



Ararat Rural City

Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan Ararat Rural City Council 2025-2030



From the Mayor

Ararat Rural City is a place where most of us spend a lot of time on the road. We're getting to work, moving stock, harvesting, taking the kids to school or heading out for a footy or netball game. When you cover long distances on high speed rural roads, you quickly learn that one bad moment can change a family's life forever. That is why Council is committing to Vision Zero – a firm view that no death or serious injury on our local road network is acceptable.

This Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan is about practical, common sense actions on the road to Vision Zero. We are introducing a 'run off road' risk program to target high risk rural sections with tactile line marking, barriers and clearer delineation to keep drivers on the road. We are also stepping up work on dangerous intersections with upgrades such as roundabouts, turning lanes and better lighting and sightlines. We also have a plan to continue to improve crossings, school zones and shared paths so that pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users are better protected.

None of this can be achieved by Council alone. Vision Zero relies on shared responsibility between Council, State Government, emergency services, local businesses, schools and our community. As a farmer, a businessman and your Mayor, I see this strategy as a down to earth roadmap – focused on fixing the right roads, in the right way, at the right time – so everyone who lives in, works in or visits Ararat Rural City can get home safely at the end of the day.

Acknowledgement of Country

Ararat Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Eastern Maar, Barengi Gadjin (the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagulk peoples of the Wotjobaluk Nations), and Wadawurrung peoples, and recognises their connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

FOR APPROVAL

Author of report

This report was prepared by DWB Engineering in accordance with the scope of services engaged by Ararat Rural City Council.



Contents

From the Mayor.....	2
Acknowledgement of Country	2
Author of report	3
Ararat Rural City Council - About Our Municipality	7
Local Context	7
Overview and Demographic	7
Key Transport Networks	7
Road Safety Challenges.....	9
Federal, State, and Local Government Context.....	9
What is Happening on Our Roads?	10
Current Road Safety Issues	10
Road Safety Data	10
What the Last Five Years of Data Tell Us.....	12
What You Told Us	17
Fixing Potholes & Edge Drop-offs.....	18
Intersection upgrades	19
Speed limit reviews	20
School Zone Safety.....	21
Key Trends and Near Misses	22
Dangerous Road Surfaces.....	22
Intersection Confusion	23
Vulnerable Road Users	24
Wildlife Hazards	25
Key Concerns	26
How We Will Move Towards Zero Trauma – Vision Zero & the Safe System	27
Principles of the Safe System.....	27
No death or serious injury occurring on our road network is acceptable.....	28
People are Vulnerable	29
People Make Mistakes	29

Shared Responsibility	29
Elements of the Safe System	30
Safer Roads	30
Safer Speeds	30
Safer Road Users.....	30
Safer Vehicles	30
How Vision Zero Aligns with the Council Vision 2031.....	31
Our Role	32
What Works in Addressing Road Trauma?.....	32
Safer Roads.....	32
Safer Speeds	33
Safer People	34
Safer Vehicles.....	35
What Does Not Work	36
Our Strategic Approach and Action Plan	38
Strategic Approach	38
Targets	40
Ararat Rural City Council – Safe System Action Plan (2025–2030)	42
Goal 1: Reduce Fatal and Serious Injuries on High-Speed Rural Roads	42
Goal 2: Prevent Severe Run-Off-Road Crashes	44
Goal 3: Improve Safety at High-Risk Intersections.....	46
Goal 4: Protect Vulnerable Road Users in Townships	47
Goal 5: Align Speeds with Road Function and Risk	49
Goal 6: Improve Safety for Those Using Roads for Work.....	50
Goal 7: Strengthen Data, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement.....	51
Conclusion	52
References.....	54
Glossary	56
Appendix – Confidential and Restricted Information.....	59

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Ararat Rural City Council Municipality	8
Figure 2: Ararat Rural City Council All Crashes 2012-2024	10
Figure 3: Ararat Rural City Council Fatal and Serious Injuries 2012-2024	11
Figure 4 Trend Comparison of Surrounding Municipalities	12
Figure 5 DCA Accident Category by Injury level 2020-2024	13
Figure 6 Run Off Road Crashes Over Ararat Rural City Council 2020-2024	14
Figure 7 Run Off Road Type Crashes on Non-Declared Roads 2020 - 2024	14
Figure 8 Run Off Road Non-Declared Roads Above 80km/h 2020-2024	15
Figure 9 Total Incidents by Suburb 2020-2024	16
Figure 10: Workshop Pick Your Priority	17
Figure 11: The Safe System Overview	27
Figure 12: The Safe System	28
Figure 13: Severity Guidance Sheet (Figure 10.3, Austroads 2022)	29

Ararat Rural City Council - About Our Municipality

Local Context

Overview and Demographic

Ararat Rural City has a population of over 11,000 people, based on 2021 census data, and is situated 198km west of Melbourne on the Western Highway, which connects the region to Adelaide. Ararat sits at an important road junction with the Pyrenees Highway, which connects northwestern Victoria with the Port of Portland in the south of Victoria.

Ararat Rural City is the gateway to the world-renowned Grampians Region and is characterised by long travel distances, high-speed rural roads and a dispersed population, all of which influence road safety risk.

Advanced manufacturing, agriculture, food and wine production, construction, healthcare and tourism experiences underpin the economy.

Ararat is a major regional service centre in Victoria's mid-west and is supported by several small rural townships. Ararat Rural City has excellent schools, hospitals, transport connections and amenities that support a regional lifestyle.



Key Transport Networks

There are currently:

- 746 kilometres of Sealed Roads
- 1,420 kilometres of Unsealed Roads
- 240 kilometres of Natural Surface Roads

Road infrastructure is extensive within the Ararat Rural City Council, with current road surface volumes exceeding 740km of sealed road and 1,400km of unsealed road. Road infrastructure serves the purpose of travel from one place to another, typically via vehicle or truck, but may also include other road-registered vehicles such as heavy

farm equipment. There is also an increasing number of active transport users for work and recreational use in the region, with many natural surface trails and paths within the municipality.

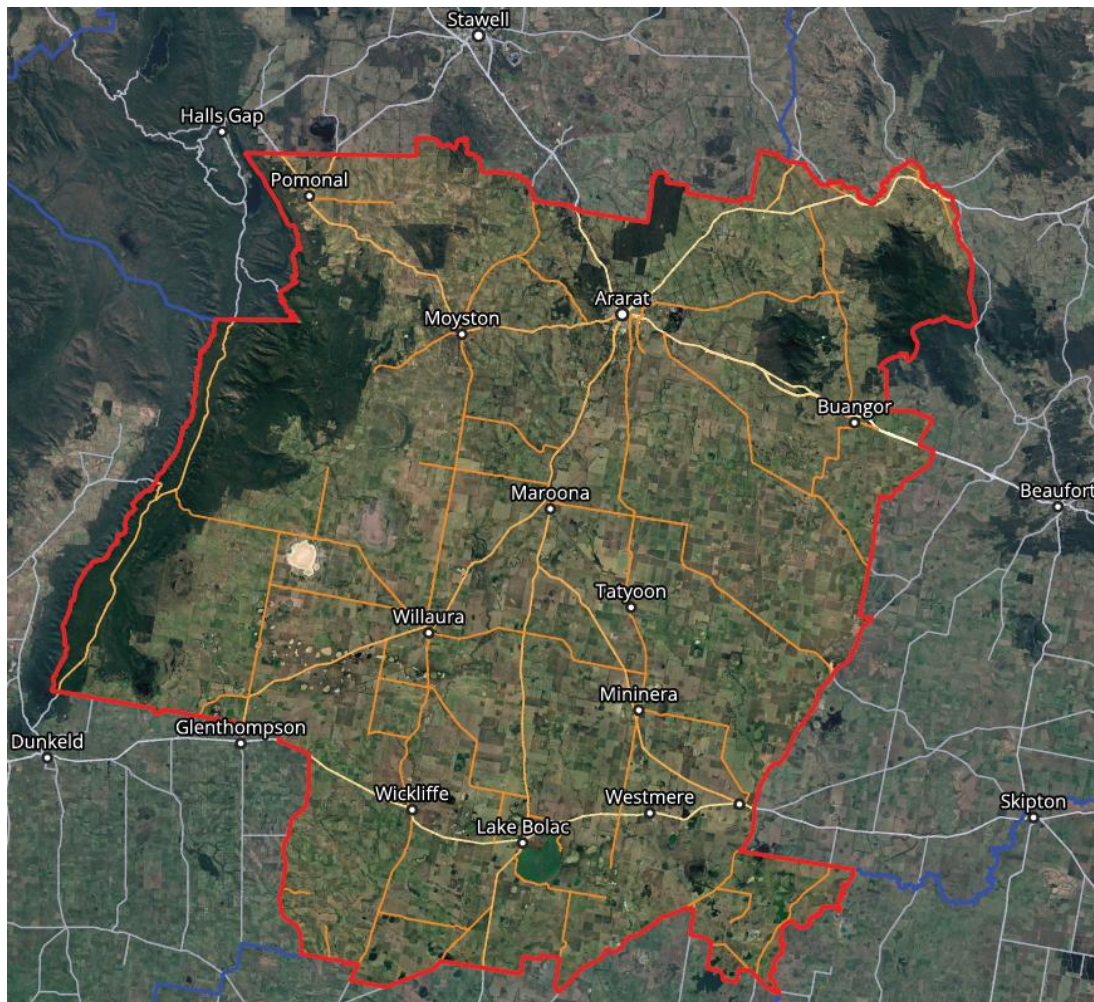


Figure 1: Ararat Rural City Council Municipality

Arterial Roads/Arterial Highways within the municipality are:

- Western Highway
- Glenelg Highway
- Mortlake-Ararat Road
- Ararat-Halls Gap Road
- Maroona-Glenthompson Road
- Rossbridge-Streatham Road
- Ararat-St Arnaud Road
- Pomonal Road
- Grampians Road
- Pyrenees Highway

There are 5 adjoining Municipalities, including:

- Pyrenees Shire Council
- Moyne Shire Council
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Corangamite Shire Council

Road Safety Challenges

Ararat Rural City Council manages an extensive and varied road network that plays a vital role in supporting local communities, businesses and visitors. The combination of long travel distances, high-speed rural roads, freight and agricultural traffic, and seasonal tourism increases road safety risk across the municipality. Recognising these local conditions is essential to ensuring road safety actions are well targeted, practical and focused on creating safer outcomes for everyone who lives in, works in or travels through Ararat Rural City.



