



ROAD
TRAVEL
REWARDS

SCHOOL
ZONE

School's in

Keeping children safe around schools

8-9 AM
2³⁰-4 PM
SCHOOL
DAYS

40

Road Safety Series

February 2025

Acknowledging Our Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the land on which we gather, from places as widespread and diverse as the NRMA. In the presence of Elders past, present and future, we recognise all journeys and our mutual role in creating new paths together.

About the NRMA

The NRMA represents 3.2 million Australians, making it one of the largest mutual organisations in Australia. We provide motoring, transport and tourism services to our members and the community.

We have focused on better transport infrastructure since the beginning, when our founders lobbied for improvements to Sydney's Parramatta Road back in 1920. Independent advocacy is the foundation activity of our organisation, and remains critical to who we are today.

Road Safety Series

The NRMA has prepared a series of reports with the aim of identifying the main factors involved in road crashes and initiatives that may help to reduce the risk of loss of life and injuries.

Continued investment in enforcement, road infrastructure, vehicle technology and public education campaigns are needed to improve the safety of all road users.

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Introduction

Every loss of life on our roads is a tragedy.

The death of a child is profoundly heartbreaking and adds to the urgency of making roads safer.

While school zones in NSW have become safer with the number of children killed or injured steadily declining over the last 20 years, more can be done to improve the safety around schools.

Road safety audits need to be conducted at each school in NSW to identify areas of risk that may lead to crashes. These need to be urgently actioned. Audits that include physical site visits can help identify issues such as more kiss and drop zones, pedestrian fencing, crossings changes to parking signs and other safety improvements.

Starting school is a huge milestone for children and passenger safety is important. Parents and carers need reminding that starting school is not the time to graduate children out of car seats and into an adult seat belt. For older children, getting to school independently is another rite of passage and more support is needed to help prepare them for a safe journey.

Children are one of our most vulnerable road users and it's unacceptable to simply install a speed camera in a school zone and say the job is done.





What is needed

1. Conduct road safety audits around each school in NSW and a program of works for delivery. Top earning speed camera locations in school zones should be prioritised.
2. Increased support to help families prepare older children for independent travel to school.
3. More education reminding parents and carers that school children aged under seven must be correctly restrained in a child car seat.
4. Child car seat diversion programs offered to all drivers who receive an initial infringement notice for a child not properly restrained in a car seat.

What our members are saying

The NRMA surveyed over 550 parents and carers of primary school aged children regarding school zone safety issues in NSW and the ACT.²

Almost half (46%) were aware of an incident or near miss at or near their child's school during school hours in the last 12 months. Of these, 41% witnessed the incident.

Top 5 safety concerns in school zones

1. Speeding through a school zone (56%)
2. Lack of parking near schools (50%)
3. Double parking or stopping illegally to drop off/pick up children (42%)
4. Children of a young age crossing the road unsupervised (39%)
5. Low visibility of children in school zones due to traffic congestion (29%)

Top 5 measures to make school zones safer

1. Kiss and drop zones (52%)
2. Increased parking (50%)
3. Alternative school access that's not on a main road (36%)
4. Road infrastructure changes – pedestrian fencing, speed humps etc. (30%)
5. More school crossing supervisors (29%)

60%

of parents and carers surveyed said their child travels to or from school without adult supervision for some or all of the journey.

28%

of parents and carers won't let their child travel to or from school without an adult due to road safety concerns.

Travelling solo to school

A safe route to school was the reason why 37% of parents and carers made the decision to allow their child to travel to or from school without an adult.

Keeping kids safe around schools

The numbers of children killed or injured on NSW roads in school travel times has been steadily declining over the last 20 years.¹

In 2024, no child aged 16 years and under was killed in an active school zone (preliminary data as at 20 January 2025). In the first half of 2024, three children (including two pedestrians) aged 16 years and under were injured in an active school zone, two seriously injured and one minor/other injured.

Between 2019 and 2023, two children (both pedestrians) aged 16 and under were killed in an active school zone.¹

40km/h school zones are in force on all notified school days.

Most school zones operate 8–9.30am and 2.30–4pm.

