

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET AT LEVEL 4, HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON ON WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2009.**

**Dr GARY FETTKE** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Dr Fettke, thank you very much for giving us your time. We know the pressure under which you work and we appreciate your submission and the fact that you are here today. We look forward to hearing your evidence, particularly about the off-road motorcycle accidents and any other matter relating to road safety that you wish to address too.

**Dr FETTKE** - I have read the terms of reference and realise that this talk is not specifically about off-road motorbikes but I am quite willing to discuss other things. I am an orthopaedic surgeon here in Launceston. I have been practising here for over 16 years and have a keen interest in trauma, and partly the personal nature of road trauma. I speak here personally but have also been asked to address this committee in my capacity as a member of the AMA - the Australian Medical Association -

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Dr FETTKE** - and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, both at the State level and the national level. I received correspondence - in fact a flurry of it - in the last week when I mentioned I was coming here to talk to you.

**CHAIR** - That is good.

**Dr FETTKE** - They have previous copies of the correspondence that I have sent to you and there has been no division of opinion on that. So I am speaking on behalf of quite a few groups. On a personal note, I have two small farms. I have a quad bike. I have a quad bike that, when I bought it, I did not receive any safety instruction nor was I given any inclination I should have safety equipment or do courses. I have not fallen off it. I also have a boat licence but I do not own any power equipment. I have ridden a jet ski and I do have kayaks. So I have an interest in public land, private land, farm land as well as my professional interest.

You have my submission previously, which really is a preamble to what I and we, as the orthopaedic surgical community, have noted that there was a significantly increased number of people presenting with injuries related to off-road motor vehicles. A lot of the press over time seems to be with four-wheel drives and quad bikes and deaths. But in fact the significant increase that we are noting as a rural and regional hospital is in off-road two-wheel motorbike accidents, predominantly in the young group of people, predominantly males. That is a personal note. It is anecdotal evidence and it is a struggle to get those statistics in Tasmania.

**Ms FORREST** - Can I just clarify that you are talking about off-road trail bikes as opposed to on-road bikes being used off-road, or is it a mixture of both?

**Dr FETTKE** - In broad terms, for every person we get coming in from a car accident we will probably get two people that come in as a result of an on-road motorbike accident. But in comparison to that we probably get 10 to 15 off-road motorbike accidents. So for every car accident patient that comes in we are getting 10 to 15 off-road motorbike accidents.

**Ms FORREST** - So they have been off-road motorbikes? Sometimes bikes are designed to be ridden on the road as opposed to trail bikes that are designed for that sort of riding off-road.

**Dr FETTKE** - These are essentially trail bikes which are being ridden on-road or off-road. I mean, I can give you lots of little examples of when the guys are doing 150 kilometres an hour doing a wheelie off-road and then on-road hits the bitumen and the whole thing - change of traction - flips his bike and then he spends the next three months in hospital. So is that an on-road or an off-road?

**Ms FORREST** - I am talking about the types of motorbikes. On-road motorbikes are different from trail bikes.

**Dr FETTKE** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. I am just asking you whether predominantly they are trail bike riders.

**Dr FETTKE** - These are trail bike riders on two-wheel, what is called an off-road bike.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, that is what I was trying to clarify.

**Dr FETTKE** - Some of those bikes might be the little, tiny ones - the Thumpstars - which is a significant issue in the towns, like in Launceston or very close to town where those things are often ridden. I will throw that in that group because they are the ones who are often riding around in an unprotected fashion.

**Ms FORREST** - On the streets as well?

**Dr FETTKE** - On the streets. I am certain you would have heard from the police at some point in time about hooning around on the city streets and I have had discussions with them. That is a significant group.

**Mr DEAN** - You referred to the statistics being difficult to get. Off-road, where it is not on a public street, accidents do not have to be reported to police unless there is a death?

**Dr FETTKE** - Correct.

**Mr DEAN** - And that is thereby, I guess, one of the problems that we have in relation to this. But if I went to the hospital today and said, 'Can you give me all of the statistics that you have in relation to off-road motorbike accidents in the last 12 months?', could I get it?

**Dr FETTKE** - No.

**Mr DEAN** - Not at all.

**Dr FETTKE** - Victoria has a very, very good injury surveillance unit that runs out of the Monash Centre and that has been running for several years. You have their hazards copy from 2006.

**CHAIR** - We spent an afternoon with the Monash people.

**Dr FETTKE** - So they have a very good system in place in Victoria. It is funded by the Government and it is rigid. However, even that system only collects probably 80 per cent of the patients who actually hit the hospitals because there is always an error in people reporting. It also does not pick up on the patients who present to their general practitioners or to a rural general practice and it does not pick the group that I have a big concern about.

Last year there was some press associated with this whole scenario of off-road motorbikes, and I know of at least three, where parents felt they did not want to take their children to the doctor or the GP or hospital because they could be seen to be seen in a poor light. One kid in particular had a head injury, was knocked out and was unconscious for about half an hour. The parents decided to hang on to him at home and nursed him with an altered level of consciousness for 24 hours.

So as we raise public awareness and increase the media side of it there are parents actually not taking their children to hospital. That kid could have died, it could have had an intracranial haemorrhage. That was through someone at the school and I thought, 'You've got to be joking'.

**Ms FORREST** - I hear what you are saying and I think that is a terrible story that you just related and possibly not unique and that is an issue. If we do not go about this carefully in how you raise awareness of it you could actually make that happen more - is that your concern as well?

**Dr FETTKE** - No, I think that is an issue but it is not really a concern because one of my solutions to this is public education. Coming back to the original thing, what is our incidence? It is uncertain. When we look at the Victorian statistics both from 2006 as well as an article which came out in the *Australian Medical Journal* last year - which I can pass a copy on to you - that had quite a bit of publicity between 2000 and 2004.

There were 3 163 children under the age of 16 who presented to emergency departments. That was a very good study which looked at the number of children who were affected. That is not taking into account all those young adults as well. They thought they had caught about 80 per cent of the patients in that figure. They were noting that there was a 10 per cent increase per annum. That was statistics from 2004 and I would say that is true. We had an issue in 2004 and I would be saying it is increasing at least 10 per cent per annum but I cannot prove it to you.

**Mr DEAN** - To fix this then should we have a position that as with motor vehicle accidents, regarding an off-road motorcycle accident where hospitalisation is required, because we have a lot of off-road motorbike accidents where people are not really hurt that bad - a few cuts, scratches - it should be compulsory and mandatory to report it to police?

**Dr FETTKE** - No. I think it should be compulsory and mandatory reporting to the health department. I have taken this up with Lara Giddings and I have had personal discussion with her late last year that we should be having a reporting system which actually codes for it. They have in Victoria.

I introduced that at the Launceston General Hospital around about nine months ago. It's a busy emergency department, so extra code that goes in, they are probably only putting in about one in five at present and that is a voluntary admission that they are just missing them. When we have religiously said okay let us manually have one weekend when we actually put down the numbers then they are significant. I can remember two weekends where we had 18 patients that presented at the Emergency department and we had a dozen on another one, 12 or 13.

**CHAIR** - Eighteen was reported in the media quite extensively - was that the one?

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes. That was the weekend after a 12-year-old had been decapitated.

**Ms FORREST** - On a farm, that one, wasn't it?

**Dr FETTKE** - On a farm who was wearing all the safety gear so he was wearing a helmet and protective gear but he still hit a fence. Yes, that got some press at that time but I know that in a busy emergency department - and you have all heard the woes of every emergency department in Tasmania - filling in another box on a computer screen at a time of great pressure they will be missed.

The discussions I had last year with the Minister for Health were that we introduce a similar reporting system and coding system in Royal Hobart Hospital and the Mersey and the North-West Regional. As far as I am aware nothing has happened.

**Ms FORREST** - But you could also extend that to the West Coast District Hospital, to Rosebery Community Hospital.

**Dr FETTKE** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - A lot of these happen down the west coast and they're not always going to come through to Burnie.

**Dr FETTKE** - One of my concerns is that by the time we introduce a coding system and we then look back and we have another year of figures or two years' figures that, yes, it's nice to have a figure, but it's just a statistic. I know that we've had at least 100 or 200 patients. We've already got those figures well and truly out of Victoria. They've also been mimicked in Queensland and if you speak to my surgical colleagues in every regional centre that I've spoken to in Australia we are all seeing the same increase. Yes, it would be nice if we had a coding system in place in Tasmania that was more rigid, and I still advocate that we should have that, but as to getting it done and actually proving the figures do we wait one year for those results or four years or five years and then report them. The Victorian study was done in 2000-04; it then gets reported in 2008. I don't think we can afford to wait that period of time when we've already got Australian statistics.

**Ms FORREST** - I agree that it's important to have a coding system in place. It probably needs to extend to the GPs as well. A pretty robust coding system would make it easy to gather that but you're suggesting that - correct me if I'm wrong - we're only going to be recording facts we already know.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Based on the evidence of other Australian States, particularly the anecdotal evidence that you and your colleagues in other hospitals know.

**Dr FETTKE** - I am under oath here so I am not making up these figures.

**Ms FORREST** - I think the point you are making is why wait; we need to do something now. What do you suggest we do? I know this completing of data is one factor and I think we should do it and you suggest that's the case as well but what do we need to do at the same time as doing that?

**Dr FETTKE** - Well, that leads me on to -

**CHAIR** - By the way, are you comfortable about us asking questions as we go at this stage or would you prefer to make a formal presentation and then have questions?

**Dr FETTKE** - No, please interrupt because I think on this topic it's a bit piecemeal. I am telling you what is the problem, which is really what I am going through here and then we can work through where I think we should move to in a step-wise process. Rather than come to you and just say look there's a problem with off-road motorbikes I'm trying to come to demonstrate that these are some of my ideas which have been backed up by the AMA.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I didn't know whether you'd like to present those first in summary and then have questions.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, it's fine.

**CHAIR** - That's good. Ruth has just raised that question.

**Dr FETTKE** - As long as you're happy with that.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Dr FETTKE** - Going through that preamble, it is an emerging recreational pursuit that is increasing in popularity. Part of that is related to maybe recreational times of society. It's certainly related to the price coming down on motorbikes and the availability of them to be bought over the Internet and then imported, and there is an enormous amount of peer pressure both on young people to be involved in it and on parents to involve their children in it.

**Mr DEAN** - On the cheaper motorbikes, I'm very pleased you raised that because that's been brought to this committee by some of our previous witnesses and so on. There's a suggestion that some of those cheaper motorbikes are not built in such a way that they

are safe for these people to ride in some of these rough areas and that is in fact the cause of some of the accidents.

**CHAIR** - Mainly the ones made in China.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, the ones made in China. There is a cheap product coming out. I know this is probably not in your area but do you have any -

**Dr FETTKE** - I am not a mechanic and I don't ride a two-wheel bike and so other people can comment better on their safety. I believe it to be a contributing factor and I've got a suggestion on how we can solve that as well; at point of entry.

Apparently Tasmania has the highest number of off-road motorcycle sales in Australia.

**CHAIR** - Is that per capita or total?

**Dr FETTKE** - Per capita. Apparently, and again unproven, there's almost been a doubling of sales in Tasmania over the last couple of years, and it was a spouse of a motorcycle sales person who gave me that information.

Certainly, looking at some published figures in the motorcycle magazines, there has been a 6 per cent to 8 per cent increase per annum in off-road motorcycle sales -

**CHAIR** - Doubled in one year?

**Dr FETTKE** - In the last two years.

**CHAIR** - The last two years. Is that reflected in the number of injuries, have they doubled?

**Dr FETTKE** - I believe so. That is what prompted my response and my speaking out on this last year.

**CHAIR** - The 18 casualty weekend?

**Dr FETTKE** - No, the 18 casualty weekend was after the -

**Ms FORREST** - The death of the decapitated child.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, when I spoke out was after I had six patients present within a 24-hour period and two of them were in intensive care. The following weekend we then had the death of the 12-year-old and the following weekend, when we counted, we had 18 presentations. We are not talking about the occasional accident.

When we look at all these accidents it is not just an increase in the number of the accidents. For these young people, and they are mostly young people, the injury severity is far greater. So rather than having a broken bone it is a complex fracture or it is what we call a compound fracture when it comes through the skin. So the severity of these injuries are far greater than if you come off a push bike or a mountain bike or even those injuries associated with recreational activities such as football and horse riding. Arguments - not arguments, I have had some hate e-mails always a bit of fun - saying

why not have a go at footballers and all sorts of other things like that. I think we have proactive training things with those but the injury severity of off-road motorbikes in particular is far greater.

One of the other things I talk about in that preamble is that we know that children do not have peripheral vision. It is not something that develops very early and our peripheral vision is very poor up until the age of eight years or 10 years and it develops through to around about the age of 22. That was recorded in literature as far back as 1976. You can see that with children on the sporting field, with young kids they run in a straight line; they do not know where they are going, they don't know where people are calling for the ball out to the side.

When you put young people on a motorbike and they do not have an awareness of speed across the ground and they are totally unaware of their peripheral then that becomes an issue. It certainly becomes an issue when you add in the other factors of alcohol and marijuana use on a recreational basis, which becomes another factor that compounds the whole problem.

Only a few weekends ago I was on call, just to give you an example of that, and there was a 15-year-old drinking heavily and a 23-year-old drinking heavily, both with very elevated blood alcohol levels. They decided about midnight to play chicken. They were not wearing any protective gear, no helmets and there were probably at least on one of them some other drugs involved and then they had a head-on collision and one fellow had multiple bone fractures and the 15-year-old spent the next six weeks in neurosurgical intensive care. That is the personal side of this. That is just an example, but it is an ongoing thing.

So mixing up no peripheral vision, youth, a recreational pursuit without good supervision and then drugs and alcohol it is a disaster and if these were one-off cases I would not be talking.

**Ms FORREST** - It is much bigger than just the issue of motorbikes, isn't it? It is a whole society issue.

**Dr FETTKE** - It is and that is why it requires a multidisciplinary input and it requires all levels of government to be involved in it. I have approached them and everyone is sort of in agreement on the issue.

The issues we have are really about a combination of safety, education and supervision. If you want to have a motorised watercraft then you need to have a licence. You need to go through a training course and you need to have appropriate supervision whilst you are training, your motor boat needs to be registered and you cannot get out on public land or water in that. The vast majority of boats on the water travel at low speeds and yet we have a recreational vehicle out there called an off-road motor bike which can travel at speeds up to 150 kilometres per hour without people being licensed.

The equipment may not be registered and they certainly are not supervised. With the number of motorbikes in the bush are far greater than there used to be. It used to be that you would go bushwalking and you might hear the occasional one. But it is very hard to go bushwalking now and not hear motorbikes.

Motorbikes cannot be recorded. They used to travel around, let us say in a clockwise direction around tracks, you now have enough motorbikes travelling some of them clockwise and some anti-clockwise and they are travelling across different paths.

They may have their helmets on, which means that they cannot hear things, and peripheral awareness is down so they crisscross around the bush. As a result of that we are seeing a lot more collisions and in particular head-on collisions. We would probably be having two or three people die each year as a result of head-on collisions rather than just pranging into trees or fixed objects.

**Ms FORREST** - The speed of impact would be greater because if you were just running into a tree, the tree is stationary whereas the oncoming vehicle is also at speed.

**Dr FETTKE** - If you do 60 kilometres per hour into a tree that is the same as doing 30 kilometres an hour into another vehicle travelling 30 kilometres per hour.

**Ms FORREST** - Which is not likely - they are usually going faster.

**Dr FETTKE** - I encourage people who want to take up off-road motorbikes to do two things; one is, and this is on a light-hearted note, to take their clothes off and run as fast as you can in your undies and dive onto the bitumen. If you think that is fun then I want you to run as fast as you can into a brick wall. That is doing 20 kilometres per hour.

**Ms FORREST** - If you are a fast runner.

**CHAIR** - I would be safe.

*Laughter.*

**Dr FETTKE** - When they start doing it into another fixed object that is at high speed. It is just not fun and they start doing harm.

**Ms FORREST** - Has anyone actually taken you up on that offer?

**Dr FETTKE** - No. You need to come down to my clinic, Ruth; I go on about this issue. I am in a privileged position where I see it and I also have a privileged position where I can hopefully raise awareness of it. There are different ways of communicating with different people and sometimes that is the best way to communicate what they are actually doing.

Rather than saying you might get injured I try to give an illustrated example of it.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that people still think that it won't happen to them, it will not happen to their child?

**Dr FETTKE** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - So you still have to get over that 'That is other people that happens to, not me'.



**Dr FETTKE** - There has been correspondence between the orthopaedic community and government for a long time. A professor has written to the Government and previous premiers. We are all in denial about a lot of things that we do and none of us are angels and we always try to cover it up by thinking that will not affect me at all, but when it comes to supervision of children and raising them in a safe environment, is this a level of decreased care when you actually say, 'Hop on a motorbike' and do not give your instruction or supervision and or corrective gear?

I realise this is a very touchy point and I realise that this is under privilege but it is public comment and I know that it has previously been discussed at government level, whether or not this is a form of children's neglect?

**Ms FORREST** - You could ask the same question about a women smoking and drinking in pregnancy.

**Dr FETTKE** - Absolutely. It is in the same ball park. It is not enforceable. It is probably not right, I believe that it is not right, but it is not something that I do not think will be tested in court. We have children who present with fractures from parental abuse and we had some recently at the hospital. That is a major concern and everyone gets up in arms about it. Well, what is the difference between breaking the child's limb and allowing them to hop on a motorbike as young as four years of age and crash into something? It is a concern. I don't think that we can do much about it along that line but it is certainly a concern. Parents often feel incredibly guilty when they come into hospital. Some don't, they say, 'That's part of the overall thing. When can they get back on the motorbike?' There are some parents who feel very guilty about it and you ask them, 'Why did you get the motorbike?' - I realise that is a moment of fragility for them - and they say they had to. That is a big social issue about parenting and the whole supervision thing.

**Ms FORREST** - Peer pressure from parents.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is what I was saying right at the beginning, it is not just peer pressure of one adolescent trying to get hold of a motorbike, it is peer pressure on parents, 'So and so has a bike, why can't I have one?'

I come to your question about where I think intervention can occur. I think it can occur on multiple levels and that is where I come through on this. I think parental education needs to be a big factor, whether or not that is a school education scenario - and I know the police are involved in doing some school education, but that is towards the students rather than the parents. I am not quite certain how we involve parents in that because not every parent comes to parent-teacher nights and the parents who do tend to be the ones who have more an interest in not letting their kids get into too much at-risk behaviour. I do think parental education, whether or not that is public awareness - MAIB has a very strong advertising campaign and I can't see why we can't hit the televisions with that because that is probably a point of contact.

**Mr DEAN** - The current problem we have, and there are some classic cases here where - and I take on your point about neglect and so on of parents -

**Dr FETTKE** - I was careful not to use the word 'neglect'.

**Mr DEAN** - where parents buy these bikes for their children or allow them to get them for whatever reason but with nowhere to ride them. There are number of suburbs around Launceston where that is very prolific and it is creating immense problems. Children are riding them around the streets as well, which is a tragic situation. I am interested in your comment on just how we control that.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is about five points down. I think parental education is difficult and I suspect that may need to come back to public awareness. I think that probably the best way is visual and it is probably challenging. That becomes a funding issue as to who would pay for that.

**Ms FORREST** - That is an interesting point about the funding because if you look at the big picture MAIB isn't really responsible for that sector so for them to put money into it you would think that is probably not their role. It is an interesting area.

**Dr FETTKE** - It is a public health issue. If I cost a weekend on call - and we take into account the cost of seeing patients, treating patients and them being off work and their families being off work, I have estimated in an average weekend on call at the Launceston General Hospital in the seasons - winter we know is always a bit quiet; we know that spring, summer and autumn are much busier - what I call the 'motorbike season', it is probably about \$100 000 per weekend of cost. When you take into account wages lost, families taking time off, that is very much a ballpark figure. If I went out and did \$100 000 worth of damage to public property each weekend, I would probably get arrested. Here we have a cost to the community of that ballpark figure - I don't know if that is \$50 000, \$10 000 or \$200 000, but it is significant. Someone is paying for that and the taxpayer is paying for it ultimately. Therefore funding for an appropriate advertising campaign may not come through MAIB but it should come from the public purse because no-one else is going to pay for it and the public purse is the one that's coughing up the cost of that at the moment.

**Ms FORREST** - You talked about public education particularly through television advertising, and you suggested it needs to be fairly graphic.

**Dr FETTKE** - I think so. MAIB is graphic, motor accidents are graphic, and we are just talking about the same motor accidents, whether or not it is on-road or off-road.

**Ms FORREST** - I was in Canberra recently and I watched the DVD recordings of I think NSW ads, or they might have been Victorian, which related to car crashes, but they were really graphic. They were gut-wrenching stuff, and they were based on events that had occurred. I do not know if you could do that in Tasmania because someone would know that person if you based it on an event that had occurred, like the child who was killed on that farm. That would be graphic, there are no two ways about that, but that family would be potentially traumatised by such an advertisement. So can we get to that point where we can make it real enough to make people stop and think, 'Gosh, this could happen to my child', without actually potentially harming the people who are left behind, the parents and siblings and the like?

**Dr FETTKE** - I think so. Absolutely. All you need to do is have someone riding a bike into a tree, and that happens a hundred times.

**Ms FORREST** - And a quite damaged body at the end that you can see. To me that is graphic.

**Dr FETTKE** - Oh yes. That is what I mean. I think it is impersonal enough. When I look at those advertisements I do not personalise them by thinking that is my patient, or that was. It depends on how much detail you go into in the advertisement to say this was a 15-year old person, here was Joe who did this. I don't think we need to go that way.

**Mr DEAN** - The smoking advertisements are pretty graphic, aren't they, and they are of real people.

**Dr FETTKE** - And there has been a decline in smoking in Australia in the last several years as a result of them. And there has been a decline in motor-bike accidents as far as I can work out, and there has been a decline in car accidents as a result of the introduction of speed testing and drink-driving and seat belts. We know that public awareness on motor vehicles, tobacco and arguably motorbikes has had an effect around Australia. The question is we have an emerging and increasing problem. Maybe we just need to start doing something about this one. Not maybe, I think we should.

**CHAIR** - And with the help of the media. You mentioned television. Do you think that the media really have some responsibility because of the spate of traffic accidents all over Australia to provide free-of-charge helpful hints or advice about how to manage vehicles, how to avoid risks?

**Dr FETTKE** - That becomes a holistic decision on the basis of what the media industry wants to do. I understand that the world does not run on charity, it runs on a commercial basis and charity is a side component of it. But I believe it is a public health issue and I think that if you can decrease the risk of these injuries then someone will pay for that, whether or not it is out of the public purse or out of the corporate purse and which media runs it.

**CHAIR** - Television stations often provide community service announcements.

**Dr FETTKE** - They do, but most of the time they are not particularly confrontational.

**Ms FORREST** - And what community is it representing, I guess that is the question, isn't it. Community service announcements often relate to a particular benevolent organisation or not-for-profit organisation providing a level of service to the community generally, and this is much broader than that, isn't it?

**Dr FETTKE** - I would love to see the television stations get on board and actually do it for nothing, but they are not going to put up something which is confrontational.

**CHAIR** - I am thinking of advisory, just helpful hints for people who are -

**Ms FORREST** - Or what the appropriate safety gear is, for example, something like that.

**Dr FETTKE** - I think I saw something about the motorbike. I don't watch enough television, but there is some motorcycle safety advertisement that I saw crop up.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, when you are on your bike you are on your own, that one?

