

# WORK ON DRIVING SAFELY

A road safety guide for drivers of fleet vehicles



DUBBO CITY COUNCIL

# FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



Mark Riley | General Manager | Dubbo City Council

Road safety is of vital importance to our community. Each road user, whether pedestrian or vehicular, has the capability to cause harm and it is each road user's responsibility to minimise any potential for injury or death.

DUBBO City Council has a duty of care to raise awareness about road safety issues and promote strategies that will address road safety.

That's why it is committed to the Local Government Road Safety Program. This is a highly-effective partnership with the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and key road safety stakeholders.

Dubbo City Council is proud to be a strong advocate of Local Government's role in road safety awareness. It's commitment to the Local Government Road Safety Program has been demonstrated with the employment of a Road Safety Officer over the past 13 years.

Council has implemented many road safety campaigns addressing road issues impacting on our community. Several campaigns have attracted national attention as role models for best practice and have been recognized with awards from key road safety stakeholders.

Our award-winning Safe Driving Policy and Motor Vehicle Focus Team ensure that road safety is being addressed for our employees and non employees.

The Safe Driving Policy outlines procedures for all employees and non employees (e.g. volunteers, trainees and apprentices), authorised to drive all cars, goods carrying vehicles, mobile plant and equipment of every description owned or used by Council.

The policy asserts that all legal requirements are complied with and safe driving practices are also promoted to prevent unsafe plant and vehicle operation, which could result in death, injury and/or asset damage.

This education kit will only enhance Dubbo City Council's commitment to road safety – as it will your organisation's.

It will increase awareness amongst staff about road safety issues such as speed, fatigue, drink driving, occupants restraints, mobile phone use and driving to the weather and road conditions.

Hopefully, it will promote road safety and assist in the development of fleet and safe driving policies within your organisation.

Drive safely!

# STENZON

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# INTRODUCTION

THIS booklet is a guide for all drivers of fleet vehicles within the organisation. It outlines the major contributing factors of road crashes and offers tips to avoid road trauma. In 95 per cent of all road crashes, human behaviour has been a contributing factor. Many crashes are avoidable. This booklet encourages safe driving behaviour and safety conscious attitudes within your workplace fleet.

If we can decrease road crashes within an organisation, it will contribute to cutting down the road toll across NSW and Australia.

Apart from the suffering experienced by victims and their loved ones, the financial cost of road trauma to our community is around \$3.7 billion each year.

## What is safer work driving?

MOST people, at some stage of their working life, will inevitably drive for work purposes. This can include:

- Driving a company car every day;
- Using a work vehicle for a short trip during the day;
- Driving a van or light truck; and
- Employees provided with fleet vehicles.

Work-related driving is a key area in which the road toll can be substantially reduced. Reductions in workplace crashes will help to reduce the road toll and provide benefits to organisations in terms of occupational health and safety and reducing industry costs.

### FACT FILE

Work-related road crashes account for 30 per cent of all fatalities.

## Preparing to drive

**BEFORE** you drive, ensure you know where to locate and how to operate your vehicle's controls. Information about your vehicle's features and controls can be found in the owner's manual (usually located in the glove box).

For example, learn how to use the windscreen wipers before it rains. Know how to use the cruise control before you start driving.

If you are unfamiliar with any control, do not try to use it when you are driving. Learn how to use vehicle features and controls prior to driving.

- Secure any loose objects in the vehicle. If possible, place objects either in the boot or behind a crash barrier net;
- Check tyre pressure, oil and water levels, regularly;
- Adjust your seat and the steering column prior to starting the vehicle;
- Ensure your seat position is comfortable, safe and within good accessibility of the controls;
- Adjust and fasten your seatbelt;
- Adjust your rear view mirrors; and
- Identify vehicle blindspots.



*Familiarise yourself with your vehicle*

## Driver fatigue

### Stop Revive Survive

**YOU'RE** four times more likely to have a fatal fatigue crash if you're driving between 10pm and dawn. That's because your body's circadian rhythms are programming you to sleep.

Driving while sleep-deprived, especially late at night and at dawn, increases the risk of having a 'microsleep' and losing control of your vehicle.

