five are:

- drink and drug driving
- speeding
- distraction
- seatbelts
- dangerous road users.

We will continue to develop and promote road safety education to the community and initiate road safety operations that target dangerous road users and recidivist offenders.

Our Road Safety Centre is a leader in road safety education, playing a vital role in reducing road trauma by enhancing the awareness, knowledge and skills of all road users through lifelong learning.

We will continue to lead the way in road safety behaviour change communications and advertising, employing contemporary and evidence-based methods to positively influence road user decision-making.

Priority One:

Why we are focusing on the over representation of First Nations peoples in road crashes

We are committed to enhancing our engagement with First Nations communities who continue to be over-represented in road trauma in South Australia. Their over-representation is due to factors including road conditions in remote areas, difficulties for young First Nations people obtaining support in attaining a driver's licence, older vehicles, lack of transport options and the lack of road safety education. To ensure we are 'closing the gap' we will engage with formal partners to enable shared decision-making with First Nations communities in the road safety space.

How we are addressing this issue

- Engage and collaborate with First Nations communities and partner agencies to inform and develop culturally appropriate road safety media, marketing and educational materials.
- Work towards making road safety education accessible and relevant to community members residing on the APY Lands and other remote locations across the state.
- Translate road safety related information and education resources into relevant languages.
- We will take every opportunity during contact with First Nations community members to promote road safety and educate motorists to stop the over-representation on our roads.



What we know

First Nations people comprise approximately **2.4%** of South Australia's population but are **2-3 times** more likely to **lose their life** and **30%** more likely to **suffer a serious injury in a crash** than non-Aboriginal people. (SARSS, p.29)

26%



of First Nations drivers and riders who lost their life or were seriously injured (and tested) had an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at the time of the crash.

(SARSS, p.29)

36%

of First Nations licence holders are aged **16-29**

47%

of First Nations drivers and riders involved in crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury were in the **16-29 years** group.

(SARSS, p.29)

It is likely that First Nations road safety data is under-reported when taking into account the under-representation in road safety data and the over-representation in public health data (presenting with injuries). (SARSS, p.29)

Priority Two:

Why we are focusing on road safety for people aged 16-24 years

Learning to drive is exciting for novice drivers, however, staying safe on the road is important for all drivers. Despite steady falls in the lives lost on South Australian roads over the past decade, drivers aged 16-24 years continue to be over-represented in road trauma statistics. In 2021, we engaged our first Road Safety Ambassador, Ms Holly Scott. The role of a SAPOL Road Safety Ambassador is to attend road safety sessions to add real-life insight into the consequences of being involved in a crash. We will continue to use Road Safety Ambassadors to enforce and support the road safety messages delivered by SAPOL and to increase our reach to this age group.

How we are addressing this issue

- Our Road Safety Section will continue to be a leader in the delivery of road safety sessions to this cohort and ensure this service is provided to both regional and metropolitan schools and community groups throughout South Australia.
- Develop and use online and social media platforms to communicate relevant road safety messaging to this age group.
- Take every opportunity during contact with this cohort to promote road safety.
- Engage and work with new partners to support the reduction of road trauma in this age group.



What we know

Between **2020–2022** in South Australia

The **16-19 years** group represents **4.4%** of the population, yet represents **10.3%** of lives lost and **8.7%** of serious injuries.

The **20-24 years** group represents **6.2%** of the population, yet represents **12.2%** of lives lost and **10.9%** of serious injuries.

59

lives lost
aged **16-24**

47

of the **59** were
male (79%).

517

fatal and serious injury
crashes involving **16-24**
year olds.

259

of these occurred within
rural areas.

Priority Three:

Why we are focusing on road safety for people 70 years of age and over

Staying safe on the road is important for all road users, however, as we get older there are physical changes which can affect our driving skills. This can also affect our confidence and result in feelings of nervousness on busy roads and at intersections.

We often hear from older people in our community proudly describing their many years of driving without ever being involved in a crash, receiving a traffic infringement, or even getting a parking ticket. It is important to acknowledge their contribution to the South Australian community by keeping themselves, their families and others safe on our roads.

However, recent statistics indicate an escalation and over-representation of lives lost in the 70+ age group.

How we are addressing this issue

- Continue to develop innovative ways to provide digital road safety messaging to this age group as not all current methods, such as social media, attract this demographic.
- Engage with older road users and provide relevant information, road safety sessions and alternative options for those who face challenges to continue to drive safely on our roads.
- Engage relevant stakeholders such as Council on the Ageing (COTA) and the medical profession to assist in formulating road safety messaging and assistance.



What we know

Between **2020–2022** in South Australia

in the **70+** age group

47
lives lost



296
seriously
injured

This is a total of **18% of all lives lost** for that period.

Road users **70+**
make up **13.9%** of the
population yet account for
18% of all lives lost and
13.9% of serious injuries
in road crashes.

Drivers and other road users
aged 70+ are involved in a
relatively small number of
crashes, but these crashes are
more likely to be more severe
in part due to the fragility and
frailty of these older users.

