



VICTORIA POLICE



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ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

July 2024 to June 2028



Acknowledgement of country

Victoria Police respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present and continue to recognise and embrace the fact that Aboriginal People are connected to the oldest, continuous culture and history.

Contents

Foreword	2	Road safety areas of focus	16
Introduction	3	Speed	16
Our vision	3	Distraction	17
Our commitment to road safety	4	Impaired driving	17
The difference in our approach	5	Seatbelts and restraints	18
Strategic alignment	6	Rural roads	18
The Safe System	7	High risk driving	19
Vulnerable road users	7	Unauthorised drivers	19
Understanding road user behaviour	8	Communications and public messaging	20
Our role	9	Implementing our strategic vision for road safety	21
Our guiding principles	10	How we will implement this strategy	22
Prevent	10	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework	22
Enforce	11	Action plans	22
Deter	13	What will success look like	22
Engage	14	Operational performance measures	23
Enhance	14	The journey begins now	24
Emerging issues	15	End notes	25

Foreword

Reducing road trauma requires a whole of workforce commitment.

Road trauma has a devastating impact on the Victorian community. In 2023 on average, five people were killed each week, eight people were hospitalised every day, and many suffered life changing catastrophic injuries. As an organisation that is charged with the responsibility of protecting our community, we simply cannot accept this. This level of trauma also has a major impact on our members who attend these scenes or are required to deliver the horrendous news to the families and loved ones of those who experience road trauma. This trauma shatters communities, often irreparably.

Road policing has historically been viewed as the domain of highway patrols and Road Policing Command personnel. However, we all need to make a significant contribution to keeping Victorians and visitors safe on our roads. We need to embed road policing as part of our everyday business, instead of being apart from it or something we only do for special operations. Reducing road trauma requires a concerted effort from our entire workforce. This strategy will be strongly focused on general deterrence and how general duties police officers, detectives and other specialist members can all contribute to this within their existing roles. Increasing the number of vehicle intercepts and preliminary testing sites for drugs and alcohol greatly enhances our visibility in support of general deterrence and is proven to positively influence the behaviour of road users.

This strategy builds on the previous strategy's guiding principles of Engage, Enhance and Enforce as concepts to achieve our strategic objectives. Prevent and Deter have been included as additional principles of our strategic approach. The focus areas of the previous strategy remain as they continue to be the main contributors to road trauma. Specific examples of policing activities for each of these principles and areas of focus are included in this strategy.

As we look ahead to the next four years, our road policing focus for delivering exceptional services for the community is aligned with the organisational *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*. We will provide a highly visible police presence on Victorian roads to support general deterrence and respond to road related events.

Additional capability and enhanced technology will ensure our people are equipped and confident to effectively enforce against speed, distraction, impaired driving, seatbelts and restraints, risks on rural roads, high risk driving and unauthorised driving.

We will place a renewed focus on the category of offending that currently and historically contributes to approximately two thirds of all road trauma: single acts of non-compliance.

This includes low level speeding, low range drink driving, failing to obey traffic signs and signals, distraction caused by mobile phones and seatbelt non-compliance.

There appears to be a growing tolerance among the community that this behaviour is acceptable. This behaviour is harming road users at an increasing rate and we must intervene at every opportunity. Our objective for every vehicle intercept or engagement with road users should be to try and positively influence their behaviour for the long term. Our presence, active enforcement and engagement with the community has never been more important.

This strategy recognises the complexity of road trauma reduction and the need for collaborative approaches with our road safety partners. An extensive road network of more than 200,000 kilometres and an increasing population are just a few of the challenges we face to reduce road trauma. This strategy will leverage existing and emerging technological enhancements, working with community, government and business as appropriate, to help us overcome these challenges.

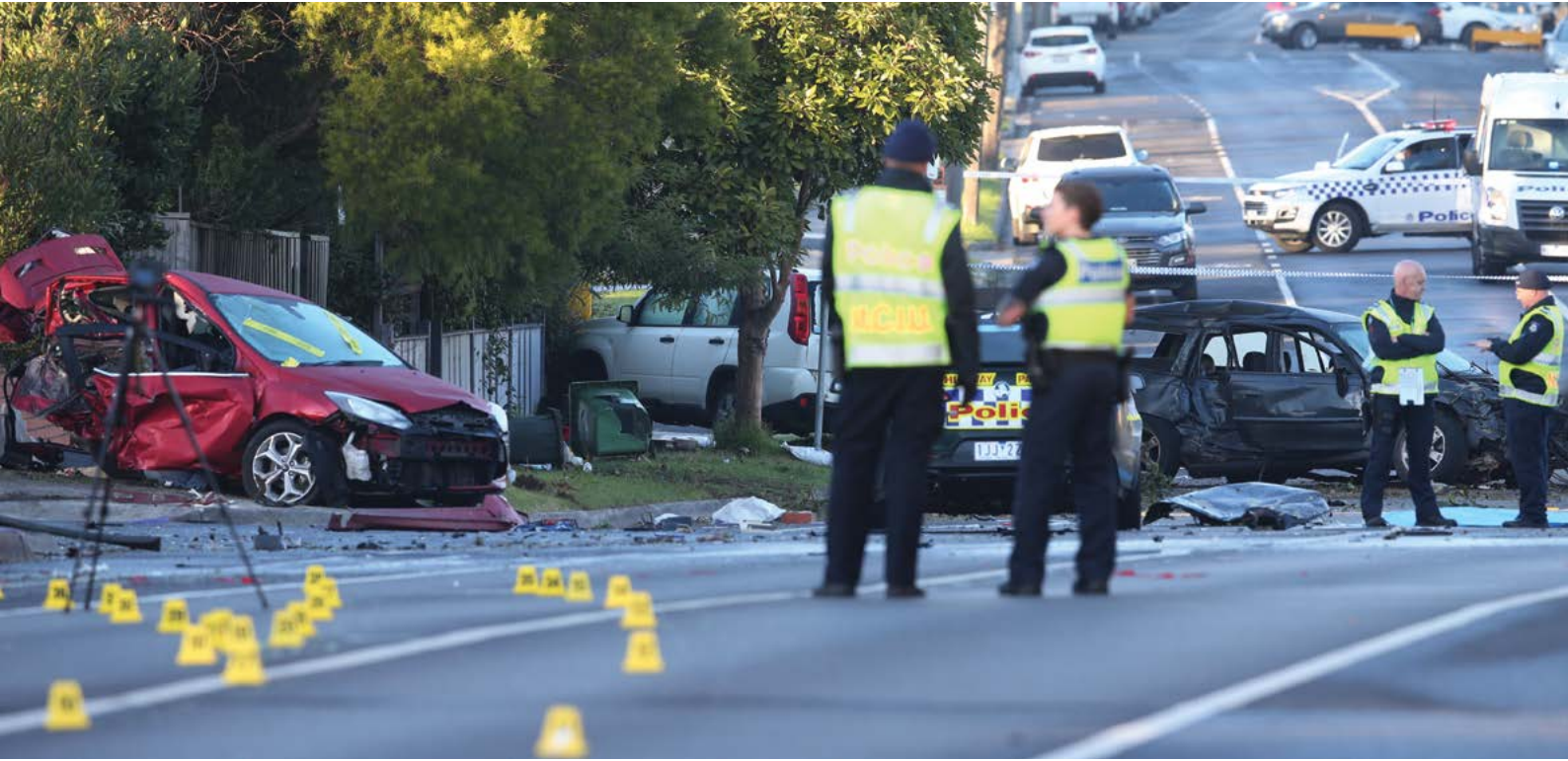
Ultimately, the most effective counter measure to addressing road trauma will be an unwavering commitment from our entire workforce to not accept the status quo and for each employee to contribute to making Victorian roads safer.



