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Press Information

## Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano are Australia's first 5-Star commercial vehicles

18 August 2009

Melbourne – The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) today announced the first Australian 5-star rating for a light commercial van. The vehicle: the Mercedes-Benz Vito.

ANCAP awarded the top 5-star rating following crash testing and assessment of the Mercedes Benz Viano and Vito, testing which was also conducted by sister program EuroNCAP.

The popular van, also the basis for the luxurious Viano, successfully passed all of the rigorous testing protocols set down by ANCAP, concluding with a side-impact 'pole' test conducted at Autoliv in Melbourne on 29 July this year.

ANCAP, and sister programme EuroNCAP, conducted frontal-offset, side-offset and pole crash tests to deliver the 5-star rating for the Viano and the Vito. The diesel left-hand drive models previously tested by EuroNCAP rated four stars due to the absence of head-protecting side airbags at the time. These became optional on the Australian Vito van from January this year; the Viano has had these airbags standard since 2006.

ANCAP recently conducted a pole crash test of the Mercedes-Benz Viano at its Melbourne-based test contractor's facility, Autoliv. This delivered the 5-star rating for the Mercedes-Benz van.

This automotive safety milestone, announced today at Melbourne's Alfred Hospital, demonstrates that the pioneering role played by Mercedes-Benz in vehicle safety is not exclusive to passenger cars.

A vast array of safety innovations, such as ABS Brakes, ESP<sup>®</sup>, and impact crumple zones have saved thousands of lives in passenger cars and vans for decades. The examples cited have all been pioneered by the German auto maker. Page 2

**Mr Lauchlan McIntosh – Chair of ANCAP**

“We have seen over the last twelve months manufacturers actively working to build safety into vans, and it is pleasing to see these improvements showing through with a number of 4-star ratings prior to today’s announcement of the Mercedes-Benz five-star result.

“This 5-star result demonstrates that commercial vehicles can and should be just as safe as passenger cars.

“We have seen the family car, utes and now light commercial vehicles become safer in the interests of all consumers.”

**Mr Ken Matthews – Managing Director, Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicles in Australia**

“Van drivers have not always enjoyed the same safety technologies as car drivers, and we have acted to redress the balance.

“As a company we are proud that this 5-star result makes a safer workplace available to the many thousands of van drivers who spend long working days in their vehicles all over Australia.

“After all, these mid-sized vans are their workplaces. We produce 4- and 5-star vans that offer real life-saving and injury-reducing safety, and it is not rocket science.

“We wouldn’t contemplate compromising on workplace safety for our office-based employees or our staff on the road so why would we accept a lower level of safety for courier and delivery drivers?”

“The fact that existing Vito and Viano owners enjoy the highest ANCAP points-score of any commercial vehicle is perhaps not well-known, and today the points-margin is even larger.

“We know this will make a real-world difference to their work place safety every single day.”

**Mr David McCarthy - Senior Manager, Corporate Communications at Mercedes-Benz Australia/Pacific**

“We are excited that Vito owners already drive a 4-star vehicle that had the highest score (30.66 from a possible maximum of 37) of any van on the Australian market.

“This latest test sees the Vito and Viano score a five-star rating with 32.66 out of a possible 37, again a new benchmark for commercial vehicles in the Australian market.

“As vehicle manufacturers, we all produce 4- and 5–star cars and some of us produce 4-star vans. It is troubling that some manufacturers are not transferring this life saving and injury-reducing technology from their 4- or 5-star cars to their commercial vehicles.”

“Today’s announcement establishes Mercedes-Benz is currently the sole producer of 5-star vans in Australia and the challenge for other manufacturers is to match this result in this segment.”

### **Achieving a 5-star result with ANCAP**

ANCAP uses four internationally recognised crash tests: offset-frontal, side-impact, pedestrian, and pole impact tests.

Crash tests are undertaken by independent specialist crash test laboratories. In all tests crash test dummies are used to facilitate the scientific measurement of the various forces in the crash test. The data gathered is then assessed, using internationally recognised protocols, and scores are determined for various parts of the crash test. Additionally, ANCAP awards bonus points for other safety features such as seat belt reminders.

The overall score is then translated into a star rating, between one to five stars. The higher scores are awarded more stars.

For a vehicle to be awarded the top-level 5-star result it must achieve a minimum combined score of 32.5 points from a maximum possible total of 37. Scoring is broken down, as follows.

- Minimum frontal offset impact score: 12.5 (from 16)
- Minimum side-impact test score: 12.5 (from 16)
- Minimum side-impact 'pole' score: 1 (from 2)
- Minimum seat-belt reminder score 0 (from 3)

Additional points are awarded for built-in mechanisms that remind occupants to fasten their seatbelts, such as an audible or visual warning before setting off. These points are summarised as follows.

- 1 point for driver's seatbelt
- 1 point for front passenger's seatbelt
- 1 point for status indicator of rear seat belts

For a vehicle to achieve the top-level 5-star rating, it must also be fitted with curtain airbags and electronic stability control, a device pioneered by Mercedes-Benz more than 15 years ago. Known as ESP<sup>®</sup> (Electronic Stability Programme), it is fitted as standard equipment to every new Mercedes-Benz van and car in Australia. This includes the smart city car and the million-dollar Maybach luxury limousine.

### **About the Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano**

Two van models are officially sold by Mercedes-Benz in Australia. The Sprinter and the Vito. The Mercedes-Benz Vito is the compact van in the Mercedes-Benz van range. The Viano is the top-of-the-range luxury version of the Vito.

There are four models in the Vito range, available in a variety of wheel-bases, roof heights and payload capacities. They are available with four-cylinder and V6 engines, both turbo-diesels. There is one version of the luxurious Viano available, powered by a turbo-diesel four-cylinder engine.

More than 1500 Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano vans were sold in Australia last year.

### **About ANCAP**

The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) gives consumers consistent information on the level of occupant protection provided by vehicles in serious front and side crashes.

The programme is supported by Australian and New Zealand automobile clubs, the state government road and transport authorities of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, the New Zealand Government, the Victorian Transport Accident Commission (TAC), NRMA Insurance and the FIA Foundation.

For a full list of ANCAP's vehicle safety ratings, including more commercial vehicles, and other vehicle safety information, go to [www.ancap.com.au](http://www.ancap.com.au)

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