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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON RURAL ROAD SPEED LIMITS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON MONDAY 22 APRIL 2013.

Mr BOB RUTHERFORD, DEPUTY SECRETARY, AND Ms DEBORAH DAVIS, MANAGER, LAND TRANSPORT SAFETY POLICY BRANCH, AND Mr IAN JOHNSTON, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERT ON ROAD SAFETY, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Welcome. As you are all aware, the evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege, however, I remind you that any comments you might make outside may not be covered by privilege. That being the case, let us go straight into it. You know what the terms of reference are; they are very simple and straightforward. We do not have a formal submission from the department -

Mr RUTHERFORD - There is one from Norm McIlfatrick.

CHAIR - Sorry, I would ask you to speak to that.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Thank you, Chair. I am here standing in for Norm, who is on a well-earned holiday and I am the acting secretary of the department at the moment.

The department is strongly behind these proposals because we believe this is a major initiative with the capacity to significantly reduce the effects of crashes on non-urban roads. We will be talking essentially about crashes and serious injuries because, as you know, the fatality numbers are difficult to work with - you get so much variation year to year with the numbers. But, we can save, we believe, more than 100 people from death or serious injury over a six-year period.

This is built on the safe system approach, which I will be taking evidence from Mr Gledhill on later. Essentially, it is one of four cornerstones: safer roads and roadsides, safer road users, safer vehicles and safer speeds. It is very important to understand that our approach aims at integrating the initiatives under all four cornerstones.

One of the key things we have been looking at is the concern over balancing the efficiency of the system with the safety of the system. I know, Mr Mulder, you raised that issue several times in your remarks. We have been looking at this in terms of the standards that were developed, based on safe system principles for assessing which roads are safe to maintain at 100 kilometres per hour. The optimal model, developed by the independent ARRB, would, if applied without change to Tasmania, have meant that very few sections of Tasmania's non-urban network would maintain a 100-kilometre speed limit.

Together with ARRB, we have developed a less prescriptive second set of criteria - the Tasmanian criteria - for 100 kilometre roads and in applying the criteria we have relaxed the desirable lane width and shoulder sealing criteria, where the crash rate was below the

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average. It was very important that we looked at what the data said about crashes. By doing so - and I think that went the whole efficiency issue - the kilometres of state roads that will retain the 100 kilometre speed limit were increased by a factor of six. We are bringing forward a change that will leave the roads that carry most of Tasmania's journeys, in combination with the 110 kilometre roads, at 100 kilometres. To put that into perspective, where people are concerned about travelling times, more than 70 per cent of vehicle kilometres travelled on state roads on a daily basis will be on those roads. It is a crucial difference to what you might have been thinking, and where the pure criteria would have taken us.

Ms RATTRAY - Mr Chair, is it possible to have a copy of this document that apparently is around, that I don't have, in relation to the roads you are speaking about? Which roads are they?

CHAIR - In other words, could you table a list of those roads?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I have got a map.

Mr MULDER - No forest reserves on it, I hope.

Mr RUTHERFORD - The white parts on the map are not forest reserves.

Mr MULDER - And the green parts are.

Mr RUTHERFORD - As some of you know, I spent a considerable amount of time on that project and I am in recovery.

Mr MULDER - You are in recovery! I am in rehab!

Mr RUTHERFORD - I am in recovery.

Ms RATTRAY - Chair, while we are receiving this information, is it possible to ask Mr Rutherford: has a document been released in the last few days relating to rural speed limits in Tasmania? The minister was talking about it in the media yesterday and then again on the radio. I haven't seen a document and I am wondering if there is such a document, or it just a map?

Mr RUTHERFORD - It is largely the map. We also have the criteria that I am speaking to. We have not consolidated it into an individual document like that at the moment, have we?

Ms DAVIS - No. The minister put out a media release, which noted the high level results of the assessment to date, and this map was attached to that media release. But currently, there are no other documents.

CHAIR - We might let Mr Rutherford keep going at this stage.

Mr RUTHERFORD - We are happy to go back to that provision of that information to the member.

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It is important in terms of infrastructure investment because there is always the persistent worry in these things that it will mean changes in what we do in with the allocation of the dollars to the road network. It is very important that maintenance levels will not be reduced on 90 kilometre per hour roads. Our strategic road network which carries 70 per cent of the traffic volumes, what we would hope to do out of this is to prioritise investment on those strategic roads that do not currently meet the criteria for 100 kilometres an hour and we would be seeking funding from both commonwealth and state governments with some additional funding from the road safety levy.

The basis premise of this, and I have the expert her beside me, travel speed of itself is a leading cause of crashes. It affects both the probability of crashes and the actual speed of impact.

Mr DEAN - Run that by me again, what did you say?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Travel speed is a leading cause of crashes. It is for the simple reasons over the nature of judgments that you make at speed. It affects the probability. I am not talking about people who are behaving wrongfully, illegally or under the influences of substances. I am talking about the greater difficulty of the exercise of judgement, the faster you drive and a number of other factors and you can follow this up with my colleague in a moment. Also the consequence of an accident at speed is significantly reduced by speed. That is the simple physics.

I have a particular concern which I would like to follow up with our ageing population and some of our fastest ageing areas are in the non-urban areas, that we will see, without action, a rising incidence of serious consequence because of the greater frailty of older drivers. We need to get on top of this ahead of that curve because in some areas the population is ageing quickly. It seems to be that in a lot of the non-urban areas because of population densities, we do not have the infrastructure of public transport that we have in the urban centres. If we wish to maintain social inclusion and do it safely, we need to reduce speed.

That is where the basic notion of where this part of the framework comes into play. There are issues over the default speed limit and we have had the issue that the need is to change the default but also post, with clarity, what the new speed is. The intent is to lower the default speed limit but also make clear the speed when you come out of one zone into another, the speed that you are allowed the travel, the maximum speed. This is why it is going to take an effort to take the community with this. There are a number of myths in this area. It is very important that we are not talking about a 'one size fits all' reduction. It is meant to individually assess the roads. It will not significantly impact on travel time. The change that we have worked hard at to make sure that 70 per cent of those journeys are on those major roads and to maintain the 100 kilometres an hour on those roads will mean that on the longer journeys you are not seeing significant increase and for most other areas of the state the reduction in the default speed limit will not have a significant effect on the average speed under which journeys are taken. So it will not mean that significant time penalties are imposed on drivers. They are the key travel time issues.

Just a word about the trials we ran. The Kingborough and Tasman trials were primarily designed to show that we could get community acceptance of the changed speed limits.