Priority Four:

Why we are focusing on improving safety for people who walk, cycle and use other forms of personal transport

Pedestrians and cyclists are more vulnerable because they do not have the structure of a vehicle to protect them from serious injuries or loss of life on our roads. Children and older community members are more at risk of a pedestrian related crash with the majority of those crashes occurring within the metropolitan area due to higher traffic volumes. The cycling participation rate in South Australia is similar to the national average. Approximately 13% of the population ride weekly and just under one third have ridden in the past year (SARSS, p.31).

The use of other forms of personal transport, such as motorised wheelchairs, power assisted bicycles, wheeled recreational devices and electric personal transporters is increasing in South Australia. This provides further challenges within the road safety space. It is important that community members understand when and where these other forms of transport can be used on South Australian roads. We are committed to ensuring safe roads as future personal transport options develop.

How we are addressing this issue

- Develop partnerships with the cycling community to promote road safety education to reduce the incidents of crashes involving cyclists. This will include promoting road safety at major cycling events such as the Tour Down Under.
- Digital and social media will be used to promote the vulnerabilities of both cyclists and pedestrians to drivers on South Australian roads.
- Continue to provide school crossing monitor training to students who perform this role across the state, ensuring that pedestrian safety is taught from a young age and embedded in our lifelong road safety education.
- Provide relevant road safety information regarding the use of motorised wheelchairs, power assisted bicycles, wheeled recreational devices and electric personal transporters which are increasing in popularity within the South Australian community.
- Collaborate with other agencies regarding the use of alternative personal transport options to ensure the safety of all road users.



What we know

Between **2020–2022** in South Australia

Pedestrians are at greater risk of death and injury if hit at impact **speeds above 30 km/h.**

From the **302 pedestrians** injured or killed, **240** were from **metropolitan Adelaide.**

24% of pedestrians who lose their lives or who are seriously injured are **70+.**

The majority of cyclists who lost their lives **on rural roads** were **hit from behind.**

80% of cyclist lives lost were from crashes that **involved another vehicle.**

Pedestrian serious injuries have consistently increased by **4%** each year over the last five years and cyclist serious injuries have increased on average by **25%** over the last five years.

E-scooters are being trialled across metropolitan Adelaide.

Priority Five:

Why we are focusing on regional and remote roads

Driving on country or regional roads comes with a different set of challenges to driving in the metropolitan area. Unsealed road conditions in regional areas can change very quickly depending on weather and other environmental factors. Road surfaces and diminished visibility may also be a factor when travelling on regional roads. There are times when slow or heavy vehicles can create frustration with some drivers who can then become impatient and take unnecessary risks. Crashes involving vehicles leaving the road remain one of the single biggest causes of lives lost on our regional roads. Drink driving and not wearing a seatbelt are also common contributing factors to lives lost and serious injuries in country areas.

How we are addressing this issue

- Continue to develop enforcement opportunities using an evidence-based approach to target identified regional locations of risk.
- Develop regional specific road safety education, engagement, community partnerships and promotional opportunities to engage with regional communities.
- Continue to use ongoing mass media advertising campaigns that highlight the dangers inherent with driving on regional roads, specifically educating regional residents.
- Enhance enforcement capabilities in regional areas through regular and targeted support from centralised and specialist road safety resources.



What we know

Between 2020–2022 in South Australia

69.6%
of all lives lost
occurred on rural roads
and are an increasing trend.

Almost a third
of those who
lost their lives
on rural roads
resided within
10kms
of the crash location.

In 2022, **46** of the **71**
lives lost



occurred on
regional roads.

Crashes on regional roads can be attributed to unstable or changing road conditions; long periods of continuous time spent driving; and the higher speed limits permitted on these roads.

Priority Six:

We provide a coordinated, evidence-based deployment of resources to identified locations with an aim to diminish road crashes, lives lost and serious injuries occurring on our roads. Evidence-based intelligence analysis will be used to ensure resources are deployed to the right locations at the most effective time to influence driver behaviour.

Why we are focusing on increasing capabilities to conduct research to identify trends in vehicle crashes and driver behaviour

How we are addressing this issue

- Continue to address issues that are identified by crash and enforcement data analysis. This provides a demographic profile of those most likely to be involved in road trauma and the key characteristics of those crashes.
- Intelligence and data analysis will provide direction in planning when to have a road safety advertising campaign in market, who to target and how best to communicate road safety messages.
- Enhance existing relationships with UniSA Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR), Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) and other stakeholders, such as Council on the Ageing (COTA) and Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA), to facilitate priority road safety research.



What we know

Research and analysis of **enforcement data** and **crash data** identifies **vulnerable road users**, as well as **high risk crash locations**, and other patterns and trends that assist with evidence-informed targeted policing.

This research and analysis guides SAPOL in the development of their media and marketing campaigns; directs the location of mobile speed cameras and Random Breath Testing sites; and assists in designating particular traffic operations - including targeting recidivist offending drivers.

Operation Safe Hills

is a long-standing traffic operation that focuses on **motorcycle behaviour in the Adelaide Hills** and surrounding areas during the warmer months of October through to March each year.

13,784 **drivers or riders** were detected for a **speed offence** during Operation Safe Hills 2020-2021.

