

TASMANIAN AUTOMOTIVE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy Discussion Paper

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TACC
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Contact



Bruce McIntosh

State Manager
Tasmanian Automotive
Chamber of Commerce
bmcintosh@tacc.com.au



Chris Baxter

Industry Policy and
Research Advisor
VACC
cbaxter@vacc.com.au

Executive Summary

The Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper proposes a new strategic direction for road safety in Tasmania based upon Vision Zero, the Safe System approach and the Movement and Place framework.¹ TACC supports these principles and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy.

TACC considers the Discussion Paper contains a significant policy gap. Road safety depends upon three core elements: roads, people and vehicles. The Discussion Paper gives considerable attention to roads and people. It affords comparatively limited attention to vehicles.

The Discussion Paper provides detailed discussion of road infrastructure, speed management, enforcement, education, behaviour change, governance and partnerships. These are all important contributors to road safety outcomes. However, there is comparatively little consideration of vehicle safety, particularly in terms of vehicle maintenance, servicing, inspections and roadworthiness.

Tasmania has Australia's oldest vehicle fleet. Evidence indicates vehicle defects contribute to approximately 10 per cent of serious injury and fatal crashes. The fatal accident rate for vehicles aged 15 years and older is approximately four times higher than for vehicles aged four years or less.²

At a national level, vehicle safety is already recognised as a key road safety priority under the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030. TACC therefore submits that vehicle safety should also be recognised as a priority area within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy.³

The Strategy should adopt a broader understanding of vehicle safety than simply encouraging the uptake of new vehicle technologies. Vehicle maintenance, servicing, roadworthiness and inspection frameworks should also be recognised as important contributors to road safety outcomes.

Recognising vehicle safety as a priority area and adopting a broader understanding would not only align Tasmania's approach with national road safety priorities, but address the unique challenges posed by Tasmania's ageing vehicle fleet.

1 Department of State Growth 2026, Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper, Tasmanian Government

2 Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2–3

3 National Road Safety Action Plan Steering Committee 2021, National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, Australian Government.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Tasmanian Government should recognise vehicle safety as a priority area within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy.

Recommendation 2

The Tasmanian Government should explicitly recognise vehicle maintenance, vehicle servicing and vehicle roadworthiness as contributors to road safety outcomes.

Recommendation 3

The Tasmanian Government should include vehicle safety within the Movement and Place framework when developing and implementing road safety initiatives.

Recommendation 4

The Tasmanian Government must introduce a statewide mandatory roadworthiness inspection framework.

Recommendation 5

The Tasmanian Government should develop a public awareness campaign promoting vehicle servicing, preventative maintenance and vehicle roadworthiness.

Recommendation 6

The Tasmanian Government should improve the collection and publication of vehicle defect, vehicle age and roadworthiness-related road safety data.

Recommendation 7

The Tasmanian Government should continue to engage with TACC, Approved Inspection Stations and the broader automotive industry in the implementation of the Strategy.



1. Introduction

The Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the development of Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy. The Strategy presents an important opportunity to reduce road trauma and strengthen the safety of Tasmania's transport system for all road users.

As Tasmania's peak automotive industry association, representing the interests of more than 400 members in over twenty retail automotive sectors, TACC is uniquely placed to provide practical insights into road safety.

TACC supports the proposed Vision Zero, Safe System approach and the Movement and Place framework outlined in the Discussion Paper.⁴ TACC also supports the emphasis placed on evidence-based decision making, stronger partnerships, improved governance and enhanced accountability.

These are all important foundations for achieving long-term reductions in deaths and serious injuries. However, TACC considers there is a significant policy gap within the Discussion Paper: vehicle safety.

There are three fundamental elements of any road transport system: roads, people and vehicles. The Discussion Paper gives considerable attention to roads and people, yet relatively limited attention to vehicles.

Much of the focus of the Discussion Paper is on driver behaviour, speed management, enforcement, infrastructure and governance. However, there is a relative lack of consideration of vehicle safety in terms of maintenance, vehicle servicing, and roadworthiness.

