

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Wednesday, 25 January 2023

MOTORISTS URGED TO BUCKLE UP AND DRIVE SAFELY THIS AUSTRALIA DAY

The Andrews Labor Government is urging motorists to plan ahead, slow down and buckle up ahead of Australia Day and the end of school holidays, amid a devastating start to 2023 on the roads.

So far this year, 24 people have been killed on Victorian roads, compared with 18 at the same time in 2022 - tragically, it is the most road deaths in the first three weeks of a year since 2004.

Regional roads have sadly seen the majority of trauma this year with 18 lives lost, compared with 10 at the same time last year, while new data shows an alarming number of people dying are not wearing seatbelts.

Last year, 21 drivers and passengers died unbuckled in Victoria – representing 17 per cent of all vehicle occupant deaths for the year, while more than 75 per cent of those occurred on regional roads.

The problem is more common amongst men, who account for 95 per cent of all drivers and passengers who lost their lives on our roads last year where it was clear a seatbelt wasn't worn.

More than 50 years since seatbelts were mandated in Victoria, the basic safety message that buckling up could save your life seemingly isn't getting through to some.

With Australia Day on Thursday, and school holidays concluding this week, it is expected to be a busy period on the roads and motorists are being urged to take the time to plan ahead – ensure you are well rested, leave plenty of time to get to your destination, and have alternative transport plans when drinking alcohol.

The Transport Accident Commission is continuing to target risky driving with its campaign, *The Lucky Ones Get Caught*, remaining highly visible across the state and supporting Victoria Police's widespread enforcement efforts.

To encourage travellers to take regular breaks from driving, Driver Reviver Australia will have the support of VICSES and Lions Club volunteers operating rest stops across the state where motorists can take a break, stretch their legs and change drivers if possible.

Victoria has been a world leader in road safety – from the introduction of compulsory seat belt laws to our no tolerance approach to drink driving, but work will not be complete until no lives are lost on the roads.

The Labor Government remains steadfast in its pledge to improve safety to achieve the targets set out in its *Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 and Action Plan* – including halving the number of fatalities by 2030 with work focused across education, infrastructure, enforcement, policy and technology to end the heartbreak.

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne

"We will keep campaigning and investing in road safety initiatives to keep Victorians safe on the roads, but we all need to take ownership and heed the message to drive safely – especially over Australia Day."

Quote attributable to Minister for Police Anthony Carabines

"Ten seconds to buckle up can be the difference between making it home to your family, never seeing them again or sustaining life-changing injuries – please, wear your seat belt, every drive."

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Quote attributable to Transport Accident Commission Acting CEO Liz Cairns

“To help turn this tragic start to the year around, we are urging drivers to plan ahead - get a good night’s sleep before you drive, take regular breaks, allow for extra travel time, and share the driving if you can.”

Quote attributable Head of Road Safety Victoria Marcelo Vidales

“We knew it fifty years ago and the science still holds up – buckling your seat belt saves lives. It takes all of us to end road trauma, everyone should buckle up when they get in the car.”