

Road to Zero Annual Monitoring Report 2020

Questions and Answers

1. What is *Road to Zero*?

New Zealand has committed to decisive action on road safety under *Road to Zero: the national road safety strategy for 2020-2030*. *Road to Zero* adopts a vision of a New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes, and an intermediate target for reducing annual deaths and serious injuries by 40 percent by 2030.

The vision and target are underpinned by seven principles and five focus areas (as set out in the diagram below).



Vision:

A New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes



2030 Target:

A 40 percent reduction in deaths and serious injuries (from 2018 levels)



Principles:

We promote good choices but plan for mistakes

We design for human vulnerability

We strengthen all parts of the road transport system

We have a shared responsibility for improving road safety

Our actions are grounded in evidence and evaluated

Our road safety actions support health, wellbeing and liveable places

We make safety a critical decision making priority



Focus areas:

Infrastructure and speed

Vehicle safety

Work-related road safety

Road user choices

System management

Road to Zero is supported by an Action Plan for 2020-2022, which sets out 15 initial actions under the five focus areas of the strategy.

2. Why was *Road to Zero* developed?

On average, one person is killed every day on New Zealand roads, and another seven are seriously injured.¹ Road deaths are the second largest cause of death from injury (after suicide) in New Zealand² and more than half of major trauma injuries treated in our hospitals relate to road crashes.³ The total social cost of fatal and injury crashes in 2018 was \$4.9 billion (at June 2019 prices).⁴ New Zealand performs poorly compared with

¹ Ministry of Transport (2021). Road deaths and injuries: Times series of casualty and crash categories. Wellington: Ministry of Transport. Retrieved from: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/statistics-and-insights/safety-annual-statistics/sheet/road-deaths-and-injuries#element-926>

² IPRU. (2012). Factsheet 42 – Causes of injury by age. Injury Prevention Research Unit. University of Otago. Retrieved from: <https://psm-dm.otago.ac.nz/ipru/FactSheets/FactSheet42.pdf>

³ Major Trauma National Clinical Network (2018). Annual Report 2017-2018. Wellington: Major Trauma National Clinical Network. Retrieved from: <https://www.majortrauma.nz/assets/Publication-Resources/Annual-reports/Annual-Report-2017-18.pdf>

⁴ Ministry of Transport (2020). Social cost of road crashes and injuries - June 2019 update. Wellington: Ministry of Transport. Retrieved from: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Report/SocialCostof-RoadCrashesandInjuries2019.pdf>

many OECD nations based on road deaths by population, by vehicle number and by kilometres travelled.⁵

To address this problem, *Road to Zero* – New Zealand’s road safety strategy for 2020-2030 was published in December 2019. *Road to Zero* outlines a 10-year strategy to guide improvement in road safety in New Zealand from 2020.

3. What is the Road to Zero: Action Plan 2020-2022

Road to Zero is supported by the Action Plan for 2020-2022. Progress on each of the 15 actions in the Action Plan for 2020-2022 is key to laying the foundations for *Road to Zero*’s 10-year change programme, with the delivery of some actions continuing over the term of the strategy.

The 15 actions (categorised by focus areas) are set out below.

Focus Area 1: Infrastructure and speed

1. Invest more in safety treatments and infrastructure improvements
2. Introduce a new approach to tackling unsafe speeds (‘Tackling Unsafe Speeds’)
3. Review infrastructure standards and guidelines
4. Enhance safety and accessibility of footpaths, bike lanes and cycle ways (‘Accessible Streets’)

Focus Area 2: Vehicle Safety

5. Raise safety standards for vehicles entering the fleet
6. Increase understanding of vehicle safety
7. Implement mandatory anti-lock braking systems (ABS) for motorcycles

Focus Area 3: Work-related road safety

8. Support best practice for work-related travel
9. Strengthen the regulation of commercial transport services

Focus Area 4: Road user choices

10. Prioritise road policing
11. Enhance drug driver testing
12. Increase access to driver licensing and training
13. Support motorcycle safety
14. Review road safety penalties

Focus Area 5: System management

15. Strengthen system leadership, support and co-ordination.

⁵ International Transport Forum (2020). Road safety annual report 2020. Paris: ITF OECD. Retrieved from: https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/irtad-road-safety-annual-report-2020_0.pdf

