



AAA NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY PLATFORM



Australian
Automobile
Association

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Foreword

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) is Australia's peak motoring organisation. Ensuring Australians are safe on our roads is central to our work and that of our member clubs.

Sadly, after decades of improvement, Australia's roads are becoming more dangerous. We have seen increases in fatalities in each of the past two calendar years.

Under the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) Australian Governments agreed to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent between 2011 and 2020. With three years to go, and the road toll increasing, it's clear the NRSS will fail to meet these goals.

The reasons for the increase in deaths and injury are not clear, with illicit drug use and driver distraction potentially playing a growing part, along with higher traffic volumes and aging transport infrastructure.

What is clear is the need for a renewed national focus on road safety.

The AAA has worked with member clubs, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) and the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) to develop this Platform as part of our ongoing efforts to bring such a national focus to road safety and we thank them for their contribution.

An early and important step in improving road safety is to better define the role of the national government and to have it show leadership in areas where it can best play a role. This would include ensuring we have accurate national data on the underlying causes of road trauma and the true extent of death and injury on our roads; supporting best practice research and driver education; linking Commonwealth road funding to safety outcomes; working more closely with state and territory governments; and, ensuring Australians have improved access to safer cars.

Australia is at a crossroads. As a nation, we can't ignore the lessons to be learned from the failings of the NRSS and embark on the next decade with no clear plan to reduce road deaths and trauma. We must start by learning from the past and we must develop evidence-based policies that will help keep Australians safe on our roads.

The AAA hopes this National Road Safety Platform will make a meaningful contribution to renewed national efforts to improve road safety.



Michael Bradley

Chief Executive
Australian Automobile Association

Introduction

Road safety is a national issue. Almost 1,300 Australians were killed on our roads last year and many thousands more were injured.

This has significant economic and social implications across the nation. Recent analysis commissioned by the AAA, estimates that the 2015 economic cost of road trauma in Australia is almost \$30 billion and the direct cost to government budgets is more than \$3.7 billion.

The AAA believes all levels of government must play a part in reducing this toll. If we are to make a meaningful difference to this loss of life and livelihood, the Australian Government must play a leadership role. Commonwealth leadership is central to ensuring that reducing the road toll is a priority at all levels of government.

The AAA's National Road Safety Platform sets out the expectations the AAA and member clubs have of the Australian Government with regard to road safety.

The National Road Safety Platform details the tools and levers available to the Australian Government across a broad range of areas and how these can bring about improved road safety outcomes.

In particular, the AAA's National Road Safety Platform advocates for the Australian Government to play a greater role in road safety in key areas including:

1. Measuring success and identifying gaps in road safety through improved data collection
2. Greater national leadership in road safety through promoting best practice research and education
3. Delivering road safety outcomes through funding land transport infrastructure
4. Supporting the introduction of safer vehicles in the Australian fleet
5. Facilitating national change through relevant intergovernmental bodies and better monitoring and tracking of the National Road Safety Strategy

What role does the Australian Government currently play in road safety?

Under the Australian Constitution the Australian Government does not have specific powers for constructing and maintaining roads¹. However, over many decades successive federal governments have increasingly acknowledged the important role that investing in land transport and road safety has in relation to national economic development and social wellbeing.

Today, in Australia's federal system, government responsibilities for road safety vary across jurisdictions. Federal responsibilities have been reduced over recent years to a number of key program areas. According to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's website:

The **Australian Government** is responsible for:

- regulating and administering safety standards for new vehicles;
- allocating infrastructure resources, including for safety, across the national highway and local road networks;
- administering the National Black Spot Program and other road funding;
- administering the keys2drive program;
- producing national road safety statistics; and
- coordinating the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020.

State, territory and local governments have a broader remit in relation to road safety, being largely responsible for:

- funding, planning, designing and operating the road network;
- managing vehicle registration and driver licensing systems; and
- regulating and enforcing road user behaviour.

Why is a renewed focus on road safety needed at the Federal level?

