**Policy and Practice Implications...**

- Raise awareness of the significance of Indigenous road trauma.
- Go beyond education to address the broader issues underlying the disproportionately high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander road injury and death.
- Improve the worst areas of roads, acknowledging that roads are expensive long-term undertakings
- Promote better public transport as low cost alternatives to private cars.
- Compassionate law enforcement concerning unlicensed drivers, drink driving, speeding, un-roadworthiness of vehicles, seatbelts, overcrowding & riding in the tray. Law enforcement must go hand in hand with a commitment to understanding the underlying reasons for the behaviours and working to find solutions to these proximal causes.

**Research Implications...**

- Strategic high quality research including improvements to data collections
  - Understand where, when, how and to whom road injuries are occurring
  - Help us to set priorities and develop the best approaches to solve the problems
- Increase understanding of the underlying determinants and potential interventions, developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Address complex cultural, social and demographic contexts
- Rigorous evaluation of local initiatives for effectiveness and generalisability, with a view to rolling out evidence-based solutions elsewhere in Australia
- Comprehensive on-going consultation and multi-level collaboration between state, Commonwealth, private and community health and road safety agencies across diverse sectors, including health, transport, education, police, local government and community groups and key individuals, particularly including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Transport-related injury is a leading cause of death and serious disability among both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians, but Indigenous infants, children and adults are all much more likely to have a fatal transport-related injury than their non-Indigenous Australian peers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who die have more often been a vehicle passenger or a pedestrian. Overall their risk factors – environment-related, vehicle related and behavioural – are different to the rest of the population. Indigenous people have generally not experienced the reduction in road fatalities in the non-Indigenous Australian population caused by effective road safety interventions. Our understanding of why this is the case is limited by suboptimal data collection, especially in remote areas, and insufficient evaluation of new interventions.

Action is needed to pursue relatively inexpensive programs to address the most troublesome areas. Multi-faceted programs are needed to enforce laws and to address the complex social problems that underlie issues such drink driving, speeding and not using restraints.

Research is urgently needed to better understand Indigenous road injury, to work out why mainstream interventions have not been successful, and to tailor and evaluate new programs.
What do we know?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Road Injury

- Compared to non-Indigenous Australians, Indigenous people are 2 to 3 times as likely to have a transport-related fatal injury and 30% more likely to have a transport-related serious injury
- 75% of these are in regional and remote areas
- Even in urban locations Indigenous people have 2.3 times higher transport-related fatal injury
- In some areas the death rate may be 17 times greater than the general population
- The increased death rate occurs at all ages, including infants and children less than 4 years old, without such a significant peak in the 18-25 year olds that is characteristic of non-Indigenous Australian road deaths
- Unlike non-Indigenous Australians, more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who die in car crashes were passengers than drivers
- Single-vehicle roll-overs are common
- Indigenous people are 10 times as likely to die as a pedestrian compared to non-Indigenous Australians (35% vs. 13% of all transport-related fatalities, respectively)

Impacts of Road Injury

- Emotional stress and psychological impact on individuals, families and close-knit communities
- Reduced quality of life for carers
- Financial burden

Factors contributing to increased transport-related injury rates

Environmental Factors

- In remote areas there are few public transport alternatives to private vehicle transport
- Roads are often poorly surfaced, with banked edges

Vehicle-related Factors

- The conditions are hard on vehicles
- Maintenance is less available
- Vehicles are frequently poorly maintained, damaged and unroadworthy
- Most cars develop mechanical problems within 6 months, an last less than 2.5 years

Behavioural Factors

- More than 50% of fatalities were not wearing a seatbelt
- Unlicensed-driving is common
- Overcrowding of vehicles is common, including carrying people in the open tray
- Alcohol use
- Speed
- Driver fatigue
- Pedestrian fatalities involving people standing, lying or playing on the road is not uncommon

What don’t we know?

- Why behaviours such as seat belt non-use and driving under the influence of alcohol, are more prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than non-Indigenous Australian populations.
- Why otherwise successful mainstream road safety programs have had little or reduced impact on Indigenous communities. For example, it is unknown whether educational messages reach Indigenous communities or whether communications regarding safer road behaviours are received but not adopted because they are not deemed as relevant or are not understood, and whether a lack of policing might contribute.

Implementation Considerations...

In non-Indigenous Australian populations, there is strong evidence from multiple studies for effective reduction of mortality through:

- Speed enforcement detection devices
- Street lighting
- Red light cameras
- Seat belt use
- Random breath tests
- Mass media campaigns for safe driving

There is some evidence of effectiveness on reducing mortality through:

- Blackspot programs
- Vehicle inspection programs
- Booster seats
- Pedestrian safety education
- Pedestrian visibility enhancement

And there is no evidence of effectiveness on reducing mortality through:

- School-based education
- Post-licence education
- Educational social marketing (fear messages)

Little information is available on ATSI-specific road safety interventions and very few have been evaluated. While transport authorities in some Australian jurisdictions have developed culturally sensitive safety programs specifically targeting ATSI road injury issues, the focus has largely been on education. However, even among mainstream initiatives, education-only intervention is rarely successful in reducing road crashes or injuries.

Lack of wearing seat belts has been identified as a particular problem for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people indicating that mainstream education programs that have otherwise been successful in achieving high usage are not reaching this audience. Levels of awareness of safety campaigns and actual uptake of safety promotion messages are directly related to social, cultural and economic factors, particularly including level of education and availability of resources.