Federal, State, and Local Government Context

This strategy does not exist in isolation; it aligns with the National Road Safety Strategy and Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, which set the ambitious target of halving road deaths and reducing serious injuries by 2030. At a local level, this document supports the Ararat Rural City Council Plan 2021–2025 (current), specifically the objective to develop and maintain key enabling infrastructure. It also integrates with our Community Vision 2031, which aspires to create sustainable and effective local transport networks underpinned by careful technical and financial planning.

What is Happening on Our Roads?

Current Road Safety Issues

Recent analysis of crash statistics from 2020 to 2024 reveals that while the total number of crashes has fluctuated, the severity of trauma remains a critical concern. In these five years, there were 158 reported casualty crashes within the municipality. The most prevalent crash types are "run-off-road" incidents on straights and curves, which account for over 25% of all casualty crashes. Intersection safety is also a major issue, with "cross traffic" collisions accounting for 22 casualty crashes.

Road Safety Data

It was found Ararat Rural City Council recorded number of crashes has been fluctuating over the last 12 years, as shown below. Generally, the number of crashes has fluctuated, the trend of the recorded incidents is towards zero; however, the rate is slow, approximately 1% per year.

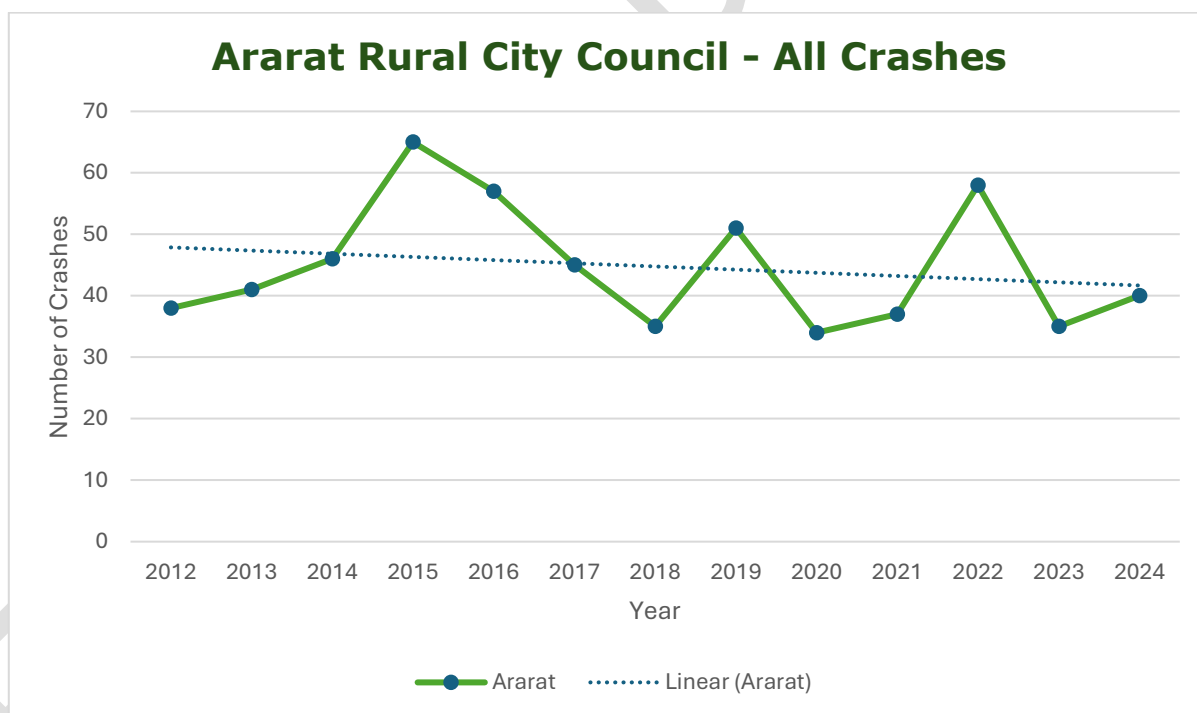


Figure 2: Ararat Rural City Council All Crashes 2012-2024

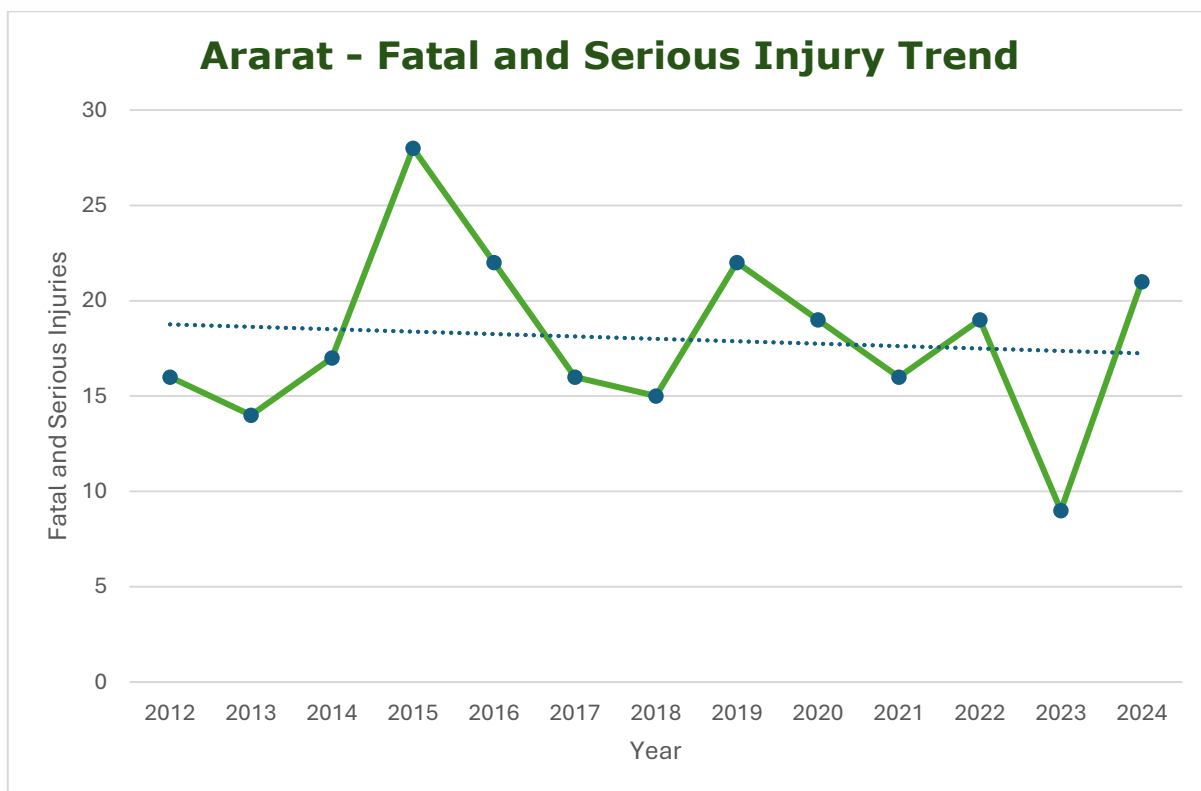


Figure 3: Ararat Rural City Council Fatal and Serious Injuries 2012-2024

Comparing this data against surrounding municipalities, Ararat Rural City Council has fewer serious and fatal injuries than neighbouring councils. The trends of surrounding councils are similar; however, Ararat Rural City Council has been the benchmark in the area for multiple years. The recorded statistics are fluctuating, and the trend towards zero is at a slow rate in comparison to other neighbouring councils.