Glenn Weir APM

Assistant Commissioner,
Road Policing Command
Victoria Police

Introduction



In 2023, 295 lives were lost and 5473 people were hospitalised due to collisions on Victorian roads.¹

The consequences of each tragic event extend beyond the directly affected families and friends, resonating throughout the wider community, including emergency service workers and healthcare professionals. The resulting economic cost is estimated to surpass \$6 billion annually, amounting to an astonishing \$17.2 million every day. The broader human cost is immeasurable, with family members and friends of road trauma victims also being negatively impacted for the rest of their lives.

Our vision

Road safety is everyone's responsibility. The Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028 confirms the responsibility and role of all Victoria Police employees contributing to keeping Victorian roads safe. The strategy identifies the value of anytime, anywhere road policing opportunities, as part of everyday service delivery, not apart from it.

In alignment with the *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*, we will deliver our commitment to reduce road trauma through our exceptional services, professional people, and strategic partnerships.

Working with the community and our road safety partners is critical to reducing harm and achieving our shared vision of zero deaths and no serious injuries on our roads. Victoria Police is dedicated to preventing road trauma through engagement with the community to educate and influence road user behaviour, enhancing technology to better prevent, detect and enforce road safety offences and supporting referral pathways for drug and alcohol affected road users.

Our vision is that everyone should be safe, and feel safe, on Victorian roads.

Our commitment to road safety

..... **OUR VISION**

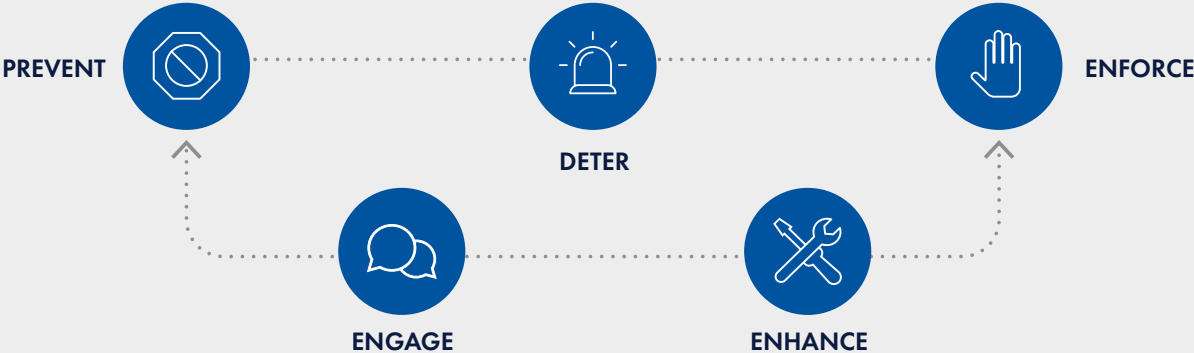
Everyone should be safe, and feel safe, on our roads.

..... **OUR OBJECTIVE**

A whole of workforce commitment to reducing road trauma.








HOW?

Our principles will guide how we work.



ROAD SAFETY AREAS OF FOCUS

Our areas of focus describe what we will target to keep the community safe on our roads.

-  Speed
-  Distraction
-  Impaired Driving
-  Seatbelts and Restraints
-  Rural Roads
-  High Risk Driving
-  Unauthorised Drivers

TOWARDS ZERO: ZERO DEATHS AND NO SERIOUS INJURIES ON OUR ROADS

The difference in our approach



The focus for 2024–2028 builds on our previous strategy using emerging research, observed changes to road behaviour and principles of the Neighbourhood Policing Framework.

A Road Safety Forum hosted by Victoria Police in September 2023 and attended by world renowned road safety experts revealed a disturbing acceptance of ‘low level’ risk-taking behaviours like speeding at 10 km/h above the limit and mobile phone use due to a perception by road users of the unlikelihood of detection. Experts also confirmed the critical role of enforcement in impacting road user behaviour change.

This strategy simplifies our approach, directing our road policing efforts towards highly visible enforcement activities with an increased focus on general deterrence. This includes ‘anytime, anywhere’ vehicle intercepts as well as targeted enforcement, aiming to increase deterrence and change driver behaviour. We will place an increased focus on single acts of non-compliance due to the significant contribution that these acts have on road trauma.

We will support members to undertake road safety policing activities with access to enhanced technology, information and equipment. Our investment in new equipment, such as the

next generation preliminary breath testing device, will allow us to regularly monitor road safety enforcement activities and map interactions to improve resource allocation and planning. We will also strengthen our community engagement approach, partnering with local councils and safety committees through our Neighbourhood Policing Framework to identify and address specific road safety risks. We will encourage our frontline supervisors to include road safety risks on the Community Issues Register to capture, track and report on Victoria Police’s response to these risks.

