

# Australian Bus Safety – a Practical Perspective

Examined from the view of the “5 Pillars”, World Road Association’s *Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020*:

1. Road Safety Management
2. Safer Roads and Mobility
3. Safer Vehicles
4. Safer Road Users
5. Post-crash Response

## Initiators:

The two worst Australian road disasters (namely, the Grafton and Kempsey bus incidents in 1989) saw the advent of major safety reforms for the bus and coach transport industry.

**GRAFTON**



- 0350, 20 October 1989
- 21 fatalities, 22 injuries
- HC truck collided with HR coach

**KEMPSEY**



- 0240, 22 December 1989
- 35 fatalities, 41 injuries
- Two HR coaches collided

After these incidents, Coronial Investigations in 1990 recommended a number of implementations for the heavy transport industry, and specifically for buses and coaches:

## **1. Road Safety Management**

- Prevent drivers having multiple licences from different Australian jurisdictions
- Transfer of driver and vehicle information among Australian States and Territories
- Collection, collation, analysis and reporting of road crash statistics
- Regulation of driving hours for truck and bus drivers (Work Diaries)
- Prevent use of radar detector devices to avoid police speed enforcement
- Modified national road transport and road freight policies
  - Operator Accreditation requirements
  - Driver Authority requirements

- Driver Licence Class requirements
- Banning "stay-awake" drugs

## 2. Safer Roads and Mobility

- Modified speed limits on undivided highways
- Develop general matters associated with road construction
- Upgrade the Pacific Highway to a divided road all the way between Sydney and Brisbane.

## 3. Safer Vehicles

- Speed limiters in heavy vehicles
- Design standards of aftermarket fitment of bullbars on motor vehicles
- Enhanced construction standards for buses and bus seats
- Design standards of long-distance buses and their safety equipment reviewed

## 4. Safer Road Users

- Prevent driver fatigue, incl. drowsiness and obstructive sleep apnoea
- Prevent drugged driving
- Enhance road safety advertising and education
- Accredited training qualification - *Certificate III in Driving Operations (Bus)*

## 5. Post-crash Response

- *Operator Accreditation* requirements (varies between individual jurisdictions)
  - Mandatory driver training in:
    - Legal obligations of drivers
    - Fatigue management of drivers
  - *Incident Management* protocols



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