**Dr FETTKE** - That one, that's it.

**Ms FORREST** - That was the Road Safety Taskforce though, they fund that through MAIB.

**CHAIR** - I am thinking not only of television but the media generally, radio and newspapers, concentrating on some road safety matters, not in a very detailed way but just helpful hints and advice.

**Dr FETTKE** - If you were to take some of the proposals I have on board then they would need to be introduced to the community and that would involve a media response. That is part of educating - why things such as registration need to come in and licensing and supervision. That would be part of that, would have to be part of an implementation plan anyway.

**CHAIR** - I distracted you.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is all right.

**Ms FORREST** - You were going onto the point of entry before I interrupted you actually.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is fine. I see if you are going to intervene in the whole process there are different points where you should. One is maybe at the point of entry of the vehicles into the State; one is at the point of sale; one is at the point of use; and then some other measures.

At the point of entry if we are worried about imports of dodgy motorbikes which do not have the right gear, we are an island State. We do have containers that come into this State and we X-ray them. We do not let guns in and a motorbike is a lot harder to conceal than a weapon so at a customs point it is very simple.

I believe if you are going to sell a motorbike in Tasmania it should be sold through a motorcycle shop. That way it is appropriately safe, it has brakes that work, it has got lights that work and then when you do sell it you sell it with the right equipment.

I actually see at point of entry we have a unique capacity in Tasmania to say, 'Okay, let's stop the entry'. Even if you buy it over the Internet it still has to come here; it does not arrive in the post.

**Mr DEAN** - That is an interesting point. Motor vehicles are closely inspected and examined before they are sold, new vehicles are put through tests and so on and must meet certain qualities and requirements. Yet it would seem that anybody can bring in a motorbike.

**Dr FETTKE** - Well, you can import it.

**Ms FORREST** - Not a motorbike. Motorbikes go through a certain place but the trail bikes you are talking about.

**Dr FETTKE** - I am talking about off-road bikes, rapstars, I am talking about all those and thumpstars.

**Mr DEAN** - I think motorbikes come into it as well if you talk to some people but we are talking about bikes, off-road bikes.

**Dr FETTKE** - And quad bikes. They all have to come into this State somehow. We have a unique opportunity to do something.

**CHAIR** - Nationally too because cars that are imported have to comply with certain standards and it does vary from State to State and they cannot be registered unless they are adapted in some cases. So the point of entry into Australia as well.

**Ms FORREST** - The other point of entry is on the *Spirit* where people actually own the bike and can bring it across. We get a number of mudrunners and that. A lot of people come from Victoria because they are shutting down a lot of the areas those people can ride over there because of the environmental damage. They are coming across on the *Spirit* and as far as I understand there is no check or balance. They just drive them off as you would your vehicle - assuming your vehicle is driven onto the boat in Victoria then it is okay to drive it off in Tasmania.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - These are not people who are buying bikes, it is a point of entry that would be much more difficult to police because you would assume that if it has been managed in Victoria onto the boat then it can be managed off it.

**Dr FETTKE** - But that is just liaison with the Victorian Government. You put a big sign up on the *Spirit of Tasmania*, 'Your off-road motorbike needs to be licensed, registered and it will be inspected'.

**Ms FORREST** - That is not the case in Tasmania at the moment, you do not have to register off-road bikes.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, no.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, that is right.

**Dr FETTKE** - At point of sale I believe we should apply the same rules to on road as we do off road - that to buy a vehicle and to drive a vehicle you should be licensed and licensing means that you are 17 years of age and you have done, just like you get a motorbike licence on road or a car licence on road you have to in fact get a licence to ride a motorbike off road.

**CHAIR** - There will be some problems there or some resistance to that because young teenagers are competing nationally with off-road trail bikes.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is correct. However the person who purchases the bike needs to be an adult and that there is an agreement if you are going to purchase that bike for a child then

that child is going to then ride that in a supervised environment with appropriate gear and we then need to provide that supervised environment.

It is difficult to police but at point of sale you can say okay you cannot buy this unless you have a licence as a parent. If you are going to buy a bike for a five-year old theoretically the parent should be riding along with that five-year-old or the 10-year-old or 15-year-old. Maybe the parents or an appropriate person in fact need to take responsibility at point of sale.

**CHAIR** - In a similar way to young people learning to use firearms; only in the company of an adult who has a licence.

**Dr FETTKE** - Who is licensed.

**Ms FORREST** - I grew up on a dairy farm. Before we had motorbikes on the farm we used to walk and get the cows in and dad would be at the cow shed getting set up, getting organised but I was going to get the cows. When we got motorbikes I would ride to go and get them because it was not a huge farmland. Now you would have more than one person out getting the cows in because of the size of the herds. But you still are going to have situations where a smaller farm cannot afford to employ extra staff just to get the cows in and so the children form part of that work force.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is right. But then those children are supervised.

**Ms FORREST** - Indirectly supervised in that case.

**Dr FETTKE** - There is at least a parent generally involved in bringing them in. If you look at farm safety and the workplace safety - and the family farm is the classic example - if you ride a motorbike on a farm you need to go through - in a workplace you need to go through an enormous amount of -

**Ms FORREST** - You do not as a family member.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, you do not. But you are still a parent supervising a child. Therefore to buy that motorbike for the farm - and we are only talking about buying the motorbike - the person who bought the motorbike had to be licensed, I believe. So it is still a parent. The family farm is an interesting one, or where you can go and ride your motorbike on someone's farm. That is fine. What I am saying is that at point of sale the person who purchases the bike takes a degree of responsibility for it by being licensed.

**Mr DEAN** - It is exactly the same situation with the farmer who buys a tractor, for instance. It is a good example. They are required to ensure that there is proper supervision for anybody driving that tractor. They do on farms - young children drive them. Mine were driving them when they were six or seven years of age. But you acquire supervision and control of them.

**Dr FETTKE** - My kids have been driving vehicles on my farm since the age of seven or eight.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, mine too.

**Dr FETTKE** - However, I am the parent. I am supervising. There is a speed limit. They can hear me if they do more than 20 kilometres per hour. So I am providing a safe environment for them.

**Ms FORREST** - There would be a number of farmers out there that would not have a motorcycle licence. They most likely have a car licence or even a heavy vehicle licence but they do not have a motorcycle licence.

**Dr FETTKE** - Tough bikkies. Go and get one.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I am just saying that is what you are suggesting. They have to have them.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes, that is right. I am saying that to buy a motorbike - an off-road bike or an on-road motorbike - you need to be licensed.

**Ms FORREST** - Does the ATV fit in the motorbike category?

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes, you need to go and get a licence.

**CHAIR** - That applies even though they are used on private property?

**Ms FORREST** - It does not at the moment.

**CHAIR** - No, no, what you are suggesting.

**Dr FETTKE** - I am saying this is where we can hit: at point of sale you cannot buy a motorbike unless you have a motorbike licence. Even for a child.

**CHAIR** - And be of the age of 17, you are saying?

**Dr FETTKE** - I think they are the same rules. So if you are under 17 then that person who may be riding it is going to have to be supervised.

**Ms FORREST** - Is there any place then for considering a restricted licensing arrangement for younger kids, say, from the age of 12 or something like that?

**Dr FETTKE** - I think they can do that because what I propose is that if you are under that age you will get into a club scenario or a supervised environment.

**Ms FORREST** - With a restricted licence? The reason I think you would do that is because when a person goes to get a licence there are varying degrees - and that is another argument we could have - about the education that is given to the person. Like when you go for a motorcycle licence now you have to go and do a whole-day course and you are given a whole range of strategies and skills so that if we had a restricted licensing arrangement for young kids from the age of, I am just saying 12 as a figure that it could be, then you would implement around that an educational framework at that time.

**Dr FETTKE** - I think I agree in principle. I have not given it an enormous amount of thought about who gets registered and licensed under the age of 17. All I am saying is that under the age of 17 they are supervised.

**Ms FORREST** - That could be part of the licensing arrangement, though. They get a course of education themselves, not just relying on their parents. Because kids of 14 can consent to a medical procedure, as you know. So these are kids that are able to make that sort of decision but -

**Mr DEAN** - You could have at a point of sale a proper recognition of the difficulties and the supervision necessary by the parent or by the senior person who is buying it. So they would probably need to sign some certificate or what have you to ensure that proper supervision is applied. There is a problem with second-hand bikes being sold as second-hand cars are. How do you control that? I think it might be a little more difficult.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, because part of my next point is registration. Again, if you need to be licensed to buy it, then you put parental education in place at that point in time, like 'You can't buy it unless you have done your course', and part of that is parental education. At point of sale, you cannot get hold of it unless you are licensed, you have done your parent education and then you are agreeing in principle to a supervised environment. Sure, it will fall down, but these are points.

On the issue of equipment, you must ensure that the appropriate safety equipment is provided. That is in the interest of motorcycle shops. They will see this as a bit of a hurdle, but then they can actually say, 'Okay, we will run these courses' or 'we will put you in contact with it', so there is no financial loss to them. If you want to buy a motorbike you might unfortunately have to buy \$1 000 of safety equipment. That might make them a little more expensive, I am not fussed about that, but that is appropriate safety equipment that needs to be instituted at that time. It is in the interests of the motorcycle shops to actually do this as well.

**Ms FORREST** - Most of the motorcycle shops sell safety gear as well.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes, but they are not forced to sell it. They have bigger profit margins on that stuff anyway, so it is in their interests to sell it. The Tasmanian company of the year was Braaap Motorcycles. I have an issue with that, I suppose.

**Ms FORREST** - Are you suggesting it should be a requirement that as part of the sale of a motorbike that the purchase of safety equipment is undertaken at the same time and you can't take your bike out of the shop without it?

**Dr FETTKE** - Absolutely, without buying appropriate safety equipment.

**CHAIR** - And a requirement to use it.

**Dr FETTKE** - And a requirement to use it, but again it comes down to how you then enforce that.



**Mr DEAN** - You could use that on boats, again your analogy with the boats is a good one. There you are required to have life vests for anybody on your boat, as well as other safety things on a boat, and motorbikes are probably more dangerous than boats are.

**Dr FETTKE** - I am recommending a level playing field. We have it in place for water craft. I am saying why don't we have exactly the same things in place, so when the public say this isn't fair, we can say they have already accepted it as a community on water craft, which we know are safer. It is very simple. I believe that all the motorbikes, on-road or off-road should be registered. The registration means that they get to a certain level of safety, just like a car registration. Tasmania is unique in that you don't need to get a pink slip and check that your car is okay, but at least it needs to go through a registration process. Theoretically that should improve the level of safety of the equipment and keep it up to scratch.

**Ms FORREST** - Those people would also be covered by MAIB.

**Dr FETTKE** - The next part of that is MAIB registration will be charging a fee, and maybe that should be a reduced premium or perhaps a higher premium. We know that motorbikes riders generally use up more MAIB premiums than car users, but nonetheless it is a small step. The moment you register it you create an information base, a funding base and an opportunity for a user-pays system. If you start getting injured, then MAIB start covering you. I am a great believer in a user-pays system for a lot of things. I think that should be the case for all engine capacities - it doesn't matter that at the moment the smaller engine ones, because they are then considered toys, can be imported as toys I think the cut-off is under 50cc, I am not quite certain about that, it is worth clarifying whether it is under 25cc or 50cc. They get imported under a totally different rule.

**Ms FORREST** - I am not sure about this, but I have seen those toy ride-on tractor things that John Deere and those people sell, and they could get wrapped up in this as well. It is something that needs to be looked at, obviously, and how far it goes.

**Dr FETTKE** - If we look at 20 years ago, a 125cc motorbike would putter around, and a 125cc motorbike now on a racetrack can do a couple of hundred kilometres per hour. Engine capacity is not really a good determinant of speed or potential for danger because if you put a smaller person on the smaller ones, they do the same amount of damage.

**Ms FORREST** - If they go for a ride they might be caught up in it too.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes, okay. I think there will be some collateral damage. These are points that I raise which, over time, can be nipped out but -

**Mr DEAN** - One issue there is - and I take your point which is a good point - you have the motorised bicycles today. They keep them below the required cc so they don't have to be registered and they're able to be ridden at 20 kph or 30 kph. In fact, I raised this in Parliament, and I think most people would remember that, saying it's only a matter of time before have accidents with them as well, and where do we go? It's a good point.

**Dr FETTKE** - But it's on the road so people are aware.

My next point concerns the use of off-road motorbikes. I've had some discussions with Rosemary Armitage on this issue of the motorcycle clubs having concerns about finding appropriate land and -

**CHAIR** - Is she a motorcycle rider?

**Dr FETTKE** - No, sorry. I should define who Rosemary is: Deputy Lord Mayor of Launceston City Council.

**CHAIR** - That's right. I know.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - She might be, though.

**Dr FETTKE** - We're now talking about at the point of use. We need to provide an appropriate environment. One of the arguments that the motorcycle associations and the clubs have - and I've had discussions with numerous levels of people who are involved in this - is that they don't have an appropriate spot to ride their bikes. They'd be happy to maintain a site but they'd like council to allocate a site and then it comes to the insurance issue as to who covers for public liability on that. You'd probably need to seek information from them specifically. They feel that, from my discussions, on public land this is a public pursuit and therefore the public purse should fund the insurance of it. I am a believer in the user-pays scenario where the land is allocated and the user has to look after it; maybe the insurance side of it you need to cover. In my previous capacity as Chairman of the PCYC, I know that insurance is a significant issue and a significant cost.

**Maybe if all those bikes are registered then part of the cost is then could be deferred upon the third party insurer which, in the current form, would be MAIB.**

**CHAIR** - The same could be applied to learner drivers of motor vehicles. Do you feel the State Government has some responsibility to provide places where they can learn to get the feel of the car and drive?

**Dr FETTKE** - Surprisingly, I can only think of one learner accident that I've seen in the last 20 years.

**CHAIR** - I'm not thinking to prevent accidents while learning but to train and get the feel of the vehicle.

**Dr FETTKE** - I totally agree. That would be an extrapolation that you could have. At Symmons Plains they run driving courses so learners can go along to a course like that. The trouble is that's not going to allow them to get their 50 or 60 hours up.

**Ms FORREST** - You need to practise in real-life situations. It's no good doing 50 hours on a racetrack.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, but part of a learning environment, learning some basic road safety can be done there. As to who funds that and where that's put, I see learner drivers as being a slightly different issue for cars than for the motorbike.

**CHAIR** - It is, and I'm distracting you from the emphasis on motorcycles, but the first time most learner drivers get behind the wheel of a car is on a public street. Some past famous motor racing people have suggested areas should be made available for learner drivers before they go on to public streets just to get the feel of a car. On farms children of farmers benefit; they can drive around and get the feel of the car but people living in urban areas can't.

**Dr FETTKE** - My children are fortunate because they get to drive around a paddock first of all.

**CHAIR** - Yes; it is thought that would be an advantage if there were spaces available for -

**Dr FETTKE** - That's what the Kmart car park is for.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - It's a bit restricted now.

**Ms FORREST** - Most parents take their kids to places like that initially, to drive around on the weekend and stuff.

**CHAIR** - I've taught a couple of people to drive going around there but I think it's not available now. I have distracted you; go back to motorcycles.

**Dr FETTKE** - Mr Fewkes has allocated me a certain amount of time and I do not want to overstay my welcome.

**Mr DEAN** - I think we could have you here all day probably.

**Dr FETTKE** - I do have to go back to the operating theatre sometime soon but I actually have that as a floating time.

**CHAIR** - We are a bit the same.

**Dr FETTKE** - It probably is a council issue as to the allocation of land rather than the State Government. I do not quite know where that line lies. But that certainly is beyond the scope of my recommendations. I do not particularly want to have a whole off-road motorbike thing next to my property but something needs to be considered about that because we need to provide an environment.

**Ms FORREST** - It may become a State Government issue because most of the local government-owned land is close to the urban fringes and there is always the 'not in my backyard' sort of approach. Once you get out into the bush and areas like that where you can actually set up something that is away from the population base you tend to get into the reserves, which is State Government land.

**Dr FETTKE** - There have been places provided for motorcycle clubs in the past. They have generally been on private property. But you have to remember a lot of these bikes are now ridden on the open fringe anyway. Therefore you are not really transferring the noise very far away. You are just putting it in the one spot. I talked about insurance issues - whether or not that is purely a council and land issue or whether or not it is an insurance issue that the motorbike riders fund themselves through MAIB. My next comment there is about road inspections. Most of the motorbikes who go out for recreational pursuit go out by one or three roads in Launceston, or if they come into the State they come in on the *Spirit of Tasmania*.

It is very simple to have road inspections or traffic inspections for vehicles that we allocate a certain amount of funding and then on  $x$  number of weekends you provide a road inspection point because they all go out on a trailer load or on the back of a ute and you say, 'Your motorbike is not registered'. We would do a vehicle inspection just like, 'The lights are not working, the brakes are not working' or we would check the thing is actually registered. It is something the Police Commissioner, when I spoke with him, felt was an option. So random road traffic inspections and road inspections are reasonable.

Sure, that does not account for all the people who go from one farm to another farm, and there are more than three roads out of Launceston, but all you have to do is go on Station Road or White Hills Road and have a look out there. You put up an inspection. At the moment there is nothing to inspect but if you actually say that it needs to be licensed and registered with the appropriate safety gear then you actually have a point of inspection. The same thing goes with forest inspections. A lot of vehicles which are ridden in our State forests and on public land should be licensed vehicles. That is a simple thing. At the moment you need a license to ride on them. Most of the State has a no-pursuit policy. I understand that in Huon the police are doing a bit of pursuit. Certainly in Victoria the police have some motorcycle pursuit force.

The police have a pursuit policy where they can go along and catch up with the motorbikes. Now I do not want to get people injured because of chasing motorbikes either/or racing away from inspections.

**Mr DEAN** - The police will not chase them.

**Dr FETTKE** - No, but if we go to a registered motorbike, on- and off-road, it has to have a numberplate on it. If you have a visual contact you can catch it that way. There is an argument for putting numberplates on motorbikes both on-road and off-road and putting numberplates on the front and the back. I do not know if that has been raised. I had not ever thought about it.

**CHAIR** - I do not think it has by evidence but we are aware of it.

**Dr FETTKE** - Speed cameras apparently - and this is some information that was sent to me through the College of Surgeons only this week - have trouble detecting a motorbike coming towards them. They could pick the speed but then they cannot catch the numberplate on the back, whereas if you have a numberplate at the front it can be picked.

We have all driven in traffic and motorbikes zip through the traffic around you. I do not really have a major issue with on-road motorbikes but I am taking the same principle that if we supervised, if we changed our licensing agreement that we had a registration where you have a number plate on the front of a motorbike then you will be able to use that as a deterrent so that you can actually catch the speed.

However with the same thing in the bush if you have a forest inspection out there and someone is driving in an illegal fashion or dangerous fashion or ill-equipped fashion you are more able to pick that up. So if the police are coming around they come along, they have a little video camera on the front of their motorbike, bang they hit the play button, they will capture that.

**Mr DEAN** - That used to always be the case up until, I do not know, 20 years ago, I suppose. They changed that because of the dangers of having a numberplate on the front of a motorbike and reasons at that time were that there had been a number of accidents where the numberplate had caused damage to the riders. So they then deemed that it was not suitable to have a numberplate on the front of a motorbike. That was the reason for it but there are probably numberplates they could now have.

**Ms FORREST** - Ones that collapse perhaps.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, different collapsible ones or whatever.

**Dr FETTKE** - Plastic ones. The numberplate is an issue of policing it in the forest scenario.

A lot of police cars have video cameras on them. They come around the corner, bang there are a whole lot of guys who are doing crazy stuff, videorecord. These are all deterrents. The question is when you then catch them as to what you do with it. We have hooning laws around at this point in time. Whether or not there should be a confiscation of the vehicle or at least a removal for a week or two, I am not trying to sound like a party pooper, I am trying to come up with points which may be considered as intervention.

**CHAIR** - You are very helpful because you are coming up with not only details of the problem but also suggested solutions. It is a practical way and we appreciate that.

**Dr FETTKE** - I believe that, as I have alluded to earlier, there should be no underage riders unless in an organised club event and fully supervised. Sometimes motorcycle clubs encourage the kids to race and get faster and faster but they do in fact teach them basic safety and supervision and the clubs are keen to have as many members as they can. The club events are interesting in that speaking to some parents who have previously been involved in motorcycle clubs they say, 'I do not want my kids to go to a motorcycle club because I want them to ride safely and not race'.

Then there is a spectrum of parents in motorcycle clubs who encourage the kids to race and have their child win and win and win. We see that on the sporting field whether or not it is football or hockey or netball or whatever. I am a coach as well so the ugly parent syndrome exists in all clubs. I do not think that should be a deterrent for saying children should not be encouraged to join motorcycle clubs.

**CHAIR** - What about children who live on properties that are a bit remote from urban areas where it may be difficult to become a member of a club, provided they are supervised?

**Dr FETTKE** - That is where I have said, it should actually on that sheet say 'and/or fully supervised'.

**CHAIR** - I see - 'and/or'.

**Dr FETTKE** - Which comes back to that family scenario.

**CHAIR** - So we will just put an 'or' in there. Yes, good.

**Dr FETTKE** - This is typed. It is much neater than my writing. It seems a blatantly obvious statement - zero alcohol and drug restriction.

**Ms FORREST** - Regardless of the age and experience of the driver?

**Dr FETTKE** - Regardless, yes. We have 0.05 as a road rule. I think at the absolute minimum we should have the same. As I was saying, the same road rules on-road off-road and whether or not that should be 0.05 but certainly in an under-age driver - you know, for a 17-, 18-year-old driver it says zero alcohol.

**CHAIR** - So when you advocate zero alcohol that is for under 17?

**Dr FETTKE** - I am recommending zero alcohol and drugs. Except I would actually understand that a middle ground is that we have under 18 -

**Ms FORREST** - It is under 21 for drivers.

**Dr FETTKE** - Is it under 21?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, because you cannot drink the whole time on your Ps and you are on your Ps for three years. You only display your Ps for one year, then you are still on your Ps for two and you still can't drink in that time.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is 20 then.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, they are 20. It depends when they get it, I guess, but effectively they are under 21, they haven't turned 21. It depends when they get their licence.

**Dr FETTKE** - It's a simple thing; the same rules as on-road.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, sorry, it is under 21. It is up to that stage, because they are still zero zero up until they go onto their full licence.

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes. Essentially a lot of what I am talking about is applying the same level playing field whether or not we are talking about on-road vehicles or whether we are looking at recreational watercraft, for which all those rules are already in place, so it is really sort of mimicking things for the same group.

I have briefly glossed over the numberplates front and back. What do you do if you find someone who does not have a registered vehicle? Do you fine them or do you confiscate them? Then that is really a disciplinary action for the police force - and the legal aspect can be looked at.

I have briefly talked about farm safety, and workers compensation and farm safety are all covered under business legislation.

