

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Every day, the AAAA continues to fight for you on issues such as mandatory data sharing and anti-competitive behaviour

With all that is going on in the world, you could be forgiven for assuming work on issues such as mandatory data sharing might no longer be a top priority for the AAAA.

I am here to tell you unreservedly that this is not the case.

In fact, mandatory data sharing and other action against anti-competitive activity remains our number one priority on a day to day basis.

We have been actively undertaking numerous activities across 2020 in pursuit of our goal and you can rest assured that while we have been working diligently to support our members through this time of crisis, we have not taken our eye off the ball.

Indeed, all at the AAAA remain keenly focused on all possible opportunities for furthering our cause and are actively seeking out ways to drive this message forward with those who can make mandatory data sharing law a reality.

For example, the AAAA was recently invited to participate in the Senate's Inquiry into Holden's withdrawal from the Australian market and we took this chance to unashamedly talk about data sharing.

By doing so, we not only ensured mandatory data sharing law stays on the Federal Government's agenda, but we also secured a commitment with an official motion in the Senate that calls for the law to be established by the end of 2020.

Our dialogue with government is not limited to activities such as this Senate Inquiry either. For instance, I recently wrote to Federal Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar asking the Federal Government to set a date for the introduction of mandatory data sharing law.

I am pleased to report Minister Sukkar responded

exceptionally positively, stating to me that not only is mandatory data sharing law still important to the Federal Government, but it is even more important than it has ever been. This is greatly encouraging, and I am grateful to the Assistant Treasurer for his commitment, his continued engagement, and his support.

At the same time we have been outraged, as I am sure you are also, by the recently announced intent of Mitsubishi to seek ACCC permission to introduce a restrictive 10-year warranty under the ACCC Exclusive Dealing regulatory framework, which will be conditional on consumers not using independent repairers or aftermarket parts.

There is no doubt this exclusive dealer notification goes too far – we have long been concerned about extended warranties because consumers already worry they do not have a choice, and now this move straight up says they will not.

This is easily the most trade restrictive move we have seen from a car manufacturer and represents the beginning of a practice that I expect, if not stopped now, will flow on to every other major brand in our market.

I can tell you wholeheartedly that we will not stand for it and so we have swiftly taken action, coordinating more than 133 major submissions to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to formally object to this proposal.

Mitsubishi may argue they are only seven percent of the market, but it will not take long before 80 percent is controlled by these extended warranties if we do not act. Moves such as this is why we dedicate so much of our resources to ensuring we are not only always ready to identify these threats but also able to respond quickly, professionally and comprehensively.



We are also fighting on a global level, with myself and AAAA's Director of Government Relations, Lesley Yates, being Australia's representatives on the Global Automotive Right to Repair Committee.

This Committee most recently met in September, with Canada, South Africa and the US joining us in reporting significant progress in our worldwide labours to protect automotive consumer rights and counter the efforts of large multinational car companies to deny access to critical repair information.

I understand that when you aren't reading about mandatory data sharing every day, it can be easy to think that it isn't what we are waking up every single day thinking about, but I can assure you that is not the case.

No matter what this global pandemic throws at us, mandatory data sharing law and the fight against anti-competitive behaviour remains our number one focus as we know it is absolutely critical to your future success.

From taking advantage of opportunities such as the Holden Senate Inquiry to our strong response to Mitsubishi trying to do wrong by consumers and the aftermarket industry, to our regular outreach and dialogue with Ministers, Departments and Associations and our participation in global meetings, there is not a day that goes by that the AAAA isn't actively fighting for you, your customers, and your Right to Repair. After all, having choice is in the best interest of all consumers.

It has always been our biggest priority and will continue to be the biggest priority until we get it – I promise you; we will not let up.



STUART CHARITY
Chief Executive Officer