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Our community surveys reveal that between 81 per cent and 84 per cent of respondents in Kingborough and Tasman believe the speed on sealed roads should be 90 kilometres an hour or lower and 91 per cent to 97 per cent - perhaps not surprising on the unsealed roads, the gravel roads - believe the speed limit should be 80 kilometres or lower. Obviously, due to the small number of crashes that you get in two municipalities like that, we were never going to get crash data that was robust enough to show the effect. What we do know, of course, and we know this obviously from what we did with the 50 kilometres an hour change, we confidently predict that there will be a significant reduction in the number of crashes, serious injuries and fatalities from bringing this in. There is a lot of empirical evidence, both in Australia and from around the world, that substantiates that.

I think that will probably do for opening remarks.

CHAIR - Thanks, Bob, I will open with one question and then I will hand it through the chair to other members. Can you explain to us exactly what the process is from now? We have had the minister beating the drum over the last couple of days saying this is going to happen, which is quite affronting to a lot of people, I have to say, so explain to me what the process is from here on in as you understand it?

Mr RUTHERFORD - The process requires regulatory change so it is essentially a matter for the parliament.

CHAIR - Are you saying that - I had asked for this some time ago - there will be an allowance for parliamentary debate on this? Will this be brought forward in the form of legislation or will it only go through in the regulations?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I think the required change is a regulation.

Ms RATTRAY - Which does not involve the parliament.

CHAIR - Could you get that advice for us as a question on notice?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I think I have a piece of paper here somewhere that explains that. I will supply you something as soon as. It is quite clear it is a regulatory change; it does not require a change to the primary legislation.

Mr DEAN - Can I make a comment on that?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I did not see that as frustrating discussion.

Mr DEAN - I think I am right in saying that it was said by the department or somebody within the department that because of the significant change in this to the state and to the road users that this is a matter that would go through and would provide for parliamentary debate. I might have that wrong but I thought it was pretty clear; there was a comment made to that effect because of the significant change in this whole thing.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Obviously, we are all here because it is a significant discussion. My understanding is, from a departmental view, that we normally work within what the law is and then when you take a proposal to executive government and they say, 'How can

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we implement this?' and we say, 'Well, there is no requirement to change legislation to do it, there is a requirement to put in a regulation,' and that is how one would normally do it. We are just working within what we see as the existing structure of the legislative framework that governs this.

Mr MULDER - It seems to me you're saying, 'We're going to remove the default system because we're now going to signpost. Every piece of road will have a signpost saying what the speed limit should be'. We are going to get rid of those 'End Speed Limit' signs and then put up a sign that says what the speed limit is on that piece of road?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Yes. Like all Australian jurisdictions, we will be maintaining default speed limits as a matter of law. The signage is a separate issue. What has been identified in this - and I think most of us who drive have had this frustration - is that it's very important that people know what speed is the legal speed for the piece of road they're on, so the signage change is designed for that.

Mr MULDER - In all practicality the default will still be law, but there will be no piece of road that has a default speed limit, because every piece of road will be signed. In other words, you can put this through just by changing the road signs; you don't need to deal with defaults. Is there a piece of Tasmanian road that won't have a signpost on it somewhere at the beginning, middle or end that says what the speed limit of that piece of road should be?

Ms DAVIS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - How will you know that? You will drive past an 'End Speed Limit' sign?

Ms DAVIS - We won't have any 'End Speed Limit' signs. They will be replaced with the new signage, which will say what the maximum limit is in that zone, but when you turn off a road onto another road without a sign - as currently exists - the default speed limit will apply. We need to have the default speed limit regulation changed to back that up, so you didn't turn onto a road with a higher speed limit than that which you just came off.

Mr MULDER - So in effect, you will now create speed limit zones rather than pieces of road?

Ms DAVIS - It will be exactly the same system we have now, except instead of having an 'End Speed Limit' sign you would have a new sign which tells you the maximum speed limit, as the community has requested.

Mr MULDER - And then that applies to side roads as well?

Ms DAVIS - Yes, unless you turned off and there was a sign that posted a different speed limit. It's not changing the system of speed limit setting that we currently have, it's reducing that maximum speed limit in those zones and putting a new sign to replace the 'End Speed Limit' signs, which is more understandable to the community and drivers.

CHAIR - Bob, you will let us know the process and arrange that for us as soon as possible?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Yes. To be clear, I believe it's straightforward.

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CHAIR - We just want to nail that down properly.

Mr DEAN - I want to come back to a point I raised in the parliament previously in relation to serious and fatal crashes occurring on our rural roads where the speed limit is 100 kph. How many fatal or serious injury crashes have occurred on our rural roads where the speed limit of 100 kph or under has been maintained? Not where they have exceeded 100 kph and had a crash or a fatal accident. What is the statistical data to identify the number of crashes or serious injuries on those roads, where the speed limit has been maintained? I would like that detail for the last three or four years, so you may have to take that on notice. I would also like to know the number of serious and fatal crashes that have occurred in similar circumstances - where the speed limit or under has been maintained - that relate to speed and speed only. In other words, there have been no other contributing factors - the driver hasn't been drinking alcohol, or taking drugs, there has been no inattentive driving, et cetera. I want to know where speed has been the predominant factor.

CHAIR - In addition, would you like that by local government area? Can that be provided? That's very important because I know a lot of people have gone through local government areas and found there haven't been any fatalities on 100 kph roads.

Mr MULDER - An upper House electorate perhaps?

CHAIR - We don't want to confuse the issue, Mr Mulder.

Mr MULDER - Why not?

Mr RUTHERFORD - It might be worth handing this around. We have a table of the serious casualties on the 100 kilometre roads broken down by local government area. It does not answer your question, Ivan, about the split between speed and other factors, but perhaps if we pass this around the table now, we can follow up with that detail.

Mr DEAN - Part of my question is where the speed limit has been maintained, in other words, 100 kph or under.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Sure, you are trying to sort out, as I understand it -

Mr DEAN - I am trying to sort this out because of the different figures that you are providing and MUARC are providing. MUARC say that if we go down this path we will - not could or might - prevent 126 fatal and serious crashes over a period of six years and you say we could prevent up to 100 fatal and serious crashes over a six-year period. You change that later on and say you will prevent that number of incidents. There is this difference about the number that it will save, or might save, and I wonder why that is occurring. Why do you say 100 could be prevented, and MUARC say 126 will be prevented? There are no ifs or buts or anything else about MUARC; they have said they will be prevented.

