

# The Guardian

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## **Mother of boy killed by car pleads with drivers to be careful**

A four-year-old boy who loved dinosaurs continues to inspire his determined mother's child road safety campaign nine years after he was fatally hit by a car on the NSW central coast.

**Michelle McLaughlin's** urgent message is that this festive season could be the most hazardous for young pedestrians in recent years as families flock to holiday spots following three years of lockdowns, fires and floods.

Her son Tom was hit and killed on the first day of a family holiday at MacMasters Beach on 6 January 2014 after a car driver failed to see the small boy on the road verge.

McLaughlin, an experienced nurse from Sydney, said she knew straight away her son had suffered a catastrophic head injury.

Devastated by the loss of her "amazing little boy", she and husband David set up the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation to campaign for improved child road safety.

The foundation has teamed up with the University of NSW to gather more data on child road deaths and devise measures to drive fatalities down.

Road fatality figures show land transport crashes are a leading cause of death for Australian children aged one to 14 and between 2012 and 2021, 422 children aged under 15 died in crashes, with 28% of them pedestrians.

Prof **Ann Williamson**, from UNSW's Transport and Road Safety Research Centre, said holidays are a risky time for young children.

▀▀ *They're in places you don't expect kids to be. In holiday locations and at holiday times kids can be everywhere.*

- From AAP