The Curtin-Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC) has criticised the Commonwealth’s new *State of Australian Cities 2010* report, released last Friday, saying it has ignored the key issue of road safety.

“The report neglects transport safety almost entirely and contains no safety assessment,” said C-MARC Director, Associate Professor Brett Hughes.

“Road safety is a significant issue which everyone should take seriously with 1,400 Australians killed in road crashes each year at a cost of $30 billion.

“These are horrifying statistics and all levels of government must take responsibility for reducing crashes in cities, starting with the Commonwealth.

“The Commonwealth Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics reported that in 2006 there were 471 lives lost and 126,000 injuries in Australian cities.

“There were also more than 387,000 reported crashes, but this number is actually much higher since a large number of crashes are not reported.

“The report fails to answer the central question it poses of where are our cities now, and how are they progressing with respect to road safety.”

Associate Professor Hughes acknowledged the Commonwealth’s leadership in addressing city sustainability in the report, but was critical of the way it neglected road safety issues.

“Omitting an assessment of road safety and not recognising its significance to the community is simply unacceptable,” he said.

“The modern Safe Systems approach to road safety must be incorporated in all stages of city planning.

“The Safe Systems approach recognises that many elements affect road safety, including the arrangements of cities, the design of suburbs, the type of transport system and the way individuals use transport.

“Road safety must be integral to city planning.”

Associate Professor Hughes said there was a need to plan to reduce crashes by better road safety, more public transport, more freight on rail and reducing travel demand.

“Public transport use grew by 23 per cent in Australian cities between 2004-2008 while passenger car use only increased by 1 per cent,” he said.

“These growth rates must be encouraged and planned for in our cities as they lead to reduced road crashes.
“Road safety is everyone’s responsibility and all levels of government, private companies and the general public need to work together to improve the safety of our communities.

“The Commonwealth must explicitly include road safety when considering the condition and future of Australian cities.”

More information on C-MARC is available on the website http://www.c-marc.curtin.edu.au

Contact: Associate Professor Brett Hughes; Director; Curtin Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC); 08 9266 9591; 0431 658 131; brett.hughes@curtin.edu.au