



Safe Vehicles Policy

August 2020

RACT Policy – Safe Vehicles

Mobility Strategy Pillar: Road Safety

Road safety is the first component of RACT's mobility strategy. Within this pillar, RACT's vision is to lower the age of Tasmania's vehicle fleet in order to better protect motorists in the state.

Safe vehicles policy statements

Safe vehicles explained

- According to the Safe Systems approach to road safety, vehicle safety technologies include improved structural integrity and passive safety features provide protection during a crash while safety assist technologies can prevent them altogether (ANCAP, 2020 and Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
- The use of these safety features can and has helped to reduce deaths and serious injuries for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists on Australia's roads (ANCAP, 2020 and Transport Accident Commission, 2018).

Purpose of this policy

- As Tasmania's peak motoring body, RACT is an advocate for improvements to road safety, particularly through safe vehicles.
- This policy will discuss RACT's position around safer and more modern vehicles as a means to reduce Tasmania's road toll and serious injuries. It will address vehicle age, the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) safety ratings, safer vehicle education and incentives as well as motorcycle, truck and bus safety.
- This policy will inform how the organisation will advocate for safe vehicles in Tasmania through liaison with all levels of government, key transport stakeholders and the media.

Relevance to RACT

- RACT advocates for better road safety outcomes for all Tasmanians through safe vehicles, in order to reduce Tasmania's road toll and serious injuries.
- RACT also supports the Federation International de L'Automobile's Make Roads Safe campaign as well as the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

Background, evidence and position

Background

- The National Road Safety Strategy was signed by all Australian State Governments in 2011 with the aim of reducing road deaths and serious injuries by at least 30% by 2020 (Australian Automobile Association, 2018).
- The NRSS is based on the Safe System approach to improving road safety and considers four key pillars: safe vehicles, safe roads, safe road users and safe speeds (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2018).
- The Safe Systems approach forms part of the Tasmanian Government's Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy. This strategy is a long-term vision where no road user is seriously injured or killed as the result of a crash in Tasmania (Department of State Growth, 2018).
- However, according to the Australian Automobile Association's most recent Benchmarking of the National Road Safety Strategy Report, Tasmania has consistently not met its quarterly fatality targets.
- Tasmania has the oldest vehicle fleet and the lowest average income in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018).
- Safe vehicles with the appropriate safety technologies can help decrease the risk of death and serious injuries (ANCAP, 2020 and Towards Zero Foundation, 2018).
- Vehicle safety technologies have contributed to a decline in deaths and injuries for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists (ANCAP, 2020 and Transport Accident Commission, 2018). They are divided into three categories:
 1. **Improved structural integrity**, which is how a vehicle's frame absorbs crash energy and channels it through the car itself, rather than its passengers. Improved structure also prevents the steering column, dash, roof pillars, pedals and floor panels from moving and injuring passengers. Doors also remain closed during a crash, while crumple zones improve safety.
 2. **Passive safety features** provide protection during a crash. These include built-in safety features and crash protection features such as driver, passenger and curtain airbags, electronic stability control, anti-lock braking systems, traction control, seat belts and pre-tensioners, rollover protection and fatigue assistance.
 3. **Safety assist technologies** include semi-autonomous and autonomous safety technologies, which assist the driver in preventing or reducing the severity of a crash. These include autonomous emergency braking, blind spot monitoring, lane keep assist, intelligent speed adaptation and intersection collision warning.
- These vehicle safety features are assessed by ANCAP, which rates each vehicle entering the Australian market from 0-5 stars through a series of assessments, including a range of crash tests. ANCAP is funded by the Australian, state and territory governments (ANCAP, 2020).
- The Australian Government undertaking planning work as part of making autonomous emergency braking (AEB) mandatory under the Australian Design Rules (ADR) for new light, passenger and commercial vehicles in the early 2020s (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, 2020 and CarAdvice, 2020).
- Electronic stability control (which includes anti-lock braking) has been mandatory for all new passenger vehicles under the ADRs since 2011 (Drive, 2019).
- Anti-lock braking and combined braking systems have been mandatory on all new motorcycles under the ADRs since 2019 (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2017).
- AEB and electronic stability control (ESC) systems will be mandatory for new heavy trucks and buses under the ADRs from November 2020. ESC systems have also been compulsory for new heavy vehicle trailers since 2019 (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2019).