If you fall into a microsleep and nod off at 100 km/h, you'll travel 100 metres in just four seconds, unconscious.

Don't ignore the early warning signs of fatigue such as yawning, poor concentration, tired eyes, restlessness, drowsiness, slow reactions, boredom and oversteering. What are your driver fatigue warning signs?

### FACT FILE

Road crashes make up the most common types of work-related deaths in Australia and are also the largest cause of injury and absence from work.

## Speeding

**SPEEDING** is travelling at a speed greater than the speed limit. You can also be speeding if you are travelling too fast for the road and weather conditions. If road conditions are less than ideal, for example a dirt or corrugated road, night time, heavy rain, heavy traffic or fog, you may be speeding if you do not lower your speed.

Many people consider that exceeding the speed limit by 5 to 10 km/hr is 'acceptable'. This is a dangerous way to think and behave on our roads. Research shows that even a small increase in speed can greatly increase the risk of a crash.

### Crash risk

Speeding increases the risk of a crash and the severity of the crash outcome.

The risk of causing death or injury in an urban 60km/h speed zone increases rapidly even with relatively small increases in speed. The accident risk at 65km/h is about twice the risk at 60km/h. At 70km/h, the accident risk is more than four times the risk at 60km/h.

The risk of a crash when driving at 68km/h in a 60km/h zone is the same as driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.08. The risk of a crash when driving at 72km/h in a 60km/h zone is the same as driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.12.

A key issue in speed-related crashes is that most motorists underestimate the distance needed to stop. A car travelling at 60km/h in dry conditions takes about 38 metres to stop. A car travelling at 80km/h needs an extra 20 metres.

### Speed limit signs

Speed limit signs indicate the maximum speed you are allowed to drive in good conditions. You must not drive faster than the speed limit allows. However, you can drive slower if you feel more comfortable.

| Speed (km/hr) | Risk relative to 60 km/hr |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 65            | Double                    |
| 70            | 4 times                   |
| 75            | 11 times                  |
| 80            | 32 times                  |

### FACT FILE

Research shows that 27 per cent of work vehicles are involved in crashes each year. Each incident costs organisations almost \$2000. Total costs allowing for indirect costs such as injuries and replacement vehicles can be much higher.

## Stopping distances

Many drivers make the mistake of assuming that if the car in front suddenly braked, they would react, stop and end up the same distance apart.

Stopping distance is made up of four components.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Human perception time      | seeing a hazard  |
| Human reaction time        | reaction time between the brain and foot to the brake  |
| Vehicle reaction time      | depends on the brakes and the vehicle's ability to stop  |
| Vehicle braking capability | depends on tyre condition, road and weather conditions, friction, braking system and driver braking technique. |

If a car is travelling at double the posted speed, the car braking distance quadruples. For example, if a car increases speed from 50 to 100 kph, the braking distance will increase from 10 metres to 40 metres. It takes longer to stop in wet weather (This is based on the laws of physics).

When a car is moving, it has kinetic energy,  $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ . When the velocity doubles, the kinetic energy quadruples. The braking capability does not increase when driving faster as there are no reserves of friction. Therefore, if your speed doubles in any vehicle, your braking distance is four times longer.

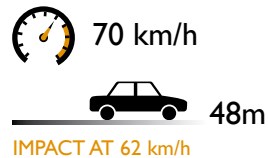
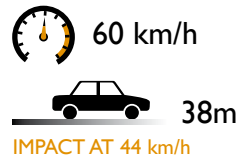
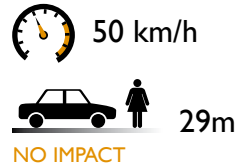
## Demerit points

### The Scheme

The Demerit Points Scheme is a national program that allocates penalty points (demerits) for a range of driving offences.

The scheme is designed to encourage safe and responsible driving.

Along with substantial fines, demerit points provide a strong incentive to drive within the law.



*The above graphic demonstrates the relationship between speed, stopping distance and impact speed*

*Source: RTA website*

Different offences have a different number of demerit points. A complete list of all offences, demerit points and fines can be viewed on the Roads and Traffic Authority's (RTA) website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)

**Accumulating points**

A driver who has not committed any offences has zero points. When an offence that carries demerit points is committed, the RTA records the offence and adds the points to the licence holder's driving record.

