

Key facts: Road Safety in Tasmania

On average, 300 people are killed or seriously injured on Tasmanian road each year.

Last year, Tasmania failed to meet its National Road Safety Strategy targets. In 2011, 24 people lost their lives on our roads, while there were 272 serious crashes. In 2020, 36 people died and 283 were seriously injured.

On average between 2011 and 2020, 32 people died and 269 were seriously injured each year on our roads.

Tasmania has the worst road safety record of any state, with 6.6 deaths per 100,000 population. This is far higher than the best-performing state, Victoria, which has 3.17 deaths per 100,000. If we can match Victoria, we could save 19 lives a year.

1. Fatal 5 crash statistics:

The Fatal 5 causes of fatal and serious injury crashes in Tasmania are speed, distraction (particularly mobile phone use), drink/drug driving, fatigue and non-use of seatbelts. This is how much they contribute to fatal and serious crashes in Tasmania*:

- **Speed:** 29%
- **Distraction:** 24%
- **Drink/drug driving:** 24%
- **Non-use of seat belts:** 9%
- **Fatigue:** 4%

2. Crash statistics in Tasmania*:

Road users: vehicle drivers and passengers make up 60% of fatal and serious injury crashes on our roads each year, with motorcyclists making up 25%

Crash type: run off road crashes (40%) and head on crashes (20%) make up the top two fatal and serious injury crash types in Tasmania each year

Age: those aged between 16-25 make up 25% of fatal and serious injury crashes in Tasmania each year, despite comprising 12% of the population

Age: those aged between 26-49 make up the largest proportion of fatal and serious injury crashes each year (35%), but also make up the highest population at 30%

Gender: males make up 65% of fatal and serious injury crashes each year, compared to 35% for females. Men and women each make up 50% of the Tasmanian population

Location: 60% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on rural roads, compared to 40% on urban roads, each year

Speed zone: more than 60% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur in 80km/h and above zones

Vehicle age: The rate of fatal crashes per registered vehicle is four times higher for vehicles aged 15 years or older than for vehicles aged five years old or less

**From Department State Growth's Towards Zero Action Plan 2020-2024*

Historical speed data from traffic counters located across the state road network shows a consistent year-on-year increase in speeding behaviour since 2016. Over that time, the mean speed has increased by 0.8%.

Research shows that a 1% increase in mean speed equates to a 4% increase in fatalities. The proportion of drivers travelling above the speed limit has also increased by 13% and the proportion of drivers travelling at more than 10km/h above the speed limits increased by 18.7%.

Research has also shown that distraction while using a mobile phone is equivalent to driving with a blood-alcohol level of between .07 and .10.

Additionally, if you're travelling at 60 km/h you will travel 33 metres for every two seconds you take your eyes off the road. At 100 km/h its 55 metres. A lot can happen in that time.

3. Key infrastructure facts:

- The state controls 3,774 km of road
- Councils control 14,022 km of road
- 48% of Tasmanian roads unsealed
- 80km/h limit on unsealed roads
- There are 11,000 km of non-urban roads in Tasmania with a 100km/h speed limit.
- Road maintenance and road infrastructure investment were the top two member concerns in RACT's 2020 Member Survey

4. Investment in Tasmanian roads includes:

- State and Federal investment: In the 2020-21 State Budget, the State and Federal governments allocated \$484 million into road infrastructure. However, just \$76 million of this was for road maintenance – a mere 15% (Tasmanian Budget, 2020)
- Tasmanian Road Safety Levy: vehicle owners pay a fee each year as part of registration, with 75% of the fund going towards road infrastructure and 25% towards other road safety initiatives. In 2020-21, the levy is expected to generate \$15.5 million in revenue (Department of State Growth, 2020)
- Black Spot Program: Tasmania will receive \$3.5 million in 2020-21 funding, with councils contributing a further \$1.7 million to the successful projects (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2020)
- Roads to Recovery Program: more than \$17 million committed to Tasmanian councils in 2020-21 (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2020)
- Community Road Safety Grants Program: \$337,000 in grants were provided to community groups in 2019-20 (Department of State Growth, 2020)
- Bridges Renewal Program: \$5.1 million to be provided in 2020-21 (Tasmanian Budget, 2020)

RACT was pleased that State Government committed to developing 10-year plans for the Tasman, Bass, Channel and Huon highways during the Election.