Ms DAVIS - I might be able to tell you why there is a different number. When the modelling was prepared by MUARC initially, it was on the basis of all roads reducing from 100 kph to 90 kph. Having gone this process -

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CHAIR - Just for a second, we might go back to Ivan's first question. If we could table the advice on that - the number of crashes. Do any of those questions need to go on notice or are you are content with this?

Mr DEAN - I am not content with this at all.

Mr RUTHERFORD - I understood what Ivan was asking and we will get back with what information we have on that. I was just passing this around because we have it and it gives a platform to add detail to.

Mr DEAN - I would like it over probably a five-year period. I want to identify whether there has been a decrease in serious crashes on these rural roads over the last four or five years since there has been road maintenance and all these other things occurring. That is why I would like those figures over the last, say, five years, if they are available.

Mr MULDER - On that point, to add a bit of rigour to the question, what data is kept on the actual or measured speed at which the accident happened? It seems to me that without that sort of data, you cannot answer Mr Dean's question. How do you work out what speed the accident happened at? What speed was the car travelling at the time of the accident, because if you do not know that how can you answer Mr Dean's question?

Ms DAVIS - I believe that there are two factors. We do not have a report from the police that tells us the actual speed. Obviously, when they investigate a fatality, that may come through, but in the crash forms the police fill out there are two options: there is 'exceeding the speed limit' or 'excessive speed for the circumstances or conditions' so we will be able to pick out those which do not have 'exceeding the speed limit' but may have 'excessive speed for the conditions or circumstances'. They are the ones that I believe would meet that criterion.

Mr MULDER - So, the follow-on question is: on what basis does a police officer say the car was exceeding the speed limit? Just subjective judgment, I suspect.

Ms DAVIS - It is a judgment by the police officer based, on their experience at the time of the crash. That is the generally accepted way of collecting data.

Mr MULDER - As a former police officer who has done these things, I do not share your confidence in that judgment.

CHAIR - If I could go back to this table you provided, Bob. It is for a period of nine years. Are you saying that none of these fatalities, or none of these serious injuries, occurred on either the Bass or the Midland highways or any of the major highways? Is that what you are saying?

Ms DAVIS - They are on the 100-kph sections within that -

CHAIR - So none of these - and I want to be very clear about this - have occurred on the Midland or Bass highways or any of those major 110 kilometre hour roads?

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Ms DAVIS - They have not occurred on the 110s. They have only occurred on the 100 kilometre per hour sections.

CHAIR - Only on the 110s. So there is separate data for the highways.

Ms DAVIS - Yes,. Only without the 100 kilometre per hour sections. So there may be sections of those highways which were at 110 kilometre per hour and they would be included because they are 110 kilometre per hour sections within that municipality. On the 110s they are not included in this.

CHAIR - 100 kilometre an hour or less, say coming through [? **TBC 10:30:38 indistinct**] and you are 80, would they be included there.

Ms DAVIS - No, this is purely 100 kilometre per hour sections of road.

Mr RUTHERFORD - We are obviously looking at those areas that potentially would come down. That is the point of the statistical table.

Since we have the map we should table it. It is the map that goes with -

Mr MULDER - I need a greater level of detail. I need to know the topographic. What kind of trees are growing under these green bits?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Given that the most characteristic crash is a single vehicle run off the road into something.

Mr MULDER - Oh no, we are back into forestry. We need to cut them down, Bob.

Laughter.

CHAIR - Do you want to speak to that at all?

Mr RUTHERFORD - In essence, its real virtue is that it gives you a picture of the geographical spread of this, but it is the same information essentially in a map that we have handed out. As you can see, it is a big number - 1 299 total serious injuries. I don't know what the fatality numbers would be in itself.

CHAIR - Sorry, how many?

Mr RUTHERFORD - It says on the map.

CHAIR - Over, once again, nine years.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question. Obviously, just receiving these, Chair, it takes a while to get your head around what is presented. Some of these, sadly, the yellow triangles, are not even on a road. Obviously, they are country roads. We have already addressed the country roads. They are probably unsealed. If you take yourself to the Break O'Day area on the green map and there is one, two, three, four, five. There are five of those little triangles there that aren't on a road.

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Mr RUTHERFORD - The map only shows the state network. In the table you will see that we have the

Mr MULDER - Council roads.

Mr RUTHERFORD - local government authority roads. On a map of this size we couldn't possibly put those on. Where you are seeing a triangle, you are seeing one on the 100 kilometre local government road if it is just in the middle, away from the state network.

Ms RATTRAY - How do we know what is a sealed road and what is a gravel road here, unsealed? I think probably we need a list of roads. If you are going to present this data, with all due respect, we need to have a list of identified roads that go with the data, otherwise I am not going to be able to pick up whether these roads are unsealed or sealed. There has not been any opposition in my communities against reducing the speed limit in unsealed roads. It is not an issue at all. I think everyone appreciates that it takes an exceptional driver to drive at 90 kilometres on an unsealed road. I think there needs to be some more detail, Chair, if you don't mind.

CHAIR - Can that be provided?

Mr RUTHERFORD – Obviously, we will not be doing it on a map. It will be tabulated.

Ms RATTRAY - Absolutely. A list of those roads will allow me to have some understanding of the areas that we are talking about because I do not know because I have not seen an extensive list. People are coming to me and other members as well and saying, 'What roads are we talking about?' and I have no idea other than what I have seen this morning. I am thinking of driving across the Sideling this morning; if I could not have done 100 kph where it was possible, to overtake somebody, I would not be here this morning; I would have still been behind a truck. It is difficult for a driver to accept that you can put a blanket ban of 90 kph and then expect someone to sit on that and try to overtake somebody, to get around a slow-moving vehicle when it is appropriate, and still be able to sit on the speed limit. I know we will have more discussion about this, Bob. I thought of that this morning when I looked at road and thought I would still be following a slow-moving vehicle across the Sideling for at least 15 minutes if I could not have overtaken doing 100 kph. There is more to this than just saying, 'If we slow them down we will reduce accidents. We will not. We will probably end up having frustrated people who will overtake in inappropriate places because they are frustrated.

Mr DEAN - Heavy vehicles might be restricted more than the others, perhaps.

Ms RATTRAY - I do not know. That is another issue in itself, isn't it? I guess we will talk to transport operators as we go through. That is just a point that I wanted to make.

CHAIR - Yes, we will get that point because we will have quite a lot of other people to talk to but I take your point. To add to Tania's point, I noticed some of those yellow triangles would appear to be in the Central Highlands. I am not even sure that they are on roads. Is it possible that some of those accidents may have occurred - and sometimes you hear a about a four wheel drive totally out in the bush where a fatality has occurred. Are they included in those statistics as well?

