



# WALKING SA SUBMISSION ON SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY TO 2031

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1 September 2021

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## 1. Introduction

Walking SA is the peak body for walking in South Australia, and pedestrian safety is a key focus of our strategy.

South Australia's Road Safety Strategy update is an important opportunity to improve road safety for all road users, to encourage modal shift and to implement policy that creates a safer environment for our most vulnerable road users.

We commend the Government on listening to past feedback, and including Walking, Cycling and Public Transport in the strategic focus area, and support the key strategies in this area which will improve walking environments to allow for pedestrians to make mistakes that don't prove to be fatal.

Walking SA has identified areas in the draft Road Safety Strategy that could be strengthened. We have presented our recommendations to further ensure that all residents of Adelaide can safely use our transportation networks to meet their daily mobility needs.

## 2. Vision and outcome focussed targets

No deaths or serious injury on our roads are acceptable. Walking SA fully supports and commends the Government for adopting a vision of zero lives lost on South Australian roads.

However, we feel that the 10-year targets of a 50% reduction in fatalities and a 30% reduction in serious injuries could be more ambitious. While acknowledging that these targets are in line with the *National Road Safety Strategy* targets, this level of reduction over a ten-year period appears to be a continuation of the long-term trend for South Australia back to 1993 (refer Figure 1), effectively representing business as usual.

The relatively safe 10-year targets set out in the strategy potentially overlook the opportunity to drive greater change around how South Australia thinks about road safety and the social acceptability of road deaths. We recommend that a greater reduction is targeted.

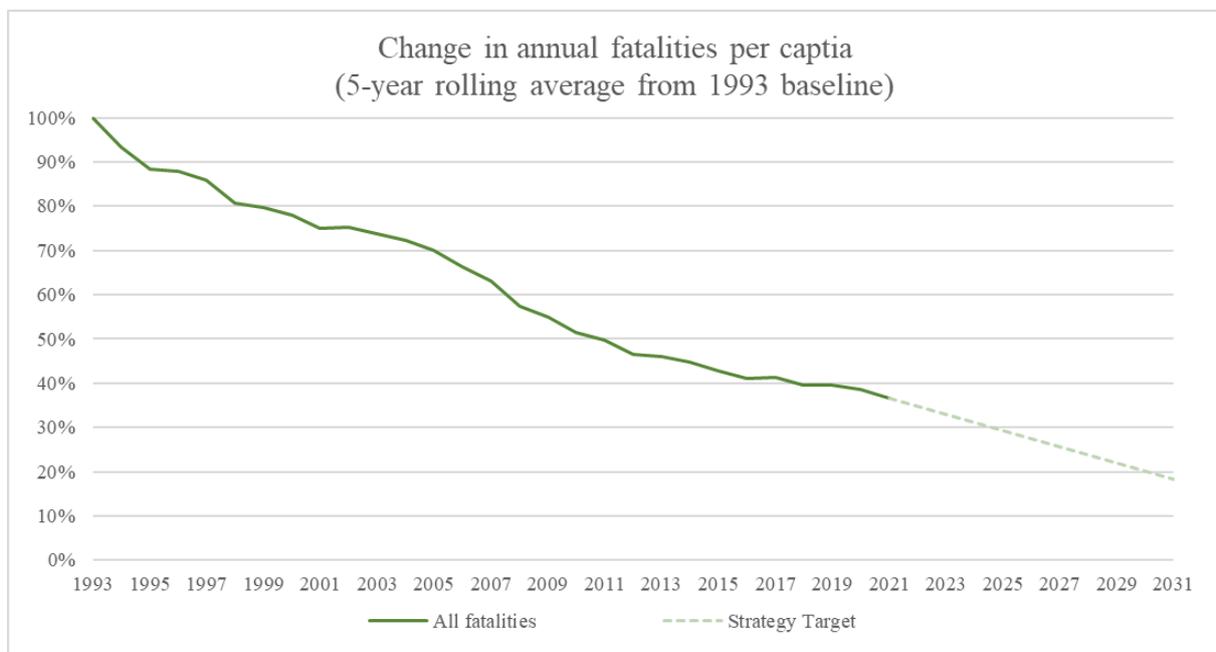


Figure 1: Long term trend in road fatalities per capita in South Australia (data source: BITRE, ABS)

### 3. Action-focussed targets

The draft strategy in its current form sets hard targets relating to end state outcomes. However, also setting more functional action-focussed targets to support the end state outcomes may be an opportunity to make the strategy a more tangible reference for project decision making and assist with generating progress in the short term. These targets could relate to actions such as expansion of low-speed limit areas, construction of new safe all ages crossing facilities or the application of safe-system design principals to intersection improvement projects.

### 4. Vision zero and learning from international practice

Unlike when previous road strategies were developed, we are now in the position of having real world examples proving that effectively achieving vision zero in an urban area is entirely achievable. In 2019, the city of Oslo experienced no pedestrian or cyclist deaths and only a single motorist death. Similarly, in Helsinki there were no pedestrians or cyclist deaths and only 3 motorist deaths.

