

RE-ISSUE & CORRECTION: MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 17 April 2025



Time to Align Vehicle Safety Standards with Europe

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) urges the Australian Government to urgently strengthen vehicle safety regulations, warning that outdated standards are putting lives at risk. While Europe has embraced world-leading safety technologies, Australians are being left behind—driving cars that would not be allowed on European roads.

Despite evidence that advanced vehicle safety features save lives, Australia has yet to adopt the European General Safety Regulation (EU GSR II, Regulation (EU) 2019/2144), which mandates a comprehensive suite of life-saving technologies. These include intelligent speed assistance (ISA) and event data recorders (EDRs), both of which are essential components of modern vehicle safety systems. While EDRs provide critical information about crash dynamics and are invaluable for post-crash investigation and learning, they do not actively prevent crashes—reinforcing the need for a broader suite of preventative safety technologies.

In addition to ISA and EDRs, the European regulation also mandates features such as lane-keeping assistance, advanced driver distraction warning systems, enhanced pedestrian and cyclist detection, and drowsiness detection systems—none of which are currently required under Australian Design Rules (ADRs). This lack of alignment means many new vehicles sold in Australia are missing features that are already saving lives in Europe.

Even where Australia has introduced safety measures, they often lag significantly behind international standards. Automatic emergency braking (AEB) is one such example. It is only now being introduced under ADRs—six years after Europe's adoption. Even then, the requirement in Australia is limited to car-to-car functionality, whereas European New Car Assessment Programmes (NCAPs) assess a broader range of AEB performance scenarios, including AEB for pedestrians, cyclists, and intersections.

Furthermore, the performance scenarios required under ADRs are limited in scope, failing to reflect the diversity of real-world crash risks. In contrast, Euro NCAP encourages manufacturers to meet more demanding and realistic safety benchmarks, rewarding innovation and broader crash prevention capabilities.

Shockingly, some vehicles currently on sale in Australia have received zero- or one-star ANCAP safety ratings. One of these models—sold in Europe under similar branding—achieves a three-star rating under Euro NCAP, due to stricter vehicle design and safety feature requirements. Many Australian consumers are unaware of these differences and have purchased vehicles under the mistaken assumption that safety standards are equivalent across markets.

“Every year, hundreds of Australians are killed in crashes that could have been prevented with safer vehicles,” said Dr Ingrid Johnston, CEO of the ACRS. “The evidence is clear: adopting stronger safety standards reduces fatalities and serious injuries. Australia cannot afford to keep falling behind.”

With the National Road Safety Strategy¹ 2021–2030 aiming to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030, modernising vehicle safety regulations must be a top priority.

“This is about making sure Australians are driving vehicles that give them the best chance of survival,” Dr Johnston added. “We need responsible leadership and immediate action to bring our safety standards in line with the best in the world.”

The ACRS stands ready to work with policymakers, road safety experts, and industry leaders to accelerate the adoption of these critical safety measures. The time for action is now—Australians deserve safer roads and safer vehicles.

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Media enquiries:

Lesley Tipping | ACRS | Communications Manager, lesley.tipping@acrs.org.au; 0439 231 394
Dr Ingrid Johnston | ACRS | Chief Executive Officer, ingrid.johnston@acrs.org.au; 0434 519 455

Source:

1. National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 (NRSS) (<https://www.roadsafety.gov.au/nrss>)

CORRECTION: TO MEDIA RELEASE issued 16 April 2025

Statement on Vehicle Safety Ratings and Introduction of AEB in Australia

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) wishes to issue the following corrections to its media release *"Time to Align Vehicle Safety Standards with Europe"*, originally published on Wednesday 16 April 2025.

1. **Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB):** The original release stated that Australia has yet to adopt Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB). This was incorrect. AEB is *only now being introduced* in Australia, six years after it was mandated in the European General Safety Regulation (EU GSR II, Regulation (EU) 2019/2144). We acknowledge that this represents a delay compared to European adoption, but it is inaccurate to suggest that AEB is entirely absent from Australian regulatory planning.
2. **Vehicle Safety Ratings:** The statement that "some vehicles on sale in Australia have received zero-star safety ratings" should have read *"some vehicles on sale in Australia have received zero- or one-star safety ratings from ANCAP. In contrast, one of these vehicles sold in Europe meets stricter vehicle design standards, achieving a three-star safety rating under the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP)."* While this still reflects significant safety concerns, it is important to accurately report the safety assessments.

We regret these inaccuracies and have taken steps to update the original statement to reflect the correct information. The broader message of the release remains unchanged: ACRS continues to advocate for the urgent modernisation of Australia's vehicle safety standards in line with international best practice to better protect all road users.

About the Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS)

The Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) is the region's peak membership association for road safety professionals, advocates, and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads. The College provides an inclusive, collaborative environment promoting communication, networking, professionalism, and advocacy across all spheres of road safety including policy, advocacy, research, innovation, technologies, and management. ACRS membership includes experts from all areas of road safety including policy makers, academics, community organisations, researchers, federal, state, and local government agencies, private companies, and members of the public. **More Information:** www.acrs.org.au