

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET
AT LEVEL 4, HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON ON TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2009.**

Mr MARK BUTCHER WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Please take a seat, Mr Butcher. You haven't put in a written submission but you are quite happy to come and express your views today.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. I sent something through quite a while ago, actually. I only have one copy here which is my copy but -

CHAIR - Perhaps you could let us have your main views and then we'd like to ask you some questions.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, sure. I will give you a quick run-down of who I am so you can get a picture of where I'm coming from.

CHAIR - What is your occupation?

Mr BUTCHER - I am the Director of a company called Driver Skills Australia. We are a national driver training provider. Recently we became an RTO as well; that's a registered training organisation. We've been operating for 12 years. I started the company back then and it has grown substantially. We now have a team of about 10 trainers based all over Australia delivering road safety training, or defensive driver training mainly now. Most of our clients are corporate groups but one of our biggest customers would be the State Government, their departments spread out all over Australia.

Ms FORREST - Are you not in Tasmania at the moment; is that the case?

Mr BUTCHER - We have done a bit here in Tassie. I only moved to Tassie 12 months ago. We bought a house here yesterday so we are definitely staying. We've been running some training in the Burnie-Wynyard area but unfortunately we are not getting much response there. We have basically had to finance the last four courses and we'll be doing the same again this Friday, so we are a bit concerned that there could be a bit more done to try to get people to take some responsibility and do some further training. That's really where we are coming from.

CHAIR - Are you finding the Government's response here is less than in other States and Territories?

Mr BUTCHER - It's hard to tell. We have only really started now, because we've been based with the corporate groups and things like that for so long, approaching the Government. Prior to that we didn't have the time because we were trying to survive. Business has been good and growing and definitely the corporate sector realises the benefits in what we are doing. A lot of the government departments have but we haven't had any government support as such as in incentives or any sort of recognition for training.

I have been talking to Ruth recently and, for example, you are probably aware of a program in Canberra that's up and running for young drivers. I've made contact with them now briefly. We would like to see something like that happen across Australia and Tassie is a great place to start because I am based here. What we basically want to see is the Government recognising that this training is beneficial to drivers. When I say 'this training', I haven't explained exactly what we do, but I am happy to answer some questions about that down the track. We would like Government to encourage drivers to come because, for example, we do a lot of work with the court systems in other States in Australia so if a driver is done for dangerous, reckless, drink driving or whatever, quite often they are sent to us to do the training course to help them become safer drivers. What we are trying to say is why don't we make it more of a proactive step and let's try to give drivers some incentive to come along. Everybody who does the course loves it. The hardest thing is trying to get people in to do it.

CHAIR - How long does it take?

Mr BUTCHER - The current course runs a full day; a one-day course.

CHAIR - What is the cost?

Mr BUTCHER - It varies. At the moment we are doing it very cheaply in Tasmania, for \$99 a head. Our standard retail price is \$275.

Ms FORREST - You are subsidising that at the moment.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. We wanted to get it up and running in Tassie to see if the price was an issue but it doesn't seem to have made much difference, so we are disappointed.

CHAIR - I've found that officers in government departments dealing with transport and road safety don't seem to place enough importance upon driver education and training and the same applies in some other States, except the Territory, ACT. What's your experience dealing with that?

Mr BUTCHER - Absolutely. I guess my biggest concern is that we can see what we can do in just one day of training and how much value there is. We've been doing this for a long time, probably 2 000 drivers a year, and every single driver, whether they've been driving for a week or 50 years has said to us, 'Gee, I wish I'd done this before' or 'Everyone should be made to do this'. The reason is that the current licensing system, I think, has some good credit to it but it doesn't provide some of those extra lifesaving skills and the knowledge so there is a big gap in the program. In Western Australia we do a lot of work for government departments. They recognise that for their drivers to be driving around during work or whatever they need to have some additional training to keep them safe, and yet when we approached the Government, as we have here, and said to them that we would like to see more drivers encouraged to do this course, they say there is no proof or evidence that this training works.

Ms FORREST - Can I get you to describe the course? One of the criticisms that the Government seems to use is that the courses as a whole, and they don't tend to specify what the course content is, make drivers more confident, overly aggressive at times and

certainly assertive. What do you actually do; can you run us through quickly what happens in the course?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. Our course may be a bit different to what they were 10 years ago which is why we are back here flying the flag again. Our course, as I said, takes a full day, but about three hours of that is actually knowledge-based, so a PowerPoint presentation on all road safety information, speeding, fatigue, alcohol, restraints, vehicle safety systems, everything like that is covered in that three hours. The skills component is more about developing awareness and experience and perhaps correcting some bad habits more than it is about saying this is exactly how to drive the car. To that effect, the nationally accredited unit we apply is called Apply Safe Driving Behaviours. We are pushing more of our behaviour and motivation than we are the skills side of things. That is where we are coming from.

Ms FORREST - Do you do some in-car stuff?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes.

Ms FORREST - What do you do in the vehicle?

Mr BUTCHER - Basically emergency braking drills and getting people to understand that if they sit too far back they cannot control the car, if you sit correctly, put your hands on the wheel you have a lot more control if you are faced with an emergency situation.

CHAIR - Where do you put them on the wheel?

Mr BUTCHER - Hands opposite each other, so six and nine.

CHAIR - Quarter-past-three?

Mr BUTCHER - Quarter-to-nine, yes, or quarter-past-three.

CHAIR - Not ten-to-two?

Mr BUTCHER - No.

CHAIR - Why?

Mr BUTCHER - The problem with ten and two is that your hands are elevated higher so for long-distance driving your heart is pumping the blood further and it is tiring. It is not comfortable, for a start, plus your indicators or your car controls are lower. The steering wheels in most cars are made for your hands to be there. Bending your arm means that if you brake in an emergency you tend to brace yourself. With your hands up you tend to straighten them out and you cannot turn. Down further you tend to have a bit of bend so if you have an accident your arms will fold rather than break. Plus the air bag, if it goes off with your hands lower it is a lot safer. I can go on and on; there are a lot of good reasons you should have your hands a little bit lower on the wheel.

Mr DEAN - You were saying about the Tasmanian Government not, at this stage, being over-enthusiastic.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes.

Mr DEAN - You have been operating for 12 years so you should have some statistical data, should you not, to demonstrate the value of this course? In other words, you have the previous accidents in these corporations in which you have been working - the Western Australian Government, for instance - and you ought to be able to compare the number of accidents in those areas with the numbers being experienced after you became involved.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, we do have some numbers, I guess. I try to avoid statistics because they will show different things, as we all know. However, we would be happy to get references from some of our customers. For example, the Education department in Western Australia had eight rollovers in one year and so they started doing our training. Touch wood, they have not had one since.

Ms FORREST - Is that in four-wheel drives?

Mr BUTCHER - They were operating four-wheel drives, but that was not four-wheel driving, that was driving kids to and from remote schools.

Ms FORREST - I know, but the four-wheel drives have quite a tendency to roll over.

Mr BUTCHER - That is right, yes. That was one example. A lot of the companies are in the same situation. The minor incidents - your bumps in the car park, your scraping poles and things - I guess, our course is not really designed to cater for them. We do, because we think it is just as important, because if you hit a pole it could have been a kid or something else so we do mention that. Our course is designed more to deal with driving at 40 kph an hour or upwards, delivering awareness and making people think about what they are doing more. The learner-driver trainers and maybe high school programs really probably can focus on those more simple car control skills, manoeuvring, parking and those sort of things. If we wanted to do everything it would take us weeks, so we have designed a course that takes one day. In that one day we have picked out the things we think are more than likely to kill you, are a biggest threat or biggest risk. We have identified them and we have tried to put training in place to help people minimise that risk.

Mr DEAN - So I can fully appreciate your course, your course is targeted more at those people who have been driving for a period of time rather than for the learner driver, or is it both?

Mr BUTCHER - We are doing it now for learner drivers as well and the same program is delivered in Queensland through another company for 2 000 year 12 students every year and quite successfully.

CHAIR - For kids with their learners, or people with their learners?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, with their learners.

CHAIR - Not before.

Mr BUTCHER - No, not before. The reason is that they need to be able to control the car safely first. As I said, that is a separate skill set we are not really targeting. But once they have reached that point where they can drive comfortably, they feel safe in their car, there are two trains of thought: if we get them when they are learner drivers hopefully we can get them while they are young and give them some good habits to start with before they develop bad habits. If we get them when they are a bit older, whether a year or two down the track or 50 years down the track, they have experience and therefore what we say might have a different value because they can say, 'Yes, now I understand what you are talking about because that has happened to me 10 times'. Either way there are benefits in it. Exactly the same courses delivered to two different groups of people have slightly different outcomes but effectively they still get to the same place.

Mr DEAN - Yes. I was just interested in knowing where it fits in across the whole spectrum.

Mr BUTCHER - We used to do a lot more for younger drivers but we just do not get the support. Mum and dad are more happy to spend \$200 on a Playstation than they are on a driver training course. That is our biggest concern.

Mr DEAN - The other thing I wanted to query with you was that you said that on the mainland you are doing a lot in relation to courts penalising people for driving errors and so on. Are the courts making that a part of the sentencing process, that they must undertake this course?

Mr BUTCHER - It seems to be the case, yes. I have only dealt with them at this level, but we do a fair few in Melbourne and Brisbane. What I have been told by the kids who come along or the young drivers - they are not all young drivers but most of them have been - is that they have been told by the judge or whatever that if they do this course then instead of a six-month suspension they will get a three-month suspension or they will get some sort of a discount on the penalty. I think that is a good thing, for sure.

CHAIR - When should driver education start, do you think, or road safety experience, perhaps?

Mr BUTCHER - I think it should start at primary school, to a degree. There is a lot of value in getting the habits right - just the hands on the wheel thing. If mum and dad teach them at 10 and two and they have been driving like that for six months it is very hard to get them to bring their hands down again. We run a whole range. This is probably the bulk of our training but we go right through to motor sport level, at world championship level. The same things apply. You put your hands on the wheel in a world rally car at the same place as we are teaching learner drivers because it is safe across the board. That is why, if we can get them younger, we can get them into the basic stuff, that will make our job easier and perhaps then, maybe in five or 10 years' time, our job will change a bit and we can do slightly different training because the people coming through have a bit more experience and knowledge to start with. There is a huge amount still to go and all we are really doing is just taking it to that next level.

As an example, we do a lot of training and have done training for the Australian Army. They hire us to come and do some training for them. Those guys are pretty good. They have a lot of driving, a lot of driver training courses but they can still benefit from our

experience and our knowledge. What we deliver to them is slightly different to what we deliver to the normal person because they have already developed some of those basic skills. It still road safety-based. It is still just getting them out there and giving them the experience to understand that in their environment, when they have people in the car, you have VIPs and they are putting the driver under pressure to be somewhere or whatever, they have to be able to handle different situations and emergencies. It is no different to an 18-year-old in the car with three of his mates. It is quite funny that the same training that we deliver for a learner driver can just about go right through, we just finetune it a bit.

Mr DEAN - Do you cover in your course anything in relation to the instruments in cars? It has been brought up in this committee on a number of occasions already, the issue of mobile phones, CDs, navigational units.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, iPods. I received a great photo the other day of a GPS right in the guy's windscreen. I should have brought it in. I made my partner take a phone of the car behind us because he had the screen mounted in front of his windscreen.

CHAIR - In front of his face?

Mr BUTCHER - I will e-mail it to you. This is the new phase of issues that is coming out. Yes, we talk about distractions, loose objects in the vehicle, just about everything. It is amazing what we can cram into a three-hour course. There are 150 slides to give you an idea on the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr DEAN - What is your instruction on all of those things that you can have in your cars?

Mr BUTCHER - We talk about risks. They all come under our risk management part of the course. What we talk about is that some things are necessary in the car and a lot of things are not, so manage the risks, identify what the distractions or hazards can be. Things like a GPS are great as long as you set them up correctly before you start driving and do not have to fiddle with them while you are going along and they are not obviously a visual distraction. We talk about such things. We discourage any phone use at all in the car, whether it is hands free or not; the same with using the stereo and CD player. If you have a passenger, let them worry about it rather than you trying to do it, or pull over. I have very much changed my driving style over the last 10 years to reflect what we teach. It does work. It is not as though we are just trying to say this is it. We do try to be realistic with our training.

CHAIR - It is good that you practise what you preach.

Mr BUTCHER - You have to, yes. But it is hard and you must be very careful because I think a lot of road safety people as such say something and then drive off doing something else and if you cannot do what they are saying, it is very hard.

Ms FORREST - It is like a doctor who has a packet of fags in their pocket saying, 'Do not smoke'.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, and you do see them.

Ms FORREST - That is right. Can I just take you back to the mobile phone issue for a moment? You said you discouraged all use. I have heard varying views on mobile phones, including on in-car kits, the ones where you do not have to touch it, or you might touch a button as you would to turn your CD on, that when someone is using a mobile phone they're actually concentrating more because they're alert, they're listening to what the discussion is - as long as it's not too complex -

Mr BUTCHER - There has been some research done somewhere that indicated that drivers on a mobile phone take less risks; because they are distracted maybe a bit from driving; they actually sit back further, they are less likely to overtake. So, yes, but at the same time also their mind's off on another channel. Again, it's a statistical thing. They're saying that if you're on the phone you generally don't overtake someone so therefore it's safer because you're not overtaking. But is it really safer because the problem with a mobile phone as opposed to a car stereo or even a two-way radio is that the conversation usually requires concentration? So if you're listening to the radio, singing along, it can just be happening in the background; if you're chatting to someone in the car, it's more background chit-chat but a mobile phone requires concentration. I find, even at the best of times, with the best phones, it is still difficult to hear what the other person is saying; whether you are driving or not driving.

Ms FORREST - Because of the car noise and the road.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, so you are always really subconsciously focusing on that. The example I use with our driver-training is that if I am at the supermarket pushing the trolley along and the phone rings, I have to stop the trolley to take the phone call because it is very hard to push the trolley - I know some women can do it, but -

Ms FORREST - I was just about to say, yes, it's probably a male thing.

Laughter.

Mr BUTCHER - I'm sure there are some men that can do it, but I can't. I have to stop because it is very hard to talk on the phone, push the trolley and do your shopping. Some people can but I still think that you'd probably get home and say, 'Why have I bought all this stuff?'

Laughter.

Mr BUTCHER - It does take your mind away from the task at hand, which is a big issue.

CHAIR - Some of the authorities say that it's not worth having driver education courses for people in their late teens or early twenties because they are at the age that they think they know it all. I don't agree with that. What's your view?

Mr BUTCHER - Absolutely. I think that they will know it all anyway. We get parents ringing us and saying, 'My son' or 'My daughter has just bought a V8 and is going to kill himself. What can you do about it? I say, 'I can't really do anything about it. If you've had him that long and you can't change his attitude or behaviour in a lifetime, we're not going to do it in a day. But what we can do is give them some experience in a safe environment. What happens with that experience is that once you've realised that at 50

kph or 60 kph you can't stop the car as well as you thought, whether you'd like it to or not it's gone in your brain somewhere and it sits there filed away and maybe the next time it's raining on the highway or something and you're going that bit fast, that will just tick up and you'll go, 'Maybe I should slow down'. It's a subconscious thing. A simple way of explaining it is a hot kettle. If the kettle's hot and everyone tells you not to touch it, well everyone's got to touch the hot kettle, haven't they, but once you've done it a few times you start going, 'No, that's not really clever anymore'. You're more cautious about it, even though you still do it; you go, 'I wonder if that's hot?' but you do it in a cautious way. It's the same learning thing.

They have to learn for themselves. Our outside part or the practical part of our course is in a safe, controlled environment where, really, we are not setting them up to fail but we're setting them up to show them that they have limitations and their vehicles have limitations. A classic comment came from one of the court drivers we had recently, a young driver, who had been sent by the court - he was a pretty good guy. He did the stop and emergency brake at 100 kph. When he pulled up I said, 'Oh, how did you go with that, what did you think?' He said, 'I thought my car would stop heaps faster than that'. I thought, 'Well, if we can get that comment out of even one person a day, we're starting to get the messages sinking in' because he's like, 'Well, I've got nice tyres and a good car so surely it's going to stop in 50 metres' and then realised he's gone miles down the road. It's going into the thought process.

CHAIR - I have two more questions on the subject. What percentage of young people do you find receptive to road safety education?

Mr BUTCHER - I guess we have two types of young people that attend our courses, those that want to be there and those whose parents have made them come. You can pick them a mile away. We had a very difficult kid the other day and his dad attended the course with him. He was difficult all day long. The first thing he said when he introduced himself to the group was, 'I don't like driving; I hate driving; I'm a crap driver', blah, blah, 'I don't want to learn'. He was a university-educated kid - very smart. At the end of the day on the form he put all this stuff about the training and what could be changed and improved, so that's fine. But the key thing was that in response to the question will this training make you a safer driver, he put yes. So it is having an effect. I think every driver who attends does gain a lot from it and it is a positive thing. The motivation to get them there is the tricky part.

CHAIR - In addition to the people you train, do you have any view or belief about the percentage of young people who would be receptive to a course of instruction in road safety, driver education?