However, RACT also believes that there next needs to be clarity around timelines and funding, as well as an outline of major projects and maintenance and how the capacity of the state service and civil construction sector can be enhanced to roll out projects.

5. Police Statistics:

Tasmania Police statistics from 2019-2020* show that many motorists on our roads are still breaking the rules, putting themselves and others at risk. The following came despite COVID-19 lockdown:

- **Speeding offenders:** 36,719
- **Drug driving offenders:** 2,657
- **Mobile phone offenders:** 2,070
- **Non-use of seat belts:** 1,638

- **Drink driving offenders:** 1,542

**From Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Annual Report 2019-2020*

Tasmania Police data, publicly available on its website, shows there were 11,343 drivers detected exceeding the speed limit by 15-29km/h in the 12 months to the end of December 2020.

There were 472 drivers who exceeded the speed limit by 30km/h or more. There were also 1,100 mobile phone offences detected in 2020.

As these numbers remain consistent over the past five years, this should be regarded as a policy failure in our efforts to reduce risk on our roads by changing driver behaviour.

Tasmania Police also issue substantially more cautions than infringement notices. In 2020, 16,550 cautions were issued for traffic violations, compared with 9233 infringement notices issued.

6. Enforcement revenue

- Traffic policing is expected to reap \$21.5 million in 2020-21. However, Tasmania is the only state that does not reinvest this fine revenue into road safety initiatives, instead channelling it into general government revenue.
- Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland all have funding mechanisms that see between \$40-\$400 million in enforcement revenue reinvested into road safety and infrastructure each year.

7. Enforcement cameras

- Tasmania currently has 10 fixed speed cameras. Tasmania Police also operate hand-held and vehicle-mounted speed-detection technology.
- RACT believes that revenue from these speed cameras should be used to establish and maintain a network of the latest generation of enforcement cameras. These can be used to detect speeding, mobile phones, seat belt use and registration.
- These cameras shoot down through the windscreen from a range of sites, including fixed to overpasses and sign gantries and from roadside mobile trailers using extendable poles that reach out over the road.
- RACT believes there needs to be a network of 16 cameras across Tasmania as part of a best practice model to improving safety as a deterrence to poor driver behaviour. There also needs to be legislative change to embrace the new functions these cameras have.
- The cameras will give greater coverage while maintaining the current level of police traffic operations. They would be overseen by civilian personnel as using police officers would, in the RACT's view, be a considerable waste of resources.
- The Police Association of Tasmania supports RACT's position on the rollout of these cameras.
- The publicly available minutes of Tasmania's Road Safety Advisory Council show that police recommended the introduction of this new technology and point-to-point speed cameras in 2018. The cameras are supported by RSAC, as well as RACT, which is represented on RSAC.
- Premier Peter Gutwein said on Triple M radio in April that his government would consider the reinvestment of speed camera revenue, if it won the Election.

8. Enforcement cameras - interstate and international experiences

- These new enforcement cameras have already been rolled out in NSW, and Queensland, Victoria and South Australia are committed to having them operating later this year or in early 2022.
- During a six-month trial in NSW, 100,000 motorists were detected using their mobile phone while driving.

- The cameras have strong majority support from the community as mobile use is widely regarded as dangerous. NSW conducted three community surveys and found support for the camera initiative at 80%.
- An international report on the effectiveness of speed cameras in Great Britain found a 36.4% reduction in the mean rate of fatal and serious collisions.
- There have also been numerous studies world-wide which show the effectiveness of speed cameras in reducing road trauma and changing driver behaviour.