

12 January 2010

The Honourable Tim Pallas MP
Minister for Roads and Ports
Level 16, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Minister

Joint Victorian Government & VACC Auto Safety Awareness Campaign

Background

Thank you for the very constructive discussions we were able to have late last year about vehicle safety and also for your response (dated 31/12/09) to my letter on the same subject (dated 23/10/09).

While we acknowledge the Government's reluctance to introduce mandatory checking of motor vehicles, we are delighted with your support of "public awareness and education programs highlighting the importance of maintaining safe motor vehicles" which, as you know, VACC has recently been conducting.

Your interest "in continuing to work on projects like the Auto Safety Awareness Program with VACC" is most gratifying.

VACC's Auto Safety Awareness Program is a campaign designed to educate the community about driving a safe vehicle. The key message is for motorists to ensure the vehicles they drive are well maintained and regularly serviced by a professional, and therefore safe.

We have been pursuing our campaign in a variety of ways, including through the general media.

The reason we are so committed to vehicle safety is that, as one of the few organisations to collect vehicle safety data, we have found that a significant number of vehicles on Victoria's roads are unsafe. Through our Automobile Repairers' Division, VACC members inspect and record the condition of the five key safety features of a vehicle (brakes, tyres, lights, steering and restraints) when it is serviced. Our statistics are showing that, at any one time, in excess of thirty percent

of vehicles on our roads have a key safety defect. VACC's Five Point Safety Check is carried out free of charge as part of normal servicing.

VACC's auto safety campaign also includes promotion of the 'Guide to Safe Work Related Driving', which you endorsed during Freight Week 2009. The Guide identifies business and commercial vehicles as work places and, as such, identifies the issue of compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Guide recommends employers purchase appropriate and safe vehicles and ensure that those vehicles are regularly maintained.

It is our view that many road traffic accidents could be prevented if the State's fleet was better maintained. Worn tyres, faulty brakes, broken lights, frayed seatbelts and unsafe steering are all too common. By addressing basic faults, we believe our roads would be safer.

Even with the introduction of ESC, if a vehicle has a bald or underinflated tyre it is still a danger to the occupants and other road users. If a 5 star ANCAP safety-rated vehicle is not properly maintained and regularly serviced, over time, it too can become a risk, endangering the driver, occupants and other road users.

Proposal

VACC is committed to vehicle safety and is proposing that the campaign be taken to the next level. VACC would like to work with the Victorian Government and its instrumentalities, to have vehicle safety incorporated into the State's fight to reduce the road toll in conjunction with the 'Arrive Alive' strategies.

We therefore propose that vehicle safety be written into the Government's 'Arrive Alive' action plan, which VACC has supported since its inception.

Government Support

VACC proposes to continue its campaign during 2010 and is considering a number of initiatives, one of which is a Vehicle Safety Day on May 5th 2010 (the fifth day of the fifth month - and linking it with VACC's Five Point Safety Check) called 'Safe Cars Save Lives' Day.

We recommend that VACC and the Victorian Government work together to promote vehicle safety. In this regard, we ask that you give consideration to the following:

1. Formally recognise the importance of well maintained and therefore safe vehicles in the effort to reduce road trauma. We ask that such recognition be in writing in various forms eg media releases etc.
2. Assist in educating the public about the importance of maintaining a safe vehicle by incorporating vehicle safety in the 'Arrive Alive' action plan. In this

regard, we look forward to being further consulted about the 'Arrive Alive' action plan.

3. Provide financial assistance for joint Victorian Government & VACC promotions and advertising campaigns. The joint campaign would include the following:

- Reprinting the 'Guide to Safe Work Related Driving' and distributing it to VACC members, fleet managers and municipal councils (\$15,000)
- Herald Sun advertorials (\$28,600)
- Leader local newspaper advertorials (\$21,000)
- 3AW radio advertisements (\$41,500)
- 1116 SEN radio advertisements (\$12,000)
- Campaign Launch Event (\$36,200)
- Auto Safety Day on May 5 (\$53,000)
- Production costs (\$6,000)

As you can see, this joint auto safety campaign has been costed at approximately \$220,000 and we seek the Victorian Government's financial support for 50 percent of this cost.

VACC will work in conjunction with you, and your office, and will provide the management and administration for the campaign. VACC will ensure you and your Government is fully consulted and informed throughout the project.

We look forward to working with you on this important initiative and await a response at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards

David Purchase