On my preamble sheet I have actually had discussions with the Health department, with the Police department, Health and Community Services, I have had correspondence with the State Government, the AMA, I have met with the Motorbike Riders Association, a couple of motorcycle riders clubs, as well as correspondence from the department of infrastructure. It is interesting that the proposal that I/we have as the AMA and the College of Surgeons, about safety education and supervision, is very easily taken on board by all of those parties. There has really been no dissension on what I have proposed as far as I can work out, apart from a bit of hate e-mail from one website. I think I was accused as a tosser and a party-pooper and all sorts of things. There was some other language used, but I forget the -

**Mr DEAN** - Did you speak with the TFGA at all in relation to it? You didn't mention them.

**Dr FETTKE** - I have presented some of my thoughts to a couple of rural groups, and there is a fellow in Victoria -

**Mr DEAN** - Some of the issues that Ruth raises they may be interested in.

**Dr FETTKE** - There is a fellow in Victoria who is looking to set up an Australia-wide task force, and his major issue is with farm safety. So from a national farm safety authority he actually has some discussions going on, and we were liaising last year about that. Again it is seen as the off-road motor cycle - I am really commenting, I suppose, from the recreational side of it today more so than the farm safety, because from the farm safety point of view a lot of that is legislated under workers compensation and workplace arrangements. They have sort of got their act together in the amount of supervision and licensing and registration that has to come with ATVs and motorbikes on farms, not the family farm, as we discussed earlier. These comments today are to try and work towards what can be done on these other issues and the broader picture. I can go on about numerous other things.

**CHAIR** - Please do, any views that you would like to express relating to road safety.

**Dr FETTKE** - There was an issue with regard to bus seatbelts. I am just passing on comments on that because there was a recent bus accident down south which prompted a bit of discussion.

**Ms FORREST** - In Wynyard a lady who was the driver of a bus which crashed was seriously injured but there were no kids in the bus. It did not get the media coverage that that one did, but she is still in Melbourne.

**CHAIR** - No seatbelt?

**Ms FORREST** - No, it was an old bus.

**Dr FETTKE** - As I say, I received a bit of correspondence this week from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons about it. These are my personal thoughts as well as a bit of an opinion. The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons feels that seatbelts should be mandatory on buses and my understanding is that new buses need to have them fitted. It involves a cost to private enterprise for the retrofit of seatbelts but clearly someone has to fund that and it needs to be introduced.

It's more the fact that the prediction is that there will be a bus accident of serious proportions at some time, it's just a matter of time. If you introduce something for new vehicles, then why haven't we introduced it as a retrofit? If people jump up and down about the cost, then come to a simple equation: at which point in time do you accept that the cost to human life as well?

**Ms FORREST** - I've made a lot of inquiries related to this because I've had lots of constituents coming to me about it, particularly after that crash. It is a small community and everyone knew the driver. She had young children who went to the local school and the whole bit. There's been a lot of comment made about it and various experts in the field have suggested that retro-fitting seatbelts is not always an appropriate thing to do, particularly in some of the older buses which have seats with the metal rail across the top.

Putting a seatbelt in those can actually make it more likely for the kids to hit their heads smack on that rather than perhaps to be thrown about the bus in a different way but not injured to the same degree. I'm not an expert on the dynamics of a bus crash, but I've had some pretty convincing arguments in some respects that they might not be the best option. Rather we should be looking at removing those buses from the fleet and getting new buses. I understand the only ones that require the new seatbelts at the moment at the smaller buses, not the big ones because the bigger ones present a different risk. If you have kids in seatbelts and you roll a bus so the kids are hanging upside-down and can't get out and the bus catches on fire, you have a whole heap of other issues with who's responsible there. I don't know if you have a view on that.

**Dr FETTKE** - I am a great believer in a lap-sash belt rather than a lap belt. There's a totally different spectrum of injuries with lap belts where it just comes across the waist and significant spinal injuries associated with those. We have a recommendation for lap-sash belts in all cars and the majority of rear middle seats have a lap-sash belt. In fact, when I used to buy cars that was a requirement in my car because if I was transporting an extra child in the middle they'd be in the rear middle seat with a lap-sash belt.

Yes, the head injuries on metal bars are theoretical. Again, it's all theoretical. How much do we protect everyone who's on a bus and who covers the cost of that protection? That becomes a philosophical thing. As someone who's at the coalface of seeing people with injuries I'll say spend as much money as you need to, to make the thing safe.

**Ms FORREST** - Does that mean getting rid of these old buses?

**Dr FETTKE** - Get rid of the old buses and every bus should have a lap-sash belt. That's my comment as a surgeon.



**Mr DEAN** - I think that is the current position in that buses can't be any older than a certain year.

**Ms FORREST** - They can; they just don't get the funding if they're old but they can still use them.

**Mr DEAN** - That's right. Some control mechanisms will be put in place.

**Dr FETTKE** - However, if I'm a bus operator I'm going to say, 'I've got my old bus which I can continue to use and it's environmentally more sustainable than buying a brand-new bus and the cost of that and I can't afford to put lap-sash belts in'. You won't get any consensus opinion on that. I'm just giving you one end of the spectrum of opinion.

**Ms FORREST** - The government approach now with school buses is if they have a new bus, or one that's up to 10 years old, they get a progressively reducing amount of money for providing that service. Once the bus - and this is not totally accurate but a broad understanding of it - gets past about 10 years of age they basically drop away to getting no financial support for running the service so there is a financial incentive for them to turn their buses over, which will take time to achieve.

**Dr FETTKE** - In Singapore you can't have a car more than, I think, four years old.

**Mr DEAN** - Taiwan is the same, I think.

**Dr FETTKE** - I think that is a bit extreme, but again that is a way of ensuring that there is a certain degree of safety equipment.

**Ms FORREST** - Deploy the same principle to the car fleet then, if you are going to do that.

**Dr FETTKE** - I have thoughts about it but I do not have a recommendation. I think I should leave you on that note.

**CHAIR** - If you have any other views you would like to express there is time. We would be happy to hear them.

**Dr FETTKE** - As a person working at the coal face, I think the public hospitals do a tremendous job of managing road trauma, but departments are under ever-increasing pressure and need whatever support the Government can give towards funding of upgrading of emergency services, as has been well and truly documented in the press. It was with great regret I noted last year that the State Government decided to withdraw a whole lot of funding for infrastructure, yet the Federal Government two weeks later gave a bonus to the population of about exactly the same amount. It is a pity this money was not spent at the coal face; the community requires infrastructure. We have an emergency department which is at bursting capacity on a daily basis, with scenarios meaning we cannot get patients into beds. On the weekend, for instance, I had two patients I needed to take to theatre but I could not take them to theatre because they did not have beds to go into after I finished operating.

**Mr DEAN** - I think of another select committee which I am chairing. We should be asking you to come and talk to us.

**Dr FETTKE** - That is another topic, okay.

From a road safety point of view we have a significant trauma load. We have a significant and increasing trauma load associated with off-road motor vehicle accidents and predominantly two-wheel drives. Anything that can be done to decrease the amount of trauma associated with that will have a beneficial effect on our trauma departments, particularly at weekends. When we talk about the cost of motorbike injuries, there is a direct cost to the patient in suffering from their injuries and to the community for the financial aspect of it which we alluded to with family lost wages and ongoing medical care. There is another cost which is operating time in theatre. First, we utilise that time. Second, these patients often require multiple operations and returns to theatre, and they require operations to be done right there and then. That means displacing patients from the waiting list. I can remember one scenario, just to give you an example. I had a fellow who had come off a motorbike and had a shattered shoulder. It did not require an operation that day but he required an operation at my next available operating time. I saw him in the clinic and in the cubicle right next to him was a lady in a wheelchair requiring a hip replacement, requiring narcotic analgesics and she was the person who was being displaced and was not able to get her operation that week. I did not introduce the two of them.

**CHAIR** - There might have been some more surgery required.

*Laughter.*

**Dr FETTKE** - At times I do have tact. They were within five metres of each other. Each week we get someone after a motor vehicle accident who requires further surgery that requires displacement of patients who are in pain on a waiting list. That has a broader concept. What is the cost of that? There is no financial cost. It is clearly a personal cost to someone. These are the reasons I am speaking up; because it becomes a personal scenario rather than just another statistic.

We have a problem, as we talked about, with data collection in this State. We are not rigid enough. It has not been brought in by the health department. It is something which needs to happen. Whether or not that data collection is simple. Apart from that, it all comes back to busy emergency departments. If you do not have the staff or the space and the time, it is very difficult to find the inclination unless we start jumping up and down each weekend and working out exactly how many came in and go through them. That requires labour.

**Ms FORREST** - You would have to pull out every patient's file to do that, wouldn't you, all those who presented over the weekend?

**Dr FETTKE** - Yes and when we decided to do we found we had 18 over a two-day period.

**Mr DEAN** - This is slightly off that track, but on the alcohol side of things you raised before, do you have a view as a surgeon in relation to the alcohol limits under which people can drive a motor car? Do you have a view whether the 0.05 is an issue we ought be

considering in this committee? Is there a need for changes or do you believe that it is a reasonable level?

**Dr FETTKE** - It is probably beyond my scope apart from my reading around the topic over time. I think probably 0.05 is reasonable. We have a society that does drink. Drinking is like anything in life; if it is done in a responsible fashion then it should not impair judgment.

Ultimately it comes down to the individual and the individual should not be driving a vehicle unless they can control it adequately in the event of an accident; that is what the law says. The same thing goes if someone has a broken arm in plaster. I tell them they should not be driving. If you have a joint replacement you do not drive a vehicle until you believe you can manage in the event of an accident. If you drink alcohol then you should not be driving unless you fall under the limit. It happens that there is an assigned figure to it and there have been numerous studies over time which look at perception, coordination and driving capacity under the influence of alcohol and it just happens to be that 0.05 is seen as a reasonable figure. You probably remember it used to be 0.08 and it got dragged down to 0.05.

There is always the scenario when you might have had one light beer or one beer and you have to go out and pick up your kids unexpectedly. Should that be zero tolerance, zero alcohol? Probably not. You would not go and pick up your kids if you had had four or five or six beers, you would get a taxi and do that.

**CHAIR** - Unless one beer affects you unduly.

**Dr FETTKE** - I think 0.05 has been well accepted around Australia over a long period of time and in other countries as well. As we said before, if you are 17 and you are on your P-plates then it is zero because 17-year-olds, 18-year-olds have to learn road sense. Part of that is mindset, part of it is physiological and because that peripheral vision still does not develop until up to the age of 22.

**Ms FORREST** - To return to data collection, paperwork in hospitals is a pain and it just gets bigger and bigger all the time. If when the patient is being admitted if all you really want to know is the number of people involved in off-road vehicle crashes and injuries sustained as a result of those surely this could be asked be just adding one extra thing. When you are admitting the patient you have to do their vital signs, the whole bit, surely just having one code is not onerous at the time of the point of entry.

**Dr FETTKE** - I wish it was as simple as that. I introduced this in discussions with the emergency department of the LGH in about May of last year. It requires one extra box on the computer at the triage desk and a three-letter code just needs to be put in. We are talking about a dropdown box in the computer program. You would be amazed how many times this is not filled in.

**Ms FORREST** - I know. I used to fill in perinatal data collection forms and I know things will be missing and you wonder why. Surely it is an education thing, that if it is brought in in a way that is supported by the department, like the Department of Health, and then there is a degree of staff education would it be that hard to implement?

**Dr FETTKE** - You are totally right, it should not be.

**Ms FORREST** - It is about compliance.

**Dr FETTKE** - It is. I was involved in a study where we reviewed every surgical patient at the LGH in a year. Only in around 30 per cent were we able to get a lot of data and I was only after three figures. It is frustrating. You still would end up with 3000 patients in our study but nonetheless it is frustrating you could not actually get enough data. That is why we have to take the Victorian study - and if we were to have a very good database over several years - as a base line and extract what we can from that, because when you start looking through the world literature, the Victorian study group is the best that has ever been done.

**Ms FORREST** - Have you talked to them about how they implemented theirs to make it so robust?

**Dr FETTKE** - I have not spoken to them.

**Ms FORREST** - Maybe that is a place that we need to look - how they actually implemented it - because obviously it is working there, from what you are saying.

**Dr FETTKE** - It has obviously required a significant amount of funding and it is a stand-alone unit related to the university. They have an agreement with the Government and the Department of Health and they collate the data. Whatever the cause of presentation is, it is just put in.

**Ms FORREST** - But that is put in at the point of entry so there must have been some way of engaging the staff at the point of entry to actually collect that data. Otherwise if it is not documented it did not happen..

**Dr FETTKE** - That is right. But what I am saying is the Victorian figures, as far as I can work out in my searching the literature, are stand-alone in the world. So there is nothing I have read out of the US. The Canadians have some stuff on it but there is nothing I have read in any Western medical journal that comes anywhere near the Victorian statistics. They openly admit that they are missing at least 20 per cent and all the GP ones. Yet their figures are alarming. Up until 2004 they were increasing 10 per cent per annum. Anecdotally, when you just talk to every rural surgeon that I have spoken to, or those involved in trauma services like at the Alfred, each person is saying exactly the same thing that I am saying. We are seeing an increase. I have no reason to think that our community, which is very much a rural community in Tasmania, is any different from Victoria. The stuff that comes out of Victoria is that the rural communities are disproportionately contributing to that statistic as distinct from the urban. It makes sense.

You are not going to have off-road motorbike injuries in the streets of Melbourne. And we accept that most of the population base is in fact urban so this is, I believe, as much of a rural youth issue as it is a community issue. We know that rural youth have a significant problem with youth suicide, unemployment. Therefore they get this recreational time - they get these cheap motorbikes. Out they go and spend a lot of time on them. 'It is not going to happen to me' - because they are adolescents - 'It does not

happen to me. It is always going to be someone else'. But then each weekend there is another one. As a State we are a rural community. What is happening with Victoria is clearly the tip of the iceberg. I would love to be able to give you the statistics here. I have some statistics. I know that they are wrong and they are wrong by a factor of several fold and I have no idea if that is one fold or five fold.

**CHAIR** - Good. Thank you very much.

**Dr FETTKE** - Thank you for your time.

**CHAIR** - Are there any comments that you would like to make around our session?

**Dr FETTKE** - I acknowledge the fact that off-road motorbikes are here. They are a recreational pursuit. They are an enjoyable thing for a young population. I got into enough strife on a pushbike when I was a kid. But they are here to stay. Let us look at what we can do to manage them along a safety point of view of supervision, education and for the extreme scenario - because there is a spectrum of riders out there. There are clearly very reasonable riders. But those that are involved in riding incorrect bikes in an unreasonable fashion, in an illegal fashion and a dangerous fashion we need to try and find some degree of enforcement for that. That is really where I am talking about it being an educational thing with both the parents and the players. Look at where it can be enforced at point of entry, point of sale and then point of use. Then it is up to the police and the legal side to say, 'Okay, when you get to that, what can we do?' When I have spoken to all parties and had correspondence with all parties, virtually everyone is in agreement, first that it's a problem and, second, what I am proposing is not too unreasonable. I am surprised that of that spectrum of people I've involved has also included some of the motorcycle clubs as well as the bikers' association. I have a lot to do with the victims of all this on a daily basis and a few of them think that I'm being a bit harsh but they tend to be the 15-year-olds whose parents have said, 'No, Dr Fettke said you can't have one'.

**Ms FORREST** - You're the big monster then.

**Dr FETTKE** - That's fine. I'm involved in coaching and I've had some of those kids have their motorbikes refused to them because Dr Fettke said they're bad for them.

*Laughter.*

**Dr FETTKE** - That's just another bit of load that I have on my shoulders and I wear it easily.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Dr Fettke. Your evidence is most helpful to us in trying to work out some solutions to this problem and we do appreciate you sharing your expertise with us and giving so much time. Thank you very much.

**Dr FETTKE** - The whole idea is not to just come to you with problems but to come with a few options and I'm happy to be involved in any further working committees and both the AMA and the College of Surgeons have asked me to be involved if required.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We do appreciate that.

**Dr FETTKE** - Thank you very much.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr GRAEME LUNSON AND Ms ROBIN IKIN**, ROAD TRAUMA SUPPORT TEAM TASMANIA INC., WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Thank you both very much for joining us and being prepared to share some of the knowledge and experiences you have, particularly in relation to the aftermath of traffic crashes and the care of people directly and indirectly affected. We look forward to hearing your views and information about any of those matters.

**Ms IKIN** - We exist because we recognise that people have psychological and emotional needs after trauma. It's often just assumed once the body is knitting together okay that the person is going home and that they'll be alright. People with close families and good social network support tend to do better than people who don't have those supports but even so sometimes people can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. We've got a client at the moment who is suffering acute anxiety attacks and finds it hard to leave the house. There are so many issues that people have. I tend to think about it in terms of we get in our cars and we just go about our daily lives; we do it like robots really. I do although I try not to. You leave the house, you say goodbye to everyone, you get in your car and off you go, never expecting anything shocking to happen to you. By the end of the day you could be dead, you could be in intensive care, you could have your whole life wrecked; your health wrecked.

The effect of road trauma, emotionally and psychologically, can just go on for a long time so we see our role as being a support as early as possible if needed. Some people don't need us at all and a lot of people shy away from the thought that they even need psychological or emotional support.

**CHAIR** - Feeling that it's a sign of weakness?

**Ms IKIN** - Very much so. Graeme can tell you that with the men it is often a very big problem; denial and that sort of thing. Our head office in the State is based at the Launceston General Hospital and we've existed since, what date Graeme?

**Mr LUNSON** - In February 1992, we opened our doors.

**CHAIR** - I was involved at that stage.

**Ms IKIN** - You were, indeed. At that stage the hospitals didn't have social workers who were consistently attached to emergency departments which they do now. This has changed our role a little but I find that - and Graeme, as our executive officer, can fill you in a bit more of the day-to-day work that we do - the hospitals are so busy with their service provision of the necessities of just keeping people alive and dealing with the acute aftermath that they often don't have the time to even think about things like psychological or emotional impact. If there's a family waiting in emergency who are hysterical and all the rest of it because of what's happened to a family member, which is quite understandable, that's probably the only time that people often, the staff emergency department - and I say this totally recognising their skills and how busy they are - that they think, oh, we need some help and better get the social worker or the road trauma people or whoever.

Even though I'm not the counsellor, I am a trained counsellor and I work in the hospital in another capacity. I am so aware of how we can plug gaps and allow the medical and nursing staff to get on with their job more effectively. I have been called in to sit with someone, an old lady, who didn't know that her grandson and her daughter had been killed; no-one has had time to tell her yet; they're trying to stabilise her and trying to stabilise her other daughter in the next bed and just to keep everything going so that the medical nursing personnel can get on with their work.

A lot of the work we do, or more and more of it, is with tourists from interstate. They get in rent-a-cars, they haven't driven that sort of car before and they're not used to our roads; they get in the gravel and they've got nobody here to support them.

**CHAIR** - Including international visitors?

**Ms IKIN** - Absolutely. I'll hand you over to Graeme for a minute because I am well known for talking too much.

**Mr LUNSON** - And I am well known for not saying very much.

*Laughter.*

**Ms IKIN** - You say something from your perspective, Graeme, as the person who runs the day to day and then I can come back.

**Mr LUNSON** - What Mr Wing said about international; yes, we probably had two international ones this year; a Canadian lady and her son in the last month and prior to that someone from France, who had a lot of other issues mainly because she purchased a vehicle here in Tasmania and was not aware of the insurance provisions that we need to have here. She was covered by the MAIB because it was a Tasmanian-registered vehicle, but for the repairs to the vehicle she had no insurance at all, so she had issues there with that as well, being what you would call a backpacker and she had a limited amount of funds, and of course she had to eventually leave Tasmania and Australia about \$4 000 or \$5 000 out of pocket and not being able to be compensated by an insurance company.

**CHAIR** - And was she injured?

**Mr LUNSON** - Mildly. She was very fortunate.

**Ms IKIN** - She was very emotionally traumatised, because she knew nobody, and if we had not been around to assist her there would have been nobody really. It is an interesting situation. That is not our day-to-day situation, but -

**CHAIR** - So people can suffer trauma even if they are not injured?

**Ms IKIN** - Very much so.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes. Most motor vehicle crashes have a ripple effect, and it can go out and touch the lives of 30 or 40 different people in varying degrees. I guess the ones that are



affected the most are the ones closest to the victims, but there are still workmates and so on. There was a truck accident early in this financial year and our Launceston counsellor and I got a phone call from the manager of the trucking company. Pat and I went out the next morning and we sat and talked to 30 employees who were affected by the fact that their workmate driving a truck just ran straight off the road and was killed. So we do not just deal one-on-one all the time.

**Ms FORREST** - Are you involved in schools at all, such as when a young child is killed or whatever?

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes.

**Ms IKIN** - But we don't come in as a debrief situation. That example that you gave us, you said when a young child was killed -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, for example, if it was identified that the kids were traumatised because of the death of a classmate, would you go in an educational framework, a prevention sort of framework?

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes, although some years ago we did the Riverside High School -

**Ms IKIN** - We used to, but the Education department has their own set-ups for that, and we have not been called in to a private school. We could do that, but that is not our main role because there are other people in the community, crisis support teams and things. For example, I belong to the university crisis support team, so if there was a big crisis there I would be one of the people called in. In education where we do play a role, and this is increasingly so, we have let all the schools know that we are available to take sessions and to bring our counsellor and to talk about the traumatic aftermath in the terms that are appropriate for the age of the children. You know, why is mummy or daddy sad or angry, or what is happening in the family. At the moment we are about to start a series with a local high school, and we liaise with the Road Safety Officer from the Launceston City Council and we are using the video *Driven to Distraction* that was made here in 2004, which we find excellent because we think it hits the nail on the head about teenagers and their normal behaviour and how easily an accident can happen. We have a call-in counsellor up the north-west coast. We have only had that established for a while and we are very happy to do that, and we have a part-time counsellor in Hobart. The biggest problem we have is being known, being accepted and getting referrals.

**Mr DEAN** - That is a question I was going to ask, Robin. How are clients referred to you? Do you go to, for instance, hospitals and ask them to refer people?

**Ms IKIN** - Graeme, you might be able to answer that.

**Mr LUNSON** - As far as the Launceston General Hospital is concerned, as I said before, we have been there since 1992, our office is in the actual building.

**Ms IKIN** - Mind you, we have to fight constantly to keep it.

**Ms FORREST** - To keep it.

**Ms IKIN** - I am not having a go at the CEOs. This one and the last one have been fantastic. It is because space is at such a premium.

**CHAIR** - Do you have to pay any rental?

**Ms IKIN** - No, we do not.

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Mr LUNSON** - Our main source of funding comes from the MAIB. The Department of Health and Human Services fund us in kind by supplying us with an office, a computer line and a telephone line.

**CHAIR** - How much actual funding do you receive from the MAIB?

**Mr LUNSON** - At the moment \$106 500.

**Ms IKIN** - We are very grateful, but when you think that we are trying to run a statewide service, Graeme is on a minimal salary. Most of it is goodwill.

**CHAIR** - How many hours a week?

**Mr LUNSON** - I work 70 hours a fortnight.

**CHAIR** - Pretty much full-time, then?

**Ms IKIN** - Yes.

**Mr LUNSON** - I travel the State a fair bit. I mean I am not only based in Launceston. I keep in touch with our counsellor in Hobart and operations that we are doing there. The same applies up to the north-west coast.

**CHAIR** - For how long have you held this position?

**Mr LUNSON** - Three years now. I have been on the committee since 1994 and I have been Treasurer, and still am since, 1997.

**CHAIR** - Good, thank you.

**Ms IKIN** - Our committee is a voluntary committee. We pay our counsellors but again we pay them less than half of what qualified people would normally be paid. The people who work for us do it with goodwill. I am the President of the group but that is obviously not a paid position. I just get paid expenses.

