



# REVIVING ROAD SAFETY

**FEDERAL PRIORITIES TO REDUCE CRASHES AND SAVE LIVES**



Australian  
Automobile  
Association

**September 2019**







**“The number of deaths and serious injuries on Australian roads remains unacceptably high.”**

*Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements, Final Report, August 2019*

**“We must act on a scale that matters, with a disaster response that reflects the true measure of the problem. Lives depend on it.”**

*Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020, Final Report, September 2018*

# Contents

Executive Summary	4
Foreword	6
The scale of Australia’s road trauma crisis	8
Data	10
Roads	12
Vehicles	14
Leadership	16
Supporting stakeholders	18

These priorities have been developed by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) through consultation with numerous stakeholders. The AAA has worked with its state-based motoring clubs and a wide range of health, transport and emergency service groups to develop this document.

The AAA supports the goal of Vision Zero – zero fatalities and serious injuries on Australian roads by 2050. But given the past decade’s inaction and poor progress, this platform focuses on the steps that governments must take in the next two years to lay a foundation for a much safer future.



**Australian Automobile Association**

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



# A message from the AAA President

The leaders of Australia’s motoring clubs believe the time has come for a new federal approach to road safety management, for which there is widespread support.

In developing this document, the AAA has worked with a wide range of national transport, health, research, and emergency services groups to identify common views on what the most meaningful, achievable, and affordable federal tasks might be.

The AAA’s *Reviving Road Safety* is not intended to articulate everything a federal government could do to help reduce road trauma; but it does aim to list the tasks that these groups agree are the necessary first steps to be taken.

The lessons delivered by the failures of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 were acquired at great cost: through deaths, serious injuries, lasting disabilities and immeasurable grief. Governments must not ignore these lessons.

Making substantial reductions to Australia’s road toll will require robust data, measurable targets backed by evidence-based policies, funding that matches the scale of the problem, transparency and accountability.

The leaders of Australia’s motoring clubs urge the Australian Government to seize this opportunity and deliver a transformative approach to road safety that is proportionate to the scale of this ongoing crisis.



Elizabeth Perry

President  
Australian Automobile Association

## Executive Summary

Australia has suffered a lost decade in the management of road safety.

Failures of transparency and accountability mean about half of the targets set by the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-20 (NRSS) will be missed, and a further quarter cannot yet be measured. Many road safety measures are worse today than they were when the NRSS was agreed in 2011.

The Australian Government’s own Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy’s failings found that strong national leadership will be essential if we are to turn things around.

In response to the Inquiry’s findings, the Australian Government commissioned the Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements, which released its final report in August 2019.

Its first key finding was that: “The Australian Government has not provided sufficiently strong leadership, coordination or advocacy on road safety to drive national trauma reductions.”

*Reviving Road Safety* aims to identify the road safety interventions that can start to shape a future role for the Australian Government.

The AAA has undertaken extensive consultation with a wide range of experts and organisations. There is a consensus that the Australian Government can make the nation’s roads safer by using its powers and responsibilities in several crucial ways.

### 1. Develop a national road safety data hub.

The Office of Road Safety coordinates Australia’s road safety data collection, analysis and reporting capabilities. Robust data must be used to inform road safety interventions and this data must underpin measurable targets, transparent reporting and real accountability.

As a matter of urgency, Commonwealth, state and territory governments decide upon a measurement of serious injury and regularly report on it.

The Office of Road Safety administers a national AusRAP hub to maximise the life-saving potential of Australian Government infrastructure investment and meet the agreed policy targets for 3-star and better roads across Australia.

### 2. Link federal infrastructure funding to road safety outcomes.

The Australian Government insists on accountability for responsible use of federal infrastructure funding, including reporting and monitoring of post-construction road safety performance.

Road project proposals demonstrate safety benefits that have been quantified by agreed standards.

States and territories that fulfil their National Road Safety Strategy reporting and compliance obligations receive incentive payments.

### 3. Enhance vehicle safety standards and encourage the uptake of safer vehicles.

Australia actively participates in developing United Nations vehicle standards and accelerates implementation of these standards in Australia.

Australia sets targets to reduce the average age of its vehicle fleet – so that unsafe older vehicles are replaced – as well as initiatives that drive progress towards these targets.

The Australian Government supports non-regulatory measures to encourage the latest safety technologies in new vehicles on the Australian market, including via the Australasian New Car Assessment Program, government fleet buying policies and voluntary undertakings by the industry.

### 4. Assign the Office of Road Safety a leadership role and genuine authority.

The Office of Road Safety:

- develops a whole-of-government approach to road safety, fostering communication and collaboration between departments, statutory authorities and jurisdictions to deliver better, more cost-effective outcomes
- identifies best practice to support policy harmonisation between states and territories
- oversees a national road safety research and capacity building program that informs evidence-based policy, infrastructure and vehicle design
- oversees the development and implementation of the next National Road Safety Strategy, ensuring it is well resourced, and guided by robust and transparent data and well-defined metrics and targets
- ensures accountability by being responsible for translating the targets in the National Road Safety Strategy into the required actions.

