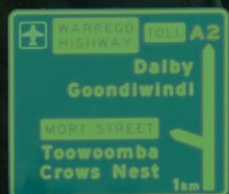




National Road Safety Partnership Program

Monthly Bulletin

September 2025 | Newsletter No. 127



"Improving Road Safety Is Simply Good Business"



Proudly hosted by

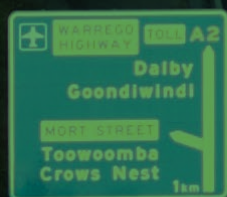


MONASH
University

ACCIDENT
RESEARCH
CENTRE

Contents

Achievements	3
New GF Toolbox Talk: Pre-start Checks	4
New Q&A's	5
New LV Toolbox Talk: Roads are for Everyone	6
Monthly Focus: Vulnerable Road Users	7
Blog: Vigilant Road Users.....	8
Truck Driver Interactions Campaign.....	9
NRSPP Resources.....	10
NRSPP News	11
Social Media	13
Useful Links	14
NRSPP Events	15



NRSPP

Achievements

- The NRSPP is proud to confirm its Core Funders for the next three years which includes:



ACT
Government



**Transport
for NSW**



**State Insurance
Regulatory Authority**

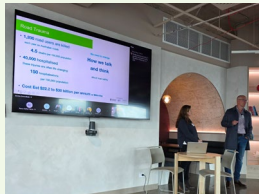


**Queensland
Government**



**Transport
Accident
Commission**

- The NRSPP Program Director Jerome Carslake and MUARC's Dr Amanda Stephens presented to BASF as part of their global safety week on workplace road safety.



- The NRSPP released its 2024/25 Annual Report which coincides with the updated logo and celebrating the program's 10+1 birthday. Special thanks to program Steering Committee Partners who featured in it

- The Vehicle Safety Research Group held its third meeting for 2025, the Used Car Safety Ratings 2025 are scheduled for release late November with the Evaluation of Blind Spot Monitoring Systems forthcoming.

- NRSPP and AfMA collaborated to present the [Webinar: Sodexo's Award Winning Approach to Proactive Safety](#) which featured Scott Leahy. Sodexo was awarded the 2025 AfMA Fleet Safety Award.

- NRSPP and Re:act collaborated to present the [Webinar: Engaging young workers in road safety: Firsthand insights from young Australians](#). The webinar featured three of the student Re:act winning campaigns for 2025 from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

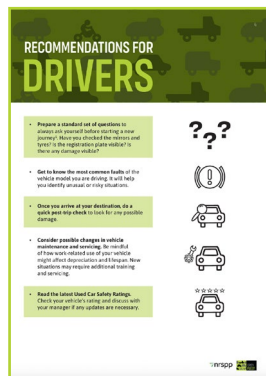
- The [NRSPP](#), and associated programs ([NTARC](#) and [CLOCS-A](#)) feature predominately in the [Draft Master Code](#)





NRSP's Newest Grey Fleet Toolbox Talk is Out Now!

PRE-START CHECKS PREVENT PROBLEMS



One of the biggest challenges in managing grey fleet is ensuring proper maintenance. Without regular inspections, it becomes difficult to monitor vehicle condition and address issues promptly. Pre-start checks serve as an early warning system, allowing both employers and workers to identify potential concerns, take preventive action, and establish good maintenance habits.

Beyond safety, pre-start checks offer financial and operational advantages, helping reduce repair costs and minimising disruptions to work schedules. However, their repetitive nature can sometimes lead to complacency.

A mindset of "It was fine yesterday, so it will be fine today" creates a false sense of security. Even if a vehicle appears to be in good condition, exposure to different road and environmental conditions means unexpected issues can arise.

[>> nrspp.org.au >> Toolbox Talks >> Grey Fleet](https://nrspp.org.au)

New Q&A's!



