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# A Lesser Species of Homicide: Death, Drivers and the Law

by Kerry King

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Non-fiction

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KERRY KING

## A LESSER SPECIES OF HOMICIDE

DEATH, DRIVERS AND THE LAW

The first study of its kind undertaken in the world, *A Lesser Species of Homicide* explores *how* and *why* deaths on the road have been treated as a species apart.

Globally, the 'road toll' is estimated at 1.35 million per year. To date, more than 50 million people have died or been *killed*, with Australia's death toll currently in the order of 225,000 people. Almost all of those deaths are attributable to some form of human error. In *A Lesser Species of Homicide*, King explores the shifting nexus where error, fault, act or omission meet the question of criminal liability.

King examines how parliaments, prosecutors, police and the courts have responded to deaths on the road from the mid-twentieth century to the present, including the extent to which the community and judiciary have been prepared to deem driving conduct culpable. She explores how wedded we are to the notion of 'accident', to speed, drink-driving, risk, constructions of masculinity and the broader driving culture, and how this has intersected with the tenets of intention, negligence, dangerousness and carelessness to affect judgments about drivers' conduct. Drawing on hundreds of cases, King carefully traces the construction of offences and case law while observing key emerging themes, including approaches to multiple fatalities, outcomes in cases involving vulnerable road users, the difficulties with prosecuting intoxicated drivers and, most importantly, trends in charging standards and sentencing.

Dr Kerry King is an Adjunct Research Fellow with Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University, Queensland. Her work is interdisciplinary, drawing on law, criminology, socio-legal and historical studies. Kerry was awarded her PhD at the University of Western Australia in 2015. She subsequently won the Margaret Medcalf Award for excellence in referencing and research. *A Lesser Species of Homicide: Death, Drivers and the Law* is her first book.



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