Priority Seven:

Why we are focusing on developing targeted road safety campaigns that are aligned with an operational focus

All of our operations, education and road safety engagement opportunities will be supported by road safety public education campaigns that incorporate the depth and breadth of traditional, digital and social media platforms. It is important that we will align targeted operations with media messaging for maximum impact to address road safety issues on our roads.

How we are addressing this issue

- Ensure the placement of road safety media and marketing campaigns are coordinated to be in market with our traffic enforcement operations, delivering the best practice behavioural change approach of education in conjunction with enforcement.
- Traditional mass media messages will appropriately target current and changing mediums used by the community, to ensure maximum penetration of messages across generations and community types.
- Digital and social media road safety related messaging will complement enforcement operations, support multi-media campaigns and engage with online audiences generally to raise awareness of road safety.
- Engage external media outlets, such as press and broadcast media news services, to seek editorial input to support the road safety campaign message and broaden opportunities for road safety education throughout the community.



What we know

SAPOL develop approximately **six major** and **two minor multi-media campaigns** targeting the **Fatal Five** causes of road trauma each year.

It generally takes **6-8 months** for a **major multi-media campaign** to be developed. This includes researching the target audience; developing creative ideas; concept testing the creative; internal and government approvals; producing the various multi-media content; booking media space; and then conducting and preparing an evaluation.

The community and their information needs are dynamic and we need to continue to evolve our messaging methods and modes to meet these community needs.

Other issues that are identified through evidence-informed research will also feature in targeted road safety campaigns.

SAPOL's multi-media campaigns will include as many innovative forms of media and marketing platforms that are available at the time.

Priority Eight:

Why we are focusing on identifying technologies and legislative opportunities to improve road safety outcomes

Technology is ever advancing and facilitates opportunities to improve road safety outcomes in prevention, enforcement, education and data analysis. New technologies may support large scale enforcement and deterrence in a similar way to speed cameras. Improved data collection and analysis will facilitate the evidence-based deployment of resources and inform enforcement, prevention and education activities. Legislative change will provide us with further opportunities to enhance our prevention and enforcement activities to ensure that those people who disregard road rules and drive vehicles on our roads in a manner that injures other road users or places them at risk are held to account.

How we are addressing this issue

- Continue to work with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to implement mobile phone detection cameras across metropolitan Adelaide to increase SAPOL's capability to detect dangerous driving behaviours.
- Research opportunities to implement technology to reduce road trauma.
- Identify legislative opportunities to improve road safety outcomes.
- Continue to leverage advances in technology and availability of data to enhance our approach to road safety through collaboration with other agencies, communities and organisations.



What we know

Between **2020–2022** in South Australia

17,545

people were issued
expiations or cautions
for **Driving while
Using a Hand
Held Mobile
Phone.**

Approximately **87%** of
all “Driving while Using a
Hand Held Mobile Phone”
detections occurred in the
metropolitan area.

10,809

**mobile phone
detections,**
or approximately
62%, were issued
to **male drivers.**

due to
**Distracted
Driving**



123

people have
lost their lives

688

have been
seriously injured

(this includes all forms of distraction, not just driving with a mobile phone)

Research into the crash risk associated with illegal mobile phone use has showed an **83%** increase in the risk of a **severe, moderate** or **minor crash** occurring when conducting visual-manual tasks on a mobile phone. (Cameron et al, 2019)

Priority Nine:

Why we are focusing on enhancing enforcement activities

Dangerous road users are those who have a blatant disregard for the road rules and place all other road users at risk. Breaking any road rule or making dangerous driver behavioural choices can result in a serious crash.

Dangerous road users include unlicensed drivers; this comprises those who have never undergone a practical driving test, and people who drive while suspended or disqualified.

These people demonstrate that they are prepared to break the law, irrespective of the consequences. We will continue to use evidence-informed targeted enforcement to reduce road crashes.

How we are addressing this issue

- Identify and target recidivist traffic offenders and focus on driver behaviours that have been identified as the Fatal Five causes of road trauma on our roads.
- Use evidence-based research to target drug and alcohol drivers across South Australia.
- Enhance our drug testing capability across the state.
- Take every opportunity to educate road users and promote road safety through enforcement activities.
- Introduce legislative change to recognise and align extreme driving behaviours with criminal offending.
- Use evidence-based deployment of resources to monitor and enforce safety compliance throughout the heavy transport sector.



What we know

Between **2020–2022** in South Australia

139

people who
lost their lives
and who were **at fault**
for a collision had **previous**
traffic offending history.

22

lives lost

and

156

seriously
injured

were drivers and
motorcyclists
who were
driving while
unlicensed

(either licence never
held, cancelled, expired,
suspended or disqualified).

Approximately

62%

of **lives lost** on
South Australian roads involved
recidivist traffic offenders
(people who had previous traffic
offending history).

62

people have **lost their lives**
due to **dangerous driving,**

and **245** have been
seriously injured.



References

Cameron, M. Fildes, B. Logan, D. Newnam, S. Newstead, S. Stephan, K. Young, K. - Submission to Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll during 2019, 2019, Monash University Accident Research Centre.

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South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031 (SARSS).