

# Vulnerable Road User Program

## About the program

The Vulnerable Road User Program (VRUP), first introduced in 2013-14, provides opportunities for Tasmanian local governments to apply for grant funding to implement low-cost infrastructure treatments that improve road safety outcomes for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists.

The VRUP is a key initiative of the Towards Zero Action Plan 2020–2024 under the ‘Improving safety in our towns and cities’ theme and closely links to the National Road Safety Action Plan 2023–2025, as a state-level action to support local governments invest in their local infrastructure and upgrade areas that are high risks to vulnerable road users, including safe cycling paths in high-risk cycling areas.

The VRUP addresses these actions by providing financial support to local governments to invest in infrastructure to improve vulnerable road user safety in urban areas.

## Aim of the program

The VRUP aims to improve road safety in Tasmania by reducing the number of crashes that occur between vulnerable road users and vehicles in urban areas and by reducing the level of injury when a crash does occur.

## Why this program?

Vulnerable road users (pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists) are at a high risk of being severely injured in a crash with a motor vehicle. This is because they have little or no physical protection to absorb crash energy when a crash occurs.

Under the Safe System approach to road safety, the management and design of the road system is aimed at avoiding the impact of energy on the human body. This approach aims to ensure that energy is managed at tolerable levels by influencing impact speeds, mass and crash angles to reduce crash injury severity. The infrastructure applications awarded funding under the VRUP apply the Safe System approach to protecting vulnerable road users.

In Tasmania, roads owned by local government make up about 80 per cent of the road network. This is roughly 14 500 km of road, of which about 3 800 km is in urban areas. The VRUP supports local governments as they are often best placed to identify problems on their road network and engage their community to action appropriate solutions.

## Funding awarded through the VRUP

Funding for the VRUP is provided by the Road Safety Levy and projects are also supported by in-kind contributions and co-contributions from local governments. In 2021, the VRUP was also supported by a \$4.6 million co-contribution from the Australian Government through Tasmania’s funding allocation under Tranche 1 of the Road Safety Program. Since the program’s introduction in 2013–14, nearly \$13.6 million has been awarded to 160 projects. Together with local government contributions, the investment in local government road safety under the VRUP totals to nearly \$19 million.

## Grant spotlight

In 2021, the City of Launceston was awarded \$50 000 from the Road Safety Levy, supported by a council co-contribution of \$22 500. In total, the city used \$72 500 to undertake a junction upgrade at the intersection of Wellington Street, Norwich Street and Rose Lane.

While there had not been any recorded pedestrian crashes at the location, it was a wide intersection for pedestrians to cross safely, with vehicles approaching from multiple directions.

The City of Launceston separated the entrances to Rose Lane and Norwich Street, then added a pedestrian refuge to the centre of Norwich Street.

This resulted in an intersection that is safer for pedestrians to cross due to reduced exposure to vehicles. It is also less confusing for drivers to safely navigate the intersection.