Mr BUTCHER - I think most would be, but it is like anything; it has to be sold correctly. That is where maybe this training in the past has not been done properly. If I was going to do a road safety course with maybe - and this is no offence, because some of my guys are police officers, current or ex - an ex-copper or someone who has been in the force for 30 years they are probably going to be less receptive to that than maybe to some younger driver-trainers who can relate to them a bit. A lot of our trainers including myself have a background in motor sport. They want to come along and hear what we have to say because they look up to us a bit more. It is a marketing thing, and I think that if we do roll something out we have to market it so that people want to go and do it.

Mr HARRISS - I am very concerned about the ex-coppers.

Laughter.

Mr BUTCHER - That is all right. A couple of my guys are top guys and they are currently still in the force.

CHAIR - Yes, and they always observe speed limits, no doubt. Do you feel that learner drivers should be required to undertake some course of instruction or information before receiving a licence?

Mr BUTCHER - Absolutely. I think there are two levels to look at. One would be the initial licensing standard. I don't think it is particularly high. We get kids along on courses who have their licence and it rains and they don't know how to put the wipers on, things like that, and what this switch does in what car, which frightens us a lot. So there needs to be a little bit more training beforehand. And then this second phase of training, which is effectively what we are talking about, with the defensive training which maybe should be done as soon as they can after getting a P-plate licence. The thing in Canberra I think is fantastic. Theirs is very basic. It is only a three-hour theory presentation.

Ms FORREST - The P-off one is. The learner one is two days. I think it is about five hours a day.

Mr BUTCHER - Okay, yes. Have you briefed them a bit on that P-off course and the thing the ACT have?

Ms FORREST - I haven't had a chance to.

CHAIR - We hope to this afternoon.

Mr BUTCHER - Al right. Basically we would like to be able to say to young drivers that if you come to our course you can have your P-plate period shortened by perhaps six months, or something off the registration, or a free licence. We want to make it a positive experience and motivate people to come along and do it. So we are not saying, 'If you don't do this you don't get a licence', because then you are already starting on them. It is a negative motivation. We want people to be proactive and say, 'Hey, we will do this', and with all the training and the way my business has grown over the last 10 years, it is all word of mouth. Even the people here in Tasmania who have done it reckon it is great and have told their friends and a lot of the bookings are coming from those people. The more we can get into the system, the quicker it will go. The high school program they run in Queensland is a highlight of the year. All the year 11s and 12s that do the courses can't wait till that time of year when they get to go and do their driver-training course for the day.

CHAIR - Is that compulsory?

Mr BUTCHER - No.

Ms FORREST - It is one of their electives, and it would also be when they already have their licences for the majority of those kids?

Mr BUTCHER - In Queensland?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr BUTCHER - No, a lot of those are learner-drivers, actually. It is done through the schools.

CHAIR - Do many participate?

Mr BUTCHER - About 2 000 a year.

CHAIR - A fairly low percentage, I suppose, of the total.

Mr BUTCHER - I guess in the scheme of things, yes. But that is only one venue in Queensland. I actually worked or contracted to them for a couple of years.

Mr CHAIRMAN - Where is it?

Mr BUTCHER - It is run at Willowbank, south-east Queensland basically.

Ms FORREST - Do the students have to go to a facility?

Mr BUTCHER - The coach picks them up from the school and takes them to the facility, they do the course and then they are coached back to the school.

Ms FORREST - Because with the road-ready one in Canberra the teachers are trained to provide it in the schools, unless they are not at school or they choose to go because they want to get their licence. They get it at 15 years and 9 months in Canberra, but they cannot get their Ps until they are 17, but they have just had more practice.

Mr BUTCHER - I have not totally looked at what they are doing over there, but I think that part of it, for schoolteachers to be involved in all those things, certainly to a certain level that is important, but once you get to the more practical side of things and the braking at speed and stuff -

Ms FORREST - It's all in class; there's nothing in the vehicle.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. That's good and what they need to do then is allow the training companies to deliver the side of it where it needs to be a controlled environment and safely delivered and all of that sort of thing.

Mr DEAN - On the incentive side, I would like to expand a bit more. Is there any other State in Australia currently considering that, to your knowledge?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, as far as I know, and I only have a little research on it, I think Victoria and New South Wales are talking about it at the moment or in the sense that they are talking about something similar with the restrictions. They have all sorts of restrictions there, for V8 and turbo-charged vehicles. They also have restrictions for passenger carrying and the two coloured P-plates, the red and the green P-plates. What

they're looking at doing is, if you do one of these courses you'll be able to go onto the other colour which takes away all those restrictions.

Again, it's a positive thing and I think that's the way it's going. That's why I'm here today. I think that we all need to jump on board and push that across promote the training that's available to make drivers safer. The course only takes a day and it's a skill drivers will use for the rest of their life. Our roads kill a lot of people; we're talking four people a day at the moment in Australia which is a lot. This is a chance to maybe make a bit of difference.

Ms FORREST - That only four people are killed; there are all the others who are seriously injured.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, hundreds a day are seriously injured. It offers the Government some significant benefits, such as savings on the financial cost of an accident or a crash, police resources, ambulance, hospitals, nurses, doctors, the whole lot. Everything can benefit from keeping our drivers safe.

Mr DEAN - I'd like to pursue one other thing. We've gone past the safe, controlled environment under which you undertake all of this. The police position was always that it's not a good position to adopt in most situations because that safe, controlled environment you talk about doesn't exist out there on the road.

Mr BUTCHER - True.

Mr DEAN - It's a whole different scenario once you get them out on the road. Police used to carry out, as you'd probably be aware, extended courses for their drivers in a controlled environment. They found at the end they were really causing problems because they were going out on to the roads and so on trying to use those same techniques which didn't work and created issues.

Mr BUTCHER - That's why ours isn't really skills-based in the sense that we're not trying to teach them how to corner fast or something like that, because that's when it can give the wrong message. What we're doing is saying, 'Come down a straight piece of road, it's wet, at 60 kph and try to stop the car'. We keep it very simple and I still think -

Ms FORREST - Before you do that activity, do you ask how far do they think it will take them to stop?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, the whole course is based around building up to these exercises. We do what's called an uncorrected assessment with all our courses. The first thing we do outside tell them to drive at 60 kph and show us how they would stop the car in an emergency. They all go sailing off down the road and don't stop, don't brake hard enough.

Mr DEAN - Sorry to cut you off. Do you teach them, as a part of that, the safe stopping distances on all types of asphalt, for instance -

Mr BUTCHER - It does vary on gravel and dry and wet.

Mr DEAN - you have the hard surface, the very smooth surface, the rubberised surfaces now
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Mr BUTCHER - What's the biggest difference? What's the biggest factor in your stopping distance?

Mr HARRISS - Tyre tread.

Mr BUTCHER - No, speed. All we are trying to say is, 'You're never going to be in a car park -

Mr HARRISS - I didn't pass that test.

Laughter.

Mr BUTCHER - 'You're never going to be on a race track or in a car park, that's never going to be this situation; what we want you to understand is what happens at 40 kph as opposed to 80 kph' and at 40 kph they stop in the length of this room, at 80 kph they stop 100 metres down the road. That's what we're trying to say. It doesn't matter if it's gravel, a wet or dry road; what we're trying to say is -

Ms FORREST - The principle is the same.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, slow down so you can stop sooner. That's what we're trying to get across. We discuss those things but it's more the effect of the speed that we want to worry about.

CHAIR - Your course is mainly defensive driving rather than advanced driving?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, that's right. We really don't run any advanced driver training courses; very rarely, and a prerequisite is that they've done a defensive course.

CHAIR - Do you think the advanced driving courses tend to make drivers over-confident? That's often said.

Mr BUTCHER - I think, again, because we have a prerequisite of doing the defensive course, they have the basics right and they have an appreciation for those things so that when they do an advanced course they're mostly more enthusiast drivers. Because we are involved in motor sport, we push very heavily for all those people, and even on our defensive courses, to join car clubs, to use their car if they want but in a safe environment and all that sort of thing. It is a whole other conversation but we have had that running in Perth and in Queensland with a lot of success. We have just advertised at Sandown a very cheap afternoon where people can come down to the track, jump in the car with us and do some laps of the track to enjoy their car in a safe environment. I think that, as a recreational side of things, those young drivers will do that sort of stuff anyway. There need to be more opportunities to encourage them to do it off the road in a safe place.

Are you familiar with Mount Cotton Training Centre for drivers in Brisbane, where they do the police training?

Mr DEAN - No, not really.

Mr BUTCHER - We used to run them there and we would get 25 or 30 young guys or girls with their cars and they would have a bit of fun on the skidpans and all that sort of thing. The cops would often come down and have a chat to them and everyone would be a bit nervous. They would say, 'If you guys keep it here and just drive sensibly on the road' - and they know the cars so they did not get hassled any more. It was a good PR exercise. It promoted a bit of maturity and, 'Hey, I have this car but I am going to drive it sensibly on the road. I can bring it to the track and have a good time and I am not going to get hassled for it'.

Otherwise they get pulled over in that pool of young drivers with these cars and they get harassed all the time. That then creates the wrong message and again it goes down that negative path. Ultimately what I would like to see is more days where the young drivers can use their cars and enjoy it in safety, where everyone is going in the same direction and there are run-off areas and all the rest of it. But we need to back it up with all the road safety stuff as well so they can appreciate the difference. Most of the guys who do track days are not the bad drivers, or the hoons on the road. We find a lot of them say - 'I have this car and it does this and that', 'Have you ever done a track day?' 'No'. 'Then how do you know all this stuff? Where are you using it?' 'Just around'. We say, 'That's a bit stupid. Why don't you go and do a track day?' They will have a million excuses.

What we need to do is say, 'You need to get it off the road, use it where it is supposed to be used and use it as a means of transport every other day of the week'. That is, I guess, one of the things with young drivers that we have deal with. Every young driver who comes to one of our courses puts their hand up at the end of the day and says, 'I want to do more'. They actually want to go out. They say, 'We have learned all this stuff and that is great but where can we go? What can we do?' There need to be some more opportunities for those guys and girls who have done the course and go, 'Yeah, that's good. We have learnt a lot and we want to be safer but we also want to use our car, so what can we do?' There are very few avenues for that at the moment, although Tasmania is pretty good with Symmons and Baskerville open a fair few days.

CHAIR - Do you do motorcycle training as well or just motor vehicles?

Mr BUTCHER - We do not, just motor vehicles.

CHAIR - Do you have any views on whether there should be any restrictions on the power of motor vehicles that young people are able to drive?

Mr BUTCHER - I do not know if you are familiar - I think just this week they changed a ruling in New South Wales for V8s because Mercedes-Benz were complaining that a lot of their vehicles are V8 supercharged or turbo-charged and so if mum and dad have a nice Mercedes-Benz and the children are not allowed to drive it because it fell in that category. They have made a dispensation for that particular type of vehicle.

I have an article about powerful cars here which was researched at the University of Western Australia. I can leave it with you to have a look at it. In Western Australia they looked at 662 serious injury crashes between 1999 and 2000 in WA and then they looked at the power to weight ratio of all those vehicles. It worked out that 3 per cent of the

crash vehicles has a power to weight ratio above 100 kilowatts per tonne and only two had more than 125 kilowatts per tonne. I think what it highlighted was that the vehicles are not necessarily the issue and it is very much about getting the drivers sorted. I say this when we are in rallying or motor sport; it is just as easy to hurt yourself in a Hyundai Excel as it is in a Subaru only the Subaru will probably do it sooner because it gets up to the higher speeds more often. With the wrong person behind the wheel it could still result in an incident or accident. That is really where I think -

CHAIR - I think that is a fairly general opinion, isn't it?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, but a lot of these things are a bit of knee-jerk reaction. It is the easy, warm, fuzzy box-ticking exercise; we will ban this or that, we will make it harder. What we are talking about today is what they did with motorbikes pretty much across the country a few years ago. They said, 'All these people on motorbikes are killing themselves so let's make it harder for them to get a licence. They have to do a course, they have to do this, they have to do that, and it has not really changed the amount of people getting a licence. What has happened is the riders coming out, the majority of them, have probably become safer and more responsible. We are still having a lot of fatalities with motorbikes, but I think if you looked at the number of bikes on the road now as there was 10 years ago there are a lot more bikes on the road. We do not want to see anyone die, but unfortunately it is a bit like a Hyundai or WRX thing. If you put the wrong person on a motorbike they are still going to hurt themselves, it is just a lot easier to do that. The training has helped, but they do not want to bring it in for drivers.

Ms FORREST - One other issue in relation to that is that often these more upmarket cars which the parents are more likely to have would have a lot more safety features. They have better brakes, they have vehicle stability assist or whatever it is called, and a number of other features, airbags all round, whereas these less high-powered cars which are the ones often the younger people can afford do not have all of that. So you are actually not comparing apples with apples in statistics, are you?

Mr BUTCHER - The newer cars are just chalk and cheese safer than a car 10 years old, and 10 years is not that long ago, that is the scary part. You look at a 10-year old car and think that is still a pretty new car, but the safety features are just moving forward. The other day I hired a new Corolla. You are sitting so much further from the front of the car and you can see how they are getting the safety ratings, because the design and engineering has improved, whereas a Corolla 10 years ago or a Corolla 20 years ago -

Ms FORREST - As I used to have.

Mr BUTCHER - is not comparable. And this is why maybe last year we did see a decrease in the road fatalities in Australia, but what has happened this year is we are up 16 per cent or something already. We should not be seeing it. Cars are getting safer. The roads are getting safer, which is another argument. The only thing that is not getting safer are the drivers.

Ms FORREST - But are we getting more older cars on the road that do not have these features? Is that an issue as well?

Mr BUTCHER - I think it is probably going the other way, because as we get newer cars the older cars drop off, and so the 10-year old cars, yes, they are not as good as today's but they are still better than the ones that were 20 years old. The fleet is progressing more towards safer cars, so I think we should still see an improvement in safety because even a 10-year old Commodore or Falcon has airbags, has ABS, whereas a 20-year old Commodore or Falcon did not. Ten years ago there should have been a lot more accidents and fatalities than there are now. There are a lot of factors, and we have to avoid getting tied up in maybe the statistical side of it. My motivation for doing a lot of this training is my background in aviation. I have been a commercial pilot for 17 or 18 years. I have worked in the industry, flown all over Australia -

CHAIR - Do you feel safer in the air or on the roads?

Mr BUTCHER - In the air, generally speaking. Sometimes I would rather be on the road. But I got my licence when I was 16, as did a lot of the young pilots out there, and as part of that process, and the thing I say to the drivers that attend a course, is that in three hours I can teach you how to take off and land and fly around in a Cessna. It is not that hard. In fact it is probably easier than driving a car, but you have to have 20 hours before you go solo, so that other 17 hours is about all the things that could go wrong. We practise emergency engine failures and instrument failures and unusual attitudes, short field approaches and whatever other failures, and that is just so you can fly around the block by yourself. And then to get to a commercial level where you can take fare-paying passengers is 200 hours of training. But at the end of the day when something goes wrong, if you have had the right training you do not sweat, you just do what you have to do, like the guy who landed in the Hudson River and all the rest of it. That relates to road safety, because if we give people the benefit of the doubt, let us give them the training that they need. Hopefully they never need it, but when it does come to the crunch it should be programmed in the system somewhere and they can react appropriately. They also would be a bit more cautious because they know the things that can go wrong. Most of us do not even walk around the car and check that there is air in the tyres before we get in it, which is pretty scary, but once you have had a few blow-outs and a few other things go wrong you tend to be a bit more, 'Oh, the car's got a bit of a lean, I might walk around the back and see why'. But most other people just get in and drive, and we see them on the road every day, people driving with flat tyres and other funny things.

Ms FORREST - I know that with a course I did, the John Bowe course, everyone went into the classroom and the cars were all parked outside, they were lined up, and we did not know what was going on outside. They were actually going around checking all the tyres and checking the tyre pressure as well as the state of the tyres. Mine were perfect.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - Norma's were terrible. Norma was on the course as well. It was interesting that we didn't realise they were doing that but it did highlight there were a couple of younger people on the course whose tyres were really severely under-inflated and they actually had to send them to the service station before they could do anything else.

Mr BUTCHER - The scary part is you can't tell by just looking at them. That's just education; a lot of that stuff can be taught at school. We use the in our course that you

wouldn't get on your pushbike and ride to the shops with flat tyres because it's a lot harder, it doesn't stop or turn very well. Yet we get into something that can go far faster and we never even check tyre pressures.

CHAIR - Talking of speed, do you have any views about the speed limits in Tasmania particularly on the Midland Highway? Is that acceptable; 110 kph or should it be reduced, do you think?

Mr BUTCHER - I don't think it's a big issue. I think, again, with the appropriate training it's not but of course leaving the road at 100 kph is not a good thing at any time so it still presents an issue and if we brought everyone back to 60 kph we'd probably see far less fatalities, but that's not going to solve any issues. One of the things I have highlighted in Tassie which I haven't seen in many other places is the restriction on speed for your P-plates and the hazards that it causes. We live off the Bass Highway and quite often we'll all be cruising along at 100 kph and the next minute you're catching up to somebody and there's a truck catching up to them and this poor P-plater's driving around the road at 80 kph with a truck bearing down on them at 100 kph and everyone else behind them. That would intimidate me. I think that is something that needs to be addressed probably sooner than later. I understand the reasons for it. But maybe on the main highway they should be allowed to do 100 kph but if it's a 100 kph zone on a country road or a windy road then they'd still have to do the 80 kph. Most of us can't do 80 kph on those roads anyway so it would be silly to try to do 100 kph.