**CHAIR** - And you have been involved for many years?

**Ms IKIN** - I have been involved since its inception. It is a real struggle in that we are a small group. We are a very unfashionable group. People do not want to go there. We find that the people who join us usually do not stay very long. They join because they have been in an accident or they have had a family member or a close friend in an accident

who has died or been terribly injured. They help us for a while. It helps them and then they leave because they want to move right away from it. They have moved on. It is not fashionable at all. To be quite frank, sometimes I find I fill in for counselling if the counsellor is on holidays or whatever. I find it very draining. I can see why it is not a fashionable thing. For your interest, as an aside, I also work with the hospital as the medical education adviser and I work -

**CHAIR** - You do not have a lot of spare time then, Robin?

**Ms IKIN** - I could not be the President of the Road Trauma Support Team Tasmania and do as much as I do if I was not already there because I stay late and work at lunch time. I have a passion; I believe that this emotional and psychological trauma is the subtext to so much that happens. With the medical students we have many of the students in the final two years of their training. I work with them and the interns and the resident doctors. I know how little training they get in this sort of area, not because people do not value it but they do not have time. Everything is jammed in. I know what an important aspect of patient care it is. Graeme and I are constantly trying to encourage young doctors and staff to refer. Hobart really misses out. We have a counsellor there. We have tried for - how many years?

**Mr LUNSON** - Two, two-and-a-half?

**Ms IKIN** - We have tried to get into the hospital and be accepted. They do not have room for us there. Graeme and our counsellor have done a number of sessions. We have organised with allied health, with nursing, professional development: this is who we are, this is what we do - social work. Please call on us. It took a lot of getting in and they are still not referring to us. We have clients who come directly to our counsellor there who said they were in hospital for six weeks, in the orthopaedic ward after a major accident and no-one mentioned us, no-one gave our brochures out. We take brochures, we take posters. We will go, 'Whatever you want. We will come down'. There is obstruction going on and I think it is to do with the culture of the hospital.

**CHAIR** - That is bad.

**Mr LUNSON** - Last year, after contacting the Deputy Director of Emergency Services at the Royal, Robyn and I met with him to discuss our organisation and how we had been trying for 18 months prior to that to get the social work department of the hospital, to start with, to show an interest in what we do and how we can help them - similar to what we have been doing here for 16 years.

The outcome of that was a special project committee was formed between the Department of Social Work at the Royal and the Road Trauma Support Team on which our Hobart counsellor and myself represented the RTST. We met monthly. We also became involved in PowerPoint presentations to the various -

**Ms IKIN** - Not long and not boring.

**Mr LUNSON** - departments at the Royal and most of those were two sessions each with the changeover of staff. We would do one the first week and then a fortnight later we would do the other one. As Robyn said, in that 12-month period and even into this year we

have had two referrals from the Royal Hobart Hospital to do with patients. The others have been either self-referred or referred by the Police department.

**Ms FORREST** - Self-referred relatives or victim's relatives?

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes, or self-referred themselves.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, but the victims or relatives or both? Were you getting both?

**Mr LUNSON** - Both. As far as Hobart is concerned, out of our client base there which is growing - but it is not growing to the same extent as what it did in Launceston - 70 per cent of our referrals come from the Police department and the balance from Emergency Services or self-referral.

As Mr Dean knows we have an ally in the police department with Acting Deputy Commissioner Scott Tilyard from his days as Commander in Launceston. He has done a lot with us to get the police awareness going. They carry these in their cars and hand them out at crash scenes, as they do here and on the north-west coast. The rapport that our organisation has developed over the last couple of years with the Police department is very much a major part of what we are doing.

**Mr DEAN** - It would seem to me that there perhaps are people who are not benefiting from your support because they really do not know the detail and do not have the facts on what you can do for them. How can we do something about that? Do we need to make it a compulsory requirement of DHHS or the hospital service to at least ensure that these people are aware of your services and what you can do? How can we strengthen that?

**Ms IKIN** - That would be helpful, as long as it was not done in a way where they felt threatened. We found social work departments found us a bit threatening at times - 'well we do all that' - and we point out that they are really busy with a huge workload whereas we specialise very specifically and get quite good at it. We have the time while they are being run off their feet, all this sort of stuff. We find the building of relationships has been absolutely critical.

It could work if the hospitals were asked to make provision and to recognise that this is important. For example, at the LGH the provision of psychological services is almost non-existent generally not just road trauma. It was only two years ago that we employed a part-time diabetes psychologist.

Some staff are so traumatised. One of the reasons I mentioned that I already work at the LGH is that people, sometimes staff, will creep into my office and say, 'I know that you are doing your other job now but I am so upset about this patient I have just been dealing with. They were in this horrible accident and this has happened'. We find the young doctors, and not just the young doctors, can be quite traumatised as you have already heard over the last few days about the crowded emergency department and everything-else. To me, the provision of psychological services full stop is just not there.

**Ms FORREST** - I have a nursing background, and when you go through your training and everything, you talk about the holistic care of a patient. If a patient is traumatised physically there is bound to be some psychological trauma as well. Do you think it is

this reluctance, I guess, to let go of part of that role? I have a real issue with fragmentation of care. I think it is really destructive for a lot of people, and we see it in Mental Health, we see it in maternity services, we see it in a lot of areas. I am just trying to be the devil's advocate here to find out. If you are setting up these smaller operations that are specifically targeting a particular area, whether it be post-sexual assault, whether it be post-road trauma, post a house fire, whatever it is, really we should be actually providing a service that is all-encompassing. Is that part of it, or not?

**Ms IKIN** - I think that is part of it, and that would be great, but people are just so busy that they just can't -

**Ms FORREST** - It slips through the net all the time.

**Ms IKIN** - Yes, that is right.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it would be better if your brief was expanded to be a trauma support organisation rather than road trauma?

**Ms IKIN** - To be honest with you, that would be a bit like opening Pandora's box in that with just road trauma support we have enough. If this were Melbourne or Sydney and we had stabbing victims and gunshot wound victims, that would be huge, but even here - no, unless we were resourced a lot more we could not do anything else. Until we can pay people a bit better, I do not think we can expand our service.

**Ms FORREST** - Just on those lines then, from your experience working in the field, are people experienced in road trauma any different to a sexual assault or a stabbing or a gunshot wound or whatever?

**Ms IKIN** - I think it shares some characteristics with those, but it is unique in the sense that we all get into cars every day and we just drive around and that is our main mode of transport, and most people drive, don't they? Most people want to drive and life would be -

**Ms FORREST** - At least they are a passenger if they are not a driver.

**Ms IKIN** - A passenger. It is almost like getting up, having your breakfast and cleaning your teeth, and I think is where people tend to be more shocked when they are badly injured in an accident. The aftermath often impinges greatly on their ability to get back in cars and drive, to trust other drivers. I know for years after I was in an accident I would almost break out in a cold sweat with anyone else driving me somewhere to a meeting, you know, down the Midlands or Hobart. It is just so much part of our everyday lives, and the disruption to everything that happens as far as our family life, our finances, our jobs, just everything, if you can't get back -

**Ms FORREST** - So you're effectively saying that, yes, there are some differences -

**Ms IKIN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - and that is why a unique service that looks specifically at road trauma has value. That is what I am trying to establish here.

**Ms IKIN** - I believe it does, because there are more and more cars on the road, nearly everyone drives. While it shares other aspects, I believe -

**Ms FORREST** - So road crashes are much more common, obviously, than house fires or gunshot wounds or -

**Ms IKIN** - Exactly.

**Ms FORREST** - even sexual assault probably. Maybe not. Okay, that has answered the question, thank you.

**Mr LUNSON** - You see, you are talking about post-traumatic stress disorder and so on. I was diagnosed personally with that 10 years ago now. The symptoms - and I have discussed this with people who are members of our team who have had post-trauma from a road accident - are very much the same, but the triggers that set them off are entirely different. My post-traumatic stress disorder did not come from a motor vehicle crash. But the problems that I had with anxiety and panic attacks and everything like that are the same, except that mine was triggered from other visual things that I had seen or that happened to me or whatever, whereas with a motor vehicle crash people can see something on the television maybe 10 years after the event.

**Ms FORREST** - They are likely to see something out on the road because they are back out there.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes. They may have seen it before and nothing happened and they see this particular one and it's so close to what happened to them that, bang, just like that they're gone.

**Ms IKIN** - The other thing, too, and I was just thinking back to what you were saying about the nursing role, is that, yes, we see some people in hospital but actually we see a lot more when they've been home a while.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes.

**Ms IKIN** - This has such an ongoing effect and, like Graeme said with the triggers, we have people who have gone back to work and think they're all right and then something triggers it and they're an absolute mess again. The health-care system -

**Ms FORREST** - Well and truly left them behind.

**Ms IKIN** - Yes, left them behind.

**Ms FORREST** - They've physically put them back together and sent them on their way.

**Ms IKIN** - That's right. That's why our service is free so that anybody can access it.

**CHAIR** - So you deal, not only with the psychological problems but with the fact that people often feel helpless if a relative dies in an accident and they're not sure what to do with funeral arrangements, insurance and matters like that.

**Ms IKIN** - All of that, and Graeme will go and visit people too, on the wards and help them fill in their MAIB forms because people are often so stressed with what's happened to them and often in pain that the last thing they can do is fill in a form. Graeme sits and helps them through it. In that way if there's a financial aspect to what we do where we help the health system and we help the Government. There were heaps of forms that weren't filled in at the LGH and at the Royal - hundreds. They were behind and so that was revenue that's not coming back in from MAIB back into the system and we managed to move - Graeme has worked with moving that on.

**Ms FORREST** - It's in the hospital's best interest to make it work.

**Mr IKIN** - Well, that's right.

**Mr LUNSON** - The nursing staff don't have time to -

**Ms FORREST** - It's another piece of paperwork.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes. So that's one of the roles that I play. The CEO of the MAIB organised for me to go down there prior to one of our meetings to sit with one of the case managers and go through - because I've been asked questions at times by patients and I haven't been able to answer them because it's not there in the booklet in front of you.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to say, on average, approximately how many people you would help?

**Mr LUNSON** - Let me say, in this current financial year, statewide, we have worked with 150 people.

**Ms IKIN** - That doesn't include all the family members; that's just individuals.

**Mr LUNSON** - Sometimes when our counsellors, in particular here at the General, will get called by the ward staff to visit with one of the inpatients there may be four or five family members there. They are suffering trauma but they don't actually come to us themselves. In the process of Pat being up in the ward talking to these people she's also talking to the mother or the father or the husband or wife or whoever.

**Mr IKIN** - Some of these people we see on a number of occasions.

**CHAIR** - What would be the optimum figure you would like to have in your budget? You're receiving about a hundred and -

**Mr LUNSON** - A hundred and six.

**CHAIR** - \$106 000 to perform the service you're providing -

**Ms FORREST** - Statewide.

**CHAIR** - As you would like statewide, what figure would you consider to be the optimum for now?

**Ms FORREST** - Be realistic.

**Mr LUNSON** - I don't want to be greedy. Probably another \$60 000.

**Ms FORREST** - You can't even pay the psychologist for that.

**Ms IKIN** - No, more than that. I'd say about \$350 000.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr LUNSON** - Okay.

**Ms IKIN** - Yes, because you can't keep paying psychologists \$30 an hour.

**Mr LUNSON** - No.

**Ms FORREST** - You devalue what they do.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes.

**Ms IKIN** - Yes; with \$350 00 to \$400 00 we could do a pretty good job. We may have to end up paying rental in other places; we've just been lucky where we are. The further we extend our service Statewide the more we've got costs; we'd get travelling between and coordinating things and -

**Mr LUNSON** - Let me just say double the figure we get - \$220 000.

**Ms IKIN** - Well, I think more than that.

**CHAIR** - Double to treble.

**Ms IKIN** - We've been running on people's good graces but we're a small group and we've realised in the last few years that we need new blood. It is not the sort of organisation where people say, 'Oh goodie, I think I'll join the Road Trauma Support Team. That will make me feel good. This will fill in my spare time'.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - Have you sought that type of extra funding?

**Mr LUNSON** - We have tried all sorts of areas and, as you would be aware, in the early days we ran chook raffles and stuff like that to pay a counsellor.

**Ms IKIN** - We haven't seriously sought it.

**Mr LUNSON** - We have approached the Community Fund, is it?

**CHAIR** - Yes, the Tasmanian Community Fund.

**Mr LUNSON** - Yes. We got knocked back on that because we did not have what you would classify as a particular project.

**CHAIR** - It is ongoing.



**Ms FORREST** - It is recurrent funding they would be looking for. But isn't it MAIB that funds you?

**Ms IKIN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Have you actually approached MAIB to increase their level of funding?

**Mr LUNSON** - I represent the organisation on a committee that is part of the Injury Prevention and Management Foundation. It is a charities committee. There are six organisations on that committee. We have a pool of money, and it is divided equally between the six members, and our organisation gets an additional \$40 000 because of our statewide operation.

**Ms IKIN** - To be honest, I think it is partly our mindset. Because we started with chook raffles and things and a voluntary committee and whatnot, I think that we were so grateful to get any funding initially and each year when it has gone up a bit we have been happy that we can keep going. We got the extra \$40 000 to get Hobart going and to keep that going. I think we have been a bit constrained by our own mindsets in that we are busy, we are doing the best we can, and I suppose partly it was cynicism in that we thought, 'Well, who is going to give us more money? Look at what is happening in the Health department and the hospitals. Who is going to give us more money for road trauma?'

**CHAIR** - Yes. Thank you very much for giving us such a good insight into what you are doing. Would you like to make any comments to close the session?

**Mr LUNSON** - No, I don't think so.

**Ms IKIN** - Can I just make one comment? I think we contribute to road safety, and that is not the particular point of reference we were looking at then, from the perspective that we exist. The subtext to every accident - and we are looking at road safety - is the horrible aftermath. We have a memorial service every year, and we have our pamphlets, and whenever we get an appropriate media opportunity we try to publicise that we exist. I think that just our existence helps promote road safety, in a sense. I know that is a bit nebulous, but I think that is important. A few years ago we did some TV ads and actually spent \$10 000 on TV ads, which was huge for us because we do not have a marketing budget or anything. It was really interesting to hear some of the comments, not necessarily the clients that we got, but people saying 'That ad was just like what happened to me' and that sort of thing. We would love to be able to afford to run those awareness things again.

**CHAIR** - Yes. We commend you for the very good important work you are doing, and thank you very much for coming to give us that information.

**Ms IKIN** - Thank you for inviting us. We appreciate it.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

**Mr PETER MACKENZIE** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Mr Mackenzie, thank you for coming and giving us your time and the benefit of your expertise by being here and also for the very detailed submission that you've been good enough to make to the committee.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - For the record, would you mind giving your occupation?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I am currently youth development officer for the Northern Midlands Council.

**CHAIR** - Please emphasise any matters and deal with the issues that you see as most important and then we'd like to ask you questions as you go along.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I'm feeling very nervous because I cobbled this together and I'm not sure how much I can regurgitate straight from memory.

**CHAIR** - Just make any general comments and then we'll have discussions about that.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Thank you. One of the things I'd like to say is that road safety and transport history are some of my pet part-time projects and dreadfully constrained. I counted this morning and I have 65 - I think it's called excessive compulsive transport disorder - lever arch files of information which my wife laughs at and says she'll throw out when I die. I couldn't pull out the references for this but I'd be happy to do that some time in the future because road safety is a very complex and complicated topic, very hard to divorce from some of the other issues I've written in there such as public health, occupational health and safety, land transport and so forth.

Harking back for a minute, I was listening to the people from the Road Trauma Support Team and I was privileged to work alongside Colleen Hall who founded the Road Trauma Support Team and Pat Igoe who worked in the RTST and worked for Lifelink so I was very interested to hear what they were saying. I think it's very important.

**CHAIR** - I was too, in the early stages, involved.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes; it's a very important thing. They did a tremendous job in getting that up and running.

I started life as a transport historian when I was very young. It's always been an interest. It started out with trains, planes, cars, boats and everything else. I mainly became interested in road safety, or at least it accelerated my interest when I was on a motorbike with my wife on the back in 1976, and I was run into by a car. I know about road trauma and I'm very grateful that I'm still walking. I'm currently working with a man who is working with me on placement through MAIB and he's a paraplegic in a wheelchair so I can see how close I've been to that sort of situation.

In my submission I put a lot of emphasis - and I did that on purpose - on what I see as problems within the system and again it's a very complex and complicated system. I became quite interested in that because, at about the same time that I met Pat Igoe and Colleen Hall when I was working for Launceston General Hospital in the medical library, I was concerned that what I was reading about road safety was missing a lot of the detail about what was happening on the roads. I started studying what was happening on roads really for my interest from about 1970 and what I saw out there was a very complex set of interactions between road users and the road environment. What I was reading was a far too, to me, and I still believe this, a far too simplistic - what's the word?

**Ms FORREST** - View?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - View of what was happening. Several things came together. I had the road crash in 1976 and I went along in my own way doing this study for myself, not in cooperation with anyone else. Then I met Pat Igoe and Colleen Hall and it spurred me on to doing some more so I started to examine what was happening with road safety and transport. Using my historical knowledge already I was also very fortunate to work in a medical library where I look at public health issues and very fortunate to work alongside a whole lot of people since that time who were experts on lots of these aspects.

My regret is that I have not published a lot and I am now trying to, I am just jumping forward, I am now trying to publish a lot more because it took me a long time to try to understand the system and how it worked and did not work and what worked well and what did not. I found that some of the problems are very fundamental in transport and road safety and really some of the barriers are quite monumental.

I do not come here pretending to have all the answers. I hear people on radio, I heard people on talkback radio this morning and they always have the simple answer - do this. It was in relation to some comments you had made. Lots of people have lots of answers. What I have done is back up and check what I believe with research, hence the 65 or plus, whatever it is, lever arch files.

**Ms FORREST** - One of the areas that we have struggled to get any research backing on is the effectiveness of driver education. We are told by the government department and the minister himself that there is no evidence to show that driver training improves outcomes and then they go on to the advanced driver training issue encourages people to be more confident and more likely to take risks. My focus is not on that area - I am looking at the defensive educational programs. Have you any research evidence related to that?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - There is lots of research. I actually wrote about that to the Australian College of Road Safety, which I have just written to again recently, about 10 years ago. I said that regarding this hiatus for 30 years about people arguing what is needed, part of the problem was that there was a belief that people who love cars, racing drivers, were better drivers. In America they did a study which proved that it was completely the opposite.

In fact racing drivers when they were on the road were having more crashes because they tend to be pushing harder and driving harder. It was very hard to get evidence to say that driver training as such was working. There are some contrary findings within the realm

of occupational health and safety which is actually why I wrote to the College of Road Safety saying that that is where most of the work needs to be done to find out. There has been a lot of stuff - Doug Ling.

**Ms FORREST** - RACT.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Doug Ling and Alex Jerrim I think he was working with. I am sure they have done a lot of research.

**CHAIR** - They have planned a course.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Which has been accepted on some parts of the mainland.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Some parts. One of the problems was that people were talking in training about how to drive a car, how to manipulate a vehicle is what they express it as, which is quite different to educating people about the psychological issues and the other issues involved. What the resolve is - if there is a resolve at the moment, I am not sure - it is an interesting one that, as I said it has gone on now for 40 years over what the best thing is.

I do not know what the top research is on that at the moment. It is a difficult problem and I think in my article to the College of Road Safety I said it was very hard to separate that from a lot of the other issues in road use. I think there is now some evidence that a mix of training and education can make a difference and certainly under the umbrella of occupational road safety. Does that answer your question?

**Ms FORREST** - You do make the comment in your submission here - if I can find it - that 30 per cent of road users are at work at the time?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That is actually one error I made. It is actually 30 per cent of all occupational accidents are on road but it is not 30 per cent of road accidents are not related to occupations. It is two different figures and I am sorry, it is more like 15 to 20 per cent.

**Ms FORREST** - Thirty per cent relate to workplace accidents.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Thirty per cent of workplace accidents take place on the road but of road crashes about 15 to 20 per cent are work-related.

**Ms FORREST** - People in work vehicles and that sort of thing?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - In motor vehicles, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - For the purpose of going about their work?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - As I said, I am struggling to remember everything I wrote. It was said by the Stay Safe Committee in New South Wales, as I spoke to them in about 1995, I think, that the evidence or the information about occupational road safety, as I call it,

which is workplace safety when people are using vehicles, was very hard to find and very small in amount. It has got better, but there is a lady - and I forget her name - and she is a representative of the United Nations about road safety and all sorts of things, and she says there has still not been that much change. So that is one of the areas where I would suggest there is a lot of potential for change. If I can give an example, I know from working in local government that for many local governments their efforts in road safety are basically 'Here's the key to the car'. There is no program of education or monitoring or anything else. I should say in there that despite anything that anybody says about what happens with road use that is related to work, most employers, in fact almost all in Australia, say they haven't got a clue what their drivers are doing out on the road, so we have this black area.

**Ms FORREST** - You mentioned having a code of conduct and a code of behaviour, things like that. If that was implemented as a requirement for all workplaces that had people using vehicles they would then have to obviously understand what the code says, so it would be a form of education that would go on within that.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - I know that you do say that there is a code of behaviours for employees using bungee cords and shopping trolleys, but there is no such thing for people driving vehicles on the roads.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That was after a young man who had his eye taken out by one I think in Western Australia, and I am talking now about 10 years ago. DIER now have a code of conduct for some heavy vehicle drivers in Tasmania.

**Ms FORREST** - A lot more government employees would drive normal vehicles, not heavy vehicles, wouldn't they?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That is right, yes. But as far as I am aware, there is no code of conduct for them.

**Ms FORREST** - No, I don't think there is that I am aware of.

**Mr DEAN** - So are you saying that the corporations, these bodies, should be more responsible in that regard about the people they employ, the vehicles they drive and how they drive the vehicles?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes. The chain of conduct-type of law has only come in in very recent years. Prior to that, with truck drivers for instance, basically what would happen was subcontracting truck drivers would be given the last loads to go from Melbourne to Sydney, the last load of the evening, and told, 'You have to get there in 12.5 hours. We don't care how you get there. If you don't get there' - and I can pull out the research for this; I can pull out the research for everything but it would take me about a year - 'you get no more business from us'. If they do that they will break the law, they will be fatigued and it is unsafe. But prior to maybe the last five or 10 years, and that is not very far, there was no chain of conduct responsibility so it did not matter what the employee was doing. There was nobody looking at the employer and saying 'you have a duty of

care over this' and that is very wrong. It is changing, but it has not changed enough on that, and in Tasmania I don't know how well that works.

**Mr DEAN** - There has been some suggestion I think made to us through this committee that some of these organisations should be required to put their drivers through certain education courses in relation to defensive driving and so on. Would you agree with that?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Actually the latest evidence - as I said, my memory is getting worse as I am getting older - this is a College of Road Safety Journal. It is an article I wrote, so that is not too long back, that is two issues ago, if you do not mind me looking for a second. Here you are - 'Development of a proactive brief: Road safety intervention for industry identifying issues associated with implementation' and that is done by the Queensland University of Technology, I think, QUT. They have a centre called CARS - Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety. They are a very good reference point.

**Ms FORREST** - We talked to them when we were interstate.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Okay. This is some of the latest information on just what we are talking about. I am happy if you want a copy of that.

**Ms FORREST** - What is the title of the paper?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is the *Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety*.

**CHAIR** - In your submission you referred to the risks taken by road users of all ages.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - It seems that if people did not take risks there would be very few, if any, road accidents. Would you like to expound on what you said in your submission?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - What I was saying was that a whole lot of risk goes on every day. For example, as I was driving here there was an older lady who changed lanes coming around the corner near Irish Murphy's or somewhere. She changed lanes in the middle of going around that intersection.