The Discussion Paper acknowledges the importance of safer vehicles and emerging vehicle technologies. However, its focus is directed primarily towards technology adoption rather than the broader question of vehicle condition and roadworthiness throughout a vehicle's operating life. For Tasmania, that distinction is significant.

Tasmania has Australia's oldest vehicle fleet. More than half of Tasmania's vehicles are older than seven years and around 22 per cent are older than seventeen years.⁵ Many of these vehicles either do not contain the latest safety technologies or remain heavily reliant on regular servicing and maintenance to ensure they continue to operate safely.

Vehicle safety is an established national road safety priority. The National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 identifies vehicle safety as one of its key priority areas and recognises the importance of reducing fleet age and improving fleet safety outcomes.⁶ The recent mid-term review of the National Road Safety Strategy similarly identified vehicle fleet age and safe vehicle initiatives as ongoing road safety challenges requiring further attention.⁷

TACC therefore submits that vehicle safety should be recognised as a priority area within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy. Greater consideration should be given to vehicle maintenance, servicing, inspections and roadworthiness as part of a comprehensive Safe System approach.

2. Proposed Strategic Framing

TACC supports the proposal to strengthen road safety management, partnerships and the use of evidence and data within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy. Strong governance, effective collaboration and evidence-based decision making are important foundations for achieving sustained reductions in road trauma.⁸

TACC particularly supports efforts to improve the collection and use of road safety data and to strengthen engagement with stakeholders that can contribute practical insights into road safety risks and outcomes. Further comments regarding road safety data, industry engagement and opportunities for future collaboration are provided in the Other Opportunities section of this submission.

Response to Discussion Questions

Where can we strengthen our management approaches, partnerships, and the use of evidence and data to achieve road safety outcomes?

TACC's comments regarding road safety data, industry engagement and evidence-based decision making are outlined in the Other Opportunities section of this submission.

What are the barriers to strengthening management, partnerships, and the use of evidence and data to deliver road safety outcomes?

TACC's comments regarding data limitations and opportunities for improved collaboration are outlined in the Other Opportunities section of this submission.

⁴ Department of State Growth 2026, Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper, Tasmanian Government

⁵ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

⁶ National Road Safety Action Plan Steering Committee 2021, National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, Australian Government.

⁷ Ernst & Young 2026, Mid-term Review of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030.

⁸ Department of State Growth 2026, Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper, Tasmanian Government

Are there any additional approaches that should be considered?

TACC's comments regarding industry engagement and ongoing collaboration are outlined in the Other Opportunities section of this submission.

3. Action Areas – Movement and Place Framework

TACC supports the proposed Movement and Place framework as a useful means of understanding how different road environments influence safety outcomes. The framework recognises that local streets, urban roads, regional roads and highways each have different functions and therefore require different safety responses. The framework also provides a practical way to communicate road safety issues to the community.⁹

TACC considers there is a risk that vehicle safety may receive insufficient attention if the Movement and Place framework becomes the primary way in which road safety is discussed.

Road safety is influenced by more than the environment through which a vehicle travels. It is also influenced by the condition of the vehicle itself. Whether a vehicle is operating on a suburban street, an urban arterial road or a regional highway, the vehicle must be safe and roadworthy. Vehicle safety therefore operates across all movement and place environments. It is not confined to a particular road type, speed zone or geographic location.

The importance of vehicle safety is recognised in the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030.¹⁰ While it incorporates Movement and Place principles, it also identifies vehicle safety as a distinct priority area. TACC considers a similar approach should be adopted in Tasmania.

Vehicle safety should be a priority

National evidence supports a greater focus on vehicle safety.

Australia is currently not on track to achieve its national road safety targets. Vehicle safety remains one of the nationally recognised priority areas for reducing deaths and serious injuries, while vehicle fleet age continues to be identified as an ongoing road safety challenge.¹¹

The Tasmanian evidence is equally compelling. Tasmania has Australia's oldest vehicle fleet. Department of State Growth statistics indicate the fatal accident rate for vehicles aged 15 years and older is approximately four times higher than for vehicles aged four years and under. Vehicle defects also contribute to approximately 10 per cent of serious injury and fatal crashes.¹²

Response to Discussion Questions

Is the Movement and Place framework a useful way to understand and discuss road safety in Tasmania?