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Mr RUTHERFORD - My understanding is that these are all on public roads.

Ms DAVIS - We only include those on public roads.

CHAIR - Can you confirm that that is your understanding? It is absolutely the case?

Mr RUTHERFORD - It is what our database is.

Ms RATTRAY - That is why we need a list of the roads. We cannot make any assessment until we have a proper list.

CHAIR - There are a couple of those things there and I did not even know that the roads existed. Anyway, we will see how we go.

Mr FINCH - In respect of the minister's letter that arrived to us on 4 April; it referred to, 'This includes works to replace end speed limit signs, to educate drivers on driving to the conditions on Tasmania's non-urban roads.'

We also have a letter from the RACT which gave a little draft that they had of a sign that might include 'Drive to the conditions.'

I am wondering whether this idea from the RACT has been advanced, whether that is part of the process going forward - drive to the conditions. Do we only find out about that when the police charge us with something that we did not drive to conditions? What is happening in this endeavour to educate drivers? Will it be the signage?

Mr RUTHERFORD - The signage there is the intended new signage. We have, changing road conditions but the basic idea was picked up.

Ms DAVIS - RACT was part of the group which oversaw the development of that new sign with focus group testing of drivers to see what message they received from the different variations of wording.

Mr FINCH - Will this be on all signs?

Ms DAVIS - It will be on those where you are in that non-urban environment as opposed to a truly posted sign where it is a standard sign. In one of the fact sheets, these are the new signs that will come. In a standard posted area we still have a standard speed limit. But on those areas where we are replacing the end speed limit signs, we will have ones with additional readings to make people realise that they are a different type of road and need to be more aware when driving through them.

Mr FINCH - But that is more related to the condition of the road or to the changed speed on the road - changing road conditions. The message that comes through from the police is that you have to drive to the conditions. This is just an instruction about the condition of the road; it is not really suggesting that you drive to the conditions. 'Changing road conditions' changes the meaning and the thrust of what this sign says and what the minister is alluding to - to educate drivers on driving to the conditions.

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Ms DAVIS - Part of the implementation would be a detailed education campaign about driving to conditions and what this new signage would mean. We developed this new sign through the Road Safety Advisory Council and RACT was part of that group which oversaw its development of this new signage. Focus script testing was used with real drivers on our roads and 'drive to the conditions' was one of the options. Basically, they told us it did not tell them anything. We have a report on that focus group testing which I believe has been available on the net and we are more than happy to provide it. This is the message in which those drivers, through those focus groups, put together which said 'This will give us the message that you are trying to give - that you need to drive more carefully on these sections of roads because they change'. So we would have happily gone with 'drive to the conditions' if that had been what gave people that message but we were told that it could mean a lot of things. We are more than happy to provide that focus group report so you can see that as well.

We would definitely have to educate people about what that meant and what driving on these roads is actually about and driving to conditions is a big part of that - it is just a different terminology.

Mr FINCH - So, hopefully, this message comes through in the education process that you run?

Ms DAVIS - Absolutely, that is the big intent of that education campaign.

Mr FINCH - Can you tell me what is being planned in the education program? Has that been worked out yet? Your media, your marketing?

Ms DAVIS - That is something we are just developing. It would be a very broad-based campaign so we would not be relying on just one media source. We would be looking at different ways to educate drivers and to continually update that education where we can.

Initially we would, I am sure, have some mixture of television, radio and web and print media. We would need to take advice from communication and marketing experts on the best way to get that message out there. We do not have a defined package ready to go; that is part of the work we will be continuing to do before any of it is implemented.

Mr FINCH - Any idea what the funding allocation might be for a campaign of that nature?

Ms DAVIS - Standard campaigns are around \$200 000 but we would probably expect a bit more than that if we are going to go through a range of various mechanisms. We would allow probably \$300 000 or \$400 000. It will depend on which avenue was determined to be the best to get that message out there and also on how we can continually update drivers.

CHAIR - What is your current budget in terms of driver education and safety over the last few years?

Ms DAVIS - The Road Safety Advisory Council they will get that number for you. I would hate to give you the wrong figure.

CHAIR - Okay, we will follow that up with Mr Gledhill when he comes in.

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I have a piece of paper here - I do not know where it came from - that shows in 1997 vehicle registrations were a bit over 200 000. Fatal and serious injuries at that time were 1 200 per annum. In 2010 we have over 500 000 vehicle registrations. That is one for every man, woman and child in the state, isn't it?

Ms RATTRAY - Pretty much.

CHAIR - It must include four-wheel bikes and everything that moves. It is very good we've dropped down to approximately 200 fatal and serious injuries; it is a significant drop. Over that time obviously the road safety message has been getting out. Things such as the compulsory wearing of seatbelts from 1977 and the 0.05 alcohol limit would also have come into play. That is a good message. With continued driver education, do you think that downward trend could still be achieved without having to go to what a lot of people would argue is going to be an economic disbenefit to Tasmania? A lot of other people also, such as traffic engineers, will give evidence to us later.

Mr RUTHERFORD - We have some differences of view on that efficiency issue and the economic facts. I made the point that we believe what we've done with putting forward that the main network remains as it is, we think we have substantially dealt with the economic trade-off. We also believe the time changes that will occur on the rest of the network in travel times are very small and we don't expect it to have a major efficiency effect suggested. I'm not saying it wouldn't have if we'd gone with those original criteria, which would have eliminated a lot of those major routes. That's what we have tried to be pragmatic about. The driving down of the number of crashes and serious consequences we have achieved has been built on key point interventions that have then been reinforced, and have to be reinforced, by education campaigns which changes attitudes. You still see people who drive without a seatbelt. It's hard to get your head around it, but people still do. We still have those problems with alcohol and other things, but this is about another major change that can take us on a step-down similar to those we've achieved in the past.

Mr MULDER - Another silver bullet, Bob?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I have always been a little happier being Tonto than the Lone Ranger.

Laughter.

Ms RATTRAY - I need to cut to the chase here. It appears to me it's a done deal and the work of this committee won't make any difference to the mindset of the minister and the department on implementing these new changes. Is there a time frame already on when you intend to implement this new strategy?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I haven't seen it in that light. We have taken the committee very seriously.

Ms RATTRAY - The committee hasn't even done its work or reported. Yet we have a body of work here and we are talking about doing this and that. It appears to me that it's already a done deal. I am interested to know if there is a time frame already committed to this strategy?