Mr DEAN - When people are learning to drive should they, under instruction, be able to drive faster than the 80 kph limit? That is the limit of a learner at this stage before they get their P-plates.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, they should be allowed to drive. Absolutely.

Mr DEAN - The reason being is that at 80 kph you are unlikely to pass too much traffic out there. Once you get off your P-plates then suddenly you're up to the 100 kph or 110 kph and in some cases you can pass vehicles and goodness knows what else without any training really.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. An example of that is when I did my bike licence back in WA. They used to have a limit on L-plates of 72 kph.

Ms FORREST - 72?

Mr BUTCHER - 72, and that was the same for drivers for a long time there as well.

Ms FORREST - Maybe it was a round figure in miles per hour.

Mr BUTCHER - No, it was just whatever they had. But it was 72. So I did my bike licence but because I'd been off my car Ps and had my licence for years when I actually got my bike licence you don't have to have P-plates so you go straight to the 100 kph. So we finished the bike test and we left at the licensing centre and my instructor's off down the highway at 100 kph and I'm like, holy cow; this is the first time I'd ever ridden at 100 kph. He's going around corners and it just highlighted the same thing. I mean, it's the same as 80 kph and then doing 100 kph; it's quite a big jump if you're not used to it.

Ms FORREST - The first time they do it, it's unsupervised.

Mr BUTCHER - That's right, yes.

Ms FORREST - In our current system the first time a P-plater or a young driver will do 100 kph or 110 kph is unsupervised.

Mr BUTCHER - I do think that there are better ways to manage that; maybe with the two-coloured P-plate system - they do have that.

Ms FORREST - Yes. You only have to display your Ps for one year but you're on your provisional licence for three.

Mr BUTCHER - That's right. So perhaps they're still limited to 100 kph instead of 110 kph but regarding this whole business of doing 80 kph, I had one on the way here today and the poor kid - I've taught learner drivers and I know how nervous some of them are - when you've got a truck coming down behind you at 100 kph, it's quite a frightening thing.

Ms FORREST - Unfortunately those trucks get up pretty close behind.

Mr BUTCHER - I nearly had to go through a red light here because I was doing my own thing and the truck, just as the lights changed, pulled into my lane behind me. I just thought, well, are you going to stop? So, I've just eased the brakes and I'm thinking if he doesn't stop I'm going to have to go. That's again, another argument. The truck drivers in the majority I think are pretty good but some of them need to give a bit of respect to some of the other road users out there.

Mr DEAN - Can I touch on alcohol?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes.

Mr DEAN - There has been quite a lot of discussion during this committee's work of the alcohol limits, whether it should be 0.05 or whether it should be reduced to 0.03 or reduced to nil as applies to P-plate drivers. Do you have a view in relation to that?

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, my view on alcohol is that I do not see a problem with the limits technically, my problem is the court system and that the drivers that are out there continuously getting done for drink-driving and then unlicensed and then get back in a car two days later and are driving around again, unlicensed, and they are over the limit and they get caught and caught. The way to fix the drink-driving thing in my opinion is that the sentence needs to be a lot stiffer.

It doesn't have to be money because some people can afford it and some people cannot. Those that cannot do not pay it as we all know, and those that can pay it do not care about it. It really has not achieved very much. I think that if you get caught the second time it needs to be a mandatory jail sentence of a year or a week. It needs to be a serious deterrent to why I am going to think twice before I drink and drive. I think that it ought to be on the first one but people make mistakes and it would be very hard to bring that in

on the first time but certainly if you have been caught for drink-driving once at 0.05 or above and then you get caught a second time there should be no leniency, even if it is a day or two in jail.

A lot of people who can afford to drink would find it very embarrassing to spend two days locked up somewhere as a result of their actions. And they are then going to be more motivated to not do it again. Hopefully it will stop people doing it full stop. In a lot of the fine systems they fine people and lock people up for doing 200 kilometres an hour, which I think is fair, but I think that a drunk driver is far more dangerous than someone who is technically going above the speed limit.

CHAIR - Depending on -

Mr BUTCHER - Yes, it is a circumstance thing. But certainly drink-driving at any speed is dangerous.

Ms FORREST - And wherever you are. Even if you are the only road user you can potentially run off the road.

Mr BUTCHER - You can be a pedestrian or you can be in your house. And this is the problem. I think that is probably what needs to be addressed more so than the levels. I think that it should be zero. But like everyone else we do have the odd drink and I think that you need a margin there just for the fact that if you have been responsible, you have only had maybe two standard drinks over a three- or four-hour period with your dinner, you drive home and you register 0.01, you do not want to go to jail for it, so there needs to be a buffer.

I think that the current buffer is very generous. From my experience of drinking, you blow in the machines at the pub or wherever and when you are at 0.05 you should know that you are at 0.05. I do not think that there should be any, 'I wonder if I should drive or not'.

There is no real excuse for it so getting done twice in that situation really needs a harsher penalty. And I think that is what would help with the alcohol side of it.

CHAIR - Particularly for second and subsequent offences.

Mr BUTCHER - Yes. I think for the first one it still needs to be substantial but I have actually been at some accidents where a drunk driver has been involved and we have had to hold him up against the car he was driving. We came across one guy and he said, 'Can you just call my mates and they'll come and pick me up'. I said, 'No, mate'. He had crashed his car on the same road that my partner drives on and everyone else drives on and what if he lost control and cleaned them up?

CHAIR - That is the danger, isn't it?

Mr BUTCHER - That is the point. I said no. So we called the appropriate people and they took him away.

CHAIR - I am sure that we would like to hear from you for a lot longer but we have limited time. I would like to give each member the opportunity to ask one question, if they wish, before we end the session.

Mr DEAN - I have one because it is such a huge issue and I would like to see if you have a view on it and that is hooning drivers, the ones doing the doughnuts and burnouts and so on. I was in a suburb close to Launceston last night and the roads are black with tyre and I have just done a media report and released some of the tape. What is your view in relation to that? Is there any way around it?

Mr BUTCHER - This is maybe what I talked to you before about, let us try to give them some facilities or venues where they can go and do it. Because then we can get hard on them on the road. At the moment it is very hard because the hoon police are trying to do their job but at the same time a lot of the young blokes are asking where they are supposed to go to have fun and do burn outs. Every young man out there has done it at some stage, or if they haven't there is a high percentage of them that want to and what we need to do is funnel that into the right facilities.

There are facilities out there not being utilised and this is what upsets us. Even from our point of view. We battle, even here in Tassie, to get access to facilities to do our training without paying an arm and a leg to do it. They need space and facilities, because then you can go down there and say, 'Look guys, you could go here and do it every Friday night until your heart's content and no-one is going to say diddly, but you're doing it here so here's the deal'. I think that with a lot of things there needs to be an alternative to give them an option to do it and then you can clamp down on them.

One of my concerns living near Burnie is that, and it amazes me because I know from my experience that even just driving around in a rally car I get picked on, but you can be standing in the main street in Burnie and people fly up and down that road.

CHAIR - Same here, particularly at night but during the day as well.

Mr BUTCHER - And they tend to be the younger kids and I am thinking, why aren't they getting pulled over?

CHAIR - That's right.

Mr BUTCHER - But then they will pull you over for doing a little bit extra on a highway and okay, you should not be doing that either but my point is there is such a high-density area, there are kids, people -

CHAIR - Should be more police?

Mr BUTCHER - More police in the town areas.

Ms FORREST - It is right beside the police station.

Mr BUTCHER - That is exactly my point. We sit there and we watch them go past and you see the same cars do it over and over and I would do it once and I would be in trouble and I think -

CHAIR - It is frustrating, isn't it?

Mr BUTCHER - I do not know how it happens.

CHAIR - In your submission you deal with a number of risk factors -

Mr BUTCHER - Yes.

CHAIR - and looking through those I would have thought that if people did not take risks there would be no accidents.

Mr BUTCHER - As a statement it is true.

CHAIR - No crashes, there would only be accidents. I correct that. There would be no crashes through anybody's fault but only true accidents.

Mr BUTCHER - As soon as you get into a vehicle you are taking a risk because your body physiologically is only designed to operate at about 5 kilometres an hour if you are me or maybe up to 10 or 15 if you are a bit faster so therefore as soon as you start travelling faster than that there is a risk of injury to yourself and, of course, to other people.

What we talk about with risk management is that we need to identify what are the things that are most likely going to effect that and our lifestyle, unfortunately, requires us to drive vehicles most of the time and so we need to identify the risk and have some sort of a plan towards minimising those things. There is so much that we can do and we are chipping at the top of the iceberg at the moment. When you talk about human factors, and this is what we specialise in, there is a lot of work to be done.

You can start at the primary school, the high school, your learner P-plate and then right through to maybe every five or 10 years there needs to be something as well. I think there is a lot of opportunity there. We just need to kick it in the guts.

CHAIR - Mr Butcher, thank you very much for travelling all the way to be here.

Mr BUTCHER - No worries.

CHAIR - It has been both interesting and helpful and we do appreciate that.

Mr BUTCHER - My pleasure.

CHAIR - Safe travelling back to Burnie.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr ROGER VALENTINE OAM WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Thank you very much for being here and for your submission. We would like to give you an opportunity to highlight any matters either in your submission or that you have by way of other views and then we would like to ask you some questions and have a discussion about that.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you very much indeed, Mr Chairman. One thing, of course, is that I am absolutely highly delighted and elated and almost unbelievably thrilled by the fact that when I went to a christening of a relative in Hobart just before Christmas, I found that audio-sonic centre lines were being installed on the Midland Highway.

CHAIR - A colleague of ours found them on the way from Hobart this week.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - Did you test them out or did you just notice they were there?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I did and people in the car complained bitterly because it held us up for five minutes but that is because I was dancing and they had to wait for me to get back into the car. I was highly delighted because I have been lobbying for this to be done for about five or six years.

CHAIR - It is a feature of your submission.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, and I would perhaps produce to the committee an article that is in the *Tasmanian Senior* and those who know me, know how extraordinary it is that I started off saying I was wrong. This refers to the Bass Highway -

CHAIR - Surprised that you are a senior too?

Mr VALENTINE - That is where the Bass Highway, I had commented earlier, was so free of head-on collisions for decades because of the audio-sonic centre lines there. Then suddenly, I was informed that there were head-on collisions and the first of them was a death near Parramatta Creek. I could hardly believe it. When I drove up there I found that the audio-sonic centre lines on the Bass Highway had been erased.

Ms FORREST - Worn away?

Mr VALENTINE - All the way, and whilst the audio-sonic sidelines were all fresh and new when I went up beyond Smithton, the centre lines were no longer audio-sonic. That is why I wrote that article. What makes me pleased is, each day I open the newspaper I do not see a report of a head-on collision on the Midland track anymore. In the three-and-half months they have been there, there have not been any head-on collisions on the Midland track.

Mr HARRISS - I notice you have deteriorated from highway to road in this and now to tracks.

Mr VALENTINE - I have to call it the highway because people do not know what I am talking about when I talk about the Midland track. But if one ever follows these huge BW high vans and watch them pass and you have to follow them because the maximum speed is 100 kph and they do 100 kph and the road, in most parts, is so narrow, you notice that they drive right on the left-hand lane white line. But when they pass a vehicle coming from the opposite direction and you look at the top of the vans and the undulation of the road and the wind, whilst the trucks are passing about a metre-and-a-half apart, you see the tops come close. Anyone who travels on the Midland 'Highway' are amazed that there have not been so many more crashes of those BW vans because of the narrowness of so much of the Midland track. I should not call it a track, it is really a road. It is not a track, it is a road, I must confess.

CHAIR - It is a heritage track so it could be classified as no work permitted on it.

Mr VALENTINE - That could be so, but on the other hand, I am delighted to note that, as I said in that article there, the new Prime Minister made it part of his election campaign that money would be spent on the Midland road. I recall, about two-and-a-half years ago, the present State Minister for Infrastructure, calling it a track. I was very disappointed when he gave the Prime Minister an excuse for not doing anything about it by reportedly saying, 'Oh, we don't need a four-lane Midland road', when I remember him calling it a track.

Whilst I am highly delighted, and I must admit that the funeral directors are very disappointed, that audio-sonic centre lines are there because it reduced the amount of work they get and the ambulance people are disappointed because it reduces the amount of work they get, the fact of the matter is so much of the highway is still too narrow to be safe.

When I have spoken to people about this they say, 'Oh, but 200 kilometres, making it four lanes, oh, the cost is enormous'. As I said in my submission, from Hobart to Granton there are four lanes; from Launceston to Breadalbane there are four lanes; from north of Melton Mowbray for a considerable distance there are four lanes so that the number of kilometres that need to be increased to four lanes is nowhere near 200. I have not taken specific measurements because I think that's more for the experts, but when I think of what a wonderful thing was done for employment during the depression of the 1930s when the Pinnacle Road was built from the Springs to the top of Mount Wellington, I think of the employment that could be generated in constructing the rest of the Midland road to be four lanes and how dramatic that would be in the light of the expectation of a lot of unemployment in Tasmania. I believe that looking only at the employment that it would create, that in itself is a great incentive for the work to be done.

CHAIR - Plus, importantly, the lives it would save.

Mr VALENTINE - The lives that it would save I think is quite dramatic. I repeat, if you look at 2008 and the number of head-on collisions on the Midland 'Highway', it's a clear indication. Again, it's a clear indication of what happens when you remove the audio-sonic centre lines as happened on the Bass Highway after the audio-sonic centre line was removed. As I pointed out in the submission, it was remarkable how after I was really

pressing this on the minister, the audio-sonic lines stretched only from Campbell Town to Breadalbane but I then found that steadily the audio-sonic white lines went down the side of the highway, south down to Mangalore on each side of the road. Also, I submitted in response to the argument about the noise of the audio-sonic lines for the residents that it's only a matter of stopping them as the road goes through the places where there are residents. That was implemented so even on the side audio-centre when it went through a township they were just ordinary white lines. Obviously, going through residential areas that was a problem solved.

I agreed with all those who said, 'Oh, but really all they're wanting to do is to save money because if they have those noisy lines on the side of the road, cars and trucks won't go on the side of the road and break up bitumen at the edge'. That is a common conception of why they went down the side. The other aspect was that people hadn't realised that if we compare the cost of the centre lines with that the sidelines, the sidelines are continuous lines. In most cases the centre line is a broken line so it wouldn't cost a third of the cost of the sidelines - in other words, half as much again - it would be considerably less because it's broken.

The thing is that work's been done, but as I said in the submission whilst that saves lives I believe it to be a contemporary measure. The real thing that needs to be done, has been suggested by those who come to the State and can't understand how the road between the two major cities in Tasmania is a narrow, two-lane road.

CHAIR - To say nothing of the surface in some places.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I agree, but I haven't found that the surface, except in two particular places, is such that it caused collisions. I have observed that two major smashes occurred when cars got onto the gravel at the side of the road because the gravel is of the little round pebble size and that causes the cars to spin - one this side of Kempton and the other the other side of Campbell Town.

I pointed out that when it was supposed to be made into a highway the foresight of those who were involved in it was great in that the reserves are well back from the side of the road so that there would be a negligible cost of acquisition of land to make it a four-lane highway because there is sufficient room. There are some cuttings, and having had a law practice in Oatlands, I have travelled up and down from Hobart very frequently. There have been great advances in the road in those times, but those cuttings have been cut back dramatically so that there is not the expense of having to make huge cuttings through some parts and road perhaps, instead of being divided by a centre part, could have a safety fence, which would mean that there would not be the huge cost of cutting into those big banks. I don't think that the cost of making the rest of the Midland road into a highway would be as huge as some people would say.

CHAIR - I can tell you one contractor who has done a lot of roadwork said he could do it for \$400 million, not including any costs of land acquisition.

Mr VALENTINE - I think that is dramatic. I wonder what the land acquisition cost was in the bypassing of Ross and Oatlands - both were good. I am not suggesting, for example, that there be a bypass of Campbell Town - I don't believe that that would be a good idea because I believe that Campbell Town and Ross are good opportunities for people to stop

at the business enterprises there. I think if at Ross and Oatlands larger signs were permitted to show that it was a good place to stop for morning or afternoon tea that that would be a good thing, too.

I believe it is dramatically important that there be action taken to make the Midland road into a real highway. I don't believe there would be any heritage lost by doing so.

The other matter that I dealt with in my submission is the speed. I used to travel interstate about every three weeks, doing hearings for various organisations, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, for example, and I have mentioned how often I move around. The extraordinary thing is the speed that is permitted on Tasmanian roads. I have yet to meet anybody from another State who has not expressed dismay at the 110 kph speed that is permitted on our roadways. This is particularly so I think on the east coast where signs say it would be best to slow down but still the speed limit is that which is up on the boards. I found the last time I was around my wife took me there for my birthday the year before last, 75th, and we were tearing back on the road, at 60 kilometres. I thought by gee this is good and she said I think you are going a bit fast dear, but the signs were 110 as anyone who has come up from Swansea through St Helens and back knows. What is the idea of having speeds like that?