4. What does the Road to Zero Annual Monitoring Report 2020 cover?

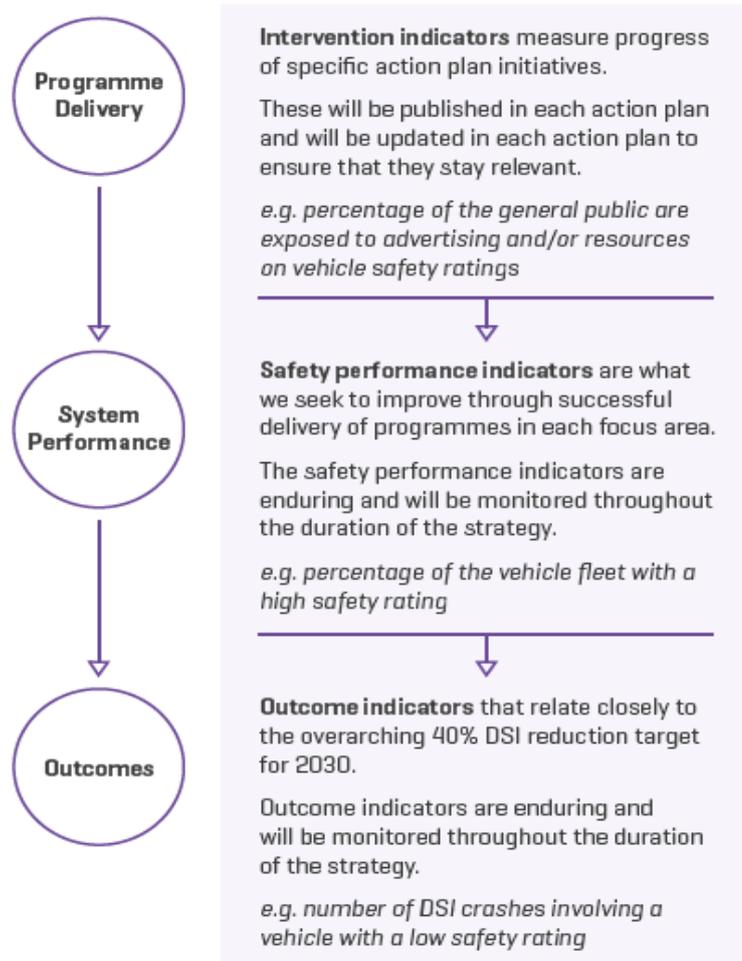
A key commitment under Road to Zero is regular monitoring and reporting against indicators set out in the Strategy's outcomes framework. This helps drive action and hold relevant agencies accountable for the delivery of the Strategy.

This report is the first of 10 annual monitoring reports on *Road to Zero*. It reports on progress made in the first year of implementing the Strategy, and actions that have been taken in 2020.

Regular monitoring and reporting is critical to keep us on track towards our 2030 target, and provides a transparent way to assess and review progress on actions. *Road to Zero* has an outcomes framework that covers programme delivery, system performance and outcomes across all five focus areas. This will enable us to take stock of where things are at, identify areas where more action is needed, and report publicly on our progress on an annual basis.

As noted in the Strategy:

- **Intervention indicators** measure progress of specific action plan initiatives. These will be published in each action plan to show how we intend to monitor the progress of those actions. The intervention indicators will be updated in each action plan to ensure that they stay relevant.
- **Safety performance indicators** are lead indicators that show our progress towards improving various elements of the transport system through successful programme delivery. The safety performance indicators are enduring and will be monitored throughout the duration of the strategy.
- **Outcome indicators** are lag indicators that relate closely to the overarching goal, which is a 40 percent reduction in the number of deaths and serious injuries by 2030. Like the safety performance indicators, these indicators are enduring and will be monitored throughout the duration of the Strategy.



5. Where is the money coming from?

The 2021 Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) focusses investment into road safety. The GPS includes safety as one of the four strategic priorities. It prioritises developing a transport system where no-one is killed or seriously injured by creating a *Road to Zero* activity class of at least 2.53 billion over 3 years to ensure safety treatments are progressed.

