

# Road Policing Investment Programme 2024-2027

Policing for safer roads



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# Introduction

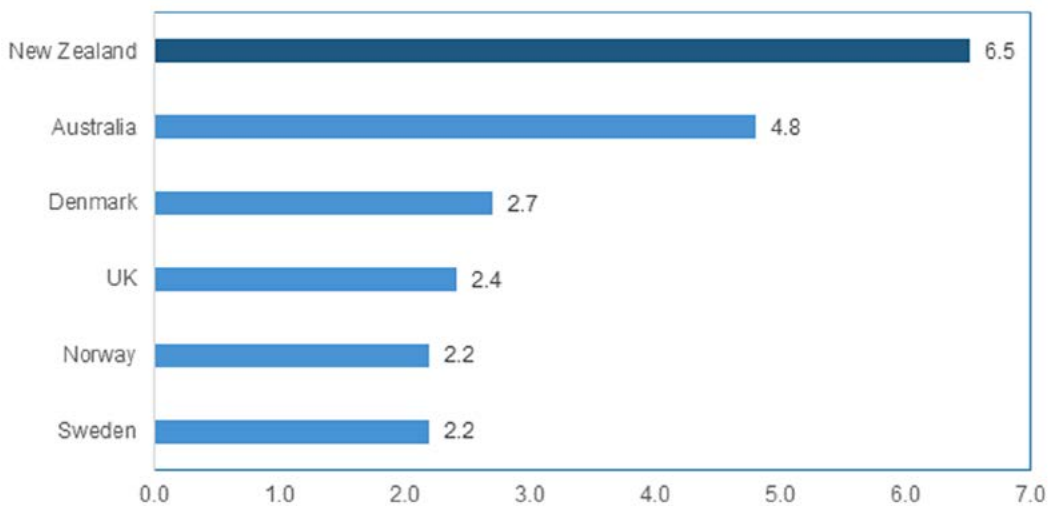
On average, one person is killed every day on New Zealand roads, and another seven are seriously injured. In 2023 this meant that 341 people died and 2,442 more people were seriously injured on our roads<sup>1</sup>. New Zealand’s rate of road deaths is amongst the worst in the OECD (see Figure 1). In addition to being devastating for those involved, their families and communities, these deaths and injuries also burden our health system, cause disruptions and delays on our roads, and have a significant financial cost. The social cost of these 2,783 deaths and serious injuries in 2023 was estimated to be around \$7.76 billion<sup>2</sup>.

Road deaths and injuries are predictable and preventable, and road policing plays an important part in reducing harm on our roads through promoting good driving practices, road safety education, and effective enforcement to deter people from undertaking unsafe behaviours. In recognition of the value of these activities, the Road Policing Investment Programme (RPIP) provides a \$1.335 billion investment over 2024-27 in road policing. The RPIP 2024-27 outlines seven key operational priorities for road policing activity based on areas of highest risk and harm. An outcomes framework details the road policing activities critical to making our roads safer and links these to wider outcomes via intermediate term measures, which are both impacted by multiple Safe System activities outside of road policing.

The RPIP has been developed in accordance with the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) and the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34 (GPS). Under the GPS, funding for road safety is focused on safer roads, safer drivers, and safer vehicles, and the significant investment in road policing and enforcement recognises that it is one of the most important tools for improving safety on New Zealand’s roads.

Additionally, road policing represents a significant opportunity for the New Zealand Police (NZ Police) to achieve its vision for New Zealand to be the safest country and ensure everybody is safe wherever they live, work, or visit by preventing harm.

**Figure 1: Provisional road deaths per 100,000 population in 2023**



1 Note that these numbers are still provisional as it can take some time to confirm road deaths and serious injuries.  
2 Based on the Ministry of Transport’s (2022) estimated social costs from road crashes of \$13,349,200 million per fatality (\$4.55B total cost for 341 deaths) and \$1,315,400 per serious injury (\$3.21B total for 2,442 seriously injured people).

# The strategic context for investing in road policing

As touched on above, the RPIP has been developed in accordance with the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) and the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34 (GPS).

The LTMA provides the legal framework for managing and funding land transport activities. Part of this is using the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) to pay for NZ Police activities which contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest. These activities need to be consistent with the GPS.