In my submission I spoke about the Midland Highway and I spoke also about the fact that I have noticed that very few vehicles do 110 on the Midland Highway. Interestingly those who pass me are usually four-wheel drives - university cars. Interestingly the university vehicles are the ones that go quickly and she works out how much it costs for people to spend longer on the Midland Highway at 100 and 110. I can only say, I suppose, it reduces the employment of the ambulance people, the funeral people, emergency services and the fire engines who have to cut people out of cars and vehicles generally. If the speed was reduced to 100 as the maximum I know those people would have less work to do.

CHAIR - Which the ambulance people, I am sure, would want.

Mr VALENTINE - Well, I would hope so.

CHAIR - Absolutely.

Mr VALENTINE - I would think the majority of Tasmanians would not find a problem of 100 kilometres as the maximum speed.

Mr DEAN - Roger, how do you balance that with statistical data that speed alone is not the cause of very many accidents at all? I am talking about speed normally accompanied by inattentive driving, alcohol and distractions. It is normally accompanied with something else but speed alone, in itself, has not been the cause of hardly any accidents.

Mr VALENTINE - I think that is a very clever thing that was brought up because accidents are caused by inattention. They are caused by distraction, they are caused by fatigue and if you are going slower you have more time to react to the fact that you are on the wrong side of the road, whoops I am in the gravel. So that to say that speed of itself is not a cause of accidents, it is very true if you are on a race track and it is a straight race track

but what about when you come to a curve, or when you come to potholes in the road, or distractions on the road?

As a child I lived at Fern Tree and I used to ride my bicycle to school and during the war potholes were everywhere and when there was snow I used to have to ride through the snow so if one of the big trucks from the Huon, of course in those days it was the main highway, I would have to move over and what was underneath the stone? A pothole. And how often would I come off my bike? Very, very frequently riding to school. So they would say it is not the snow that causes accidents is it? Or it is not the pothole that causes the accident and I think that same argument can apply to those who say that it is not speed alone. It is the factor of speed coupled with the other factors that cause accidents. I believe that if the speed maximum was reduced there is more reaction time to prevent accidents. So whilst I understand that argument I do not think that it is valid.

Mr DEAN - Can I take that one step further then and say, okay, and I do not disagree with what you are saying, why don't we then bite the bullet and reduce the speed limit to 90 or 80 even?

Mr VALENTINE - I think vehicles being as they are and with people's busyness and the time factor the negative reaction to that would be too great. But reduction to 100 I think would be, with few exceptions, accepted.

Ms FORREST - We have had evidence from other parts of the country that people who have been in Tasmanian and seen the roads have made similar comments to yourself that there would only be one section of the Bass Highway that would qualify on the mainland for 110 limit. And because it is only a short section of the Bass Highway, which is the best road in the State, let us face it, that would be eligible for 100 you would not bother because changing the speed limits is an issue. The argument that 100 is more suitable to the roads that we have has been put about.

Mr VALENTINE - I think that you are absolutely right. One of the first things my daughter said on the phone on Sunday was, 'We have arranged for you to have a Toyota Camry for next week and as a reminder, the maximum speed is 100 over here', which must upset the grandson who loves driving at 110.

CHAIR - She would not see you as being a lead foot needing that caution, would she?

Mr VALENTINE - No, but she knows that I stay at 100 so there was a bit of a crack because at university she used to travel at 110 to get to Hobart because she said that 10 minutes costs a lot of money.

Ms FORREST - But is it 10 minutes?

CHAIR - You pointed out in your submission that it takes only 13 minutes longer but it saves between 23 to 26 per cent of your fuel.

Mr VALENTINE - I am a bit keen on the petrol thing. I always keep it because it is a way, being a car crank, that I have been able to check that my car is in working condition. Being of my age and being retreaded, not as good as retired -

Laughter.

Mr VALENTINE - I am conscious of the cost. So I have always kept a very close eye on and always fill the tank up and always do my kilometres. My car when I go to Hobart generally does about 42 miles to the gallon. For you here who have no idea what miles are, that used to be -

CHAIR - I know nothing else.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - How does that equate to kilometres per litre?

Mr VALENTINE - About six litres per 100 kilometres. That generally goes to eight or nine if I am rushed and have to go to a DVA meeting and I am running late or I am held up with road works or behind these trucks that are doing their maximum, which is 100. I think it is 100. But when you get to passing lanes -

Mr DEAN - I think that the maximum for trucks is 110 where it is 110. I do not think that there is any difference.

Mr VALENTINE - It is 100, I think.

CHAIR - It is 100 all over.

Mr VALENTINE - It is 100 all over.

Ms FORREST - Some trucks are supposed to speed-limited to 100 but I do not know if it is all of them.

Mr DEAN - I need to check that.

Mr VALENTINE - I only go to Hobart every six weeks or so, but I have not found any truck drivers exceeding the speed limit as a standard thing. One hundred is what they do and you stay behind them at 100 even though your limit is 110. Of course that is the other aspect, that because they are limited to 100 and the road is a narrow thing, you just cannot pass because you cannot see past them and there is not enough space to pass them, if there is anything coming in the opposition direction and you only have an extra 10 kilometres per hour to pass them. That is another reason. On a four-lane highway they can do 100 kph, 90 kph or whatever and I could do 100 kph. I do not mind pulling over. I pull over as soon as there is a side road or something if there is a bank-up of cars, but seldom is there a bank-up of cars. That is what surprises me because I am very conscious of what is behind me all the time. That is why, as I say in my application, in my 57 years of driving I have never, ever been - since 1950 so 59 years not ever even being charged with a traffic offence. I am very conscious of the law.

CHAIR - You mention in your submission that you agree with the widespread view that it would help to have more visible presence of the police. You suggest even two or three vehicles on the road. Would you like to discuss or amplify that?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. It is most noticeable that if there is a police car, you get plenty of indication from oncoming cars that there is a police car about. There have been many occasions when I have seen the hidden police cars going down Spring Hill, hidden off the road with their cameras and speed guns. It never worries because the car has cruise control and my cruise control is such that I am able to concentrate on driving and what is about instead of looking up and down to the speedo all the time. Cruise control is a great advantage, I believe, when you are travelling in the country because you can then concentrate on driving, not on the speedo.

Ms FORREST - And keep an eye out for police cars.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, that is quite true. Not only that but you can watch other people getting caught, which is good fun although not as good fun as when I was in private practice and I thought, 'Here comes a client'.

Laughter.

CHAIR - I do not think you can make much money out of speeding cases.

Mr VALENTINE - It is most noticeable, if there is a police car which might be on other sorts of business, how everybody is so much more careful. I am not taking away from the fact that I am seldom blocking traffic if I am only travelling 100 kph but you see much more attention being given. They do not necessarily have to drive up and down the road. There are truck pull-over areas where they can sit, if you like. They do not have to have speed cameras. But I think the investment involved would be great. I am surprised that there has been a dramatic reduction. I was Chairman of the Police Promotions Appeals Court for a number of years, as a result of which I often get information. I have information that there was a reduction of funds for traffic control and that was why the number of visible police cars on the Midland road was reduced dramatically.

CHAIR - When was this? When did you receive that information - recently?

Mr VALENTINE - I received it from four sources. The first was six years ago. It was reaffirmed four years ago and a former police inspector told me last week that there was this action when I was talking about coming here. This was reaffirmed by him today.

CHAIR - Was that a reduction in funding for road traffic police patrols?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

CHAIR - Instead of an increase.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. One of the factors is that I think speed control was handed on to another organisation, or another section we shall call it. Whether or not that still exists I do not know.

Ms FORREST - Were standards of speed cameras and the radar guns set according to a separate department within the police force? Is that what you are suggesting?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, a separate section.

Ms FORREST - And resourced separately to normal policing work?

Mr VALENTINE - For example, I live at Trevallyn and I come down the section of the road from the shopping centre before it crosses the bridge. There are traffic officers there in uniform but in places like Pitt Avenue there are unmarked cars and the officers are not in uniform.

Ms FORREST - Are you suggesting they should look like the transport people or something like that?

Mr VALENTINE - I am not able to say for sure but I have been told that it was seconded; that is how it was put to me. Speed control was seconded, not completely but a major proportion.

Mr DEAN - What happens is it is secured in the regional budgets but the Road Safety Taskforce, which sits aside of the regional budgets, puts money into it as well and those people carrying out the speed camera functions are normally civilians employed within the police department. Then you have transport officers from Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources also carrying out some of that testing.

Mr VALENTINE - There we have it from the horse's mouth.

Ms FORREST - To put an alternative view on having more police on the roads, it has been suggested that having even three or four police in marked cars on the Midland Highway only has an immediate impact and once you have gone past that police car or have seen the speed camera or whatever that impacts your behaviour right there and then but when you get down the road you think that is fine and you might go back to speeding or whatever you might have been doing incorrectly before. In saying that, should we really be trying to alter driver behaviour more broadly rather than having to use that punitive method because police cannot be everywhere?

Mr VALENTINE - Ms Forrest, that is quite correct. I am not talking about one car, I am talking about perhaps two.

Ms FORREST - But even two on a stretch of road that long -

Mr VALENTINE - No, with respect I am thinking about one perhaps between Campbell Town and Ross, for example, and perhaps another between Hobart and Oatlands or between Oatlands and Ross, that sort of thing. I do not think it is a substitute, but it is not an expensive assistance to control.

Ms FORREST - My point is that potentially it only impacts on the behaviour of the driver at that particular point.

Mr VALENTINE - That is not my experience. I am very interested in cars and driving and have been involved in the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport for more than 50 years and I am very interested in driver reactions. This is one reason I like cruise control because I can watch reactions of drivers. When I come to an intersection or I come to a

roundabout I watch the faces not the front wheels because you are able to see if someone is coming to a junction or an intersection whether the driver is looking at you or looking away and therefore you drive and react accordingly. I am very interested in people's reactions and I do not think the fact that they have gone past a patrol car means that they then just let their head go.

Ms FORREST - It is interesting when you see people drive past the scene of a crash, a serious crash. I do 50 000 kilometres a year so I do a lot of time on the road and I see some really interesting things. I have nearly been cleaned up several times in the last couple of years.

Mr VALENTINE - On the Midland road?

Ms FORREST - On the Midlands, Bass, everywhere. I know what I am talking about. I have driven past fatal road crashes and everyone slows down past a crash. Obviously you can't go fast anyway because you've got police and emergency vehicles and the whole bit, but you just go up the road a bit further and the cars will take off again.

CHAIR - But if they felt there was a risk of seeing another patrol car unexpectedly about 5 or 10 kilometres further on they may not.

Ms FORREST - But if you had a police car every 5 to 10 kilometres you'd have a lot.

Mr VALENTINE - What I'm suggesting is even 50 kilometres away. The trouble is I can't speak of recent times because there are very few marked police cars on the midland road now but going back - I've only lived in Launceston 15 years but I have driven a great deal all over the State, particularly along the north-west where my daughter used to live.

Mr DEAN - Roger, I take it you support the new systems that they're trialling in some States and have got in place in some States where you pass through a speed check put in place by police -

Ms FORREST - Point-to-point.

Mr DEAN - Point-to-point speed checking where they set it up here, you go through and then you're checked again, say, 10 kilometres away or 15 or 20 kilometres south -

Mr VALENTINE - Near Epping.

Mr DEAN - Yes and then they do a calculation of your average speed through those points and if you exceed that then you're charged and booked and so on. That's one of the current systems they're looking very closely at on the mainland; some are using them, in fact, in some places.

That's a new system and I think that would work well, wouldn't it, if you were -

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

Ms FORREST - That has the potential to have a bigger effect because rather, if you go past a speed camera and you're not speeding and you know you haven't been caught speeding

then you know that there's not going to be another one immediately down the road. But with point-to-point if you travel from this point and 20 kilometres later you go past another point and you've done it in less time than you could, it means you have to not speed for the whole of that distance pretty much. Of course, people are always going to do things that perhaps are inappropriate but that way you've got more chance of stopping people speeding over a distance as opposed to at one point with a camera.

CHAIR - The way to combat it is to stop for lunch, strangely.

Laughter.

Mr VALENTINE - Ms Forrest hit the nail on the head there. One of the great factors of the safety of a four-lane highway, especially a divided highway, is that you do have people who make mistakes, who are tired, who have been drinking, who are showing off, whose kid in the back seat is being sick and they're turning around and who are changing the channel especially when they're coming up from Hobart changing from the ABC which is AM to northern which is FM and they're fiddling with it but when they do make a mistake - whoosh - they're unlikely to hit oncoming traffic because you've got a four-lane highway.

Ms FORREST - A divided four-lane highway.

Mr VALENTINE - A divided four-lane highway. So speed in itself can be a factor but by the four-lane divided highway idea is that the errors, the mistakes, the stupidity, the unfortunate accidents don't affect as many people as on the midland road, undivided and as narrow as it is.

CHAIR - We've exceeded our time but I'll allow one more question for each member if they wish.

Mr DEAN - The speed camera, Roger; there's a lot of talk from time to time about speed cameras being hidden, that they should be out in the open view where the public at least know they have gone past that speed camera and have that in mind. I'll give you an example of this at Devonport; it's a good example of where a car went through a speed camera site that was hidden somewhat from view and 100 metres above that site the car crashed and killed the three occupants. Would you say they ought to be open or is there a need for them to be hidden and not in view?

Mr VALENTINE - Speed cameras?

Mr DEAN - Yes. What is the greatest speeding deterrent, is probably what I am saying.

Mr VALENTINE - I think both can apply. One is as a deterrent and the other is for catching people who are deliberately breaking the law. I don't feel that one could exclude the other if we are thinking about police in broad terms, as you are familiar with.

CHAIR - Mr Valentine, would you like to make any closing remarks?

Mr VALENTINE - I think I have expressed what I wanted to get across. I would like to express my appreciation of the honour and the attention I have received from Nathan in coming here. I think this is something we have to do for our employment and our safety and I know it is going to reduce the unemployment. Let us reduce the cost of hospitals and things and let us employ people because I think it is something that can really make a whale of a difference. I am not excluding other roads but the Midland Highway is one that is so much a danger.

CHAIR - I think the ambulance people would welcome any relief from what they have to deal with. Thank you very much, Mr Valentine. We appreciate your submission, the time you have been good enough to give us and the expertise that you have in this area. It has been very helpful.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr KEITH PRICE, CHAIRMAN, SAFER ROADS FOR CYCLISTS TASMANIA INC., WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Mr Price, welcome and thank you for your submission and for coming to give evidence. The thrust of your submission is that it would be desirable to have more rail freight services to have heavy vehicles off the road in the interest of road safety.

Mr HARRISS - That is the next one.

CHAIR - Sorry, cyclists. You are concerned about safer roads for cyclists in Tasmania. If you would like to tell us more about your views.

Mr PRICE - As an introduction, although I am chairman of Safer Roads for Cycling the views that I am expressing have not been endorsed by that group. They are matters which we deal with and have discussed, but I am not presenting an endorsed document on their behalf.

I will refer to a number of facts in the next few minutes most of which come from a publication by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau which dealt with deaths of cyclists due to road accidents. There are a number of references which I have taken from an organisation called the Cycle Promotion Fund. The facts that I quote are from there and I cannot bona fide them or anything.

As far as Safer Roads for Cycling is concerned we are totally concerned with just the safety of cyclists on the road rather than competitive cycling, rather than fund-raising and it came about as the result of the death of a young cyclist in Burnie some years ago. As a result of that, Cradle Coast Authority encouraged the development of the Safer Roads for Cycling.

As members of that organisation we have managed to attract representatives from all the cycling bodies on the coast plus representatives of all the local councils. It is unique in that it represents a very wide spectrum of interest.

To date we have worked very hard with DIER to get appropriate signage on roads, particularly popular roads for cyclists. We have worked on school education programs and we have a policy of responding to letters which are published in the local paper. It is not hard to find out who has written them in spite of the lack of an address, but we write to them thanking them for their interest and encouraging their interest in cycle safety regardless of their own standing on the issues.

At the moment we are currently working on a code of behaviour for cyclists. So that is where we come from. As far as the current national situation for cycling is concerned over 1 million bikes are sold annually and have been for the last four or five years. In fact, as is often quoted there are more bikes sold in Australia every year than there are motor cars. Not that you would be aware of that from the support and the publicity given to the auto industry.

Ms FORREST - Does that include all the little kids' bikes as well, Keith?

Mr PRICE - The statement is that they sell more bikes now whether they are for seven-year-olds or 40-year olds, but there are more bikes sold and that is a given fact.

Mr DEAN - Keith, is there any statistical data to demonstrate how many more people are actually riding on the roads than there were, say, 10 years ago?

Mr PRICE - Yes, there are.

Mr DEAN - You will probably get to that, I am sorry.

Mr PRICE - No, that is fine. Thank you for that I was not exactly sure how we would go on. If you want to ask me a question by all means do. The number of accidents which have occurred in the last 25 years is on the decrease for cyclists even though there are more bikes being sold. So I guess we have to learn something from that. Currently, two per cent of all total road accidents involve cyclists. Typically from 2002 to date there is something in the region of 26-40 cyclists dying each year. Now, I have not got on hand the exact number of major road accidents but in terms of death, for example in 2005 there were 41 deaths. So that is the sort of figure that we are talking about.