6. How have we progressed towards our target of a 40% reduction in the number of deaths and serious injuries by 2030?

In 2020, there were 318 deaths and 2,176 serious injuries (total 2,494) on our roads (provisional figures). While the number is still unacceptably high, this represents a 16% reduction from 2,978 in 2018.

Table 1. Number of deaths and serious injuries, 2018-2020

Year	Deaths	Serious injuries	Total DSIs	Reduction from the 2018 level
2018	378	2,600	2,978	-
2019	352	2,506	2,858	4%
2020 (provisional)	318	2,176	2,494	16%
2030 target	<227	<1560	<1,787	40%

The temporary but recurring COVID-19 alert levels travel restrictions imposed from March 2020 is likely to be one of the biggest contributing factors for the reduction in DSIs in 2020. The drop in trips, travel distance and road traffic, particularly during alert levels 3 and 4, significantly reduced the risk of crashes at a population level.

7. Why is some data not available and why have some indicators changed from the Strategy and Action Plan?

When we developed the *Road to Zero* outcomes framework, we knew there were a number of existing data gaps that needed to be filled as some of the indicators were not historically monitored. Identifying the appropriate mechanisms to fill the data gaps became our first priority.

In 2020, extensive work was undertaken to develop new data collection and analysis mechanisms, including the re-establishment of the Public Attitudes to Road Safety Survey and baseline data collection for indicators that we previously did not collect data for.

Three-quarters of the indicators are available for reporting in the first year, and we will continue to build on it for future monitoring reports. Future work will include investigating where and how we could source additional data, and providing additional granularity in our data.

Finally, some indicators in *Road to Zero* have been refined for better alignment to the overarching outcomes and/or actions, or improve clarity on the reporting metrics.

Appendix 1 of the Report sets out the full list of indicators and the rationale for any refinements made.

8. How has COVID-19 affected progress?

The impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent government response has resulted in delays on some actions as considerable policy, operational policy, and drafting resource was diverted to managing the response. This included a series of emergency regulatory amendments to the driver licensing and vehicle licensing systems.

Some regulatory programmes (including the Tackling Unsafe Speeds programme, the Drug Driving Bill, and the Accessible Streets package) are expected to be significantly advanced in 2021, with implementation to follow once the new legislative or regulatory settings are in place. Other regulatory actions will commence in 2021 (e.g. the proposed driver licensing review and a review of road safety penalties), while some have been re-phased to begin in 2022 (e.g. work to raise the standards of the vehicle fleet and strengthening commercial transport regulations).

In addition to delays in progressing some regulatory actions, implementation challenges on some key operational actions (particularly the safety infrastructure programme and road policing) have meant that these actions are not on track to meet their delivery targets. We will need to significantly ramp up and improve performance in these areas if these programmes are to make their full contribution towards the 40 percent target by 2030.

Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency is undertaking further modelling to identify the impacts these delays could have on achievement of the 2030 target. This will also inform the shape and scope of future actions and action plans.

Police have advised that they were also significantly impacted in their progress on *Road to Zero* actions. During the COVID-19 response, Police stopped undertaking Impairment Checkpoints and only breath tested drivers where officers suspected that the driver was impaired by alcohol. Because of this, during the initial months of COVID-19, the number of breath tests fell to almost zero and continued to be impacted by subsequent lockdowns.

For the reporting period, Police also advised that there were significant numbers of dedicated road policing resources diverted to assist with lockdown checkpoints and assisting with security at Managed Isolation and Quarantine facilities. This impacted on road safety policing activities delivered.

9. How does *Road to Zero* relate to the Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS)?

Road to Zero is the Government's strategy to guide improvement in safety and the GPS helps to direct investment into things that the Government wants to achieve for New Zealand's transport network, including *Road to Zero*. Safety is one of the four strategic priorities identified in GPS 2021. It prioritises developing a transport system where no-one is killed or seriously injured, supporting the vision set by *Road to Zero*.

10. Why is road safety a priority?

In 2018, 377 people were killed on our roads, and thousands more were seriously injured. On average 1 person was killed every day and another was injured every hour.