Children aged 16 years and under injured in an active school zone between 2019 – 2023¹

44

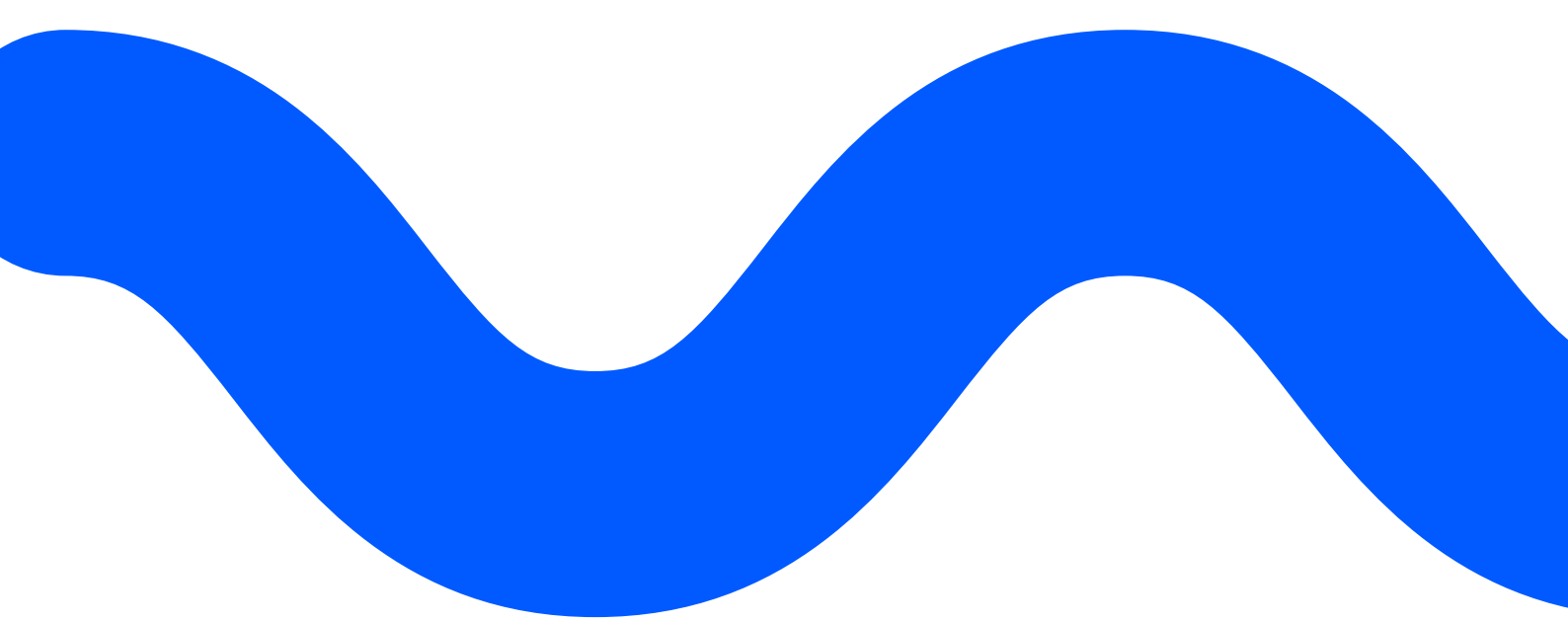
seriously injured
(including 37 pedestrians)

55

moderately injured
(including 42 pedestrians)

36

minor/other injured
(including 27 pedestrians)



Speeding in school zones

Over 132,000 speeding fines were issued in NSW school zones raising over \$34 million in fine revenue in the financial year 2023/24. This represents a fall of over 9,000 speeding fines on the previous year.³

881 red light fines were issued across school zones in 2023/24, representing a 14 per cent increase on the previous year.³

Top 5 speed camera locations in NSW school zones for 2023/24³

1. Woodville Road, Chester Hill – Southbound	7,813 fines
2. Princes Highway, Kogarah – Southbound	5,642 fines
3. Victoria Road, Ryde – Eastbound	5,173 fines
4. Lane Cove Road, North Ryde – Northbound	4,366 fines
5. The Boulevard, Strathfield – Northbound	3,933 fines