The Government's land transport strategy is set out in the GPS, including setting expectations for what should be achieved through NLTF investment. It is issued by the Minister of Transport under terms specified in the LTMA and describes the government's overarching goal for transport, which is:

*an effective, efficient, safe, secure, accessible and resilient transport system that supports the growth of our country's economy in order to deliver greater prosperity, security and opportunities for all New Zealanders.*

The GPS recognises the role of road policing and enforcement in improving road safety on New Zealand roads and makes Safety one of its four Strategic Priorities.

Read more about key relevant documents here:

- Land Transport Management Act 2003: [www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0118/latest/DLM226230.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0118/latest/DLM226230.html)
- Government Policy Statement on Land Transport: [www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/government-policy-statement-on-land-transport-2024](http://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/government-policy-statement-on-land-transport-2024)





# Evidence-based road policing

The RPIP focuses road policing activity on seven key areas of highest risk and harm. These seven operational priorities build on the areas for investment from the RPIP's predecessor, the Road Safety Partnership Programme 2021-24, and are based on international best practice and evidence.

## Seven road policing operational priorities

1

### **Impairment (including from alcohol, drugs and fatigue):**

Alcohol was a contributing factor in 13% of road deaths and serious injuries (DSI) from 2012-2023. Over 2019-2022, an average of 105 people were killed each year in crashes where the driver had consumed impairing drugs before driving, representing around 30% of all road deaths.

Alcohol, drugs (legal and illegal), and fatigue can impair driving and increase the likelihood of crashes occurring. Alcohol can negatively impact a driver's judgment, reaction time, and visual awareness. Alcohol-related crashes also often involve speeding. Medication or illegal drugs can negatively affect how a driver takes in and processes information, their reaction time and perception of reality. Drugs can also contribute to fatigue. Fatigue can negatively impact a driver's attentiveness and alertness to dangers, reaction time, decision-making ability, lane tracking, and speed maintenance.

Impairment-focused road policing activities include:

- General and targeted compulsory breath testing for alcohol
- Compulsory impairment tests for drugs
- Enforcement of the shift and time rules for commercial drivers.

2

### **Speed (including speed management and roads and roadsides):**

Speed was a contributing factor in 24% of road deaths and serious injuries from 2012-2023, of which around half (49%) were on rural roads.

Speed always matters in a crash. As speed increases, so does the likelihood of a crash, because higher speeds narrow your field of vision and increase your stopping distance, the probability of losing control on a curve, or other road users misjudging how you're travelling.

Even when speed does not contribute to the cause of a crash, it always contributes to the severity of the injuries sustained. The rate you're moving determines the amount of force on the vehicle and your body in the event of a crash, and the human body has limited ability to withstand crash forces.

Speed-focused road policing activities include:

- Directed patrols for speed enforcement
- Planned operations for speed offences
- Visible road patrols at key times.

3

### **Restraints (including seatbelts and child restraints):**

21% of people who died or were seriously injured in light passenger vehicles from 2012-2023 were unrestrained.

Restraints support you in a crash or when your vehicle stops suddenly, preventing your body from colliding with the dashboard, steering wheel, windscreen or front seats. Wearing a restraint reduces your risk of dying by 45-50% for front seat vehicle occupants and 25% for rear seat occupants.

Restraints-focused road policing activities include:

- Spot and stop activities for restraint offences
- Planned operations for restraint offences.

4

### **Distraction (especially mobile phone use):**

Distraction was a contributing factor in 5% of road deaths and serious injuries from 2012-2023.

Anything that diverts a driver's attention significantly increases the likelihood of a crash. Sources of distraction include mobile phones, music devices like radios, driver information screens, food and drink, and other passengers.

Distraction-focused road policing activities include:

- Spot and stop activities for cell phone offences
- Planned operations for cell phone offences.

5

### **High-risk drivers (including recidivist and high-end risk-taking behaviours):**

Drivers without current driver licences were involved in 15% of road deaths and serious injuries from 2012-2023.

A small group of drivers are significantly overrepresented in fatal and serious injury crashes because they take part in deliberate, high-end and repeat offending, and risk taking. This includes unlicensed and disqualified drivers, high-end alcohol and speed offenders, repeat offenders, fleeing drivers, and drivers involved in illegal street racing.

Road policing activities focused on high-risk drivers include:

- Enforcing illegal street racing legislation
- Identifying and responding to the highest risk drivers with the most effective interventions
- Responding to and safely managing fleeing drivers.

## 6

### **Commercial vehicles (including light and heavy vehicle safety and compliance):**

While heavy vehicles are not involved in significantly more crashes, these crashes are far more likely to be fatal (e.g., trucks make up 6% of the total distance travelled on our roads but account for over 20% of road deaths). Almost 90% of those killed in heavy vehicle crashes are not the occupants of the heavy vehicles.

