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****UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 12.01 AM SUNDAY, 5 APRIL 2020****

RACV AND TAC JOIN FORCES TO LAUNCH INNOVATIVE BOOSTER SEAT INITIATIVE

New clothing label icon that turns tees into road safety tools

- Victorian road safety campaign reframes child booster seat safety for parents by using height instead of age
- **Fewer than 3%** of parents know that children should be at least 145 cm tall to safely travel without a booster seat [1]
- **More than 97% of seven year olds** are not tall enough to move out of a booster seat safely [2]
- Children who aren't seated in an appropriate restraint at the time of a crash are up to **seven** times more likely to be seriously injured [3]

A new road safety initiative from two of Victoria's most trusted brands, RACV and TAC, launches today across Victoria aimed at reducing the existing confusion around booster seats. Focusing on when children can safely be moved out of a booster seat, the campaign re-frames booster seat safety **in terms of height**, not age, providing a simple and innovative solution - **The Booster Tag**.

The **Booster Tag** is an icon in the shape of a booster seat and is designed to sit alongside clothing care icons for t-shirts sized 4-11, which fit children under 145cm. The icon is a height indicator, so parents can quickly identify that their child should sit in a booster seat. Any child that fits a t-shirt with **The Booster Tag** is likely to still need a booster seat.

Current child restraint laws focus on age as an indicator, **using seven years of age** as a barometer for parents to assess whether their child should remain in a booster seat or be moved to an adult seatbelt. However, paediatric research has shown that height is a better indicator and that children should use a booster seat until they are at least 145cm in height [4]. Adult seatbelts are specifically designed to safely restrain a person of at least 145 cm in height [5] but less than 3% of children reach 145cm at 7 years old [6]. Statistics show that 66% of children aged seven to 10 currently travel without a booster seat even though they are not tall enough to achieve a good seatbelt fit [7].

Speaking about the campaign, TAC Lead Director of Road Safety Samantha Cockfield said, "It's critical that all passengers are correctly restrained when travelling in a vehicle, especially children, who are among our most vulnerable road users. Booster seats reduce a child's risk of injury and death in a car crash by providing side impact protection, and most importantly, protecting their heads."

"This campaign is about arming people with simple and clear information to help them protect their most precious cargo."

RACV Senior Policy Advisor - Safety, Elvira Lazar, added, "We hope to spark a movement that sees all children's clothing manufacturers utilise **The Booster Tag** which in turn, can help to save children's lives."

"Using age as a guide to move children out of a booster seat is no longer appropriate. All seven-year olds are different heights so it only makes sense that we highlight to parents that it is the height that they need to consider before evaluating if they should take their child out of a booster seat."

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“That’s why, in partnership with TAC, we have created **The Booster Tag**. The tag helps clear the confusion for parents around whether their child should be in a booster seat – if a t-shirt carries **The Booster Tag**, the answer is yes.” Miss Lazar said.

With Victorians now spending more time at home, RACV and TAC encouraged parents to take the time to measure their children’s height.

Once children reach 145cm, the Booster Tag prompts parents to do the seat-belt ready 5-step test, to check their children can achieve a good adult seatbelt fit and travel without a booster seat.

The Booster Tag is an open source sizing tag and icon designed to sit alongside clothing care instructions. It is available to download, for free, for all Victorian and Australian clothing manufacturers.

High-profile clothing brands Minti, Oobi and Littlehorn have all adopted **The Booster Tag** in their clothing ranges, with more clothing brands to be announced.

Half Moon Bay Surf Life Saving Club and Lumineer Academy in Victoria will both be supporting the initiative by adopting **The Booster Tag** in their uniforms and rash vests. Part of the campaign objectives will be to recruit further clothing companies, schools and sports clubs to adopt **The Booster Tag** and join the initiative.

Myer have also incorporated **The Booster Tag** message onto selected garments across its popular Milkshake range with exclusive swing tags.

The Booster Tag campaign aligns with the Victoria Government’s **Toward Zero** road safety **strategy and action plan**, which is a plan for a future where no one is killed or seriously injured on Victorian roads.

Limited-edition T-shirt range

To launch the new road safety initiative, RACV and TAC have created a limited-edition unisex fashion range consisting of eight t-shirts. The t-shirts will also utilise **The Booster Tag** and the range is suitable for children sized 4-11, with the largest size designed to fit children who are 145cm tall.

The collection features eight custom designs, with each size indicated with lines that reflect a growth chart which helps to reinforce the message. It will be available online at www.boostertag.com.au.

All profits from the limited-edition range will go to The Royal Children’s Hospital, helping children and their families affected by trauma.

For more details on the initiative or, to check if your kids have outgrown a booster seat by taking the 5 Step Test, please visit [The Booster Tag website](http://www.boostertag.com.au).

##ENDS##

Notes to editors

TAC Towards Zero:

Towards Zero is Victoria's plan to ensure no one is seriously injured on our roads. It acknowledges that we all face risks on our roads. But our choice to use the road shouldn't cost us our lives. That's why we need to ensure we have a safe transport system in place. Together we can build a system that protects us from our own mistakes and those of others. The Towards Zero road safety principles are also in place across most Australian states and territories. Overseas, many other countries have adopted the same principles (also known as Vision Zero), including: Sweden, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Norway and large cities in the US, such as New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston.

About RACV:

Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.

About TAC:

The TAC is a Victorian Government-owned organisation whose role is to promote road safety, support those who have been injured on our roads and help them get their lives back on track. The TAC covers the costs of injuries which are the direct result of the driving of a motor vehicle and provide support services for people injured in a transport

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accident as a driver, passenger, pedestrian, motorcyclist, and in many cases, a cyclist. The TAC is also unique among personal injury compensation schemes in that one of its key roles is to promote road safety. Working closely with Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and Department of Transport, the TAC develops campaigns that increase awareness of road safety issues, change behaviour and ultimately reduce the incidence of road trauma.

The 5 Step Test

Can your child travel with an adult seatbelt? Take the five-step test:

1. Check that your child has their back flat against the back of the seat
2. When sitting all the way back with their back flat, their legs should be able to bend over the seat edge
3. The seatbelt should run over the middle of the child's shoulder and not dig into their neck
4. The seatbelt should sit low and firm across the child's hips and touch their thighs
5. This position should be comfortable and allow the child to sit in this position for the whole trip.

International guidelines on booster seats safety:

USA

The NHTSA recommends that children who do not use harness restraints use boosters until they are at least 145 cm tall.

(Source: Stephanie Huang and Matthew P. Reed, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute)

[1] <https://www.rchpoll.org.au/polls/car-seat-safety-are-australian-children-safe/>

[2] <https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/data/set2clinical/cj41c071.pdf>

[3] <https://www.racv.com.au/content/dam/racv/images/public-policy/reports/2017-Child-Road-Safety-Research-Report.pdf>

[4] https://journals.lww.com/pedorthopaedics/Abstract/2018/08000/The_Effect_of_Booster_Seat_Use_on_Pediatric.4.aspx

[5] Reeve, Zurynski, et al. 2007

[6] <https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/data/set2clinical/cj41c071.pdf>

[7] <https://www.rchpoll.org.au/polls/car-seat-safety-are-australian-children-safe/>