

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



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FATIGUE TEST TRIAL A WAKE-UP CALL TO DROWSY DRIVERS

Victorians are being urged to think twice before getting behind the wheel when drowsy, or take a break if they feel tired on the roads, with drivers travelling on just three hours' sleep ten times more likely to be involved in a crash.

The Andrews Labor Government has just completed an Australian-first technology trial to detect drowsy drivers and better understand the role fatigue plays in road trauma, with brand new pupil scanning technology detecting tired drivers' level of distractions.

Supported by Road Safety Victoria and the TAC, the trial kept participants awake for up to 32 hours before a two-hour drive on a controlled track, supervised by a qualified instructor in a dual-controlled vehicle. They then took three further drive tests – after three hours' and five hours' sleep in a 24-hour period, and again after eight hours' sleep.

Drivers were tested before and after their drive with a scanner that measures involuntary movement of their pupils – which has shown strong links to increased levels of sleep deprivation, leading to less focused and more distracted drivers.

The study also collected a range of behavioural, physiological and driver performance data like brain electrical activity, lane deviations, speed variations and changes in reaction time to show the effects of excessive fatigue on a driver.

As part of the Labor Government's \$850,000 investment in this new technology, the results of the study will be analysed to inform how the trial could be implemented in real-world settings, with the potential to conduct roadside testing to identify and support drivers who are on the roads while excessively fatigued.

Current figures show fatigued drivers are involved in up to 20 per cent of crashes and 11 per cent of fatalities on Victorian roads.

Road Safety Victoria is leading the study in partnership with the Transport Accident Commission, working closely with Monash University, Victoria Police and the Cooperative Research Consortium for Alertness.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Ben Carroll

"Victoria leads the nation in road safety initiatives – random breath testing and roadside drug driving tests started here, and now we're working to end another killer on our roads with this Australian-first fatigue trial."

"If you're feeling tired, do your part to keep everyone safe - think twice before getting behind the wheel or pull over to a safe place to rest."

Quote attributable to Head of Road Safety Victoria, Robyn Seymour

"Fatigued drivers are involved in up to 20 per cent of crashes on Victorian roads - by better understanding how fatigue impairs drivers and how to detect it we move closer to a world where no one is hurt or killed on our roads."

Quote attributable to Monash University Associate Professor Clare Anderson

"The risk of a crash increases significantly with lack of sleep – and this trial has demonstrated that it is possible to reliably detect excessively fatigued drivers in a roadside context."

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