



Strategic Plan 2022-2025

MACA LTD

Mobility & Accessibility
for Children in Australia

Who we are



MACA is a registered charity dedicated to advancing the rights of children with disabilities and medical conditions to safe and accessible transport.

Currently, many families of children with disabilities and medical conditions don't have access to the resources, support, and products to enable their safe transport and participation in community. MACA exists to change this.

MACA is leading a significant agenda to close the gaps in research, policy, products and allied health training and practice that impacts on the transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions.

We are also raising awareness and removing regulatory and legislative barriers by working closely with road agencies throughout Australia.

No family should have to worry about their family's safety and well-being on any mode of transport. That's why MACA advocates for the highest standards of motor vehicle safety for our vulnerable road users.

Our vision



Every child has access to safe and equitable transport.

Our mission



To develop and deliver solutions for the safe and equitable transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions.

Core values



- ✓ Trusted and evidence informed
- ✓ Independent
- ✓ Collaborative, caring and committed
- ✓ Influential
- ✓ Innovative





Message from the Chief Executive



Children living with disability are entitled to enjoy human rights on an equal basis with other children. Yet until the establishment of MACA in 2019, there was no national expert body to support and advocate for best practice transport and associated products and services for children with disabilities and medical conditions.

I am proud of the positive impact we have already made by initiating research and creating policies, resources, and programs to enable and empower a system that meets the real-world transport needs of families. We share examples of this impact in this plan.

But this is only the beginning — there is still a long way to go to close the gaps in research, information, policy and products that impact the rights of children with disabilities to safe transport in Australia.

This Strategic Plan will guide MACA's efforts for 2022–2025 as we continue closing these gaps and working towards our vision where every child has access to safe and equitable transport.

We have set four key priority areas that we will focus on during the next three years. These priorities have been developed with input from stakeholders across the disability, transport, education, and health sectors.

Build capacity and capability across organisations and among allied health professionals.

Strengthen policies and systems to be more inclusive and responsive to the transport needs of children with disabilities and their families.

Advance knowledge to address a historic and global lack of information in this area.

Drive innovation to encourage new solutions for children and their families.

The lived experience of children with disability and their families is at the heart of MACA's approach — and we thank those who have taken part in our research or shared their stories and experiences.

We hear harrowing stories of parents and carers unable to safely transport children in their care due to prohibitive costs, lack of access to evidence-based information and systemic barriers. This is unacceptable to MACA.

We believe that any society that values equality needs to address avoidable barriers that limit the full participation of vulnerable members of society.

We believe that when it comes to ensuring access to reliable information and safe transport, nobody should be left behind.

Helen Lindner
Chief Executive

Our Impact

Advocacy and awareness

Through the media, MACA raises awareness of the challenges families face and advocates for best practice transport for children with disabilities and medical conditions.

This includes ABC South Australia state and national news coverage of MACA and Monash University's ethnographic research study.

The team spoke to a participating family, the Haythorpes, about the difficulties they faced in getting an appropriate car seat for their son Liam, who has autism.

They also spoke about how life-changing the special purpose car seat has been for their entire family.

MACA Chief Executive Helen Lindner outlined the gaps that exist in policy, research and products, and explained what MACA is doing to change this.

You can read the full story [online](#).



Access to products

MACA's Australian Safety Assessment Program (AuSAP) is an independent world first program driving global advancements in knowledge and safety of vehicle restraint systems used by children with disabilities and medical conditions.

This program assesses (including sled crash testing) restraint systems from around the world and develops independent prescribing advice and information about each product.

This will support allied health professionals in prescribing suitable vehicle restraint options for children and give parents greater choice in vehicle transport decisions that affect their child and family.

It will also further expand safe transport options by making it easier for organisations to supply and promote products in Australia. This will increase the availability of products to meet a range of user needs, and close current product gaps.

This program received funding support from the Victorian Transport Accident Commission (TAC). It is supported by a preeminent Expert Technical Committee, with in-kind support from Britax Childcare and Neuroscience Research Australia.



Our Impact

Information and training

The lack of access to information on the safe transportation of children with disabilities and medical conditions increases road safety risks for vulnerable children and their families.

This is why MACA created macahub.org — a one-stop website of national resources. It provides trustworthy, independent, and evidence-based information to ensure families, health professionals and organisations have the right information at the right time for good decision making.

The website has been funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

MACA has also developed first-of-its-kind online training that will equip allied health professionals with best-practice knowledge and skills to help them confidently assess and support children's vehicle transport needs.

The self-paced course has been developed in response to research that shows that over half of allied health professionals reported that lack of appropriate training and professional supports was their most significant challenge. The training features contributions from esteemed experts in road safety, child restraint research, health, and other fields.

Driving new research

MACA drives new research to progress the evidence base for safe and equitable transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions.

In partnership with Curtin University, MACA undertook the first and largest national survey of parents, health professionals and organisations about their experiences and challenges transporting children with disabilities and medical conditions.

This revealed stark challenges. More than half of caregivers reported that their child had gotten out of their child restraint or seatbelt while they were driving, and more than two-thirds of caregivers reported never receiving information on safely transporting their child.

The findings are being used to inform, evaluate, and improve MACA's information resources and programs.

MACA also partnered with Monash University to undertake ethnographic research, which involves spending time with families to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of transport arrangements on their daily life.

The findings will inform further research opportunities, government policy, allied health professional practice, and product innovations that better meet the real-world transport needs of families living with disability.

Removing regulatory barriers

Buckle covers are often urgently needed to reduce the risk of children with disabilities or challenging behaviours from getting out of their seatbelt, but they conflict with vehicle standards in some states and territories.

MACA worked closely with the Northern Territory and Queensland governments to introduce new legal requirements for using buckle covers, making it easier for health professionals to prescribe these products and for families to comply with the law.

MACA will continue to call on the commonwealth and other state and territory governments to clarify the legal requirements when using a seatbelt buckle cover. We are also calling for industry to develop seatbelt buckle covers that comply with the voluntary Australian Standard — if this was achieved, then exemption notices wouldn't be needed.



2022–2025 Priorities

Build capacity and capability



Objectives:

- ✓ Create tools and resources to develop awareness, knowledge, and skills for supporting the safe transport needs of children with disabilities and medical conditions.
- ✓ Empower organisations to promote a road safety culture.



Strengthen policies and systems



Objectives:

- ✓ Promote the inclusion of the transport and road safety needs of children with disabilities and medical conditions in policies and strategies.
- ✓ Influence the improvement of standards and regulations relating to child restraint systems and devices for children with disabilities and medical conditions.



Advance knowledge



Objectives:

- ✓ Progress the evidence-base to improve vehicle transport safety for children with disabilities and medical conditions.
- ✓ Explore lived experience to improve transport safety for children with disabilities and medical conditions.




Drive innovation



Objectives:

- ✓ Openly share insights and learnings with industry and researchers to stimulate innovation.
- ✓ Accelerate user driven product design and safety solutions.





*MACA pays respect to the Traditional Custodians
of all lands on which it operates. We honour
their Elders, past, present and emerging.*

www.makahub.org
Phone: (03) 9134 2500
LinkedIn: @macaltd
Email: contact@makahub.org