- The Australian Design Rules administer national standards for vehicle safety and address international harmonisation of vehicle safety standards (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2018).
 - The ADRs are reviewed every 10 years to ensure they remain effective and follow international standards (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2018).
- The main barriers to safer vehicle uptake in Tasmania is purchase price and other upfront costs. The cost of safer vehicles is also impacted by federal import fees, including the 5% vehicle import duty and Luxury Car Tax, as well as customs duties and GST. It is also impacted by state based registration and stamp duty, which is included in the registration of new or used vehicles (AAA 2020, RAC 2019 and FCAI, 2020).
 - The AAA, FCAI and RAC all advocate for the removal of the import tariff and LCT, as well as reducing registration fees and stamp duty, to encourage increased uptake of safer 5-star ANCAP rated vehicles.
 - These stakeholders argue that the import tariff and LCT should be abolished as it was established to protect the Australian passenger vehicle manufacturing industry, which no longer exists.
- Governments and organisations can help to accelerate the introduction of safer vehicles in the passenger fleet by continuing to require all government fleet purchases to have 5-star ANCAP ratings. This can be achieved by 5-star ANCAP fleet policies, which the Tasmanian Government has had in place since 2018 (RAC, 2019 and Department of Treasury and Finance, 2020).
- RACT research of state and territory transport agency websites found that vehicle safety certificates ensure vehicle roadworthiness by checking on tyres, steering, brakes, lights, windscreens, seats and seat belts, suspension, vehicle damage, electronics as well as exhaust and emission controls
 - The rules vary in each state and territory, with most requiring certificates for new vehicles or when a vehicle of a certain age (generally between 1-7 years) is either having its registration renewed, or when the registration is being transferred to a new owner.
 - Certificates are also required when a vehicle has been written-off but is repairable, when it is being transferred from another state or overseas, when it has been deemed non-roadworthy (defected) or modified, or when it has been unregistered for a certain period of time. Only repairers approved by the relevant transport department may carry out inspections.
 - In Tasmania a vehicle must pass a safety inspection if it has not been registered for more than three months, if it has been deemed unroadworthy or if it is from interstate or overseas. They do not require a certificate when being transferred to a new owner (Department of State Growth, 2020).
- The Used Car Safety Ratings website, which is managed by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) is based on statistics collected from 7 million serious casualty crashes in Australia and New Zealand between 1990 and 2016. It provides 1-5 star safety ratings for used cars (TAC, 2018).

Evidence

- The average age of a vehicle in Tasmania is 13 years, with the Australian average being 10 years. The Australian Capital Territory has the youngest fleet in Australia with an average age of nine years (ABS, 2020).
- On average of 270 people are seriously injured and 30 people are killed as a result of crashes on Tasmanian roads per year. Tasmania's Towards Zero Strategy has a target of reducing the number to fewer than 200 by 2026 (Department of State Growth, 2019).
- Vehicle drivers and passengers account for approximately 60% of crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities on Tasmanian roads each year (Department of State Growth, 2019).
- The average age of passenger vehicles involved in fatal and serious injury crashes in Tasmania is 12 years (Department of State Growth, 2019).
 - In Tasmania, the rate of fatal crashes is four times higher for vehicles aged 15 years or older than for vehicles aged five years or less (Department of State Growth, 2019).