Top 5 red light locations in NSW school zones for 2023/24³

1. Chalmers Street, Redfern - Northbound	144 fines
Meredith Street, Bankstown - Northbound	144 fines
2. Borella Road, Albury - Westbound	131 fines
3. Rutledge Street, Eastwood - Westbound	86 fines
4. Lancaster Street, Blacktown - Southbound	80 fines
5. Lane Cove Road, North Ryde - Northbound	50 fines

Audits will help

Duty of care doesn't stop at the bell or at the school gate - this is the NSW Department of Education's mantra when it comes to student road safety.

Schools often invest a lot of time and resources to help keep their students safe outside the school gates. Teachers can be seen donning high visibility vests to usher children safely on school buses, manning the school's kiss and drop zones and crowd controlling popular local bus stops. While school zones are generally safe, more can be done to improve the overall safety around schools, help ensure road rule compliance from motorists and support schools in protecting students.

Road safety audits are needed around each school to identify areas of risk that could lead to crashes and what is needed to mitigate the risks. The NSW Government should prioritise locations where known speeding occurs.

This will help to identify hotspot areas around schools, which need urgent safety upgrades to improve the

overall safety around schools. Audits should include examining the road conditions around each school and identifying any operational or maintenance issues. Consideration should also be made for the whole journey to and from school and not just within the parameters of a school zone.

Audits would help identify issues such as the need for kiss and drop off zones, pedestrian fencing or crossings, improvements to road infrastructure and changes to parking signs. They would also help to identify issues such as faded traffic signs and line markings, poorly positioned signs and trees growing across school zone signs. Audits could also include an evaluation of any available data such as speed surveys and infringement data.

The NRMA believes that audits must include physical site inspections and not only rely on desktop research. They should also include school representatives and the wider community to enhance local knowledge. School road safety audits should be made public and identify community infrastructure needs and program them for delivery.

Ryde, Victoria Road – Eastbound near Cressy Road

With over 5,000 speeding fines issued during the financial year 2023/24, Victoria Road, Ryde eastbound near Cressy Road is the third top speed camera location in a school zone. On the opposite side of the road, over 1,600 fines were issued in a school zone by a separate westbound fixed speed camera that ranked 32 out of 85.

The schools near the cameras are Holy Cross College Ryde and St Charles Catholic Primary School.

An NRMA site visit during the afternoon school zone hours revealed missing speed camera warning signs. It was apparent that a review of school zone signage and speed camera warning signs is urgently needed. A comprehensive road safety audit is needed at this location to see what other infrastructure requirements are necessary to improve the safety of children in this busy school zone location, surrounding streets such as Potts Street and popular public bus stops along Victoria Road eastbound.

