



Media Release

Specialists unite to put the brakes on Northern Territory open speed zones

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Three specialist medical Colleges have intensified their campaign to put an end to unrestricted speed zones on the Stuart Highway, with the release of a video highlighting the dangers the policy poses to the lives of Territorians and visitors to the Northern Territory.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM), call on both major parties to commit to ending the policy if elected on 27 August.

RACS surgeon, Dr Phill Carson, said that since the reintroduction of unrestricted speeds on sections of the highway in 2014, the three Colleges have repeatedly warned of the risks involved.

“So far our calls to end the open speeds have fallen on deaf ears, but I am really hopeful that by bringing the issue to the forefront during an election campaign we can generate a much more mature discussion focussed on the evidence,” Dr Carson said.

ACEM’s Dr James Fordyce also highlighted that the NT was the only jurisdiction taking the regressive step of bringing back roads without speed limits, despite having a road toll three times higher than the rest of the nation.

“The Northern Territory rate of deaths in motor vehicle accidents is 15 deaths per 100,000 people per year, which is comparable to Indonesia, Pakistan or Bhutan,” Dr Fordyce stated.

“Whether it is your fault or not, things go wrong on the road. Regardless of the initial cause of an accident, the reality is that the faster you are travelling, the greater your risk of death or serious injury.”

The RACP’s Dr Christine Connors, said that drivers were increasingly vulnerable for every additional kilometre they travelled over 130km/h (the standard speed limit on most rural roads in the NT).

“The difference between driving at 130 km/h versus 160 km/h versus 190 km/h, is that your physical ability to react in an accident just isn’t there. Open speeds place us all at significantly greater risk.”

“We are hopeful that by relaying our direct experiences with road trauma victims in this manner, the community will get a better understanding of what we see on a daily basis, and why we are so convinced of the need to end open speed limits.” Dr Carson said.

Watch the video to [put the brakes on open speeds](#)

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