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Government inquiry needed as road safety strategy stalls

Australia's peak motoring body has called on the Australian Government to fund an inquiry into Australia's rapidly growing road toll as new figures show almost no progress has been made in reducing deaths since the National Road Safety Strategy was agreed by all Australian governments in 2011.

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) today released its *Benchmarking the performance of the National Road Safety Strategy* report, which tracks progress against the strategy's target of reducing road deaths by at least 30 per cent by 2020. The new report finds no real progress has been made since the strategy was agreed more than five years ago due to 2016's 7.9% increase in road deaths, which saw 1300 Australians killed.

AAA Chief Executive Michael Bradley said: "At a time when new vehicles and roads have never been safer, we need to understand why 40 years of improvement is being so dramatically reversed. More than one thousand Australian families lost a loved one on our roads last year, while a further 30,000 are now dealing with the consequences of a life changing serious injury. The human cost is immense, however road trauma is also costing our economy around \$34 billion every year.

"This level of death, injury, and cost should not be accepted on our roads and it's time the Australian Government sought to clarify why our national road safety strategy has stalled, so that efforts to reduce road trauma can be re-focussed."

As part of its *pre-budget submission* provided to the Federal Treasury, the AAA also calls for the following safety related funding:

- continued funding for the Government's *keys2drive* program, which delivers a free lesson with a professional driving instructor to learners and their supervising driver. There is currently no Government funding beyond 30 June 2017.
- continued funding for *ANCAP*, which provides consumers with vehicle safety ratings. There is currently no Government funding beyond 2017-18.
- removal of remaining tariffs and car taxes designed to protect the Australian automotive sector; a move that would greatly enhance the affordability of newer, safer vehicles; and,
- a requirement for all governments to use risk assessment tools such as *AusRAP* to prioritise investment and incorporate safety improvements as part of infrastructure upgrades.

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