**CHAIR** - Was she giving a signal?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - No signals. My guess is, and I am only guessing from my experience and talking to people over those 40 years, that I do not believe she knew she was doing it. I have a sister-in-law who is 65 and changes lanes in the middle of roundabouts for no reason, she is not going anywhere else. I have spoken to her about it but she has no comprehension. One of the real difficulties we have is getting people to see that what they are doing is risky so there is an example of -

**Ms FORREST** - But it is illegal to do that. A lot of those manoeuvres would be illegal, certainly not indicating and all those sort of things, so isn't it a matter of people being aware of the road rules and applying them? I know that is easier said than done, but isn't that where we need to start?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes, that could be part of it. Part of that is getting people to understand what they are doing as well.

**Ms FORREST** - And be aware of what they are actually doing?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes and understanding what their intent was. To work with people to change behaviour and understand why they were doing it, what their intent was which is different than saying they did that, that is wrong. A point with that older lady, I believe she did not do it on purpose, that is my judgment, so slapping her with a fine would probably not be effective.

**Ms FORREST** - No, but if you had some sort of education after five years of having your licence or 10, or whatever, do you think there is some value in reminding people of those aspects of being aware of what is happening on the road?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I think there is.

**Ms FORREST** - What you are intending to do as well as what you do.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Well, when the T-junction law changed and you had to give way, believe it or not at that stage I had not read the newspaper, I was not listening to the radio and I did not have a TV and I was completely unaware of the change. I do not force my right of way on anybody. I thought I had right of way at a T-junction and this other person obviously believed they had because the law had changed. I always check what the other vehicle is doing and I was quite sure they were not going to stop. That is a long time ago when that came in, but that is an example. No, I was totally unaware of it. There was no effort to tell individual drivers that this law has changed. Certainly I was not told and my wife was not told.

**CHAIR** - There seems to be very little enforcement of existing traffic laws even to remind people that if they change lanes they need to signal well in advance. If they are going to turn right they need to give signals well in advance. Do you think there should be some tightening of this generally?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I think there needs to be. How you do that is the difficulty. Coming back to Ivan with the hoons, you would not treat the person, in my belief, who just changed lanes who I think did it accidentally the same way and yet they are at quite a risk doing that.

I agree completely that we need to do more. One of the problems with older people is that they do not often speed, although one man of 78 was caught hooning in Victoria, I think. He is on record. Someone will probably try to beat him. One of the problems, one particular thing - I will just pick this out that older drivers do - is that they accelerate slowly and they do not speed so they think they are safe. That is a really big problem because they are not. If you pick Campbell Town, they form a second lane in Campbell Town when there is not one. I have discussed this with the police and our local safety committee but we have not got any further. What happens is, I call them roadside rollers, they roll down the side of the road and make a second lane. Someone did it in Carrick or somewhere the other day. They believe this is harmless. I have done thousands of interviews with older people and worked with the Council on the Ageing

which gave me a great deal of chance to ask political questions and I have worked with older people in other ways. They, as a general rule, cannot see the problem.

What happens is if you are near the supermarket in Campbell Town and a person is rolling, if you want to turn the corner you now have to decide whether to cut round them or wait. If you have a B-double coming down behind you, you do not want to sit in the middle of a traffic lane and hit the brakes when he may be concentrating on the road ahead or the cars on the right or the child who looks like he is going to run out. If you blow the horn they then think you are a very rude person and they are not doing anything wrong, what is wrong with you.

**CHAIR** - When you say rolling down, would you mind just explaining that? Do you mean in the left-hand lane?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - There is only one lane. They make a second lane. It is a non-existent lane. They think because they are doing it very slowly it is okay, but you want to turn there so you are now stuck.

**Mr DEAN** - The same thing happens on the opposite of the street coming back this way Zeps Cafe and someone making a second lane and the keeping driving along.

**CHAIR** - Which one makes the second lane; in the left or the right?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - In the left.

**Ms FORREST** - The slow car.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - This is just an example. As far as I am aware there is no education program anywhere in Australia that has ever touched on that to my knowledge and I could be wrong.

**Mr DEAN** - You are right, and they do not indicate either. The fact is that they get over and make that second lane without any indication at all.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - And they will pull back in. You do not know when they are going to pull back in. You do not know whether they are going to pull back in front of you and you have to hit the brakes or they are going to keep going and you still have to hit the brakes.

**Ms FORREST** - They might be turning into a street but they have failed to indicate. They could be turning to the left.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - They could be going left, as well. Often they are not, they are going straight down. I guess I am saying that is an area where we do need more education. I am cherry-picking an example. To me we are letting those people down by not trying to change their behaviour. Changing their behaviour would be difficult and I would suggest it comes through peers and mentors, some of whom work with older people. I do not believe that one would be well done by police sending out a red card or a yellow card. You need someone they will listen to to teach them so they understand what the



problem is. I am aware you are an ex-policeman, Ivan, but I have had problems explaining that to some senior policemen. They just do not see what the issue is.

**CHAIR** - Is Campbell Town in your jurisdiction?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any views about the reasonableness or otherwise of the 60 kilometre per hour limit on the northern end of Campbell Town? It used to be 80. It was reduced to 60. There are wide nature strips, virtually no pedestrian traffic or hardly any vehicles coming in. Do you think that is reasonable or was 80 better?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I do not have a problem with it, personally. You still get children in that area and children will run out onto roads.

**CHAIR** - When do you get them in that area? I have been travelling it for 26 years and I have only seen about four pedestrians in the whole time.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I have seen more than that. I would not say great numbers but I see children walking home in groups at times. I am probably talking about afternoons, after school.

**CHAIR** - On the nature strips?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - On the nature strips, but they still cross the road unsafely and they can, as you know, go into a 90 degree and run across the road without any problem. As I said, I do not have a problem with it because the difference, as we know, in slowing from 80 to 60 is still quite significant. I think Campbell Town should have 50 kilometre an hour limits through the town which it does not.

**Ms FORREST** - That was in evidence given to me by people in Zeps, at which I am a frequent customer, the number of near-misses they have seen out there, particularly with the trucks. The trucks are not at fault, it is just that people step out from their cars and parking to go across to one of the shops on that side.

**CHAIR** - It is surprising that they do not have a 50 kph limit there bearing in mind they do at Brighton and there is at least as much traffic, if not more, at Campbell Town.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Having driven large vehicles in my past - I've done lots of different things - I know many large-vehicle drivers would not ever drive at 60 kph through Campbell Town. I could probably think that I've seen some through past Zeps, I've very rarely seen them. They're generally going slowly and most responsible large vehicle drivers know that in that type of area you would be going under the speed limit. One of the difficulties with speed is working out what is the appropriate speed because a lot of people think it's either the speed limit or their 10 kph faster or faster again, but the appropriate speed is often under the speed limit; that's one of the issues. The parliamentary Staysafe Committee in New South Wales mentioned that but they had trouble finding out whether when the authorities were talking about speed, did they mean

speed in excess of the posted speed limits or speed for the conditions. Determining the right speed for the conditions is a very difficult subject. There's not a lot -

**Ms FORREST** - In Campbell Town - and I've driven through there very late at night as well sometimes, as other members probably have too - it's probably quite reasonable to go at 60 kph when all-day shops are stopped and no-one's stopping. It's during the day when they're obviously quite busy that it's different.

**CHAIR** - But it's a limit, not a target. I would have thought that most people going through there at busy periods would probably be travelling closer to 50 kph than 60 kph.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I think probably the majority are.

**CHAIR** - I want to put to you that on the northern side, where it is reduced from 80 kph to 60 kph, the majority of motorists resent that because they see it as being unnecessary and therefore it causes them to lose some respect for traffic signs generally, if they perceive some speed limits to be unreasonable. There are 27 houses in that distance, which has the widest nature strips, I think, in Tasmania and hardly any pedestrian traffic and there doesn't seem to be a problem with that.

**Ms FORREST** - Did you go and measure them?

**CHAIR** - I counted them all.

**Ms FORREST** - No, measured the medium strip.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - You are right that speed limits do cause resentment with some people.

**CHAIR** - If they're perceived to be unreasonable and unnecessary.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I think the difficulty is that a lot of people don't know what the appropriate speed under particular conditions are. In a large vehicle I've saved a child's life by anticipating what happened at a roundabout. I saw the child; my gut feeling was that the child would run which happened and by the time I reached that point I had basically stopped. In regard to working out what is the safe speed limit, in that case it was zero. I have been in many situations where the safe speed limit is zero, but the science of trying to describe the safe speed for any condition is very difficult. There are a lot of people travelling even at the speed or under but still in excess of what the situation or conditions - I use situation more than conditions - warrant. If there are children around, even if it wasn't a 40 kph I wouldn't be going more than 40 kph, if they were close by.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I think most responsible drivers would be the same. Do you have knowledge of the area between Pontville and Brighton which is now 60 kph?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I went through there recently, yes.

**CHAIR** - There are hardly any houses in that space. Do you think that's a reasonable speed limit on a main highway?

**Ms FORREST** - You have to brake going down the hill because you can't just stay at 60 kph without braking down the hill from the top.

**CHAIR** - No, that's right. I'm thinking between Pontville and Brighton.

**Ms FORREST** - That's what I'm talking about; you come down into Pontville.

**CHAIR** - Yes, coming north.

**Ms FORREST** - You have to brake going down the hill.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - You're talking about the flat section.

**Ms FORREST** - It starts at the top of the hill, the 60 kph zone.

**CHAIR** - Travelling north.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - To be honest, I'd have to see that again. Going back to that difficulty, I heard on the radio, probably 15 years ago, somebody saying slow down on Doctors Hill because conditions are icy.

**Mr DEAN** - On the East Tamar Highway?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes. The difficulty is, what is the safe speed and how does a young, inexperienced driver, or anybody else really, know what the safe speed is? By saying slow down - slow down to what? We don't know whether it should be 50 kph, 40 kph, 30 kph, 20 kph.

**Ms FORREST** - Slow down from what as well.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I guess what they meant was slow to below the speed limit; I think that's what they meant. There isn't a lot of good science on working out the appropriate speed. If you think about how we learn to drive, we learn to drive by feel; I'm not explaining this very well, but I do know what I mean. The science isn't real good.

**CHAIR** - There are advisory signs with a speed figure on them and those would be more effective than 'slow down'.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That is another issue, there is a mismatch of where advisory signs are placed, as is the case with side lines. You go along the road to Poatina and all of a sudden there is no change in the traffic volume so we have not split at an intersectional and halved it or quartered but you have white edge lines then no white edge lines, you have a centre line, then no centre line, corners are the same in one place as a centre line on rural roads but not in another one. You have speed advisory signs on one road and not on another. There is very much a mismatch of those types of things. We do not have a comprehensive program for doing that.

**Mr DEAN** - That is a problem, isn't it? A lot of drivers drive by signs unfortunately, they take notice of the signs, and they should do plus other things as well we know. A lot of drivers in the rural areas will take notice of signs such as sharp corner, 30 kilometres or

40. They rely on that. There are corners on these roads which should be negotiated at very low speeds which are not marked. Do you see that as an inconsistency in the marking of these areas?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is a great inconsistency. One of the other issues was raised by a good and deceased friend of mine called Don McColl. Don was a consulting engineer who did a lot of road projects, used to teach road engineering and he was one of my mentors and unfortunately, as I said, he has passed away. Don picked this up in about 1995. This is an example of how things link together in this system. Near his place there was quite a long, straight road, and I can think of many around Tasmania, and then a very sharp corner but with no warning sign and the surface treatment. Surface treatment is something that is overlooked a lot on roads. I know that from other engineers who have told me that they have argued with engineers about the surface treatment on corners.

What happens is people come up and yes, they may be going too fast for the conditions, inexperienced, tired or whatever, these things happen all the time anyway, they are givens. The person crashed. He went to various authorities and said that he just met a brick wall for ages. He finally broke through only because of who he was and he argued scientifically that it was psychologically wrong to have very long, fast roads - and, as I said, I can think of many around here - and then very tight corners with no warning. Basically, with human beings there are certain things you can do; if you want to design for people injuring themselves, you do things like that. That is what you do.

**Ms FORREST** - A lot of these roads were designed when we had soldier settlements. The north-west coast is particularly bad because the land was divided into rectangles and the roads went around the edge of the rectangle. They are still there anywhere around Circular Head and back of Wynyard. They are like that because they go along the line of the boundary of the properties.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - The best you can do is have the warnings and at least warn people and give them that opportunity to slow down. If you take away the signage, you are not giving them the opportunity to do anything. The problem was with this case of Don McColl, as he was saying, when there was an accident there, and he said there were a number, the police would come out, their brief was to find fault, that is their job to find fault.

They would say it was the driver driving too fast for the conditions, whereas he looked at it more deeply and broadly and said that there was a problem with the long straight and the curves. When he went to the Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales, he said that he hit a brick wall over it.

**Ms FORREST** - In spite of that, the driver was driving too fast for the conditions. The condition of the road changed from being straight to a sharp bend. How do you quantify that?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Okay, if you look at the Safe System approach and Vision Zero of Sweden, Safe System acknowledges that, that people will make mistakes. We can all make that mistake. When we have driven a long way, we are a bit tired, we have a headache, we have sinus or whatever, we may misread something,. If took a risk

management approach, and if it was a workplace you would have to put signage in and do whatever you could to alleviate the mistake.

This is from one reference I found, for the Australasian College of Road Safety, which says, 'Crashes are predominantly caused by drivers'. We know that human error accounts for 95 per cent of crashes. There is another issue over what is a cause and what is a contributor; they tend to be used interchangeably and they should not be. 'Research clearly shows that the majority of death and serious injuries from crashes occurs because of inadequate road infrastructure'.

**CHAIR** - Do you subscribe to that view?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - That the majority of accidents are caused by road infrastructure, not driver error.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - No, not road accidents. What they are saying is - because there is quite a difference - that crashes are predominantly caused by drivers so driver error, the driver makes a mistake. Western Australia, though, said that 30 per cent of crashes were contributed to by road conditions. What they are saying is the majority of death and serious injuries - in other words, the outcomes from the crashes - are because of inadequate road infrastructure.

**CHAIR** - The majority of deaths are the result of inadequate road infrastructure.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes. I have not seen their scientific backup for this, I am just -

**CHAIR** - Does that surprise you?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - No, not really.

**CHAIR** - The majority of deaths are caused by road infrastructure.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes, that does not surprise me.

**CHAIR** - What is that document?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is a submission to Infrastructure Australia dated October 2008 from the Australasian College of Road Safety.

**CHAIR** - Would you be able to let us have a copy of that?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Certainly, I would be very happy.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - If you take Constitution Hill as an example, on Constitution Hill, drivers make the error and any of us could be the one coming the other way that that driver runs into. If you put wire rope, which has now been put in there, that won't happen.

I have seen a film recently of how effectively wire rope will stop a car; it is amazing to see in what conditions it will stop an erring car. A driver could be young, inexperienced, old, tired, whatever - they made the error and run into a car coming the other way. Michael Henderson, a guru of road safety, said 40 per cent of people just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The wire rope barrier will stop that but that wire rope barrier should have been there 10, 20 years ago.

I spoke to DIER staff when they were putting in the new road to Westbury, the bypass. I asked why a wire rope barrier was not being installed and they were quite vehemently opposed to it. They said it was not on the road to Hobart. They are now putting that in on Constitution Hill.

**Ms FORREST** - They gave you as a reason that they did not have it on the road to Hobart so we cannot have it on the road to Westbury, is that what they are saying?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - They said, 'We won't put it on the road to Westbury because we don't even do it on the Midland Highway and we are not going to'. I am prepared to stand in a court of law, I am standing in a court, and say that on oath, as I am now. They were so almost aggressive about the fact that they wouldn't do that. Somewhere in that time - that was 10 years ago - they have changed their mind and are putting it on Constitution Hill as they have put it out to Breadalbane.

**CHAIR** - About 20 years before that they resisted having any passing lanes on the then new road between Travellers Rest and Hagley.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Right.

**CHAIR** - They had to put them in within about three or four years at much greater expense.

**Mr DEAN** - I think a more recent example of what you are getting at is the Dilston bypass with best practice infrastructure. On that point, you make comment in your submission to us about the truck which had collided on a crossroad and tragically a lady was killed as a result of that.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I know where that was.

**Mr DEAN** - You go on to say partway through this that 'the police would not have found the road at fault and to my knowledge the intersection remains unchanged'. I think you are saying that there was a sightline problem with this intersection et cetera. Are you saying to us that very clearly where an intersection or the road infrastructure is shown to be wanting action is not always taken to alleviate that position?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Most definitely action is not taken for up to 20 years in certain cases. That goes to a bigger problem of the funding and we know there is not enough funding. However, the Australian Transport Council will tell you themselves that I think 85 per cent of the funding goes into what they call 'mobility' so there is a problem nationally where we are trying to put money into the transport infrastructure and safety is the poor cousin.

That is a simple way of saying it - safety has always been the poor cousin. When they say there is not enough funding, part of this - and I am not sure if I put it in my submission - is trying to prop up the competition between road and rail freight. There is a freight war between road and rail and it costs a lot of money. South of Albury there is - they are just converting it now - the four-lane Hume freeway, the old highway, a broad-gauge railway and a standard-gauge railway. One of those would do the whole task. It costs an enormous amount of money to build and maintain that, whereas the freight road through Birrallee is a goat track. The money will be spent on this apparently. It was supposed to be, so there has been a misallocation of funding.

**CHAIR** - What is your view about the suggestion that there should be a four-lane, divided road between Launceston and Hobart?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - I do not know. If you do that you will use funds that could be used somewhere else for safety. Does it need to be a four-lane road all the way or does it need to be on the lines of the Dilston and the Swedish two-by-one model? Would that be better? Or does it need to be single lane with overtaking lanes and divider? If you are talking about coming up with that mobility, four lanes would be very nice, thank you. We could drive to Hobart and stay in the overtaking lane. If you are talking about safety, that is probably not necessary. There are lots of other things that can be done. I am not sure if I am saying that too well.

**CHAIR** - Would it not avoid head-on collisions, which are the big problem on that road?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - But you can do that without building a four-lane highway. The other question is on the costs. I saw the costs being thrown around and people talking about different costs. Did that include the intersections or is it coming back to the Dilston idea where you build -

**CHAIR** - Which estimate of costs, the Government's or the Opposition's?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That is what I am saying. There were two different -

**CHAIR** - They were \$2 billion and \$400 million.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - That is a great difference between the two. I have never seen a breakdown of what those costs were supposed to involve so I do not know. I am not an expert, but I know that the cheaper model, if that were in a sense just to duplicate the highway and put a divider in and the intersections are left untreated, then we are building the Dilston problem again. The Dilston problem is that we are building possibly world's best practice for part of it and substandard practice for the intersections, in my opinion and the opinion of what I can glean from the Swedes and Monash University.

**Mr DEAN** - On the Midland Highway, I think you were saying to us that you could put the divide between roads with the wire rope barrier or whatever between the two lanes or three lanes, but there ought to be more overtaking lanes as a part of that model as well.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - As an alternative to four lanes. That could be an alternative.

**Mr DEAN** - I mean as an alternative.

**Ms FORREST** - My question is about your view of the overall speed limit in Tasmania with most of the highway at 110 kph, although some are marked at 100 kph. Do you have a view on that?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is interesting that a 110 maximum - and it is a maximum, not what you have to do - seems to be the limit on some of the roads. The road is not up to the standard of some of the freeways on the mainland where you have very limited access to those highways. You have your traffic travelling on four-lane roads or divided highways and you have lots of underpasses and overpasses and no farm access. As an example, I have had people pull out of farm gates straight in front of me at night on some of the roads and in the case of the road I was talking about the limit was 100 kph and if I had been doing 100 kph I would have gone straight through them. That was last year. It is very hard to say that it is 100 kph when there are changing factors along that road.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it should be reduced to 100 on the open road because of the sections that are perhaps better suited to that speed?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - It is not about whether you can drive at 110 kph. That is where a lot of people get confused. They think, 'I am a really good driver'. The RACT said this recently: most people think they are the superior driver and they think about 'my standards of driving' - and it is overinflated. That is for most people. It is about all the other interactions that you have with vehicles and the pedestrians and so forth and what that safe speed is. Does that make sense?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Mr Mackenzie, are there any comments that you would like to make in closing?

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Only thanks for listening to my rambling on.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for your views. We appreciate them and the fact that you did make the submission and come here.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Again, I am happy to back up anything I have said with references. I have the references, but I do not have a cross-index system in my filing system, although it is getting better. I have spent about a year fixing it up. Even though I used to work in specialist libraries, I do not have the time to do the indexing. I would love to have someone to pay to do it but I do not have that money.

**CHAIR** - You were going to let us have a copy of that document.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Yes, I am happy, certainly, to do that.

**CHAIR** - We will take that into evidence. Thank you very much.

**Mr MACKENZIE** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



**Mr GEORGE CHANDLER, Mr TONY WALKER, Mr BUCK EMBERG, Mr MICHAEL ADAMS AND Mr RON GOODES**, DILSTON, WINDERMERE, SWAN BAY BYPASS COMMITTEE, WERE SWORN, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Gentlemen, thank you for coming. We welcome you all and look forward to hearing your submissions. You will start, Mr Chandler.

**Mr CHANDLER** - This first section will be the committee's submission so that your committee understands where we are coming from. We represent five settlements on the East Tamar, 500 households plus all the other community segments associated that will be affected by the traffic being channelled onto the two entrances to the bypass.

The committee and community want to state upfront that things have failed in the past but now the game has changed. We fully support the DIER in the concepts they have put forward and we are looking forward to working with the council, DIER and the community, to make the whole thing safe and come out well.

The problem is being solved and for that we are sincerely grateful. We as the community and the committee sincerely thank Mr Sturges, Mr McIlpatrick, and Messrs Goodman and Taskunas from the RACT and we would like that recorded.

The aim of today is to learn from the past and pass on through your committee ways to improve safety in the future. The northern junction is a compromise. There are two junctions for the 9.5 kilometres of the bypass. The northern junction is a compromise and the community still has concerns, but we are really happy to have been given a choice of taking an overpass or underpass should the traffic or the weather conditions be unsatisfactory. That is really where we are at the moment.

What are we on about, what were we on about? I think I will pass these photos to each of the committee.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr CHANDLER** - If we go through the photos very quickly, things are written on the back of them but you will see that the one on top shows the sort of conditions that the Australian Standards are written for. They are written for average conditions in Australia. If you pick up the next one you will see exactly the same spot in the 50-metre visibility fog that we experience in the Tamar Valley and this is what makes it particularly difficult. Those were both taken at the southern junction and the fog picture was taken at 10.30 in the morning. The next one is the northern junction and if you have a look at it just think about how you might like to take a school bus across those two lanes of traffic or a four-wheel drive with a 2 tonne horse float.

**CHAIR** - Without winding the window down.

*Laughter.*

**Mr CHANDLER** - That one is infamous.

**Ms FORREST** - You could also ask, why would you live there? I should not say that. That is what the member for Windermere was challenged with in the Chamber when he showed some photos.

**Mr CHANDLER** - The next thing, you will notice at the back of that are diagrams. The first diagram is the T-junctions as they were originally proposed. The one behind that is the seagull junction, which is the one which came before council a couple of weeks ago. If you look at the front diagram you will see that the red car waiting to pull out on to the junction has to cross two lanes of 100 kilometre an hour traffic. The one waiting from George Town to turn into the junction has to cross the same two lanes and there is a danger of conflict between the two. If they pause in the middle they will be cleaned up by the two lanes coming down the lane. That does not change. The changes between a T-junction and the seagull junction are purely cosmetic in relation to the dangers there.

