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Australia needs smart policies to revive road safety

- **Reviving Road Safety priorities document brings together 23 organisations to tackle 5-year spike in fatalities**
- **Federal Government must link road funding to safety outcomes**
- **New Road Safety Research Program offers grants to tackle fatigued driving**

Twenty-three national and state organisations have come together to develop the new *Reviving Road Safety* policy priorities document, which calls on the Federal Government to link infrastructure funding to road safety outcomes to combat Australia's rising road toll.

The document released today by Australia's peak motoring body – the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) – also seeks a commitment that the new Office of Road Safety will be charged with data collection and coordination. This must be a priority because Australia still doesn't know how many serious injuries are caused by road crashes each year or how many crashes occur in which speed was a factor.

The AAA's Managing Director, Michael Bradley, said 1,203 people died on Australian roads in the 12 months to 31 August – higher than the equivalent period five years ago.

"This is a national crisis – we need a new approach to road safety from the Federal Government," Mr Bradley said.

"Eight years after all levels of government agreed to set 33 individual Safety Performance Indicators, half of these KPIs are not on track, while a further quarter – including the number of serious injuries – are still not being measured."

Mr Bradley said the AAA and its seven member clubs – the NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAA, RAC, RACT and the AANT – received input from another 15 organisations to develop key steps to revive road safety action in Australia. (Note: these organisations are listed at the end of this media statement).

Additionally, the AAA sought the input of the government appointed Co-Chairs of the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy, Associate Professor Jeremy Wooley and Dr John Crozier.

"*Reviving Road Safety* is not a detailed blueprint on everything the government must be doing to help reduce road trauma. Instead it advocates the priority steps that the government can take at the beginning of its new term."

"Critically for government, this platform is not asking for great sums of additional dollars. Instead we have focused on better and largely cost-neutral policies aimed at optimising existing investment to maximise better road safety outcomes and save lives."

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Reviving Road Safety advocates several high-impact policy measures.

- **Develop a National Road Safety Data Hub** within the Office of Road Safety. This would coordinate and analyse the collection of road infrastructure safety data to help develop future policy and investments.
- **Link infrastructure funding to road safety outcomes**, and use incentive payments, to ensure road funding proposals are tied to safety standards.
- **Encourage the uptake of safer vehicles** and work towards targets to lower the average age of Australia's vehicle fleet.
- **Ensure the new Office of Road Safety has genuine authority to oversee the development and progress of the next National Road Safety Strategy**, which will take effect from 2021.

To help ensure government has access to the best road safety research, the AAA has also launched its new Road Safety Research Program, which offers funding of up to \$1 million per research project into road safety.

"Our new program recognises that road safety is a shared responsibility," Mr Bradley said. "Projects that examine fatigued driving will be considered for the inaugural round of funding."

The AAA's *Reviving Road Safety* document follows last month's release of the Federal Government's own *Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements*, which found:

"the Australian Government has not provided sufficiently strong leadership, coordination or advocacy on road safety to drive national trauma reductions."

Mr Bradley said: "We congratulate the government for recognising the depth of Australia's road safety problem and for having the courage to commission a full and frank analysis of failings and actions.

"That Review's findings prompted the AAA and our seven member clubs to reach out to 15 other organisations for input into *Reviving Road Safety* to put together key policies for government to prioritise."

The following organisations helped develop *Reviving Road Safety* and endorse its themes and priorities:

- Amy Gillett Foundation
- Australasian College of Road Safety
- ANCAP
- Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
- Australasian Trauma Society
- Australian Medical Association
- Australian Motorcycle Council
- Australian Road Safety Foundation
- Australian Trucking Association
- iRAP
- National Road Safety Partnership Program
- Roads Australia
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Safer Australian Roads and Highways Inc
- Towards Zero Foundation

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The Australian Automobile Association is the nation's peak motoring body, representing Australia's state-based motoring clubs and their 8 million members. The AAA is an apolitical and technology-neutral advocate for federal transport policy that improves safety, affordability, and mobility.