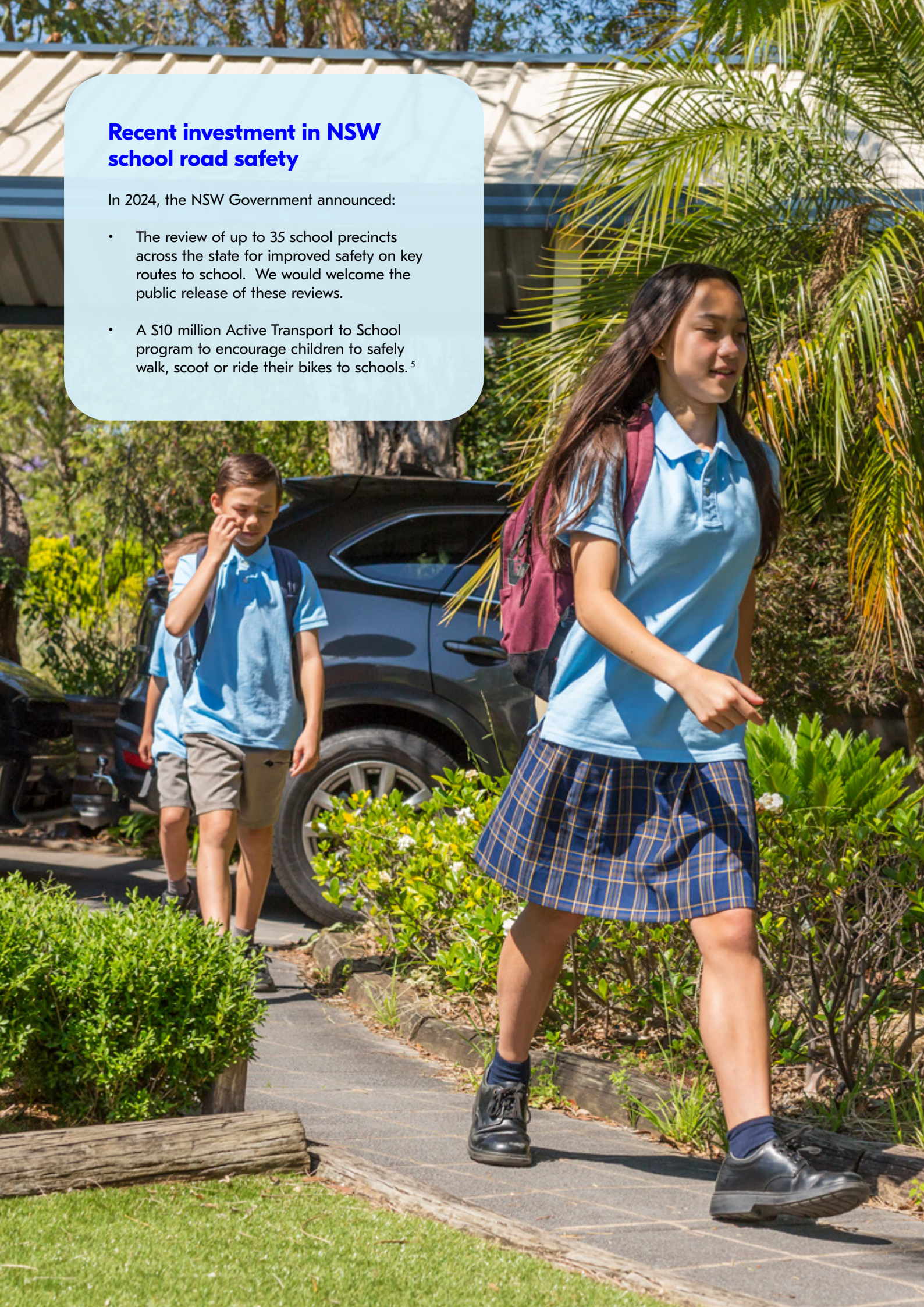
“Duty of care doesn't stop at the bell or at the school gate.”

-NSW Department of Education.

Recent investment in NSW school road safety

In 2024, the NSW Government announced:

- The review of up to 35 school precincts across the state for improved safety on key routes to school. We would welcome the public release of these reviews.
- A \$10 million Active Transport to School program to encourage children to safely walk, scoot or ride their bikes to schools.⁵



Solo school trips

Driving or walking children to school is the easiest way to ensure their safety, but what happens when they get older? The NRMA survey found that 60 per cent of parents and carers said their child travels to or from school without adult supervision for some or all of the journey.