Continuing to adopt the Safe System approach, we will work with our road safety partners to identify all contributing factors in a collision and address areas of risk holistically. Speeding, impaired driving, risks on rural roads, seatbelt non-compliance, distraction, unauthorised driving, and high-risk driving behaviours persist as focal points for our enforcement activities in our mission to reduce road trauma on Victorian roads.

Strategic alignment

The Victorian Government *Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* aims to halve road deaths and reduce serious injuries by 2030. The focus of the government’s strategy is on creating a safe road environment and supporting road users to make safe choices.




Victoria Police seeks to support this strategy by engaging in evidenced-based road safety activities that we know work. We will aim to drive a reduction in road trauma incrementally over the next four years by focusing on the identified themes that cause the most harm and enforcing against those themes. We will hold offending road users to account, increasing the deterrence effect across all cohorts to create a safer environment for all Victorians.

During the life of this strategy and in alignment with the *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*, Victoria Police will better equip our police, enhance access to road policing intelligence and improve awareness of what police activities provide the most impactful road safety outcomes.



Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028

The Victoria Police *Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028* will support the organisation to deliver on its vision for exceptional police services in alignment to the *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*.

Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028	Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028
 <p>Policing Highly visible and responsive policing</p>	<p>Providing a highly visible police presence on Victorian roads to support general deterrence and respond to road related events.</p> <p>We will support members to understand the contribution they can make to road policing activities as part of core duties and tailored to the communities they serve.</p>
 <p>People Skilled people, ready and able to respond</p>	<p>Ensuring road policing assets are refreshed to support safe work practices and road policing operations are informed through evidence and intelligence.</p> <p>We will support members to deliver exceptional services with up-to-date information to inform deployments, upgraded equipment and by providing access to research informed practice.</p>
 <p>Partnerships Strong partnerships across community, government and business</p>	<p>Supporting our road safety partners in working towards a shared vision of reducing road trauma and collaboratively exploring opportunities for innovation.</p> <p>We will support members to work with community to identify local road safety priorities, as well as collaborating with road safety partners on new initiatives. whilst maintaining enforcement to hold offenders to account.</p>

The Safe System

The Safe System is the internationally recognised exemplar approach to road safety.

The Victorian Government *Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* and its action plans are informed by international experience and expertise, including the Safe System. It advocates a collective and coordinated approach to road safety (per Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Safe System approach



Safe System objectives

The Safe System approach to road safety focuses on the four key pillars of the transport system being vehicles, roads and roadsides, speeds, and road users. Victoria Police works collaboratively with the community and our road safety partners to ensure a holistic approach to managing risk for all road users.

Safer speeds – Enhanced enforcement of non-compliance with a focus on behavioural change through specific and general deterrence.

Safer roads and roadsides – Engage and influence our road safety partners to continually improve infrastructure through design and maintenance.

Safer vehicles – Promote awareness of the risk associated with older vehicles through community engagement and enforce standards of vehicle roadworthiness.

Safer road users – Enforcement, including communication of this enforcement, is critical to ensuring road users are motivated to stay within the operational boundaries of the Safe System. With our road safety partners and using our Neighbourhood Policing Framework, we will highlight our enforcement efforts against all forms of non-compliance to increase the perception of being caught, to enhance general deterrence.

Vulnerable road users

Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, e-scooter riders and motorcyclists, face a myriad of risks on today's roads. These individuals often lack the protective structures afforded by vehicles, making them particularly susceptible to serious injuries or fatalities in the event of a collision. In line with the Victorian Government *Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030*, we aim to prioritise measures that improve safety for these vulnerable groups.

Strategic alignment (continued)

Understanding road user behaviour

Road safety experts highlight that for many road users, road rule compliance is a motivation issue rather than an awareness issue.² This indicates that road users are often making conscious decisions to ignore road rules and are comfortable that they can do so without consequence, resulting in a significant increase in the risk and severity of a collision. A single act of non-compliance occurs when a road user has made an error or disobeyed a road rule (e.g., low level speeding). Enforcement and trauma data indicates that there is a large percentage of road users in Victoria who routinely engage in non-compliance with road rules. Their behaviours do not constitute extreme non-compliance but are embedded in their everyday driving/riding and are a major contributor to road trauma.

Across the Victorian road network every day, there are several road user types that contribute to road trauma:

- » Mostly compliant road users who occasionally and/or unintentionally make an error constituting a single act of non-compliance.
- » Non-compliant road users who make a conscious decision to routinely ignore road rules resulting in single or multiple acts of non-compliance.
- » Deliberately dangerous and high risk road users who deliberately and consistently engage in dangerous or extreme driving behaviours.

There is a belief within the community that road fatalities and serious injuries are largely the result of risk taking or extreme behaviour, however data shows that around two thirds of road fatalities originate from a single act of non-compliance.⁶

Over the next four years, Victoria Police will focus on opportunities to be highly visible on our roads, conducting enforcement activities to improve compliance and reduce risk taking behaviour. Within the key areas of road safety, we will focus on single acts of non-compliance such as low range speeding and opportunities for increased general deterrence related to impairment, distraction and seatbelt offences. Research and international experience have demonstrated that road users who routinely engage in single acts of non-compliance can be strongly influenced by high visibility policing and enforcement activities. This commitment to general deterrence will be delivered through our professional people, strategic partnerships and strengthened policy.



SPEEDING PREVALENCE

75% of Victorian drivers admit to speeding at least some of the time.³



BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Compliance with the Road Safety Camera program demonstrates that Victorians do change their behaviour when enforcement outcomes are known.⁴



INTENTIONAL NON COMPLIANCE

Concerningly, for 41% of Victorian drivers, speeding is an intentional behaviour. Younger drivers (18 to 29 years old) are more likely to admit to speeding intentionally at least 'some of the time', as are male drivers and those who drive at least daily.⁵

Our role

Road safety is everyone's responsibility.

All frontline police play a crucial role in enforcing our road safety laws. Their primary road policing function is prevention through highly visible vehicle intercepts and conducting preliminary breath tests on all intercepted road users and enforcement where appropriate. This simple and effective approach ensures a proactive and identifiable presence on the roads to deter and prevent offending.