Yes.

TACC supports the Movement and Place framework as a useful way of understanding how different road environments influence safety outcomes. However, vehicle safety should also be recognised as a factor that operates across all road environments and should not be overlooked.

Are there any improvements or alternative approaches that should be considered?

Yes.

Consistent with the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, vehicle safety should be recognised as a distinct road safety priority within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy.

4. Action Area 1 – Safer Behaviour and Choices

TACC supports Action Area 1 and agrees that driver behaviour, education and enforcement remain important elements of road safety.¹³

The automotive industry has long supported initiatives aimed at reducing speeding, drink driving, drug driving, distracted driving and fatigue-related incidents. These behaviours continue to contribute to road trauma and should remain a focus of future road safety efforts.

⁹ Department of State Growth 2026, Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper, Tasmanian Government

¹⁰ National Road Safety Action Plan Steering Committee 2021, National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, Australian Government.

¹¹ Ernst & Young 2026, Mid-term Review of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030.

¹² Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2–3

¹³ Department of State Growth 2026, Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy – Discussion Paper, Tasmanian Government

The concept of safer behaviours and choices should extend beyond the actions of the driver alone. Safer behaviour and safer choices begin before a driver has even started their vehicle. The vehicle itself must be safe.

The Discussion Paper frequently refers to safer vehicles and the opportunities presented by advances in vehicle technology. TACC supports the ongoing adoption of modern vehicle safety technologies and acknowledges the important role they play in reducing crash risk and crash severity. However, vehicle safety should not be viewed solely through the lens of new vehicle technology.

Tasmania has Australia's oldest vehicle fleet. Many vehicles currently operating on Tasmanian roads either do not contain the latest generation of safety technologies or contain only some of these features. As a result, a road safety strategy focused exclusively on emerging technologies risks overlooking a substantial proportion of the existing vehicle fleet. This is particularly important given the available evidence.

As noted above, the rate of fatal accidents per registered vehicle is approximately four times higher for vehicles aged 15 years and older than for vehicles aged four years or less. This suggests that vehicle age and vehicle condition remain important contributors to road safety outcomes.¹⁴

Vehicle roadworthiness

Regardless of the technology fitted to a vehicle, there remains a basic standard that every vehicle should satisfy before it is operated on public roads. The vehicle should be roadworthy.

Roadworthiness forms the foundation upon which all other vehicle safety systems depend.

A vehicle fitted with advanced collision avoidance technology may still present a significant risk if its braking system is defective. Likewise, worn tyres, damaged suspension components or steering defects have the potential to undermine the effectiveness of modern safety systems.

Put simply, a vehicle is only as safe as its least reliable safety-critical component. As noted above, vehicle defects contribute to approximately 10 per cent of crashes resulting in serious injury or fatalities on Tasmanian roads. Vehicle roadworthiness is therefore a road safety issue rather than merely a compliance or regulatory issue.¹⁵



Hand patched tyre side wall



Anti roll bar removed

Roadworthiness inspections

Vehicle inspections represent one means of identifying and addressing roadworthiness issues before they contribute to road trauma.

TACC has previously advocated for a statewide mandatory roadworthiness inspection framework and maintains this position.¹⁶ The rationale is straightforward.

Roadworthiness inspections provide an opportunity to identify safety defects before a vehicle is involved in a crash. They also provide consumers with greater confidence regarding the condition of vehicles entering the market. This is particularly important in the used vehicle market, where consumers may have limited information about a vehicle's mechanical condition and roadworthiness. A roadworthiness inspection framework can provide greater transparency and support more informed purchasing decisions.

Most Australian jurisdictions require some form of roadworthiness inspection beyond defect notices and interstate transfers.¹⁷ Yet, Tasmania has relatively limited roadworthiness inspection requirements despite having Australia's oldest vehicle fleet.

¹⁴ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2–3

¹⁵ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

¹⁶ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

¹⁷ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 7–8.

Tasmania's current inspection requirements are limited to inspections associated with interstate vehicle transfers, defect notices and expired registration. By contrast, several states and territories require roadworthiness inspections at the point of sale, periodic inspections for certain vehicle classes, or both.

