

Long weekend traffic: We've missed you!

Those in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory, are looking for places to go and people to see this long weekend. Between bushfire related road closures and COVID-19 movement restrictions, this could be the first chance this year to get some form of real holiday.

With limited flights and interstate options, there will be plenty vehicles on the road in your state and plenty of people in them. Long weekend traffic also means traffic delays and the potential for holiday road carnage.

Following several serious crashes last weekend, road authorities will be approaching this coming long weekend with trepidation.

The crash near Newcastle early on Saturday (26 September 2020) that injured eleven people has been well covered in the media. Today's (29 September 2020) Daily Telegraph tell us about the victims who are not just numbers but people with families who are suffering.

There's the 24-year-old mother of three, still fighting for life in hospital. She was doing the right thing by taking a taxi home with her friends. How do you explain this to the children?

There's the 46-year-old taxi driver – a man out working at 1am on a Saturday, trying to put food on the table. He's also in hospital. How is his family going to cope with him badly injured? Like so many people seriously injured in crashes, what do they do if he can't drive cabs anymore?

Although NSW and Australian road deaths are down on last year (see www.rtszero.com.au for our earlier pieces about the impact of COVID-19), analysis shows us the reduction isn't uniform. According to Centre for Road Safety published data, in NSW as of 28 September:

- Females (all road user types) are being killed in greater numbers this year with 9 additional deaths
- 14 more people aged 26-39 years have been killed this year
- Pedestrians deaths are up 9 on this time last year
- 12 children aged 0-16 years have been killed on NSW roads – 4 more than last year

In coming days, government, road safety authorities and police will be calling on motorists to get the basics right this long weekend. Road policing activities will be targeting speeding, drink/drug driving, not wearing seat belts, drowsy driving and distracted driving this long weekend. Plan your trip and allow plenty of time.



Each day there will be reports on how many people have been breath tested, booked for speeding, other offences, and inevitably, how many people have died in crashes.

Remember, it's not numbers that are killed and injured on our roads but real people.

Photo left: Operation Slowdown is the annual NSW Police Force Labour Day long Weekend campaign.

It runs 2-5 October inclusive and includes a legislated four-day period of "double demerit" points for speeding, seat belt, motorcycle helmet and mobile phone offences.

RTS Zero: Road Safety for Real People

RTS Zero is the partnership of Michael Timms and Sonia Roberts who have a combined 55 years of experience in road safety. Their profiles are searchable on LinkedIn. This work is their personal analysis of current events.