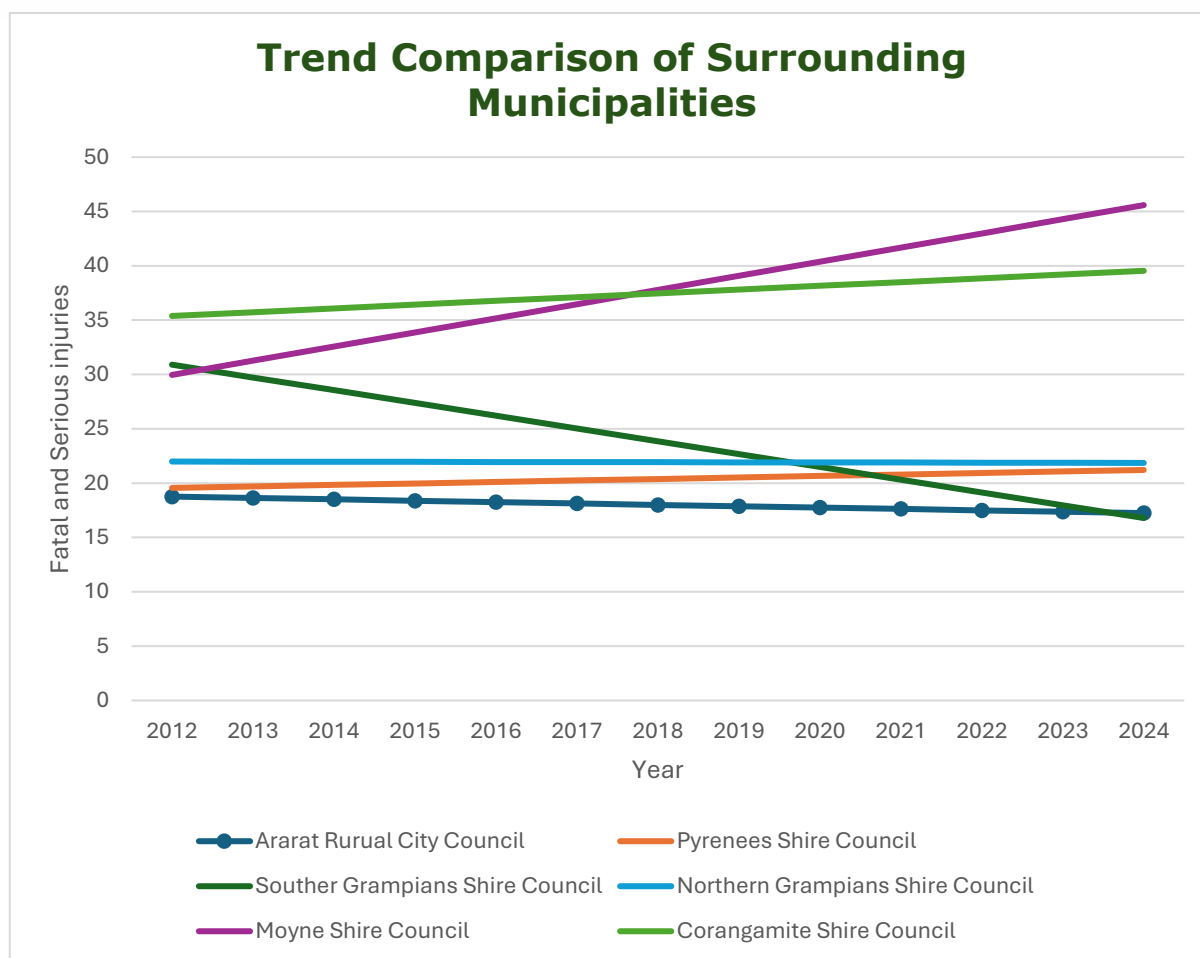


Figure 4 Trend Comparison of Surrounding Municipalities

What the Last Five Years of Data Tell Us

The following analysis is based on 5 years of verified crash data (January 2020 – December 2024) sourced from the Road Crash Information System (RCIS).

Over the five years, Ararat’s road network recorded 158 casualty crashes, resulting in significant human impact. Tragically, five lives were lost, with a concerning recent trend emerging—three fatalities occurred in 2024 alone after no fatalities were recorded in 2023. In addition in the same 5 year period, 83 people sustained serious injuries. Crash frequency peaked in 2022 with 43 casualty crashes and subsequently reduced to 29 in

2023 and 30 in 2024; however, despite this overall reduction, crash severity remains high, highlighted by the sharp increase in fatalities in the most recent year.

Analysis of Predominant Crash Types Using DCA (Definition for Coding Accidents) Classifications:

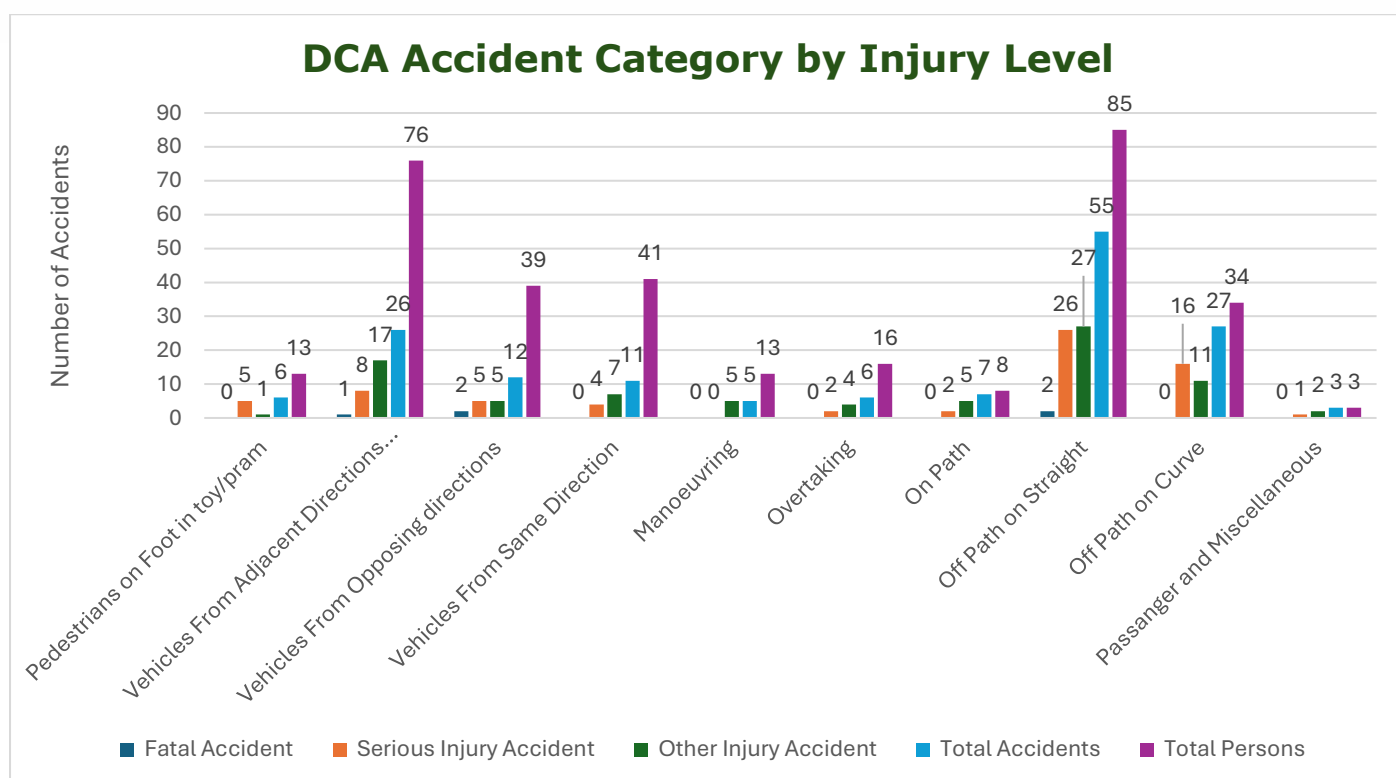


Figure 5 DCA Accident Category by Injury level 2020-2024

Run-off-road crashes represent the primary safety risk on the network, accounting for the majority of recorded trauma. The most common crash type was DCA 171 (left off road on a straight), with 23 crashes resulting in 11 serious injuries. This was followed by DCA 173 (right off road on a straight), which accounted for 176 crashes, including 10 serious injuries and two fatalities. DCA 181 (off right bend into an object) was also significant, contributing to nine incidents and five serious injuries, further reinforcing run-off-road events as the dominant and most severe crash mechanism.

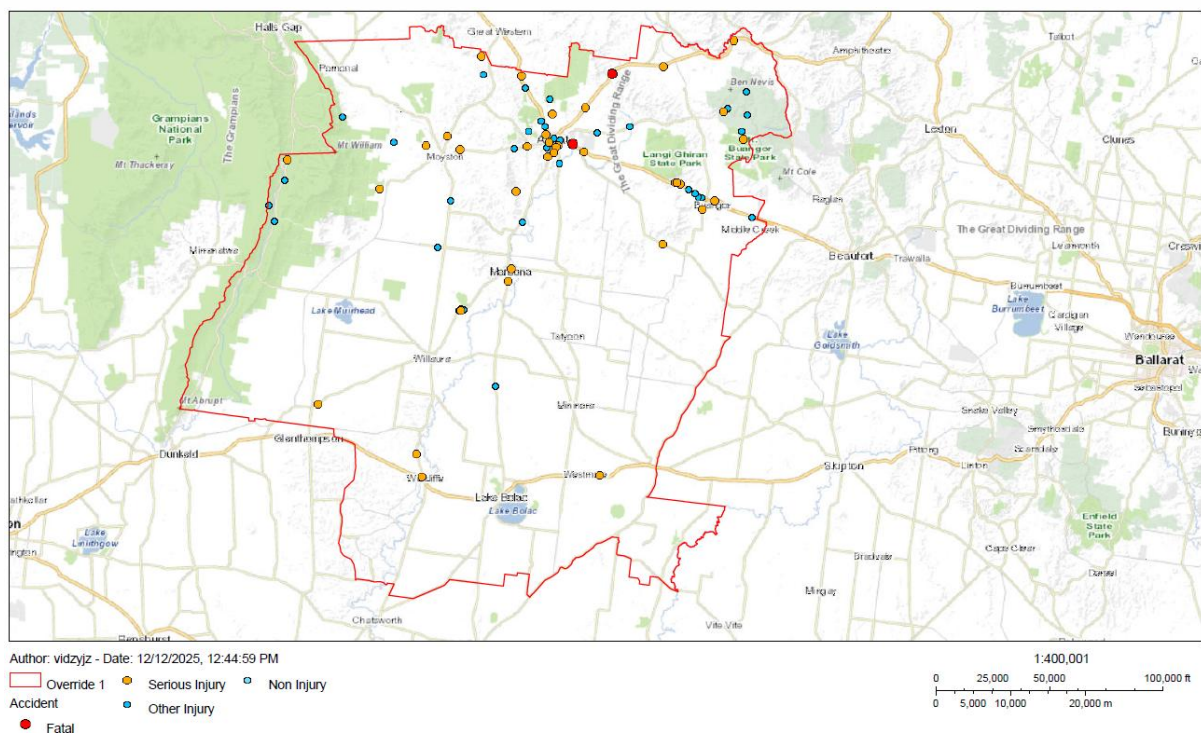


Figure 6 Run Off Road Crashes Over Ararat Rural City Council 2020-2024

Figure 6 (above) shows all the runoff road categorised crashes throughout the municipality. It is noted that this type of crash occurs throughout the whole municipality, with clusters in Buangor and Ararat heavily on Arterial roads.

