

CONTROLLING OUR DESTINY WITH VEHICLE MODIFICATION REGULATIONS

Australian aftermarket manufacturers are world renowned for innovative, high-quality products, technology and parts that improve upon and add to a vehicle's capability and performance

The 4WD aftermarket is a great example of a healthy and growing modification sector, with hundreds of companies producing a vast array of 4WD products to help consumers enjoy the great outdoors more or help our workforce with built for purpose work vehicles.

As fantastic as this market is for manufacturers, retailers and consumers alike, vehicle modifications have to integrate with vehicle safety systems, and abide by relevant state and federal requirements including ADRs and general vehicle roadworthy requirements.

Although our product developers work diligently to produce high quality, safe, and compliant modifications, navigating Federal and individual state and territory regulations to ensure compliance can be challenging, and restrictive. This process is made more complex given different jurisdictions have different regulations, and some of these regulations are not best practice.

You may remember the situation the industry faced in Queensland in 2018. The Queensland Government had without notice, and without proper industry consultation, implemented a new restrictive suspension lift law. The law was retrospective and immediately resulted in vehicles with responsible lift modifications becoming illegal overnight. Police then conducted 'Operation Lift' and fined, issued Defect notices and impounded modified 4WD vehicles.

The AAAA mobilised very quickly, immediately engaging with Queensland Government and Transport and Main Roads (TMR) to strongly object to the enforcement action. We also mobilised our members and the public to contact the Minister responsible to share their views as responsible 4WD owners.

We were proud of our response and deployed our

government relation resources effectively to work to have the Government amend the regulations, but it was a cautionary tale for the industry.

To ensure better transparency and avoid similar situations, we have been proactively engaging with regulators, to understand what they are worried about before decisions are made. And we've been making significant inroads.

Our initiative to form the Gross Combination Mass (GCM) Technical Working Group was an absolute game-changer, yielding very positive results on a topic that is increasingly important for our industry, and consumers.

We didn't stop there. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are a new frontier for modifiers and regulators, and knowing the future challenges in this space we also formed an ADAS Technical Working Group. These collaborative groups allow us to help set an agenda, get ahead of issues and potential changes and ensure we are in a strong position to help shape good regulation.

With momentum and learnings from the success of these working groups, I'm proud to announce the inaugural *National Light Vehicle Modifications Summit*, to be held at Autocare 2023 on June the 9th in Brisbane. This exclusive summit is the next logical step for our industry to collaborate and influence national vehicle standards and we're very excited to launch this new initiative.

The unique, highly-interactive one-day Summit format will bring together industry leaders, business owners, product developers and entrepreneurs. Crucially, we will also be joined by regulators.

Why should you attend? If you are in the vehicle modification space, want to understand what regulators are thinking, hear different perspectives, and contribute to the discussion on



important topics including GCM, ADAS, EV and more, this is a must-attend summit.

If we can lead the conversations to regulate our industry, we can control our destiny. This Summit will be a big part of these efforts.

The Summit's format will feature three key themes.

Knowledge – sharing about vehicle modification regulations; what's changed, what is under review and what's coming.

Influencing – identifying the major issues and working together on agreed solutions for regulations and for industry.

Priorities – setting the agenda for industry collaboration on policy influence and product testing. Using recent testing examples, can we as an industry get ahead of the curve and develop responsible standards that are commercially practical and produce safe outcomes.

So, if you are a modifier or design parts and accessories that enhance vehicle performance, join us at Autocare for the historic National Light Vehicle Modifications Summit. Let's work together, talk, learn and make a positive impact on the future of this important sector.

I look forward to seeing you there.

For further information on the National Vehicle Modifications Summit, and to register, visit www.autocare.org.au/modsummit



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