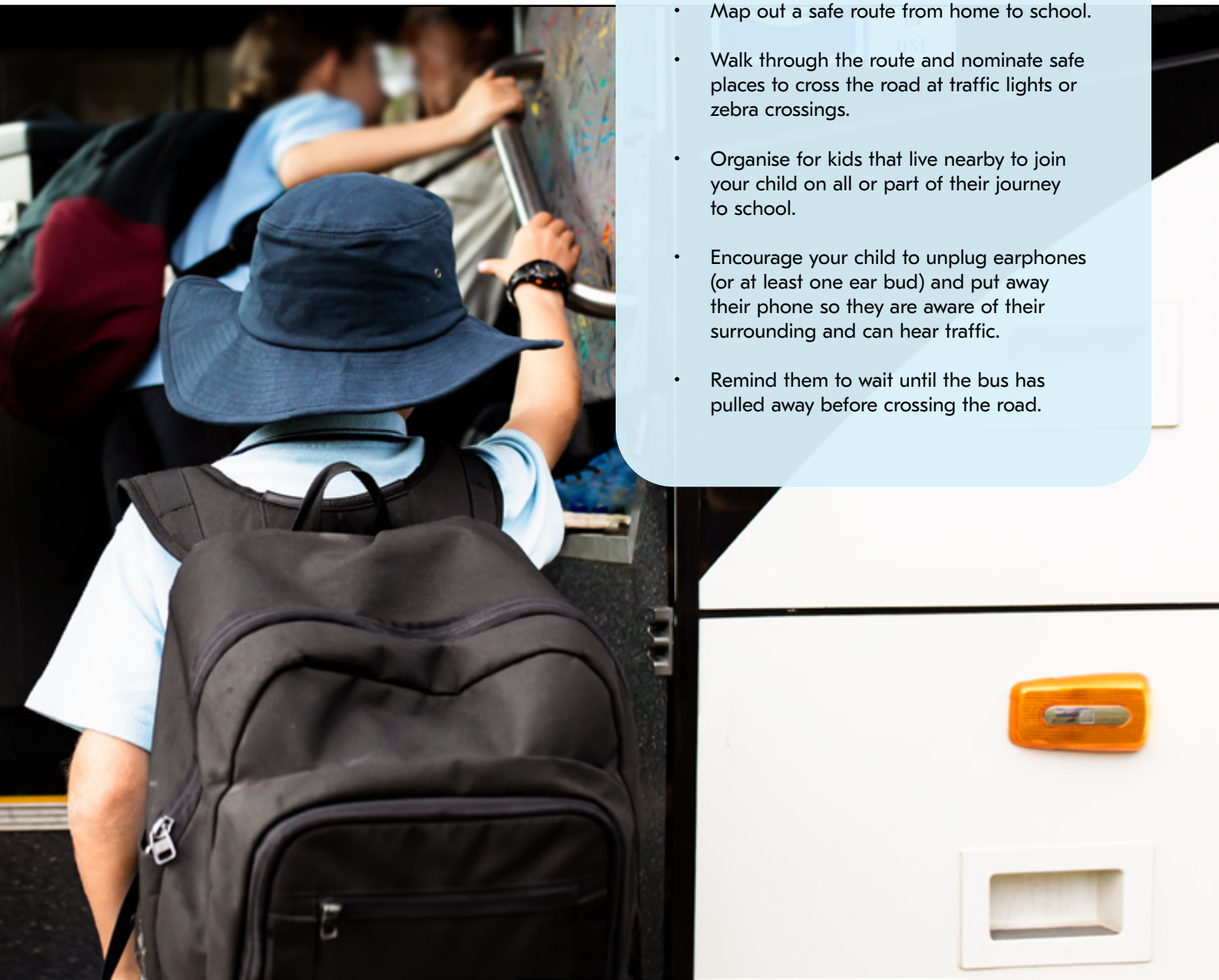
There has been a steady decline over the last 20 years of the number of children killed or injured in active school zones. However, nearly 30 per cent of parents and carers surveyed said that road safety concerns was one of the reasons their child travels to school with an adult.

Eventually, the day will come when children will travel to school on their own. Families need more support to help equip their children with effective strategies for getting to school safely.

Going solo tips

If children are walking, riding or catching public transport on their own for the first time, it's best to do a run through with them to ensure they are confident to travel to school.

- Map out a safe route from home to school.
- Walk through the route and nominate safe places to cross the road at traffic lights or zebra crossings.
- Organise for kids that live nearby to join your child on all or part of their journey to school.
- Encourage your child to unplug earphones (or at least one ear bud) and put away their phone so they are aware of their surrounding and can hear traffic.
- Remind them to wait until the bus has pulled away before crossing the road.



Buckle up

Getting safely to school is not only about pedestrian safety. Passenger safety is equally important. Across Australia, laws require children under the age of seven to be secured in a restraint suitable for their age and size. Starting school doesn't mean transitioning to an adult seatbelt. For school-aged children under seven, this means using a booster seat or a forward-facing child car seat.