Truck Loading and Unloading with Electric Pallet Jacks and Tailgate Lifters: Understanding Safety Challenges in the Retail Sector

Thrishna Briet | Monash University

Synopsis

Electric pallet jacks (EPJs) are widely used in the Australian retail and grocery sector for loading and unloading goods, often in conjunction with tailgate lifters. A series of recent incidents, most notably a fatality and serious injury in separate incidents in 2024, have drawn attention to the safety risks associated with these operations. This Q&A investigates the systemic causes of EPJ-related incidents using stakeholder input and socio-technical analysis. Analysis tools, such as the Swiss Cheese Model and AcciMap framework, are used to explore failures at regulatory, organisational, environmental, and individual levels. The findings highlight critical gaps in training, equipment standards; and hazard awareness, and inform practical recommendations to help business operators and workers improve workplace safety where EPJs and tailgate lifters are used together.

Introduction

The retail and grocery sector relies heavily on fast, flexible logistics operations, particularly during the loading and unloading of stock at delivery sites. Two essential tools that support these processes are Electric Pallet Jacks (EPJs) and Tailgate Lifters.

- EPJs are motorised devices designed to move heavy, palletised loads efficiently, reducing manual effort and physical strain on workers. Tailgate lifters are mechanical platforms that raise or lower goods between ground level and the truck deck, facilitating deliveries at sites without loading docks. Together, EPJs and tailgate lifters have significantly improved operational efficiency. However, their combined use has also introduced serious safety challenges.

Recent incidents have drawn urgent public and regulatory attention to the safety risks associated with EPJs and tailgate lifters. In June 2024, a worker delivering stock in Adelaide suffered a serious head injury and suspected leg fracture after falling from a tailgate platform when an EPJ unexpectedly rolled backward. Just four months earlier, another worker lost their life in a similar incident after falling and being crushed by equipment. These high-profile cases underscore the pressing need for stronger safety systems, improved training protocols, and tighter regulatory oversight to mitigate risks in EPJ and tailgate operations.

This research adopts a socio-technical systems perspective to investigate what went wrong in these incidents and, more importantly, why they occurred. By examining the broader system in which this equipment is used, including human, technological, and organisational factors, this Q&A aims to uncover underlying causes and inform more effective safety interventions.


PJ-Tailgate The Interface: A High-Risk Zone

The interaction between electric pallet jacks and tailgate lifters represents a particularly dangerous situation in logistics operations. When operated together, these tools create a high-risk scenario that requires coordination, balance, and spatial awareness – all within a limited space on a raised platform.


In the overlapping use of EPJs and tailgate lifters, several hazards intersect:

- Two Moving Systems:** Both the EPJ and the tailgate platform are moving; mechanical systems. Either can malfunction or behave unexpectedly. Combined, they present a heightened risk of collision, tipping, or loss of control.
- Elevated Work Surface:** The tailgate elevates workers and equipment. A fall from any height can lead to serious injury, especially when compounded by the momentum of a moving EPJ or heavy pallets.
- Spatial Awareness Challenges:** Workers must operate within tight and variable spaces, often outside their usual environment (e.g., different loading areas). Misjudging position, slope, or distance is common.
- Inconsistent Equipment:** Workers may use unfamiliar EPJs or tailgate systems throughout a shift. A lack of standardisation (e.g., brake configurations, control layouts, varying EPJ models) reduces operational predictability.
- Time Pressure and Cognitive Load:** Tight delivery schedules can lead to workers rushing. This increases the likelihood of procedural shortcuts and reduces attention to environmental risks.
- Reduced Margin for Error:** When working at height, with moving machinery, and under time constraints, even small lapses such as forgetting to engage the brake or misjudging the tailgate angle can have serious outcomes.






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August 2025 | 1

Click [here](#) to read more.



How Sodexo's award-winning approach to proactive safety is preventing fatigue and distraction-related incidents

The webinar is now available for you to watch or share with your team. View the recording [here](#).

If a driver experiences fatigue on multiple occasions over an extended period (e.g. several months), what additional support mechanisms are implemented to assist them? Are there any driving restrictions or job-related consequences if they are unable to continue fulfilling the role as required?

We provide extensive support to drivers found to experience fatigue on multiple occasions. Our HSE / Injury Mgmt teams work closely with the driver to ensure fitness for work, including external specialist support for example Sleep studies etc.

