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Release of 2019 road toll dashes hopes of achieving safety targets

- Australian road toll for 2019 shows 4.7% increase in deaths (1188 people in 2019)
- Road toll increases in Victoria (up 25.8%) and South Australia (up 42.5%)
- Federal Government needs to urgently act on the “Reviving Road safety” recommendations of 23 organisations.

The latest Australian Automobile Association (AAA) report shows 1188 people lost their lives on Australian roads in 2019; a 4.7 per cent annual increase that more than reverses the small improvement recorded the previous year.

Particularly alarming annual increases were recorded in Victoria (25.8% increase) and South Australia (42.5%).

The latest edition of the AAA's quarterly Benchmarking the Performance of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 shows the Australian Capital Territory as the only jurisdiction on track to meet the decade's targets.

Signed by state and federal governments in 2011, the National Road Safety Strategy aims to reduce road death and injuries by 30 per cent through the decade to 2020. Yet the new analysis by Australia's peak motoring group shows the 2019 road toll to be significantly higher than it was in 2014 (1,151 fatalities).

AAA Managing Director Michael Bradley said: “These figures underscore the failure of Australia's current approach to road safety and make clear that our current Strategy has not been supported by the investment, leadership, or accountability required.

“Successive inquiries and reviews have said Australia needs – and can develop – a new approach to road safety, with an enhanced role for Canberra sitting at its core.”

The AAA – which represents more than 8 million motorists through its member clubs, the NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAC, RAA, RACT and the AANT – has called on the Federal Government to urgently adopt key recommendations of the Reviving Road Safety strategy, which last year brought together the expertise and input of 23 organisations dedicated to improving road safety.

Priority recommendations include linking federal infrastructure funding to the Strategy's objectives and targets; policies that encourage the delivery of safer vehicles; and establishment of a national Road Safety Data Hub.

“The AAA has welcomed the Federal Government's recent establishment of a National Office of Road Safety to oversee the next National Road Safety Strategy, and the appointment of the Assistant Minister for Road Safety,” Mr Bradley said. “The establishment of a bipartisan Select Committee on Road Safety is also welcome, as it has the potential to highlight a clearer federal road safety role and ensure we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.”

Media contact: Jake Smith jake.smith@aaa.asn.au 0403 466 153

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.