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Mr RUTHERFORD - I believe we have a target to put this through, yes.

Ms RATTRAY - A target of?

Ms DAVIS - When the minister launched this strategy -

Ms RATTRAY - Was that yesterday?

Ms DAVIS - No, the minister launched this last year. It was launched in August or September of last year.

Ms RATTRAY - There was a fairly strong launch yesterday.

Ms DAVIS - That was really an updating of the process to provide some further information. This strategy was launched last year and there was quite a big launch that was undertaken at that time and the minister committed to trying to implement in a nine to 12 month period.

Ms RATTRAY - The implementation date now?

Ms DAVIS - We do not have a firm implementation date as we are working through the processes taking the amount of time that it needs to go through this road assessment process, but we are working towards that target of the nine to 12 month implementation timeframe. That will involve, of course, preparing regulations and putting them before the parliamentary process as required. We will do that as we have some further information available.

Ms RATTRAY - With all due respect, you must have a timeframe to go through that process. There must be a timeframe for when you want to see this come out the other side.

Ms DAVIS - We are working towards the 12 months that the minister announced in ???
[TBC 10:50:50 Rattray talks over her]

Ms RATTRAY - So that is 1 June or thereabouts?

Ms DAVIS - That would have been nine. We are working to the 12 which I believe will be September.

Ms RATTRAY - Goes to 1 September.

Ms DAVIS - That is the timeframe that was announced, but we need to work through this process and part of that working through the road assessment process that was announced as part of the launch of the strategy and that has taken longer than we would have hoped. We would have hoped to have had some more final results which we would have been able to present to you today but we are trying to get those finalised as we work through that process and take those back to local government as well. We are working towards that timeframe, but obviously we will take on board what comes out through this process. That is why regulations have not been put through at this point in time because we do not want to pre-empt in this process.

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Ms RATTRAY - Chair, that leads me on to local government and we will be speaking with the local government representative later. I heard one of the local government members this morning say that they have not been re-engaged through this process since they first submitted a submission. When is that process likely to be undertaken if we are looking at a 1 September timeframe?

Ms DAVIS - We are looking at taking those results back out within the next few weeks as we finalise this process. Unfortunately, there was a delay in some of the submissions coming in and we have been trying to do a thorough assessment. Probably there has been more discussion at the technical level with council on those particular roads in that assessment process so that hasn't been formally fed back to the councils yet, but that is the information which we are looking to take back in the new few weeks.

Ms RATTRAY - The works and services managers have been engaged in the process, but the Mayor may not necessarily know what has been going on. Is that what you are saying?

Ms DAVIS - As part of the process of assessing the roads, there has probably been more discussion at that officer level. However, we have provided opportunities to brief elected members of local government. We went round and offered to provide briefings throughout the state. We went to a number of regions to do that and I believe that there has been some communication going back via email but I would have to check that that has occurred to give an update on the fact that we are still working through this process and we will be coming back soon.

Ms RATTRAY - One more question while I am on a roll, if you don't mind, Chair. I took note as I drove down this morning of the number of signs. I am just talking on the left hand side and I thought I would pick a bit of an area. Between the northern end of Oatlands and the southern end of Kempton there were around 80 signs. How many more signs are the motoring public likely to see in relation to the changes that are proposed.?

CHAIR - They were just speed limits?

Ms RATTRAY - There were just advising you of what is happening on the roads. They were general. Some were general, but there were almost 80 signs. I was still trying to take notice of what I was doing as well, but I was counting and I got 78 but I think I missed a couple of the squiggles, the pictures. How many more signs are we expected to see if we are going to be signing all the way through when we have changes? I noticed in one part here - the first part when you turn off from Bridport and head along the Flinders Highway, if it is still called that - that it is proposed to change, I think, in colour. It starts off at black and then it goes to pink. So you have got a 90 and then you will go through to 100. That is just a small section of 90, then you have a larger section of 100. Give me some ballpark figure of how many more signs we are likely to see on our roads and how motorists are likely to deal with that.

Ms DAVIS - On that particular stretch of road there would be a 90 as you came off, then into a 100 section and then into a 90 so there may be a few additional signs in that respect. For the majority of roads, those that are already posted at a speed limit, there would be no change to that. We would be replacing the end speed limit signs with a new one but that would just be a straight on-for-one swap. The only other additional signage might be

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some additional advisory signage where we believe going through this process has identified some areas in which some hazard identification or some advisory warning signs might be required. I could not give you a number on those, but that would be advisory signage to help people to choose a more appropriate way of driving.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, so you will turn off on a piece of road and then there will be the smaller area - I do not know, 200 or 300 metres - where you will wait to build up your speed so you will finish at a 70 and then you will go into a 90 and then you will go into a 100 in a stretch of, say, 2 kilometres. Is that what we are looking at?

Ms DAVIS - To be honest, I do not know if there are any other speed limits before that on that stretch of road.

Ms RATTRAY - There is.

Ms DAVIS - One of the messages we did get quite clearly from the community in the consultation processes has been that we need to try to reduce the amount of chop and change and that is why we are looking at trying to define stretches of road that are not too short because we want to minimise that, but we also need to be aware that there may be a stretch, as you mentioned, with an overtaking opportunity which does have a higher standard but it may not be very long, so we will have that discussion when we talk to local government about it in the area so that if they believe it might be appropriate to post a smaller stretch at a higher limit. Even though it might introduce a little bit more chop and change it might actually provide motorists more with what they are after on that. There is definitely no intention to significantly increase the amount of signage or speed zones.

Ms RATTRAY - That engagement back with local government areas, with the community and all through it, you are hoping to have all that done and dusted and the community on board because one thing that the RACT submission did say was that if you do not have the community with you it is an absolute waste of time and all before 1 September of this year?

Ms DAVIS - That is the time frame that we are working towards.

Mr MULDER - Your optimum model AARB, as you explained, if applied - you have had to relax that, I think I heard you say in your opening statement, and something like a six-fold relaxation just so that you could get many of those volume roads to the 100?

Mr RUTHERFORD - I certainly did not say a six-fold relaxation. What it did was, by making what we regard as sensible changes for our local conditions, we achieved a six-fold increase in the roading that we could have at 100 kilometres. It is a very important distinction because we have not cut the standards by a sixth of what they were or anything, it is -

Mr MULDER - No, but the application of those standards is a sixth less than it would have been?

Mr RUTHERFORD - The application of the Tasmanian standards has led to a big increase in the level of the network that we can sign -

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Mr MULDER - And that is targeted to volume roads, you said?