**CHAIR** - Do you know why it is called seagull junction?

**Mr CHANDLER** - I thought it was more the angel of death, but I do not know. I think that it is the shape of the island in the middle or something.

**Ms FORREST** - It looks like the wings of a bird. It could be a dove junction as much as a seagull.

**Mr CHANDLER** - The independent assessor's report omits anything to do with ice on the road and the last photographs show the sort of ice that we get. You will notice that the date on that is May and the two coldest months are July and August. One of our people was there and able to record it. The independent assessor's report basically is rubbish. The famous line, which I can see you have heard, 'In fog, people slow down, take extra care and use their hearing to make up for lost visual information'. On the basis of that, what is next? It is blind drivers who take a hearing test and are licensed.

**Ms FORREST** - Who do not have their radio on either.

**CHAIR** - If you cannot hear anything then just get out and walk around and have a view.

**Mr CHANDLER** - I will not through all the holes in the report; there are many of them. In the community's view it was shameful.

We did get a good laugh on Monday when Jodie Campbell was reported in the *Examiner* as saying in relation to black-spot funding, 'projects had been assessed and recommended by a panel of road safety experts'. We were not too sure what happens then they all get together.

In a recent development, and I will mention only one although there have been a whole lot of them since the initial planning, TasPorts on 23 December last year said that Bell Bay would experience an expansion and that would be 650 000 containers per annum, most of which would be on the highway because the rail services do not operate or are not operating very well at the moment.

The committee's original reason for applying to see this committee on road safety was from November 2008 and we want to record our concerns at that time. As I have said, thanks to Mr Sturges, Mr McIlpatrick and the RACT things have changed and it is important that that be recorded. We are looking now at things in the past. That is the end of the road safety committee's submission.

From my own submission, and if we go through it now with the people here who will give their own submissions, I have raised a number of points. My submission covers what I have learnt from the past and I can expand on these but we are trying to run through fairly quickly so if you want at a later date I will expand further. One, involve the community; they know what the conditions are, what happens there and it would save a lot of time and a lot of money if the community were involved. I imagine that this bypass would have been in and operating probably 12 months earlier than it will be if the community had been involved. Is that right, Mr Dean?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.

**Mr CHANDLER** - They have a vested interest and their vested interest is in life and limb. I am a little concerned that the fast-tracking process that is now being mentioned in Parliament may create difficulty for this community involvement, not just in road safety but in other matters, but particularly in relation to road safety.

**Ms FORREST** - In regard to the fast-tracking, my understanding is that it only relates to the money allocated to housing and schools.

**Mr CHANDLER** - Will it not relate to roads at all?

**Ms FORREST** - The media has stated that it is related to the Federal Government initiative to spend the however many billion dollars on public housing and schools.

**Mr CHANDLER** - Right, thank you.

**Ms FORREST** - So it should not impact on this aspect, I would think.

**Mr CHANDLER** - On road safety?

**Ms FORREST** - Not on road safety but on this particular project and the community consultation.

**Mr CHANDLER** - I appreciate that, thank you.

Number two, DIER, Pitt & Sherry and most of the contractors are not good at community liaison. Number three, the political system means that a locally-elected government representative must support their minister, he must support his department and so the locally-elected government representatives hands are a bit tied if there is conflict with what is being proposed by departments. I feel that something needs to be done about that to open up community involvement, especially in relation to safety. Number four -

**Mr DEAN** - Sorry, George; do you mean the members of the Government that are involved?  
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**Mr CHANDLER** - I do. Mr Cox's representative phoned me - he's one of our members - and said he would support DIER, whatever they determined, and the minister, so there was little point in us seeing him. It's a system. It's not blaming anyone personally but it's a system that says that you have to support your own party and you have to support your Minister and he has to support his department.

**CHAIR** - It's not the first time that has happened. When Mr Wriedt was the equivalent of Minister for Main Roads - and I have very great respect for him - there was the planning to build the road from Travellers Rest to Hagley. I was one of a number urging that there be passing lanes put into the plans and his department advised him that it wasn't necessary and that the traffic counting decoded that it wasn't necessary. I pointed out that if it were not put in then it would only be a few years before it were necessary and it would cost more. Within three years they had to put passing lanes in at considerable extra cost. He was relying on the departmental advice, as Mr Cox is.

**Mr CHANDLER** - This is why I am saying that it is terribly important for the community to have an input because they know the conditions; they know their locality.

I've also learnt from this that what is stated by government departments is often different from what is actually done. That surprised me because I totally believed that whatever was stated would be what happens. That's one of the difficulties.

Number 5; the acceptance of road accidents as a way of dying or being injured, by the community and by everybody in it, has horrified me. I mean, if 40 to 50 people were killed and a few hundred maimed walking down the footpath there would be the biggest shout you've ever heard, but if that happens on the road it's accepted. I think that's one of the things your committee is going to be facing.

**CHAIR** - We have made that point.

**Mr CHANDLER** - All people have great difficulty in planning for the future and your point about the highway proves that people have great difficulty seeing what's going to happen in future even though it's sort of in front of them.

Point number 7, don't build black spots into the road to start with. They spent \$500 000 at Calder Road trying to make sight lines safer. A lady was killed there early in January. You can't do it once the thing's in.

The last point is the ability of people to see the bigger picture; where road safety ties in with education. If people are well educated - the road safety messages are written by educated people for educated people but they don't particularly communicate well with the less educated. So the tying in of education, tourism, medical, hospitality industry and the whole lot of it just isn't there.

I would like to repeat, and this is now from the committee's point of view, that it looks like we are now heading for a great solution. We're happy with it, the council's happy with it and we believe DIER is happy with it. Thank you very much.

**Mr DEAN** - DIER identified that best practice infrastructure is one of their four strategies. Do you wish to make any comment on that in relation to the initial situation with the Dilston bypass?

**Mr CHANDLER** - You're referring to the road safety strategy 2007, I think, to 2016.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.

**Mr CHANDLER** - One of the four points was exactly, as you say, improved infrastructure. I think that finances were seen as the constraining issue but somebody at the council pointed out that the cost of one person being injured in an accident and put in a wheelchair or being intellectually handicapped was somewhere around \$16 million for the rest of their life. So that that bigger picture that I spoke about at the end needs to be seen. You cannot compartmentalise things and that is going to be one of the hardest jobs of this committee to try and tie it together. Did that answer your question?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, that is good. That is how I wanted him to answer.

**CHAIR** - Thanks, Mr Chandler. When the appointment was made we thought there was going to be a submission about the Dilston bypass, we did not realise there would be five members giving individual evidence. If we run out of time then we can probably sit again at a future date here and deal with matters that we may not have time to deal with today.

**Mr WALKER** - Yes, I am sorry. I did not realise George was going to talk so long.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - That is all right. We delayed him by asking questions.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, we did.

**Mr WALKER** - George has covered a lot of the stuff that I wanted to say. Three points really have come out of my experience with this. T-intersections and high speed industrial highways are not compatible. While I realise we are stuck with that situation on a lot of existing roads it is crazy to do a new road that creates that potential black spot.

An example of best practice I think is the Bass Highway where from Launceston to Deloraine there is not a single T-intersection - everything is by overpass or underpass and yet here we were, a community of a thousand people 12 kilometres south of Launceston where they were proposing to allow the only access to be a T-intersection. We had no alternative, no other way to get onto the highway.

The fact of the matter is if it had not been for two years of community effort and a lot of help from *The Examiner* and from the council, of course, we would be stuck with that situation. I would like to see a change in attitude by DIER in their community consultation particularly.

**CHAIR** - Have you noticed a change since Mr McIlfrack became head of the department?

**Mr WALKER** - Certainly that one meeting resolved the whole issue but that could have happened a year ago.

**CHAIR** - Except he was not head of the department then.

**Mr WALKER** - No, exactly. Our experience certainly was that DIER was very keen on public consultation while we agreed with them. The minute that we disagreed with them they did not want to come near us. Despite several requests they told us they thought a further public meeting would be unproductive - their exact words.

The only other thing I wanted to add is I am very concerned about DIER's attitudes to roundabouts. I think there is a very strong case to be made now that roundabouts will prevent accidents and yet DIER were very reluctant and in fact even now have found \$5 million to avoid putting a roundabout in because they seem to put speed ahead of safety. They seem to say they do not want to slow trucking down.

The other thing they said which worries me is that trucks are too unstable to be safe on roundabouts. The solution to that would be, to me, to make the trucks more stable rather than make people risk accessing the highway through T-intersections.

**Ms FORREST** - Tony, I could point to the Bass Highway again and the Mount Hicks junction, that was a high-crash intersection that has a lot of trucks from Circular Head. They all go through that way, there is no other way, and they put a roundabout on that after a number of crashes and to my knowledge there has been none since.

**Mr WALKER** - No.

**Ms FORREST** - The trucks all have to negotiate and they have log trucks, freight trucks, every sort of truck going up that highway.

**Mr WALKER** - Yes. There is a lot of very strong Victorian evidence now both from Monash University and from the, who is it George? The road safety, Aus -

**Mr CHANDLER** - Austroads

**Mr WALKER** - Austroads, yes. They really have done some work on that.

**CHAIR** - We spent half a day with the Monash people. One of them, Dr Bruce Corben, who is a member of the Tasmanian Road Safety Council, is reported as saying that roundabouts decrease crashes by 80 per cent.

**Ms FORREST** - I think there is an issue that once they get to a certain traffic volume they become inefficient. The traffic volume on this road would be significant but not to the level of traffic we are talking about. I know in Canberra they are taking out a number of the roundabouts there because traffic just was not flowing, but that is really dense traffic they were talking about there.

**Mr WALKER** - Yes. The attitude of DIER was that mathematically we did not have enough traffic volume to justify any other access to the highway but a T-intersection. As you know we did not accept that and we do seem to have made it in the end.

**Mr DEAN** - A good example of the roundabout situation, Tony, is that they are very happy to put in a roundabout at Longford now on a very much used route where you have a lot of heavy vehicles on it. They are very happy to put one in there.

**Mr WALKER** - Yes, that is right. It is not going to help the people who have already been killed at that intersection.

**CHAIR** - No.

**Mr WALKER** - That is all I wanted to say. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Mr Walker.

**Mr EMBERG** - My concept and Joan's stems from the belief that there are no secrets in Tasmania. There is a rumour and I proceeded on this rumour, talking to union people, RACT, politicians, I sent a letter to Graeme Sturges requesting information about the B-triples which have become the euphemism for road trains. People said there would not be any B-triples at all in Tasmania. I called people at CFMEU and they said, 'Yes, we have heard that rumour. We are into that. We are talking about it now'. I called RACT and they said, 'Yes, we know about that rumour and we think there is some truth to it and we are working on that right now'.

I called politicians. They said, 'Yes, we care about it'. So Joan and I wrote to Graeme and he replied. The letter that he sent back to us had what I euphemistically called 'wormholes' because you cannot be sure what is meant by his letter. It is a good letter. I will not read the letter I sent him but he said, 'On the Tasmania road network'. I have lived on the west coast of Canada and the west coast of the USA where there were two networks of roads. One was owned by Forestry, one was owned by the State. They had two separate ones. That is a wormhole. 'To date', he said, there are no plans for B-triples. 'To date' means to date. It does not mean anything by itself. He said, 'Any route assessment' -

**CHAIR** - Do you remember the sale of TOTE? That is reminiscent of the sale of TOTE.

**Ms FORREST** - And other things.

**Mr EMBERG** - Yes. 'Any route assessment', he said. This was said before concerning the B-doubles. Remember the B-doubles. Our concern is the euphemistically called B-triples. They should be called road trains for what they are. They are the Trojan horse. If you introduce something like the B-triples - and Mike Adams has some terrifying statistics for you - remember the B-doubles were only going to be on the basic roads but we have B-doubles going by our house, 10, 20, 30 a day and they were not supposed to go on the Lilydale Road but some place along the line they said, 'Oh well, we will let that go'.

My concern for the committee is that the B-triples - the road trains - might just sneak on this road. If 'safety first' is the object of the day we believe that this committee should say, 'We will under no circumstances allow B-triples to be used on the roads in all of Tasmania'. I have contacted the Labor Party and they will present it at a Bass meeting to

put it on their platform. That is what they said. All I have to say is it seems to me that we have a Trojan horse here and I believe this committee should say, 'We do not want and will not approve any road trains in Tasmania forever'.

**Mr DEAN** - Buck, are you also saying that there needs to be a better policing of the situations? You have mentioned that B-doubles are not supposed to be on the Lilydale Road and so on, that that was never a part of it. Are you saying also there needs to be a better policing of the uses of these roads?

**Mr EMBERG** - Yes, do we not in Tasmania live in the world of wink-wink, nudge-nudge?

**Mr DEAN** - You are right. I do not disagree with that comment. I am saying obviously it comes out of that.

**Mr EMBERG** - Yes, that is all I have to say.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Mr Emberg.

**Mr ADAMS** - I will be brief. I agree largely with what has gone before. As George mentioned to you, two days before Christmas the announcement was made that Bell Bay port would expand and by the third quarter of 2011 it would be able to manage 650 000 containers annually. A little bit of simple arithmetic: if we average, say, two containers per truck and we assume a six-day week and a 12-hour working day, this means 173 truck movements each hour, which is one every 29 seconds. That is down the East Tamar Highway.

Local traffic is also scheduled to grow with population growth through new subdivisions. There is one mooted for Swan Bay and another one for Hillwood. Much of this traffic will be present as commuter traffic, at that particular time of the morning. I am currently engaged in an Internet search for ports worldwide which have the above capacity with only one main road access and effectively no railway. So far I have found none.

I note among your terms of reference there are methods and means whereby road traffic crashes in Tasmania may be reduced, and with most of our community I feel that prevention is better than cure. I also feel strongly, as do the other two speakers, that community consultation when road improvements are mooted is essential to avoid the confrontation that can arise when the decide, announce and then defend tactic is used, as was used, incidentally, at the very first meeting that Pitt & Sherry held with us. They expected 12 people to turn up and 52 did. Our community is very fortunate insofar as we have a well educated group, communally active, and we have a wide range of talents and experience among our members. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - That statistic that you calculated, one vehicle every -

**Mr ADAMS** - Twenty-nine seconds, 28.8 to be exact if you do the arithmetic.

**CHAIR** - One truck every 29 seconds?

**Mr ADAMS** - Yes. And what happens when they hit Launceston?



**CHAIR** - That is what I wrote down, but I was not sure that I was correct.

**Mr DEAN** - To expand on that, it is a fact, isn't it, that a lot of those truck movements will come out through the Frankford highway and won't necessarily go through Launceston or Dilston?

**Mr ADAMS** - Yes, but even so I imagine a modest increase will be -

**Mr DEAN** - Oh, there will be an increase, sure. But I am just making the point that they will not all come through Launceston and Dilston.

**Mr ADAMS** - Not necessarily.

**Ms FORREST** - But they still all have to come down the East Tamar Highway at least to the Exeter turn-off, wouldn't they?

**Mr ADAMS** - Some will go on the Frankford highway and Batman Bridge.

**Ms FORREST** - But they still have to come down a certain section of the highway first.

**Mr ADAMS** - Oh, yes. They have to come down before they get to that. A minimal amount, I imagine, will take the road through Bridport to Scottsdale and the north-east, but even so I think we are talking about a lot of traffic, heavy traffic. We are talking about commuters, increased population. It makes a recipe for road safety concern.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is right. Thank you very much.

**Mr CHANDLER** - Ron Goodes is our resident engineer. He has 46 years of road and bridge-building experience. Without Ron's work we would not have been able to approach Mr Sturges, and the committee would not have been able to approach the RACT. His alternatives have made everything possible, and I don't know how many hours he has put in to his planning, but it has been prodigious.

**Mr GOODES** - I am not a great spokesman, not as articulate as these other gentlemen. The thing that concerns me the most is the situation at Doctors Hill. There are some very steep grades there. All you all familiar with Doctors Hill? It is on the East Tamar Highway, about 3 or 4 kilometres north of the Windermere turn-off. There is a brick pump station there -

**CHAIR** - That is the northernmost or southernmost of Windermere?

**Mr GOODES** - The southernmost. It is about halfway between the northernmost and the southernmost ends of where the Windermere Road comes out.

**Mr DEAN** - Near the Los Angeles Road.

**CHAIR** - I know the one you have described. I had not heard it called that.

**Mr GOODES** - There is a red-brick pump station there from Esk Regional, and that is right on the top of it. At that point the existing East Tamar Highway will branch off from its

existing route and go to the left to the Dilston bypass, which will go about half a kilometre east of the current road through Dilston.

**Mr ADAMS** - Excuse me interrupting. This is a quick diagram I did for the benefit of our community.

**CHAIR** - Can we take a copy of that?

**Mr ADAMS** - By all means.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will take a copy of it into evidence.

**Mr GOODES** - Could I have a look at that, please?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr GOODES** - I won't object to it. I have a more elaborate drawing supplied by DIER, done by Pitt & Sherry and Johnstone, McGee & Gandy, but I will come to that. In November last year, when the council was calling for comments, which were to be presented to RPDC at that stage, they received about 120 comments. One of them was from DIER. This is the DIER one. It is signed by the manager for that project but it's written by a chap named Peter Todd, General Manager, Roads and Traffic Division. He is virtually one step below the minister and Norm, the secretary.

**CHAIR** - McIlfattrick.

**Mr GOODES** - Yes, McIlfattrick. Amongst other things, he talks about for diminished investment value if they use a few roundabouts. The provision of roundabouts diminishes the effectiveness of the large cost investment that will be applied to the Dilston bypass to give heavy transport the potential to have speeds of up to 100 kph. In other words, the roundabouts, by causing through traffic to slow down, negate to some extent the advantages of the 3 per cent maximum grade design philosophy that has been applied at Dilston. There has been a cost premium to pay to limit the grades to 3 per cent.

Pitt & Sherry have designed grades. This is Windermere turn-off; this is the turn-off to Los Angeles Road; up this hill is the Doctors Hill pump station on this white area in the photo; this is where they are branching off from the existing highway to the south for the Dilston bypass. Here's Dilston Road. This is where you turn into the Windermere shop; this is farmland and this is the new bypass road which is bypassing Dilston by about half a kilometre. I am all for that because I live in Dilston and my front gate is only three or four metres from the Dilston Road where the 60-tonne B-doubles go past at a speed restriction of 80 kph which is not always obeyed. It starts at about four o'clock in the morning. I am all for the bypass.

In this part of the highway which is fairly flat it gets rather steep coming up to the pump station, to Doctors Hill and it is at this point that they've taken the diversion from the existing highway and brought it into the new bypass at this particular point.

**CHAIR** - I see.

**Mr GOODES** - This is where one of the proposed T-junctions will be put in. At that particular point, the steepness of the Pitt & Sherry's design is 6.5 per cent. That 6.5 per cent, just to give you some idea, from that point to this point which is the top end of where the pump station is, is exactly one kilometre. They have chosen the steepest and the frostiest section of East Tamar Highway. The fact that it is the frostiest - here are photos. This one was taken at the bottom of Doctors Hill. This is near the turn-off to Los Angeles Road. This is quite close to the Dilston shop and that acknowledgment by the road authority that there is an ice problem has been there quite a few years and this is about three-quarters of a kilometre from Doctors Hill. This other photo was taken on northern side of Doctors Hill on the East Tamar Highway, looking south. Again, it is about three-quarters of a kilometre from this steep section. We have the T-junction planned for the steepest and frostiest section of East Tamar Highway.

Pitt & Sherry for some reason, although Peter -

**Mr DEAN** - Todd.

**Mr GOODES** - Peter Todd says that they are limiting the longitudinal roads to 3 per cent, Pitt & Sherry have designed this grade at 6.5 per cent. This is still rough bushland.

**CHAIR** - You made that point, I assume, at the meeting with Mr McIlfatrick and others, did you?

**Mr GOODES** - I have not had a chance to have a detailed discussion with Mr McIlfatrick. I did have discussions in his office a fortnight ago with Michelle O'Byrne. I must say that Michelle must also be included in the credits for what is happening because she has spent a lot of time in Hobart talking with Norm McIlfatrick. I know they are in the same party but she is the minister in a different section.

**CHAIR** - Same party, same department.

**Mr GOODES** - No, they are both in Labor but she is the Minister for Tourism and he is in the roads and infrastructure department so they are not in the same section of the Labor Party, if you like. She has gone outside.

**Ms FORREST** - Her departments cover other areas, that is what you are saying? Her department is Tourism, Arts and the Environment.

**Mr GOODES** - Yes, and does not cover roads but since we had a meeting with her in her office about six weeks ago she has tackled Norm in Hobart and spoken about how the bad situations here are being ignored.

**CHAIR** - I understand that but I would be surprised if it was accurate to say they are both in the same party. Are you talking about a political party?

**Mr GOODES** - Yes. She is Labor and he is Labor.

**CHAIR** - I did not know what he was.

**Ms FORREST** - He works for the Labor Government.

**Mr GOODES** - I am sorry, he works for the Labor Party.

**CHAIR** - I doubt if he is a member of any political party.

**Mr GOODES** - No, I am sorry, I have used the wrong words. He works under the Labor minister. He is in the roads department, he works under the Labor minister.

**CHAIR** - Yes, he does. That is so but I do not think he would be a member of a political party as a departmental head.

**Mr GOODES** - No, that does not automatically give her close, direct access to him, but she has spoken with him, called his attention as to the shocking situation here and got quite a bit of the positive action that we are hoping is happening now.

**Ms FORREST** - I am not familiar with the area and I understand about the issues you have raised with the grade and the location and inherent challenges that brings. What do you suggest is the most appropriate way forward here to avoid the issues with the grade if necessary? Should it be further up or down the road where you would bring them in or what is your suggestion?

**Mr GOODES** - I am sorry, I am a bit slow, give me time.

**CHAIR** - That is what we do not have, I am afraid, because we will need to finish within the next three or four minutes so if you would like to condense what you are saying.

**Mr GOODES** - What Peter Todd said is that all this money has been put aside to flatten the grades. I would suspect from the amount of money that he is spending at Mount Direction, there will not be much money available to flatten the grades here and it will not get done. We will finish up with a dangerous situation. What is being done at Mount Direction will help the trucks go faster because there are no bad bends, it is just flattening out some grades a bit. It will probably help the trucks go 105, 110 kilometres an hour rather than 95 kilometres an hour but will not save lives.

DIER also had Johnstone, McGee & Gandy, another firm of consulting engineers, to do the design from Los Angeles Road towards Mount Direction and they were not coordinated. Peter Todd said that when grades get over or around 6.5 per cent, although he is referring to roundabouts, what he is saying is that when you have a grade of 6.5 per cent trucks will have difficulty starting and stopping on the 6.5 per cent gradient when required to give way. What he is saying is that 6.5 per cent is a nasty grade.

**Ms FORREST** - Is there a better location on this road to put a roundabout or a junction of some sort that would avoid those issues?

**Mr GOODES** - There is. I have drawn a longitudinal section which, instead of having these 6.5 per cent grades, can have a 4.8; on a section here, it's 3.8 per cent grade which is reasonably flat where a roundabout circle could be put.

**Ms FORREST** - On your other map, where is that in relation to the road?

**Mr GOODES** - It's in the same spot. This road comes out here and this can be put here by doing some filling and altering this longitudinal section. This grade up here is what Pitt & Sherry have got and these grades can be altered to these by putting more filling in.