As part of our dedication to preventing road trauma and in line with our organisational commitment to exceptional service, we will deliver a range of projects to enhance the efficiency of our members in the field and ensure they have access to state-of-the-art equipment and intelligence to enforce non-compliance with Victoria's road safety laws.

Initiatives to be delivered under the *Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028* include:

- » Additional breath testing devices with improved capability to enable automated data capture and better service anytime, anywhere road policing enforcement.
- » Introduction of electronic penalty infringement notices (ePINs) and exploration of roadside automation to streamline processes in the field to reduce safety risks at the roadside.

- » Review and replacement of critical road safety assets that detect unregistered and unlicensed drivers on Victorian roads.
- » Supporting an uplift in regional road policing capability through additional access to specialist training, road safety program initiatives and enhanced equipment.
- » Expansion and enhancement of measures reported on the Organisational Performance Hub Dashboard to better track key road safety enforcement activities against areas of high trauma.

In addition to these initiatives, the strategy will be supported by the implementation of road safety action plans tailored to regions and specialist areas, to ensure our people understand which policing activities best contribute to both general and specific deterrence of non-compliance on our roads.

We will work with our road safety partners and the community to ensure enhanced approaches to road safety are evidenced, adaptable to emerging harm and aligned with shared strategic priorities. This partnership approach is critical to reducing harm and achieving our shared vision of a road system where fatalities are reduced by 50 per cent by 2030, and no one loses their life on Victorian roads by 2050.⁷



Our guiding principles



Prevent

Prevention of road trauma through partnerships is a cornerstone of our approach to road safety. This involves leveraging our knowledge and experience to foster collaboration with our road safety partners and the broader community. Embracing a structured and consistent methodology, the Neighbourhood Policing Framework guides how police engage with their communities. We will use the framework's Community Issues Register and Community Sentiment Survey to understand the community's road safety related issues and risks to determine preventative approaches.

Under this framework, every member assumes the responsibility to actively engage with the community, adopting a problem-solving approach to address road safety issues. Through Road Policing Command's Road Safety Education Hub, we will provide additional resources, informed by academic partnerships, to assist our frontline members to interact with road users more effectively. This includes identifying opportunities to provide consent-based referrals to relevant support services for road users seeking assistance for long term behavioural change. Our commitment extends beyond enforcement, emphasising a proactive and community-centric approach to create lasting impacts on road safety.

What does prevention look like?

- » **Working with the community** through our Neighbourhood Policing Framework to understand local road safety issues and to identify opportunities to reduce risk and prevent offending.
- » **Collaborating with our road safety partners** to identify where improvements to road safety infrastructure will reduce risk across the road network, engagement related to major road policing operations and identifying opportunities for legislative reform to prevent road trauma.
- » **Taking a restorative approach** to refer road users identified as at-risk to support services that assist them in removing some of the factors that may be contributing to their offending. These may include drug and alcohol counselling and/or culturally appropriate referrals for those in our community that need support to obtain, renew or re-instate licences.
- » **Proactively targeting recidivist high risk road users** to address their ongoing offending through our offender management processes.
- » **Maintaining strong relationships with jurisdictional partners and academic institutions** to explore new road safety initiatives while understanding the behaviours and motivations that contribute to road user behaviour.
- » **Access to evidence-based resources and emerging research**, hosted by the Road Safety Education Hub, to support continuous improvement in workforce practices.



Enforce

Enforcement is a crucial and impactful mechanism for promoting safe road user behaviour and adherence to road rules. We will police all forms of non-compliance to instigate behavioural change and enforce when appropriate, in addition to continuing a sustained effort to detect and prosecute high-risk offenders.

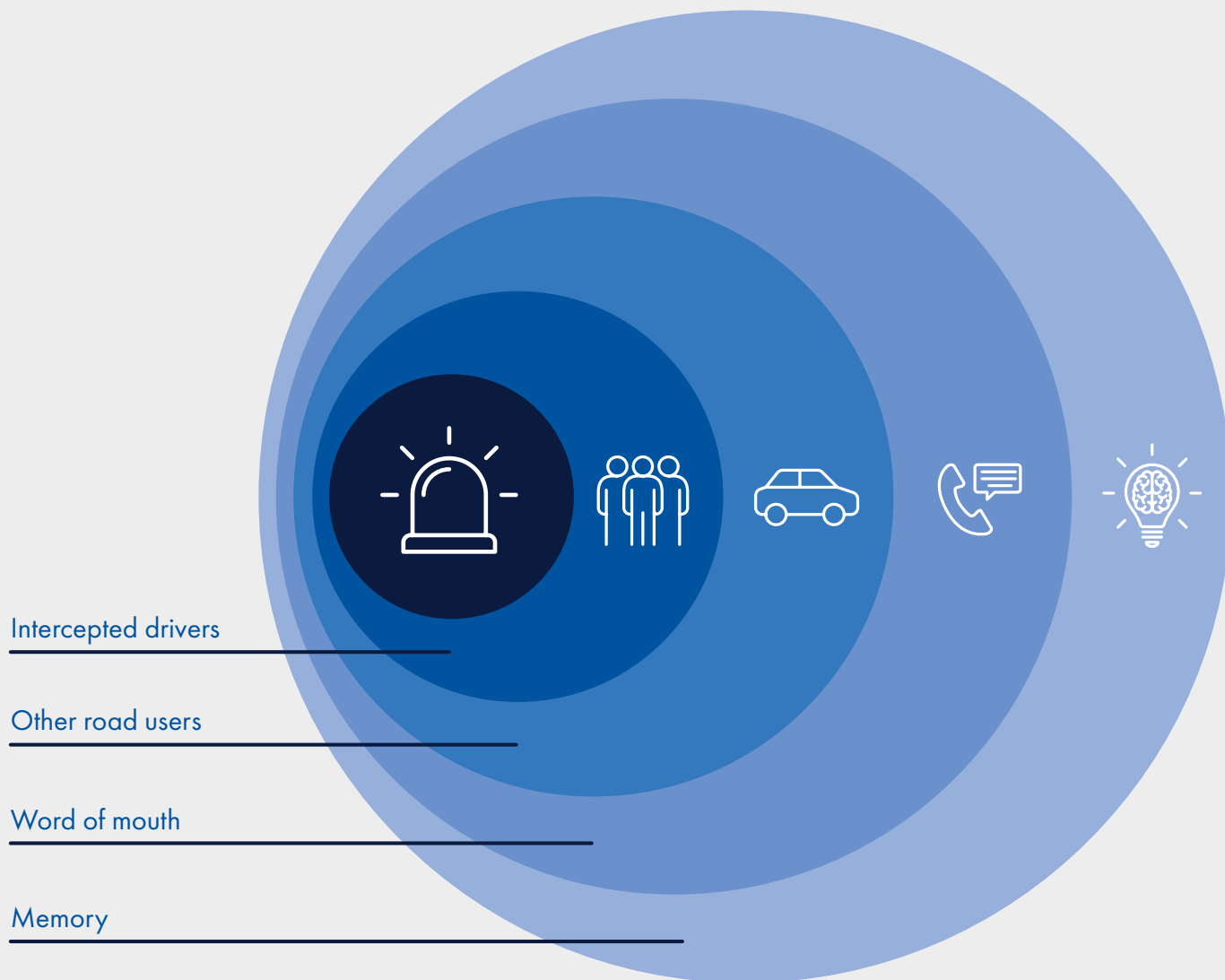
Historical road trauma data indicates that approximately two thirds of all road trauma is caused by single acts of non-compliance, such as low-range speeding, any form of distraction, seatbelt non-compliance and failure to obey traffic control signs.⁸ While media often focuses on high-risk and high-harm behaviours, it is habitual non-compliance, committed by a significant proportion of road users, that multiplies the risk of a serious collision. We will place a renewed focus on this type of non-compliance with the objective of influencing the road user's behaviour in the long term.