Are the same supports and health checks conducted with contractors?

Our contractors are required to follow the same processes we do around reporting of events, and we audit their fatigue monitoring / IVMS reporting regularly.

Their approach to the driver in relation to further health checks / fitness for work programmes etc is as per their own policy.

Do driver shifts comprise multiple short trips or some much longer trips? Or do the schedulers blend drivers onto a combination of short trips and long trips?

All sites have a varied schedule dependent on the village/ accommodation location and the minesite or aerodrome. As a result, journeys can be short (under 15 minutes) or longer, with our longest trip going from Pannawonica to Karratha Airport, 2.5 hours away.

Our schedulers ensure drivers are spread as equally as possible across these journeys to manage fatigue, given the drivers roster and experience.

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What is the escalation procedure for Guardian Alerts?

Our system is configured for a fatigue alert to trigger the vibration device linked to the drivers seat, whereas a distraction event is audible only.

Should a driver receive the vibration, they are directed to pull over and make contact with their Supervisor to discuss event.

The Supervisor will check the Guardian system for the alert, but also should have received a call from the Guardian centre around the same time if a 'True' event.

A formal Fatigue check is undertaken over the phone, to confirm the driver is able to continue their journey. If found not to be in a fit state, a relief driver will be sent.

How do you define a "True Fatigue event"?

We follow the Guardian centres classification as 'gospel' unless an obvious mistake has been made. We find the centre errs on the side of caution, which is understandable, however we still need to review the decision.

Should we find we disagree with the centres decision, we follow an internal process with multiple levels of sign off (HSE, Ops Mgmt etc) to ensure we can evidence a fair and just process.

After the action at the time of the fatigue event what further management action is taken with that driver? EG extra training, interview etc?

Firstly, we will support the driver to ensure they are ok, and will stand them down from driving activities for the remainder of the day and ensure they carry out light duties only.

Separate to our discussions with the driver, we raise an incident in our safety mgmt system, and follow the same process we would with any other incident - drug & alcohol testing, lessons learnt / actions assigned if required etc.

Can the drivers pull over and have a nap if they feel fatigued?

Although we do not explicitly state a driver can have a nap in a vehicle, the driver is supported to take the time to ensure they are fit prior to continuing their journey, and that will look different for each driver.

Often, our driver following procedure and pulling over to the side of the road (where safe) to contact their Supervisor is enough to 'snap' them out of any onset of fatigue, plus we have the option of sending a relief driver should that be required.



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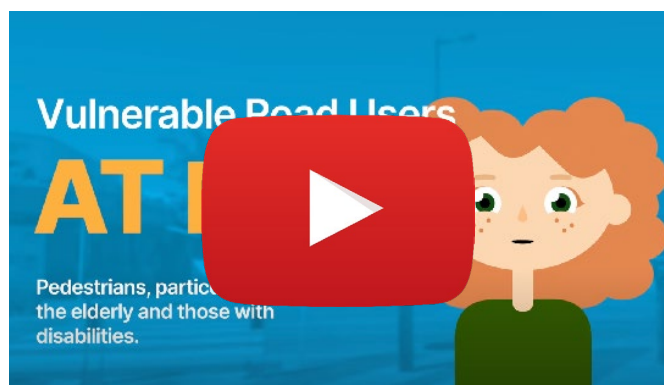
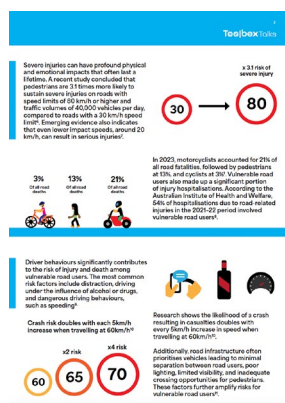
August 2025 | 1

Click [here](#) to read more.



NRSP's Latest Light Vehicle Toolbox Talk is Out Now!

Roads are For Everyone



In recent years, more Australians have embraced walking and cycling, whether for commuting, leisure or exercise. This shift has increased interactions between different types of road users.