If a certain number of demerit points are accumulated in a given timeframe, their licence will be suspended or application for renewal refused.

The number of points resulting in a licence suspension varies for different licence types:

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Full unrestricted licence holders | 12 demerit points in a three-year period |
| Provisional 2 (P2) licence        | 7 points                                 |
| Provisional 1 (P1) licence        | 4 points                                 |
| Learner's licence                 | 4 points                                 |

*January 2010 figures. Check the RTA website for any changes.*

**Double demerit points**

Double demerit points apply for speeding, seatbelt and motorcycle helmet offences during all holiday periods such as long weekends, Christmas, New Year and Easter.

**School zones**

Certain driving and parking offences attract an additional demerit point if committed in an operating school zone. There will be times when double demerit point periods apply when school zones are in operation. If you commit a speed, seatbelt or helmet offence during this combined period, the demerit point value applying for the school zone will be doubled.

**FACT FILE**

Between 50 and 60 per cent of all new vehicles are sold to companies and other organisations.

*Source: RTA website*





## Seat belts

Wearing a seat belt is one of the easiest ways to protect drivers and passengers when travelling in a vehicle.

Seat belts prevent vehicle occupants from being ejected from a vehicle, they reduce the time taken to come to a stop in a crash, spread the impact force over a greater area of the body and minimise contact of occupants with a vehicle's interior. Without a restraint or an airbag, you can be killed in a head-on collision if travelling at just 29km/hr.

The car driver is responsible for ensuring passengers wear seatbelts and/or restraints whilst travelling in the vehicle.

Except when no seatbelt is fitted to a vehicle, all occupants must wear a seatbelt.

Babies and children must be in an Australian Standards approved child restraint.



## Alcohol and drugs

### The risks

It is illegal to drive while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, including some over-the-counter and prescription medication. They significantly affect your driving skills and increase your crash risk.

As a driver, you need to be alert and able to concentrate on what you are doing so that you can react to whatever is happening around you on the road. Read the label on drugs and other products to check that they do not contain alcohol (also known as ethanol).

Alcohol is a drug which affects your skills, mood and behaviour. Just one drink increases your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). This is the amount of alcohol in your blood. As your BAC increases, so does your risk of being involved in a crash. Your BAC can increase for up to two hours after you stop drinking.

### Blood Alcohol Concentration and the risk when driving

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 0.05 | double the risk   |
| 0.08 | 7 times the risk  |
| 0.15 | 25 times the risk |

Source: RTA website

The safest BAC for driving is ZERO no matter what licence class you hold.

You don't have to be drunk to be affected by alcohol. Even one or two drinks will affect your reaction, judgement and ability to drive. You might feel normal but no one drives as well after drinking alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant. It slows your brain functions so that you can't make decisions or react quickly. It also gives you a false confidence so that you may take greater risks.

Getting back to zero (sobering up), takes a long time. No amount of coffee, food, physical activity or sleep will speed up the process.

### Random Breath Tests

In NSW, police have the power to:

- Stop drivers at random to test for alcohol;
- Arrest drivers who test over the legal limit;
- Arrest drivers they believe are impaired by drugs and conduct a blood and urine test; and
- Require a driver to undergo a sobriety test in certain circumstances.

### Roadside Drug Testing

Police have powers to carry out roadside drug testing on any driver, rider or supervising licence holder in NSW.

Drugs and driving don't mix.

Safe driving requires precise skills, clear judgement, concentration, and being able to react to what happens on the road.

Drugs affect all of these skills, and not just illegal drugs.

Prescription drugs and even over the counter medicines can affect your driving skills if you don't follow the manufacturer's instructions or your doctor's advice.

Taking more than one drug or mixing alcohol and drugs and then driving is even more dangerous. But taking drugs of any kind and then driving puts you at greater risk of injuring or killing yourself, your passengers or other innocent people.



### HOW TO AVOID DRINKING AND DRIVING

- Leave your car at home
- Plan ahead and arrange alternative transport
- Share a taxi
- Catch public transport
- Stay overnight at a friend's place
- Get a lift with a driver who hasn't been drinking
- Arrange for a friend or relative to give you a lift
- If you have to drive the day after a night out, restrict your intake. You can be over the limit the next day due to residual alcohol in your system.