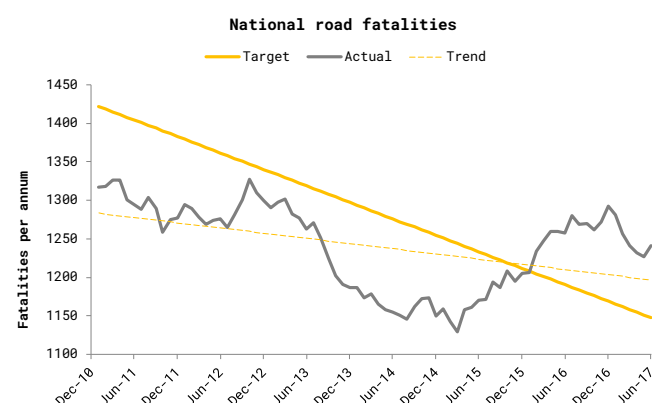
The AAA believes Australia cannot continue to take a fragmented approach to road safety. A number of factors exist to underscore the need for federal leadership to reinstate road safety as a priority for governments at all levels. These factors include:

a. Australia is falling behind its target on road safety

In 2011 all Australian governments signed up to the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 (NRSS). This is Australia's road safety blueprint, which sets out to reduce both deaths and serious injuries on Australian roads by at least 30 per cent by 2020.

Unfortunately, the trendline is heading in the wrong direction. The 12-month road toll has declined by just 13 per cent since the start of the NRSS - from an average of 1,427 fatalities per year prior to commencement of the NRSS (over the baseline years 2008, 2009 and 2010) to 1,241 in the year ending June 2017 - far short of the targeted 30 per cent reduction.

The trauma on our roads extends further than fatalities. In addition to those killed, around 42,000 Australians were hospitalised from traffic crashes in 2014-15, an increase from 39,000 in 2010-11². With around 800 Australians seriously injured and 24 killed on our roads each week and with the national road safety strategy failing, the need for Australian Government leadership is clear.



b. The economic cost of road trauma is significant

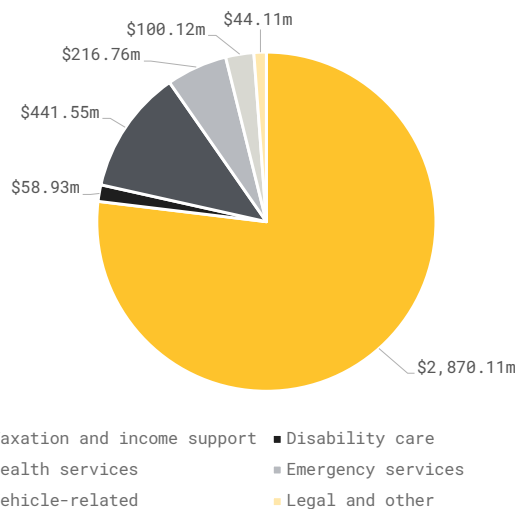
In response to the upward trend in fatalities over the past two calendar years, the AAA commissioned research to quantify the cost that the Australian community incurs each year as a result of road crashes. Economic Connections Pty Ltd (ECON) was commissioned to undertake an analysis of the cost of road crashes in Australia for the 2015 calendar year (the ECON 2015 report).

The analysis updates the Cost of road crashes in Australia 2006 report published by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) in 2009 (BITRE 2009). Since the BITRE 2009 report was published, a number of factors have changed - namely road fatalities have fallen by 25 per cent, from 1,598 in 2006 to 1,205 fatalities in the 2015 reference year, notwithstanding increases in each of the calendar years 2015 and 2016. However, hospitalised injuries increased by 22 per cent over the nine years to 2015 from 31,204 to 37,964.

The report finds the total economic cost of road trauma is estimated at \$22.2 billion for the 2015 year only, equivalent to 1.3 per cent of gross domestic product. Using the revised ECON 2015 estimate (\$22.2 billion) the cost per fatality was \$4.34m, while the cost per hospitalised injury, including persons disabled as a result of road trauma, was \$239,000. However, using the willingness to pay approach used in BITRE 2009³, the 2015 cost of road trauma is estimated at \$29.7 billion.

The ECON 2015 report also estimates the direct cost of road trauma to government for 2015 at more than \$3.7 billion. More than three quarters of this cost comprises the present value of many future years of forgone taxation revenue and additional income support payments arising directly from road crash fatalities and disabilities. The health services area is also a significant contributor at 11.8 per cent.

Cost to Government for 2015 road trauma
(\$3.7 billion net present value)



Of the total cost of \$3.7 billion, \$945 million is incurred in the first year alone.⁴ First year costs primarily comprise the immediate systemic responses to road trauma in health, emergency services and other areas. The significant direct cost to government budgets, for only one year of road trauma, is an important reminder for policy makers that investing in road safety not only saves lives, but saves governments money too.