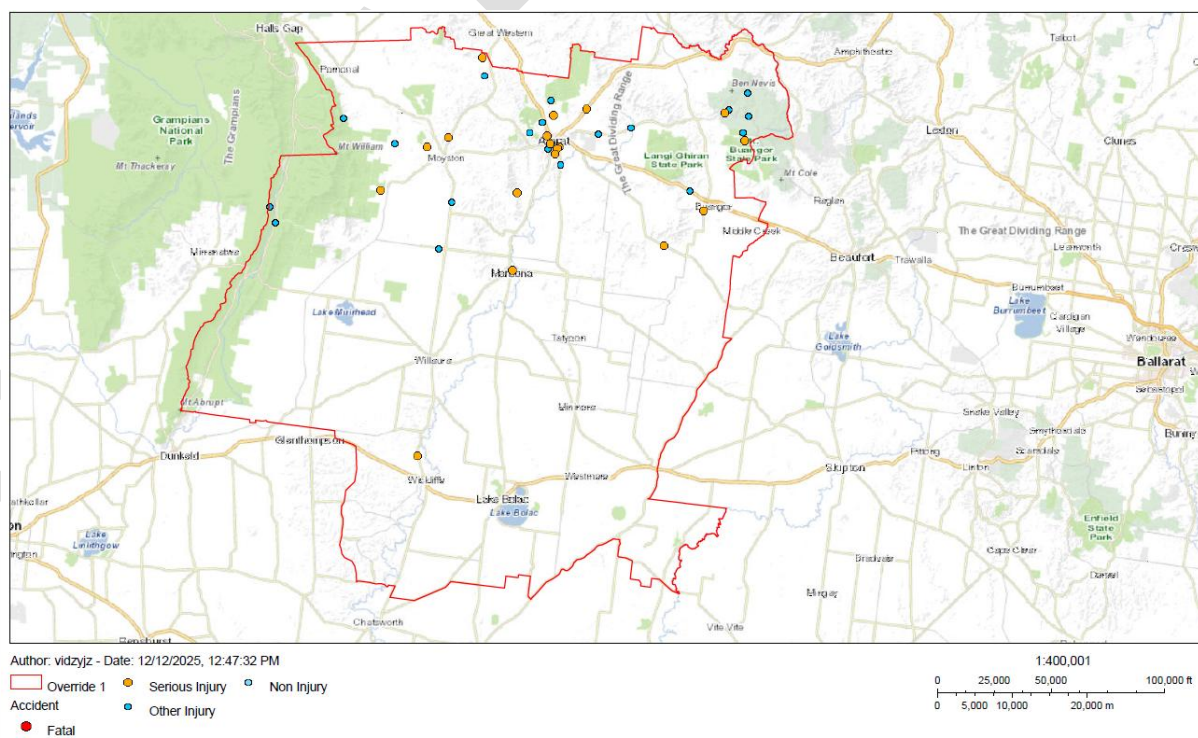


Figure 7 Run Off Road Type Crashes on Non-Declared Roads 2020 - 2024

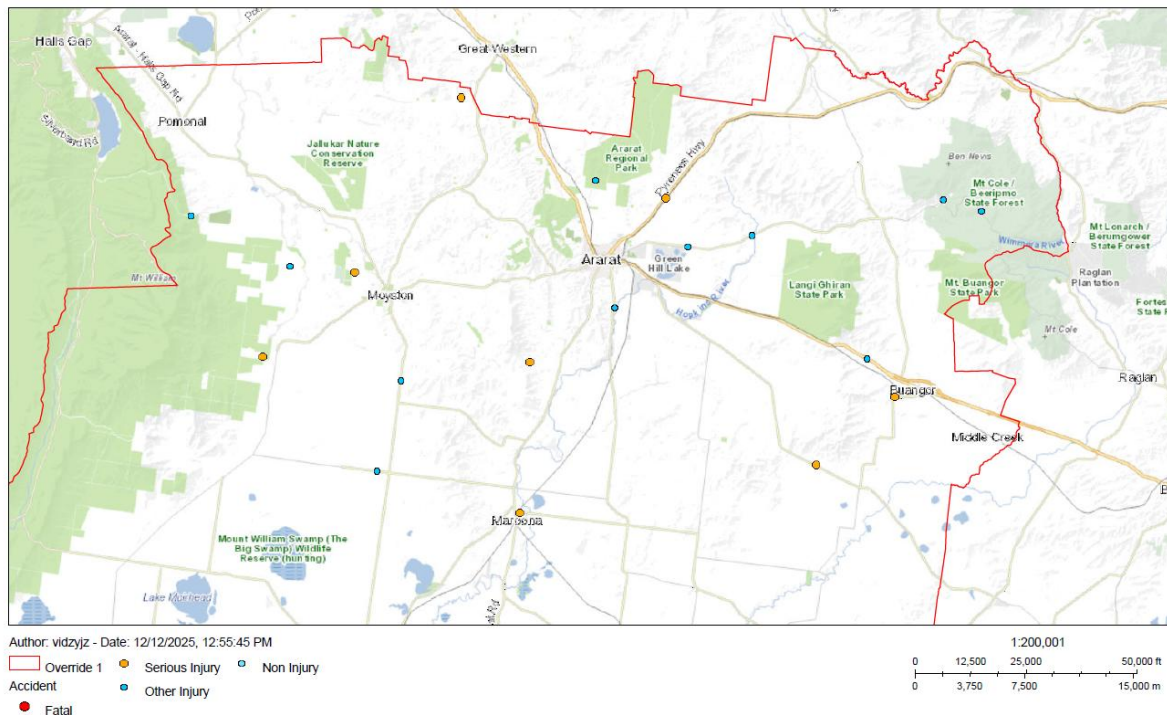


Figure 8 Run Off Road Non-Declared Roads Above 80km/h 2020-2024

Roads managed by the Council with speed limits above 80km/h equate to over 33% of crashes under this category. There were no trends in locations on non-declared roads.

Intersection crashes and opposing-direction crashes also present a significant safety concern due to their severity. DCA 110 (cross-traffic at intersections) was the second most common crash type, accounting for 13 incidents, including one fatality and seven serious injuries. Although less frequent, head-on collisions (DCA 120) were particularly severe, with eight crashes resulting in three fatalities and five serious injuries, highlighting the disproportionate risk associated with these crash types.

Vulnerable road users are disproportionately affected by crash trauma across the network. Motorcyclists are notably over-represented, with 25 riders involved in crashes, of whom 10 sustained serious injuries, representing a 40 per cent serious injury rate.

Pedestrians are at even greater risk, with nine pedestrian crashes recorded, five of which resulted in fatal or serious injury, underscoring the extreme vulnerability of pedestrians when incidents occur.

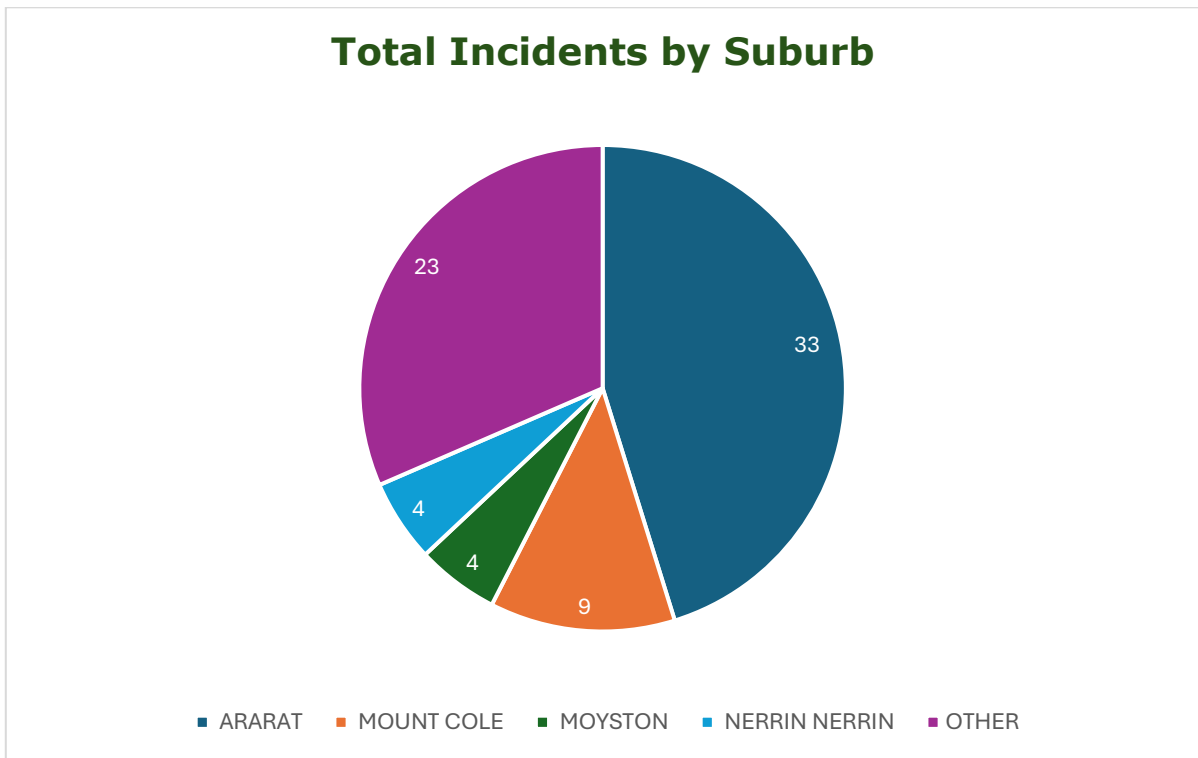


Figure 9 Total Incidents by Suburb 2020-2024

Spatial analysis indicates higher crash frequencies in Ararat and generally the Bush Trail recreational areas, such as Mount Cole. Ararat records almost three times as many crashes as the next township, Mount Cole. These figures are likely influenced by population distribution, as the Ararat city encompasses 59% of the municipality's population, meaning significantly higher populations and traffic activity than smaller surrounding townships. Mount Cole had nine incidents as shown in the figure above, indicating high recreational use with the bushland trails.

What You Told Us

To ensure this strategy reflects the lived experience of our residents, we undertook a comprehensive engagement process involving community workshops and the "Engage Ararat" online social mapping tool. This feedback provided a clear picture of the community's safety priorities and the specific locations where residents feel most at risk.