Remember, if you plan to drink, don't drive.

There are harsh penalties for driving while impaired by drugs, including significant fines, gaol terms and licence disqualification.

## Mobile phone use

It is illegal to drive or ride a vehicle while using a hand-held mobile phone. The penalty is a significant fine and three demerit points.



This means that talking, sending or receiving text messages, playing games or taking photos is illegal when using a hand-held phone. It is also illegal to perform these activities when your vehicle is stopped but not parked, for example when you are waiting at traffic lights.

A hands-free device can reduce the physical effort to make and receive calls but it doesn't necessarily make it safe to use a phone while driving. It is illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving if it causes you to lose proper control of your vehicle. The penalty is a significant fine and demerit points.

If you must talk on a hands-free phone while driving:

- Make sure it is a hands-free phone that is set up and working before you start driving;
- Keep the conversation short. Don't engage in complex or emotional conversations;
- Tell the person on the other end that you are driving and may have to end the call;
- Never text message (SMS) while driving; and
- End the call if it is distracting you from driving.

Remember, if you don't have proper control of your vehicle because you are talking on a hands-free mobile phone, you are guilty of an offence.

## Learner and P1 licence holders

Learner and P1 drivers and riders must not use a mobile phone while driving or riding.

This includes phones in the hands-free mode or with loud speaker operating, sending or receiving SMS messages, playing games or any other function on your phone.

The penalty for mobile phone use is demerit points and a significant fine.

### FACT FILE

Using a mobile phone whilst driving increases your chance of a crash by 400 per cent.

Learner and P1 drivers and provisional riders are still developing their vehicle control and hazard perception skills. Mobile phone use can distract novice drivers and riders from the task of driving. Using a mobile phone while driving is dangerous as it slows reaction times and interferes with a driver's perception skills. It increases the chance of having a crash by as much as 400 per cent.

So switch your phone off and focus on your driving.

## Country roads

Country roads can be narrow, winding, rough and full of surprises – such as kangaroos, grazing stock, large trucks and potholes.

Adhere to warning and advisory signs, don't be tempted to speed, avoid the edges of roads (but be ready to slow down and move over for passing vehicles), and always remain alert, even if the road looks quiet.

### Animals on the road

It's not unusual to spot kangaroos, wild pigs, emus, goats and wombats when driving through the country. When you spot wildlife or livestock on the side of or crossing the road, slow down to give the animals a chance to cross the road and to reduce your braking speed. This will greatly reduce your chance of a crash.

Look for signs on the side of the road warning you about farm animals crossing the road. Quite often farmers move and graze sheep, cattle and goats along the side of the road. When approaching these animals, slow down and give the animals plenty of room. Don't honk your horn or rev your engine. The animals will move out of your way if you don't scare them and wait patiently in your vehicle.

Avoid travelling at dawn and dusk when animals are more active. Adjust your speed if you are travelling into the western sun in the afternoon or the morning sun – especially during daylight saving periods.

If an animal unexpectedly travels across the path of your vehicle, **DON'T SWERVE** to miss it. You could lose control of your vehicle and risk a head-on crash with a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction.



Steep descent ahead



55  
km/h



NEXT  
10km



Source: RTA Road User Handbook 2009



Watch for grazing sheep, cattle and goats.

## Crash locations

Crash 'hot spots' involving animals are concentrated along the Hume, Barton and Federal highways, with peaks around the intersections, particularly those at Canberra and Yass.

Other 'hot spots' are located near Dubbo, Newcastle and Byron Bay. Clusterings of crashes involving 'straying stock' are greatest at Lismore, Newcastle and the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

Crashes are significantly more likely to happen at weekends and twice as likely to happen in the winter months, from April to August. The majority of crashes occur on dry roads in fine weather between dusk and dawn, with the peak period between 6pm and 7pm.

### FACT FILE

Two out of 3 vehicles on the road are making a work-related trip. This can greatly increase exposure to risks on the road.