**Ms FORREST** - So that's quite costly; putting in filling. Is there another section further down the road where you could actually do that without having to spend that amount of money to get the same outcome?

**Mr GOODES** - Putting filling in is not a huge expense. Much money has been put aside to flatten out grades; the money is there. Perhaps some of it is being spent now in the wrong place but some of it should be spent here to flatten out the grades at this particular point. What I have suggested as an alternative is that this intersection be more or less scrapped and converted into what is sometimes called a no-right turn. If you're familiar with the Bass Highway just north of the chocolate factory near Latrobe you'll see that there is Winspears Road. Are you familiar with Winspears Road?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr GOODES** - There's no right turn there now. When the road reconstruction was done two or three years ago I was involved in it. I was on site supervising it. The right-hand turns were scrubbed at that particular point; Winspears Road. That reduces enormously the chances of heavy trucks on a busy highway, like the Bass Highway there, colliding with traffic going into and out of Winspears Road.

**CHAIR** - Right. I think we have got the point there. Would you be able to let us have a copy of those documents or do you want to retain those? If you do, if it's possible for us to make a photostat copy.

**Mr GOODES** - I can get you a copy. Ivan's got a copy.

**Mr DEAN** - I've got a copy; I certainly have. In fact I've got one in my office.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We understand the point you're making there. We'll have to finish shortly. Is there any other point that you want to make in submission?

**Mr GOODES** - One of the other things that we're most keen on is using the existing Rocherlea overpass as an overpass for commuter traffic. That means being able to get the Dilston, Windermere and Swan Bay traffic to the western end of the existing Rocherlea overpass, sometimes called the Landfall overpass. To do that they've got to be able to go over, without great expense, the existing Barnards Creek bridge and up outside the eastern fence line of Landfall to the western end of the Rocherlea overpass and get the commuter traffic onto the overpass in that particular spot.

**CHAIR** - On the existing road.

**Mr GOODES** - Part of it is on the existing road but part of it requires about half a kilometre of new road up the eastern boundary of Archer's property outside the eastern boundary of Archers Road.

**CHAIR** - I understand that. At what estimated cost, do you think?

**Mr GOODES** - One thing that is important is that the existing Barnards Creek bridge is in very good order; it carries huge loads at the moment. DIER are going to demolish it and use it as a bypass bridge for the construction of their new bridge. They are building a new four-lane bridge for the Dilston bypass. What they want is to be able to have the existing Barnards Creek bridge demolished in three stages and the new bridge built over the top of it in three stages, which is going to have two effects. First, it is going to make the existing Barnards Creek bridge no longer available for the commuter traffic to use the overpass and it's also going to cause quite a lot of delays on traffic while it's being built. While the new bridge is being built, which can be done just 10 metres to the east of the existing bridge -

**CHAIR** - So you are advocating retaining the Barnards Creek bridge?-

**Mr GOODES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And using that section of road to link up with the Rocherlea overpass?

**Mr GOODES** - That's right, yes.

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Mr GOODES** - It is going to save a lot of delays in traffic.

**CHAIR** - Good, I understand that.

**Mr DEAN** - As I understand it, you are also satisfied if an integrated exchange is put in up on the bank for Dilston and Windermere. That was just as good, as I understood it, if not probably better. Is that right, Ron?

**Mr GOODES** - I am not familiar with the details of that.

**CHAIR** - Mr Goodes, thank you very much for your evidence. We appreciate your submission and the evidence that everybody else has given. If we could borrow those and just have copies made of those two plans.

**Mr CHANDLER** - Madam, gentlemen, Mr Chairman, thank you very much for hearing the committee's submission. We can see that things are now moving forward, and Mr McIlfatrick does need congratulating on that. We are very pleased there. Thank you for listening to the individual submissions from people. As I said, they have put in a lot of work. The basic role of government is to care for its people, and that is what this committee is doing here and we thank you very much for that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Mr Chandler.

**Mr DEAN** - I will just get a copy of that.

**Mr GOODES** - Yes, I would like that one back, and it is more effective if it is in colour.

The red colour is Pitt and Sherry's way of showing that is part of the Dilston bypass, whereas this up here in blue is what Johnstone, McGee and Gandy have done, which overlapped. DIER have two different consultants, both working on the same bit of road and not coordinated. That's an absolute disgrace.

**CHAIR** - Right, thank you very much.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**Mr PETER KITTO AND Ms ANNE FRANKS, MOTORCYCLING TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - We are sorry to have kept you waiting. Thanks for waiting so patiently. The floor is yours.

**Mr KITTO** - Both Anne and I are on the executive of Motorcycling Tasmania, which is the governing body of motorcycle sport in Tasmania. We replied to this ad in the *Examiner*, and the part that really concerns us is the increase in off-road motorcycle casualties. Our organisation is affiliated with the world governing body of motorcycle sport, and if there is anything that we can offer in any way to help reduce this, that is what we are here for.

**CHAIR** - We have heard some evidence this morning about this, very interesting detailed evidence, so we would appreciate your views on how to reduce the trauma and injuries, sometimes fatal, of the activity. Do you have any suggestions?

**Mr KITTO** - We have noticed an increase in the casualties and the accident rate ever since the cheaper imported and - I am hesitant to say - Chinese motorcycles have come on the scene. It has made it easier for people to get hold of cheap motorcycles and away they go. I think this is where some of it comes from. Other areas are just people getting together and organising a weekend ride in the bush without any experience. Anne is our coaching coordinator. We have 10 affiliated clubs throughout the State. We have licensed coaches - Anne could elaborate more on that - whereby we offer coaching for children from as young as five, six, right through.

**Mr DEAN** - Peter, when you said since the cheaper Chinese motorcycle imports you have seen an increase, is that through malfunctions within the bikes themselves or more inexperienced people getting them and being able to ride them?

**Mr KITTO** - Inexperienced, exactly, yes. That is exactly it.

**CHAIR** - So you do not see any inadequacy in safety in their design? Some people have given evidence as to that.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, we do. Some do. Some, yes. Some, no. Some of the cheaper ones. You can buy an 80 cc or a 100 cc motorcycle for \$600 or \$700, whereas a few years ago that same motorcycle would cost \$3000. It was out of the reach of the average child or Joe Blow. But now it has been brought into their reach they buy them without any experience, and away they go.

**CHAIR** - Without requirement to be registered or the rider to be licensed or to have any training.

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - How do you think that should be managed? We have had evidence regarding that because there is no requirement for those bikes to be registered or for the riders to be licensed and then it falls, potentially, outside the MAIB. So if there is an



accident, a crash and someone is injured or killed there is potentially no cover through MAIB.

**Mr KITTO** - That is right, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - So what would you suggest we should do and how should it be structured in dealing with that? You are allowed to have a wish list.

**Ms FRANKS** - I was going to say we have a wish list.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, we do have a wish list actually.

**Ms FORREST** - Okay, give us the wish list. That is what we are interested in.

**Mr KITTO** - The wish list is that we train people, get them into our organisation and offer them training. I have been involved with the sport now for some 18 or 19 years and in the past we did not have to have any licensed officials. There was no training for anybody. They could come along and away they went. As the years have gone on we have certainly cut our accident rate way down because we have brought in rules and regulations and training and coaching, licensing of officials, better tracks, better things to offer people and make it safer. That is what we are all about.

**Ms FORREST** - You could say - I am being the devil's advocate here - that getting and being involved in an organisation such as yours and going out with the bike and riding around a track or whatever is not the same as riding in the bush, it is not the same as riding on the road. So those skills they might have learned, whilst I am sure they are helpful, may not be applicable to all settings. But we have the issue of these people in the bush riding without being registered. On the road you have to be registered, you have to be licensed. But we have kids and younger people as well as older people riding in the bush without registration and therefore without insurance and without a licence. Do you think that needs to be addressed?

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - So what should be mandatory?

**Mr KITTO** - I guess, in some areas - and I know it because I have been involved in it - in Tasmania like the west coast you cannot go and ride a motorcycle without an RV registration. That fixes it straight away. You have a tag on somebody once they take out an RV registration. They then, I understand, have third-party on their RV, is it?

**Ms FORREST** - I think so. Would you say that every bike, regardless of where it's going to be used, should at least have a recreational vehicle registration?

**Ms FRANKS** - RVs come into an age limit, though, don't they?

**Mr KITTO** - They do. RVs stop at, I think - or start at 16, I think - 15 or 16.

**Ms FORREST** - So you are talking about a restricted licence?

**Mr KITTO** - No; if you take an RV registration out on a motorcycle I think you've got to be 16 before you can ride it anywhere. Whereas if you get somebody that's under 16 with an RV on it he's not covered but he can still ride the motorcycle.

**Ms FORREST** - So then what do we do to fix that?

**Mr KITTO** - Well, yes obviously.

**Ms FORREST** - But what do you do? I'm asking you to tell me what we do.

**Ms FRANKS** - I attended the recreation vehicle usage last year and we couldn't find answers in regards to that issue but when I got back to MTAs - if MTAs can grow; if we can get out there more to grow bigger and bigger. We started this club on the east coast; it was a very young club. We've got some bush bashers now who always went on forestry roads and were never going to come to our club so if we can keep doing that it will happen. You'll never stop the guy who wants to jump on his bike and go up the road; you'll never stop that but I've seen it from coming into the club more and if we can promote this more

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**Ms FORREST** - I don't think you quite understand what I'm trying to elicit - I do not want to put words into your mouth but I will try to put it to you another way. If there was a solution that would see people having been in a situation where there is no option really but to get some sort of education and perhaps membership with a club or whatever, how can you achieve it? Is it through saying that every vehicle that's got wheels and has got an engine above a certain capacity or whatever, maybe not, but you say they have to be registered. Is it reasonable to register every trail bike that's out there and every ATV that's out there?

**Ms FRANKS** - It would be. You'd have to start at the bike shop, though.

**Ms FORREST** - So that you couldn't sell a bike without it being registered?

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes. That was talked about; looking into something like that. It's a big call because you've got four or five-year olds on little bikes.

**Ms FORREST** - So a four- or five-year-old is not going to have a licence.

**Ms FRANKS** - No.

**Ms FORREST** - Do we license them? Do we have a restricted licence for four- and five-year-olds and up?

**CHAIR** - Or do we require the motorcycle to be registered and for an adult to hold the licence in relation to that? Any children operating it would be subject to the control of and supervision of an adult with a licence. That's been put to us.

**Mr KITTO** - That's probably not a bad way out.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, that could be.

**Ms FORREST** - That's what I'm trying to get out of you; what you think is a good idea.

**Mr KITTO** - We offer training. Anne's in charge of our coaching and we've got licensed coaches and we offer coaching for people right through on different capacity motorcycles so I think where it happens is with people, I or you or anybody, can go down the street and buy one of these cheaper motorcycles and you don't necessarily have to have a helmet or anything and off you go.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that when a bike is sold it should be registered or that it's an option that you can't actually drive it anywhere unless it's registered? Should there also be a requirement to buy the appropriate safety gear before you're allowed to ride it?

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, sure.

**Ms FORREST** - Can we mandate that? Do you think it's reasonable to mandate that?

**Mr KITTO** - Well, how do you do something like that without sounding as though you're living in Russia?

**Ms FORREST** - That's the question I'm asking you.

**Ms FRANKS** - Well, what would they do when you're on a bike on the road? It's not a mandated thing - you just have to wear the gear if you're on the road, don't you. How does the police see that; if you bring in these different things with the bikes, how is it policed and to what capacity? Are the parents at fault if little Johnnie's doing the wrong thing and how do they get into trouble? They're not fined, or you wouldn't think, but yes it's a big -

**Ms FORREST** - When little Johnnie's 14 and he's 6 foot tall and he's bigger than his mother and his mother says, 'You have to wear the gear if you're going to go out on the bike and Johnnie says whatever Johnnie might say, it's not an easy situation, is it?

**Mr KITTO** - No, it is not easy.

**Ms FRANKS** - We are also here because of what was advertised by the Council. We want to let the Council know what we have to offer, depending on what road you go down. The Queensland Government set up ride parks and that type of thing. You can have a look at this and keep it. If you were in future years thinking about going down that track, we would set up in a lot of areas to come on board and help Government if they were going to do something like this.

**Ms FORREST** - It is a dedicated area for people to go and ride.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, and it is for all types of bikes.

**Mr DEAN** - If that were to happen, should that be a responsibility of local government, State Government or what other department in relation to the provision of areas for them to ride?

**Mr KITTO** - It would probably be local government, I reckon, within the area.

**Ms FORREST** - Beside whose property would you put it?

**Mr KITTO** - Who carries the insurance, who does this?

**Mr DEAN** - That was my next question: who carries the liability insurances? My next question is in relation to farming. These bikes that are purchased for the purposes of farming pursuits, what is the position there? Do you have a position there, say, with young people being able to ride those bikes and so on? Do you think the parent or the adult person - a foster parent or something - should be responsible? What is your position on farms?

**Ms FRANKS** - Parents, I suppose. But coming back to liability, if a road park was set up, this is where Motorcycling Tasmania, which is affiliated with Motorcycling Australia, have total liability cover. We can hold race days in a paddock, get the correct licences, police licences, and it is fully covered.

**Mr KITTO** - That is what we are about. That is all the gear that people are given when they come along. It is all about how to get started in motorcycle sport, but that motorcycle sport side of it relates to the off-road side of it as well.

**Ms FORREST** - Are you saying then, if there was a possibility of setting up a venue where people could go and ride, with the challenges that people like such as trees, bogs, rocks and things to go over and under and around and everything, your organisation could insure that event?

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, but we would have to work alongside. In Queensland they have really big ones where you can have a four-wheel drive area, motorcycle area, different types of bikes and so on. It is fairly big, and I think we would have to go with State government. We would not be able to take all the liability. We have to have certain track inspections. We go through everything.

**Ms FORREST** - That is a huge issue that has been a failing of some other suggestions. It is interesting, though, that you can achieve that.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes. What we do is we are working with a gentleman in Hobart at the moment who has started to get one up and running near the Hobart Airport, and he would not do it unless we backed him. We said okay -

**CHAIR** - Is that Casimaty?

**Mr KITTO** - Yes. We said, 'If we come on board with you, Greg, you have to do it this way. This is how it has to be done, paperwork signed off, et cetera'. We are going along quite nicely with him at the moment.

**Ms FORREST** - If I decide I want to come and ride on the track, will there be requirements for me to wear the appropriate gear -

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - and would I have to be licensed? What if I am only 16?

**Mr KITTO** - That is fine. We can handle all that.

**Ms FORREST** - Or 15?

**Mr KITTO** - We can handle all that right down to four or five.

**Ms FRANKS** - Seven years and onwards can race, and they have to have their parents with them. Under 16 all junior riders have to do a compulsory five hours' training before they can have any type of licence. They have to accredit that licence with that five hours every year up to the age of 16. That was brought in about five years ago by Motorcycling Australia. If you are a senior rider it is a little bit easier. You can come on the day, you can get a one-day practice or race licence, whatever is happening. Your bike is scrutineered, your gear is scrutineered, everything is checked before you go out on that track.

**Ms FORREST** - If you have one of these bikes that does not have the appropriate safety features you say, 'Sorry, go and get another bike'.

**Ms FRANKS** - The bikes have to be homologated by Motorcycling Australia to ride on our tracks.

**Ms FORREST** - You have a lot of the checks and balances we haven't heard about, which have been of concern.

**Mr KITTO** - That is why we came along.

**Ms FRANKS** - We have been quiet achievers for a long time. I think we need to make a noise.

**Mr KITTO** - We have not been making any noise. We have been sitting quietly in the background.

**Ms FORREST** - On the sidelines, yes.

**Mr KITTO** - But when this appeared we thought right, it is about time.

**Mr DEAN** - Are you aware that they are thinking about putting one at Rocherlea?

**Mr KITTO** - No.

**Mr DEAN** - I need to put the people on to you.

**Ms FORREST** - Who is doing that?

**Mr DEAN** - I am going to a meeting shortly in relation to it.

**Ms KITTO** - That is not Brad Smith with BRAAAP, is it?

**Mr DEAN** - No, it is another group in the northern community suburbs.

**Mr KITTO** - Is a lady involved?

**Mr DEAN** - It is a gentleman I am dealing with but there are ladies involved in it.

**Mr KITTO** - Okay. A lady rang me some time ago and wanted to know how they could use our insurance. I said they could do so by becoming affiliated with us, forming a club, and away you go but I said bear in mind there are a fair few stipulations that are put in place before we let others use our insurance. She asked, 'Oh, how much does all this cost?'.  
  
When I started reeling off a few of the costs, all of a sudden it became a mountain to climb. I said, 'I am sorry but this has to be done before you get our insurance'. Motorcycling Australia is currently self-insured, they have their own insurance company, and we are currently running with \$50 million of public liability insurance.

**Ms FORREST** - I am just scanning some of your information. Is it really about racing as opposed to just recreational or is it both?

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, it is but we do not discriminate. If people want to come along and be coached so they can ride their motorcycles better and go off and ride it in the bush that is fine, we do not have an issue with that.

Yes, you are right - it is more learning towards racing but we get a lot of people coming to our coaching days and they do not come back and race. They come and pick up the experience from the coaches on how to look after their motorcycles, how to dress appropriately and then off they go and do some coaching for the day. They can come back as many times as they like.

**Ms FRANKS** - The insurance side, I suppose, cost approximately \$2 500 for each affiliated club with MTas. There are outside clubs which do not have this insurance and do not come on board but it is a bit of a catch-22 because joining fees are a lot higher than ours are. It cost only \$50 to join and you have that insurance but the outside clubs have to charge a lot more because they have to get that money for the insurance. There are only probably three bike clubs in Tasmania that are not affiliated with us now.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes.

**Ms FRANKS** - I am lucky, I actually started a club on the east coast at St Helens because I used to travel and became sick of travelling. We have started one there and we have a lot of juniors there who do not want to race. They just come along, we have lots of practice days.

**Ms FORREST** - Who is affiliated with you? Which clubs or organisations are affiliated with you?

**Ms KITTO** - Where are they all?

**Mr FRANKS** - There is one in Smithton, one at Penguin, one in Launceston, Anne's club on the east coast, a road racing club in Launceston that uses Symmons Plains, a road racing club in Hobart and there are two off-road motorcycle clubs in Hobart as well, plus Greg Casimaty's now.

**Ms KITTO** - Brad Smith's BRAAAP has just come on board too because he has found that insurance side of it, you need to have it and it is the cheapest way to -

**CHAIR** - Sorry to interrupt, how many members do you have?

**Mr KITTO** - We currently have 650 licensed members. That covers people or don't race, recreational licences as well.

**CHAIR** - Are they all off-road?

**Mr KITTO** - No.

**CHAIR** - It is both on- and off-road?

**Mr KITTO** - On- and off-road and Speedway. We have Speedway riders as well. There is an in-field Speedway track at Latrobe.

**CHAIR** - How many motorcycles would there be in Tasmania, approximately?

**Mr KITTO** - I could not answer that.

**CHAIR** - What percentage of the number do you think your clubs represent?

**Mr KITTO** - A very small percentage, I would say.

**CHAIR** - And off-road?

**Mr KITTO** - Off-road a very small percentage because Joe Blow can just go and buy a bike and we would not necessarily know about it.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I interrupted you.

**Mr KITTO** - No, that is fine. One thing that we are concerned about is that there is one club in particular that - I do not know whether you have heard about this mob that come to Launceston every now called the Crusty Demons - do loops and jumps and so on.

**CHAIR** - Do you do any of that?

*Laughter.*

**Mr KITTO** - No. Absolutely not. We have a club here that does and what worries me a little bit there is that our organisation caters for that, however, there are a fair few stipulations in place before we hand over our insurance on that type of thing. The ramps that have to be built have to be passed by a structural engineer; the people cannot do it under 16 years of age; they have to be coached in that area for - three or six months, I am not sure but it is a fair while they have to be coached in that area. We are a little worried that people see it and then go off and say, 'I can do that' and they put a plank up on bricks.

**Ms FORREST** - And the outcome is not good.

**Mr KITTO** - That is what happens. It sends the wrong message.

**Mr DEAN** - My kids used to do it. My boys used to do it.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, so did mine. But Motorcycling Australia looked at that and they said, 'Hang on, if we are going to insure this we need to do this'. Motorcycling Australia employ their own safety and compliance officer. We now employ an environmental officer. So we are going along in the right direction.

**Ms FORREST** - Effectively this is all supervised by trained and registered people.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, absolutely. All our people are licensed track inspectors and all that sort of thing to make sure that everything is in play.

**Ms FORREST** - There is a requirement for parents or a guardian or whoever to be there when a child is involved.

**Ms FRANKS** - Under 18, yes. But with the officials and all the coaching, the official seminars that we hold each year and the coaching seminars, they are all free to our members. And for people who want to come on board there is no cost involved. MTAs take all the cost. Our level four officials have to go to Melbourne to become accredited. Our level two coach has to go to Canberra's Australian Institute of Sport to become accredited as well. So it is up there and it is all done properly.

**Mr KITTO** - We have all our own code of conduct. We have drug policies. All that is in place, all done in place.

**Ms FORREST** - You also confiscate a vehicle. I noticed in there you can confiscate their bikes if they are behaving inappropriately.

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely. Yes, there is a code of conduct. All that is in there. That is why we thought if we left that with you you can peruse it.

**Ms FRANKS** - Just from a personal thing too I have had three riders now - my son was one too - who went through the club. They were motocross riders. One was an enduro rider. I talked to them one day and my son said he was on a road bike and he said his training of four or five years saved him. He was clipped by a car and he hung on and he said he knew that his training from there helped him so much. I just think if we can just get out there a lot more and get known.



**Mr KITTO** - Talking about these Chinese motorcycles, I was driving to work the other day and a bloke came out of a side street round in front of me. I thought, 'Little bike, big bloke with a beanie on for a helmet'. That is where it starts. He must have been late for work or something like that.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - And forgot his helmet. Can I just ask one question about the licensing of motorcycle riders? For a person to get a motorcycle licence in Tasmania you have to go and do the whole-day course - I think it is over two days actually.

**Ms FRANKS** - Two days, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that that is robust enough?

**Mr KITTO** - On-road licences?

**Ms FORREST** - On the two-day training that motorcyclists have to do before they can get their licence, the Stay Upright course.

**Mr KITTO** - No, that is good.

**Ms FORREST** - Anne had some concerns about it.

**Ms FRANKS** - Personally both my children, my daughter and my son - my daughter came back shaking her head at how some people could get their licence. They passed on the day. She said it was incredible. She said, 'I do not know why Motorcycling Tasmania is so hard on us if you can go in and get a licence to ride on the road. I have not been to one myself.

**Ms FORREST** - My daughter has.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, and my daughter has because Jess used to race motocross. She went in there and she just couldn't believe it. She's a level-headed kid; she wasn't coming out being a narky motocross rider or anything like that.

**Ms FORREST** - In what way did it fail in her opinion?

**Ms FRANKS** - Holding the bike; there were a couple of girls in there who actually couldn't hold their bike properly going around the cones and they still passed on the day. Braking; they give a distance and if you're within that distance they could still get a licence and my daughter felt that that distance was too great; it should be sharpened up more and that type of thing. But I hope I'm not speaking out of turn here.

**Ms FORREST** - No. That's one of the issues that's been raised about the possible inadequacy of the current training for car drivers as well as motorcycle riders in people getting their licence. Is it robust and rigorous enough to ensure that when people get out there on the road - because when you're on your bike, you're on your own; you haven't got that supervisor with you -

**Ms FRANKS** - That's it; that's what the ad says.

**Ms FORREST** - That's right. You haven't got anyone right beside you. Learner-drivers are the safest drivers on the road.