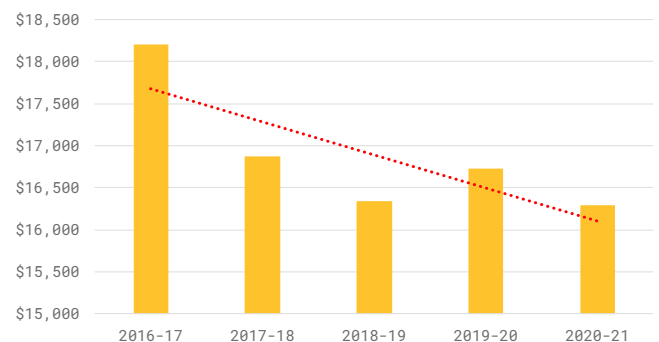
Importantly, the ECON 2015 report shows that despite a significant reduction in fatalities since 2006, the cost of road trauma in 2015 was only 6.8 per cent or \$1.6 billion lower than the cost in 2006 when expressed in 2015 prices. The report also shows that although fatalities have fallen, hospitalised injuries continue to increase contributing to the significant cost imposed on the economy and the Australian community.

c. Federal Government resourcing for road safety is in decline

Over the past two decades, federal resourcing for road safety policy, research, and programs has declined. This reflects a level of inertia that has come about following significant road safety gains in the decades through to the 1990s and the low priority that road safety is now afforded at the federal level.

The AAA is concerned that internal departmental resourcing is diminishing. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's appropriation for road safety is expected to fall from a high of \$18.2 million in 2016-17 to \$16.3 million in 2020-21 at a time when the national road safety strategy is failing and leadership is needed.⁵

Road safety departmental appropriation
2017-18 Budget (\$m)



Previously, all revenue generated through the motor vehicle identification plate fee of \$6 per vehicle was dedicated to road safety, however this transparent link is no longer in place.

The AAA urges the Australian Government to commit to increasing departmental resourcing to levels that existed when the former Federal Office of Road Safety was responsible for road safety strategies at the federal level. This would require a funding increase to around \$25 million per annum (based on 1995 resourcing adjusted for inflation).

Road safety actions required by the Australian Government

1. Measuring success and identifying gaps in road safety through improved data collection

In Australia, there is currently no national system for the measurement of serious road crash injuries, despite the National Road Safety Strategy 2011- 2020 including the specific KPI of reducing serious injuries by at least 30 per cent over the decade. Similarly, there is no open or consistent data available on the condition of the road network. The ability for governments to identify and act on emerging trends that may contribute to road crashes is also limited.

To monitor Australia's progress in improving road safety, governments and industry must have access to accurate, timely and readily available data on road deaths, serious injuries and the economic cost of road trauma. The availability of consistent, up to date data on Australia's road network in an open source platform would also better inform road safety policy development, road safety programs as well as infrastructure delivery and maintenance.

The AAA has identified a number of data sets that should be available at a national level, on a timely basis and through open source platforms:

Injury data

The AAA welcomed the Government's commitment to fund the Australian Trauma Registry as an interim solution for measuring serious road injuries. The Registry will gather data on the number and type of severe injuries due to road crashes, and help make Australia's roads safer through better planning and more targeted investment. However, the Australian Trauma Registry provides data for severe injuries only. There is a need to gather national data on injuries across a range of severities and to link these to data on individual road crashes. The AAA is very supportive of the project being undertaken by Austroads to assess the feasibility of linking the National Hospital Morbidity Database with crash data. However, the Austroads pilot project has a timeframe of at least several years, and the project's outcomes remain uncertain.

Data collected at crash scenes

In addition to improved reporting and collection of injury data, the AAA calls on the Australian Government to lead a review into the data collected by first responders at crash scenes. The review would identify whether sufficient data is consistently collected by police and other enforcement agencies which would assist policy makers in identifying emerging issues in road safety. For example, there may be opportunities to improve on the collection and reporting of data at crash scenes that identifies mobile phones or other driver distractions as a contributing factor in a crash. This could include identifying new enforcement and investigation methods to determine whether a driver was distracted at the time of a crash, such as through mandatory reviewing of phone activity logs.

Cost of road trauma

As noted in the introduction, the AAA recently commissioned a research report into the economic cost of road trauma in response to the recent increase in fatalities and serious injuries on Australian roads. The last such report was produced by the Australian Government in 2009 using 2006 data. The New Zealand Government produces similar reports on a yearly basis providing the community and policy makers with an important reference point to benchmark road safety priorities and programs.

The AAA understands that such reports cannot be published in Australia until a national 'willingness to pay' study is finalised, which would underpin such a report, however this work has been underway as part of the NRSS for some years. The study would provide for a nationally consistent approach and an agreed set of values for evaluating safety. Consequently, the AAA considers that the Australian Government should prioritise the national willingness to pay methodology work within Austroads that would allow for yearly reporting of the cost of road trauma.