## Driving to the conditions

### Night driving

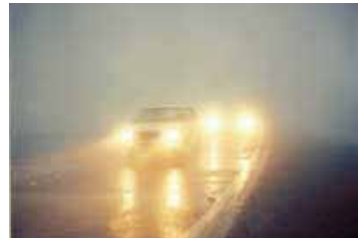
Lack of visibility makes night driving hazardous. Slow down if you're having trouble seeing. Try shifting your gaze slightly away from oncoming headlights and adjust your rear vision mirror to reduce glare from behind. If you become dazzled, pull over until your eyes recover.

Dip your lights to low beam when a vehicle coming towards you is within 200 metres or when driving 200 metres or less behind another vehicle.

When you overtake another vehicle, you may briefly flash high beam immediately before starting the overtaking manoeuvre.

### Driving in fog and wet weather

When driving in foggy and wet conditions, decrease your speed significantly. Pull over if you cannot see the road in front of you. Use your fog lights or low beam headlights. As the road surface is likely to be damp, stopping will require a longer distance. Leave a safe gap between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you in case you need to stop suddenly. You may risk aquaplaning if you are travelling too fast and your tyres don't grip on the road surface.



*Slow down in foggy conditions.*

## Narrow roads

If the road is narrow, unsealed or unmarked, drop your speed to maintain control of the vehicle. Position your vehicle to the left of the road. Slow down around curves or anywhere you cannot see oncoming traffic. Pull over to the left when passing vehicles. Beware of soft edges on the road. Do not overtake vehicles on a narrow road until they have seen you and you have time and distance to make the pass safely.

## Long, straight stretches

When driving on long, straight stretches of road, resist the temptation to speed and position your vehicle poorly. Stick to the speed limit, position yourself on the left-hand side of the road and watch for animals on the road.

Driver fatigue sets in quite quickly on long stretches, so know your warning signs, schedule breaks and, if possible, swap drivers.

## Driving through hills on winding roads

Speed advisory signs show only the recommended maximum speed it is safe to travel in good weather and traffic conditions. If the weather is poor or the traffic conditions are difficult, it is best to slow down and stay under the posted speed limit.

Be aware of the variety of traffic on highways – heavy vehicles, caravans, farm machinery, interstate travellers, motorcycles and light vehicles.

## Bridges

Slow down as you approach a bridge. Bridges in country areas are usually very narrow. If you think two vehicles cannot pass each other on the bridge, give way to the other driver.

On a bridge wide enough for two vehicles, slow down and drive with care. Sometimes you are not permitted to overtake or pass a vehicle on a bridge. Be guided by the signs.

### FACT FILE

As well as the psychological effects from workplace road trauma, it can also result in lost revenue, lower productivity, increased worker compensation claims and higher insurance premiums.



*Narrow bridge ahead,  
be prepared to stop*



*Narrow bridge*

## Railway crossings

Level crossings can be dangerous if you do not slow down when approaching them. Be alert, stop, look and listen for trains – especially if there are no gates, booms or flashing lights.

You must stop at gates, booms and flashing lights. Only start to cross when the gates and booms have lifted and the flashing lights have stopped.

Stop signals at crossings must be obeyed, as trains may appear to come from nowhere, are very fast, heavy and unable to stop quickly. Always check for trains.

## Overtaking

Overtaking vehicles can be extremely dangerous and requires extreme care and judgement.

When in doubt – DON'T!

If you have any doubts about overtaking, don't make the manoeuvre until it is safer.

You must overtake to the right of the vehicle unless it is waiting to turn right, is stationary, or if you and the other vehicle are travelling in marked lanes. In these instances you may overtake to the left if it is safe.

### When overtaking:

- You must not go over the speed limit and make sure that the road ahead is clear and there is sufficient space to complete the manoeuvre;
- Check mirrors and give other road users sufficient warning with your indicator;
- Check blind spots for motorcycles and other vehicles before changing lane position;
- Give way to traffic in the lane you are moving into; and
- Pass the vehicle with sufficient space to avoid a collision.

### Do NOT overtake:

- Unless you have a clear view of approaching traffic and you can complete the manoeuvre safely.