Evidence from existing Tasmanian inspection arrangements demonstrates the value of roadworthiness inspections. In 2025, TACC reviewed a sample of more than 500 interstate vehicle inspection reports and found a first-presentation failure rate of 38 per cent. For trailers, caravans and other towable assets, the first-presentation failure rate was approximately 50 per cent.¹⁸ These findings indicate that substantial numbers of vehicles continue to present with defects serious enough to warrant inspection failure.

In TACC's view, these results demonstrate the continuing importance of roadworthiness inspections as a preventative road safety measure.

TACC therefore recommends the Tasmanian Government introduce a statewide mandatory roadworthiness inspection scheme as part of a broader vehicle safety agenda. This would support road safety objectives while also delivering important consumer protection benefits by providing greater assurance about the condition and safety of vehicles being offered for sale.

Vehicle servicing and maintenance

Roadworthiness inspections alone will not deliver safer vehicles. Inspections generally occur at specific points in a vehicle's lifespan. Vehicle safety must be maintained between those points. Regular servicing and preventative maintenance also play an important role.

Routine vehicle servicing keeps safety-critical vehicle systems operating as intended. Brakes, steering, suspension, tyres and other vehicle components deteriorate over time through age and use. Without proper maintenance, these components may compromise the safety of the vehicle and increase the risk of mechanical failure. Older vehicles in particular often rely more heavily on regular maintenance and servicing to maintain safe operating standards.

Vehicle safety should therefore be viewed as an ongoing responsibility that extends throughout the life of a vehicle. While manufacturers play an important role in designing safe vehicles, owners also have a responsibility to maintain them in a safe and roadworthy condition.

Regular servicing provides an opportunity to identify developing faults before they become serious safety risks. It also helps ensure vehicles continue to operate in accordance with manufacturer specifications and recommended safety standards.

Safe vehicles are not simply vehicles that were safe when they left the factory. They are vehicles that continue to be maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition throughout their operating life.



Oil leak from brake hub and oversize tyre fitted

Public awareness and education

TACC supports continued investment in public road safety education.

Historically, public education campaigns have focused on behavioural issues such as speeding, distraction, seatbelt use, fatigue and impairment. These campaigns have made important contributions to road safety outcomes. However, there is also an opportunity to strengthen community awareness of vehicle safety.

TACC recommends the Tasmanian Government develop a vehicle safety awareness campaign that promotes:

- regular vehicle servicing
- preventative maintenance
- tyre and brake safety
- adherence to manufacturer servicing schedules
- the importance of maintaining a roadworthy vehicle
- the importance of purchasing safe and roadworthy vehicles.

Such an initiative would complement existing road safety campaigns and reinforce the principle of shared responsibility contained within the Safe System approach.

¹⁸ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2-3.

At a minimum, vehicle servicing and maintenance should become a prominent feature of existing road safety communications delivered by government agencies and road safety stakeholders. This could include public messaging, online resources and educational materials that encourage motorists to maintain their vehicles to an appropriate safety standard.

Response to Discussion Questions

Do you support an Action Area that focuses on safer behaviour and choices?

Yes.

TACC strongly supports Action Area 1. However, the concept of safer behaviour and choices should be broadened to include vehicle safety, vehicle maintenance and vehicle roadworthiness. Safer decisions occur before a journey begins and include decisions relating to vehicle upkeep and maintenance.

What actions or initiatives should be prioritised?

Priority should be given to:

- **recognising vehicle safety as a road safety priority**
- **introducing a statewide roadworthiness inspection framework**
- **promoting vehicle servicing and preventative maintenance**
- **incorporating vehicle safety into public awareness campaigns and road safety communications.**

Are there additional issues, opportunities or innovations that should be considered?

Yes.

Vehicle maintenance, servicing and roadworthiness should be recognised as important contributors to road safety outcomes and incorporated within Tasmania's future road safety initiatives.

5. Other Opportunities

TACC broadly supports the direction proposed in the Discussion Paper. However, there are several additional opportunities that could strengthen future road safety outcomes.