Children who are correctly restrained are better protected against fatal or serious injuries compared to non-restrained children. Sadly, more than 4,600 people were fined for unrestrained children aged four to seven in NSW over five years, as shown in Figure 1. More education is needed to remind parents and carers that school children aged under seven must be correctly restrained in a child car seat.

Families with more than one child may be under pressure to graduate children early out of a car seat and this can put the child at risk in the event of a crash. According to a NSW Ombudsman review, children from low socio-economic backgrounds, those that live in remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to lose their lives as a passenger.

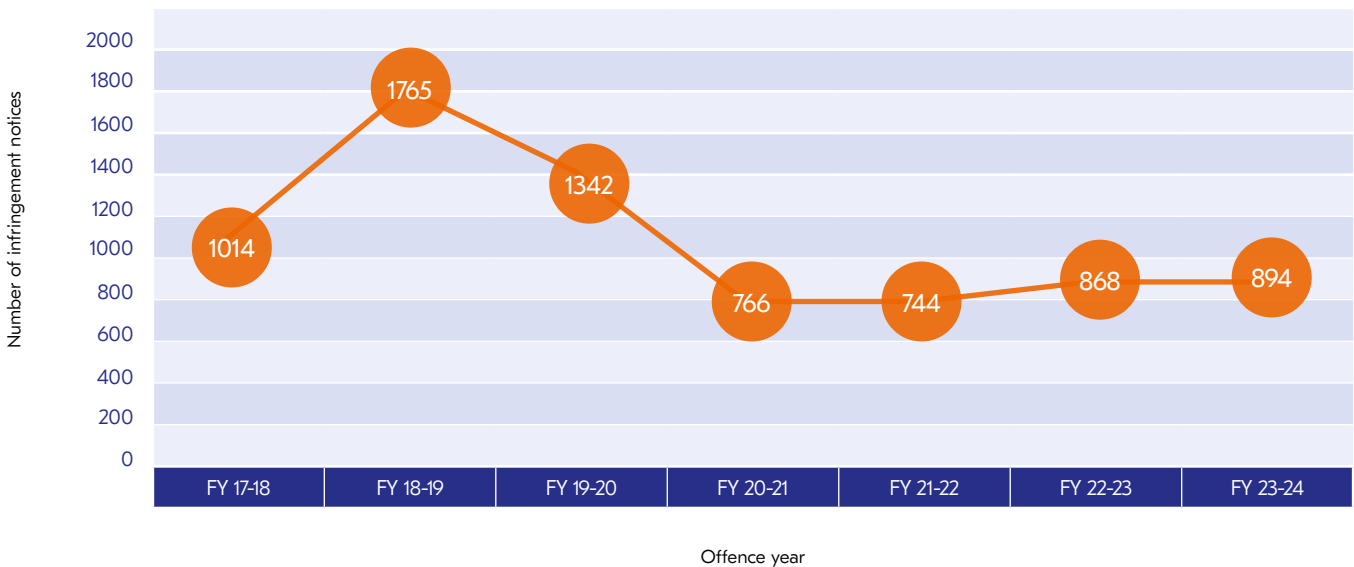
Issuing fines to those who are disadvantaged will not solve the road safety problem of unrestrained children. In particular, for financially disadvantaged communities, the accumulation of infringement notices can have a detrimental effect and can often lead to the loss of a licence.

Diversion programs that identify people who are incorrectly or not restraining their children and educate them on how to keep their children safe is a better approach rather than handing out fines. Assistance for families with financial difficulties to source a compliant child car seat is also critical.

The NRMA believes that state-wide car seat diversion programs should be in place across Australia for first time offenders. Car seat diversion programs should also be offered to all drivers who receive an infringement notice for a child who is not properly restrained rather than at the sole discretion of a police officer.

Car seat diversion programs must also have long term sustainable funding with additional support programs for people with financial hardship to access a free and compliant child car seat.

Figure 1. Number of infringement notices for unrestrained children aged four to seven issued in NSW.