*Railway crossing  
with traffic lights ahead*



*Railway crossing ahead*



*Stop before crossing*



*Stop if the red lights are flashing*



*Give way at the crossing,  
be prepared to stop*

- When you are approaching a crest, curve or have limited vision;
- Another vehicle that has stopped at a pedestrian crossing, railway crossing or intersection;
- Across an unbroken (continuous line);
- Where the road narrows; and
- When the driver in front waves you around their vehicle, especially trucks. Make your own judgement whether it is safe to overtake.

## Driving with trucks

Trucks are longer, heavier and more powerful than a standard vehicle. Consequently, they need more distance to stop and more space to turn. They may need two lanes to complete their manoeuvre.

Be courteous and stay back. Give them plenty of room. Avoid cutting in at traffic signals, roundabouts and other locations where traffic queues occur. The truck driver may not see you and be able to stop in time and this could result in a serious crash.

Always allow heavy vehicles to make their manoeuvre then you can make yours.

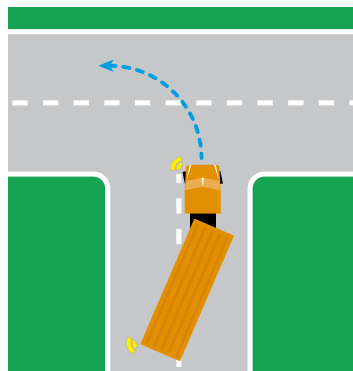
Trucks accelerate slowly, so try to be patient, as the truck driver has to move through many gears to get going.

## Oversize vehicles

When you see this sign, the vehicle ahead is wider and/or longer than normal.

The oversize vehicle may be accompanied by a pilot vehicle (with flashing lights) or escorted by Police. Follow directions given by Police and the pilot vehicle driver, provided you do not break the law.

When approaching an oversize vehicle, reduce speed and remain alert. Keep to the left of the centre line and be prepared to move to the left side of the road to let the oversize vehicle pass.



*Trucks need more space to turn – they may even need two lanes to complete their manoeuvre.*



*Source: RTA Road User Handbook 2009*



## Large, heavy turning vehicles

You must not pass on the left of the vehicle if it is turning left or on the right if the vehicle is turning right. If you put your vehicle in the path of one of these vehicles, you may be crushed.

## What to do if you have a crash

### If you have a crash, you should:

- STOP immediately;
- Use headlights, indicator lights or hazard lights to warn other drivers, and to light up the scene if it is dark;
- If available, place safety triangles near your vehicle and wear your safety vest so that other road users see you;
- If possible, send someone to warn oncoming drivers;
- Ensure you are out of harm's way;
- Help the injured. Keep a first aid kit in the vehicle;
- Dial 000 to make contact with Police (and/or Ambulance if anyone is killed or injured or if property damage exceeds \$500);
- Exchange drivers' names, addresses, registration numbers and names of vehicle owners with others involved in the crash;
- Contact your supervisor and fleet manager; and
- A Crash Action Form must be completed. These are available at the depot.

This process must be followed immediately after the crash has occurred and appropriate first aid sought if required.

### If you have broken down, you should:

- Move over to the side of the road;
- Put your hazard lights on;
- Contact your supervisor and fleet management for further instructions; and
- Stay off the road and wait for assistance.



*Give vehicles displaying this sign plenty of room as they may need to use more than one lane when turning left or right.*

*Source: RTA Road User Handbook 2009*

## References and further information

- **Road Transport Authority (RTA)**  
Road Users Handbook, Driver Knowledge Test
- **Road Transport Authority (RTA)**  
[www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)
- **University of NSW**  
[www.unsw.edu.au](http://www.unsw.edu.au)
- **Science Alert**  
[www.sciencealert.com.au](http://www.sciencealert.com.au)
- **Joel Neilsen, Managing Director, Safe Drive Training**  
[www.sdt.com.au](http://www.sdt.com.au)
- **GWAHS Corporate Standards of Practice Manual** E-Workforce Manual
- **Main Roads Western Australia**  
*Guide to Driving with Trucks*  
[www.mainroads.wa.gov.au](http://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au)
- **Dubbo City Council Road Safety Program**  
[www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au)  
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## Notes

A road safety initiative by  
Dubbo City Council Road  
Safety Program



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**A road safety initiative by Dubbo City Council as part of the  
Local Government Road Safety Program.**

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