

## Too many pedestrians are injured and killed on our roads

13 November 2019

Pedestrian safety will be the focus as trauma experts gather at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) office in Melbourne for the RACS annual Trauma Symposium.

Over the past decade almost 2000 pedestrians have lost their lives on Australian roads, and many more have been seriously injured. Almost three-quarters of these fatalities occur in metropolitan and inner regional areas, while male pedestrians are more likely to be killed by a ratio of two to one according to figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics.

Dr Valeria Malka, Chair of the RACS Road Trauma Advisory Committee Chair and convenor of the symposium, said the event will provide an important platform to discuss the unacceptably high numbers of pedestrians killed and injured each year.

“Pedestrian safety is complex, and we need to look at the broader picture rather than just focusing on one aspect. Poor road and vehicle designs, distractions, and drug and alcohol issues all contribute to the fatality rate. The symposium will bring together experts in education, public health and urban planning to explore the scope of the problem, look at risk factors and prevention strategies, and to try and work out a way forward,” Dr Malka said.

“When you look at the data, it paints an interesting picture about the demographics of those that are involved in fatalities, the locations in which these most commonly occur, and the sorts of incidents that lead to these tragic events.

“For example, we know that many pedestrians are often killed by right hand turners despite crossing on pedestrian crossings. We also know that the elderly are another cohort that are significantly overrepresented in the fatality rates. This is something we must address given Australia’s ageing population.”

Highlights of the conference include:

- A presentation on the ‘scooter epidemic’ from the CEO of the Pedestrian Council of Australia, Harold Scruby.
- Jason Thompson from the Melbourne School of Design discussing how Australian cities can be better designed to protect pedestrians, and David Logan from the Monash University Accident Research Centre, who will analyse vehicle design.
- RACS Trauma Chair and Chair of last year’s Inquiry in to the National Road Safety Strategy, Dr John Crozier, who will discuss the dangers of intoxicated pedestrians.

The Trauma Symposium is being held as part of [RACS Trauma Week](#). The program is available on the [RACS website](#).

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**About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS):** RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.  
[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

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