
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



Road use experts gather to consider the way ahead

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Experts from a wide range of fields will gather at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons tomorrow to consider ways to make our roads safer.

The forum, *2020 Vision Zero: To share or not to share the way*, will be hosted by the College's Trauma Committee and will focus on the interaction of different types of road users, including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists and truck drivers. Speakers will consider whether the 'way' should be shared at all and, if it should, how it can be shared more safely. Speakers will include senior trauma surgeons, road safety experts, and representatives of several transport related interest groups.

President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Associate Professor Michael Hollands noted that trauma is the leading cause of death for all age groups under the age of 44. He said it remains one of the most significant public health issues across the world, and motor vehicle crashes represent the major cause of trauma and death.

"The Road Trauma Committee of the College was established to address the epidemic of road trauma in the 1960s and 70s. This epidemic saw fatality and injury rates per head of population in Australia exceed those in the United States and double those of the United Kingdom," he said.

"The Trauma Committee lobbied governments and worked hard to change public opinion and behaviour. As a direct result of these efforts, in December 1970 legislation was passed in Victoria requiring the wearing of seat belts – a world first. By January 1972 similar legislation had been passed in all Australian states and in New Zealand. Other achievements such as drink driving legislation and mandatory bicycle helmet wearing have followed, further testament to the great work of this dynamic group within the College.

"The Trauma Committee's other achievements include the promotion of optimum care for all crash victims and the establishment of training courses such as Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST) and Definitive Surgical Trauma Care (DSTC).

"These courses have significantly enhanced the skills of thousands of medical professionals in caring for the multi-injured patient. The College has been integral to the development of the Australasian Trauma Verification program, which is a peer review of trauma services throughout Australia and New Zealand aimed at ongoing quality improvement. This has helped hospitals identify strengths and weaknesses in their management of injured patients."

Associate Professor Hollands said it was a great privilege for the College to be welcoming a range of experts to revisit the Trauma Committee's first great interest – safety on our roads – and, in particular, the vexed issue of 'to share or not to share the way', the interaction of different types of road users.

Among speakers at the forum will be the Hon. Catherine King MP, the federal Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing and the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport, and Mr Lindsay Fox the owner and operator of one of Australia's largest and most iconic transport and warehousing groups.

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