

Media Release

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



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NEW TRIAL TO EMPOWR YOUNG VICTORIANS TO DRIVE SAFE CARS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting a new trial that will help young Victorians overcome barriers in accessing a safe vehicle, while also collecting critical data to help drivers learn how to be safer on the road.

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) is contributing \$50,000 for the pilot program led by Empowr Mobility, a social enterprise that aims to improve access to safe vehicles, while developing safe driving behaviours and habits.

For the trial, Empowr has joined forces with organisations in regional hotspots Geelong and Shepparton to provide four young drivers access to a safe and fit-for-purpose vehicle.

Ganbina, an indigenous school-to-work transition program, will trial the program in Shepparton, while in Geelong, major regional employer Barwon Water will support the program through its progressive trainee program.

The vehicles for the trial, provided by IAG (Insurance Australia Group), have been fitted with telematics to collect driving data. Participants will use Empowr's CAR[A] app, which will collect the data and provide real-time insights to help drivers learn how to be safer on the road.

Participants will have access to the vehicle for the duration of the three-month trial, improving their ability to connect with their local communities through work, education, and social opportunities.

The trial is addressing a number of current road safety concerns, including the rise in young people dying on Victorian roads – 22 people aged 18-25 have lost their lives already this year, compared to 14 in 2021.

Road safety authorities are also concerned with the number of people dying in older vehicles, with around two thirds of driver and passenger deaths over the past five years having occurred in a vehicle built more than a decade ago.

An evaluation will be conducted at the end of the pilot period to determine whether the program will be extended, and how to grow organisational participation. Empowr Mobility is seeded by the National Road Safety Partnership Program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Ben Carroll

"Socio-economic factors are a very real barrier for many Victorians when it comes to choosing a safe car and shouldn't be a reason that someone isn't protected on our roads."

"Improving access to safe vehicles will go a long way in reducing road trauma. The design of a car and its safety features can help lessen the severity of a crash or even avoid it altogether."

Quotes attributable to Transport Accident Commission CEO Joe Calafiore

"We know that safe vehicles are among our most powerful tools in reducing road trauma and we will continue looking for ways to help people access them."

"The TAC is proud to support this trial that will not only have road safety benefits for the participants but also improve their social and community connection, as well as access to work and education."

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