

27 March 24



## Drive egg-stra safe this Easter

A long weekend mixed with road trips can be a recipe for disaster. Rural doctors are reminding their communities to plan carefully so they arrive safely over the Easter weekend.

Dr Megan Belot, Immediate Past President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), said that while the long-long weekend can be seen as the perfect time to travel, it is traditionally one of the deadliest holidays on the roads.

“People driving on rural and regional roads are almost five times more likely to die in a road crash than people driving in a city,” Dr Belot said.

“While less than one third of Australia’s population lives in rural areas, two thirds of the road fatalities occur there, and almost twice the number of serious road-related injuries.

“This can be pretty catastrophic for everybody’s long weekend.

“Basically, rural roads have higher speed limits, more hazards (think kangaroos, wombats and then also more corners at higher speeds), greater distances, with help often a long way away and taking more time to arrive on-scene. There is also the influx of people from urban areas that aren't match fit for rural driving, which can be a risk for both their own safety, and the safety of others.

“What this boils down to, is that our patients are far, FAR more likely to be involved in an accident over the long weekend than we would like,” Dr Belot said.

“We want everyone to arrive safely, wherever they are going, so that we all get to enjoy our long-long weekend together. Here are some tips for success.”

- **Be sensible and realistic**

Plan ahead on your departure date and time of day, ensuring you give yourself realistic timeframes that aren't rushed. When you're on the road, accept the fact it's Easter and there will be extra numbers of cars heading to popular holiday destinations. It's going to take longer than normal, so just stay calm and go with the flow.

- **Don't drive tired**

Long hours of drive times, with poor quality sleep, substantially increases the risk of an accident. Have a good rest the night before a long drive and plan for plenty of breaks. Avoid alcohol the day before you drive, get a good rest that night and have a shower next morning to make sure you're fresh before you get in the car.



- **Prep the car**  
Check your tyre pressures, spare tyre pressure/condition, top up the coolant, fuel, windscreen fluid and ensure all trailer attachments are working and in good condition.
- **No phones**  
In-car entertainment is never the job of the driver, and give the phone a rest until you stop.
- **Dress for driving when driving.**  
You can't expect to control the car while wearing thongs, slides, golf shoes, riding boots or bare-feet. Shoes with a flat, rubber sole are best for driving.
- **You aren't home until you are home**  
The return journey is just as dangerous as the one away, so the same rules apply for the return journey, beginning with avoiding a big night on your last day away and moving through all of the above.

"Remember it's double demerits from Thursday 28 March to Monday 1 April 2024. Be safe, and enjoy your long weekend!" Dr Belot said.

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**Photo of Dr Megan Belot:**

[Megan Belot](#)

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