Given these achievements were somewhat of a watershed moment for road safety, and the only two examples globally of a major city achieving the vision set out for South Australia, it appears somewhat of an oversight that these examples are neither acknowledged by the draft strategy, nor have the key learnings been drawn out and applied to South Australia.

Relative to Adelaide, Oslo and Helsinki are not small cities, each being home to around 600,000 residents and it appears both have taken a common approach to urban road safety: incrementally reducing speed limits and increasingly prioritising the movement of pedestrians and cyclists over private vehicles. While this approach would have obvious hurdles to overcome in Adelaide, it must be noted that both Norway and Finland are not without strong car cultures. Ownership rates are high, and Finland is home to the largest number of Formula 1 world champions per capita. These places are clearly not car-free utopias.

We suggest that the strategy includes a case study analysis of both Oslo and Helsinki, identifying how these cities effectively achieved vision and drawing out the key approaches which should be applied in South Australia to create a realistic pathway toward vision zero.

### 5. Data analysis and setting focus areas

Overall, we feel the data analysis which underpins the focus areas set out in the draft strategy overlooks concerning trends related to vulnerable road users. While overall fatalities on South Australian roads continue to decline, the rate of pedestrian fatalities has remained constant since ~2005 and the rate of cyclist fatalities has actually begun to steadily climb since ~2010, refer Figure 2. As a result, the total share of fatalities among active road users is steadily climbing, now representing around ~20% of all fatalities, up from a low of ~12% in 2006, refer Figure 3. The draft strategy document does not appear to acknowledge that our roads are no longer getting safer for pedestrians and cyclists, nor what planning implications this might have.

These trends mirror what is occurring in a number of locations around the world and are mostly likely reflective of the fact that the benefits of recent road safety technology and design improvements typically only accrue to motorists, sometimes at the expense of vulnerable road users.

Given that the base data analysis appears to have been used, at least in part, to underpin selection of the strategic focus areas, we recommend that the strategy includes expanded data analysis and greater consideration of addressing the growing disparity between active and motorised modes of travel in relation to road safety improvements.

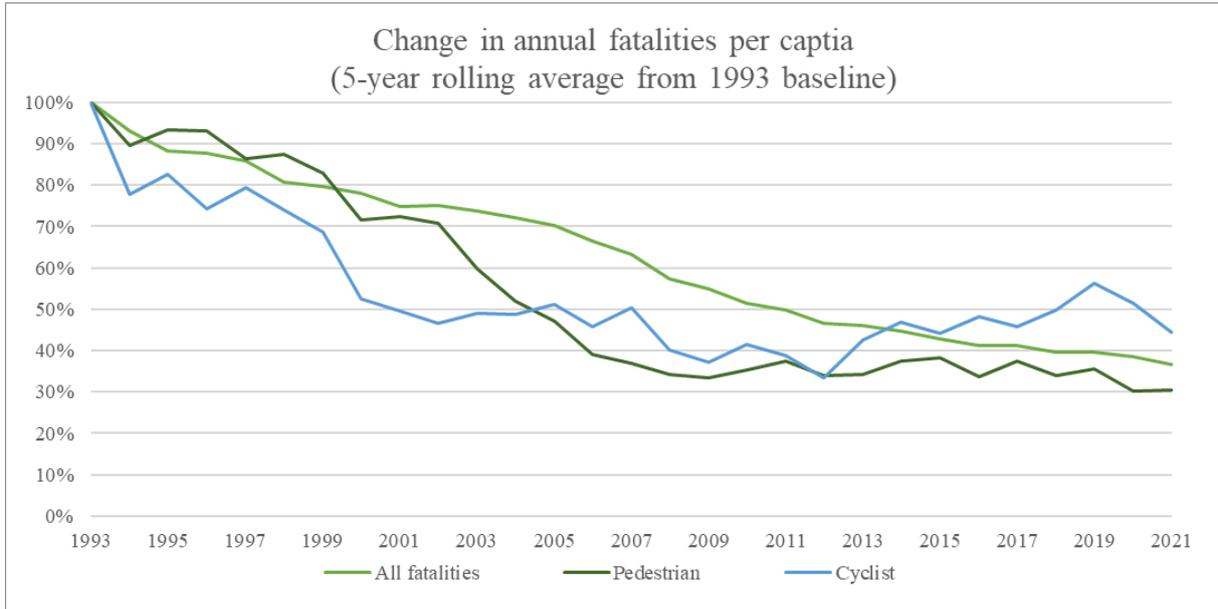


Figure 2: Long term trend in pedestrian and cyclist fatalities per capita in South Australia (data source: BITRE, ABS)