Commercial vehicle-focused road policing activities include:

- Commercial vehicle inspections
- Dangerous and hazardous goods inspections
- Heavy vehicle regulatory compliance (incl. operator licences).

## 7

### **Other on-road prevention and enforcement activities (crash response, network maintenance and efficiency, general enforcement, and education and engagement):**

NZ Police also undertake a range of other on-road prevention and enforcement activities which are important in making our roads safer. These include:

- Responding to, managing, and investigating major crash incidents, including victim support, scene examination, evidence collection, and prosecution
- Ensuring an efficient roading network and keeping motorists safe by managing hazards on the road (e.g., animals wandering on or near roads, vehicle breakdowns and blockages) sometimes alongside other agencies such as Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- Enforcing general compliance with road safety laws, including lane and intersection compliance, vehicle defects or illegal vehicle modifications, and Warrant of Fitness compliance. This is especially relevant for those who are particularly vulnerable or fragile in a crash (e.g., active road users, motorcyclists, the elderly and children)
- Road safety education, including school crossing training
- Identifying and engaging with non-licensed and inexperienced drivers to refer them to appropriate driving programmes (e.g., Ride Forever, driver licensing programmes).

# Investing in road policing

In total, NZ police are funded \$1.335 billion over three years to deliver the core road policing programme and implement a new activity testing oral fluids for drugs.

## Core road policing programme

The RPIP funds NZ Police \$1.315 billion over three years from 2024–27 to deliver road policing and enforcement, as set out in Table 1. This significant investment from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) in accordance with the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and the GPS is made in recognition that road policing and enforcement is one of the most important tools for improving safety on New Zealand’s roads. As per the GPS a small portion of this funding is dependent on delivery of speed and alcohol road policing activities described in the outcomes framework.

**Table 1: Investment in core road policing through the RPIP 2024-27 along with the longer-term financial forecast over 10 years (\$ million)**

Funding for RPIP 2024-27			Forecast for 2027-34						
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34
416.6	437.8	460.5	485.5	512.1	540.5	570.9	603.3	637.9	674.8

**Note:** The forecast assumes no change to the operating model, levels of service, and powers and functions of NZ Police.

NZ Police invest this funding to deliver road policing through a ‘whole of police’ approach, where all constabulary staff, regardless of their specific role, contribute in part to road policing. In addition, at least 1,070 dedicated constabulary road policing staff focus at least 90% of their time on road policing. These 1,070 dedicated constabulary road policing staff are supported by approximately 200 non-constabulary staff across 12 Police Districts and the National Road Policing Centre (including the Commercial Vehicle Safety Team and Police Infringement Bureau).

An example of how this works would be the deployment of dedicated road policing teams, who spend most of their time patrolling the high-speed open roads network, being supported by non-road policing staff in urban areas, who in the course of their usual duties, take appropriate action when they observe unsafe driver behaviour or offending.

## Ministerial programme: oral fluid testing project

Additionally, the RPIP funds NZ Police \$20 million to deliver and implement a new oral fluid testing regime to better detect and deter drug driving. This project, which includes one year of phased implementation and testing, is expected to take two years, with funding shared across that time.

No other Ministerial programmes are at this stage funded.