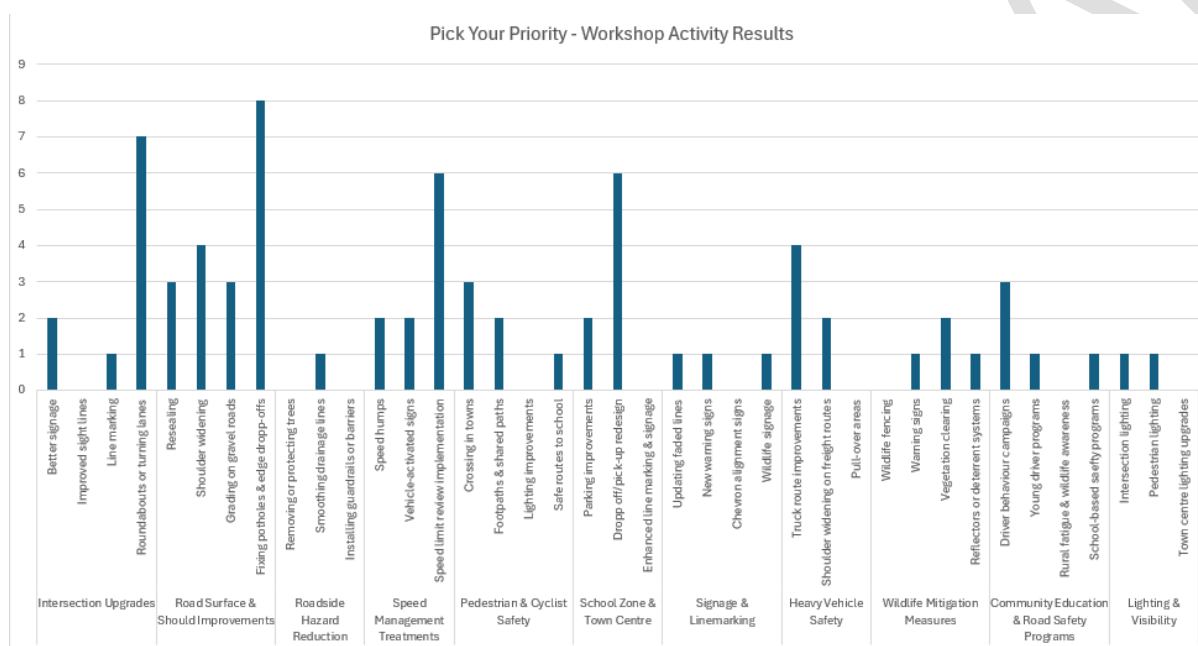


Figure 10: Workshop Pick Your Priority

During the workshops, participants ranked potential safety interventions by priority. The results were decisive, with the community identifying four clear priorities for immediate action as shown in Figure 10.

Fixing Potholes & Edge Drop-offs

This was identified by the community as the highest road safety priority. Residents highlighted that deteriorated road surfaces, particularly the combination of potholes within the traffic lane and significant edge drop-offs along sealed roads, create serious safety risks across the municipality. Potholes can lead to sudden steering or braking responses, vehicle damage and loss of control, while edge drop-offs increase the difficulty and danger of safely recovering a vehicle if it leaves the sealed surface.



Together, these conditions significantly heighten the risk of run-off-road incidents, especially on high-speed rural roads and for heavy vehicles, agricultural machinery, motorcyclists and drivers unfamiliar with local roads. Addressing both potholes and edge drop-offs through proactive maintenance and targeted treatments is therefore critical to improving vehicle control, reducing crash severity and enhancing safety across the road network.

Intersection upgrades

Intersection upgrades were strongly supported by the community as a key measure to improve road safety. Residents identified intersections as locations where conflict between vehicles frequently occurs, particularly where traffic volumes, turning movements and sight distance limitations intersect. There was strong support for installing roundabouts or dedicated turning lanes as effective ways to reduce the number and severity of conflict points, improve traffic flow and make driver intentions clearer. These treatments were seen as particularly important on higher-speed approaches and at intersections used by heavy vehicles and visitors unfamiliar with the local road network. Upgrading intersections in this way is considered a critical step in reducing the likelihood and severity of crashes, particularly those involving cross-traffic and turning movements.



Speed limit reviews

Residents strongly supported the review of speed limits, particularly within residential areas, town centres and around schools, to ensure that posted speeds better reflect the surrounding road environment and level of activity. Community feedback highlighted concerns that existing speed limits in some locations do not adequately account for pedestrian movement, cyclist activity, roadside development and frequent turning movements. There was a clear expectation that speed limits should align with how roads are used, rather than solely their physical characteristics, and that lower speeds in high-activity areas would improve safety, comfort and amenity. Reviewing speed limits, supported by appropriate infrastructure and road design, was seen as an important step in reducing crash severity and creating safer, more liveable local streets.



School Zone Safety

School zone safety was identified as a top community concern, with strong support for redesigning school drop-off and pick-up areas to better protect children. Residents highlighted that congestion, vehicle turning movements, reversing, and informal stopping behaviours during peak school times create heightened safety risks for students, parents and staff. There was a clear desire for improved layouts that better separate vehicles from pedestrian movements, provide safer crossing points, and reduce conflict between cars, buses and active travel users. Redesigning school zones to improve visibility, traffic flow and speed management was seen as critical to creating safer school environments and encouraging safe travel to and from school. It was also noted that Ararat College do not have a designated crossing area with a supervised crossing person, creating an inferior environment with a higher likelihood of an incident occurring. It is common to find supervised school crossings at high schools in other nearby councils on arterial roads due to the higher volumes of traffic.



Key Trends and Near Misses

Dangerous Road Surfaces

As part of the community engagement, dangerous road surface conditions were raised as a significant safety concern by the community, with specific locations identified as presenting an elevated and immediate risk. Feedback described sections of Rossbridge–Streatham Road as “actively dangerous,” particularly where large potholes occur near blind spots and curves, limiting drivers’ ability to react to the conditions safely. The conditions reported were likely to increase sudden braking or evasive manoeuvres, heightening the risk of loss-of-control and run-off-road crashes. Similarly, the narrow shoulders on Moyston–Great Western Road were identified as a major hazard, particularly for heavy vehicles and agricultural machinery, which are often forced to sway or partially leave the sealed surface to safely pass oncoming traffic. The combination of constrained road width, high operating speeds and heavy vehicle movements significantly increases crash risk at these locations, reinforcing the need for targeted surface repairs and shoulder improvements to improve safety and network resilience.



Intersection Confusion

Intersection confusion was repeatedly raised by the community as a safety concern, particularly at the intersections around High, Ingor and View Point Street. Residents reported poor visibility, unclear priority and complex traffic movements at these locations, which were described as contributing to frequent near-miss incidents. These issues were noted to be exacerbated during periods of higher traffic volumes and by drivers unfamiliar with the local road network. The combination of limited sight lines and ambiguous intersection layouts was seen to increase the risk of turning and cross-traffic conflicts, reinforcing the need for targeted intersection upgrades to improve visibility, clarify priority and reduce the likelihood of crashes.

Vulnerable Road Users

The safety of vulnerable road users was a strong theme in community feedback, with a clear demand for improved active transport infrastructure. A dedicated shared path proposed along Warrak Road was identified as “essential” to support the safety of staff, visitors and other pedestrians and cyclists. Residents highlighted that the absence of separated infrastructure along this corridor forces vulnerable road users to travel close to high-speed traffic and heavy vehicles, significantly increasing the risk of serious injury in the event of a crash. Providing a dedicated shared path was viewed as a critical measure to separate active transport users from vehicle movements, improve accessibility and encourage safer, more sustainable travel options along this important employment corridor.



It was also noted during the community consultation that there was a strong demand for accessibility for people with disabilities, especially near amenities and key infrastructure such as medical centres and hospitals.

Wildlife Hazards

Wildlife hazards were consistently identified by the community as a significant road safety issue, particularly along the Ararat–Halls Gap Road. Residents reported frequent wildlife strikes involving kangaroos and deer, especially during dawn, dusk and night time periods when animal movement is most common, and driver visibility is reduced.

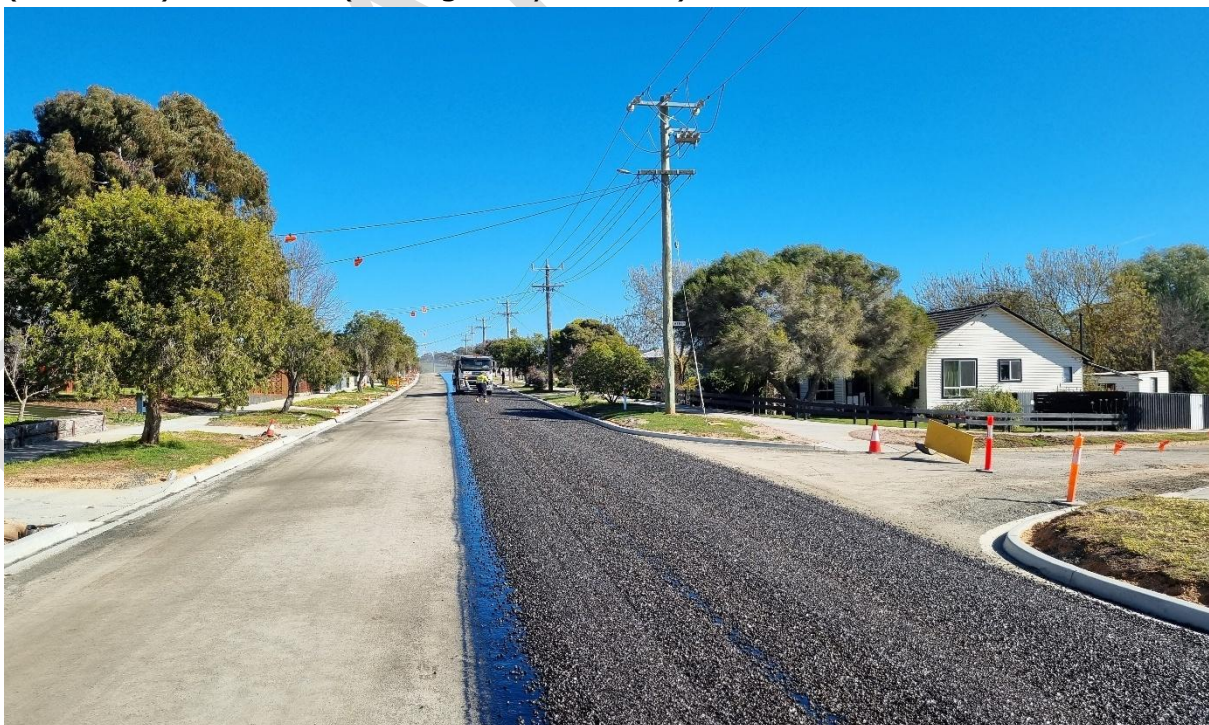


These collisions were noted to pose serious risks not only to animal welfare but also to driver safety, with the potential for severe vehicle damage, loss of control and serious injury. There were strong calls for targeted speed reductions, improved warning signage and other mitigation measures to better reflect the heightened wildlife risk along this corridor and reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes.

