

Friday 9 August 2019

RURAL ROAD SAFETY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Some important facts to consider:

- While country residents make up only one-third of the New South Wales population, two thirds of all fatalities occur on country roads.
- If you live in the country, you are around four times more likely to die in a road crash than if you live in a metropolitan area.
- The rate of serious road-related injury among residents in rural areas is nearly twice that of those in major cities.

These statistics highlight the need to make rural roads safer.

There is a strong belief that locals are safer on country roads than 'city people' or 'tourists', and that crashes won't happen to them. However, more than 70 per cent of fatal crashes on country roads involve country residents.

Running from August 1 to 31 Rural Road Safety Month is a national awareness campaign targeting regional and rural road safety. It's a chance for all of us to be involved in making the roads safer.

Despite the fact that the majority of fatalities on country roads are local residents, Transport for NSW research found that country drivers often resist the notion that the way they drive puts themselves or others at risk. There is also a tendency for complacency, over confidence and lower perception of risk when driving on familiar roads.

Research released by the Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) to mark Rural Road Safety Month reveals that more than one in three New South Wales drivers admit they are more likely to undertake risky behaviour on rural roads. This included being one and half times more likely to speed on rural roads and also more likely to overtake on a double line on a rural road, compared to city or suburban streets.

The research found more than half of drivers who admit they are more likely to break rules on rural roads would do so because they are less likely to be caught by police.

While there are a number of unique factors contributing to higher risk on country roads – higher speeds, roadside hazards such as trees and embankments, longer travel distances and older vehicles – research shows that driver behaviour is still the most significant factor in crashes.

Speeding, driver fatigue, drink driving and not wearing a seatbelt are more likely to contribute to country fatalities and serious injuries.

Encouragingly, one third of New South Wales road users recognise that a shift in driver attitudes and behaviours would have the biggest impact on the rural road toll. Rural Road

MEDIA RELEASE

Safety Month encourages drivers to make safer choices on the road by taking a pledge to “Choose Road Safety”.

By taking the pledge drivers are promising to:

- Always be fit to drive
- Scan the road ahead
- Know their limits and plan their trip
- Stay sharp and take regular breaks
- Not drive through flooded waters
- Be alert for wildlife and livestock
- Drive to suit the conditions

About half a million people have already taken the pledge. Taking the pledge is an opportunity for drivers to take ownership for and make a commitment to their role in reducing the rural road toll.

You can “Choose Road Safety” by taking the pledge at:

www.arsf.com.au/take-the-pledge-for-rrs/



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Precis or Summary: August Road Safety Editorial – Rural Road Safety in the Spotlight			
Attachments	Nil	Embargoed: N/A	
Authorised By: George Cowan - General Manager	Media Contact: Communications Officer, Edwina Foley T (02) 6959 5502	Number of Pages	2
Distribution To: Council Website, Media – Local		Number: 19/20-	06