Geospatial data

The AAA and member clubs produce the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) report, which analyses the network of major highways and motorways in Australia, as defined in the National Land Transport Act 2014. In compiling the AusRAP analysis the AAA utilises a range of data sources including:

- Geospatial data describing the national network of highways from Open Street Maps (OSM);
- Traffic volumes per road segment supplied by road authorities;
- Start and end points of road segments supplied (in some cases) by road authorities
- Crash data supplied by road authorities; and
- Imagery of the national network at 100 m intervals, calibrated for image-based measurement and analysis, and with associated geospatial coordinates, supplied by road authorities.

During the latest AusRAP risk mapping process, basic, high level data sets on fatalities and casualty crashes on the National Highway Network were requested from all jurisdictions. A number of jurisdictions found it difficult to provide the requested data and in many cases a considerable amount of time was needed to “cleanse” the data sets to ensure consistency at a national level. Given this data is critical to informing road safety programs and decision making, the AAA believes it needs to be reported in a timely manner, available all year round, and provided in a consistent form, on an open access platform.



In addition, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development provides a PDF map of the roads in the National Land Transport Network, but does not supply the underlying data, while the ‘roads’ data set, supplied by Geoscience Australia, is available, the National Map contains only dual carriageways and therefore only covers part of the network.

Action 1

To better manage and track success in road safety the AAA is calling for the Australian Government to ensure: timely, consistent and high-quality reporting of key road related fatality and injury statistics; open, timely access to other critical public data sets; and consistent reporting of data between jurisdictions. In addition, the AAA urges the Australian Government to:

- 1.1 Maintain a continued focus on developing a national database that accounts for and tracks all serious injuries across Australia either by broadening the Australian Trauma Registry to include a wider range of serious injuries or expediting work on linking the National Hospital Morbidity Database with crash data.
- 1.2 Lead a review into the data collected by first responders at crash scenes to ensure emerging trends, such as mobile phone use, are consistently reported and monitored across states and territories.
- 1.3 Expedite and prioritise work underway that would establish a nationally agreed methodology for valuing safety through a national willingness-to-pay study. The study would establish nationally consistent values based on estimates for travel time, reliability and safety and allow for economic evaluations of the cost of road trauma to be produced by the Australian Government annually.
- 1.4 Produce an annual report using nationally agreed values for evaluating road safety, similar to the ‘counting the cost of road crashes’ report in New Zealand⁵, so that governments and the community can better understand the social and economic cost of road crashes. The last similar report produced in Australia was released in 2009 and relies on data from 2006.
- 1.5 Encourage regular publication of high-quality geospatial data in a consistent format from the state and territory road authorities regarding locations of roads, key road features, speed limits, traffic volumes and crashes, which would greatly facilitate stakeholder analysis, and assist governments to target their road safety investments.

2. Leadership in road safety through promoting best practice research

The recent increase in fatalities against the longer-term downward trend is a national phenomenon and is consistent across the majority of Australian states and territories. The concerning trend is also being experienced across many other developed countries including the United States, the European Union, Canada and the Netherlands.⁷

As the causes of the underlying trend are largely unknown, the AAA believes the Australian Government has an important leadership role in funding research to better understand the trends, and to inform the development of enforcement best practice and other road safety programs.

The AAA welcomed the Australian Government's announcement that it would be conducting an inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy and the commitment to undertake research into drug testing and driver distraction.⁸ The AAA understands the research will look at:

- a range of issues related to the use of mobile phones while driving, including current regulatory and enforcement practices in Australia; and
- options to enable more roadside testing, at a lower cost to governments while also reviewing current practices, looking at the most effective drug testing regimes and investigating the impediments to a more effective and efficient drug-testing regime.

While the AAA is supportive of the Australian Government's recent announcements, the AAA is concerned that national road safety research is delivered on an ad hoc basis and does not form part of a strategic road safety research program. The AAA believes the Australian Government has a role to play in funding and delivering best practice research which explores issues such as road safety trends, best practice enforcement models, innovative vehicle technology, driver behaviour, and infrastructure design. This research could then underpin national education programs, consistent state and territory enforcement activities, and improvements to vehicle design through the Australian Design Rules.

The ability for the Australian Government to conduct national road safety education and awareness campaigns is also limited under the current federated model. Pooling resources and developing a federal communications message would be valuable where an issue is consistent across states and territories and where the message does not need to be tailored to specific jurisdictions.