# Foreword

## The last decade's harsh lessons show need for real leadership in road safety

A year has passed since the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy delivered its report to parliamentarians calling for an urgent response to the national road safety crisis.

The Inquiry's recommendations were channelled through the Council of Australian Governments' Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC) in October 2018. To date, a Governance Review has been completed and an Office of Road Safety has been set up, although that office's remit is not yet clear.

The Governance Review concurred with the Inquiry's findings. Its completion should mean that the other recommendations are now acted upon in earnest.

Despite some broad statements of intent, the details of what might be done regarding the balance of the recommendations are now likely to be communicated at the November 2019 TIC meeting in the form of an implementation plan.

The newly established National Office of Road Safety must be given the capacity and authority to address a key finding from the Governance Review: the "need for greater leadership, strengthened management, heightened accountability and more effective coordination."

I commend TIC for acknowledging the ethical approach and seeking to position Australia to achieve zero road fatalities by 2050. The August TIC communique provides strong statements of intent that focus on managing systemic harm reduction approaches across all levels of government.

The 2018 Inquiry found that the National Road Safety Strategy was not supported by adequate data, definition, timelines, capacity, resources or accountability for actions. No wonder governments failed to implement the Safe System approach to road safety over the past decade.

We must not repeat these failures in the next decade. The vast array of stakeholders and communities expect the indications of good intent to be urgently converted to meaningful outcomes. We all eagerly await the detail on how this might be achieved.

Stakeholders must also join together and build scale to their efforts. All levels of government will need much assistance to magnify the effects of their actions.

The time is now right for a more structured, transparent and strategic approach to road safety involving all parties. Stakeholders must demand a process that leads to greater ownership and shared commitment, not only through the life of the next National Road Safety Strategy but also during its development phase.

*Reviving Road Safety* presents an important snapshot of road safety performance and issues. It forms a solid basis for ongoing discussion and clarification on how we can make the road safety response more effective.

As a mature nation, we should be able to articulate responses to the questions it poses and have both government and non-government organisations commit to pathways to success.

Failing to do so will subject future generations to preventable harm.



Assoc. Professor Jeremy Woolley

Director, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide

## Road trauma crisis demands real leadership, close collaboration and smarter data

The hospitalisation of 44,000 Australian road crash victims each year is an annual tragedy to which we have become habituated.

Each day, more than 100 of us are hospitalised following a road crash – a silent epidemic.

The annual trend in these numbers is upward.

The appropriate response to this road trauma epidemic should match the scale, urgency and coordination with which AIDS and SARS epidemics were countered.

As a trauma surgeon, I see the benefit of an independently verified trauma system. The unbroken chain linking rapid rescue and resuscitation of the road crash victim, appropriately triaged, and rapidly transported, to the appropriate facility where treatment is provided at the highest quality delivers the best health outcomes.

Timely provision of good quality data drives improved health outcomes.

We need accurate post-crash injury data collated nationally and linked to the geocode of the crash site.

The rapid acquisition and delivery of this information is vital. It facilitates the allocation of appropriate resources for post-crash care and helps calibrate the progressive maturation of a Safe System.

The paramount requirement is leadership at a national level and collaboration at every level.

We are not there yet. We should be.

I commend this AAA strategy which addresses the scale, stimulus and tempo of response required to halt this silent epidemic of road crash deaths and injuries.



Dr John Crozier

Chair National Trauma Committee, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons





# The scale of Australia’s road trauma crisis

Vehicle safety technologies continue to improve, yet each year thousands of Australians are killed or seriously injured in road crashes.

Road trauma brings tragedy into the lives of thousands of Australians.

It affects not only the people involved in crashes, but also their families, friends and workmates, as well as medical and emergency staff, including first responders at crash scenes. Australia’s road safety response must seek ways to mitigate these impacts.

Every day, about 100 Australians are hospitalised for road crash-related injuries. That’s one person hospitalised every 15 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

Every month, about 100 Australians die on our roads.<sup>2</sup>

Every year, road trauma costs the national economy almost \$30 billion and costs our federal, state and local governments \$3.7 billion.<sup>3</sup>

## NRSS High Level Outcomes

	2008-10 BASELINE 3 YR. AVERAGE	2017 STATUS	2020 TARGET 30% REDUCTION
Number of deaths resulting from road crashes	1,426	1,226 -14.0%	998
Number of road crashes resulting in deaths	1,297	1,130 -12.9%	908
Number of deaths per 100,000 population	6.6	5.0 -25.4%	4.6
Number of deaths per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled	0.63	0.48 -24.2%	0.44
Number of deaths per 10,000 registered vehicles	0.91	0.65 -28.3%	0.64
Number of serious injuries resulting from road crashes		STILL NOT MEASURED	

## Cost to Government for 2015 road trauma - \$3.7 billion net present value



1 The daily figures are AAA extrapolations from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (August 2018), Hospitalised injury due to land transport crashes.