Any person who lacks the protective shield of a vehicle such as a pedestrian, motorcyclist, personal mobility device user, or cyclist is classified as a vulnerable

road user due to their heightened risk of injury in the road system.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), vulnerable road users account for more than half of all global road fatalities.



Monthly Focus: Vulnerable Road Users

Sadly, over the last decade [vulnerable road user fatalities](#) (VRUs), which are the road users who have less protection in crashes than people inside a vehicle, such as pedestrians and motor cyclists have increased significantly and cyclists remain relatively unchanged. Pedestrians in particular have had the greatest increase this is despite the National Road Safety Strategy aiming to reduce them by 30 per cent over this decade. The numbers are heading in the opposite direction.

For businesses, so many people commuting to and from work fall into the VRU bracket. Those driving for work in urban areas have to keep a keen eye out watching for VRU interactions. During winter this can be tough as people rush to get away from the rain and weather.

Now as winter ends, people will begin venturing outside again as the winter blues life. With onset of spring major sporting events begin kicking off with the AFL and Rugby finals and racing commencing. Add in the joys of daylight savings and there is a life in the social scene.

What this all means is more people out and about. Our theme for this month places a spotlight on this transport change and seeks to remind all road users to take care and be mindful of VRUs. Don't be in a rush, drive defensively and share the responsibility for road safety.

Monthly Feature: Quick Fact

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vulnerable road users account for more than half of all global road fatalities. Vehicle design and pedestrian alertness plays a critical role in the protection of vulnerable road users.

Click [here](#) to read more.



Vulnerable Road Users

Introduction

In recent years, more Australians have embraced walking and cycling, whether for commuting, leisure or exercise. This shift has increased interactions between different types of road users. Any person who lacks the protective shield of a vehicle such as a pedestrian, motorcyclist, personal mobility device user, or cyclist is classified as a vulnerable road user due to their heightened risk of injury in the road system.

Vehicle Design

Vehicle design also plays a critical role in protecting vulnerable road users. The shape of a vehicle's front end significantly influences its energy absorption capacity during a collision, with some designs better suited to protect the head upon impact. Similarly, in-vehicle safety technologies, such as [Distance Warning](#), [Autonomous Systems \(ADAS\)](#), and [Vehicle-to-Everything \(V2X\)](#) communication systems, are creating new opportunities to reduce injuries and enhance safety for vulnerable road users¹.

Types of front end shapes:



Pedestrian Distractions

The increasing prevalence of personal devices competing for attention on the road has also become a significant risk. A study revealed that approximately 20% of pedestrians crossing streets in Melbourne² (33 were using smartphones³). In-ear headphones have long been recognised as a risk factor for crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists. Recent research confirms that these devices also pose dangers to light vehicle drivers by compromising awareness of surroundings and creating distractions that detract from the primary task of driving safely⁴.

Recommendations

- Stay Alert for Less Visible Pedestrians:** Some pedestrians, such as children or individuals using wheelchairs, may be harder to see due to their height. Others might be distracted by listening to music with noise-cancelling headphones or texting on their phones.
- Respect the Right of Way:** Always yield to other road users, especially at intersections. Failing to do so can lead to serious crashes, particularly with motorcyclists.
- Adjust to Road Conditions:** Drive at safe speeds—especially in areas with vulnerable road users. Speeds under 30 km/h allow for better communication through eye contact or gestures. Ensure other road users have noticed you.
- Allow Safe Passing Distances for Cyclists:** When overtaking a bicycle rider, leave at least 1 metre on roads with speeds up to 60 km/h, and 1.5 metres on faster roads.



Source: RoadSafe & Transport Research Australia

Monthly Blog:

Vigilant Road Users

Do you know what vulnerable road user means, or what VRU stands for? It's the fancy name for those who use our roads outside of cars, buses, or trucks. They are 'vulnerable' because in a crash they don't have the physical protection from injury that a vehicle can provide.

Pedestrians are the largest group of VRUs; at some stage every day most of us will be travelling on foot. Other VRUs are cyclists, with more than a third of Australians owning a bike, and the almost 10% of us who have a motorcycle licence.