Our commitment involves enhancing enforcement efforts through intelligence-led, evidence-based approaches and leveraging new technology. This strategic approach will ensure that our resources are directed to the areas where the greatest impact can be delivered, reinforcing our mission to create a safer road environment.

What does enforcement look like?

- » **Increasing enforcement** against single acts of non-compliance.
- » **Achieving our target numbers of annual roadside drug and breath tests.**
- » **Prioritising enforcement on rural roads** to reduce complacency and increase the perception of detection.
- » **Supporting the expansion of automated enforcement** via road safety speed, red light and distracted driver and seatbelt cameras.
- » **Proactively targeting recidivist high risk road users** utilising our offender management principles to reduce ongoing harm to themselves and other road users.

General deterrence: The halo effect



Regardless of the outcome, **your intercept** has a significant influence on:

- drivers
- passengers
- everyone they tell
- anyone else who witnesses it

POLICE ARE ENFORCING AGAINST ALL FORMS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Our guiding principles (continued)



Deter

Experts have identified deterrence as our best source of defence in changing road user behaviour. There are two forms of deterrence: general and specific.

General deterrence is the extent to which people are deterred from doing an action, not because they have been caught, but because they believe they may be caught and the consequences of being caught are undesirable.

Key to this approach is:

- » **Maintaining a highly visible police presence.**
The presence of police patrolling high risk areas such as shopping strips, major arterial roads and school zones and conducting vehicle intercepts in marked and unmarked patrol cars serves as a visible deterrent, signalling that traffic laws are actively enforced anytime, anywhere.
- » **Conducting frequent preliminary testing sites (PTS).**
Drug and alcohol enforcement contributes to general deterrence as hundreds of drivers can be tested while thousands of road users see the PTS and are deterred from offending. This creates a 'halo effect' of deterrence.
- » **Increasing the perception that enforcement is probable.** This involves the use of unmarked patrol cars in conjunction with a highly visible police presence to ensure that road users believe that they cannot easily avoid detection by seeing police before they are caught.
- » **Delivering consistent community messaging.**
Developing an evidence-based engagement strategy to guide our communications with the public about road safety issues. Distributed through various media channels, including languages other than English, to inform the community about the risks of unsafe driving while emphasising the likelihood of detection and subsequent legal ramifications.
- » **Consistently imposing penalties.** Ensuring penalties for traffic offences are consistently applied and are of sufficient severity to dissuade potential offenders.
- » **Using community engagement opportunities.**
Engaging the community in road safety initiatives creates a shared responsibility for ensuring safer roads, fostering a culture that prioritises safe driving over convenience or timeliness. Key messaging will be designed to be translated into various languages and include an Easy English version to ensure all members of the community have equal access to road safety information.

- » **Enhancing opportunities for media.** The media can be proactively engaged to provide broader awareness of enforcement activities, leading to an increased perception of being caught.
- » **Adopting new and emerging technological measures.** Implementing technologies such as road safety cameras and other automated enforcement systems contributes to a continuous monitoring system, reinforcing the idea that unlawful behaviours are likely to be detected.
- » **Reviewing and revising policy and legislation.** Developing and influencing policy and legislation to address road safety risks and promote responsible driving behaviour.

Specific deterrence is the extent to which a person is deterred from doing a certain action because they have been caught and penalised for that behaviour.

Specific deterrence typically involves the following elements:

- » **Penalties.** Imposing specific penalties, such as fines, demerit points and licence suspensions, on individuals who violate traffic laws. The severity of the penalty is intended to discourage the offender from repeating the behaviour.
- » **Legal consequences.** Ensuring that individuals face legal consequences, such as court appearances and potential criminal charges, in response to more serious or repeated offences.
- » **Rehabilitation.** Providing consent-based referral services to address underlying issues and promote behaviour change.
- » **Recidivist high risk road users.** We will proactively manage known high risk road users in line with our Offender Management Principles.
- » **Vehicle impounds.** Impounding the vehicles of repeat offenders or those involved in serious offences can serve as a powerful disincentive to further offending.

In essence, specific deterrence aims to create a personal disincentive for the individual offender, using targeted consequences to discourage them from engaging in future risky or unlawful behaviours on the road. Intentional high risk drivers and riders will be a particular focus for specific deterrence.

Our guiding principles (continued)

Engage

Road safety is a shared responsibility. Victoria Police is committed to building and maintaining strong partnerships across the community, government, and businesses.

To achieve this, we will:

- » Connect with partners to respond to local issues.
- » Collaborate with partners to enhance crime prevention and reduce harm.
- » Invest in and grow strategic partnerships, nationally and internationally.

