
From roadside trauma to recovery

Friday 26 October 2018

In 1969, 1,034 people were killed on Victoria's roads. In 2017, with almost double the population, that number was 259, an 87 per cent reduction in deaths per capita. Victorians are now taking seriously the prospect of reducing the road toll to zero.

This extraordinary achievement is the product of ground-breaking approaches to preventing injury, saving lives, and optimising recovery. Beginning with what became known as 'the most successful newspaper campaign of the 20th century,' and the world's first seatbelt legislation in 1970, Victorians repeatedly charted new territory in health and public policy, especially to counter speeding and drink driving.

The new book, [*From Roadside to Recovery: The Story of the Victorian State Trauma System*](#), published by Monash University Publishing and authored by Peter Bragge and Russell Gruen details how grim statistics of 1969 were the catalyst for sustained action by Victorian professionals, policy-makers, and the public in the area of injury prevention and trauma care.

In 2001 the system to care for severely injured people received a major overhaul. The management at the roadside, in the ambulance, and on arrival at hospital was transformed, and processes were put in place to learn from every patient so that care would improve even more. The new Victorian State Trauma System halved the risk that anyone injured would die, and became the envy of the world.

From Roadside to Recovery is not just the story of the system's evolution, implementation and impact, and those who championed it, it is a tribute to the vision, leadership and determination that has saved countless lives. It is a story about which there is much to celebrate, and from which there is much for the world to learn.

Key facts

- In 1969, 304 per million people died on Victoria's roads. By 2017 the road death rate was 40 per million - a reduction of 87 per cent.
- We are nearing the end of the UN / WHO [Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011 – 2020](#)
- Every year, 1.25 million people around the world still lose their lives in road traffic accidents.
- Road traffic accidents are projected to become the seventh leading cause of death by 2030 without sustained action.
- For these reasons, the Agenda for Sustainable Development has set an ambitious target of [halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020](#).
- Victoria's focus on life-saving care at the scene, timely treatment of injuries, system of governance and monitoring, and restoration of function and independence has led the world.

"RACS has a long history of contributions to injury prevention and the care of trauma patients, and is pleased to host the launch of this thought-provoking book. From Roadside to Recovery: The Story of the Victorian State Trauma System, shows what can be achieved when health care professionals, policy makers and the media work together for the safety and well-being of the community."

Mr John Crozier AM CSM, FRACS, Chair RACS Trauma Committee

"This is a story that simply had to be told. It is a story of vision, of conviction and leadership which has led to the saving of countless lives since the early 1970s."

Professor Chris Baggoley, Australian Chief Medical Officer 2011-2016

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MEDIA RELEASE

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS



[*From Roadside to Recovery: The Story of the Victorian State Trauma System*](#) will be launched at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons on Monday 12 November by former Victorian Health Ministers The Hon Robert Knowles AO and The Hon John Thwaites.

[Click here to register your attendance](#)

About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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