



How Safe Are Our Roads?

Rating the Australian Capital Territory's Highway Network for Risk

Benchmarking the performance of Australian Capital Territory roads in the Decade of Action

2011

Why Road Safety is Important

Many road crashes involve sudden loss, untold suffering and financial hardship, and they change the lives of people forever. Safe personal travel should be a key feature of modern society but unless road tragedy personally touches us or our loved ones, we sometimes don't reflect on how big a problem it is.

Across Australia around 1,400 people are killed each year and more than 32,500 are hospitalised. This averages four deaths and nearly 90 serious injuries on Australian roads and costs our community on average \$74 million each and every day.

Most crashes occur when ordinary people make everyday human mistakes. It has been estimated that around 1 in 500 driving decisions can be wrong, involving a mistake, an error of judgement, a missed signal or the like. Sober, drug-free, responsible drivers obeying the speed limit and wearing seatbelts frequently die on our roads. Safe roads minimise the chances of these crashes happening, and if they do occur, they minimise the severity of the crash. Engineering measures to improve safety don't have to be high cost and best of all, they last decades!

We need to create a genuinely safe road system, in which improving the safety of drivers, vehicles and roads is of mutual importance. A road system where we have five star drivers, in five star cars on five star roads should involve no deaths.

It is estimated that of all road fatalities which can be avoided through improved safety, half of these would be

avoided through road upgrades including investment in new road construction and expenditure on safety-related works. Australia's National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 recognises the critical need to improve road infrastructure, particularly those road features which are designed to reduce run-off-road, intersection and head-on crashes.

Making this happen requires the commitment of politicians, based on support from the public, funding from treasury, road authority action, and the design and construction skills of road engineers.

AusRAP is here to help all of these stakeholders, and aspires to help Australia become a nation free of high risk roads.

About AusRAP

The Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) is a program run by the Australian Automobile Association and State and Territory automobile clubs, dedicated to saving lives through advocating for safer road infrastructure.

AusRAP's objectives are to:

- reduce deaths and injuries on Australia's roads by systematically assessing risk and identifying safety shortcomings that can be addressed with practical road-improvement measures; and
- put risk assessment at the heart of strategic decisions on road improvements, crash protection and standards of road management.

AusRAP works in partnership with government and non-government organisations to:

- inspect national and state highways and develop Star Ratings and Safer Roads Investment Plans;
- track road safety performance through risk maps so that funding agencies can assess the benefits of their investments; and
- explain the benefits of safer road infrastructure to the community by describing why some roads are safer than others.

Rating Australia's Network for Risk

In total, we have analysed more than 20,000 km of the highways which represents less than three per cent of the total road network in Australia, yet carries some 15 per cent of the nation's road traffic. This network experienced 1,170 road crash deaths, equating to 15 per cent of all road deaths in Australia during 2005-2009.

The AusRAP analysis focuses on casualty crashes that occurred between 2005 and 2009 on rural sections of the National Land Transport Network and significant connecting roads. These are generally defined as being those with a speed limit of 90km/h or more, though some lower speed limit sections are included where they form an integral part of an otherwise higher speed route.

For the results of risk across Australia's network see the companion report *How Safe Are Our Roads? Rating Australia's National Network for Risk*, published in 2011, available from www.ausrap.org.

Rating the Australian Capital Territory's Network for Risk

This brochure is a companion report to *How Safe Are Our Roads? Rating Australia's National Network for Risk*, published in 2011, and provides detailed results for the most improved and persistently higher risk roads in the Australian Capital Territory. This brochure complements the broader national picture and provides an extra level of detail for Australian Capital Territory roads.

Two highways were assessed in the Australian Capital Territory, totalling 20km in length. The length assessed of each highway and number of casualty crashes and deaths that occurred during 2005-2009 are shown in Table 1.

The 20km network in Australian Capital Territory represented less than one per cent of the network analysed throughout Australia and the two deaths that occurred during 2005-2009 represents less than one per cent of the total national network assessed.

Change in Network Crash Risk

The collective risk graph for the Australian Capital Territory Network, below, shows an increase in percentage rated as high risk. Given that only 20km of road network has been rated within the Australian Capital Territory, it is not unexpected to see such a change between the two rating periods, however it is a concern that the risk is now worse rather than recording an improvement.

The same assessment can be made with the individual risk during these periods, as shown below. A similar percentage of the network rated as low individual risk in 2000-2004 and 2005-2009, however the remaining 60 per cent of the network now rates medium risk in 2005-2009 compared to medium-low risk in 2000-2004.

TABLE 1: HIGHWAYS RATED IN AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Highway	From - to	Length		Casualty crashes		Deaths	
		km	%	2005-09	%	2005-09	%
Barton Highway	ACT border to Federal Highway	12	60%	37	74%	1	50%
Federal Highway	ACT border to Antill Street	8	40%	13	26%	1	50%
Total		20	100%	50	100%	2	100%

Performance Tracking

Performance Tracking uses the data compiled for each risk map to assess how the risk on the network, as a whole, and on individual road sections, had changed over time. It is a way of measuring success and the effectiveness of investment in safer roads.

Since 2005, AAA and the State and Territory Motoring Clubs have been mapping the rate of death and serious injury on Australia's main highways. This year, for the first time, and to coincide with the start of the *Decade of Action*, we have also tracked the risk rates across Australia. For this report, crash and traffic data for the period 2000-2004 has been compared to 2005-2009, and we have identified the most improved and persistently high risk sections of highway.

Two roads were rated in the Australian Capital Territory, and only the Barton Highway from the border to the Federal Highway changed in individual risk rating between 2000-2004 (low-medium risk) and 2005-2009 (medium). This change was not statistically significant at the 98 per cent level, and therefore the Australian Capital Territory does not have any sections of highway which qualify as *Most Improved* or *Persistently High Risk*.

More information

For detailed information on the risk ratings for the Australian Capital Territory's network, including maps and the best and worst roads, see pages 40 to 42 of the *How Safe Are Our Roads? Rating Australia's National Network for Risk*, published in 2011, available from www.ausrap.org.