**Ms FRANKS** - But it's the same thing, though, with anyone who goes on a road bike. I believe, they should get on a trail bike and go round the track and learn how to hold a bike. For anyone who gets in a car and wants to ride a car there should be an off-road skid-pen somewhere where someone can spin out and know what it's like to spin out or go off in the gravel. I think there are lots of areas there where they just don't do enough.

**Mr DEAN** - Should we treat those riding a motorcycle -whatever it is, trail-bikes and so on - differently to those that ride quad bikes, for instance? Should there be different training there? A quad bike is absolutely and totally 100 per cent different to riding another bike.

**Mr KITTO** - Absolutely, it is.

**Mr DEAN** - There really is no comparison.

**Mr KITTO** - No.

**Mr DEAN** - Do you think we've got that right or do you think we should do more on the quad bikes?

**Mr KITTO** - It probably wouldn't hurt.

**Ms FORREST** - We don't do anything, do we?

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, there is a course you can do but, sorry again, I have seen someone who has done that course and it's just up and down and around and everything. They should just go somewhere, even again, on a motocross track with big jumps and everything so they are actually going up and down and know what it's like -

**Mr KITTO** - Sideways.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, and that type of thing.

**Ms FORREST** - They have to go on hills where they can tip over. That's where most people are injured, tipping over on an ATV.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes, exactly.

**Mr KITTO** - That's right; the bike rolls on them. We just thought we'd come along and tell you what we're all about.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for doing that.

**Ms FRANKS** - If, further down the track, the Council feel like you're going to go in some direction and we can be of assistance, then by all means.

**Ms FORREST** - We can recommend to the Government how that should go, shouldn't we Mr Chairman?

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - The Government has to take it from there.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Are there any points you'd like to make to round off the session?

**Mr KITTO** - No. We'll leave that.

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Are you leaving these documents?

**Ms FRANKS** - Yes.

**Mr KITTO** - Yes, absolutely.

**CHAIR** - We'll take all those into evidence. Thank you very much indeed for giving us your time and views.

**Mr KITTO** - Thank you for allowing us the time.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**Mr SAM CAWTHORN** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Mr Cawthorn, thank you very much for coming to give us your views on road safety. We do appreciate that. The floor is yours.

**Ms FORREST** - Maybe I should confess because I suggested that we talked to Sam after I heard him talking at a work and training awards night when he related the story of a quite significant car crash he was in when he suffered extensive injury. I particularly liked his mother's response when he woke up in the ICU. We have not had a lot of input from people who have been victims, I guess, and gone through the process of experiencing the trauma of the crash and then the recovery, and I thought you were an adept speaker. It was good to hear a personal account. That is one of the reasons I suggested to the committee that we talk to Sam, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - It is very good you did.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Would you like me first to share my concerns or do you want just a very quick overview of the accident.

**CHAIR** - Your views on road safety because we are to make recommendations that will improve road safety and anything relevant to that. We are happy for you to present it in whichever way you would like.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - First, I do not know if this is in this area but I had a position that required lots of travel. In an average week I would travel 1 500 kilometres, even sometimes up to 2 000 to 3 000 kilometres a week, all on Tasmanian roads. I suppose my concern is from my accident which was fatigue-related. From speaking to many people who have been in similar positions to mine and have very demanding jobs that require them to do many kilometres on the road, I suppose I do not want other people to have the same outcome I had.

**Ms FORREST** - You are looking at people across the table who do this.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Is there a position where we can put a cap on kilometres that employers can ask their employees to do per week?

**CHAIR** - It happens with trucks and buses. There is a limit to the number of hours that a person can drive at any one time and then they need to have certain rest periods for sleep in between. There is nothing for car drivers.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - But why does it not happen to -

**CHAIR** - Good question.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I think there should be because there was a high demand on my role. The area that I was in charge of was pretty much everything in northern Tasmania, so from Ross upwards, both islands, St Helens, Queenstown, Smithton and right along the top of northern Tasmania. I am based in Launceston And I might have a meeting in St

Helens one day. The next day could be Queenstown, back to Launceston. The next day could be Burnie, back to Launceston. Sometimes I would stay overnight, sometimes I would not. We all know what Tasmanian roads are like. Obviously, between the main centres it is okay, but when you start getting away from the main centres they are smaller roads. When you are doing so many kilometres I think that is a real issue. I think that there should be some type of restriction or even a cap. We were talking about truck drivers. I know people doing more kilometres than truck drivers, yet they are sales reps or people in similar roles to me. How come there is a cap on truckies but there is not for normal, everyday people. There is still only one person in a truck.

**Mr DEAN** - Sam, should there be a requirement on corporations and companies, say, in your instance, that they are required to give you extra support, training, to put you through defensive driving courses and take on an extra role in the way you control and drive their vehicles?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, and know what your limit is. I went straight into a role when I had never really done any kilometres in previous jobs. Then all of a sudden I went into this role that required me to do bucketloads of kilometres. I did not know how to handle it. I thought I did.

**CHAIR** - Did you fall asleep?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes. It was just fatigue. That week I had done a lot of kilometres.

**CHAIR** - It is easy to do, too.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - It is, and I know a lot of people who have. Unfortunately, the time I fell asleep a truck happened to be coming along in the other direction. I suppose for me if there is a way that we can make companies responsible and say they should not place so much a demand on their staff to do this number of kilometres.

**Ms FORREST** - On that point, I do 50 000 kilometres a year all over the State, and I am not unique, there are other people who do it, obviously. So far I have had a lot of near misses, people coming across the road in front of me and things like that. I don't think I have nearly taken anybody out, but at the end of the day I tend to know when I am tired. But if we have a sitting in Parliament, for example, and we have two late sittings after midnight and finish at 5 or 6 o'clock on the Thursday, we are expected to drive home after that because we have finished early so we won't pay another night's accommodation. I will stay sometimes anyway. That week I will not have driven that much because we are in Hobart sitting, so you drive to your accommodation and back, five minutes each way, so for the whole week I haven't driven as much as I would when I am based in my electorate. I am driving at a time after a long week of concentration and meetings and the whole bit, so if you put a cap on it, for that week I would not have met the cap, probably. I am thinking it is not just about the number of hours you are driving, it is the times you are driving and what has happened beforehand. It would be very difficult to achieve that, because I might have driven 360 kilometres to get to Hobart and then the car basically sits there, and I have a crash at Brighton because I have fallen asleep. Is there a way of dealing with this aspect of it?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Thinking out loud here, would the onus be more on the employee to determine whether or not they are able to drive back to Launceston on the Friday night after 6 p.m., following a five-day conference in Hobart, or whether the employee can automatically, without getting permission from the employer, get an extra night's accommodation in Hobart and drive up the very next day?

**Ms FORREST** - I worry about when a company can be charged with manslaughter because a death has occurred during their work time, I guess, but the employer really has no capacity to say 'No, you can't drive'. How would my employer know, potentially, that I had had three late nights and I was planning to drive home, so there has to be some responsibility on the employee?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, but on the flip side, a lot of the time the employee does not have permission to stay an extra night unless they pay for it from their own pocket. I know for many people that is the case, employers simply will not cover that extra night, even though the employee -

**Ms FORREST** - Or they have scheduled a meeting at 9 the next morning in Burnie.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Should Workplace Standards have a greater role in this in your view, who are responsible for policing the place and work?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Absolutely. I think there is a case on both sides, but also how come the truckies have a cap?

**CHAIR** - Yes, you make a very valid point that I haven't heard before.

**Ms FORREST** - You would almost need to have a logbook or some way of logging the hours to monitor the hours that a driver is doing, one that details the time of day. If you normally sleep at night, then that is when you are more likely to fall asleep.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Even in the morning. I regularly go to Smithton for a breakfast leaving at 4 o'clock from Launceston.

**Ms FORREST** - That is when you feel tired.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Or St Helens for a breakfast. Or you might have an after-school function in Queenstown in winter, finishing there at 6 or 7 p.m. and driving from Queenstown to Launceston in winter is full-on.

**CHAIR** - What business were you in at the time?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - My role was a regional industry careers adviser. Basically it was a Federal Government contract role that national Joblink won, and my role was to oversee 57 schools and give the industry careers advice for those schools throughout northern Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - You have the right personality for that.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Thank you. So there is only two of us for the State, there are 57 around the country. I know some people in rural Australia who have areas bigger than my area. They have a massive fear that something similar might happen to them but at the same time I think rural Tasmanian roads would be one of the worst in Australia.

**Ms FORREST** - Are you still doing that job?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - No, not at all. I am doing as many kilometres but this time flying and catching cabs.

**Ms FORREST** - When you had your crash what was your employer's, the Federal Government, response?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Look, they have been great. Obviously they did not take any responsibility at all but nonetheless they have been really supportive to the family and personally and everything like that.

**Ms FORREST** - How has the crash impacted on you personally and on the family then? As much as you want to reveal.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Where do I begin? I could write out a list. Everything from I used to dance, I used to play guitar, I used to be a musician. I cannot do any of that now. I have got three kids under the age of six; just holding them up and everything like that. It is hard. Sitting in a normal chair - the reason why I am slouched down is because my leg does not bend at all, it is physically straight. Sitting in a car, in a plane, in a theatre - very hard. I get upgrades though.

**CHAIR** - You would need them. You would not be able to sit in the budget airline seats, would you?

**Ms FORREST** - Economy seat on a Rex plane going from Burnie to Melbourne.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Actually over the weekend I was flying from India to Dubai. I was doing lectures just last weekend and there were no upgrades to business class and normally I might get free seats in economy so unfortunately they had to upgrade me to first class.

**Ms FORREST** - What a shame.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - It is a hard life, you know.

**CHAIR** - You had to stretch out and sleep.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - How about on your family?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Obviously it has been quite full-on for the family and we live on a block where it is quite steep so I cannot do any gardening or mow the lawns or anything like that now. Yes, it has been hard for my wife as well just in normal, general house duties.

It is quite hard for me with my leg as well as just having one arm. Obviously I have still got a prosthetic arm and it can help me to a very limited extent but yes, there are a lot of issues there. I do not resent my work and I will not sue them or anything at all like that but I do not want other people to go the same way. The kilometres that I had and the number of hours I was doing on the road could have been the major factor in me having the accident.

**Mr DEAN** - In your situation too there should be consideration given to providing you with a chauffeur and drivers obviously to move you around because of the kilometres you were doing, for instance.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Another way out of it, wasn't it, was to give you that extra support.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - That you very clearly needed.

**Ms FORREST** - When you were in hospital and in those first few weeks or months, what sort of support did you and your family get?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - It was a workers compensation claim so it was not MAIB because being in a work car, work time, from one work meeting to another work meeting it was workers compensation.

Workers compensation has been brilliant. The insurance company was Allianz Insurance who my work was insured under and they have been supportive beyond my expectations. I have been very, very happy with that both financially but also regarding things that they have done around the home in order for life to be a little easier because I was in a wheelchair for 12 months.

That was hard and so they actually provided a ramp at home and made the home a lot more open for a wheelchair to go in and out and everything like that. They have paid for all my surgery and everything, even right down to a cordless kettle which is a lot easier for me to use with one hand. I do not have any negative word at all to say about my treatment.

**Ms FORREST** - People in a situation where it is not a workers compensation case where they are relying on other services, MAIB, I assume, would provide a similar level of service but you may have other -

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Not as much as far as I am aware. I think I have been blessed more in that particular sense but again on the flip side I am an overly positive person so I can only see the good. If there were a different character in my same role he could say more negative things about various things but I can't really see it.



**Ms FORREST** - Do you think your family got the appropriate emotional support? We heard earlier today that the Road Trauma Support Group are there to help families and victims of road trauma to deal with that often a little bit belated emotional trauma, like post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety attacks and that sort of thing.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I did not see them once. My wife did not see them once either. It is interesting we actually did not get any emotional support at all from any third party.

**Ms FORREST** - Really?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I think it is also because the nurses and the doctors could see that we were handling it well. And even on the flip-side I was even asked by the nurses and doctors to go and support other people all around the hospital.

**Ms FORREST** - Even as a patient?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - I could just see that happening, yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Sam, with what has happened to you and with your driving on the roads for that long period of time obviously you would be supportive of the ripple strips being down the middle of the road on all roads and the division between the roads with the wire ropes and all of those things. Do you want to comment on any of that that you feel we need to do on our roads?

**Ms FORREST** - Would they have saved you?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, and for safety reasons. For instance, had there been a wire rope where you were you would have been saved or certainly saved from the serious injury that you suffered. I do not know whether the ripple strip would have impacted. It may have brought you round, it might not have. I do not know.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Apparently I was told that I did brake 20 metres before the actual impact. I do not remember that but the police said that there were skid marks on my car. Even if the ripple strips work - and, again, I actually went in the middle of the road so the side ones would not have mattered in my particular case. Maybe, possibly if the ripple strips were there that could have woken me up earlier. I know that in that section of road there are no ripple strips in the middle. On the flip side, the wires in the middle: yes, that would have completely saved me.

**CHAIR** - On what part of the road were the skid marks as far as you were told?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I could not answer that truthfully. I could have a guess.

**CHAIR** - No, it does not matter. I just wondered whether they had told you whether you had gone over the ripple strips or whether it was before the middle of the road.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - As far as I am aware, I actually veered straight from the left hand into the right. As far as I am aware, there are no ripple strips on that particular road in the middle.

**CHAIR** - There would not have been at that time. Then they put them in and then they removed them. We have had some evidence that they were removed.

**Ms FORREST** - They removed them or they wore away?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, worn away.

**Ms FORREST** - I think they are worn away. Because it was near the passing lanes of Parramatta Creek, was it not, Sam?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes. Actually it was not in the passing lane. It was just before the passing lane coming from Devonport.

**Ms FORREST** - But the people start to go out at that.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - We see it all the time. People start to cross before they are really quite there and so potentially wear them away. I do not know.

**CHAIR** - How long ago was your accident?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Two-and-a-half years ago.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I remember the publicity. I did not realise it was you that was coming in today but I remember reading about it in the press and your remarkable attitude to it all. It stuck in my mind. Was no airbag fitted to your car?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes. The airbag was deployed and I think that is why I have no head injuries. I did have a lot of chest injuries but the airbag was deployed.

**Ms FORREST** - Side airbags as well?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - No, there was no curtain or side, just front.

**Ms FORREST** - You are lucky you did not have head injuries, aren't you?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Very lucky.

**CHAIR** - Do you remember whether you were feeling tired and sleepy before or you do not have any recollection of it?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I asked that question of a friend of mine in Devonport that I had dropped off 20 minutes before and he said that he did not see any major signs. But I know I had a lot on my plate. I know I was doing too many Ks.

**CHAIR** - And you were coming back to Launceston when you were in that?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Back to Launceston.

**CHAIR** - The reason we are asking you this is that one of the terms of reference is to consider the aftermath of accidents and the injuries and casualties and the effect there. So this is all relevant to our inquiry. It is not just how to prevent accidents but the effect of them on people who are injured. So we are grateful to you for coming along and sharing your experience with us. Are you still working for the same company?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - No, I have left them.

**CHAIR** - It is a very interesting job you have, travelling to India to give lectures. What is your current role?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I have now started up my own enterprise.

**CHAIR** - Good on you.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I have a couple of businesses. I do a lot of youth work under a business called Be Motivated. I do lots of youth work, youth forums and today at the Aurora Stadium did some Beacon Foundation no-dole promotion. I really believe in the next generation of people. On top of that, I also do a lot of corporate stuff. I do conference speaking and the like and I speak a bit on economic stuff.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a solution to this?

**Ms FORREST** - It's outside the terms of reference, I think, Mr Chairman.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - That's very interesting.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Thank you.

**Ms FORREST** - On the aspect of emotional care, you said that you felt that the medical and nursing staff made the assessment that you were okay -

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - but was it ever offered to you? I mean, with a health background I think you look at people and you think they're doing okay but even someone who's doing okay and you know they've had a traumatic experience might need you to sit down with them and talk to them about that. Then if they really say, 'I'm fine' you can refer them to someone to talk to further down the track if you need to because often they're not fine. Was it actually pursued or -

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, some questions were asked, like would you like to talk to someone in regards to this, but that was only from the staff so I didn't have any one-on-one contact at all with any third party, no-one as a road trauma support.

**Ms FORREST** - Right. What about your wife, parents and siblings?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I'm not 100 per cent sure about my wife. I could ask her and find out. As far as I'm aware, she wasn't speaking to them one on one. My family, obviously, are very, very close and very faithful - we have a strong faith so they were really supporting my wife and that type of stuff. Really our that got us through, other than using road trauma support, but I knew I didn't really need it. I'm not saying that arrogantly; I just didn't need it.

**Mr DEAN** - Sam, going back to the accident, were you using cruise control at the time?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Good question. I don't know. I regularly did use cruise control in my V8 Statesman, a big car. I regularly did use cruise control. I would say that there would be a 50 per cent chance that I was using it because I would normally use it between Devonport and Launceston.

**Ms FORREST** - But you did brake so obviously the cruise control would have shut off at that point.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, that's right, but beforehand. It would be interesting. I don't know. I could look through the reports and see if the police recorded it.

**Mr DEAN** - It's an interesting factor because we have heard some evidence in relation to cruise control, some that it is good, some that it is bad. The general evidence is that it's good because you can concentrate on the other things you should be concentrating on rather than looking at your speedometer all the time, but some people say that cruise control in some situations is not good because people tend to rely on it too much -

**Mr CAWTHORN** - You switch off.

**Mr DEAN** - and also when people are tired some people say you tend to not put your foot on the accelerator, your foot comes off the accelerator, et cetera. There are lots of things and that's why I was asking you.

**CHAIR** - I would have thought that you would have had a reasonable case of claiming common law damages on the basis that it was an unsafe system of work.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You're probably still in time for that. I'm not sure what the time limit is.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Three years.

**CHAIR** - I would have thought three years. It used to be six but I think it's three years so you still have the time. I mean, it's not going to hurt -

**Ms FORREST** - But Sam did say he didn't want to pursue that, didn't you?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I know you said you hadn't wanted to but I don't know whether you've made a final decision on that. Your former employer, even though they've been very good to you -

**Mr CAWTHORN** - What would be the benefit of doing that? I don't want to tarnish my name in order to do that.

**CHAIR** - No.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Do you know what I mean?

**CHAIR** - Well, I imagine if a lawyer felt that you did have a good case, the other side's lawyer would probably think that and it would be the insurance company, not your former employer, and then you can claim damages for future economic loss, not only workers compensation but for pain and suffering. There is a certain limit on that these days, but any future economic loss. You might like to talk to a practising lawyer about that if you want to explore that.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, thank you.

**CHAIR** - But if you are getting engagements in India you are probably doing pretty well financially now.

**Ms FORREST** - Might not be much of a claim to be had about loss of future income.

**CHAIR** - No, but it would be worth just talking to a practising lawyer who deals in that, and then you can make your decision before the time is up. You may make a decision, even though you have a reasonable claim, not to pursue it, but you never know. You may decide it would be worthwhile pursuing it, and it would not reflect on your credibility, not in any way. Anyway, I just make that point in passing.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, thank you.

**CHAIR** - We have been talking with you mainly about the physical effects on you, and the road safety aspect. In addition to what you have said about having a cap on the driving times and perhaps having a requirement that employers of people driving sedans should be subject to similar limitations as employees driving trucks, do you have any other suggestions that might help us in making recommendations about increasing road safety?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - There was one other thing, but this is probably more of an insurance matter. I will run it past you guys anyway, but I do not think it really about road safety as such. In Tasmania insurance companies are only liable to pay any long-term damages for up to 10 years, and so unfortunately in my particular case, having a prosthetic arm and major issues to my leg, they are only obliged to pay for all my prosthetics and general medical expenses for 10 years. After 10 years I am basically all out on my own. I then have to fund my own arms. To give you an idea, this is an electronic bionic arm. It is worth \$95 000, and the doctors say I need a new one every three years. That gives you an idea of the expense that I will accrue in 10 years' time. I think that is a big issue -

**Ms FORREST** - Is it the same under MAIB, do you know?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes. Ten years.

**Ms FORREST** - You are a young man, so you have hopefully a lot of years ahead of you.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Again this is probably not really to do with road safety as such, but it is just very interesting.

**CHAIR** - It is a consequence of that.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, for sure.

**CHAIR** - That is within our terms of reference, so it is relevant. It is a point I had never considered or heard about the suggestion of limitation of responsibility.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Other States are different, but this is Tasmania's status.

**CHAIR** - Some have that requirement for employees who drive sedans, do they? Oh, you mean about the 10 years?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I see, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - What is their situation there?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - I am not 100 per cent sure, but I do know that Tasmanian law is different to other States when it comes to workers compensation and insurance.

**Ms FORREST** - Is this regardless of the percentage capacity that you have?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Because you would obviously meet the 30 per cent, or you would be over the 30 per cent.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, easily.

**Ms FORREST** - In spite of that - under 30 per cent it is a bit of an issue anyway.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, even with more than 30 per cent capacity they are only liable for 10 years of medical expenses.

**Ms FORREST** - That is a real failing.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - It is, especially for someone in my case, absolutely, big time.

**Ms FORREST** - When you look at the statistics, they show that one of the groups of people most affected by road trauma are young people, unless they have serious neurological

injuries that mean that they may develop other complications and they die younger. There is no reason to suspect that you will die before the average age for men.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - That is right.

**Ms FORREST** - I cannot remember what that is at the moment but it is not quite as good as for women.

**CHAIR** - I think it is a bit more than 70, fortunately.

Laughter.

**Ms FORREST** - You are right with us for a moment or two longer, Mr Chairman. Is there anything else like that you have become aware of through the experience, Sam?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Nothing else. Everything has been really good to me. I am an eternal optimist but yes, I have been really blessed with the support.

**CHAIR** - Your attitude must have helped you so much through great difficulty.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes I think so. I suppose it was just those two things. You know I do not want to see other people in my same situation - a young bloke coming into a job which suddenly requires him to do bucketloads of kilometres, not really knowing how to handle that because it is just a sudden job in this area.

**Ms FORREST** - I even worry about our young university students from the north-west coast, Sam, who drive up and down the Bass and Midland highways.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - To come home for a weekend or whatever.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - They are young and inexperienced, generally.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - The sales reps and that type of stuff, yes. If I even did an extra 1 000 kilometres a week from what I was already doing. There is no limit at all to what my employer says yes or no to.

**CHAIR** - What would you have been doing on average for the month before the crash?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - It would have been on average about 1 500 kilometres a week.

**CHAIR** - Including early mornings?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Four o'clock starts, things like that?

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, including four o'clock starts. Quite late evenings as well.

**CHAIR** - As Ruth was saying it is not only the hours but it is the time of the day.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, time of day and everything like that. Especially when it is winter and you are driving to Queenstown. It is pretty full-on.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I do it.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - You have black ice on the roads at four o'clock in the morning.

**Mr DEAN** - It is not only the time, it is what you have been doing in the meantime as well, your concentration levels and the meetings you are attending et cetera.

**Ms FORREST** - That is in a role too. It is a bit like our role that you are always thinking about where you are going.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, exactly right.

**Ms FORREST** - You are focusing on the next thing.

**Mr CAWTHORN** - Yes, always.

**Ms FORREST** - The next speech you are going to make.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Sam, for coming along. We do appreciate that. It has been very interesting. You have put interesting points and I think it would be fair to say we all admire you very much. Well done.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**