Co-ordinated research and education programs that could benefit from federal intervention include:

- improving the safety of older drivers through education and consistent re-training programs;
- educating international drivers about Australian driving conditions and national road rules on arrival, similar to the New Zealand Government's 'Driving in New Zealand' education campaign;
- encouraging states and territories to adopt standardised 'fitness to drive' guidelines so motorists with various driving impairments are treated equally across states and territories;
- awareness and education that promotes safety outcomes of the protection of elderly vehicle occupants given Australia's aging population;
- promoting the benefits of driving newer vehicles with automated vehicle technologies such as Autonomous Emergency Braking, Lane Departure Warning and Intelligent Speed Advisory systems to assist in driving technology uptake as well as promoting ANCAP safety ratings and Used Car Safety Ratings;
- research and development of best practice infrastructure design to improve the safety outcomes of major projects, and improve safety in local areas through technology and other low-cost infrastructure improvements; and
- young driver training, including awareness of driver distraction and sharing the road with heavy vehicles.

Action 2

To ensure that all states and territories are equipped with the tools to address emerging and critical issues in road safety the AAA is calling on the Australian Government to:

- 2.1 Establish a dedicated unit within the Australian Government that has a transparent funding source to coordinate federal road safety activities and fund critical research projects in road safety.
- 2.2 Commit to resourcing the dedicated unit at the same levels as existed when the former Federal Office of Road Safety was responsible for developing and implementing integrated road safety strategies and programs at the federal level - around \$25 million per annum (equates to the 1995 resourcing level adjusted for inflation).
- 2.3 Establish a funding mechanism to allow the Federal Government to undertake national education campaigns in consultation with states and territories where a national response is possible.
- 2.4 Demonstrate leadership in driver behaviour research and education through the development and implementation of programs targeted at young drivers and other user groups including older drivers while also promoting the benefits of a nationally-consistent approach to driver and trainer education.



3. Delivering road safety outcomes through funding land transport infrastructure

The Australian Government plays an important role in providing funding to states and territories for national highway and local road networks and for other nationally significant infrastructure.

Infrastructure Australia

Infrastructure Australia (IA) provides a critical role in the Australian Government's funding of infrastructure by providing robust, independent and evidence-based advice on future infrastructure needs.

In order to facilitate robust project selection, Infrastructure Australia formally assesses submissions as Initiatives and Projects for inclusion on the Infrastructure Priority List. Submissions are considered against three assessment components:

- Strategic fit;
- Economic, social and environmental value; and
- Deliverability.⁹

The AAA acknowledges that 'safety impacts' are considered within the economic, social and environmental value assessment component of IA's Assessment Framework. However, the AAA considers the IA assessment process could provide a stronger mechanism for states and territories to prioritise and develop projects which deliver safety outcomes.



For example, rather than simply assessing the 'economic value arising from a reduction in the number of accidents, deaths and security incidents', the Assessment Framework could include specific assessment metrics which encourage state and territory governments to include additional road safety measures in their proposed projects to further bolster the safety benefits attributed to the project.

The AAA also calls on the Government to amend the IA Statement of Expectations to specifically include road safety or broader safety and community objectives. For example, in addition to 'promoting best practice in reforming strategic infrastructure planning' the statement of expectations could also direct IA to promote 'best practice infrastructure design that prioritises road safety objectives' in recognition of the significant economic and productivity benefits that are generated from a reduction in road trauma.

Driving safer roads through targeted funding

In addition to IA's Assessment Framework the Australian Government has several additional levers available to ensure road safety is prioritised through the investment process. These could include:

- linking grant payments to specific road safety project milestones;
- setting aside a small amount of project funding as incentive payments linked to other project related road safety programs; and
- mandating the use of road safety audits using proven, objective risk assessment methods when undertaking project selection of smaller scale projects.

Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP)

AusRAP is a program run by the AAA and the state and territory motoring clubs. The latest 'Risk Mapping' report released in December 2016 was based on casualty crash data supplied by state and territory road authorities.

The AusRAP Risk Mapping report identified the worst ten sections of the National Land Transport Network. Where funding has been directed into roads previously identified as 'worst sections', significant reductions in crash rates have been achieved. The Bruce Highway, for example, has consistently rated as one of Australia's highest-risk highways. The section from Cooroy to Gympie was identified in 2011 as especially dangerous: over a five-year period, 155 casualty crashes and 24 fatalities had occurred.

Funding of \$388 million from the Australian Government and \$125 million from the Queensland Government led to the opening of a new 12-kilometre section with major safety enhancements. Since the upgrade, the number of crashes has been reduced by around 50 per cent on the improved section. This example shows that with the right investment even the worst stretches of road can be made significantly safer. The challenge is to replicate this success across the rest of Australia.