2 Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (July 2019), Road Safety Statistics.

3 Australian Automobile Association (September 2017). Cost of road trauma in Australia 2015.

Australia’s road trauma statistics are not improving.

In the past four years, the road toll for the 12 months ending June 30 has been higher than it was in the 12 months ending June 2015.<sup>4</sup>

In the second half of 2015, the road toll rose and has remained at higher levels ever since, ending decades of continuous improvement.<sup>5</sup>

Data sets make it clear that all states and the Northern Territory are on a trajectory to miss the targets agreed in 2011 and set in the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.<sup>6</sup>

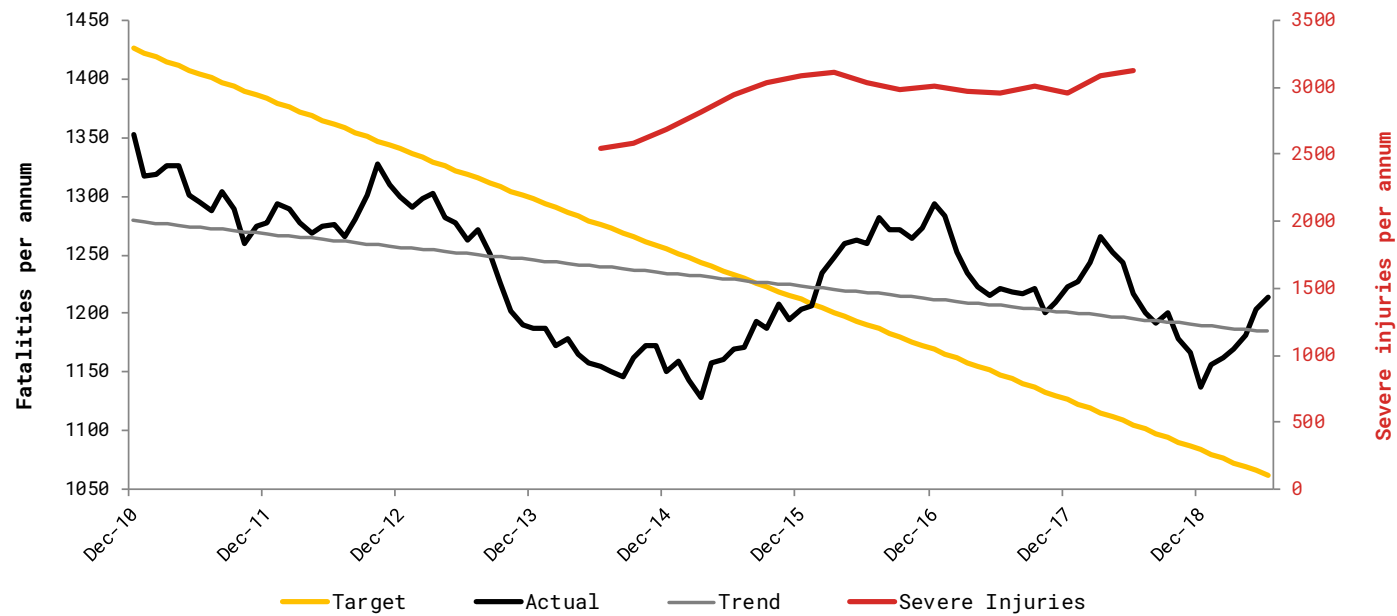
From 1 July 2018-30 June 2019, there were 1,214 deaths on our roads.<sup>6</sup>

Under the National Road Safety Strategy, Australian governments agreed to reduce road deaths to less than 1,000 per year (a 30 per cent reduction on the pre-strategy baseline) by 2020.

With less than two years to go, it’s clear we will fail to meet this goal.

The NRSS is targeting a 30 per cent reduction in road-related serious injuries between 2011 and 2020. Yet as of August 2019, it is still not possible to even measure this figure nationally.

## NRSS Progress - Fatalities and Serious Injuries (June 2019)



4 Australian Automobile Association (June 2019). Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy.

5 Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, Road Deaths Australia 2018 Statistical Summary.