CHAIR - Nationwide?

Mr PRICE - Nationwide. It is actually very hard to get figures on accidents even though we do have pretty good feeds into the local hospitals. They are very reluctant to give precise figures on that. The common cause attributed to the majority of deaths comes under a heading of 'failure to observe'. That is both on the part of the cyclist and of the motorist. That is seen as the major cause of fatalities, a failure to observe, a lack of visibility.

Incidentally, the most common accident involving fatalities and cyclists involves a car running into the back of a cyclist on a country road. That attributes to 40 per cent of all accidents involving cyclists. I find this interesting because daily I get challenged by my friends and associates 'why are you riding, these trucks in the town will run you over'. In fact, the polygraph I have here shows 40 per cent from cars and the others broken down. I am reluctant to say as an advocate of cycling, but it is suggested that as many as 60 per cent of accidents are deemed the fault of the cyclist. Again, that is another point that I have to defend daily as my role as an advocate for cycling and wish I did not have to tell you.

There are fewer accidents but more importantly in countries where there are a greater proportion of cyclists there are far, far fewer accidents. So in your classic cycling countries like Denmark, Holland and what have you -

CHAIR - France.

Mr PRICE - in Europe generally there are far fewer accidents.

Ms FORREST - Do they have better formed cycleways and things like that, though, Keith?

Mr PRICE - There is a whole range of reasons. One of the ones is that for a start motorists expect to see cyclists, whereas here if you are riding along a country road then a motorist

comes around the corner and they say, 'I did not expect to see you here'. So, in a cycle-oriented country they are more ready and more prepared and the motorists themselves are more likely to be bike riders rather than this antagonism which exists between a minority of motorists who have this aggressive approach to cyclists. If a motorist rides then they can anticipate what the cyclist is going to do, they can understand what is going through the cyclist's mind.

Again, in a country where there is more cycling the authorities are more likely to allocate better resources for their requirements, better infrastructure. If there is a strong body of cyclists then there is a generally greater acceptance of the culture of cycling.

Cycling is not - by cycling I do not mean competitive cycling but the use of a bike on the roads in transport situations - accepted culture throughout Tasmania.

Those are some of the points as far as cycling is concerned.

I have just a few throwaway points and observations or comments if you like. It is not always appreciated by everyone that a pushbike is a motor vehicle in the eyes of the law therefore you have rights, you have responsibilities. You are not performing an illegal act as some of my less accommodating friends in their beaten up Holdens have explained to me as they drive past with their windows down and make comment on my parentage. Having said that with the increased health push within our community, we are seeing more people take up cycling and, hopefully, there will be an increase.

Two months ago when the pressure was on with regard to petrol everybody was talking about bikes and my friends who have bike shops tell me they were selling more bikes.

Mr DEAN - Do you have the statistical data there to show how many more now are on the roads than what there was, say, three ago?

Mr PRICE - I can show you a graph which relates from 1982 through to 2007. It does exactly what I am showing you. There is quite a jolt. Incidentally, this is the number of accidents. That has slightly gone down and the number of cyclists has definitely gone up.

Ms FORREST - Have the safety features and safety equipment on bikes changed much in that time, Keith?

Mr PRICE - The introduction of the helmet in 1989, I think it was, was quite traumatic. Again, there are figures which show that the number of people who are seriously injured or die when not wearing helmets is significantly higher.

Ms FORREST - There was that young child in Wynyard just a couple of weeks ago who was hit by a car. He was wearing his helmet and the helmet got a hole in it but he was okay.

Mr PRICE - Yes. There is a definite correlation between accidents and wearing one.

I have never presented evidence to such a forum before. I was not quite sure exactly where to go but what I hope I have set a scene to show you where I think cycling is and

some of the history and some of the trends. I have a number of suggestions here which I think would contribute to the positive safety of cyclists and indeed the community.

CHAIR - We would be very happy to hear about those, thanks.

Mr PRICE - Thank you. The start of it is that we need to promote and encourage a culture of cycling which in turn would reduce the conflict and risks for cycling. I am not sure whether in my introduction you were made aware that I am from Burnie which, although a city, still has a very rural culture about it. Most of the role models we have in the world are big cities. We hold Melbourne up as the ultimate cycling city in Australia. Our challenge, I think, is to think our own way through it. We will not have masses of commuters riding from Penguin to Burnie. To get a whole network of bike paths we have to adopt an approach which is appropriate to Tasmania rather than try to take Copenhagen and transplant it into Tasmania.

CHAIR - Is Melbourne seen as the capital of cycling because it is so level, flat?

Mr PRICE - In part and it has an incredibly strong lobby group led by Bicycle Victoria which has a membership of something like 49 000 people. It is a self-funded organisation. It raises its money through membership and organised rides. They have been through Tasmania. I am off to Perth on Thursday to ride with them. With a membership of 49 000 they have a very strong political lobby. That is how they are able to bring about some of the changes.

Ms FORREST - Are you a member of that, Keith?

Mr PRICE - Yes. I am a member as well.

Driving licence requirements in Tasmania are quite interesting. I am not sure you would be aware of this but before you get a learner's licence you have to do a test involving 'yes', 'no' ticks - Nathan is probably closer to this than most of us -

CHAIR - I did not know he was a cyclist.

Ms FORREST - He is too young to have a licence.

Mr PRICE - I am talking about his driving licence.

CHAIR - I see.

Mr PRICE - He would have had to answer a series of questions to get his licence.

Ms FORREST - Pass the road rules test.

Mr PRICE - There are 164 random questions that can be asked. Three of them refer to cycling and it is in fact possible to satisfy the requirements of the test without answering one question on the issue of cyclists and use on the road. We feel very strongly that there should be some compulsory reference to cycling in the pre-driving test.

n the issue of ongoing driver education, I have a very good publication here published by Cycling South which refers to sharing the roads. That is the essence of what we think underpins the whole question of road safety because it talks about motorists, cyclists and pedestrians sharing and unless there is appropriate sharing we will have accidents. One of the suggestions that we have as far as this road safety issue is concerned is that when drivers receive their notification of licence renewal, they also receive copies of this within the mail and we have suggested that to the authorities. I don't think anything has happened yet, but we feel that an ongoing of education for drivers is important.

Mr DEAN - On your point in relation to aspects of cycling being part of the testing process, to your knowledge when learner drivers are having their lessons, do you know whether there are any facets of that in relation to teaching those learner drivers how to pass a cyclist, who has the right of way?

Mr PRICE - There is an organisation called the Amy Gillett Foundation - she was the young lass who was killed in Germany with the Cycling Australia team, the one that Louise Yaxley was involved in. Following her death, the Amy Gillett Foundation was set up nationally to support road safety. They are working directly with whatever the organisation for learner drivers is, the driving schools, so if as a result of involvement a person goes on the Internet to find the Amy Gillett Foundation there is a list of questions on cycling, which they are encouraged directly to look at. They award one free car a year randomly to someone who looks at the web site. It is rather interesting, little aside, that the car they win is a Volvo. I am not sure whether 17-year-olds get really worked up about Volvos.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - Not the ones I know.

Mr PRICE - Whether they make a hole in the muffler so that it roars or something like that.

Laughter.

Mr PRICE - Yes, there are definite steps being taken to encourage that.

Mr DEAN - Are we embracing that in Tasmania?

Mr PRICE - It is available. I am not sure of the organisation to which the driving schools link but yes, they are.

Ms FORREST - The only failure, I guess, in that is that you can get your learners licence without having any official lessons. You don't have to have lessons; as long as you pass your road rules test and get your 50 hours you can get your licence and not have had any official lessons.

Just on that brochure, Keith, who was the producer of it?

Mr PRICE - It is published by Cycling South. Originally five councils in the south contributed to it. There are now four - Hobart, Clarence, Glenorchy and another. They

employ a cycling officer between them - Mary McParland and as a result of her efforts they produce this.

Ms FORREST - Have they approached the Government to include that with the licence renewals?

Mr PRICE - No, they haven't, but we did. Safe Roads for Cyclists made a submission. It is not happening yet but we hope that it will.

Ms FORREST - Have you had any feedback either way at this stage?

Mr PRICE - Acknowledgment of our suggestion.

Ms FORREST - Are you able to table that brochure for us?

Mr PRICE - Yes.

Ms FORREST - I got my licence renewal the other day and there was nothing in it so obviously it hasn't been acted on yet.

Mr DEAN - Keith, could I go back to the issue you raised that most accidents are rear-end accidents straight into a cyclist? What do you see as important to improving that position? You said that we need to change the culture and get people to recognise and understand that cycling is an important activity in Tasmania and is increasing and improving. Apart from that, what else do you think we could do?

Mr PRICE - There are two issues. One concerns bicycle education - currently there is an advertisement, I think on the television, that tells cyclists to keep left. That is the last thing on earth you want to do because when you move to the left what you are saying is, 'Hey, big truck' - sorry, I shouldn't rubbish trucks because they are the least offenders - 'Hey, car, come past me'. The only times I have ended up in a ditch is when I lost my nerve and moved from 1.5 metres out from the side. The other way is this discussion about riding single breast, two abreast or single file. I appreciate the frustration on the part of motorists - I have done it myself - but one of the good things about riding two abreast is that motorists can see them and can't squeeze past. That is very often a survival tactic.

Mr DEAN - That was my question and I am glad you have raised that because a lot of people say that you are much safer driving in the laneway than what you are at the side.

Mr PRICE - As far as bicycle education is concerned I have a number of points here that I have suggested and I will push through quickly. Some of them will answer your point there. Certainly bicycle education as a means of road safety education within schools is a hands-on meaningful thing. So what we are suggesting is that there should be more opportunity because that is a way of getting the whole picture. There is a bicycle education unit in Hobart which goes into schools for a week at a time and they have five lessons at an hour each and at the end of that it is aimed at giving them the skills to ride in appropriate places.

Another issue as far as road safety and the cyclists are concerned is this whole question of going to school. This week, in fact, is Ride to School Week. That is quite involved in as much as the whole question of getting people to school is quite farcical. I am sure you have all observed what happens outside schools at going to school and going home time. There are a considerable percentage and I cannot quote the fact of accidents which happen near the school during that time.

I was fortunate enough to go to an international conference in Melbourne a couple of years ago talking about pathways and roadways and again they referred to this in some European countries schools are obliged to have a going to school plan so that they can encourage each kid to go to school in a safe way. For example, they monitor where the nasty dogs are, they do a whole series of things, to make it easy and to encourage kids ideally to walk or cycle to school instead of this mum's train or however it is described which is chock-a-block in the mornings. So there are two things there; one is there are lots of accidents happening at that time and the other is that it does not support our thrust for a healthy lifestyle in our community. Getting to school is a worthwhile thing as far as I am concerned.

As far as improving the behaviour of cyclists I recognised to my almost embarrassment that in 60 per cent of accidents involving cyclists the fault lies with the cyclist so we need a big major thrust there.

Safer Roads for Cycling and many other groups are currently talking about a code of behaviour that would include for example appropriate clothing. That does not mean just a helmet, we are talking about how we would minimise accidents. High-risk clothing these days is cheap. When I started cycling however many years ago you had to pay \$120 for some brightly coloured top. You can go into Chickenfeed now and get one for \$12 so that is the sort of thing that we are recommending should be included.

Ms FORREST - Going back to 60 per cent of cyclists are deemed to be at fault in a crash, if you are looking at all crashes not all crashes that cyclists have involve another person or vehicle. So if you looked at statistics that considered the number of crashes involving a cyclist and a motor vehicle do you know how many of the cyclists are at fault?

Mr PRICE - No, I don't to be honest.

Ms FORREST - That would be an interesting statistic to have. When you look at the whole picture the most predominant population who have fatalities on the road are drivers because every car has a driver. If you have a single vehicle crash and one person dies it is always going to be the driver. So you skew your figures if you don't look at the true picture. It might not be that the cyclists are that bad, I am not trying to make you feel better here. One of the issues that has been raised is the lack of observation or failing to observe or failing to notice, whatever it was you said -

Mr PRICE - Failing to observe.

Ms FORREST - We are trained as motorists to look out for other cars. I know in the road safety course I participated in in Canberra recently they use that little film where you see the basketball with the gorilla.

Mr PRICE - And the dancing bear or whatever it is.

Ms FORREST - Yes, or the moon bear, there are a couple of different ones. And they use that to demonstrate that when you are on the road you are looking for cars so you are watching the ball looking for cars and a lot of motorcyclists are cleaned up by vehicles going along looking, doing the head check not seeing a car, so pulling out and the riders who survive say but you looked at me, you saw me and you pulled out anyway. So if we are conditioned as road users as car drivers to actually look for cars is that part of the issue that we need to have that broader awareness and how do you see that being developed?

Mr PRICE - Yes.

Ms FORREST - It comes back to your brochure about sharing the road.

Mr PRICE - You are asking me to present and comment on statistics which I have found for the purposes of this presentation. And yes the figures that I have given you, to the best of my knowledge, are accurate and appropriate, but whether that 60 per cent applies to country roads, town roads or whatever I guess the underlying message that I want to give from that is cyclists are not free from blame. Too often in discussions that occur rightly or wrongly the motorist blames the cyclist and the cyclist blames the motorist instead of saying, 'Hang on, we are in this together'.

CHAIR - I heard about six weeks ago from a man who was driving near Rosevears on that narrow road and he was surprised to come around a corner and find a bunch of cyclists approaching, I think about three abreast and three or four deep, quite a large number. What is the law on that and do you have any comments about that?

Mr PRICE - The law is that you should be two abreast unless someone is overtaking. So you can be two and temporarily three. In all the literature it uses the expression 'two abreast where appropriate' so there is a technique called 'singling out' which is if there is a bunch riding and they come through a narrow gap or a bend they would be in a close to 'single out' - in other words, one behind the other.

CHAIR - And how far back can they go in following each other, how many deep?

Mr PRICE - Legally at the moment there is no restriction. My understanding is that currently that is being reviewed and the suggestion is that they may well identify a group of 30 as being the maximum. But at the moment there is no limit.

CHAIR - So that would be 15 double - two abreast?

Mr PRICE - I guess so.

CHAIR - That would be difficult for a vehicle to overtake on a normal road - a group of 30.

Mr PRICE - In a narrow road, yes.

CHAIR - Is there any code of conduct amongst people in the cycling fraternity as to that, even though that may be illegal?

Mr PRICE - Not an agreed code. There are patterns of practice, if you like, and then again just as you have good and bad motorists, you also have good and bad cyclists. I am often asked to defend the current youth culture where 16-year olds will choose to ride 12-inch wheeled bikes. It always amuses me; are they cyclists? They are riding bikes but am I supposed to stand up and defend their actions?

Mr DEAN - This is the reason why you get cyclists in groups, they tend to bunch up because they feel safer bunched up than in your position, Mr Chairman, of actually staggering back up two abreast or however long it is. They feel much safer bunched up when the cars can go past very quickly.

Mr PRICE - That is exactly right. And you are far safer in the bunch.

Mr DEAN - I am anyway and I am happy to agree with you on that.

CHAIR - You mentioned you had friends in a bicycle shop. Do you also have relatives in a bicycle shop?

Mr PRICE - No, he doesn't work on the coast now, he lives in Queensland.

CHAIR - Oh, Craig. I see.

Mr PRICE - I have obviously got a very Pommie accent and he has not.

CHAIR - I think that his name is still on the shop in Ulverstone, isn't it?

Mr PRICE - Yes, but he has been bought out by someone else.

CHAIR - I did not realise he had moved. That is a pity. Would you like to make any closing comments?

Mr PRICE - No, other than to thank you for your time. I think the question of road safety is a massive issue; cycling is part of it. We need to look at the whole picture and work from there.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We appreciate your interest in the committee and the fact that you've travelled all the way from Burnie.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr PAUL ASHLEY WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Paul, thanks very much for accommodating us by agreeing to come earlier. We appreciate that because we had a witness who had to withdraw. We're looking forward to hearing your views on road safety.

Mr ASHLEY - These are observations on my part. The first one I will talk about is actually a passion. I will just read from my notes and add in bits and pieces and you'll tell me whether it's the sort of thing that you want to hear or not.

The first thing I want to talk about is headlights. In 1995 I was in Vancouver, Canada, and it was law there that all motor vehicles, regardless of what they were, must drive with their headlights on; not parking lights because parking lights are totally useless.

Ms FORREST - They're for parking.

Mr ASHLEY - Well, they're all right for parking but that's it. The idea was that all vehicles were fitted with whatever was required so as when the engine of the vehicle started the headlights came on automatically. The information that I heard at that time was that it - I think it was introduced somewhere around about 1994 but I'm not sure on the dates - reduced the crash rate by up to 50 per cent almost instantly.

Ms FORREST - That was in Canada?

Mr ASHLEY - Well, in Vancouver; whether it was the whole of Canada, I don't know. It was just that I was in Vancouver at the time. So, as I say, we are talking headlights, not parking lights. My observations are that, particularly out on the highways, very few vehicles have their headlights on; most of them seem to be either heading from the north strangely enough, that's not to say the southerners don't do it but you know what I mean. The point of it is about the driver's safety; it's not about your safety, it's about my safety if you see what I mean.

