

AUSTRALASIAN ROAD SAFETY CONFERENCE 2024
RECEPTION FOR DELEGATES
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to Government House and may I extend a special welcome to our overseas and interstate delegates.

I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose land we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea and waters.

Tonight, we celebrate the end of another successful Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) Conference, hosted by ACRS and Austroads, in Tasmania for the first time. I thank our Tasmanian chapter of the ACRS and the conference organising committee for your hard work.

I also thank the many sponsors, including the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, the Tasmanian Road Safety Advisory Council, the MAIB, and the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania.¹

May I acknowledge the ongoing work of the ACRS, led by its managing Council and President, Professor Ann Williamson, and CEO, Dr Ingrid Johnston. You are the peak membership association for road safety professionals, advocates, and members of the public. I understand that your membership exceeds 1,000, from 35 countries.²

A commendable initiative of ACRS is the *Career Pathways for Women in Road Safety project*. This involves the development of a clearer and stronger body of

¹ <https://australasianroadsafetyconference.com.au/sponsors-exhibitors/>

² ACRS Annual report 2023, pg 8: <https://acrs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ACRS-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

knowledge for road safety which will incorporate existing training and point out training needs for women.

Also, over the past 18 months, ACRS has approved new policy statements on climate change and road safety, speed management, data and information needs, motorcycle safety, the vehicle as a workplace, and a new systems thinking approach to road safety.³

Back to your conference, which is an essential forum for current research, insights and strategies for improving road safety across our region. You have all been very busy with 32 sessions on a range of road safety, education and management topics, and opportunities to hear from Australian and other internationally renowned experts in their fields.

Delegates explored issues impacting road safety, from road design, infrastructure, and driver behaviour to socio-economic factors that influence our use of roads.

In the keynote speech on Day 1, organisational psychologist, Dr Amantha Imber, presented evidence-based approaches to bridge the gap between psychological science and strategic policy-making, to assist road safety managers to better shape and sustain impactful road safety initiatives.

Other highlights of your conference included:

- the implementation of Vision Zero in Sweden (one of the world's top road safety performers) with Dr Lars Eckman;
- the essential role of vehicle safety standards with Australasian New Car Assessment Program CEO, Carla Hoorweg; and
- road safety enforcement with Dr Helen Wells, a criminologist and Director of the International Roads Policing Academic Network.

³ ACRS Annual report 2023, pg 4: <https://acrs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ACRS-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

A key issue highlighted at your conference was driver distraction. Participants shared insights on technology and road safety, while presenting approaches to minimise distractions and ensure that drivers stay focused on the road.

It is pleasing to hear that new initiatives, such as cameras monitoring mobile phone use, have been successful and have also highlighted the recurring issue of failure to use seatbelts. Excessive vehicle speed remains problematic, and our vehicle safety standards currently leave us behind Europe.⁴

Of particular concern, our national road fatality rate is not on track to meet the National Road Safety Strategy target of halving road fatalities and reducing injuries by 30%, by 2030.⁵

So, it will be important to maintain efforts to research, educate and plan our road safety initiatives.

In closing, I thank you all for your dedication and efforts toward your aim of “*the elimination of fatal and serious injury on the road*” through knowledge sharing, professional development, networking, and advocacy.

Please enjoy your visit here to Government House.

⁴ Personal communication from Dr Ingrid Johnston (CEO, ACRS).

⁵ The ACRS Annual Report.