6 Australian Automobile Association (June 2019). Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy.

THE PROBLEM

**Australia lacks detailed, reliable and consistent road safety data in many key areas.**

**Without good road safety data:**

- **we can't track progress against our targets**
- **we can't identify the reasons for failures**
- **we can't use evidence to set effective priorities.**

**We need good data combined with measurable targets, transparent reporting and real accountability.**

The Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 had as its first term of reference: "Identify the key factors involved in the road crash death and serious injury trends including recent increases in 2015 and 2016." But the Inquiry could not achieve this because the necessary data sets were insufficient or unavailable.<sup>7</sup>

Australia still cannot:

- deliver open and consistent data on the condition of the road network
- measure the number of road deaths in which speed was a contributing factor
- accurately measure serious road crash injuries (because data on serious injuries from road trauma is inconsistent across states and territories)
- measure the percentage of new vehicles sold with key safety features.

Eight years after the NRSS began, 8 of its 33 safety performance indicators are either still not being measured or have not been assigned agreed targets. This means progress against almost a quarter of the Strategy's goals cannot be measured.<sup>8</sup>

We can't manage what we can't measure. This makes success unachievable.

**Integrated and open data**

Fixing Australia's road safety data collection, analysis and reporting capabilities must be the Office of Road Safety's most urgent objective.

*"The current approach to evaluation at a national level is unclear, fragmented and not systematic.*

*Without data and information, parliaments, industry associations, trade unions and the general public cannot participate in an informed discussion about road safety policy and actions.*"

**Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements, Final Report (page 28).**

The Office of Road Safety must work with state and territory governments to:

- agree on consistent metrics and reporting formats for data
- share all data sets – including a full picture on crash causes
- integrate data sets - overlaying road crash information with geospatial, road network and health data
- share these data sets in an open-source platform and produce up-to-date reports on performance against NRSS targets.

Improved data will produce better informed road safety interventions. It will support evaluation of interventions' effectiveness and monitoring of key performance indicators in the next National Road Safety Strategy – improving transparency and accountability.

Open sharing of data will help government and business better manage their workplace health and safety risk associated with use of the road transport system. Vehicle collisions represented 34% of work-related fatalities over the period 2013-17.<sup>9</sup>

For example, it is known that well-spaced rest areas reduce fatigue crashes, but it is difficult for trucking associations to gain an understanding of fatigue-related crashes, where they happen and their distance from rest stops. This could be addressed by integrating and sharing data sets collected by various government authorities.

**We need to know the extent of the harm**

We are nearly at the end of a decade-long National Road Safety Strategy that sets a headline target to reduce serious injuries by 30 per cent - yet we are still not able to measure this.<sup>9</sup>

*"Serious injury reporting has been an embarrassment for the nation for several decades."*

**Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy, Final Report (page 26).**

Focusing on fatality data only provides a very narrow view of the road trauma problem and ignores the thousands of Australians seriously injured on our roads each year.

Commonwealth, state and territory governments must finalise arrangements for measuring serious injury and begin reporting this data as a matter of urgency.

**Signposts towards safer roads**

Australia lacks open, available and consistent data on the condition of the road network.

Road assessment programs (RAPs) aim to substantially reduce road trauma by providing objective assessment methods for making road infrastructure safer. iRAP (the International Road Assessment Programme) is the umbrella organisation for RAPs around the world.

The National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020 aims to achieve 3-star AusRAP ratings or better for 80 per cent of travel on state roads, including a minimum of 90 per cent of travel on national highways.<sup>10</sup> But there is no transparency over how this is being measured or whether this is being achieved.

State and territory road authorities are using the AusRAP methodology and specifications to undertake risk assessment, but the extent to which this is being coordinated and transparently reported is unclear.

A nationally administered AusRAP hub could coordinate road network risk assessment, the reporting of national infrastructure KPIs and ensure that infrastructure funding accelerates the elimination of high-risk roads, and help track improvement.

THE SOLUTION

- The Office of Road Safety coordinates Australia's road safety data collection, analysis and reporting capabilities. Robust data is used to inform road safety interventions and to underpin measurable targets, transparent reporting and real accountability.
- Commonwealth, state and territory governments decide upon a measurement of serious injury and report on it as a matter of urgency.
- The Office of Road Safety administers a national AusRAP hub to maximise the life-saving potential of Australian Government infrastructure investment and meet the agreed policy targets for 3-star and better roads across Australia.

7 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), pages 6, 25 and 26.

8 Safe Work Australia (December 2018) Work-related traumatic injury fatalities Australia 2017, page 24

9. Australian Automobile Association (July 2019). National Road Safety Strategy Progress Report.

10 Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (2018) National Road Safety Action Plan 2018–2020.

# Roads

## THE PROBLEM

**Too many existing roads are not safe enough.**

**Australia has a serious infrastructure backlog and governments are rightly moving to build new roads and upgrade existing ones.**

**But projects are not obliged to follow best-practice safety standards.**

**Even today, some unsafe new roads are being built.**

**As the Inquiry into the NRSS noted, governments are still funding high-speed undivided roads with dangerous roadsides, right-angle intersections on freeways, and the replacement of roundabouts with traffic signals.<sup>11</sup>**

**Reporting of infrastructure projects’ safety benefits is piecemeal and inconsistent.**

“Road infrastructure funding is not conditional on the inclusion of Safe System treatments in every project. Adding this condition would save lives and prevent expensive retrofitting of measures after projects are completed.”

Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements, Final Report

11 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), page 65.

### Building safe roads

As the major funder of national infrastructure, the Australian Government can and should insist that safety is prioritised in project selection and planning.

It’s not enough to simply build new roads.

These roads must be engineered to high standards with safety considerations built in from the start of all projects.

All governments must work together to ensure that no new high-risk roads are built, with the Australian Government and its Office of Road Safety taking the lead.

Several key principles should guide the construction of a safe national road network.

- Australian Government funding for road projects must match the scale of the safety problem and must be linked to safety outcomes by demonstrating safety benefits measured by agreed standards.
- States and territories that fulfil their National Road Safety Strategy reporting and compliance obligations should receive incentive payments.
- Safety benefits must be embedded and prioritised in infrastructure projects and programs and the opportunity cost reported transparently.
- The Office of Road Safety should work with state and territory governments to invest in safety-focused transport infrastructure and upgrades to high-risk roads.
- Funding of infrastructure projects should be used as a lever to improve safety accreditation of construction vehicles and ensure appropriate protection of roadside construction workers.
- Governments need to use safety performance reviews of all recently completed infrastructure projects to identify and rectify systemic problems with planning, road design and maintenance practices.
- Road design standards must be reformed to ensure minimum safety outcomes are achieved.

To deliver good outcomes, federal funding for road projects must require demonstrated safety benefits measured by agreed standards.

### Linking safety outcomes to funding is smart policy

Linking federal funding for road projects to well defined safety standards will deliver better results and better value for taxpayer money.

Funding should only be provided once project proposals have demonstrated safety outcomes that can be quantified by agreed standards.

States and territories should also be offered incentive payments for meeting their National Road Safety Strategy reporting and compliance obligations.

These payments could take the form of extra funding through existing programs.

### Investing in transport is smart economics

Investing more money in our transport system makes economic sense, because analysis shows that the returns from transport investment are greater than the costs.

The Australian Government analysed 128 road and rail projects between 2008-09 and 2013-14. It estimated that every dollar spent on these projects returned \$2.70 to the national economy.<sup>12</sup>

Putting off transport investment is poor economic management.

The Inquiry into the NRSS reported that in Australia 7 per cent of vehicle travel is on 1-star roads and 28 per cent is on 2-star roads.<sup>13</sup>

More than a third of all road deaths and severe injuries could be prevented if the National Road Safety Action Plan 2018–2020 achieves the target for 90 per cent of travel on National Highways to be on 3-star or better roads, and 80 per cent of travel on state roads to be 3-star or better.

## THE SOLUTION

- Link Australian Government funding for road projects to safety outcomes by requiring demonstrated safety benefits measured by agreed standards.
- States and territories that fulfil their National Road Safety Strategy reporting and compliance obligations receive incentive payments.
- The Office of Road Safety works with state and territory governments to invest in safety-focused transport infrastructure and upgrades to high-risk roads.
- Governments use safety performance reviews of all recently completed infrastructure projects to identify and fix systemic planning, road design and maintenance problems.
- Reform road design standards to ensure minimum safety outcomes are achieved.

12 Bureau of Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Economics (2015). Information Sheet 55: Infrastructure, Transport and Productivity.

13 Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), page 63.

# Vehicles

## THE PROBLEM

**Australia's vehicle fleet is not as safe as it should be, which is costing lives.**

**Australia has too many older vehicles on its roads.**

**We do not have widespread deployment of the latest vehicle safety technologies.**

**And we are too slow to update and implement new vehicle safety standards.**

### Vehicle standards

Australia is entitled to participate in developing United Nations vehicle safety standards, but we don't take full advantage of this opportunity.

Taking an active role in the development of global vehicle standards would help ensure that global standards better recognise Australian needs.

It would also let Australia develop local standards in tandem with its participation in the UN process.

This would mean that instead of passively waiting for the delivery of new UN standards before starting our own work, we could adopt new UN standards much more quickly and could accelerate their implementation.

### Newer vehicles are safer

Older cars are much less safe than newer ones.

From 2000 to 2017, Australia's road toll fell by almost a third. About 36 per cent of this reduction was due to the use of safer vehicles, according to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics.<sup>14</sup>

But too few Australians are getting access to the safety benefits built into new cars.