As an example, if you're driving anywhere on a road and somebody's left their front light on, even in the daylight, the first thing your eyes are drawn to is that light because it's on, not for any other reason. It's the same on a highway; if you see a car with their headlights on, you don't know what sort of car it is but you do see the headlights; that's the first thing you see.

So, as an example, if it's drizzly rain or if it's actually raining - or really at any time but certainly at that time - a lot of cars and even trucks blend in with the surroundings and you can't see them; it's as simple as that. But if they've got their headlights on you can see them. If you have to pass a truck, for instance, or anyone who is going slower, you can see them if they have got their headlights on. If they have not the chances are you cannot see them. That can be at any time of day, whether sunlight or not, because things glare, reflect or blend in. I will read my notes and see what examples I have.

Mr DEAN - I am thinking about the lights and if they are wired into the car then they are still on when you are driving around cities with all the city traffic and so on.

Mr ASHLEY - Absolutely, yes.

Mr DEAN - You have no difficulty with that?

Mr ASHLEY - No, absolutely. What you see is the lights. The lights strike you first. I can only speak again about the Vancouver where every vehicle had their headlights on and you saw the lights. It made it very easy, I have to say.

Ms FORREST - I spend a lot of time on the road and am a bit passionate about headlights myself I must admit, I always have mine on. Occasionally, I forget to turn them on in broad daylight but usually I notice if they are not on. The suggestion you are making would avoid the situation I constantly see when you are leaving Hobart or even the north-west and heading the other way in the late afternoon. You will drive in dusk at that time eventually, at some stage it will be getting dark. The other cars on the road driving at that same time do not turn their lights on because they do not realise they are not on.

Mr ASHLEY - That is right.

Ms FORREST - Many times you cannot see approaching cars. I flash my lights at them now. If they do not have their lights on I flash mine at them. If they think it is a police radar, I do not really care what they think. Sometimes they will realise and they will turn them on, I see them turning their lights on in the rear view mirror because you see the tail lights come on so you know they have the message.

Mr ASHLEY - But most of the time they do not.

Ms FORREST - No, they probably think there are police up the road.

Mr ASHLEY - The other thing about that is, and I know it is a long time ago, but when I got my licence I distinctly remember one of the questions being, 'When do you turn your headlights on?'. The answer as I recall was 'When the sun has gone down'.

Mr DEAN - Sunset and sunrise.

Mr ASHLEY - 'If it is raining. If it is overcast'. I think that was it, but it is a long time ago so I cannot really remember. Now you see a lot of vehicles driving without any lights on and it is almost dark. You often see it.

As an examples, I think in 2007 I came across a crash well after it happened. The people were still lying on the side of the road waiting for an ambulance. A car had come out of the southern end outlet of Ross onto the Midland Highway and a vehicle had come along and run straight into it. Also lateish last year a similar thing happened at the northern outlet from Oatlands and a big truck did everything to avoid the crash but somebody crashed into them and what have you. I would not mind betting - and I have not seen the report, obviously - that part of what they say is that they did not see the vehicle coming towards them and that would be because they did not have their lights on, I would say. I am just using that as an example.

Ms FORREST - I had an instance where I was driving along the Bass Highway behind Wynyard with my headlights on in daylight, at about 6 o'clock in the middle of summer so it was still quite light and a car pulled straight across Deep Creek Road in front of me.

Mr ASHLEY - Right.

Ms FORREST - I was not hit but I stopped. I braked hard to avoid a collision but that person clearly did not see me or did not look.

Mr ASHLEY - Or did not look, yes.

Ms FORREST - It is hard to tell.

Mr ASHLEY - I think it is worth the risk of having your headlights on.

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr ASHLEY - I always drive with my headlights on. It is a habit I have; around town, it does not matter, whenever I am in the car the headlights go on and I so far never forget. I do not forget to turn them off either but that does not matter because when you pull the key out the lights go off anyway.

Mr DEAN - As long as you are on dip.

Mr ASHLEY - Oh yes, on dip. Talking about headlights at night, many cars - I would not know what the percentage is - have faulty headlights. Also, if I go back to my youth when we had the car serviced the service station had a thing on the back wall where they could always check the lights to make sure they were all right.

CHAIR - And the RACT used to have free checks of headlights.

Mr ASHLEY - And we do not have any of that now. That is another thing. The other bugbear I have, and I am sure a lot of drivers do, is those later-model cars that have their four lights on, their fog lights as well.

Mr DEAN - That is still an offence, I think, under the Traffic Act, the traffic regulations. It is an offence to have four lights on in the front when you are coming towards a vehicle. You can only have two lights.

Ms FORREST - So even in the fog?

Mr DEAN - In a fog it is different. You are allowed to have fog lights on.

Mr ASHLEY - In the fog you would only have the lower ones on.

Mr DEAN - It was an offence, and I think it still is but I need to check it, to have four lights on.

Mr ASHLEY - A lot of people do not know that. Some look as though their headlights are on full but they just have these. I think they should be not allowed or that they should be

banned. The other thing I find a bit strange - but again it is about how you think, how you observe - if somebody is driving on the road with their headlights on and you are not, it seems to me, why would it not occur to you, 'They have their headlights on, maybe I should put mine on?' But that does not seem to be the way some people think either.

Ms FORREST - Maybe they think it uses fuel. I do not know.

Mr ASHLEY - I think some people think they might get an extra power bill from Aurora.

Ms FORREST - From Aurora, you think, as opposed to the service station.

Mr ASHLEY - I think that is what it is. Some time ago there was a story about that if you had your headlights on it would cost extra petrol, but that is a myth of course. Anyway, that is one of the things I really would like to see in legislation because it is for everybody's safety to have your lights on. That is the first thing. I will just move on to make a few comments about the push bikes and people not being able to see them and so on. There are a lot of white cars on the road and over a period of time I had two white cars. I found that people were actually pulling out in front of me a lot more when I was driving a white car than when I drive the dark-green one that I drive now. Whether that has anything to do with light reflection or whatever, I do not know - or background but I will throw that in there anyway. Driving with four lights on at night is another one. Another thing of course is that people quite often do not indicate or often do not indicate until they are about to turn anyway.

CHAIR - Or after they have turned so that people know what they have just done.

Mr ASHLEY - After, yes. So that is a problem. Faulty lights, I said, and trailers and cars. On a lot of trailers either their wiring is not working or they are not plugged in or something. A lot of trailers and things do not have lights for that reason.

Mr DEAN - I think the law there is that you are supposed to put them on about five seconds before you are going to turn.

Mr ASHLEY - Which is not long enough, is it?

Mr DEAN - No. It is better than not at all, but five seconds is not too bad.

CHAIR - Just before you leave that one, how would you like to see that handled? Notoriously the laws about traffic signals are disobeyed, and probably by the majority of road users. They do not seem to be enforced and there does not seem to be an education program through the media or elsewhere. How would you like to see that dealt with?

Mr ASHLEY - I was going to finish off with that but I can do it now.

CHAIR - I see. No, do it in order if you were going to deal with that.

Mr ASHLEY - The other thing I have a problem with is horseboxes. You still see a lot of old Falcons and old Holdens dragging along a dual - if that is what they are called - horsebox with two horses in it. That is a couple of tonnes that this old car is pulling along. A lot of them do get away with it but sometimes they do not. If there is an

emergency there is no way in the world that they can stop. To me, it is just so silly. I don't know that there have been a lot of accidents with them but sometimes I wonder about the -

Mr DEAN - Are you talking about the braking capacities and things like that?

Mr ASHLEY - Braking capacities, yes, and the weight ratio; when you've got two tonnes behind and the car only weighs half a tonne, let's say, it doesn't make sense.

Mr DEAN - There's a law for weight for ratio on trailers and cars too, but I don't know how it's controlled and so on.

Ms FORREST - The power of the car towing it, do you mean?

Mr DEAN - Yes, if you are towing something above a certain weight it is illegal with certain vehicles; there is all that weight ratio stuff in there.

Mr ASHLEY - How much these things are policed or if they're able to police them I don't know but -

CHAIR - What's your observation about that?

Mr ASHLEY - Probably four or five years ago, just before Kempton where the road was fairly straight but there was a slight bend, something broke or whatever while a fellow was towing a couple of horses. The next thing the car and the horsebox on the side of the road tipped up; one horse was seriously injured and the other one not quite so badly. My observation then is that horses really should be carried in a proper horse truck.

CHAIR - One of those capsized about six or eight years ago.

Mr ASHLEY - I guess it can happen. Obviously, accidents can happen but -

Mr DEAN - They need a suitable towing vehicle.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, that sort of thing. That's just one of things that concerns me. There are a few other things, such as passing lanes on the Midland Highway, for instance, and I instance that because that's where I mostly travel. You know where it says that the lane ends in 500 metres and there are arrows. The way I read the arrows is that it's just advising you that it's coming to an end so when you get to the last arrow then you can move out into the right-hand lane, but a lot of people, as soon as they see the arrow, pull straight over whereas really I would have thought that it is not a sensible idea. If, say, a car or vehicle is passing and all of a sudden this car going a lot slower has pulled into that lane, I've seen people actually pull back into the left lane to go around that vehicle because they've pulled out so quickly and so early.

Ms FORREST - Without indicating?

Mr ASHLEY - I'm not sure about indication. A lot of people don't seem to understand that the sign and arrows are really a warning rather than something you do immediately.

Mr DEAN - Can I just ask you about another road marking at this stage? Coming along the Midland Highway, just after you get out of Conara Junction there is a good example of this; coming towards Launceston after you've passed through Conara, you come along the straight, then there is a right-hand turn across the road into, I think, the road to get back into Evandale.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Where the lane divides the first arrow doesn't indicate that you must turn right for some distance and you see a lot of drivers will pull out thinking that's the commencement of the overtaking lane.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, but there are double white lines there.

Mr DEAN - That's right. Do you see an issue with that one?

Mr ASHLEY - I haven't seen anyone do it, no.

Mr DEAN - I have seen people do it on several occasions. They were caught but there was nearly an accident.

Mr ASHLEY - I guess that needs some observation. There is a double white line but if you're a stranger going along there you could be fooled there.

Mr DEAN - There is the sign prior to that indicating an overtaking lane coming up.

Ms FORREST - That could be remedied by having an arrow as soon as that road goes off to the right.

Mr DEAN - That's right.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - As well as the double white line that would be an extra reminder that it's a turning lane, not a passing lane.

Mr ASHLEY - Maybe there should be another sign back further.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely; saying right turn only.

Mr ASHLEY - It often happens that if somebody's going along the road at, say, 80 kph or 90 kph, when they get to the passing lanes they speed up. A truck belonging to a well known Midlands property with property's name on the side of the truck was carrying sheep, I believe, one day. The driver was travelling between 60 kph and 80 kph and he was going faster, then slower, then faster. When he got to the passing lane, although he could not do 110, he certainly sped up as quickly as he possibly could and it made it difficult for smaller cars anyway, and then of course at the end of the thing he would slow down again. Lots of people do that, not only in trucks.

Ms FORREST - It is more cars that do that.

Mr ASHLEY - How you overcome it I don't know, but I am sure it must cause a lot of frustration. When they talk about road rage and so on you could understand less patient people being rather aggressive about that sort of stuff.

Ms FORREST - It almost puts people in a position where they will go to 120 to get round those people on the passing lanes so they do not have to slow down to 90 again when they get to the end.

Mr ASHLEY - Something that I think needs to be looked at very seriously is P-plate drivers and learners who are not allowed to do more than 80 kph. They are on the highway where the speed limit is 110, and they are travelling at their 80. In that sense they are not breaking the law, but I think it should be made very clear to them, and anybody else for that matter, that if they are not travelling at the speed limit and it is interfering with the flow of traffic they must at the first opportunity pull over and let the traffic through. I saw one day when there were nearly 30 cars behind a learner driver, and that is just ridiculous.

Ms FORREST - Wouldn't you think it would be more reasonable perhaps to enable learner drivers to be supervised driving at the speed limit, because when they get their provisional they will be allowed to drive up to the limit at that stage unsupervised, and why should learner drivers have to pull off and then have the risk of pulling back in with the inherent risks there? Why should we increase their level of risk?

Mr ASHLEY - That is one way of looking at it. I had not thought along those lines. I only wished they were not there.

Ms FORREST - They all have to do it.

Mr ASHLEY - No, I don't mean that, I mean travelling at that speed. I would have thought, though, if you are a licensed driver and you are trying to teach a learner driver then your own commonsense would tell you, okay, there is a stopping bay or a pull-off area, and you would just say to that person 'Pull over here because there is traffic behind. Let them go through and when it is clear we can take off again'.

Ms FORREST - I can tell you as a parent supervising drivers that I would never do that. My kids are entitled to use the road as much as anybody else, and if the road rules say -

Mr ASHLEY - I am not saying they are not.

Ms FORREST - I can only do that, I don't think they should be disadvantaged. That is my view. I think other drivers do find it frustrating, but maybe we need to look at the rule rather than penalise a section of the road-using community. We are actually penalising the other people too who do not want to travel at 80 kph.

Mr CHAIRMAN - It depends on the circumstance. If there is a build-up of traffic of about 30 vehicles, then naturally you pull off as a matter of courtesy, even though you are entitled to the road as much as anybody else. P-plate drivers would not have an instructor or somebody teaching them beside them. We have heard evidence suggesting

that P-plate drivers should be able to travel up to 110 as a matter of training so that they have the experience of doing that before they have a full licence.

Mr DEAN - Just on the point you make there, it was law, and I think it still is law either in New South Wales or Queensland, that it is an offence to hold up on the open road any more than five vehicles, so once you know you have about five vehicles behind you it is law there that you pull to the side to allow those vehicles to get past.

Mr ASHLEY - Certainly I am not opposed to learner drivers or P-plate drivers. I just think that as a courtesy and a safety thing if they are going to stick with this 80 rule then there must be some way to keep the traffic flowing rather than people getting frustrated and passing when it is not safe.

Ms FORREST - On highways there probably are a number of areas where you could pull off. but there are a lot of areas where you cannot. On our rural roads, for example the Murchison Highway or somewhere like that, there would be nowhere for a long distance for a driver to safely pull over, so you could effectively get more than five cars built up behind you at any one time.

Mr ASHLEY - But then the speed limit may not be 110.

Ms FORREST - It is 100.

Mr ASHLEY - Oh, is it? Right. The whole thing needs looking at anyway, I guess.

Mr DEAN - You pull over as soon as it is safe to do so to allow those other cars to pass.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, and I guess it applies to elderly people that are driving slowly because they think that is safe, and truck drivers who cannot help it because they have loads and so on. Another thing is cars stopping on the road at night with their headlights on. You do not know whether there is an accident, you do not know if there is a problem, and a lot of people do it. They stop for whatever reason but they leave their headlights on. It is probably the only situation that I can think of where you might put your parking lights on. Sometimes they leave their lights on full beam as well. At night it is very difficult but it is a safety thing because you cannot see past headlights, as you would know; for that moment that it is the full glare.

Mr DEAN - Hazard lights probably should be used more in some cases.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes. There is another thing of course. I noticed when it rained a week or two ago when it was really heavy there was a report on the news about a lot of accidents happening that day. Where I work on the corner of Bourke and Frederick streets and Frederick Street becomes Hillside Crescent there is a sharpish bend. A lot of people as soon as it gets wet actually plant their foot so that the wheels will spin and all this sort of thing; they have poor tyres. Somebody did that one day when the big red double-decker came down and they went straight into the side of it. Another time a taxi did that and shot across the road and rammed into a woman and shot her off the road. The point I am making is that a lot of people do not realise that their tyres are almost worn out. In the dry it is fine because they do not notice it but as soon as they get in the wet it is a problem. I guess that comes down to education or having their car serviced regularly.

On the Southern Outlet there is no sign to say that slow vehicles should use the left lane only. There is no sign to say that there is a steep hill ahead and if you are driving a slow vehicle stay in the left-hand lane because a lot of people with faster cars can go up that hill at 110. Many a time there have been near accidents and accidents where people have not stayed to the left-hand side of the road when they are slower than other vehicles. Also coming down the Southern Outlet there are a number of people who are driving slowly in the right-hand lane. My understanding of that particular rule is that if it is 80 kilometres or more on a dual highway you must keep in the left-hand lane unless overtaking or turning right. Is that correct?

Ms FORREST - That is what a policeman who pulled me over said a year or so ago. In the 80 zone you can drive either side. Once you are out of the 80 zone you have to pull over to the left unless you are overtaking.

Mr DEAN - It is a standard national law.

Mr ASHLEY - A lot of people do not know that. There may be a truck and the person indicates to pull into the right lane to pass the truck or the car or whatever and when they are level with it they put their brakes on and slow down to the same speed as the vehicle they are passing, which seems a very strange thing to do to me.

Mr DEAN - The reason you do not see it is that it is a national law and a lot of the national laws now going right across the whole country are not identified. People are expected to know them. It is like the zip laws about who gives way to whom and all the rest of that. It is a national law and so everybody knows that if it is a lane that ends - two lanes coming and there is an end to it - whichever is in front has the right of way whether it be left or right. It is something that should be known. It is a national law.

Ms FORREST - So all our new drivers would know those laws obviously.