Further, the AAA's AusRAP Star Rating (released in 2013) analysis found that an investment of just \$4.7 billion would bring 85 per cent of the national highway network to a standard of 3 star or above and save 36,000 lives and serious injuries over a 20-year period. This investment would return \$3.50 for every dollar¹⁰ invested.

The AAA's view is that the Australian Government should undertake AusRAP analysis at regular intervals to establish objective, cost-effective, guidance on where safety improvements are most needed on our highways to inform investment decisions and set policy targets.

Black Spot Program

The AAA supports the Australian Government's Black Spot Program, which has achieved significant reductions in road trauma over many years preventing over 4,000 crashes including 30 fatal crashes per annum. The program has also performed well in economic terms, achieving an estimated benefit-cost ratio of 7.7.¹¹



Considering the significant benefits, the AAA strongly supports the continuation of the Australian Government's Black Spot program, and calls on the Government to increase the annual allocation to a guaranteed minimum of \$100 million. The AAA also remains concerned at the recent under-spends in the program and recommends the program guidelines be urgently reviewed to ensure funding can be allocated to projects in a timely and efficient manner.

Action 3

To deliver road safety outcomes the Australian Government could use its role in providing infrastructure funding to states and territories by:

- 3.1 Making road safety a greater priority in Infrastructure Australia's Assessment Framework as well as referencing road safety objectives in IA's statement of expectations.
- 3.2 Creating incentive payments in infrastructure agreements to incentivise road safety outcomes and objectives with states and territories for individual projects.
- 3.3 Permanently increasing funding to the Black Spot program to at least \$100 million per year.
- 3.4 Improving and reviewing the Black Spot program guidelines to ensure funding does not continue to be underspent.
- 3.5 Demonstrating leadership in innovative congestion management solutions or intelligent transport systems that can be easily replicated across states and territories.
- 3.6 Encouraging states and territories to utilise proven risk assessment methods such as AusRAP in order to effectively prioritise projects requiring road safety investment.
- 3.7 Undertaking regular AusRAP style assessment of the national land transport network to inform investment decisions and set policy targets.

4. Supporting the introduction of safer vehicles into the Australian fleet

Improved vehicle safety has been central to much of the improvement in road safety over recent decades. The Federal Government has a critical role to play in the area of vehicle standards - ensuring that vehicles imported into Australia provide the greatest safety benefit to consumers.

To ensure Australian motorists have access to the safest possible vehicles, the AAA calls on the Government to ensure sufficient resourcing for the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to effectively undertake this work program.

According to evidence provided to the 2017-18 budget estimates committee, Australia has 13 standards in the Australian Design Rules that are not yet harmonised internationally. Whilst a number of regulatory impact statements are underway, these processes can take several years and require sufficient internal resourcing so that they can be completed.

The AAA understands the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's design rule priorities over coming years will be established through the development of the NRSS action plan for the period 2018-2020 and are likely to include:

- Advanced Emergency Braking (AEB) for heavy and then light vehicles;
- Reviewing occupant protection standards against the latest available UN Regulations;
- Adopting future UN Regulations for Intelligent Transport Systems/Autonomous Driving; and
- Continuing to promote the market uptake of new vehicle technologies with high safety potential.¹²

In addition to the above priorities, the AAA also considers the Australian Government should prioritise safety improvements in the light commercial vehicle fleet by better aligning the safety standards of light commercial vehicles with passenger vehicles. This work is becoming increasingly important given the significant increase in light commercial vehicle sales in Australia.

The AAA is strongly of the view that the work on the design rules needs to be prioritised and adequately funded within the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, preferably within the newly formed dedicated road safety unit referred to in Action 2.

In addition to the development of regulatory standards, which is critically important, the AAA considers other non-regulatory levers could also be utilised by the Australian Government to incentivise manufacturers to install key safety features in new vehicles as standard features.

For example, in the United States the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reached an agreement with 20 automakers to ensure automatic emergency braking is included as a standard feature on virtually all new cars by no later than September 1, 2022.¹³

ANCAP's safety ratings are also an important non-regulatory lever. For example, ANCAP has announced it will not be possible for new vehicle models to achieve a 5-star ANCAP safety rating without an effective AEB system fitted as standard from 2018 to encourage take-up of this potentially life-saving technology.

Other options that do not directly involve updating vehicle standards could include the Australian Government incentivising consumers to purchase safer vehicles by:

- lowering the cost of new vehicles by removing import taxes;
- ensuring information provided to consumers on vehicle safety is accurate, consistent and independent;
- ensuring ANCAP continues to receive adequate government funding to deliver and promote the results of its vehicle safety assessment and rating program; and
- ensuring the Australian tax regime encourages the purchase of safer vehicles.

