

WA LABOR

# Making Our Roads Safer



**A Fresh Approach for WA**

WA Labor Policy | December 2016

## MAKING OUR ROADS SAFER

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to implementing initiatives to decrease deaths on our roads. Western Australia has gone from having the best road safety record to having the worst in the country.

Western Australia has some of the worst regional road death rates in the world. At a rate of 26.8 deaths per 100,000 population, the Wheatbelt has a higher rate than Indonesia, Malaysia and Kenya.<sup>1</sup> The main factors contributing to deaths on our country roads are speeding, not using seatbelts and alcohol-drug driving.<sup>2</sup>

The statistics are alarming with 62 per cent of road deaths occurring in regional WA. This is not acceptable.

Over the last five years, the number of vehicles in WA has grown a massive 16.9 per cent to almost 2.2 million vehicles.<sup>3</sup> Over the same time there have been significant cuts to state road funds to local governments, regional road safety programs and traffic enforcement hours.

An increase in the police presence on our regional and metropolitan roads is the single most effective tool in modifying road user behaviour and reducing the WA road toll. Combined with increased alcohol and drug testing of drivers, these are just some of the initiatives that will make WA roads safer.

Additional authority for police to end high speed car chases in extreme circumstances has already been announced. This will include additional techniques such as bumping a car off the road where it is safe to do so.

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to reducing deaths on our roads.



**STAY INFORMED:**

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[markmcgowan.com.au/SaferRoads](http://markmcgowan.com.au/SaferRoads)

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 Mark McGowan MP

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 [mark.mcgowan@walabor.org.au](mailto:mark.mcgowan@walabor.org.au)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/cause-of-death/road-traffic-accidents/by-country/>

<sup>2</sup> RSC 2015 summary Preliminary fatal and critical injuries on WA roads, p5

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/9309.0>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **A McGowan Labor Government will:**

- **Create a Regional Enforcement Unit of WA Police to target factors contributing to the regional road toll.**
- **Ensure WA Police have the resources to significantly increase the volume of drug and alcohol testing of drivers on WA roads.**
- **Introduce laws to force motorists to reduce speed when approaching emergency and breakdown response vehicles and where possible, move to the next lane.**

## MAKING OUR ROADS SAFER

### A 'Regional Enforcement Unit' to target regional road users

According to the Road Safety Commission most of the fatal and serious crashes that occur in regional areas of WA involve a single vehicle that has run off the road and/or collided with an object or rolled over.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the behaviours identified as contributing factors to fatal and serious crashes in regional WA are at higher rates than those experienced in the metropolitan region.

Drivers not wearing seatbelts are three times more common in regional crashes where someone is killed or seriously injured (KSI). The most common crash site speed zone in regional areas is 110km/h compared to 60km/h in the metropolitan region. Speed is a contributing factor in 19 per cent of KSI on regional roads compared to 15 per cent of KSI on metropolitan roads.

The reality is, those people travelling on regional roads are statistically more likely to be involved in a serious crash or killed than those travelling on metropolitan roads. As part of an ongoing strategy to address driver's behaviours that contribute to the regional road toll, a McGowan Labor Government will direct WA Police to create a Regional Enforcement Unit (REU) to target those driver behaviours that contribute to the regional road toll.

- **A McGowan Government will create a Regional Enforcement Unit of WA Police to target factors contributing to the regional road toll.**

A REU will be transient and focus on targeted campaigns in regional cities and towns to modify the behaviour of road users.

The REU will strengthen the existing capability of regional law enforcement in regional cities and towns and target those areas where the regional road toll is disproportionately high.

### Increase Statewide Drug and Alcohol Testing

The rate of random drug and alcohol testing of drivers in WA is well below that of NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Figures obtained by the RACWA show that between January and October 2015, NSW had conducted 97,000 tests which is equivalent to approximately one test per 78 persons. During the same period, Victoria conducted 100,000, equivalent to one test per 59 persons and South Australia conducted 40,000 making their ratio closer to one test per 40 persons.

Meanwhile in WA, 24,986 tests were conducted, making our ratio one test per 104 drivers.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will ensure WA Police have the resources to significantly increase the volume of drug and alcohol testing of drivers on WA roads.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://rsc.wa.gov.au/Statistics-Research/Regional-WA>

## Slow Down, Move Over

Every day, police, paramedics, state emergency officers and tow truck drivers attend to accidents and breakdowns on our roads. It can be a dangerous situation for these responders who often have to work beside fast flowing traffic and curious drivers.

Slow down, move over (SLOMO) is essentially a road rule that requires drivers to slow down and move over when approaching emergency vehicles or tow trucks on the side of the road. In South Australia and NSW, drivers must slow down when approaching an emergency vehicle that is stationary and displaying flashing lights and if possible, move to the next lane.

In December 2013, the death of a female tow truck driver on Roe Highway raised debate about the workplace safety of tow truck drivers and other emergency responders. In February 2016, yet another tow truck driver was struck on the Kwinana Freeway and calls to introduce slow down laws were made by the RAC and industry leaders.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will introduce laws to force motorists to reduce speed when approaching emergency and breakdown response vehicles and where possible, move to the next lane.**

Emergency workers and breakdown response workers have the right to feel safe in their work environment. By slowing down the passing traffic, they can focus on their task of dealing with the emergency and removing the vehicle(s) away from moving traffic.

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# Making Our Roads Safer

A 'Regional Enforcement Unit' to Target Regional Road Users

Increase Statewide Drug Testing in line with other States

Slow Down, Move Over