Mr DEAN - They should know. New drivers should know.

Mr ASHLEY - Right. That is one of my bugbears as well. So many people, even if there is no traffic in the left lane, automatically pull over to the right lane and just drive in the right lane. I am not really sure why they do that but they do.

Another dangerous thing is I have noticed a few times - and I do not think there is a law against it - is when people back out of their driveways on to a road. It seems to me if you can back out of it you can back in to it and it is a lot safer to drive out of a driveway because you can see what is happening rather than backing out into traffic or whatever. I am not sure whether there should be regulations around that but as a safety thing it is probably not a bad idea.

This is not so much about road safety - well it is in a way I suppose, at one stage in Glenorchy, I cannot remember the name of the street, there was a rail crossing because and a train coming so the boom was down. There is a roundabout very close and yet the traffic coming down the street to go around the roundabout could not get through because everyone had stopped and blocked the road. I guess it is about education.

You hear a lot of things about smoking in cars. It seems to me that some people on occasions have dropped a cigarette in their lap. Some people throw it out of the window so you do not know whether it has actually caused a fire or you do not whether it has flown into somebody-else's car window, like side window or into somebody who is walking along the street, that sort of thing. I think maybe there could be more regulation around that.

Probably the last thing I wanted to say is about drink-driving. There still seems to be a lot of that. People are being convicted all the time for drink-driving. I wonder whether consideration has ever been given to making the penalties so severe that it may deter people in that respect, something like losing your licence for three months and you get fined whatever it is, I am not sure what the figure is, for your first offence but if for instance the fine was ridiculously high maybe that would really deter people more than is happening now.

CHAIR - For the first offence or do you mean second or the subsequent?

Mr ASHLEY - Maybe all of them. People get killed still because of drink-drivers. Everybody knows that there are limits on how much you should drink and that you should not drive if you have had a drink. That is probably the best way. People say, 'Oh, well it will be right', but it is not right so maybe the penalties are just not strict enough. I even know somebody who came out of a hotel after having a few drinks and wanted to move his car to a safer spot, so he got in his car and drove from one side of the street to the other into the hotel car park and the police saw him, put the breathalyser on him and booked him because he was on a public road. In one sense he was doing the right thing but he was doing the wrong thing because he was driving his car having consumed too much alcohol.

I think that maybe the penalties are not heavy enough to really deter people. If you put the penalty for drink-driving at, say, \$10 000, people would say how ridiculous but maybe it is enough in somebody's brain to say, 'Well, I won't drink and drive'. I do not know but it is just a thought I had about that.

Ms FORREST - There has been an alternative view put about that, that if you make a monetary penalty that is really significant the people who cannot pay it will not anyway -

Mr ASHLEY - That is right.

Ms FORREST - regardless of whether it is \$100 or \$10 000 and those who can afford it will probably think well I could pay it - unless there is some other punitive method a fine in itself would not be a deterrence.

Mr ASHLEY - I did think of that and you are right. The majority may decide not to drink. I do not know, that is just a thought. Maybe you should lock them up. I do not know, you cannot do that either because you do not have enough space in the jails.

Ms FORREST - There are always implications for anything, aren't there?

Mr ASHLEY - The thing you asked about, Don, is -

CHAIR - More visible police on the road.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, there is that but I think most things come down to education. I refer back to, I think the 1960s, when Ray Schipp used to be on the TV five minutes before the news at night, and I cannot remember whether it was once a week or every night but -

CHAIR - It was called *Road Worthy*.

Mr ASHLEY - Right. He used to talk about road rules, commonsense and all that sort of thing and I think people considered that in the north of the State we probably had the best drivers anywhere in the world. That's exaggerating slightly but that's okay. Everybody knew what the rules of the road were because everybody used to watch it. I know TV was new then but you would sit down and you would watch Ray Schipp talk about all the road rules and you knew what the road rules were, always. People would write in and I guess ring up as well - I don't know what they did exactly but nothing ever seemed to be left without some sort of explanation and it was good.

Ms FORREST - They didn't have e-mail or SMS, I don't expect.

Mr ASHLEY - Not in those days. I think it was after telephones came in.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - I think it was the repetitiveness of that; that's what you're saying, isn't it, that the repetitiveness and the almost beating people into submission is what you're suggesting?

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, but everybody knew the rules of the road; everybody.

Ms FORREST - But did they apply them? Do you think it had that flow-on effect?

Mr ASHLEY - Absolutely. The drivers were good. There were still accidents, of course, but people knew the rules of the road.

Ms FORREST - There were a lot fewer drivers on the road than there are now and the cars now have the capacity to go a lot faster.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - I'm not saying we shouldn't try a similar approach again, but I'm saying there are a number of different scenarios now that may or may not make such a thing effective.

Mr ASHLEY - But at the moment there's no education.

CHAIR - That's right. Do you think that once the people are told what the laws are they should be enforced more than they are now?

Mr ASHLEY - I do indeed.

CHAIR - Traffic signals, changing lanes without signals and things like that.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes. I think if you remind people constantly then maybe they will remember. I have often thought if the State Government wanted to make lots of money they could set up a camera at or send a police officer or whatever to the roundabout at Prospect where you go to the casino and they would make millions from people who do not indicate. I'm not sure what the fine is, it used to be \$80 -

Ms FORREST - That would be called revenue-raising, I reckon.

Mr ASHLEY - Yes, they would raise a lot of revenue.

Ms FORREST - Education as well - education or revenue-raising.

Mr ASHLEY - Basically what I am saying is we need ongoing public education on all road rules and commonsense issues. I think that's about as much as I can say, really.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Paul. It's good to hear your range of ideas and we appreciate your interest and the time you've given us and agreeing to change the time.

Mr ASHLEY - Thanks for the opportunity.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr NICHOLAS CAMERON WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Welcome. I've heard you on radio and we thought we'd be interested to hear you. We appreciate the fact that you've been prepared to talk to us too.

Mr CAMERON - Thank you very much. I consider it an honour. I would have liked to have put a submission in to you previously but I just haven't had the opportunity, unfortunately.

I guess I've been involved in road safety as an instructor in the Arrive Alive defensive driving course through TAFE Tasmania since about 2002. In that time we've delivered that program to a number of private government employees and I consider it to be a really successful program, not only from the comments in the feedback that the program gets during the day but also the continuation of meetings I have with people who have done the program and some of the comments that they've given me since that program; how it's changed their driving from a level of not thinking about it to being more conscious, more aware and more safety-orientated.

There are a couple of things I would like to be able to talk to you about. Defensive driving, if you want to call it that, or road safety, is not on the radar as much as it should be. I think it is probably the most important way that we can improve road safety for our public, our learner drivers and our older drivers. I think the most important way of changing people's attitudes to driving and the culture of driving is through education. Fundamentally, that is the biggest issue I see with our crashes and accidents, that most of it is preventable, and it is generally through poor culture and poor attitudes.

The other thing that I see through the courses that we run is that the public's knowledge of the modern day motor vehicle is really bad, to the point I would say where 90 per cent of the people that are driving motor cars do not know the fundamentals of how to use ABS brakes, what cars are capable of, what their own abilities are. They certainly know the road rules to an extent, but their actual knowledge of their own skills, their own abilities and the car's abilities is extremely poor. We have a fundamental problem there, and I think educational-type programs are the best way of improving that.

CHAIR - Do you think some form of educational program should be compulsory for all learner drivers?

Mr CAMERON - Absolutely. There is no doubt about that.

CHAIR - What type of programs?

Mr CAMERON - I think there needs to be a mixture of education through information and also through practical training. I think the reason why Arrive Alive has had a lot of success is because it mixes the fundamentals of driver safety and education with a practical-based approach, so it backs up what it says. Generally, what you find is when people do these programs you can show them via a PowerPoint presentation what a car does with speeds and different conditions. But it is not till they get out on the track and practise it through a simple exercise that the alarm bells come on. It is amazing how

people really start to comment that they don't believe how hard it is to get the car to stop, or the effects of speed, until they actually practise it. We have had a number of P-platers who have been sent to our course, and they have had their eyes opened up well and truly. Their comments have been 'This has been really good for me. I can go away now and appreciate what people are saying and what the TBA campaigns and the signs on the roads are saying'.

CHAIR - With the change in the educational structure affecting the TAFE, are you still conducting this program?

Mr CAMERON - Yes. Arrive Alive is still within the Tasmanian Skills Institute. It is part of the licensing unit. It has actually gone out of our automotive unit so I will not be having a day-to-day role, but it is still sitting within TSI, yes.

CHAIR - Good. Could you give us an idea of what is involved in the course?

Mr CAMERON - Sure. It is a one-day course. It is held at Symmons Plains and Baskerville Raceway. We have held it at Wynyard airport, and at Queenstown airport.

Ms FORREST - They have just resealed the track at Queenstown airport too. It would be much better now down there..

Mr CAMERON - Planes landing would be a problem.

Ms FORREST - They don't always tell you they are coming, do they.

CHAIR - It is in Ruth's electorate.

Mr CAMERON - Oh, okay. It was really quite successful down there actually. So we have a program where they go to the racetrack, only because it is a safe learning environment. We are able to do the driving exercises in a safe, controlled place. It is a mixture of PowerPoint delivery, video presentation, as well as driving exercises. We try to focus on giving them a really good, fun experience with a car. They are not breaking the law when it comes to speeds or going round and round in circles. All exercises are done for a particular reason and it is all focused back to the effects of speed, and learning what you can do behind the wheel of a motor car yourself.

CHAIR - How many people do you have at a time?

Mr CAMERON - We generally have 12 per class and two instructors.

CHAIR - And for how long has that been held, and about how many people have passed through the course?

Mr CAMERON - We have averaged around about 20 to 30 programs per year. Mainly it has been government departments that have been our major focus, although we have done a number of private people as well. We have done the majority of the DPIWE departments, education departments. I would say we have probably done about 3 000 to 4 000 people over those years.

CHAIR - What is the cost for a day program?

Mr CAMERON - Per person it is \$260.

Ms FORREST - Do you think it is something that you do once and that is probably all you need at that sort of education or training? Is it something that should be repeated after five years, or 10 years?

Mr CAMERON - The comments I have received from people who say, 'I have done your course', when you ask them what they got out of it virtually everybody says, 'I cannot believe the effects of speed and I have changed my attitude to driving. I am a lot safer driver'. Things like following distances we really concentrate on to make people aware of that cultural thing about following distances and changing. People generally say, 'I understand where you are coming from and now I have changed'. So although they have done it once I think it has made a dramatic improvement. If you ask me should they continue doing it I think, yes. You can always learn better processes by practising but I generally think it makes a big difference just by doing it once only.

Ms FORREST - So you are talking about the three-second rule?

Mr CAMERON - Two-second rule? Yes.

Ms FORREST - In the ACT they focus on a three-second rule. The reason they do that is that you get a 1.5 second response time. You are going 60 kilometres per hour. You have 16 metres a second so that gives you another 1.5 seconds before you hit the stationary thing in front of you. Obviously if the car is moving in front of you you have further, so it does not matter. But if that car hits another car and you do not have the three-second gap you are going to run into them.

Mr CAMERON - I guess two seconds-three seconds is ideal. Anything below that is just not enough. The problem is the community have no understanding of it. We actually get the group to watch the Midland Highway when we are doing the course, to watch the flow of traffic. They can see it first hand - trucks, cars, whatever. It is a bad culture in our driving practices. That is the good thing about education programs: you get buy-in and people actually understand what you are talking about and actually with buy-in you change their culture. Fundamentally, I think, the most important thing about driver safety is to change that culture.

CHAIR - So what is 'buy-in'?

Mr CAMERON - If you get them to understand why it is an important issue. Why is two seconds the most important thing when it comes to driving behind other cars? If you can make them understand that you do not get from A to B any slower by being here compared to being there. We do a demonstration where we actually show them the effect of driving like this. We simulate a potential crash with the two instructors driving. Not them, but two instructors. When they see the smoke and the cars beside each other then we do it with two seconds, you stop behind the other car and it clicks. They understand where we are coming from. Not only that but you have the reinforcement over the day where we are doing different activities and we see the effect that speed

makes and the increments in speed and the difference it makes. It also reinforces that you get buy-in.

I do a demonstration at 110 kms and try to do an emergency stop. I get them to try to guess the distance that I will stop the car. Most people put in a little marker about the 50 metre mark and I am stopping 80 metres. They cannot believe it. It is not until they see that that they realise that. And when you say, how many people actually drive on our Midland Highway 80 metres behind the other car? No-one does. That is what I mean. They start to appreciate what we are talking about. The messages that the Road Safety Council is talking about, the messages of the signs on the highways. You get that reinforcement. That is what I mean by buy-in.

CHAIR - Yes, thank you. What are the general age groups of people undertaking your courses?

Mr CAMERON - Right from P-platers. We do not have anybody on Ls and we want them to have a bit of driving experience first. So from P right up to, I think the oldest person we had was in their mid-70s, early 80s. So broad, right across the whole range.

CHAIR - I could be right.

Laughter.

Mr CAMERON - And we have had some people who have just really surprised us, younger drivers and older drivers who have been extremely good and some people have been extremely poor.

CHAIR - Thanks. Very good. So you say you do not have the learner-drivers but I take it from the tone of your evidence that you would probably like to see a course designed for learner-drivers. Would you? Or even information by way of education, even if it is not involving driver training?

Mr CAMERON - I think that you could have a bit of both. I would like to see it. Personally I would like to see us get into the high schools just before people are about to start driving and maybe do a simplified approach with some basic information, but also some simple practical exercises.

CHAIR - That used to be the case at Launceston College. Brian Watson used to conduct that with the help of transport officers, I think. I am not sure when that ceased. I assume it has done.

Mr CAMERON - I think it would certainly be valuable to start early - I think it is a really important step.

CHAIR - Do you think that the existing traffic laws are enforced sufficiently?

Mr CAMERON - No, I do not. My new role within the TSI is on the road so this year I have been driving up and down the Midland Highway and down to the coast virtually every day and one thing that has surprised me is just how the cultural shift has got worse, to be

honest. The following distances of the majority of drivers I believe has got worse in the last three, four years from what I previously experienced.

Speeding has definitely changed. There are not that many drivers that are actually speeding faster or at higher speeds than the speed limit - I think there has been a cultural shift there - but there are definitely people taking more risks in stupid places probably because of time restraints and the conditions of the road and traffic, which is a concern.

In my honest opinion I do not believe it is just wholly and solely the job of the police to be able to fix this problem. You have to be realistic. You cannot have police on every single road every single hour of the day. I can count probably two or three stupid manoeuvres or things that people do every time I drive a motor car. In my opinion what we should look at potentially is having something like road marshals or JPs for our roads - people in the public who have really good driving records.

CHAIR - I have a JP who has just given evidence. He let's people out on bail at nights.

Laughter.

Mr CAMERON - I do not believe you can change the culture of driving just through enforcement. It has definitely got a place but fundamentally we have to look at changing people's attitude to driving motor cars - make it a positive thing, change other people's attitude to other drivers when it comes to treating them with respect.

It needs to be done through a different approach; something like a road marshal who can report stupid behaviour. It might not lead to a fine but it might lead to a policeman knocking on our door or somebody else knocking on the door and saying, 'Your car was'

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Ms FORREST - Maybe they can install a camera on the front of my car and I can take a photo of all those opportunities that I see. All I have to do is press a button and take a photo of the people overtaking on double white lines, on blind corners. I could sort that out, I could do that.

Mr CAMERON - I think it has a high potential. Fundamentally, if you look at the problem at the moment you can drive up and down from Launceston to Hobart or to Devonport and you may see one or two police cars in that distance which is good, they are there, but for the rest of the time you do not so people take risks, people do manoeuvres. If it is known that there are people about who could spot you doing something silly then it may change that culture.

CHAIR - It seems that most of the time the police cars you see on the Midland Highway are four-wheel drive ones where the police officers are just going from point A to point B rather than patrolling. Seldom I think do you see a police patrol car or many of them on the Midland Highway or other highways. Would you like to see more?

Mr CAMERON - I definitely would. As I said I think there needs to be a fundamental change in our attitude and culture of driving but I do not think that is the only issue - it is changing people's beliefs.

CHAIR - Do you think the media has a role here in publishing, free of charge, driving tips and recommendations, things like that?

Mr CAMERON - We do. There are some great opportunities there. We have some wonderful fishing shows and we have some wonderful cooking shows but the one thing we do every single day, everybody does, which is driving motorcars, is not covered.

The ABC Radio thing I am doing at the moment is having an impact. People are talking about it - I am getting people always talking to me about listening to me on the radio and even Chris Risby is starting to sell the message. When I first started doing it he was a bit of the car larrikin and now he is starting to sell the message for me. I think the media has got a role to play and can play a lot more for sure.

Ms FORREST - Just one question, Nick. I tend to agree with your comments about needing to educate drivers on identifying and managing risks. That is the basis of any safety message whether it is in driving or at a workplace or whatever. The majority of our learner-drivers have their parents or close family friends as supervising drivers. Do you think we should be looking at a requirement for the supervising driver to undertake the Arrive Alive course or something similar before they're allowed to supervise?

