

WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2024

## RACV PATROLS CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION ON 'SLOW DOWN, MOVE OVER' RULE

A recent RACV survey of its emergency roadside assistance patrols has revealed 83 per cent of respondents are experiencing a near miss with another vehicle at least once a week while working on the side of the road.

The survey follows RACV discussions with the Victorian Government to introduce a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit when driving past or overtaking any incident response service including roadside assistance vans, such as RACV patrol vans, and tow trucks.

Known as the 'Slow Down, Move Over' rule, Victoria remains the last state in Australia where the rule requiring drivers to slow to 40 kilometres per hour when passing police or emergency services does not cover roadside assistance vehicles or tow trucks.

In March 2024, RACV conducted a survey to ask their emergency roadside assistance patrols how safe they feel while working on Victorian roads.

RACV's patrols rated 'vehicles not slowing down' as the most common unsafe behaviour that they experience when working on the roads.

All respondents told RACV that they believe reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres per hour when passing a roadside assistance vehicle would make their workplace safer.

Patrols also said that 'no or insufficient emergency lanes' was their highest safety-related issue with Victorian roads.

RACV Head of Policy, James Williams, calls on the Victorian Government to take immediate action to protect all emergency roadside assistance workers.

"According to our survey, 52 per cent of our patrols are experiencing motorists driving too close to them once a week. An additional 31 per cent advised that that these serious near misses are occurring several times a week," Mr Williams said.

"Safety is the number one priority for our patrols, members and customers.

"Our patrols have confirmed what we have known for a long time. Working in a high-speed environment is a safety hazard and the introduction of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit when driving past or overtaking any incident response service is a long overdue control to reduce the risk.

“Every day, hundreds of RACV workers put themselves at risk of injury and death from fast-moving vehicles while helping over 820,000 Victorians annually.

“The health and safety of our employees, contractors, and all the Victorians we serve is extremely important to RACV. As an organisation, we are committed to continually improving our Health, Safety Management System to provide a safe working environment.

“I am sure every motorist who has needed the help of an emergency roadside assistance worker or tow truck driver would be disappointed to know that the Victorian Government is not protecting these essential responders.

“Our emergency roadside assistance workers are often the first and only person helping a member at a breakdown and we want them to return home safely at the end of every shift.”

**-ENDS-**

## **Further information**

The following quotes are attributable to RACV’s emergency roadside assistance patrols to the question ‘What one or two things, if any, do you find most challenging when working on the road?’:

“A few times I’ve nearly been run over, it makes it very dangerous for myself and the member when I’m trying to assist them, and no one will slow down to make a safer environment.”

“Always stressed while working on busy road. Keeping eyes on oncoming traffic while working is hard.”

“When a vehicle is broken down on a main strip or street and I am working other cars speed past you which is very unsafe.”

**High-res images** are available for use, please email the RACV media team.

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