Key Concerns

Ararat Rural City Council faces the challenge of addressing high-severity road trauma, evidenced by 158 casualty crashes and five fatalities between 2020 and 2024. Data analysis identifies "run-off-road" incidents on high-speed rural corridors and intersection collisions as the primary drivers of trauma, particularly on key origin-destination routes. These statistical findings are strongly corroborated by community feedback, which prioritises the rectification of road surface hazards, specifically potholes and edge drop-offs and the engineering of safer intersections to mitigate cross-traffic type crash risks. Furthermore, the disproportionate severity of injuries among vulnerable road users, combined with localised risks such as wildlife strikes and school zone congestion, underscores the need for a strategic focus on forging infrastructure, speed management, and improved active transport links.

- Rossbridge-Streatham Road: High incidence of surface hazards contributing to loss-of-control risks. (Managed by DTP)
- Moyston-Great Western Road: Narrow shoulders contributing to run-off-road (DCA 171) incidents. Managed by DTP)
- Ararat-Halls Gap Road: High frequency of wildlife strikes and tourist traffic incidents. (Assumed not all incidents have been recorded, as there may only be vehicle damage.) (Managed by DTP)
- High St, Tobin St & View Point St Intersection: A known hotspot for cross-traffic (DCA 110) conflicts. (Managed by Council)



How We Will Move Towards Zero Trauma – Vision Zero & the Safe System

Principles of the Safe System

The Safe System is internationally regarded as the most appropriate framework used to dramatically reduce road trauma.

Over the past ten years, for example, Sweden has reduced fatalities and serious injuries by almost 40%.

The Safe System framework has been committed to being utilised by Ararat Rural City Council for current and future road safety projects and initiatives to achieve further road trauma reductions throughout the municipality and set the standard for the region.



Figure 11: The Safe System Overview

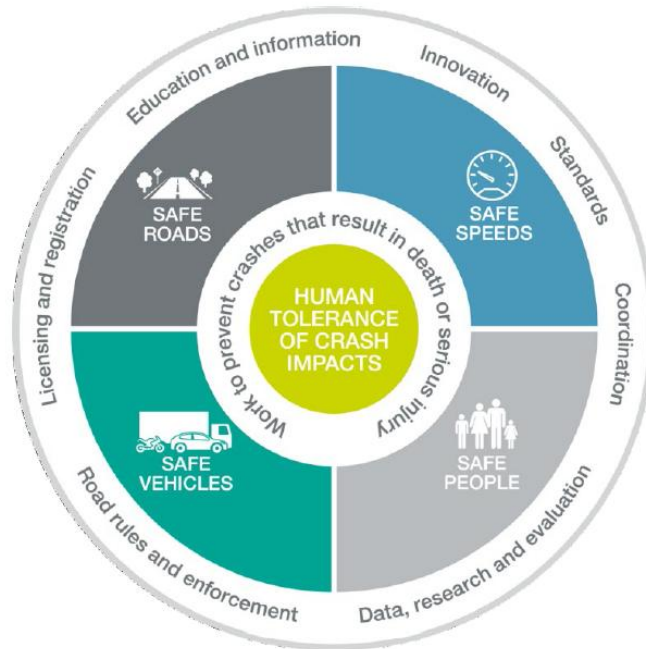


Figure 12: The Safe System

The Safe System framework is based upon the following 4 principles. Ararat Rural City Council are committed to applying these to current and future projects.

No death or serious injury occurring on our road network is acceptable.

Road Safety needs to focus on the reduction of Fatalities and Serious Injuries.

People are Vulnerable

Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, e-scooter riders and motorcyclists, face a myriad of risks on today's roads.

These individuals often lack the protective structures afforded by vehicles, making them particularly susceptible to serious injuries or fatalities in the event of a collision.

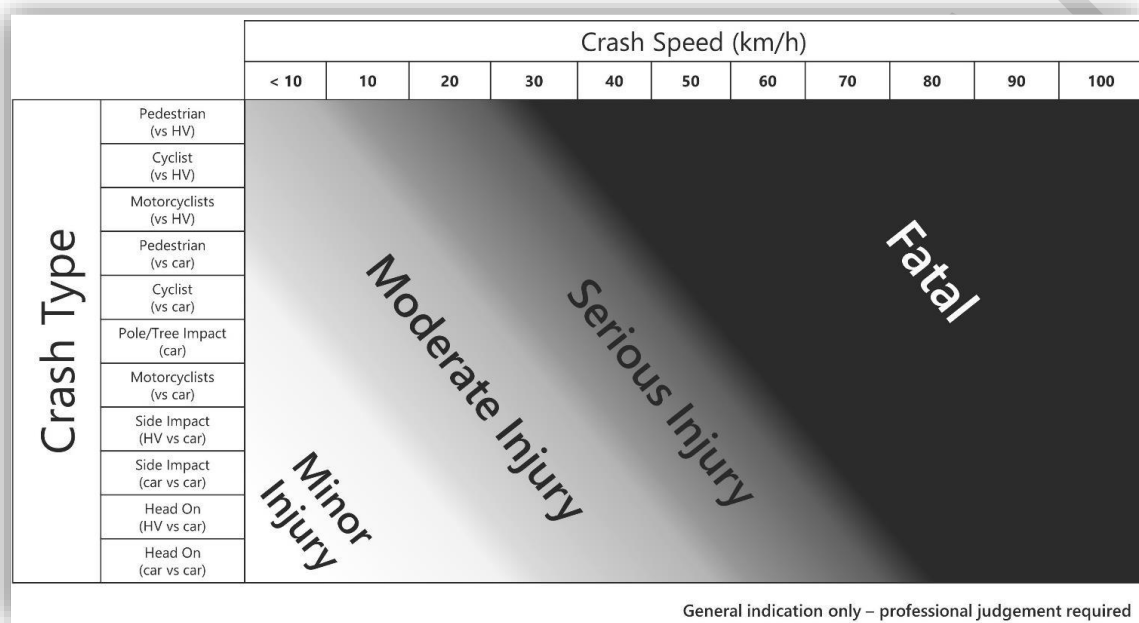


Figure 13: Severity Guidance Sheet (Figure 10.3, Austroads 2022)

People Make Mistakes

Humans are fallible and will inevitably make mistakes when driving, riding or walking. However, these crashes should not result in fatal and serious injury. The Safe System recognises the unavoidable nature of human error, and rather than blaming the road user for an incident, there are a range of factors that contribute to a crash such as road design, road maintenance and road use.

Shared Responsibility

Creating a safe road network is everyone's responsibility. The Ararat Rural City Council, local businesses, organisations and the community all have a role to play in order for us to move towards zero.

Elements of the Safe System

Safer Roads

The element 'Safer Roads', relates to both the road itself and the roadside. It considers ways to design, operate and maintain the road network to reduce the chance of a crash occurring as well as the consequence when one does occur.



Safer Speeds

The element 'Safer Speeds', relates to the speed at which vehicles are likely to travel on the road. Factors that influence operating speeds include posted speed limits, the level of compliance with the speed limit and physical constraints. Unsafe speeds can increase both likelihood and consequence of a crash.

Safer Road Users

The element 'Safer Road Users', relates to road user behaviour, driver / rider training and licensing, levels of compliance and personal safety equipment, particularly in the case of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists.

Safer Vehicles

The element 'Safer Vehicles', relates to the safety features, including intelligent technologies that are incorporated into vehicles of different types, which contribute to crash avoidance and / or reducing the severity of crashes.

How Vision Zero Aligns with the Council Vision 2031

This strategy is directly linked to the Ararat Rural City Council Community Vision 2031. The Vision commits to "sustainable and effective local transport networks" where enabling infrastructure supports social and economic growth. By embedding the Safe System principles, we ensure that our transport network is not only efficient but fundamentally safe for all users, supporting our goal of being a place of strength, compassion, and self-reliance.



Our Role

Council plays a multifaceted role as a road manager, land-use planner, and community advocate. Our primary responsibility is the design, construction, and maintenance of the local road network. However, we also have a critical role partnership with State Government for improvements to arterial roads, facilitating road safety education, and partnering with Victoria Police and other agencies to address behavioural issues.

What Works in Addressing Road Trauma?

Safer Roads

Goal: Roads should be "forgiving" of errors and designed to minimize the severity of crashes.

- Flexible Barriers: Installing flexible roadside and centre-line barriers on high-speed roads can reduce run-off-road and head-on crashes by up to 85%.
- Tactile Lines: Audio-tactile edge and centre lines ("rumble strips") help alert drivers who are drifting. Studies show a 29% reduction in single-vehicle run-off-road crashes where these are used on rural roads.



- Intersection Safety:
 - Roundabouts: Consistently reduce casualty crashes by 70% to 80% by slowing traffic and changing impact angles.
 - Safety Cameras: Speed and red-light cameras at intersections have been shown to reduce casualty crashes by 47% on the leg of the intersection facing the camera.
- Separation: Dedicated paths for cyclists and pedestrians separate vulnerable users from heavy vehicles and high-speed traffic



Safer Speeds

Goal: Ensure travel speeds suit the safety standard of the road and the physical tolerance of road users.

