



Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano achieve 5 star Safety Ratings

The Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) announced last week the first Australasian 5-star rating for light commercial vans. The vehicles: the Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano.

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 air bags at the time. These became optional on the New Zealand and Australian Vito van from January this year.

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 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 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.

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 this week'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 Australia/Pacific

"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 work place available to the many thousands of van drivers who spend long working days in their vehicles all over Australia and New Zealand."

"After all, these mid-sized vans are their workplaces. We produce 4 and 5-star vans and 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 Ian Walker - General Manager, Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicles New Zealand

"We are delighted to see the Mercedes-Benz Vito and Viano enter into the 5-star safety leagues that previously were only occupied by prestigious passenger cars. This underlines the reason why so many customers are turning to Vito so



they can provide the safest possible working environment for their employees.

"After all these are moving offices for most people with many hours spent behind the wheel, and safety should not be a questionable option."

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 (Electronic Stability Programme), it is fitted as standard equipment to every new Mercedes-Benz van and car in Australia and New Zealand. This includes the smart city car and the million-dollar Maybach luxury limousine.