A major issue increasing risk for VRUs is that Australian cities are car-centric, and that large parts of Australian cities are not pedestrian friendly.

So when most of us travel, our first thought is what is the fastest route and where will I park? The design of our cities encourages car use. A lucky portion may have viable public transport alternatives but the complexity and time a journey takes can be a deterrent. A car provides mobility and life opportunities.

[Click here to read the full blog.](#)





Partner link project:



TRUCK DRIVER interactions

Trucks are frequently interacting with vulnerable road users (VRU), and it's essential these interactions happen safely. Everyone has a role to play in keeping each other safe on the road, and these new training videos have been created to support truck drivers' in safely sharing the road with VRUs.

VRUs are road users who travel outside of cars, buses, or trucks, typically pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

The goal of the videos is to help truck drivers understand how to navigate through busy streets safely, particularly where VRUs can be present. Parts of the Victorian road network are used by high numbers of pedestrian, bicycle riders and motorcyclists, and major construction projects can take place in these locations

The new training videos offer practical safety tips on how truck drivers can safely share the road with road users.

Watch the Truck Driver Training videos here:

Keeping the Community Safe During Construction Periods



Vulnerable Road Users



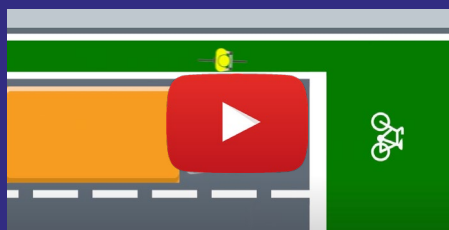
Blind Spots



Pedestrians



Bicycle Riders



Conclusion

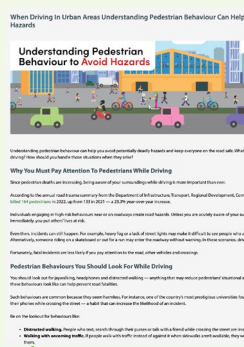


NRSP Resources

NRSP Insight: Understanding Pedestrian Behaviour

Since pedestrian deaths are increasing, being aware of your surroundings while driving is more important than ever.

[Read more here](#)



NRSP News Item: Father of Cellphones

The father of cellphones (mobiles) is not alone in recognising the risk these devices pose to pedestrians when their focus is on their phone instead of what is going on around them.

[Read more here](#)

Father Of Cellphones, Martin Cooper, Is "Devastated" By Pedestrian Mobile Phone Use



Transport for NSW: Vulnerable Road Users

The road is there to share and road safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you're in a car or truck, walking on and around the road, we can help keep ourselves and others safe.

[Read more here](#)



NRSP Construction Trucks Toolbox Talk: Sharing the Road with Pedestrians

Urban areas, where there are a high number of vulnerable road users, represent additional challenges and risks for truck drivers. Slow down and try to anticipate sudden movements.

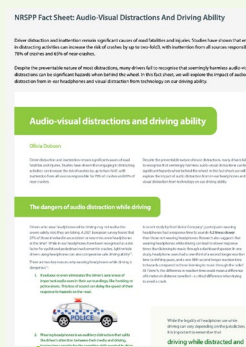
[Read more here](#)



NRSP Fact Sheet: Audio-Visual Distractions

Despite the preventable nature of most distractions, many drivers fail to recognise that seemingly harmless audio-visual distractions can be significant hazards when behind the wheel.

[Read more here](#)



NRSP News

The Road Safety Learning Lab is now live!

Launching today alongside Road Rules Awareness Week, the Road Safety Learning Lab is a new interactive digital experience that brings road rules and their importance to life.

This Australia-first website is designed for all road users to test their knowledge, challenge assumptions and learn more about staying safe on our roads.

[Read more...](#)



Councils Urged to Put Public Safety at the Heart of Chain of Responsibility

Local government Fleet Managers, Operations Managers and executives have been urged to view every decision affecting heavy vehicle operations through one lens — public risk.

[Read more...](#)



NRSP 10+1 Celebration, Annual Report 2024-25 & New Logo

The National Road Safety Partnership Program (NRSP) is proud to celebrate its 10+1 birthday in 2025. The program was launched by Prince Michael of Kent in Melbourne in 2014 as part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety.