Impact Tolerance: Research shows the risk of death or serious injury escalates rapidly above certain impact speeds:

- 30 km/h for a pedestrian struck by a car.
- 50 km/h for a side-impact crash.

- 70 km/h for a head-on crash.

Small Reductions Matter: A decrease of just 1 km/h in average traffic speed can result in a 3% decrease in injury crashes and a 4–5% decrease in fatal crashes.

Traffic Calming: Measures in residential streets (e.g., speed humps, slow points) can reduce injury crashes by 25%.

Safer People

Goal: Encourage safe behaviour and alert driving, while acknowledging human fallibility.

Enforcement: Intensive and targeted enforcement is effective. Random breath testing and drug testing create a "general deterrence" effect.

Alcohol Interlocks: These devices reduce re-offending by approximately 67% during the interlock period.

Graduated Licensing: Systems that require minimum supervised driving hours (e.g., 120 hours for learners) help young drivers build experience safely.

Protective Equipment: Wearing a properly adjusted seatbelt reduces the risk of fatal or serious injury by up to 50%. For motorcyclists, protective clothing and helmets are critical.



Safer Vehicles

Goal: Promote vehicles that can prevent crashes or protect occupants during a crash.

Active Safety Technology:

- Electronic Stability Control (ESC): Reduces single-vehicle crashes by 32% and rollover crashes by 59%.
- Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB): Can reduce real-world rear-end crashes by 38%.
- Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) for Motorcycles: Shown to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes by 39% in Australian conditions.

Side Curtain Airbags: Reduce the risk of death in driver-side crashes by 37%.

Fleet Safety: If every driver drove the safest vehicle in their class, death and serious injury would drop by an estimated 26%.



What Does Not Work

While the Ararat Rural City Council Road Safety Strategy prioritises evidence-based solutions, it's also important to acknowledge approaches that have been shown to have limited effectiveness in reducing road trauma. Understanding what doesn't work helps us avoid investing resources in initiatives that are unlikely to yield significant or lasting safety improvements.



Training Without Experience: Traditional driver training that focuses on vehicle handling skills without an on-road context can lead to overconfidence and increased risk-taking behaviour. While mastering vehicle control is important, research suggests that such training, in isolation, doesn't necessarily translate to safer decision-making on real roads.

Fear Appeals Alone: "Shock and awe" advertising campaigns generally have diminishing returns if they are not supported by tangible enforcement and infrastructure improvements. While raising awareness is crucial, relying solely on fear-based messaging does not change the underlying system that allows mistakes to happen or provide practical strategies for safer behaviour.

Blaming the User: Relying on road users to be "perfect" at all times is ineffective. The Safe System approach recognises that human error is inevitable, and the system must be designed to accommodate it, rather than just punishing users. Focusing exclusively

on individual responsibility ignores the critical role of road design, speed limits, and vehicle safety in preventing crashes and mitigating their severity.

One-Off Education: Short-term education programs without ongoing reinforcement or practical application have limited impact on long-term behavioural change. Sustainable safety improvements require continuous engagement, practical skill-building, and a supportive environment that reinforces safe choices over time.



Our Strategic Approach and Action Plan

Strategic Approach

Ararat Rural City Council is committed to the Safe System approach and the long-term vision of zero deaths and serious injuries on our road network. Consistent with Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030 and the principles of Vision Zero, Council recognises that road trauma is preventable and that no loss of life is acceptable.

Moving towards zero requires a fundamental shift in how road safety is planned, delivered and evaluated. Rather than focusing solely on individual road user behaviour, this strategy acknowledges that people make mistakes and are physically vulnerable, and that the road system must be designed and managed, so those mistakes do not result in death or serious injury.



Council's goals are therefore focused on reducing the likelihood of crashes occurring and, where crashes do occur, ensuring the forces involved are within levels the human body can tolerate. This will be achieved through a balanced application of the Safe System pillars — safer roads, safer speeds, safer road users and safer vehicles — and through strong partnerships with State Government, emergency services, industry and the community.

In a predominantly rural municipality such as Ararat, this means prioritising safety on high-speed rural roads, addressing run-off-road and intersection risks, protecting vulnerable road users in townships, and ensuring road environments support safe travel for residents, visitors and those who use the road network for work.



The overarching goal of this strategy is to provide clear strategic direction for Council's Road Safety Action Plan, guiding the prioritisation of resources and actions to achieve meaningful and sustained reductions in road trauma across the municipality.

Targets

The targets set out in this Road Safety Action Plan have been developed to align with and support Council's broader planning framework, including the Council Plan, Asset Management Plans, Active Transport and Lifestyle Strategy, Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Community Vision 2031. By aligning road safety targets with existing service levels, renewal priorities and strategic objectives, Council ensures that safety outcomes are integrated into core asset management, infrastructure investment and community wellbeing initiatives. This approach supports coordinated decision-making, maximises the effectiveness of available resources, and ensures that road safety improvements contribute to wider goals such as accessibility, economic participation, environmental resilience and liveable communities.



These targets focus on reducing fatal and serious injuries, particularly in areas of highest risk within the municipality. They recognise that while zero is the ultimate goal, interim targets are critical to driving accountability, prioritising investment and monitoring effectiveness over time.

Council's road safety targets are:

- By 2030, achieve a minimum 30% reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes on Council-managed roads, relative to the 2020–2024 baseline.
- By 2027, achieve an interim 10% reduction in fatal and serious injuries, demonstrating early progress toward longer-term outcomes.
- Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on high-speed rural roads by at least 30% by 2030, with a focus on run-off-road and head-on crash types.
- Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes at priority intersections by 40% by 2030.
- Reduce fatal and serious injuries involving vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) by 40% by 2030, particularly within townships and activity centres.
- Reduce fatal and serious injuries involving vehicles used for work, including heavy vehicles, by 25% by 2028.



Progress against these targets will be monitored annually by council assets department using verified crash data, supported by community feedback and local risk assessments. Targets will be reviewed and refined over time to reflect emerging trends, changes in the road network and advances in road safety practice.

Ararat Rural City Council – Safe System Action Plan (2025–2030)

This Action Plan translates Safe System goals into deliverable, measurable actions and clearly demonstrates alignment with the four Safe System pillars: Safer Roads, Safer Speeds, Safer Road Users and Safer Vehicles. It has been structured for direct inclusion in Council's Community Road Safety Strategy and has been developed to align with Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, as well as relevant State Government policies and Council plans, strategies and asset management frameworks that guide transport, infrastructure, safety and community wellbeing outcomes.

Goal 1: Reduce Fatal and Serious Injuries on High-Speed Rural Roads

SMART Goal: By 2030, reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on high-speed rural local roads by at least 30%, with an interim reduction of 10% by 2027.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Treat high-risk rural corridors (shoulder sealing, audible edge lines, safety barriers)	✓				Kilometres treated; FSI crashes.	By 2030, achieve ≥30% reduction in fatal and serious injuries on treated corridors.	Council; DTP
Progressive roadside hazard removal program	✓				Number of hazards removed	By 2028, treat 100% of currently identified 'extremely high-risk' sites and 75% of 'high-risk' sites.	Council

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Rural speed environment reviews on priority corridors		✓			Reviews completed; speed compliance	By 2027, complete speed reviews on all priority corridors (generally defined as Link Roads, characterised by description in the Ararat Rural City Council Roads and transport Asset Management Plan)	Council; DTP
Community education on rural road risks (speed, fatigue, wildlife)			✓		Campaign delivery and reach	Annually deliver rural road safety education campaigns	Council; TAC

Goal 2: Prevent Severe Run-Off-Road Crashes

SMART Goal: By 2030, assess and treat 100% of identified high-risk run-off-road locations using Safe System-aligned treatments.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Network-wide run-off-road risk assessment	✓				Percentage of network assessed	By 2027, assess 100% of the sealed rural road network to provide a Risk Score in accordance with a Network Roadside Risk Intervention Threshold (NRRIT)	Council
Develop Jurisdictional Policy for NRRIT	✓				Policy Developed	Jurisdictional Policy developed to meet Council's financial commitment and capacity	Council
Install delineation, curve warning and tactile linemarking	✓				Number of sites treated	Treat all priority sites within three years of identification	Council

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Upgrade high-risk curves with barriers or geometry improvements	✓				FSI crashes at treated sites	Due to the current absence of completed network-wide NRRIT assessments, the program will initially target locations identified as high risk through preliminary screening methods, including crash trends, roadside hazard characteristics, traffic exposure and operational considerations. Formal assessment against NRRIT criteria will continue throughout program development to validate and refine treatment priorities.	Council; DTP

Goal 3: Improve Safety at High-Risk Intersections

SMART Goal: By 2030, reduce fatal and serious injury crashes at priority intersections by 40%.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Upgrade priority intersections (roundabouts, turn lanes, splitter islands)	✓				Funding effectively invested	By 2029, allocate available program funding and percentage of capital works budget toward the treatment of high-risk intersections, prioritised in accordance with network risk and Safe System principles.	Council; DTP
Carry out existing condition Road Safety Audits on priority intersections	✓				No of Existing Condition Road Safety Audits	Carry out 5 existing condition road safety audits each year.	
Improve lighting, sight distance and linemarking	✓				Audit compliance	Implement 100% of 'extreme' RSA recommendations	Council
Undertake Road Safety Audits for all major intersection works	✓				Audit actions implemented	Implement at least 90% of High or Extreme road safety audit recommendations	Council

Goal 4: Protect Vulnerable Road Users in Townships

SMART Goal: By 2030, reduce fatal and serious injuries involving pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists by 40%

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Deliver pedestrian crossings, refuges and school-zone upgrades	✓	✓			Treatments delivered	By 2030, treat all identified high-risk pedestrian locations	Council
Expand shared path connections in Ararat, Moyston and Pomonal.	✓				Kilometres delivered	By 2030, deliver continuous shared-path priority links based on community engagement through the development of the strategy.	Council
Motorcycle-focused curve and surface improvements	✓				Motorcycle FSI crashes	By 2030, achieve ≥40% reduction in motorcycle fatal and serious injuries	Council