- Vehicle defects are a contributing factor in approximately 10% per cent of crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities on Tasmanian roads each year (Department of State Growth, 2019).
- Australian research shows that electronic stability control (ESC), which was mandated for all new vehicles in Australia in 2012, reduces the risk of single car crashes by 25% and single four-wheel-drive crashes by 51% per year (TAC, 2018).
- Research jointly commissioned by ANCAP, the Australian Government and Euro NCAP revealed low-speed autonomous emergency braking (AEB) technology led to a 35% reduction in real-world rear-end crashes per year and the severity of these crashes by 53%. There are also benefits also for cyclist and pedestrian avoidance (ANCAP, 2020).
- All vehicles in Tasmanian Government vehicle fleet have been required to have a five-star ANCAP rating since 2018 (Department of State Growth, 2018).
- On average, motorcyclists are involved in 29% of crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities on Tasmanian roads per year, despite making up just 4% of registered vehicles (Department of State Growth, 2018).
- Anti-lock braking systems (ABS) on motorcycles have been shown to reduce crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities by up to 39% per year (Department of State Growth, 2016).
- Heavy vehicles are involved in, on average, 7% of crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities on Tasmanian roads per year (Department of State Growth, 2018).
- ANCAP research has found that vehicles built before the year 2000 represent just 20% of the fleet but are involved in nearly one-third of fatal crashes each year (AAA, 2018).
- If all Australians drove the safest car in its category, road trauma involving light passenger vehicles could be reduced by 26%. If each vehicle incorporated the safest design elements in its class, trauma could be reduced by 40% (NRSS 2011-2020).
- Lowering the average age of Australia's light vehicle fleet by one year would save almost 1400 lives and create an almost \$20 billion benefit in trauma and emission reductions over a 20-year period (AAA, 2018).
- The Australian Government has a duty of 5% of the cost of an imported vehicle and a luxury car tax of 33% on the amount above a dedicated LCT threshold (Australian Border Force and ATO, 2020).
 - Imports are taxed 33% for every dollar over the \$67,000 LCT threshold. This threshold is discounted at \$75,000 for fuel efficient vehicles (from 7L/100km). The issue here is that many high rated ANCAP vehicles cost under \$75,000, meaning they do not receive any LCT discount.
 - According to the current Federal Budget, LCT earnings are forecast to grow from \$640 million in 2019-20 to \$720 million in 2022-23, while passenger vehicle import duties will raise \$420 million in 2019-20.
- In Tasmania the stamp duty rate is 3% for vehicles between \$600-\$34,999, 11% and \$1050 for vehicles between \$35,000 and \$39,999 and 4% for those \$40,000 and over. For vehicles under \$600, the duty is \$20 (Department of State Growth, 2020).

Position

RACT

- Strongly urges vehicle designers, manufacturers and importers, Tasmanian vehicle dealerships and all levels of government to work towards lowering of Tasmania's fleet age from 13 years to the Australian average of 10 years by 2030.
 - This will be achieved through stakeholder consultation and submission processes, both nationally and state-based, as well as stakeholder lobbying.
- Urges the Tasmanian and Australian governments to implement laws within the Australian Design Rules that dictate the mandatory fitting of:

