



Mobility & Accessibility  
for Children in Australia

Wednesday 26 October 2022

## **SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON CAR SEAT SAFETY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Parents of children with disabilities and medical conditions can now access independent safety information about specialised car seats for their child thanks to a world-first crash-testing program.

Mobility and Accessibility for Children in Australia Ltd (MACA) has completed 54 sled-crash tests on 15 different car seats as part of its groundbreaking Australian Safety Assessment Program (AuSAP).

MACA launched AuSAP with funding from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and in-kind support from Britax Childcare and Neuroscience Research Australia, while industry donated special purpose car seats for testing.

MACA has used the findings to today launch a [national register](#) of special purpose car seats, where, for the first time, families and the allied health professionals who support them can find independent safety information about each product.

The car seats are imported and all meet overseas standards, but AuSAP tested them against selected criteria from Australia's more rigorous standard – the same standard that 'off the shelf' car seats must comply with here.

Of the 15 special purpose car seats that were crash tested, eight have been published on MACA's national product register. A number of products are undergoing further investigation and/or testing, while some have been withdrawn from the Australian market.

At the same time, some Australian suppliers have already decided to increase their range of products thanks to the information gained through AuSAP – which means families will soon have access to a wider range of suitable special purpose car seats.

MACA Chief Executive Helen Lindner said there was an undeniable need for special purpose car seats in the market, but it was critical to have more independent information about their performance.

“Until now there has been no independent evaluation program in Australia – or globally – for special purpose car seats used by children with disabilities and medical conditions, leaving so many families facing a concerning lack of information,” she said.

“MACA launched AuSAP to provide families with more independent information about the strengths and limitations of special purpose car seats when it comes to safety. The findings will also help to improve product design and increase the range of products sold in Australia.

“Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable car passengers – and this important work will help ensure no child is left behind when it comes to road safety.”

TAC Head of Road Safety, Samantha Cockfield, said the TAC was proud to support initiatives that prioritise the protection of vulnerable road users, because everyone has a right to feel and be safe on Victorian roads.

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“Access to a safe and reliable car seat will not only provide road safety benefits to families, but improve connections to their local community through education and social opportunities,” she said.

The AuSAP findings have also informed practical advice and information for allied health professionals to guide best practice prescribing.

To learn more about AuSAP and access the national product register, visit [macahub.org](http://macahub.org).

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### **MORE INFORMATION**

#### **Special purpose car seats**

Special purpose car seats are used by some children with disabilities and medical conditions, such as cerebral palsy and autism, who are unable to travel in ‘off the shelf’ seats.

The specialised car seats offer an extensive range of features and optional accessories not available on Australian standard car seats, and also cater for older and larger children.

For example, this could include extra postural support, anti-escape options, or swivel bases to help parents with getting children in and out of the car.

Special purpose car seats should be prescribed by an allied health professional and are supplied through specialty product suppliers who have expert knowledge about each product, including installation in vehicles.

All special purpose car seats available in Australia comply with an overseas standard or regulation.

More information: [maca | Special purpose car seats \(macahub.org\)](http://maca | Special purpose car seats (macahub.org))

#### **About AuSAP**

AuSAP is not a certification program. Rather, it undertakes independent assessment of the safety and performance of special purpose car seats available for children with disabilities and medical conditions in Australia.

AuSAP aims to improve road safety outcomes, influence consumer choice, improve product design and inform government funding decisions.

Where MACA has not included a product on its national register, they work with the overseas manufacturer to encourage them to make changes to meet the AuSAP Test and Assessment Protocol and resubmit for testing.

More information: [maca | Australian Safety Assessment Program \(macahub.org\)](http://maca | Australian Safety Assessment Program (macahub.org))