Mr CAMERON - Yes, I do agree with you. One of our potential programs that we looked at with Arrive Alive last year was to develop a parent course. That was a very short, sharp course for parents to be able to train their learner drivers. It was just covering a real basic sort of driver safety and driver education to give them some armed information to go away and help. I think that would be a really good program.

Ms FORREST - The parents themselves understand the two or three-second rule, whichever one you are going to apply, or the basics, of even seeing what are the most frequent crashes that provisional drivers, in particular, have - that sort of basic information to identify what the risks really are.

Mr CAMERON - I think it's highly valuable. There are lots of techniques that you can use when you're an educated trainer, to help your younger drivers drive. There are even techniques of watching them as they drive the motor car, where they're putting their eyes and all these different things.

Ms FORREST - If you were going to mandate it so that you can't be a supervising driver unless you've actually done a course - it might only be a three-hour course or whatever - would it be reasonable for that to be government subsidised?

Mr CAMERON - It would be interesting to find out. I think it's the availability of it. The majority of parents that I speak to are really keen on providing really good education for the young drivers. They might be prepared to pay for it themselves, even if it's a fifty-fifty thing.

Ms FORREST - I am making a generalisation here. Those who perhaps aren't so fussed about it might be the ones who haven't the best driving records or the best habits in driving. Maybe they're the ones that need to do it more than those really dedicated parents who are really keen to do it.

Mr CAMERON - It's a good point; I suppose most people who have the financial ability to use proper driving instructors would do so but people who can't afford it would probably do it themselves, so you are probably right. It may be important that the Government does subsidise it. It's something that's not going to be a waste of money; it would be a proactive approach.

Ms FORREST - I don't think it would break the bank if it's only a short course.

Mr CAMERON - We looked at a maximum three-hour program; short, sharp. It even included a basic drive around with the parents in the car to give them some feedback and instructions.

CHAIR - If you were appointed the Minister for Road Safety this month and you had a reasonably adequate budget, what are some of the main things that you'd do if you had the power to implement them?

Mr CAMERON - I think, basically, what we've spoken about. One of the first things is to look at a really well-run driver education program in the schools, and one available for the driving public starting from P-plates onwards. I would negotiate with the insurance companies about potentially supporting this program so they would give the opportunities for decreased insurance rates for the public; not only new drivers but all drivers, to get some buy-in there. I would definitely investigate the opportunities for a good TV program. I think that has so much potential. I saw it last night the larrikins from England in their car program *Top Gear*. There are some really good faces on TV. I would certainly investigate something like that show.

Ms FORREST - Didn't they put an Australian version on and no-one liked it, though?

Mr CAMERON - I'm not sure.

Ms FORREST - I could be wrong but I thought they liked the British one better. I don't watch it so I don't know.

Mr CAMERON - The other important thing I was going to talk to you about is the Midland Highway. It needs to be dual lane.

CHAIR - Divided?

Mr CAMERON - Absolutely. It takes away the innocent party getting hurt. You'll still have car crashes, given it's a dual-lane highway, but potentially you take away the innocent party and the person coming the other way. This day and age, having two cars travelling at those speeds separated by a white line is relying only on both people being attentive, and it's not happening.

CHAIR - Then, when there is the impact it's double speed in fact.

Mr CAMERON - That's right. You will have, potentially, people pulling off onto that road, dual highway; accidents can still occur but usually you take out the innocent party with what we have currently got. Some of the road conditions on our current highways, the

Midland especially, is quite poor, to be honest, and need to be improved. I would definitely investigate the possibility of looking at public marshals on our roads.

CHAIR - In the form of a specialised traffic enforcement and regulatory body, is that it, when you talk about the marshals?

Ms FORREST - Of the transport division or something?

Mr CAMERON - I'm not sure how it would operate but what I'm looking at here, I guess, is people who have the ability to take vehicle registration details. I don't think it needs to be people who can pull drivers over and book people as such. I don't think that is quite necessary. I think the public need to know that there are people out there who can spot them doing stupid acts. It would be taking people's registration numbers and car details and then the police or somebody else could follow up with a warning, and when you get a certain number of warnings you might lose your car or get a fine or something like that.

Ms FORREST - Wouldn't the evidence be an issue? That's why I say I want a camera on the front of my car so I actually could capture some evidence.

Mr CAMERON - Potentially. The technology these days is fantastic. You could do that.

Ms FORREST - Otherwise it could just be one person's word against another. I instance the case where a man in Burnie was charged with throwing a cigarette butt out his window when he is not a smoker. He was the driver of the car on the day and he might have thrown something else out but it certainly was not a cigarette butt. It was one person's word against his.

Mr CAMERON - I was driving back from Hobart last week during really heavy rain. The water was actually lying on the road. I reduced my speed to about 95 kilometres because the car was simply aquaplaning all over the place. People were still going past me above the speed limit. I think that is just stupid. People have no idea how they could hurt themselves or other people. It could be a case of a simple knock on the door and saying, 'Mate, do you realise you put yourself and other people in danger?' Maybe if there is a continuation of that act then they should be forced to do a public education system like Arrive Alive where they get out on the track and learn just what danger they are causing themselves. It is more of a proactive approach.

Mr DEAN - Looking at the other side of it, do you think we should have a system out there where we reward the good drivers? That has been talked about a lot of late, that those drivers who have not committed any traffic offences or violations - or have not been caught, at least, and there is a difference here - those who do not have any prior convictions of any type in relation to traffic ought to be rewarded, perhaps by a discount on their registrations or their licences. What is your position on that?

Mr CAMERON - Absolutely. It is always good to have the law enforcement side of it but I think you are right. This is being proactive and being positive about it. I guess it is changing people's perceptions about driving motor cars. Make it a positive thing. A registration reduction or a special number plate for your car - I do not know. I agree with you.

Mr DEAN - There are a lot of drivers out there who have been good drivers for 20 years or 30 years. If they had a 10 per cent discount on their registrations or their licences even at least they would be rewarded.

Mr CAMERON - It is certainly a way of changing people's attitudes towards it, absolutely. I would agree.

Ms FORREST - Carrots rather than sticks.

Mr DEAN - Yes. The carrot rather than the stick. You are absolutely right.

I was not here when you began, and you might have already mentioned this, but in regard to the course that you spoke about, could it to be considered when applying penalties and so on? In other words, a magistrate who is sentencing somebody might say, for instance, 'If you do this course then your licence disqualification will only be one month rather than two months' or something.

CHAIR - No, we did not touch on that.

Mr CAMERON - Absolutely. As I mentioned to the group before, the comments and the feedback we have had from this program have been really tremendous and really positive. Generally it has changed people's attitude to driving motor cars. When you think about it, some people got their licences 20 years ago and that is it. They just drive, they just do not think about it, so the course is very positive. People have broken the law by drink-driving a number of times or are continuous speeding offenders so we have to do something. If you can get them out there on that track - and I think that since 2002, of the 3 000 or 4 000 people that we have had in that program, only two people, I would say - it did not matter what we did - would never change their attitude to driving motor cars.

Ms FORREST - So they were there because they were sent as opposed to being there voluntarily?

Mr CAMERON - Actually they were there through a company, so they did not really want to be there.

Ms FORREST - They were sent?

Mr CAMERON - Yes, they were sent by the company, but it did not matter what we said or what we did, we had no impact on their attitude. We have had other people who were forced by their company to go there and who had a brilliant day and learned a lot. But two out of 4 000 always think it is just a waste of time.

Mr DEAN - That is a good point. I asked this question previously of another person: is there any statistical data available? You have been working with these corporations and bodies over a period of time, so do you have any evidence to show that those people that have gone through this course have been involved in fewer accidents?

Mr CAMERON - We have not.

Mr DEAN - It would be a good selling point for you, wouldn't it?

Mr CAMERON - It probably would be, but it is not so much that we have never had a car crash. We have had people who do this course who have had car crashes, but these people have said to me 'You saved my life, because I believe the skills that you have shown us helped me survive that crash'. I have had three people who have come to me directly and said, 'You saved my life', but they still had car crashes, because of other people. What it has done is changed people's attitudes, it has given them more awareness of their skills and abilities to drive motor cars.

What you are suggesting is hard to do, other than doing feedback forms. I guess one of my biggest disappointments in my time in this program is that since 2002 I have never had the Road Safety Task Force come to me and say, 'How is it going?', and that is extremely disappointing. I have invited them to that program. I have invited them to come on board and have a look at it, and in that time they have never approached Arrive Alive to ask 'What is your feedback? Who are the participants? Can we go and ask these participants what they have got out of it?' When I did speak to these people when we first got this course up and running, their general comment was that defensive driving courses do not work.

CHAIR - Yes, that's the problem.

Mr CAMERON - They say it there is no data, no evidence, to say that defensive driving courses work. When you don't come and ask you probably do not have the data.

Ms FORREST - How long have you been providing it?

Mr CAMERON - We have been doing it since 2002.

Ms FORREST - Okay, so you have seven years of at least participant evaluation and feedback forms. Can you do a collation of that?

Mr CAMERON - Absolutely.

Ms FORREST - Can you provide that to the committee?

Mr CAMERON - I can.

Ms FORREST - That would be helpful for the committee's purpose.

Mr CAMERON - It would probably be nice to get it when it is nice and fresh. I can give you data or maybe a survey of all our 2008 participants.

CHAIR - And some statistics going back to 2002, the main ones.

Ms FORREST - Yes, that would be helpful. When you have approached the Road Safety Task Force, did they say why they do not want to attend?

Mr CAMERON - No, I received a very nice letter from them: 'Thank you, but no thank you'.

CHAIR - You specifically invited them and they said no?

Ms FORREST - How long ago was that?

Mr CAMERON - I cannot recall, 2003 or 2004, at a guess.

CHAIR - Would you have copies of those available that you could send to us?

Mr CAMERON - I have the letter in my folio somewhere.

CHAIR - If you would be good enough to let us have copies, that would be very helpful.

Mr CAMERON - It was an open-arms gesture to say that I was concerned that defensive driving was not on the radar, education was on the radar with road safety. I support them. I don't want to say I don't support them. I do support them. I think they have been very proactive. Some of their signage these days is tremendous, but it was very disappointing from my side that I felt I hit a shut door.

CHAIR - Unfortunately, that is the attitude at government level in departments. I do not know about the elected representatives, but at departmental level, as it is in some other States and overseas. I can't understand that attitude, when anybody who has experienced these educational defensive driving courses sings the praises and realise the value in them. Notwithstanding the attitude that is expressed at departmental level, it is encouraging that you have a number of government departments arranging for you to do the course.

Mr CAMERON - In one of our DPIWE groups last year, one of the original participants was one of those people who almost got killed in a car crash and believed that the course saved her life. The occupational health and safety committee she was involved in made a decision that the entire team would do that course. I think we had 70 people from that one DPIWE team who did that course on her recommendation.

CHAIR - So you are getting strong support from DPIWE. What other departments?

Ms FORREST - You mentioned the Department of Education earlier.

Mr CAMERON - Yes. We have TAFE Tasmania, of course. We do a lot for Hydro.

CHAIR - You might be able to let us know when you send the other material.

Mr CAMERON - Yes.

Ms FORREST - It has been raised in Parliament by members whether this sort of education program will be considered, and we are constantly told there is no evidence to show that it has any benefit, or there is evidence to show that there are disadvantages. That is particularly related to the advanced driving, with people becoming more confident and overly confident in their driving. You are saying here you have some qualitative evidence at least, even though you might not have the figures to back up with the number of people involved in crashes following a course as opposed to those who have not done

a course. A big randomised control trial would need to be done for that, obviously, but you have qualitative evidence that has been basically, I cannot really say ignored, not taken into consideration because it was declined.

Mr CAMERON - As I said, it is my biggest disappointment that they have never ever knocked on the door and said how is it going and we actually got their assistance when we first developed the course. We wanted a partnership with them so that we would make sure we were selling their message.

I did get some assistance in some data, I did get them to look over our original PowerPoint presentation and the booklet we give out to the participants and they did help with that but that was one person. Other than that that is about it. We did invite Paul Hogan, the chair of the Road Safety Taskforce. He did come along to the course, he did the course with us and that is as far as it went - we have not heard back.

CHAIR - What was his reaction to that?

Mr CAMERON - I think he enjoyed the day, I think he had a good day. He did write back, from memory, and thank us for it but that is as far as it has gone.

CHAIR - How long ago would that have been?

Mr CAMERON - Good question. I cannot recall. I am guessing between 2004 and 2005 I reckon, a rough guess, so it would be four or five years ago.

CHAIR - Any other questions? Mr Cameron, would you like to make any closing comments?

Mr CAMERON - There is so much more that can be done on an educational grounding. From my experience through the courses and speaking to people it has a real positive effect. We have had participants who have brought their husbands and wives into the program because they have got a lot out of it. We have had participants who have brought their sons and daughters into the course because they have got a lot out of it. I guess what reinforces my belief that it is a positive thing is when I see people in the street and their general comment is that they have changed their driving to a more positive frame of mind - they are thinking about it, whereas before they were not because it is such a second nature thing.

CHAIR - That happens to you frequently, I gather?

Mr CAMERON - All the time, continually.

CHAIR - That is proof of the effectiveness, isn't it?

Mr CAMERON - Yes. It is a wonder that the Parliament has not heard more from the public. The continuing comment I get from participants is, 'Why isn't this compulsory? I have learnt so much, why isn't this compulsory'. My comment to them is, 'If you want to make changes, if you think this is a good program write to your MPs and your politicians and let them know'. I am very surprised you have not got it because most people say, 'Yes, we will do that'.

CHAIR - I would welcome it personally, very much.

Mr CAMERON - So would I.

CHAIR - And write to the newspapers as well and talk on radio programs about it.

Mr DEAN - I was interested in the comment that the person from DPIWE made in relation to it probably saving their life. That sort of thing, I would have thought, would have been very valuable information to get out there to the public. You know, a newspaper item or something to the effect that here is a lady or a person who has completed the defensive driving course who has said that this probably saved my life. I can see it being a very strong argument for the support of these courses.

Ms FORREST - If she was employed by a department, as an employee of a department she probably is not allowed to speak to the media. It could be an issue.

Mr DEAN - I am not saying she should have done it but she could have done it through her department somewhere, perhaps DPIWE because DPIWE support your course and - as you have said - one of your better clients, that there is probably an opportunity there for that I would have thought.

Mr CAMERON - There are probably heaps of opportunities. We certainly see that Arrive Alive could do a lot more but I guess we were restrained because we are also teaching Automotive State-wide, which is a big program in itself, and we did not have the ability to expand it like we would like to. It has certainly got more abilities. There are lots more focuses when it comes to that parental-type training, which we would have liked to have done but we never got the opportunity. The educational staff in high schools - we would have liked to have done that but we just did not have the capacity.

CHAIR - To counter the claims that there is no evidence to support the worthwhileness of these courses, when people make those comments would it be possible for you to record them - dates, names, what they say - and then build up a body of evidence that can be presented to the department, the Government, and say, 'What other -

Ms FORREST - Here is your evidence.

CHAIR - evidence do you need?'

Mr CAMERON - It is difficult being in the position I am - a government employee so -

CHAIR - I see.

Mr CAMERON - I am always continually aware that you have to be careful how you do those sort of things but -

CHAIR - So you are engaged by Skill Tasmania?.

Mr CAMERON - Yes. I have tackled it from a different approach. I have obviously approached the ABC. I thought talkback would be an effective mechanism.

CHAIR - It is.

Mr CAMERON - I think it is. It has already been done I think four times now and it seems to be going really, really well. I am using different approaches.

CHAIR - It is very effective and it is really good. Do you think you could seek the approval and permission of one of your superiors who have authority to do it for you to compile these comments and make it available to a committee such as us or members of Parliament generally?

Mr CAMERON - I guess so because at the end of the day it is the public's information.

CHAIR - It is a lifesaving measure.

Mr CAMERON - The majority of our managers have done the program and are very supportive of it so I imagine that would not be a problem, no.

CHAIR - They should not refuse that.

Mr CAMERON - No.

CHAIR - Why stifle that information? It would be quite wrong if they did not give approval. Anyway just suggest that.

Mr CAMERON - Sure.

CHAIR - For your consideration. We would be happy to hear from you as members even if we have reported and ceased to be a committee. We are a select committee and once we report we are no longer a committee, but we would be happy to hear from you, while we are a committee, anything else you would like to send to us.

Mr CAMERON - Well, maybe there is an opportunity for a representative of Driver Education to be on the Road Safety Taskforce. I do not think there is at the moment. That might be a recommendation that a position is made for somebody for sitting in Road Safety. It does not have to be someone from TSI, there are a number of Road Safety trainers in Tasmania, some very passionate people I am sure you have spoken to in your committee.

CHAIR - You are the second one today and we have heard from others so the expertise is there.

Mr CAMERON - Maybe that is the best way of getting it on the radar.

CHAIR - It is one way but having the comments of people who have done the course is yours and it would be up to the consideration of the others too. It would be very helpful in accumulating evidence to say to the authorities this is the way to go. Anything else?

Mr CAMERON - No. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for taking it and for sharing your expertise with us.

Mr CAMERON - You are very welcome.

CHAIR - We do appreciate that and your time. I look forward to hearing you on the radio regularly.

Mr CAMERON - I will give you some cards if you want to get in touch with me.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.