Mr RUTHERFORD - It is not surprising that given Tasmania's topography and the quality of the roading that the investments that are being made in the past on of those roads mean that the relatively small changes in the criteria get over the line because they are by and large well invested in roads and what it has enabled us to do, and it is shown in the map - is to clearly indicate those that we believe should be prioritised for funding in order to improve the efficiency consistent with the standards that we are putting forward.

Mr MULDER - What you find is that if we had applied the national AARB standard we would have more roads that would have had to been reduced?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Absolutely.

Mr MULDER - As a result of that reduction, those reductions have, of course, occurred on the volume roads?

Mr RUTHERFORD - That is correct.

Mr MULDER - The new standard 'to be more suited to Tasmanian conditions' - if that is not relaxing, I do not know -

Mr RUTHERFORD - I was trying to - but, you carry on.

Mr MULDER - Carry on? I shall, I assure you. This seems to be putting the cart before the horse, because you say we need to reduce the standards so we can increase the number of roads on which you can travel at 100 kph. Those roads are the ones with the great volumes on them. It seems to me an indictment of the construction and maintenance of these 100-kph roads, that these high volume roads do not meet the national standards and that we have to come up with a new one just so we do not impede the flow of traffic.

Mr RUTHERFORD - We have not approached it with anything like that mindset. We have approached it with the mindset that we are trying to achieve a significant road safety improvement. We are mindful of the issues that go to the major traffic routes that we need to address. But a lot of these technical issues - the optimal set of criteria - it is like a lot of these things where the marginal benefit you get from a tightening of standard, the gain tends to taper off as you get towards the top. We believe we can get most of the benefit with a slightly lower standard for various technical aspects, without significantly compromising the safety benefit, which is why are confident we will get that safety benefit. It is not an accident that we can do that on the main network because the main network is the network we have invested heavily in.

Such is the topography of Tasmania and the difficulty of our roading network. Because we have more dolerite than any other place in the southern hemisphere, as I understand it, it will probably never be practical to bring the whole of the Tasmanian network up to 100-kph standard. It is not a doable thing. We approached it in that way.

I do not see it as putting the cart before the horse - how we have gone about it. We start with the network we have. The main state network is built to a pretty high standard but it

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would not meet the high bar that came out in the national standards, which would have taken into account the very different state of roading on the mainland and the topography on the mainland.

Mr MULDER - I am not suggesting you did anything other than come to this with a road safety mindset. But you also mentioned that the reduction from 60 kph to 50 kph had achieved some major benefits in terms of road safety. I assume that would be number and severity of crashes. Do you have data to substantiate that claim?

Mr RUTHERFORD - Since I have Professor Johnston beside me, who is an expert on this, I might turn to him, if I may, Chair, to make the observations on that.

Mr MULDER - I hope that's not the result of a car accident?

Prof JOHNSTON - No, a bit of old-man surgery. Thank you, Bob. With the 60 kph to 50 kph change, there have been a lot evaluations and every place it has happened there have been statistically significant drops in serious casualties. It has been formally evaluated in Queensland, particularly south-east Queensland around the Gold Coast, and in Melbourne. Deb, has there been an official evaluation here too?

Ms DAVIS - Yes, they have been publicly available.

Prof JOHNSTON - The thing about Tasmania is; the numbers are smaller so it is a little harder to always get statistical significance. That goes to something you were talking earlier. Around the world there have been an enormous number of changes, both up and down, in speed limits. People have tried to evaluate what happens when you put them up, and down. One examination has looked at all the scientific studies right around the world and came to the conclusion that every time speed limits come down, casualties come down and every time they go up, casualties go up. It is absolutely clear-cut - there can be no doubt at all. For example, Victoria did not have 110-kph speed limit zones for a long while and then they put a 110-kph limit on dual-carriage divided highways and the casualties went up over a two-year period by about 20 per cent. They brought the speed limit down to 100 kph and the number of incidents came back down again, so it is very striking.

Mr MULDER - What is the optimal speed, versus safety?

Prof. JOHNSTON - That's a good point and goes to this question of the road standard. Most of the two-lane rural roads in Australia, not just Tasmania, cannot safely sustain 100 kph. When I started in the field there were 3 500 Australians killed every year and now it is about 1 400. Have we come a long way - and I think that is the point you were making, Chair? Yes, we have come a long way. We have got there with compulsory seatbelt wearing, compulsory helmet wearing for motor cyclists, intensive random breath testing and lowering PCA levels to 0.05. We have done a lot of work and now we've reached a point where it gets harder and harder to make the next changes. We know the standard of the road is absolutely critical, and so is the standard of the vehicle and the driver. Over the last 30 years we've worked very hard on the drivers - legislation, regulation, and intense enforcement. The unique thing about Australia is we have a very large road network with a small taxpayer base, so the amount we have available to spend on the road network is small. This is a lot of what the discussion has been about today - we

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have to learn how to build economic roads that still have an appropriate level of safety. You have probably all heard of 'black-spot engineering': we used to look at where crashes congregated. If you had, say, 10 casualty crashes at an intersection, you would look at the intersection and fix it up. Rural crashes don't congregate on one little section of road; they are dispersed across the whole network. The figures from Tasmania are very similar to what I've seen elsewhere in Australia. Roughly half of the rural casualty crashes happen on these types of roads. If you want 100 kph or more - I don't care if all the roads are 140 kph or 150 kph, providing they are safe for that level of speed.

Mr MULDER - Now we get to the point I was trying to raise before. Why would you vary that standard when it's the condition of the road that is the determinant? We know the risk management matrix, and volumes are part of that, but if the condition of the road determines the speed limit, why are you now varying that to a higher speed limit, because of the volumes? You are in fact increasing the risk on those roads, when you should be determining them by the level of the road.

Prof. JOHNSTON - If we started with a clean sheet, you would build the roads to a totally different standard, but you don't have the money to do it. No state in Australia has the money to build them to the standard you want for 100 kph now, but you are stuck with 100 kph because you have it historically. What do you do? If you have the money, by all means turn all the current 100-kph roads into 100-kph standards roads and then you'll get the same safety benefit.

Mr MULDER - So we're going to allow people to travel on these roads at a faster speed than the road allows because we can't afford to build a road and we're going to save money? It seems to me a terrible position you've got yourself into by deciding you're going to vary the standard of the road applicable to the speeds you'll be travelling. You make a very significant point in the fact that the speed has a rock solid connection to the standard of the road. What we are watching here is a heap of relaxation of that thing and thereby creating, in your own words, danger.