Vehicles built before 2000 account for just 20 per cent of Australia's national fleet but are involved in 36 per cent of fatal crashes.<sup>15</sup>

Over 2015-17, the average age of light vehicles in Australia remained constant at 9.8 years. Yet in 2015 the average age of a vehicle involved in a fatal crash was 12.5 years. This rose to 12.9 years in 2016 and rose again to 13.1 years in 2017.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, vehicle age has not been declining. By July 2019, the average age of vehicles in Australia had increased to 10.2 years, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.<sup>17</sup>

Many Western European countries' vehicle fleets have a lower average age than Australia's.<sup>18</sup> We can and should be doing better.

### Reducing the age of Australia's vehicle fleet

Australia's uptake of new vehicles is being held back by the Australian Government's continued application of tariffs and taxes, totalling more than \$1 billion each year, originally designed to protect the now obsolete Australian car manufacturing industry.

The Australian Government should set targets to reduce the average age of Australia's vehicle fleet. AAA research<sup>19</sup> has found reducing the average age of Australia's vehicle fleet by one year would:

- reduce road crashes by 5.4 per cent
- save more than 1,300 lives over the next 20 years
- deliver road trauma and emission reduction benefits worth \$19.7 billion over 20 years
- deliver \$3.3 billion in direct savings to government over the same period.

### Rolling out safety technologies

New vehicles are better than old ones, but not all new vehicles are equally safe.

Different new vehicles offer different packages of safety technologies – including lane keep assist, lane departure warning, electronic stability control and autonomous emergency braking. These features help prevent crashes and reduce the severity of those crashes that do occur.

The Australian Government can lead the way by ensuring that its fleet purchases specify a 5-star ANCAP safety rating with a tested date stamp no more than three years old to ensure dynamic inclusion of the latest collision avoidance technologies and road user protection.

It should also require that all advertising or point-of-sale statements on vehicle safety reference the ANCAP rating.

The Australian Government should also encourage voluntary undertakings by vehicle manufacturers to fit latest safety technologies, such as lane support systems and autonomous emergency braking to prevent crashes.

The Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy<sup>20</sup> has suggested several ways that the Federal Government could encourage the uptake of newer, safer vehicles.

- Increase the scale and scope of ANCAP or similar entities to cover the vehicle fleet beyond light vehicles.
- Abolish tariffs and the luxury car tax for vehicle imports with high safety performance.
- Support and enhance vehicle testing capabilities to verify safety across all vehicle types.
- Accelerate the implementation of vehicle, truck and motorcycle Australian Design Rules to mandate proven low-cost safety technologies in all new vehicles.

## THE SOLUTION

- Australia actively participates in developing United Nations vehicle standards and accelerates implementation of these standards in Australia.
- Introduce targets and initiatives to reduce the average age of our vehicle fleet – so that unsafe older vehicles are replaced.
- Abolish costly tariffs and taxes that were originally designed to protect our vehicle manufacturing sector and which continue to make newer, safer cars more expensive than they should be.
- Support non-regulatory measures that encourage the latest safety technologies in new vehicles on the Australian market, including via ANCAP, government fleet buying policies and voluntary undertakings by the industry.
- Any advertising or point of sale statements on vehicle safety must reference the independent ANCAP safety rating.

<sup>14</sup> Bureau of Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Economics (2018). Modelling road safety in Australian states and territories, page 4.

<sup>15</sup> Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), page 52.

<sup>16</sup> Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), page 52.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Motor Vehicle Census July 2019

<sup>18</sup> ACEA European Vehicle Manufacturers Association, Vehicles in use Europe 2018

<sup>19</sup> Australian Automobile Association (December 2017), Benefits of Reducing the Age of Australia's Light Vehicle Fleet.

<sup>20</sup> Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2022 (September 2018), page 52.



# Leadership

## THE PROBLEM

**Australia has not had a single national road safety agency that provides leadership and coordinates best-practice interventions across the Australian Government and between other jurisdictions.**

**Without a lead agency, Australia has failed to achieve the step-change needed to deliver substantial reductions in road trauma.**

**Australia now has an Office of Road Safety. But its resourcing and remit remain unclear.**

**The Office must have the resources, responsibilities, accountability and authority needed to to substantially reduce road trauma in Australia.**

### Evidence-based policy, accountability and transparency

The Office of Road Safety should:

- develop a whole-of-government approach to road safety, fostering communication and collaboration between federal departments and statutory authorities – including Treasury, Health, Environment and the National Transport Commission – to deliver better, more cost-effective outcomes
- identify best practice to assist policy harmonisation between states and territories
- oversee a national road safety research program that informs evidence-based policy, infrastructure and vehicle design - and ensure that this work informs existing safety programs
- oversee the development and implementation of the next National Road Safety Strategy, ensuring it is well resourced; guided by robust and transparent data and well-defined metrics and targets
- ensure accountability by being responsible for translating the targets in the National Road Safety Strategy into the required actions.