Improved road safety data

The Discussion Paper places considerable emphasis on evidence-based policymaking and improved use of data. TACC strongly supports this objective.

One area where additional information would be valuable is vehicle-related safety data. While vehicle defects are identified as a contributing factor in approximately 10 per cent of serious injury and fatal crashes, there remains limited publicly available information regarding the specific role that vehicle condition plays in road trauma outcomes.¹⁹

TACC recommends improved collection and publication of data relating to:

- vehicle defects
- inspection outcomes
- vehicle age
- vehicle-related crash factors
- broader fleet safety trends.

Improved data would help inform future policy decisions and strengthen the evidence base underpinning road safety initiatives.

Vehicle fleet renewal

Tasmania's ageing vehicle fleet represents an ongoing road safety challenge. While maintenance and roadworthiness are important, these measures cannot fully compensate for the absence of modern safety technologies in many older vehicles.

National road safety policy already recognises the importance of reducing fleet age as part of improving road safety outcomes.²⁰ TACC therefore recommends that the final Strategy recognise fleet renewal as an important long-term road safety objective.

¹⁹ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

²⁰ National Road Safety Action Plan Steering Committee 2021, National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030, Australian Government. Ernst & Young 2026, Mid-term Review of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030. Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting 2024, 2024 National Road Safety Progress Report.

Ongoing industry engagement

The automotive industry has practical experience in identifying vehicle safety issues and understanding how vehicles perform over time. Repairers, vehicle inspectors, dealerships and servicing businesses observe vehicle condition trends on a daily basis. This provides valuable insight into fleet safety issues that may not always be apparent through crash statistics alone.

TACC therefore encourages continued engagement with:

- TACC
- Approved Inspection Stations
- repairers
- dealerships
- other automotive industry participants.

Such engagement would help ensure future initiatives are informed by practical experience and technical expertise.

Response to Discussion Questions

What are the most significant opportunities and challenges for improving road safety in Tasmania?

There is a significant opportunity to improve vehicle safety outcomes through enhanced roadworthiness, better maintenance practices and continued fleet renewal.

Tasmania's ageing vehicle fleet and the increased risks associated with older vehicles remain a significant challenge for improving road safety.

Are there any road safety priorities, actions or opportunities that are not currently reflected in the Discussion Paper?

Vehicle maintenance, servicing, roadworthiness and vehicle inspection frameworks are not given sufficient prominence within the Discussion Paper. These issues warrant greater consideration in the final Strategy.

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed direction of Tasmania's Road Safety Strategy?

The proposed direction is broadly supported. However, in TACC's view, vehicle safety should receive greater prominence and should be recognised as a distinct road safety priority alongside the other initiatives outlined in the Strategy.

6. Summary and conclusions

TACC supports the development of Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy and commends the Tasmanian Government for undertaking extensive consultation in developing the Strategy.

The Discussion Paper contains several initiatives relating to infrastructure, driver behaviour, enforcement, governance and data. These initiatives should form an important part of Tasmania's future road safety framework. However, greater attention should be given to vehicle safety.

Vehicle safety is already recognised as a national road safety priority. Tasmania's unique circumstances, particularly its ageing vehicle fleet, support the need for a stronger focus on vehicle maintenance, servicing, roadworthiness and inspections. The evidence demonstrates that vehicle condition remains relevant to road safety outcomes.²¹

Vehicle defects contribute to serious crashes. Older vehicles experience higher fatal accident rates. Existing inspection programs continue to identify substantial numbers of vehicles with significant defects.²² For these reasons, TACC submits that vehicle safety must be recognised as a priority area within Tasmania's next Road Safety Strategy.

Safer roads are important. Safer road users are important. Safer vehicles are equally important. Together, they form a stronger and more complete Safe System approach.

TACC appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and would welcome further engagement with the Tasmanian Government as the Strategy progresses.

²¹ Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2–3

²² Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2024, Mandatory Roadworthiness Inspections – TACC Position, August 2024, pp. 3–5.

Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) 2025, TACC Response to Proposed Light Vehicle Inspections Changes for Interstate Vehicles, February 2025, pp. 2–3



TACC House • 117 Harrington Street, Hobart TAS 7000