Prof JOHNSTON - I obviously cannot answer the question for the Tasmanian government but the way I see it is really saying that if you have the money to fix them all, then fix them all now. If you do not have the money to fix them all -

Mr MULDER - Then reduce the speed limit.

Prof JOHNSTON - Yes, then reduce the speed limit. If you said, 'Let's reduce the speed limit on all of them', my experience from other states would be that you haven't got a snowball's chance in hell of getting that accepted. So you have to take the games you can get where you can get them and then target your investment on the rest. That is not me speaking for the Tasmanian government.

Mr MULDER - I think I have made my point.

Mr RUTHERFORD - It is very important. I think you have made a very important point that I need to put our position on the record over. The issue you are putting is that we have relaxed the standards beyond the optimum model that was developed -

Mr MULDER - To gain community acceptance.

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Mr RUTHERFORD - To gain community acceptance. The position that I am putting forward is not that. We have relaxed the standards on taking expert advice and we believe that the relaxation we have gone for does not compromise the significant safety benefit. So we do believe - and I need to put this firmly on the record - that our roads at those relaxed standards, as you call them, or I would say Tasmanian appropriate standards -

Mr MULDER - You have twice now called them relaxed so I am happy to take it.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Because I am happy to use plain English - that we are not applying those national standards. I am relaxed about using the word 'relaxed' because I could not sit here before you and say that we are doing it because we do not have the guts to lower the speed limit. That is not the case. We are simply saying that we have looked hard at those standards and we have taken technical advice. We believe within the Tasmanian standards those roads are safe at 100 kph. We have also looked at the network and picked out the areas on the map where we believe that by prioritising funding we can make the network safe for 100 kph.

I accept the fundamental premise that we cannot go out and buy perfect safety. But we can make a hell of a difference and that is what this is about. We are not expecting that we are putting people at risk on that main spine but we do believe that 70 per cent of the kilometres travelled by Tasmanians can be travelled safely at that speed on that main network. We further believe that by lowering the default speed on the rest of the non-urban network, we can buy significant changes in safety at a trivial penalty in travel time. I accept Tania's point about the frustration some of us can feel. We have to learn - it is a learning and an educational thing. Being stuck for 15 minutes behind a truck is very irritating but it does not mean you would have been able to travel more quickly had you passed it. It helps with how you feel; we are all like that but it does not actually make a major difference over time for the travel time it takes.

Ms RATTRAY - Through you, Chair, my point was that if I could not overtake at 100, I would not have been able to get past. I did not say I was travelling at 100 but you have to be able to overtake safely, and that was my point. I do not travel at 100 kilometres on the sideling - I would be a pretty good driver if I could but I do not. I need to get past people and there would be many people just like me. Therefore I would be breaking the law overtaking at 100, but you safely have to overtake at that speed. You cannot get around because we do not have a good enough road.

Mr RUTHERFORD - Sorry, I did not mean to attack that point, Tania. I was simply taking on the point about our perceptions of how long it takes to get from A to B and the affect that we personally get from that control feeling we have. We massively overstate our ability to control the travel time because the overall conditions of the road force us to travel close to an average speed.

Mr MULDER - Which is a great point to switch to my last point, Chair, if I might. It is that connection between what a rational human being would do and what we actually do. You can talk all day long about what you shouldn't do; the fact is that in our mindset we often think, 'If I could only get past this truck, I will be there sooner'. We don't even bother to do the calculations because if we did we wouldn't bother passing the truck. The

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bottom line is that human behaviour does not work on this lovely rational model that we all build into these things.

You mentioned the trials and the significant community acceptance of those trials. I think around this table no-one is talking about gravel roads. We all know that you cannot think of too many gravel roads where you would go more than 80 kilometres an hour. It is common sense and we don't really object to that. With those community trials I accept the 80 per cent and the 90 per cent acceptance. Would you like to run through what was the actual difference in average travelling speeds as a result of those trials? What was the average speed they were travelling at before and what were they travelling at afterwards? From my memory it is a minuscule variation. Broad community acceptance but people still travelled at the speed they travelled at.

Ms DAVIS - There are some evaluations which were published which I assume you are referring to.

Mr MULDER - Yes, that is what I was talking to.

Ms DAVIS - I believe that it is probably the second evaluation, the first 24 months. I believe that overall there was a 0.9 kilometre per hour reduction.

Mr MULDER - So instead of travelling at say 90 kilometres an hour they were now travelling at 89.

Ms DAVIS - That is the average. What is important to recognise in these is that it is also about how many people were at those very high speeds. I believe what it showed also was that there were fewer people travelling over 100. That is where the benefits come in. Even though you may not get everybody travelling under a speed limit, you do get a reduction in the speeds that are happening. That is where you get safety benefits because you have a better chance of avoiding a crash or a better chance of surviving a crash. You also have the people coming in the opposite direction to you travelling differently. I have the Kingborough results and we are more than happy to table those if you want.

Mr MULDER - And the Tasman one.

CHAIR - I follow on from Tony's question. Why did you only do the two trials in Tasman and Kingborough which are very topographically challenged as far as roads go - including bends and curves and everything else. Why didn't you do one in the north of the state, in the northern Midlands areas, for example, where there are big open spaces - lots of long straights. You would have got an entirely different perception from the public, could I suggest? Why didn't you do it that way?

Ms DAVIS - I was not involved in the setting up of those so I am just talking from the knowledge that I have. I believe at the time that those communities were interested and were asking to participate in those types of trials, or there was a negotiation process and that they were the communities wanting to undertake those demonstrations. I cannot say whether northern Midlands, for example, also wanted to do that but we were not imposing something on a local government area.

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CHAIR - Could I suggest that you have now got a skewed result from a public perception point of view because of doing it that way?

Ms DAVIS - When we did the initial consultation on a statewide proposal, we also did a statewide community survey which also showed very high levels throughout the state that

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CHAIR - Which is quite different from the RACT one. Anyway, we will go down that when we talk to the RACT. We have got a totally different set of figures.

Ms DAVIS - Very different bases of reports.

Mr MULDER - I have got one other thing but I am happy to let anyone go first so that if we run out of time, I haven't hogged all the limelight.

CHAIR - Yes that is right. We have 10 minutes. For the record, what is the standard lane width - it has been out to councils for public comment - for a 100 kph road? As I understand it, I think it is 3.5 per lane and a half a metre or a metre shoulder; I have forgotten what that is now. Can we put that on the public record, please?