Using the Neighbourhood Policing Framework will ensure local police address road safety concerns in collaboration with their community, tailored to local needs.

Tailored communication tools for frontline police will highlight that each interaction with the community provides an opportunity to actively reinforce the benefits of safe road user behaviour.

How will we engage?

- » **Through direct engagement.** By involving the community in road safety initiatives and fostering a sense of shared responsibility in adhering to traffic laws, collectively we will contribute to a culture where safe driving is considered normal behaviour. We also acknowledge that we need to develop inclusive messaging for our culturally and language diverse communities to ensure we connect with everyone.
- » **Training and equipping our workforce** by providing ready access to road safety education material relevant for our frontline. Members will be provided with communication tools to inform conversations with road users, treating every interaction as an opportunity to reiterate road safety messaging and influence behaviour.
- » **Reinforcing road safety messaging.** In conjunction with our road safety partners, we will ensure that road safety messaging is consistent and relatable to all road users to increase general deterrence.
- » **Strengthening relationships** with local councils and road safety committees to identify and remedy road infrastructure hazards.

Enhance

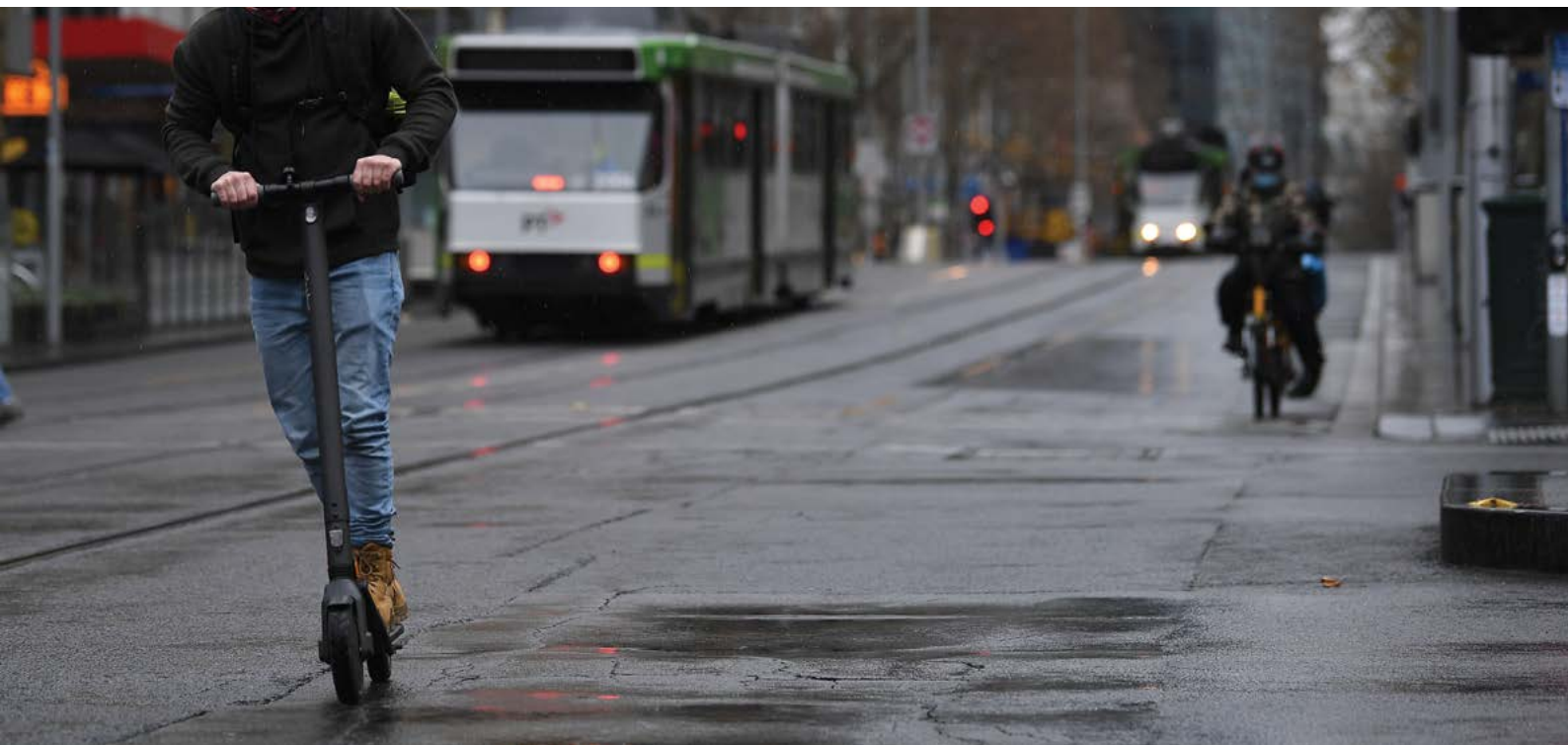
Our approach to road safety will be enhanced through our commitment to refining our current procedures and developing new capabilities to address emerging challenges, supporting our organisation to deliver its road safety objectives. A key focus will be the continuous improvement of our existing processes through technological advancements and new methods to detect offending.

How will we enhance our approach to road safety?

- » **Equipment and information.** By increasing the efficiency of our members in the field with state-of-the-art equipment and enhancing our intelligence analysis, so that we are in the right place at the right time.
- » **Innovation.** Continually exploring innovative approaches to ensure that our efforts in prevention, deterrence, enforcement, and engagement are not only effective but also efficient and co-ordinated. This includes setting a clear vision and periodically evaluating the growth of programs (such as Roadside Drug Testing) against their outcomes aimed at delivering increased public safety.
- » **Refreshing and replacing assets.** Introduction of next generation preliminary breath testing devices that will enable us to map our enforcement efforts and accurately record every interaction with road users. When combined with other intelligence, this information will assist in improving the tasking and coordination of frontline units.
- » **Intelligence and data use.** Improved reporting and monitoring of related road safety data through the Organisational Performance Hub creating accountability and visibility of road safety operations.



Emerging issues



Victoria Police continues to monitor trends and emerging issues impacting our roads such as vehicles used for work. Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in the number and type of vehicles utilised for a range of food and package delivery, freight, and ridesharing services.