Many of these actions directly influence fleet renewal and also reduce the average vehicle fleet age in Australia. Reducing the age of the vehicle fleet is also a high-level direction outlined in the NRSS, however the most recent NRSS progress report noted that the national average fleet age for 2015 of 10.1 years was slightly greater than the average in the baseline period of 10.0 years. Further, the progress report noted that 'no specific action has been undertaken aimed at reducing fleet age, beyond the promotion of safer vehicles'. Consequently, the AAA urges the Australian Government to prioritise actions that seek to reduce the vehicle fleet age given the significant productivity and economic benefits to be derived from having a safer vehicle fleet.

Action 4

To ensure Australians benefit from the newest developments in vehicle safety the AAA calls on the Australian Government to:

- 4.1 Provide sufficient resourcing to engage in more proactive assessment of international developments that may affect the Australian Design Rules.
- 4.2 Work in close consultation with industry to explore other non-regulatory incentives, such as voluntary agreements, that seek to expedite the introduction of Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) as standard on all vehicles by at least 2022 while also exploring mandatory mechanisms.
- 4.3 Commit to long-term funding of the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) at, at least, \$1.25 million ongoing from 2018-19 with future funding indexed in line with CPI as per ANCAP's 2017-18 budget submission.
- 4.4 Direct the ACCC to develop a new advertising guideline for the portrayal and display of vehicle safety information. The new guideline would strengthen the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, meaning statements about vehicle safety made by vehicle brands, either at the point-of-sale or in general advertising, would need to reference the independent ANCAP safety rating.
- 4.5 Continue to mandate 5-star cars for Australian Government fleet purchases, similar to policies in a number of states and territories.
- 4.6 Urgently review Australian Government taxes and charges that can decrease the cost of new vehicles to encourage fleet renewal. For example the removal of the 5 per cent tariff on imported vehicles and the Luxury Car Tax (LCT) would save consumers \$2.2 billion and \$2.7 billion respectively over the forward estimates and encourage thousands of Australians into safer cars.
- 4.7 Review other tax levers available to the Australian Government that may incentivise the uptake of newer, safer vehicles for example Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) arrangements or tax incentives for small businesses that may incorporate minimum safety standard purchase requirements.
- 4.8 Investigate options that better align the safety standards of light commercial vehicles with passenger vehicles given the significant increase in light commercial vehicle sales in Australia.



5. Facilitating national change through relevant intergovernmental bodies and better monitoring and tracking of the National Road Safety Strategy

The AAA believes the Federal Government has a strong role to play in working with the states and territories to track and report on national progress in delivering road safety objectives.

In this vein, the AAA welcomes the Australian Government's recently announced inquiry into the NRSS and looks forward to playing an active role in that inquiry. The AAA believes it is important to review the current progress against the NRSS objectives, and ensure that the forthcoming NRSS Action Plan and the next national road safety strategy (post 2020) are able to build on the successes and failures of the current plan. However, in order to successfully build on the current NRSS a number of data and reporting deficiencies need to be addressed.

The AAA acknowledges that the implementation status report released in November 2016 provided an assessment of the overall progress of the NRSS against statistical measures as well as providing a comprehensive report on the nineteen priority actions including simple 'traffic light' indicators of progress.



However, the November 2016 report is based on 2015 data; this makes it difficult for governments to be proactive in targeting key road safety trends as the reporting timeline has a 12 month lag. By the time key national actions to address trends are developed, programs would be more than 18 months behind current trends.

Consequently, the AAA considers that the 12 month NRSS progress reports need to utilise current data and track individual state and territory progress against specific NRSS actions rather than referring to 'most jurisdictions', 'some states' or 'several jurisdictions' when reporting on key deliverables. Progress could be highlighted using a traffic light reporting system, much like other federal reports monitoring the progress of intergovernmental agreements.

The AAA also notes that statistical measures are still missing from key safety performance indicators in the NRSS, meaning that progress against targets cannot be measured. For example, data is not available for the following statistical measures:

- number of deaths from crashes where speed was a contributory factor;
- average speeds at designated sites across the network;
- percentage of vehicles speeding by vehicle type and offence category; and
- percentage of new vehicles sold with key safety features.

In combination with better tracking and monitoring of the NRSS, other intergovernmental bodies such as the Transport and Infrastructure Council, the National Transport Commission and Austroads could be better utilised to develop incentives and other mechanisms for states and territories to implement best practice road safety programs, standards and regulations.