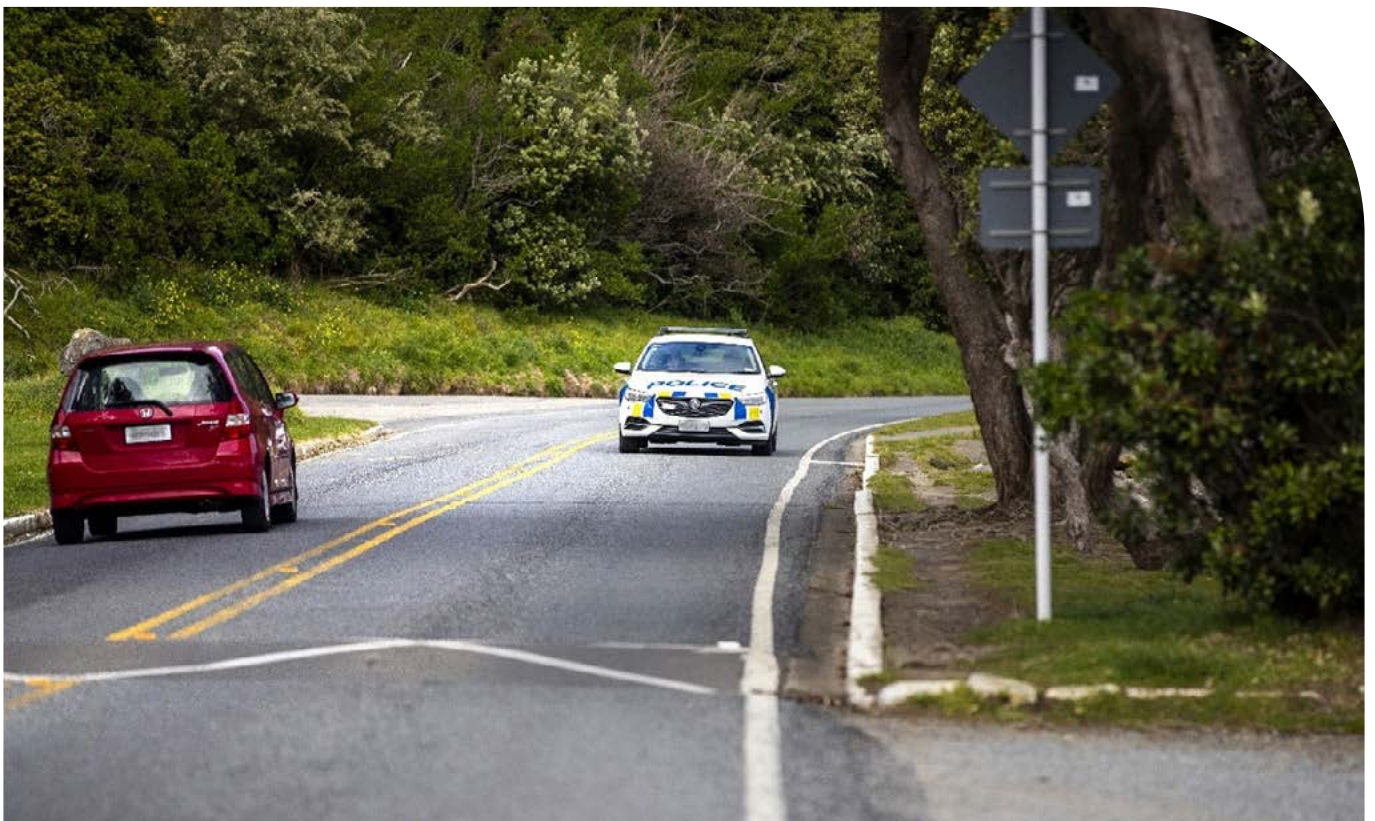
# What has changed from the previous programme

The RPIP 2024-27 represents a step change from the previous programme investing in road policing, which was called the Road Safety Partnership Programme.

The RPIP now focuses on and highlights the impact and value of road policing. To facilitate this, we've introduced an outcomes framework linking road policing activities to intermediate and long-term outcomes and consolidated the previous 13 operational priorities into seven key areas of highest risk and harm. This framework provides a clearer overview of the wide variety of activities the NZ Police undertakes to make our roads safer.

The framework also builds on the recent strong delivery of road policing activities from the 2021-24 Road Safety Partnership Programme. As such we've increased the desired activity levels of some measures, setting expectations of sustained delivery.

Read more about the past Road Safety Partnership Programmes here: [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/road-safety-partnership-programme](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/road-safety-partnership-programme)



# Measuring delivery, value for money and success

Governance of the RPIP is designed to strengthen delivery of road policing activities to achieve road safety outcomes and provide assurance around the NLTF investment. This governance is provided at different levels to provide senior level strategic oversight and appropriate performance and programme management (including monitoring and reporting). RPIP governance exists in an ecosystem of other governance groups.

Assurance and reporting of the RPIP 2024-27 aims to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the NLTF investment into road policing. A range of regular reports (quarterly and annually) provide information on the delivery of road policing activities along with the impact of these activities, as set out in the outcomes framework. Importantly, assurance reporting is designed to address assurance requirements (e.g., for the LTMA and the NZTA Board) and maintain investment confidence by demonstrating that delivery maximises road safety outcomes.

## Outcomes framework

Key to measuring success is the RPIP 2024-27 outcomes framework (see Table 2).

This framework details the key road policing activities considered to be critical to making our roads safer, linking these to outcomes like reduced deaths and serious injuries (DSI).

