



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR HAWKE, AND THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, MR MORRIS

A comprehensive national road safety program to tackle the tragic death rate among young road users will start early next year.

The Federal Government has adopted the program which is a four-pronged attack aimed at reducing death and injury among the nation's youth.

In its 1985/86 budget, my Government deemed young Australia to be "Priority One".

In line with that principle and the philosophy behind International Youth Year, we'll be directing Australia's greatest road safety effort towards conserving our most important natural resource, our young people.

My Government's existing road safety strategy, which is directed to all Australians, has made a substantial contribution to road safety improvements in recent years.

We're developing better, safer roads through record funding levels, ensuring that cars are safe, and increasing research and public education activities by the Government's Federal Office of Road Safety.

It should be well known that road crashes are the biggest killer of young Australians.

The 17 to 25 year old group represents only 15 per cent of the population, but makes up 37 per cent of all road crash fatalities.

My Government will confront this national tragedy by concentrating on four key groups.

A program aimed at young drivers will be sponsored by Mobil Oil Australia with the Federal Office of Road Safety.

Mobil has taken up the challenge to industry I offered at last year's national road safety symposium, where I stressed the need for national co-operation and industry effort to fight the road toll.

In accepting this challenge, Mobil will be working hand-in-hand with the Government to promote safer driving among young drivers.

This innovative and exciting program of public sector and private enterprise co-operation will continue through to our Bicentenary year.

Three other young road user groups - motorcyclists, bicycle riders and young children - would also be targets for substantial efforts.

Young school children are particularly vulnerable.

To improve their awareness of road safety in a way to which they can easily relate, activity books for children, along with guides for teachers and parents will be available for the start of the school year.

Bicycle safety is particularly important for children and the whole question of bike safety and their place on the roads will be carefully covered.

A three-day national bicycle safety conference - Bikesafe 86 - will be held in Newcastle in April to get together interested people from government, industry, community and user groups.

Supporting the conference aims will be a series of bike safety television advertisements, one of which will feature Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, to build on the tremendous popularity of the poster series promoting helmet wearing released this year by the Federal Office of Road Safety.

A series of films identifying key motorcyclists survival skills will be produced by the Federal Office of Road Safety and distributed to motorcycle clubs, as a positive approach to an area of great concern for the Government.

Inexperience is a major factor in road deaths among the young, whether it's as a car driver, a bike rider, or a youngster on their way to school.

These programs have been developed to counter the inexperience of the young and reflect the importance placed by the Government in the future welfare of young Australians.