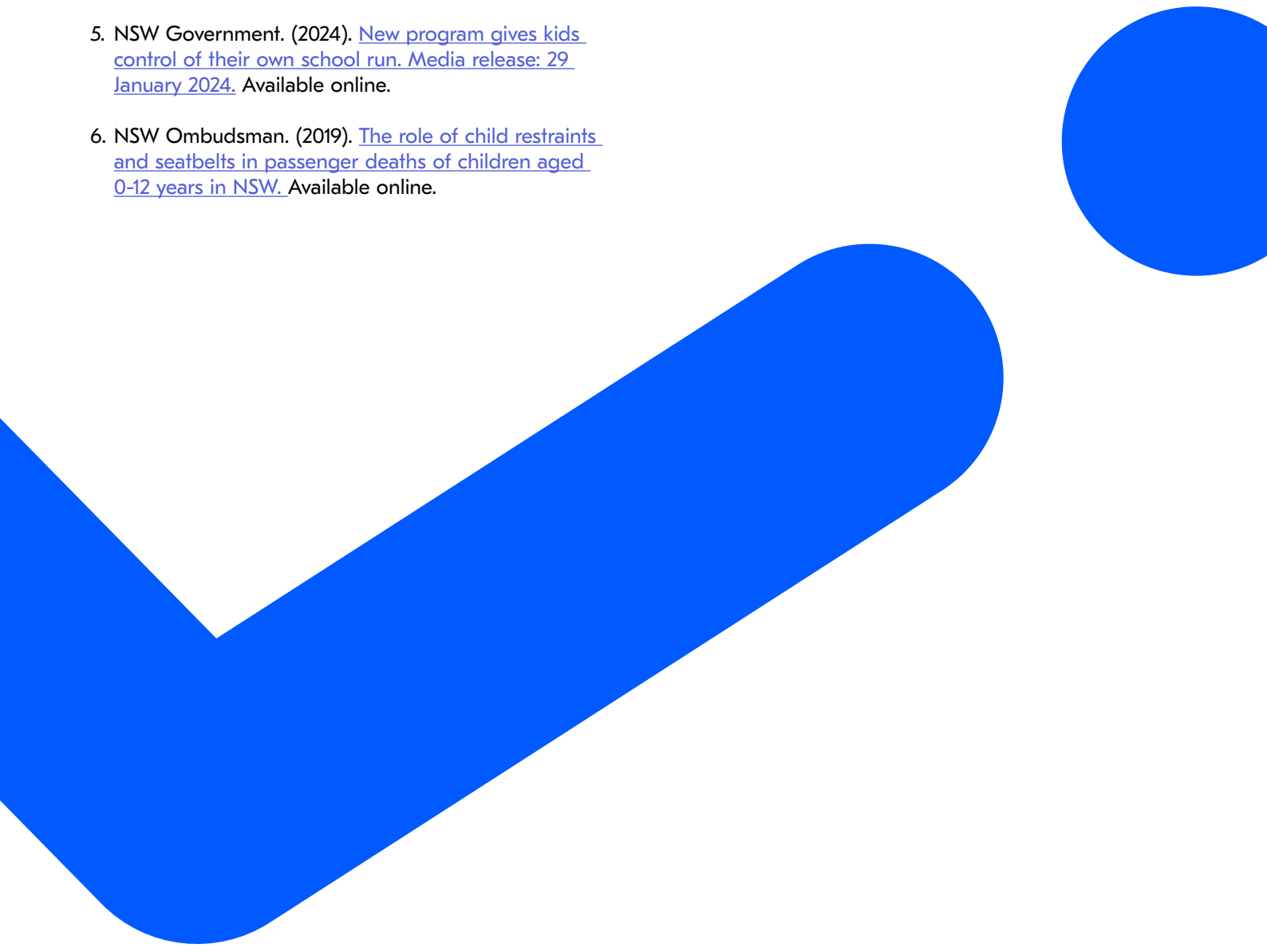
Five-step test

Before a child can move into an adult seatbelt, they should be able to:

1. Sit all the way back against the back of the seat.
2. Bend their knees comfortably over the front edge of the vehicle seat.
3. Sit with the sash belt across their mid-shoulder.
4. Sit with the lap belt across the top of their thigh.
5. Stay seated in this position for the whole trip.



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