These outcomes take a long time to achieve, so intermediate-term indicators are used to signal whether we are moving towards the desired outcomes. A range of agencies are responsible for making our roads safer and achieving these outcomes through a wide range of activities (including safer vehicles, safer drivers, and roading infrastructure).

The framework is detailed in Table 2, with indicators for six road policing operational priorities (impairment, speed, restraints, distraction, high risk driving, and commercial vehicles). Appropriate indicators were not available for the seventh operational priority (other on-road prevention and enforcement activities), which includes activities that focus on responding to events (such as responding to major crash events). Indicators are measured in three ways:

- measures are set for the key road policing activities at levels which target the biggest areas of risk and harm on our roads. They also provide network-wide general deterrence. Some activity levels are set higher than for the 2021-24 programme (the Road Safety Partnership Programme, the RPIP's predecessor) in the expectation that Police sustain the recent improvements they made and continue to deliver to strong levels. Some of these measures target activity to risky times or locations, for example a majority of alcohol breath tests are required to be done at the times when most of these serious and deadly crashes occur, and a majority of speed infringements are to be issued on the roads where the majority of serious and deadly crashes occur (open roads, or those rural roads with speed limits of 80km/h or above). All these measures are set as minimum delivery levels, recognising that any activity delivered above this makes our roads even safer.
- some activities are 'monitored for operational purposes only', where it is important to monitor trends but setting a level of activity won't contribute to achieving road safety goals, or where a new measure is being introduced and an appropriate level of activity is yet to be determined.
- Intermediate indicators and outcomes are monitored for trend only (up/down, using 2018 as a baseline year where possible) rather than setting a specific level to be met. This is because they are affected by a wide range of activities beyond those delivered through the RPIP 2024-27, including multiple Safe System activities, human behaviours, and other drivers (such as fuel prices).

**Table 2: The RPIP 2024-27 outcomes framework**

Areas of Harm	Road policing activities (Outputs of the RPIP)			Intermediate indicators	Outcomes (Long term)	
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27			
<b>Impairment (alcohol, drugs and fatigue)</b>	Number of passive breath tests and breath screening tests conducted	3,300,000	3,300,000	3,300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced percentage of drivers impaired by alcohol</li> <li>• Increased percentage of the public who think a person who was driving after drinking will be stopped and breath tested</li> <li>• Reduced percentage of drivers impaired by drugs</li> <li>• Reduced percentage of people who report having driven when affected by drugs</li> </ul>	Number of DSIs involving alcohol and/or drugs
	Number of passive breath tests and breath screening tests conducted in high and extreme alcohol risk times	2,145,000	2,145,000	2,145,000		
	Number of excess alcohol offences	Monitored for operational purposes only				
	Number of oral fluid drug tests	50,000 p.a. from first year of implementation <sup>2</sup>				
	Number of drug impaired driving offences	Monitored for operational purposes only				
<b>Speed</b>	Number of officer issued speed offences	430,000	430,000	430,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mean speed</li> <li>• Increased percentage of traffic travelling within speed limits</li> <li>• Increased percentage of the public who think they will get caught for speeding</li> <li>• Increased percentage of the public who think they will get caught for speeding when slightly over the speed limit</li> </ul>	Number of DSIs where inappropriate speed contributed
	Number of officer issued speed offences under 11km/h over the speed limit	64,500	75,250	86,000		
	Number of officer issued speed offence notices on open roads	301,000	301,000	301,000		
<b>Restraints</b>	Number of restraint offences	60,000	60,000	60,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased percentage of vehicle occupants wearing restraints</li> <li>• Increased percentage of the public who think they will get caught for not wearing a seatbelt</li> </ul>	Number of DSIs where restraints were not worn
<b>Distraction<sup>1</sup></b>	Number of cell phone offences	40,000	40,000	40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased percentage of the public who think they will get caught for using a hand-held cell phone while driving</li> </ul>	Number of DSIs where distraction contributed
<b>High risk driving<sup>1</sup></b>	Number of high-risk driver offences	Monitored for operational purposes only				
<b>Commercial vehicles<sup>1</sup></b>	Number of Commercial Vehicle Inspection Reports completed	50,000	50,000	50,000		Number of DSIs where a heavy vehicle was involved
	Hours at Commercial Vehicle Safety Centres	Monitored for operational purposes only				

1 Intermediate indicators and outcomes for some areas of harm are not currently available and would require research and development

2 To be confirmed based on legislation