



## ***Media Information Backgrounder***

Do you know how to save a life?

The answer is easy – just take the pledge on May 22 for Fatalities Free Friday.

It costs nothing but it saving the most precious thing in the world – your life and that of others.

It's the one decision that can mean everything to you, your friends, your family and your colleagues.

### ***Fatalities Free Friday May 22, 2009***

#### ***Why Fatalities Free Friday?***

Each year, around 1600 people die on Australia's roads. By far the most dangerous days - those which statistically suffer the most deaths - are Friday, Saturday and Sunday\*. Saturday is traditionally the worst.

Road safety is a complex issue but we believe that if drivers consciously think about road safety and safe driving for just one Friday in the year, that day's toll - statistically about 5.3 deaths - could be reduced to zero.

That's our aim. Not a single road death in Australia for just one day. Just one Fatalities Free Friday.

And we further hope that by making people think about staying alive on the road on Fatalities Free Friday, they'll drive safer for the next few days too and reduce the traditionally high weekend fatality rate.

Who knows? Perhaps drivers can keep thinking safety each and every Friday and we won't just save 5 or 6 lives but many more.

*\*DataSource: Australian Transport Safety Bureau*



### ***How People Can Help***

There are many ways you can help to make 22 May 2009 a Fatality Free Friday on Australian roads.

As an individual, if you do nothing more than keep road safety in mind during the day, the life you save might just be your own. On Fatality Free Friday:

- Each time you get behind the wheel, be mindful of safe driving
- Be patient with other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians
- Stay alert
- Don't speed
- Slow down if it's wet

But you'll help do a whole lot more if you share the message around:

- Tell family, friends and colleagues that 22 May 2009 is Fatality Free Friday and ask them to take care on the roads
- Put a free Fatality Free Friday bumper sticker on your car.
- Visit the Fatality Free Friday web site and print out the notices and pledges. Put them up on your noticeboard at work
- Write a letter to your local newspaper at least one week prior to the day telling them about Fatality Free Friday
- Consider organising a road safety activity

Families have even more opportunities to make a difference:

- Remind your family members that you love them and ask them to take care when they get behind the wheel
- Visit the Fatality Free Friday web site, print out the notices and pledges and put them up on the fridge
- Let neighbours and friends know about Fatality Free Friday and ask them to take care on the roads
- Make sure children are wearing helmets while playing on bicycles and remind them to watch out for cars and other road users
- Parents, take extra care in school in set-down zones
- While you're out and about, remember how your family would feel if you had an accident
- Set a good example to your children (or even your parents!) by driving calmly and safely
- Consider organising a road safety activity.



## *Background*

Road Safety is a global issue that ranks as one of the most pressing matters facing society today. The social, economic and emotional costs are immense and these figures are poised to increase unless something is done, NOW.

Whilst advances in road design and vehicle safety have no doubt made a significant contribution to road safety, it is clear that a vital piece of the puzzle is still missing because the fatalities continue.

Fatality Free Friday represents a fresh approach in dealing with what is a complex issue. The day will be an annual event designed to focus public attention on road safety and encourage all road users to think and drive safely.

Our goal is to ensure that there are no road crash fatalities around Australia during the day. It is a call to action that will serve as a platform for a targeted and ongoing approach to road safety. The campaign will facilitate this via media and community involvement. You can make a difference.

The concern regarding Road Safety is well documented.

It is possibly best summarised in a report tabled by the Select Committee of the House of Lords in London, it reads:

“The holocaust on the roads today is nothing short of appalling but it seems to be comprehended by the public in general with complacency. To achieve even a reduction in the number of road accidents raises issues of great complexity. The most important factors are the education of all road-users in road behaviour and segregation of road users – motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.”

It is clear that this statement identified the real core of the issue. *However, you may find it interesting to know that these words were spoken back in 1939.* One could argue that the situation hasn't changed much since then.

Currently, around 1.2 million people are killed each year in road crashes around the world. That equates to more than 3000 people a week. In Australia the road toll is around 1600 to 1700 road fatalities and for every death approximately 10 people are injured. These figures are shocking and highlight the need for urgent action. This situation is not acceptable and the road toll should not be accepted as inevitable.

The first Fatality Free Friday in 2007 coincided with the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week. The week represented a unique opportunity to raise community awareness on road trauma. The key messages for the week were:

- Road traffic injuries are a major global public health and development problem. Their magnitude is expected to rise considerably in the years ahead.
- Road traffic injuries greatly impact upon young lives.
- Road traffic injuries can be prevented

**[www.fatalityfreefriday.com](http://www.fatalityfreefriday.com)**



Road safety is no accident.

International cooperation is crucial to strengthening national road safety efforts. We support these objectives and Fatalities Free Friday aims to provide assistance in achieving this global philosophy as the years go by.

Won't you join us? Visit the Fatalities Free Friday web site, check out the section on What You Can Do and let's work together on the roads to make 22 May 2009 a Fatalities Free Friday.

### *Further Information*

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