New Zealand's road death rate was 7.9 per 100,000 population in 2018, whereas countries with good safety performances had rates between 2 and 4 per 100,000 population. Australia's rate was 5.0 deaths per 100,000 population and Sweden's was 2.6. In addition, deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand roads had been increasing from the mid 2010s.

We know speed, impairment, distraction and not wearing seatbelts remain major factors in road deaths and injuries. But we also needed to look at the broader road system and improve the safety of the road network and the vehicle fleet to be more forgiving of mistakes.

11. What is Vision Zero?

Road to Zero is based on Vision Zero, a world-leading approach that refers to a societal commitment to work towards zero harm on the road. First launched in Sweden in 1997, it has been adopted by places like Norway, New York and London.

Under the Vision Zero philosophy, no loss of life is acceptable. It is based on the fact that we are human and make mistakes so, while the road system needs to keep us moving, it must also be designed to protect us.

Vision Zero is framed as 'Towards Zero' in some jurisdictions, such as Victoria and New South Wales in Australia, as well as Canada and the European Union. A number of New Zealand cities and regions, including Auckland, Waikato, Otago and Southland, have adopted Vision Zero approaches.

12. Can we achieve no deaths and serious injuries on our roads?

Our *Road to Zero* vision is 'a New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes'. It is based on Vision Zero.

Adopting this vision means no longer viewing the deaths on our roads as a 'toll' we're prepared to pay for mobility. Systems cannot be designed to prevent every crash. But they can, and should, keep people alive when crashes happen.

Loss of life is not considered to be an inevitable and acceptable part of the aviation and maritime sectors. Vision Zero applies that same expectation to the road system.

We recognise that zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads may not be achievable in the next 10 to 20 years. But adopting this vision means taking meaningful and sustained steps to reducing road trauma.

Vision Zero is now possible to envisage. Our existing knowledge shows how roads, vehicles, travel speed and users can interact to form a safe system. Several countries and overseas jurisdictions have formulated ambitious road safety targets by setting a date for achieving Vision Zero. The European Commission and a number of jurisdictions in the US and Australia have adopted a target and a road map to achieve close to zero fatalities and severe injuries by 2050.

13. How we decided on a target to reduce death and serious injuries

The target to reduce road user death and serious injuries by 40% by 2030 resulted from modelling of a substantial programme of road safety interventions over the next 10 years. This modelling requires all of the interventions to work together as a package to achieve the 40% reductions in deaths and serious injuries. The modelling is based on robust international evidence on how effective some interventions are.

The modelling shows that the best gains can be achieved by sustained investment in infrastructure improvements and effective enforcement, alongside safer speeds, safer vehicles, and supporting people to make safer choices.

Other countries that have adopted Vision Zero have typically aimed for reductions of between 40% and 60% in every 10-year period.

14. How do we plan to achieve the 40% target?

Modelling suggests that just over half the target could be achieved through a combination of speed and infrastructure improvements, such as:

- a. median barriers and intersection treatments
- b. speed limit changes in urban areas and on the highest risk parts of the road network
- c. increased levels of enforcement, both by safety cameras and police officers.

These changes require substantial investment in road safety over the next decade.

Up to a further 25% could be achieved by lifting the safety performance of the vehicle fleet and mandating ABS for motorcycles.

The remainder could be achieved by a combination of other interventions, such as improvements to driver licensing and increases to penalties for safety offences, as well as broader factors, such as advances in vehicle safety technology.

15. What it will cost to deliver the 40% target

To achieve the target, the Government needs to invest NZ\$1 billion per annum into road safety.

This will deliver:

- infrastructure improvements on roads with the highest concentration of deaths and serious injuries including:
 - 1,000km of additional median barriers
 - more than 1,700km of other safety treatments including side barriers and rumble strips
 - more than 1,500 intersection improvements such as roundabouts and platform treatments
- maintaining 1,070 sworn staff dedicated to road policing, plus breathalysers, vehicles and alcohol interlocks
- new roadside drug testing equipment
- measures to support the Tackling Unsafe Speeds package, including more safety cameras, improving roads to support existing speed limits and to facilitate speed changes around schools, and speed signage.

Half of the extra \$200m will be spent on infrastructure and road engineering, and the other half will pay for enforcement, including testing equipment for drugs.