[Read more...](#)



NHVR'S New Pilot Research Competition: Pitch Stop

Australia's heavy vehicle sector is vital to the economic and social wellbeing of people and communities, with many challenges in need of urgent research and innovation. Help NHVR build a healthier, more productive, sustainable and safer heavy vehicle industry, by sharing your research.

[Read more...](#)



NRSPP News

NRSPP Welcomes its Core Funders for the Next Three Years

The NRSPP's Core Funders play a crucial role in the Program's capacity to function and support Australian businesses in developing a positive road safety culture by enabling it to access resources free of charge.

[Read more...](#)



Are you Ready for Safe Work Month Next Month – The NRSPP is!

Next month is National Safe Work Month 2025 has your organisation got something planned? The vehicle as a workplace is often out of site and out of mind. The task of managing driving for work risk often viewed as too hard, only relates to traditional fleet or just the vehicle, the domain of professional heavy vehicle drivers and the term "grey fleet" is entirely alien.

[Read more...](#)



New Training Videos Released: Truck Driver Interactions with Vulnerable Road Users

Victoria is currently experiencing a major construction boom known as the Big Build. A side effect of these large-scale infrastructure projects is the increased demand on road transport. Trucks are the lifeblood of these developments, many of which are located in highly urbanised areas.

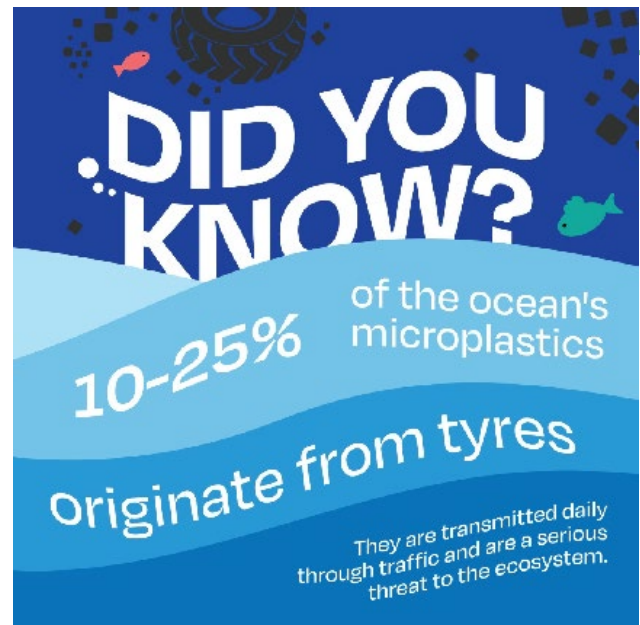
[Read more...](#)



NRSPP Social Media



[Download here...](#)



[Download here...](#)



[Download here...](#)



[Download here...](#)

Useful Links

- [Inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users – Parliament of Victoria](#)

Parliament
of Victoria

- [Pedestrian deaths surge nearly 50 per cent in four years as road toll hits 15-year high | Drive](#)



- [Questions with ANCAP | Facebook](#)



- [C-ITS for motorcycle safety demonstration success](#)



NRSP Events

September

Webinar: Major Incident Investigation Report

Date: Tuesday October 7th, 12:00pm 2025

Location: Online, Zoom

Organisation: NTARC

[Register here](#)

Watch to review the 2025 Major Incident Investigation Report, built on ground-breaking, collaborative research to ensure safety for drivers and freight operators in the heavy vehicle sector.



October

2025 Australasian Road Safety Conference

Date: October 20 – 23, 2025

Location: Perth, Western Australia

Organisation: Australian College of Road Safety

[Register here](#)

Join Australasia's leading road safety and injury prevention researchers, practitioners and policy makers for the 2025 Australasian Road Safety Conference.



Acknowledgements



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ACT
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GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



ROAD
SAFETY
COMMISSION



Transport
Accident
Commission

Programs Governed by NRSP

VSRG

UCSR

★★★★★
USED CAR
SAFETY RATING

NTARC

