



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Surgeons condemn Federal Government's decision to ignore pedestrian safety

Monday 28 February, 2011

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has joined motoring groups in condemning the Federal Government's decision to close down a consultation process aimed at enhancing the safety of Australian pedestrians.

On Thursday the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Catherine King MP, directed her Department to withdraw the Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) on pedestrian safety, before the public consultation period had ended. As a result of this directive, not only have the views of interested parties been ignored, but the likelihood of internationally recognised standards being adopted to help protect pedestrians has been significantly reduced.

Chairman of the College's road trauma sub-committee, Professor Danny Cass, said the College was dismayed by the government's action, noting that the frontal configuration of some vehicles dramatically increased the severity of injuries sustained by pedestrians and other unprotected road users in a crash.

"Withdrawing the RIS effectively takes this issue, and other aspects of pedestrian safety off the agenda," Professor Cass said.

"In the last decade an average of 232 pedestrians and 31 cyclists were killed each year on Australian roads. In addition to this appalling statistic, several times that number have been seriously injured. These road trauma survivors' lives are vastly altered – as are those of the family members around them that need to help their loved ones cope with often a lifelong disability.

"Research has shown that the frontal design of vehicles, and in particular the presence of bull-bars, can have a significant effect on injury outcome. We need to look at adopting the ECE (Economic Commission for Europe) pedestrian impact standard. To date it offers the best outcome for pedestrians. Now, however, consideration of such options has been closed down by the Federal Government.

"We call on the Government to reconsider the withdrawal of the RIS – and make a real impact on the safety of our most vulnerable road users," Professor Cass said.

Professor Cass further recommended that when buying a car people do research into the vehicle's safety, not only the safety of occupants but also of other road users.

**Media inquiries:** Michael Barrett, Manager Media & Public Relations  
0429 028 933 or (03) 9249 1263