



## **The Hon Scott Buchholz MP**

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport

Federal Member for Wright

### **Pledge to be Road Safe, this Fatality Free Friday**

Rarely a day goes by that the average Australian doesn't use a road. We're driving on them, cycling alongside them, walking across them. They connect communities and help move goods to ports and our local businesses and shops. They help get us to our workplaces, and they're the paths we follow whether we're driving into town to meet friends or picking up the kids after school.

We are all road users, which is why road safety matters so much within our communities. Road safety impacts all of us.

The statistics tell a sobering story. There were 1,195 people killed in road-related deaths in 2019 – that's over three per day. Road crashes place major emotional and economic strain on all affected communities but particularly on the families and friends of the victims. And from an economic perspective, accidents on our roads cost Australians approximately \$30 billion per year.

What's more, about two-thirds of all road deaths in Australia occur in regional and remote areas. Most of these are single vehicle crashes, and most fatal crashes on regional and remote roads occur in high-speed zones. These figures have remained consistent for the past decade.

As Government, we welcome the reduction in drink driving rates; yet alcohol-impaired drivers are still involved in 13 per cent of all fatal crashes. A rate that is unacceptable and too high.

It is for these reasons that I welcome programs and initiatives like Fatality Free Friday. An annual campaign created by the Australian Road Safety Foundation in 2007, Fatality Free Friday is a nationwide program conducted to raise road safety awareness and champion the reduction of road injuries and fatalities.

It achieves this through a range of road safety awareness programs, driver education, research, advocacy and community engagement.

I encourage everyone to get involved and to take the Fatality Free Friday pledge to drive safely. To pledge, one must promise to always be fit to drive, to stay focused on the road, to scan the road ahead, to keep a safe distance, and to drive in a way that suits the conditions.

As Assistant Minister for Road Safety, I am very aware that Australian Government initiatives such as the Black Spot Program substantially improve dangerous crash sites right across Australia.

The Black Spot Program is one of the most effective safety measures the Liberal National Government has at its disposal. Safer roads save lives and the Black Spot Program is a fantastic initiative that upgrades local streets and roadways to make them safer for all road users.

The Government has committed \$1 billion to the Black Spot Program from 2013-14 to 2022-23 to improve road safety across the nation. Our record investment into upgrading roads is playing an important part, in saving lives right across the nation.

By specifically targeting road locations with a history of crashes for safety upgrades such as lighting, signage, traffic lights and roundabouts, the Black Spot Program reduces crashes causing injury and death at those sites by around 30 per cent.

Our Government acknowledges the need to continue investing in road safety, alongside our state and local counterparts. Fatality Free Friday is a part of this, as is the Black Spot Program, National Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, Road Safety Innovation Fund, Driver Reviver Site Upgrade Program and others we are delivering.

As always, our priority is keeping people and communities safe, and we are investing in road infrastructure, safety and awareness today to help create better futures for all Australians.

But remember, the next time you get behind the wheel of a car, motorbike, truck or bus – whatever it may be – road safety is everyone’s responsibility.

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***Note:** Fatality Free Friday is supported by the Australian Road Safety Foundation, to take the pledge or find out more information visit: <https://arsf.com.au/fatality-free-friday-2/>*

Ends.

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