- Autonomous emergency braking on new vehicles, including trucks and buses from late 2020, in Tasmania, as well as motorcycles when the technology becomes available.
 - Electronic stability control systems on new motorcycles when the technology becomes available.
 - Seatbelts on all buses in Tasmania, regardless of size or carrying capacity.
- Supports the mandatory fitting of:
 - Electronic stability control on all new passenger vehicles, as well as new trucks and buses from late 2020.
 - Anti-lock braking and combined braking systems on new motorcycles.
 - Mobile technology that automatically prevents smart phones or smart watches from being used by hand when a vehicle is started, as well as the ability for vehicles to disable phones and watches when connected by Bluetooth or to prevent connections to internet, Wi-Fi or cellular networks.
- Urges Tasmanians to purchase new and used vehicles of all classes with the highest ANCAP rating they can afford, with a strong preference for 5-star rated vehicles. This will ensure they have the safest structural integrity and are fitted with the latest passive safety features and safety assist technologies.
 - This includes Tasmanian Government, local government and organisational fleets, which must have a 5-star ANCAP safety rating and the latest safety features. The Tasmanian Government already has such a policy.
 - Laws that dictate the mandatory display of ANCAP ratings at the point of sale so that consumers have transparent access to safety information.
- Urges all levels of government to implement incentives and initiatives that help increase uptake of 5-star ANCAP rated vehicles, thus lowering the age Tasmania's vehicle fleet, including:
 - Phasing out and removing the federal vehicle import duty and luxury car tax in order to increase affordability of modern and safer vehicles. Other vehicle import fees, such as customs duties and GST, should also be reduced.
 - Reducing state registration fees and providing a stamp duty discount for 5-star rated vehicles as an incentive to increase uptake.
 - Policies and programs that accelerate the introduction of 5-star ANCAP vehicles from government and organisation fleets into Tasmania's used car market.
- Will consider the reduction of insurance premiums for Tasmanian motorists that purchase 5-star ANCAP vehicles with certain safety features as part of increasing affordability.
 - RACT will also aim to regularly upgrade its own vehicle fleet to the latest ANCAP five-star models.
- Urges the Tasmanian Government to legislate the requirement for a vehicle inspection safety certificate upon the transfer of registration for vehicles more than seven years old. The certificate, prepared by an approved repairer, should address any damage, engine issues, electronics, tyres, brakes, steering, suspension, windscreens, lights, seats and seat belts as well as exhausts and emission controls.
- Urges the Australian and Tasmanian governments to mandate the inclusion of all second hand vehicles in the TAC's Used Car Safety Rating Program (UCSR).
- Urges the Tasmanian Government to provide more funding for and active policing of vehicle roadworthiness, defects, modifications and other safety issues by Tasmania Police and transport inspectors through increased roadside inspections.
- Urges deeper investigation into the contributing factors of road crashes by Tasmania Police crash investigators, particularly around vehicle age and roadworthiness.
- Will educate (alongside partners and stakeholders) Tasmanian drivers, particularly novice drivers and their parents, about:
 - The importance of purchasing the highest ANCAP rated vehicle they can afford.
 - Complex safety features in modern vehicles.
 - The importance of vehicle maintenance and roadworthiness, including general vehicle safety checks (lights, brakes, tyres, seatbelts and windscreen wipers)

- Urges the Tasmanian Government to educate the community about complex safety features in modern vehicles, as well as the importance of having their vehicle maintained to a roadworthy standard by a mechanic on a regular basis
- Urges the Australian state and territory governments to continue ANCAP's funding for independent crash tests and safety assessments of passenger and light commercial vehicles and child restraints.
- Urges the Australian Government to continually review and update of Australian Design Rules based on research, evidence and industry developments, both national and internationally, in order to make vehicles safer.
- Urges vehicle designers, manufacturers, repairers, importers and dealerships to:
 - Maximise vehicle safety for all road users, minimise car ownership, maintenance and repair costs and improve reliability, durability and security.
 - Not place restrictions on the availability of advanced vehicle technical information and equipment.
 - This will also be achieved through stakeholder consultation or submission processes, both nationally and state-based, as well as stakeholder lobbying.
- Urges government to ensure that motorists are guaranteed the right to choose where they have their vehicle serviced, maintained and repaired without negating their warranty rights.

Scope

Policy Application and Ownership

This policy applies to:

- Tasmanian road users
- The Road Safety Advisory Council
- Local government
- Tasmanian Government policy makers and ministers
- Australian Government policy makers and ministers
- Vehicle designers, manufacturers, importers and repairers
- Tasmanian vehicle dealerships

The ownership and responsibility of this policy is with the RACT Board.

Approvals

Date of approval: [insert date]

Date of review: [insert date]

Signature of CEO: [insert signature]