Issues such as vehicle safety standards and fatigue management may lead to an increased risk of collision. Victoria Police is committed to working with industry partners to ensure the highest safety standards apply to all involved in the commercial use of Victoria's roads.

We also continue to work closely with vehicle manufacturers and our road safety partners to understand the risks and benefits of vehicles with an increasing level of autonomous capability. As vehicle technology advances, the on road interaction between older and newer vehicles with these capabilities will increase and we will need to understand how this may impact road safety.

We will monitor links between the use of mapping applications and serious injury and fatal collisions, particularly on high risk rural roads. Mapping applications may direct a road

user who is unfamiliar with local roads or their condition onto a road that appears to be the most direct route, regardless of its condition or lack of any safety infrastructure. We will engage with our industry partners and developers of mapping applications to consider collaboration on an appropriate solution.

We will monitor societal trends that contribute to road trauma such as the prevalence of illicit and prescription drugs. Our partnership with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) will be critical to this and will influence potential legislative reform and other initiatives to address impaired driving.

Road safety areas of focus



Analysis reveals seven key contributing factors in serious injuries and fatal collisions. These factors – speeding, distraction, impaired driving, seatbelt and restraint non-compliance, rural road risks, high-risk driving, and unauthorised driving – significantly contribute to the frequency and severity of these collisions.

Surprisingly, while extreme behaviour poses a heightened risk, it is the persistence of single acts of non-compliance that leads to the majority of fatal collisions, especially when one or more of these seven contributing factors is present.



Speed

Speed continues to be the prominent contributing factor in serious road trauma. Speed management and driving to the conditions is crucial to minimising risk and reducing the impacts of road trauma.

What we know about speeding:

- » Inappropriate or excessive speed contributes significantly to collisions on Victoria's roads.⁹
- » Victorian drivers appear to have adopted an unacceptable tolerance to low-level speeding.
- » 64% of surveyed drivers admitted to intentionally speeding at 3 km/hr or more over the speed limit.¹⁰
- » Drivers focus on posted speed limits rather than adapting to the conditions. The posted speed limit on any road refers to the maximum speed in perfect conditions.



Distraction

Operating a motor vehicle safely requires a significant level of skill and attention, and if a road user is distracted, they are unable to effectively manage the risks on the road. Mobile phone usage continues to be a major contributing factor in collisions and contributes significantly to road trauma.

What we know about distraction.

- » Drivers are 10 times more at risk of crashing if they are texting, browsing, or emailing on their mobile.¹¹
- » The Road Safety Monitor 2023 Report indicates 51 per cent of drivers surveyed use a mobile phone while driving.¹²
- » From 1 July 2023 to 30 December 2023, the driver distraction and seatbelt cameras detected 30,231 drivers using a mobile device.¹³



Impaired driving

The operation of any vehicle requires a high degree of concentration, and any impairment renders the road user incapable of operating it safely. Alcohol, prescription/illicit drugs, medical capacity and fatigue, or a combination of these, remain as key contributors to impairment related collisions.

It is critical for Victoria Police and our road safety partners to continue to address road trauma caused by impaired driving.

What we know about impairment:

- » 48 per cent of Victorians consider driving after two or more alcoholic drinks.¹⁴
- » One in five drivers killed on our roads have a blood alcohol concentration of .05 or higher.¹⁵
- » In the last five years, 41 per cent of drivers and motorcyclists killed had drugs in their system.¹⁶
- » In Victoria, around 30 people die each year, and up to 200 are seriously injured, due to fatigue related collisions.¹⁷

Road safety areas of focus (continued)



Seatbelts and restraints

In 2023, there were several collisions where vehicle occupants not wearing a properly fitted seatbelt were killed, whilst other occupants in the same vehicle wearing seatbelts survived.¹⁸

What we know about the use of seatbelts and restraints:

- » The TAC *Road Safety Monitor 2023* report indicated that 2.7 per cent of drivers and 4.2 per cent of passengers travelled in a vehicle without wearing a seatbelt within the previous 12 months. The report also indicates that the perceived risk by the driver of being caught by police, for failing to wear a seatbelt, was less than 31 per cent.
- » 130 lives were lost in the last five years where the occupant was not wearing a seatbelt.¹⁹
- » From 1 July 2023 to 30 December 2023 the driver distraction and seatbelt cameras detected 16,499 drivers and 6375 passengers not wearing seatbelts.²⁰



Rural roads

The rural road network across regional Victoria continues to present significant risk to road users. Population growth and migration from metropolitan to rural areas has seen an increase in registered vehicles and their use on high risk rural roads that have little or no safety infrastructure.

Road user errors on rural roads disproportionately result in serious injury or death when combined with other contributing factors such as speed, impairment, distraction, and a failure to wear seatbelts.

What we know about rural roads:

- » Rural roads account for over 50 per cent of our annual road deaths, however only 24 per cent of Victorian drivers live in rural areas.²¹
- » Approximately 50 per cent of deaths on rural roads involve single vehicle crashes.²²
- » In 2023, nearly 25 per cent of vehicles involved in fatal collisions in rural areas were over 20 years old.²³



High risk driving

High risk driving includes any form of extreme driving behaviour that endangers life or could cause injury. Recidivist offenders engaging in high risk driving every time they get behind the wheel are often involved in other criminal offending and unauthorised driving. We will continue to target organised drag meets and hoon events as a public order issue, however we will also focus on identifying those individuals who engage in high-risk driving every day.

What we know about high risk driving:

- » High risk drivers are often involved in other offending and may fail to stop on police direction, driving dangerously and at extreme speeds to evade police.
- » In 2022–23, Victoria Police recorded 14,165 vehicle impoundments for a range of offences.²⁴



Unauthorised drivers

Unauthorised drivers continue to pose significant risks to the community and themselves, often highly represented in road trauma, traffic offences, and criminal offending. This group has strong links to other forms of non-compliance including excessive speed, the use of illicit drugs, and unregistered vehicles. Removing high-risk and recidivist unauthorised drivers from the roads is a priority for Victoria Police.

What we know about unauthorised drivers:

- » Approximately 10 per cent of road users killed each year are unauthorised.²⁵
- » In 2022, 40 per cent of motorcycle riders killed on Victorian roads were unauthorised.²⁶
- » The increased use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology will assist us to identify unauthorised road users and hold them to account.