“*The new Office of Road Safety is an opportunity for the Australian Government to assume an increased leadership role by driving greater consideration of road safety issues in road infrastructure investment; ensuring that the Safe System pillars are considered equally; and making sure that decision-makers remain focused on significantly reducing trauma.*”

### Review of National Road Safety Governance Arrangements, Final Report (page 9).

A well-designed and well-resourced Office of Road Safety can be agile, adaptable and well-connected. It can more effectively report on, target and address road safety issues.

The Office should work closely with other government bodies to enhance data collection, guide construction of safer roads and promote best-practice research. It must also compel NRSS transparent reporting and hold all governments to account for delivering on targets.

### Promote best-practice research

The Office of Road Safety can take a lead role in coordinating research efforts to shed light on important road safety trends and issues.

After decades of steady decline, Australia’s road toll increased in the second half of 2015 and has remained above 2014-15 levels since then.<sup>21</sup>

Governments and experts don’t know what has caused this trend, but it can’t be reversed unless we understand it better.

Australia also faces various emerging road safety issues.

For example, the frailty associated with longer lifespans has increased the rates of deaths and serious injuries in crashes involving older people. It also makes licencing older drivers a growing challenge. And widespread use of smartphones and other devices is increasing the prevalence of distracted driving.

It’s crucial that we understand these issues. Not just their scale and impact, but also the most effective ways of dealing with them.

Some Australian universities and technical experts are producing world-leading road safety research, but the nation’s road safety research and innovation effort is short-term, fragmented and underused. The Office of Road Safety can fund, coordinate and deliver best-practice research that examines issues such as:

- driver behaviour (such as distracted driving and drug driving)
- best-practice enforcement models
- innovative vehicle technology
- infrastructure design.

This research would help inform and underpin education programs, consistent state and territory enforcement practices, and improvements to vehicle design through the Australian Design Rules or ANCAP ratings.

### Education and capacity building

The Australian Government currently funds several important national road safety education and capacity building programs, such as Driver Reviver and the National Road Safety Partnership Program. Many of these initiatives are multi-disciplinary and cut across state and territory boundaries.

The Office of Road Safety can provide leadership and maximise impact by administering these programs where appropriate, or by providing national coordination and fostering collaboration across various organisations.

Further Commonwealth investment in education and capacity-building should be prioritised where evidence indicates the greatest road safety benefits lie.
















## THE SOLUTION

The Office of Road Safety:

- develops a whole-of-government approach to road safety, fostering communication and collaboration between federal departments and statutory authorities to deliver better, more cost-effective outcomes
- identifies best practice to assist policy harmonisation between states and territories
- oversees a national road safety research program that informs evidence-based policy, infrastructure and vehicle design
- oversees the development and implementation of the next National Road Safety Strategy, ensuring it is well resourced and guided by robust and transparent data and well-defined metrics and targets
- ensures accountability by being responsible for translating the targets in the National Road Safety Strategy into the required actions.

21 Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (July 2019), Road Safety Statistics.

The following organisations have contributed to and support this report’s themes and priorities:

	<b>Amy Gillett Foundation</b> Dr Marilyn Johnson – Acting CEO	<p>“Safe cycling communities are healthier, happier and more liveable. More people riding bikes, especially for local trips, will help to achieve goals in health and transport with improved mobility and reduced traffic congestion. To achieve these goals, governments must take meaningful actions to make it safe for everyone to ride, especially on our roads.</p> <p>It’s time for effective action to stop preventable death and trauma. We support this submission from the AAA and stand with the other organisations in this urgent call to action.”</p>		<b>Australian Road Safety Foundation</b> Russell White – CEO	<p>“Of all the systems with which people have to deal every day, road traffic systems are the most complex and the most dangerous. Road Trauma places enormous social and emotional costs on the community.</p> <p>Addressing these issues requires new levels of road safety leadership, active participation in delivering new innovations and a national capability to achieve new standards in road safety culture.”</p>
	<b>Australasian College of Road Safety</b> Martin Small – President	<p>“The Australasian College of Road Safety supports the core themes addressed here: strengthening national leadership in road safety, significantly improving road safety data, leveraging much more safety from infrastructure investment (whether for roads or paths), and accelerating new vehicle safety technology.</p> <p>We look forward to working with the AAA, other stakeholders, and the Commonwealth’s Office of Road Safety on the elimination of fatal and serious road trauma from our communities.”</p>		<b>Australian Trucking Association</b> Ben Maguire – CEO	<p>“The Australian Trucking Association supports the AAA Reviving Road Safety as it aligns with our shared vision of ‘towards zero’.</p> <p>Each death or accident on our roads is one too many. It is time for government to take serious action and lead the way as we work towards our goal of reducing crashes and saving Australian lives.”</p>
	<b>Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP)</b> Wendy Machin – Chair	<p>“We’ve been tracking the average age of vehicles against road fatalities and our research shows the rate of fatal crashes four times higher for older vehicles than for newer vehicles.</p> <p>Newer vehicles provide increased crash protection as well as the ability to assist the driver to avoid a crash.</p> <p>Safer vehicle choices play an important role in reducing deaths on Australian roads so we must work on ways to increase the accessibility and affordability of the newest cars with the latest safety technologies.”</p>		<b>International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP)</b> Rob McInerney – CEO	<p>“Building on the 15-year history of AusRAP in Australia, high-risk roads can be systematically identified and high-return on investment treatments mobilised on a scale that matters.</p> <p>An enhanced AusRAP programme and hub, administered by the new Office of Road Safety, will unlock this potential and deliver reduced road trauma across the country.”</p>
	<b>Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council</b> Stuart Ellis – CEO	<p>“Fire and Emergency Services are committed to providing road crash rescue services across the country. We support the efforts of AAA to reduce the harm associated with roads fatality and injury on our roads.”</p>		<b>National Road Safety Partnership Program</b>	<p>The National Road Safety Partnership Program (NRSP) offers a collaborative network for Australian organisations to build and implement effective road safety strategies in the workplace.</p>
	<b>Australasian Trauma Society</b> Dr Michael Parr – President	<p>“Our members who work on the front-line of Trauma management are very familiar with the immense damage done to individuals, families and society by the rising rate of serious injuries and deaths on Australian roads.</p> <p>Through the National Office of Road Safety, we urge the Australian Government to support the development and implementation of the Safe System Strategy which includes safe drivers, roads, vehicles and speeds to put an end to the current road trauma epidemic.”</p>		<b>Roads Australia</b> David Stuart-Watt – President	<p>“Road trauma is a national epidemic. As with any epidemic, we need to work together – and with great urgency – to eliminate it. The initiatives outlined in this report seek to strengthen the Commonwealth’s role and commitment in key areas like vehicle safety, data collection and targeted investment in infrastructure.</p> <p>Roads Australia welcomes this call to action, and urges all Australians to encourage and support strong Federal leadership to drive the National Road Toll to Zero.”</p>
	<b>Australian Medical Association</b> Dr Tony Bartone – President	<p>“Collecting better data, improving the quality of Australian roads, ensuring the vehicles Australians drive are safe and addressing vehicle emissions are vital in reducing road trauma and making our roads safer for all road users as well as the environment.</p> <p>The AMA welcomes the AAA’s contribution and ongoing efforts to improve vehicle and road safety in Australia.”</p>		<b>Royal Australasian College of Surgeons</b> Dr Tony Sparnon – President	<p>“Road trauma crisis demands real leadership, close collaboration and smarter data. Surgeons support the proposals in this Australian Automobile Association document which address the scale, stimulus and tempo of response required to halt the silent annual epidemic of road crash deaths and serious injuries.”</p>
	<b>Australian Motorcycle Council</b> Guy Stanford – Chairman	<p>“We applaud the AAA on challenging current received wisdom on road safety.</p> <p>A belief trap assumes that general treatments designed for other road users will be effective for motorcycles. Motorcycles are a distinct road user class with specific and legitimate safety needs that need to be addressed. Yet, motorcycle safety remains an afterthought or annoyance to received wisdom.</p> <p>A fresh approach is required to challenge assumptions. The methods proposed by the AAA have our full support.”</p>		<b>Safer Australian Roads and Highways (SARAH)</b> Peter Frazer – President	<p>“Our failure to meet NRSS trauma reduction targets has life-and-death consequences. It is a national shame. For every person who dies on our roads, there are many others who will forever grieve for their loss. For the most seriously injured, and for those who must care for them, the lives they had before the crash are now a bittersweet memory.</p> <p>Yet we know how we can prevent most crashes, and we know how to minimise the deaths and serious injuries from crashes. We don’t lack knowledge, but we do lack a sense of urgency and shared national commitment. We need national leadership and much greater resources to make our roads safe.”</p>
				<b>Towards Zero Foundation</b> Lauchlan McIntosh AM – Chariman	<p>“Urgent implementation of road safety management across the country is demonstrated in this AAA call for action almost a year after the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy set out 12 very specific recommendations to build scale.</p> <p>This AAA report emphasises the need for a well resourced, national and collaborative disaster approach to take us Towards Zero with specific actions, timelines and accountabilities.”</p>



# Australia has had a lost decade in the management of road safety.

The fragmented approach to road safety **must not continue**. We need **national leadership** to coordinate road safety efforts across the country.

## The Federal Government can make Australian roads safer by:

- developing a national road safety data hub
- linking federal infrastructure funding to road safety outcomes
- enhancing vehicle safety standards and encouraging the uptake of safer vehicles
- assigning the Office of Road Safety a leadership role and genuine authority.

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