



Media Release

FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

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Victorian Vehicles Not as Safe as Overseas Vehicles

The Road Safety Committee today tabled a report into vehicle safety which found that more needs to be done to raise the safety of Australian vehicles to the standard of overseas vehicles.

Mr John Eren, MLA, the member for Lara and Chair of the Road Safety Committee said today “The level of vehicle safety can be the difference between life and death and we need to be proactive in improving vehicle safety.

“The Committee has found that the United States, Japan and some European countries have higher vehicle safety standards than Australia.”

The level of safety provided by Australian Design Rules (ADRs) the national standards for vehicle safety was found lacking by the Committee and it has recommended replacing these with international vehicle standards made by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Mr Eren said “The majority of Australian Design Rules are already harmonised with international standards. The Committee’s recommendation to replace ADRs with these international standards would help ensure that Australian vehicle safety keeps pace with international standards.

“Australian vehicle manufacturers have the knowledge and capacity to build vehicles with world class safety. The new Ford Falcon has recently gained a five star ANCAP (Australasian New Car Assessment Program) rating, and with encouragement from Government, local manufacturers will achieve even higher safety standards.

“But having only one Australian five star vehicle is not enough. The bar needs to be continually raised to make vehicles even safer. My fellow Committee members and I are passionate about road safety and protecting Victorian road users.

“This situation is not helped by the practice of de-specification, whereby importers do not include the same level of safety on the same models

sold in Australia as in other countries.

“The Road Safety Committee strongly rejects this practice and has made recommendations aimed at increasing the safety specification of Victorian vehicles.” The Committee also strongly criticises the practice of bundling safety features with luxury items.

The Committee has made thirty-seven recommendations aimed at encouraging the fitment of leading edge safety technologies to vehicles sold in Victoria and the development of infrastructure to support future developments in road safety.

Mr Eren said “While the Committee would like to see all vehicles fitted with all of the safety technologies listed in this report, the Committee has identified two key safety technologies for immediate action.

“The Committee calls for pre-emptive brake assist to be fitted to all cars and heavy vehicles by 2015 and anti-lock braking systems (ABS) fitted to motorcycles by 2011. This could be achieved in a similar way that the Brumby Government has led the way in requiring Electronic Stability Control and side curtain airbags for Victorian cars.”

The report has identified that in the future, road safety will combine vehicles and transport infrastructure in new Intelligent Transport Systems. These systems will include communication between vehicles and central traffic management to ensure safe efficient road travel. Victoria will need to promptly establish this infrastructure if Victorian road safety is going to move into the 21st century.

Mr Eren said “Victoria needs to develop infrastructure to support future road safety systems. These include electronic speed maps that move from the old speed sign toward on-board driver notified speeding information and warnings. Communication technologies are where vehicle safety is heading and Victoria needs to be at the forefront of that technology.”

We hope that the Victorian Government adopts the recommendations in this report in continuing to strive for greater road safety.

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