This could be achieved through jurisdictional progress reports (following up on recommendations in key reports) or other methods that seek to draw attention to areas requiring further attention across jurisdictions. For example, Austroads recently released the Assessing Fitness to Drive 2016 Guidelines which detail the medical standards for driver licensing for use by health professionals and driver licensing authorities. While the report is important, the benefits are eroded if road authorities are not audited on their compliance and take-up of the guidelines.

The Australian Government could also use incentive payments to achieve additional outcomes under the NRSS. This method has been deemed as an effective tool in incentivising action in a range of policy areas over recent decades when the federal government has pursued key national policy reforms. Road safety incentive payments could be tied to high priority actions in a future NRSS action plan and paid to state and territories once milestones are delivered and reported on.

Action 5

To help enact change and promote best practice across states and territories the Australian Government should better utilise key intergovernmental bodies by:

- 5.1 Regular tracking or 'benchmarking' of the performance of individual states and territories in the NRSS strategy through a 'traffic light system' that creates a higher level of visibility of key actions that have not been delivered in certain jurisdictions.
- 5.2 Considering incentivising states and territories by allocating incentive payments when key deliverables in the NRSS are met.
- 5.3 Better utilising Austroads and the Transport and Infrastructure Council to target national road safety priorities and seek to promote best practice regulation and reform across states and territories.



Endnotes

- ¹ *History of Commonwealth Government Legislation Relating to Roads and Road Transport 1900 – 1972*, Burke R.H., https://bitre.gov.au/publications/1977/files/op_008.pdf
- ² Productivity Commission: *Report on Government Services 2017*, Table 6A.37 available at: <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2017/justice/police-services>
- ³ The BITRE 2009 report (*Cost of road crashes in Australia 2006*, https://bitre.gov.au/publications/2010/files/report_118.pdf) included, as a sensitivity test, alternative valuations based on the willingness to pay for a reduction in the risk of death on the roads. BITRE estimated that the annualised cost of crashes using a modified human capital approach was \$17.85 billion in 2006; and that using a willingness to pay based value of a life of approximately \$6 million (*Estimating the willingness to pay and value of risk reduction for car occupants in the road environment*, Hensher et al 2009, Transportation Research Part A, Volume 3, Issue 7) increased this to \$27.1 billion. The willingness to pay approach, while providing for valuation based on individuals' choices, has been updated by Economic Connections in line with current Australian Government guidelines.
- ⁴ The 'first year' cost encompasses 2014-15 (second half), 2015-16 and 2016-17 (first half), allowing for a period of up to 12 months following all road crashes that occurred during 2015.
- ⁵ *Portfolio Budget Statements* accessed at: https://infrastructure.gov.au/department/statements/2017_2018/budget/files/2017-18_PBS-infrastructure.pdf
- ⁶ *Social cost of road crashes and injuries 2016 update*, available on the NZ Ministry of Transport's website: <http://www.transport.govt.nz/socialcost>
- ⁷ International Technical Conference on the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles - Government Status Report Presentations accessed at: [https://www-esv.nhtsa.dot.gov/ESV Government Status Report Presentations.htm](https://www-esv.nhtsa.dot.gov/ESV%20Government%20Status%20Report%20Presentations.htm)
- ⁸ Media Release: *Drug driving and mobile phone use to be targeted in road safety research* http://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/chester/releases/2017/may/dc115_2017.aspx
- ⁹ Infrastructure Australia: *Assessment Framework June 2017* accessed at: <http://infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/policy-publications/publications/files/Assessment-Framework-June-2017.pdf>
- ¹⁰ *Star Rating Australia's National Network of Highways*, 2013 [http://www.aaa.asn.au/storage/ausrap-star-rating-report.original\(2\).pdf](http://www.aaa.asn.au/storage/ausrap-star-rating-report.original(2).pdf)
- ¹¹ Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), 2012, *Evaluation of the National Black Spot Program* Volume 1 BITRE Report 126, Canberra ACT
- ¹² Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development: Government Status Presentation to the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles Conference accessed at: [https://www-esv.nhtsa.dot.gov/files/ESV Government Status Report Presentations/25th ESV 2017 GSR Australia.pdf](https://www-esv.nhtsa.dot.gov/files/ESV%20Government%20Status%20Report%20Presentations/25th%20ESV%202017%20GSR%20Australia.pdf)
- ¹³ US Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: March 2016 accessed at: <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/news/desktopnews/u-s-dot-and-iihs-announce-historic-commitment-of-20-automakers-to-make-automatic-emergency-braking-standard-on-new-vehicles>



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