Road safety experts call for national trauma registry

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Road safety experts attending the Australasian Road Safety Conference on the Gold Coast this week have called for ongoing funding for a national trauma registry to better quantify trends in road trauma.

Queensland surgeon and former Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Trauma Committee Associate Professor Daryl Wall says that Australia has no way of measuring the number of serious injuries due to road crashes nationally, and this is a major gap in efforts to improve road safety.

“On average four people die and 90 people are seriously injured on Australian roads every day,” Dr Wall said.

“The National Road Safety Strategy was signed by all state and territory governments in 2011, and set a goal of reducing both deaths and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2020.

“But without statistics to quantify the trends in the number of serious injuries from road crashes, it’s not possible to determine whether road safety actions are effective in reducing serious injury.

The Australian Trauma Registry collates data from 27 designated trauma centres across Australia and its inaugural report containing data from 2010 to 2012 showed that 20,435 seriously injured patients were admitted and treated over three years.

“About half of these were road-related, and the average length of stay in intensive care units was four days,” Dr Wall said.

“This registry is an invaluable source of information on road-related injury.

“The Australian Automobile Association and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons have written to the Deputy Prime Minister requesting ongoing funding for the registry, and we hope that he will commit to this important initiative.”

The Australian Trauma Registry is managed by the National Trauma Research Institute, a partnership of The Alfred and Monash University, based in Melbourne.

About RACS

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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