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Road safety education for schools and the community			✓		Program participation	Annually deliver road safety education across all schools	Council; TAC

Goal 5: Align Speeds with Road Function and Risk

SMART Goal: By 2027, complete speed limit reviews on all Council-managed roads adjacent to townships, schools and high-risk corridors.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Evidence-based speed limit reviews		✓			Reviews completed	By 2029, complete speed reviews for all townships and priority corridors	Council; DTP
Implement traffic calming and gateway treatments	✓	✓			Operating speed changes	Achieve a minimum 10 km/h reduction in operating speeds where applied	Council
Support Victoria Police speed compliance activities		✓	✓		Enforcement activity	Support targeted enforcement activities annually	Victoria Police

Goal 6: Improve Safety for Those Using Roads for Work

SMART Goal: By 2028, reduce fatal and serious injuries involving vehicles used for work by 25%.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Apply Safe System principles to all roadworks traffic management	✓	✓			Worksite compliance	From 2026, achieve 100% compliance at Council roadwork sites	Council
Improve heavy vehicle route geometry and shoulders	✓				Work-related FSI crashes	By 2028, achieve ≥25% reduction in work-related fatal and serious injury crashes for local businesses and the Council	Council
Council fleet safety standards (procurement)				✓	Fleet ANCAP rating	From 2026, ensure 100% of new fleet vehicles are 5-star ANCAP rated	Council

Goal 7: Strengthen Data, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

SMART Goal: By 2026, establish and maintain an annual road safety monitoring and reporting framework.

Action	Safer Roads	Safer Speeds	Safer Road Users	Safer Vehicles	KPI / Measure	Targets	Lead Partners /
Annual analysis of RCIS crash data	✓	✓	✓	✓	Annual Road Safety Performance Report	Publish an annual road safety performance report	Council
Integrate community hazard and near-miss reporting	✓		✓		Issues logged and resolved	Review and address 100% of all flagged issues.	Council
Annual review and update of the Action Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	Review completed	Annually review and endorse the Action Plan through Council	Council

Conclusion

Ararat Rural City Council is committed to improving road safety through a strategic and data-driven approach. This plan will be continuously reviewed to ensure effective implementation and a safer community for all road users.

FOR APPROVAL

Approved by:

Ararat Rural City Council

[xx/xx/xxxx]

For further inquiries or to report road safety concerns, contact council at <https://www.ararat.vic.gov.au>.

FOR APPROVAL

References

- Ararat Rural City Council. (2015). Ararat On The Move Active Transport and Lifestyle Strategy 2015-2025
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2016). Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2021). Community Engagement Policy
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2021). Council Plan 2021-2025.
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2021). Community Vision 2031.
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2024). Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024 - 2034
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2024). Footpaths and Cycleways Asset Management Plan
- Ararat Rural City Council. (2024). Roads and Transport Asset Management Plan.
- Austrroads. (2022). Guide to Road Safety Part 6: Road Safety Audit (AGRS06-22). Sydney, NSW: Austrroads.
- Austrroads. (2024). Guide to Road Safety Part 2: Safe Roads (AGRS02-24). Sydney, NSW: Austrroads.
- Austrroads. (2026). Guide to Road Safety Part 7: Road Safety Strategy and Management (AGRS07-26). Sydney, NSW: Austrroads.
- Austrroads. (2025). Guide to Road Safety Part 3: Safe Speed (AGRS03-25). Sydney, NSW: Austrroads.
- Department of Transport and Planning. (2024). Movement and Place in Victoria.
- Department of Transport and Planning. (2025). Road Crash Information System (RCIS). Victorian Government.
- Department of Transport and Planning. (2025). Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA).
- Infrastructure and Transport Ministers. (2021). National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.
- National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. (2021). Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy 2021 - 2025
- National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. (2024). Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy 2024 - 2025
- Pexels. (n.d.). Pexels. <https://www.pexels.com/>

Road Safety Victoria. (2021). Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030.

Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd. (2023). Safe System Assessment Framework.

Transport Accident Commission. (2025). Towards Zero.

Victoria Police. (2024). Road Safety Strategy 2024-2028

World Health Organization. (2023). Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023.

FOR APPROVAL

Glossary

Word / Phrase	Definition
Active Transport	Walking, cycling, wheeling and other forms of travel powered by people rather than motor vehicles.
ANCAP	Australasian New Car Assessment Program. An independent organisation that assesses and rates the safety performance of new vehicles.
Arterial Road / Arterial Highways	A major road managed by the Victorian Government that carries high volumes of traffic between towns, cities and regions.
Audio-Tactile Line Marking	Raised road line markings (also known as rumble strips) that create vibration and noise when driven over to alert drivers who are leaving their lane.
Baseline	The starting point used to measure future performance or improvements.
Casualty Crash	A road crash that results in a person being injured or killed.
Community Vision 2031	Ararat Rural City Council's long-term community vision that guides planning and decision-making for the municipality.
Continuous Improvement	An ongoing process of reviewing performance and making improvements over time.
Council-managed Road	A road for which Ararat Rural City Council is responsible for the management, maintenance and operation. This generally includes most local roads within the municipality, but excludes roads managed by the Victorian Government.
Crash Severity	A measure of how serious the outcomes of a crash are, such as property damage, injury or death.
DCA (Definition for Coding Accidents)	A structured, alphanumeric classification system used by Australian road authorities (VIC, TAS, SA) to categorise road crashes based on the movement and interaction of vehicles and pedestrians.
Declared Road	A road declared under Victorian legislation and managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). Declared roads are generally major highways, arterial roads and key transport routes.
Delineation	Road features such as guideposts, line marking and signs that help drivers understand the alignment of the road.
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning (Victoria), the Victorian Government agency responsible for managing arterial roads and the transport network.
Edge Drop-off	A difference in height between the sealed road surface and the road shoulder that can make it difficult for drivers to safely recover if they leave the roadway.

Fatal and Serious Injury (FSI)	A collective term used to describe road crashes that result in either a fatality or a serious injury. FSI is a key measure used to monitor road safety performance.
Fatality	A death resulting from a road crash.
Flexible Safety Barrier	A wire rope or flexible roadside barrier designed to prevent vehicles leaving the roadway or crossing into oncoming traffic while reducing crash severity.
Forgiving Road	A road designed to reduce the likelihood of serious injury when drivers make mistakes, through safer roadsides, barriers and clear road layouts.
Heavy Vehicle	A truck, bus or other large vehicle generally exceeding 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass.
Interim Target	A short-term milestone used to measure progress towards a longer-term objective.
Intersection	A location where two or more roads meet or cross.
KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	A measurable value used to assess whether an objective or target is being achieved.
Linemarking	Painted or raised markings on the road surface used to guide and regulate traffic.
Local Road	A road primarily intended to provide access to homes, businesses and local destinations. Local roads are generally managed by the local council and carry lower traffic volumes than arterial roads.
Near Miss	An event where a crash was narrowly avoided but had the potential to result in injury or damage.
Network Roadside Risk Intervention Threshold (NRRIT)	A nationally recognised methodology used to assess roadside hazards and prioritise locations for safety improvements based on risk.
Non-Declared Road	A road that is not managed by the Victorian Government under the Road Management Act and is generally the responsibility of the local council. These roads typically provide access to local homes, businesses, farms and communities, and include most local streets and rural roads within the municipality.
Operating Speed	The speed at which vehicles typically travel on a road under normal conditions.
Pedestrian Refuge	A protected area within a road that allows pedestrians to safely cross one direction of traffic at a time.
Priority Corridor	A road identified as requiring higher priority for investment or safety improvements due to traffic volumes, crash history or strategic importance.
RCIS (Road Crash Information System)	Victoria's official database containing police-reported road crash information.

Road Corridor	The land reserved for a road and its associated infrastructure, including the carriageway, shoulders, footpaths, shared paths, drainage, utilities and roadside vegetation.
Road Safety Audit (RSA)	A formal, independent assessment of an existing or proposed road project to identify potential safety issues and recommend improvements.
Road Trauma	Deaths and serious injuries resulting from road crashes.
Roadside Hazard	Any object or feature beside the road, such as trees, poles or drains, that may increase the severity of a crash.
Roundabout	A circular intersection designed to improve traffic flow and reduce the severity of crashes by lowering vehicle speeds.
Run-off-road Crash	A crash where a vehicle leaves the roadway and strikes an object, overturns or comes to rest off the road.
Safe System	An internationally recognised approach to road safety that accepts people make mistakes and aims to ensure those mistakes do not result in death or serious injury.
Safe System Pillars	The four key elements of the Safe System approach: Safer Roads, Safer Speeds, Safer Road Users and Safer Vehicles.
Serious Injury	An injury sustained in a road crash that requires hospital treatment or results in significant long-term impacts.
Shared Path	A path designed for use by both pedestrians and cyclists.
Sight Distance	The distance that a driver can clearly see ahead to identify and respond to hazards.
SMART Goal	A structured framework for setting a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.
Splitter Island	A raised island used at intersections to separate traffic movements and improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians.
TAC	Transport Accident Commission (Victoria), the Victorian Government agency responsible for road safety promotion and supporting people injured in road crashes.
Tactile Line Marking	Raised pavement markings that provide audible and tactile feedback to drivers when crossed.
Traffic Calming	Road design measures that reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety, such as speed humps, raised crossings or narrowed lanes.
Vulnerable Road User	A person who is at greater risk of serious injury in a crash because they are not protected by a vehicle, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and e-scooter riders.
Vision Zero	An internationally recognised road safety philosophy based on the principle that no death or serious injury on the road network is acceptable.

Appendix – Confidential and Restricted Information

This appendix has been withheld from the publicly available version of this document. The information contains confidential consultation material and restricted road safety information that has been considered in the preparation of the Road Safety Strategy.

FOR APPROVAL