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Mr Craig Kelly MP
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Mr Kelly

W www.aaa.asn.au

MEMBER OF



I write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, which is currently undertaking an inquiry into the theft and export of motor vehicles and parts.

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) did not make a formal submission to the inquiry. However, having reviewed the submissions presented to the Committee, the AAA wishes to support comments made in relation to access to vehicle data.

The AAA is the peak organisation representing Australia's motoring clubs and their eight million members. The AAA advances the interests of all road users across Australia to ensure transport systems are safe, affordable and transparent.

The AAA welcomes the Committee's work to examine the theft and export of motor vehicles and parts and strategies to reduce theft in Australia. Motor vehicles are critical to the Australian way of life, with 90 per cent of Australians living in a household with a car, and more than 60 per cent of Australians driving to work each day. The AAA therefore welcomes measures that can improve the security of the family car and reduce the risk of theft.

However, the AAA believes any policies to reduce motor vehicle theft in Australia should not be at the expense of consumers being able to choose who services their car due to manufacturers restricting the ability of independent operators to access service and repair information.

A recent ACCC Market Study into the new car retailing industry examined the level of access independent operators had to service and repair information. It found that generally car manufacturers are not providing independent operators with the same technical information provided to authorised dealerships, which was affecting their ability to compete effectively against authorised dealerships.

The ACCC's recommended regulatory intervention to ensure car manufacturers make technical information available to independent service and repair operators on commercially fair and reasonable terms.

To that end, the AAA supports the introduction of a mandatory code on access to motor vehicle service and repair information. Without such a mandatory code, effective competition between independent operators and authorised dealerships is likely to be reduced, meaning that consumer choice will be diminished, and consumers will face increased costs to repair the family car.

During the consultation process for the ACCC Market Study, car manufacturers claimed that access to security related information could assist in enabling theft of cars. The AAA does not support this



supposition. Safety and security related information is shared with independent operators in overseas jurisdictions, and appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that the information can be protected. The ACCC found little evidence to link access to service and repair information with increased rates of theft.

The AAA believes the most appropriate regulatory model would include appropriate safeguards and controls on all operators who access security related information, rather than limiting information to just the car manufacturer's authorised dealership network. This would ensure a level playing field between independent repairers and the authorised network with the same safeguards and controls being placed on both sectors.

The AAA would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bradley
Chief Executive