Victoria Police will prioritise initiatives aimed at preventing and deterring offences related to these key contributing factors. Through rigorous enforcement, engagement with community and road safety partners, and enhancement of our road policing capability, we will discourage single acts of non-compliance and concentrate our efforts across these specific focus areas. We will leverage the key components of the *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028* to address these contributing factors by delivering exceptional policing services, inspiring and educating our people and enhancing our strategic partnerships.



Communications and public messaging

Victoria Police will actively involve the Victorian community in road safety through various communication channels, with the Neighbourhood Policing Framework playing a crucial role. Our approach includes media, social media, and daily face to face interactions with road users. While addressing extreme road behaviour remains a priority, we will focus on communicating with the segment of the community responsible for the majority of road trauma (approximately two thirds), road users who routinely commit single acts of non-compliance.

International experience and academic research provide evidence that consistent messaging and enforcement have proven effective in promoting positive behavioural change among this group. We will adhere to research backed principles for impactful road safety messaging based on academic research and international experience.

This includes acknowledging that:

- » Campaigns promoting enforcement activities are the most effective. Road users are more fearful of enforcement consequences than the risk of being involved in road trauma.
- » We will promote the enforcement outcome of single acts of non-compliance (e.g., specific fines, demerit points and license suspensions) in these campaigns.
- » Road users only become safer if they change their behaviour.
- » Messaging that focuses solely on extreme driving behaviour (e.g., a driver detected 60+ km/h above the speed limit) can also be counterproductive to road safety. It can create a perception that single acts of non-compliance such as low level speeding are acceptable in comparison to extreme behaviour.

Implementing our strategic vision for road safety



Identifying changes to road user behaviour and being able to account for policing contributions towards road safety initiatives will be critical to determining the success of the strategy.

Existing data sets that identify trends in lives lost and serious injury on our roads will remain important, however other opportunities to monitor the impact of our interventions will be required. This will include leveraging existing measures to further understand their relationship to road policing, using emerging technology to support intelligence gathering and developing ways to measure change impacts.

Measuring the effectiveness of police visibility and activity on general deterrence cannot be directly attributed to reduced road trauma and therefore a range of measures, qualitative and quantitative, will need to be combined to translate the impact an increased focus on anytime, anywhere road policing has.

Understanding success of the strategy will require a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) approach that is inclusive of existing data sets, considers community perspectives and adopts emerging research to understand drivers of behaviour.

How we will implement this strategy

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

A MEL framework provides a systematic approach to governing the implementation of a program's activities, and evaluates the impact of those activities on the overall desired outcomes. A learning phase also provides opportunity for continuous improvement and refinements to the delivery of the strategy.

A central program of road safety activities will identify priority actions that align to the pillars of the *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028*. The MEL Framework will articulate key program activities, performance indicators and measures for monitoring the delivery and impact of the *Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028*. The underpinning principles aligned to road safety focus areas will be shared with policing regions, divisions, and commands to support the integration of targeted road safety activities within existing action plans, allowing tailoring for local priorities and emerging trends.

Action plans

Victoria Police regions, divisions and commands will be supported to develop and maintain road safety action plans that are locally informed, and align to the *Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028*. These road safety action plans will allow for a tailored approach to the unique road safety risks and community issues within each region, with an emphasis on activities that prevent and deter offending.

What will success look like

The new *Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028* updates our focus on general deterrence road safety activities promoting the importance of a highly visible police presence, highlighting the impactful role all police can play. Success of its implementation should be judged firstly by the visibility of the strategy's principles in everyday service delivery and the communication opportunities the organisation delivers and supports.

Success will include:

- » Road policing related activities further integrated into general duties policing.
- » Observed changes in road user behaviours and attitudes.
- » A reduction in road trauma proportionate to population growth.
- » A reduction in overall detectable traffic offences through improved compliance.
- » Victoria Police maintaining its reputation as a jurisdictional leader in approaches to safer road policing tactics that disrupt and contribute to trauma prevention.
- » Improved performance data that contributes to understanding drivers of trauma and organisational performance.



We will continue to measure our outputs as clear indicators that enforcement activities are taking place and contributing to the impact of general deterrence across the state. Success will be observed strategically, operationally and through our governance, as aligned to *Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023–2028* principles.

Strategic alignment	Operational application	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Alignment to Victorian Government <i>Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030</i> and emerging commitments as identified through working in collaboration with road safety partners. » Development of a MEL Framework. » Legislative, policy and training updates to reflect strategic vision. » Coordinated and consistent community messaging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Culture of anytime, anywhere road policing embedded through highly visible policing. » Workforce equipped to lead a safe driving culture. » Engagement with local communities on road safety issues (Local Safety Committees and Neighbourhood Policing community forums). » Disruption of high-risk behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Action plans developed and updated regularly. » Connection to Neighbourhood Policing Framework. » Road policing portfolios and priorities visible at divisional level. » Enhanced information collection and reporting capability.

Operational performance measures

Using existing performance measures will be a first step in understanding opportunities and impacts of increased focus on road safety interventions. Monitoring plans will incorporate existing organisational measures where relevant and look for opportunities to develop other insightful performance indicators. These include:

1. Increasing the frequency of vehicle intercepts.
2. Increasing penalty infringement notices issued for offences across all areas of focus.
3. Increasing vehicle impounds to remove high risk behaviours from our roads.
4. Meeting government commitments to preliminary breath tests and roadside drug tests.
5. Increasing our capability to administer impairment testing through drug impairment assessments.
6. Ensuring all road safety messaging from Victoria Police includes information that supports our general deterrence approach.





The journey begins now

Road trauma reduction is a complex problem that is not isolated to Victoria or the responsibility of any one organisation. Through a sustained commitment to our partnerships with our key stakeholders and the community, we can make a difference.

The Victoria Police *Road Safety Strategy 2024–2028* requires a whole of workforce commitment to the principles of Prevent, Deter, Enforce, Engage and Enhance to significantly reduce road trauma in Victoria.

VISION

Everyone should be safe and feel safe on Victorian roads.

OBJECTIVE

Reduce the incidents of road user non-compliance contributing to road trauma.

DELIVERY

Anytime, anywhere road policing.

End notes

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