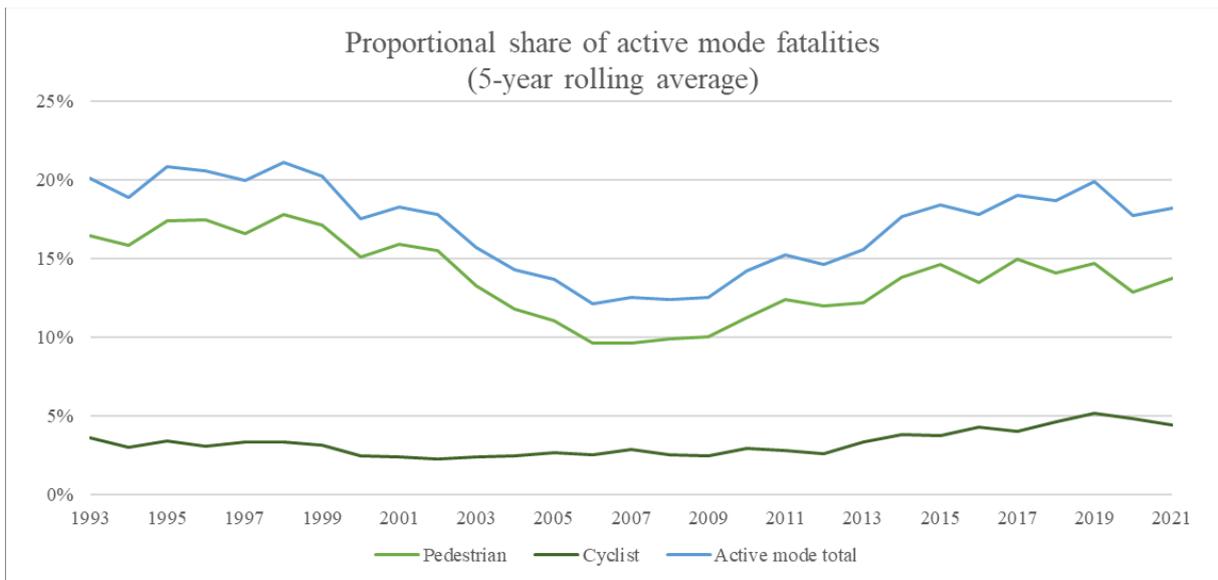


Figure 3: Long term trend in share of active mode fatalities as a proportion of all road fatalities in South Australia (data source: BITRE)

## 6. Strategic focus areas and key strategies

### 6.1 Vehicles

Walking SA supports the key strategies and the initiatives outlined in the strategy which will reduce the severity of injuries to pedestrians and cyclists. We would also recommend the strategy considers:

- New vehicles safety standards. There are still new vehicles available for purchase which received an ANCAP safety rating of one star out of a possible five, with some rating particularly poorly for pedestrian safety. There have been 249 vehicles since 2000 awarded only one star, however many of these vehicles are still on the roads today and available for purchase second hand. The state government should not allow vehicles with one star safety rating to be sold in South Australia.

- Consider the safety standards and the ongoing legality of large aftermarket bull bars. These devices negate the design advancements made by vehicle manufacturers to improve pedestrian safety and make all road users less safe.
- Review of existing stamp duty tax structure. This regressive tax on transactions creates incentive to keep older, less safe vehicles on the road for longer.
- Promote the benefits of advanced safety technologies which benefit all road users. These include Autonomous Emergency Braking with pedestrian detection and external pedestrian airbags.

## 6.2 Older Road Users

Walking SA supports the key strategies outlined to make our roads safer for older road users. We would also recommend the strategy considers:

- Focussing not simply on older drivers, but also on all older road users
- Strategies to develop better mobility options to ensure older people can choose other forms of transport, beyond driving, to meet their daily mobility needs.

## 6.3 Roads

Walking SA generally supports the key strategies outlined to improve all-user safety outcomes through better planning and design. However, the strategy could make further recommendations regarding road design:

- *Signalised intersection cycle times.* Long intersection cycle times (120 seconds or greater) are commonly applied across South Australia and the Adelaide CBD. Whilst long cycle times maximise traffic capacity, they create a less convenient pedestrian environment and lead to poorer compliance outcomes. Many cities have adopted a policy of limiting cycle length in high pedestrian areas (typically no more than 90 seconds). The strategy should consider where shorter cycle lengths should be mandated in South Australia.
- *Left turn slip lanes* generally create poor pedestrian amenity and safety outcomes due to their inherent emphasis on fast vehicle travel as well as the creation of additional conflict points. The strategy should address where design standards should mandate stand up left turn lanes and avoid the typical approach of installing left turn slip lanes at signalised intersections.
- *Left turn on red (LTOR)* creates poor road safety outcomes for pedestrians and cyclists<sup>1</sup>. Jurisdictions including New South Wales and Queensland are seeking to remove existing LTOR provision at signalised intersections. Walking SA does not support LTOR and recommend that it ceases to be permitted.

## 6.4 Walking, cycling and public transport

Walking SA agrees that strategic approaches are needed to improve the safety of those who walk, cycle, and use public transport. We particularly support the need to create lower speed environments, the use of the movement and place framework (strategy 38/39), the development of safer community and pedestrian precincts (strategy 42) and improved data collection relating to walking and cycling (strategy 51).

However, we feel the strategy could make further recommendations in regard to supporting and encouraging sustainable modes of access to public transport. The strategy should consider addressing secure bike storage facilities at key public transport nodes, path and crossing improvements to expand useable station catchments as well as the need for improved lighting and wayfinding signage.

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<sup>1</sup> Preusser, DL et al. 1981. The effect of right-turn-on-red on pedestrian and bicyclist accidents.