

Report highlights

What this report is about

Around one-third of the state's population lives in regional NSW, but deaths on regional roads make up around two-thirds of the state's road toll.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is responsible for managing road safety outcomes across the NSW road network. This audit assessed the effectiveness of TfNSW's delivery of road safety strategies, plans and policies in regional areas.

The NSW Road Safety Action Plan 2022–2026 has the stated goal of 'no death or serious injury occurring on the road transport network' by 2050.

What we found

There is a disproportionate amount of trauma on regional roads, but there are no specific road safety plans or trauma reduction targets for regional NSW.

TfNSW advises that the setting of state-wide road safety targets is consistent with other jurisdictions and international best practice. However, the proportion of road fatalities and serious injuries in regional NSW is almost the same as ten years ago.

There is no regional implementation plan to assist TfNSW to target the Road Safety Action Plan 2026 to regional areas.

TfNSW considers that local road safety outcomes should be managed by councils, but only 52% of regional councils participated in its Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) in 2022–23. This program has not been updated since 2014, despite commitments to do so in 2021 and 2022.

TfNSW has not undertaken a systematic and integrated analysis of the combined impact of its road safety strategies and plans in regional NSW since 2012.

TfNSW reports against the Community Road Safety Fund (CRSF) annually but there is no consolidated, public reporting on total road safety funding allocated to regional NSW. The Fund underspend increased from 12% in 2019–20 to 20% in 2022–23.

What we recommended

We recommended TfNSW:

- develop a regional implementation plan to support the NSW Road Safety Action Plan, including a framework to annually measure,

analyse and publicly report on progress

- develop a plan to measure and mitigate risks causing underspend in the CRSF
- expedite the review of the LGRSP including recommendations to increase involvement of regional councils.

Disclosure of confidential information

Under the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983* (the Act), the Auditor-General may disclose confidential information if, in the Auditor-General's opinion, the disclosure is in the public interest, and that disclosure is necessary for the exercise of the Auditor-General's functions.

Confidential information in the Act means Cabinet information or information subject to legal privilege. This performance audit report contained confidential information.

The NSW Premier has certified that in his opinion the disclosure of the confidential information was not in the public interest.

The confidential information has been redacted from this report.

Fast facts

\$104m

The forecast underspend on the Community Road Safety Fund's budget for 2022–23

29.3%

Increase in regional road fatalities in 2023 (at 23 November 2023) compared to the 2020–22 average