Ms DAVIS - As part of the safe non-urban road network strategy, the criteria are detailed in there and it is the Tasmanian criteria. It is important to note that these are desirable and they are stated as such in there, and that is where we have this work ongoing to see how far we can push that desirable number. There is a desirable lane width of 3.5 metres and desirable sealed shoulders of one metre width. That is where we are going through this process at the moment - seeing if they are desirable, how far can you relax those before you get to a point at which you compromise the safety? That is where we are looking at working in there and being flexible and it is part of the discussion we had initially with some of the local government people, about that we really need to look at what we can do on those numbers. That is the information that has led to a lessening of those numbers in their practical application and that is the information which we are hoping to present very shortly back to local government and the communities to see how that has moved. They are desirable and I think that it is important.

Prof JOHNSTON - There are no national standards for specific speeds.

Ms DAVIS - No. These were developed specifically for this project.

Prof JOHNSTON - The key things to two-lane rural roads are sealed shoulder - that is critical - and delineation, both centre line and edge line and ideally, the rumble strip edge line and protection of the roadside, particularly in areas that are heavily treed. The wire rope barrier, for example. If someone asked me for a two lane, rural road that is going to carry volumes at reasonable speed, that is where I would want to start.

CHAIR - In other jurisdictions is there any movement to follow what is being proposed here?

Prof JOHNSTON - Every jurisdiction does different things. What Victoria has been trying to do and they have taken a similar approach with this issue of single vehicle run-off rural road crash, often into trees or bridge abutments or roll-overs on embankments.

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How do you tackle that when they are dispersed all of the place? What Victoria has been looking at is taking the five major arterials out of Melbourne and then putting wire rope barrier progressively out. You start where the volumes are high because it makes sense that if there are more cars there and there is more likely to be a crash somewhere along the way. They have been doing the speed limit stuff as well. Do they have it at quite the stage that is being looked at here yet? Probably not.

CHAIR - I do not think so, no.

Prof JOHNSTON - It is really interesting that on the Monash Freeway, which carries an enormous volume of traffic out of the tunnels under the Yarra, they put the speed limit down to 80 while there was a lot of redevelopment work going on and then they kept it at 80 because they found that the congestion was less than when the speed limit was 100 and the travel times were shorter. That was because whenever you had any incident, the traffic was moving much more smoothly and the total journey time was not only not increased, it was lessened. It was an interesting example.

Ms RATTRAY - Congestion is not a real problem on these roads.

Prof JOHNSTON - No, I am not suggesting it is, but I am showing that a lower speed limit improves traffic flow.

Mr DEAN - In some cases.

Prof JOHNSTON - Yes. One of the national carriers, Thomas Nationwide Transport, has speed-limited its vehicles on the long distance run to 90 kph. He did it mainly for fuel benefit and he is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in diesel over the year -

Mr MULDER - Frustrating many a Legislative Council member, I would suggest.

Prof JOHNSTON - I do not know that that is true. But he has also found that if you comply with the fatigue management systems of 15 minutes every two hours and the like, it added nine minutes to the journey to Sydney. There is a myth about what happens to travel time when you alter the speed limit.

CHAIR - We are down to five minutes, members. Ivan, do you have a question?

Mr DEAN - I will go to a couple of questions that the public have asked me to ask particularly in my area. We are reducing the speed limit on these roads from 100 to 90 which suggests to me that what you are also saying is that that extra 10 kph is probably the cause of a number of crashes on these roads. The other question I ask is what is the significant impact of two vehicles colliding at 100 kph and two vehicles colliding at 90 kph? I suspect that the latter one you would simply be deader than if you had crashed at 100 kph, if you get it? I don't know.

Mr MULDER - There would be less of you to bury under the former.

Mr DEAN - The questions I asked and I know the statistical data on all of this, and we know very well if you are travelling fast in a crash, the consequences are probably going to be more so but there comes a time when, as somebody was saying to me, if you get two

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vehicles crashing at 80 kph the impact is 160 kph then that is almost the end of you in any event. I am wondering what really is the difference that would make. Going to the article of Martin Gilmour - and you would have read an article in the *Examiner* - where he went into the statistical background and the facts relating to this - and he believes that you have all the facts wrong. I will read very quickly:

Unfortunately, the Road Safety Advisory Council reports that most of the accidents are caused by speed, drink driving and inattention. However, inexperience, inattention, distraction and failing to give way was by far the biggest problem - 28.6 per cent of crashes. Alcohol was blamed for 9.3 per cent of the crashes and excessive speed for the conditions, 13.1 per cent.

In light of these statistics, it is still a mystery why the RSAC remains fixated on reducing the speed on a country road from 100 kph to 90 kph. If 31 per cent of crashes were the result of excessive speed and that equates to 4.3 deaths and a toll of 33. If you then deduct the crashes on the major highways it becomes clear that excessive speed on country roads is not the real problem and there are no statistics to support the theory.

That is basically what I am saying with those two questions that I asked in the first instance that you have taken on notice and I will get the answers back from. We have this fixation on speed and we are really forgetting some of the real issues of the causes of crashes. That is what we should be targeting, and we are not doing that. I put that to you for any comment that you would like to make.

Mr RUTHERFORD - I will ask the expert. We can get you something offline.

Prof. JOHNSTON - I have been involved in the public discussion side of speed and speed management for 30-odd years and you may remember a television advertisement in Tasmania of two cars and a truck and I was the David Attenborough in that so I have been confronting this for a long time. There is a limited number of things we can do and racing car drivers can survive crashes of 200 kph -

Mr DEAN - They are not running head on into anyone.

Prof. JOHNSTON - They are running head on into barriers and things.

Mr DEAN - That is different.

Prof. JOHNSTON - It is and it isn't. As I said before, with the number of studies now around the world of what happens when a speed limit is reduced, the evidence is so clear cut, absolutely clear cut, that if you reduce a speed limit on a road where the standard of the road does not sustain it -

Mr DEAN - Could I just cut you off there, and I am sorry to do this, and add to what I was going to add here is that why don't we fix this and reduce it to 80 kph then? Why don't we do that, if we say that that has such a significance in the crashes and fatalities around it, why not reduce to 80 kph?

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Prof. JOHNSTON - I have often been asked, 'Why not go back to having a man walking in front of the car with a red flag?'

Mr DEAN - That is being silly. When we say this, in New South Wales - and I travel the roads there fairly regularly and particularly in the western suburbs of New South Wales - where you have many of the roads there at 80 kph but where here they are 90 kph and 100 kph and I don't why that is the case.

Prof. JOHNSTON - A lot of the Melbourne ones are 80 kph as well, even some of the freeways. It is done exactly for that reason.

Mr DEAN - Let's not talk about a fellow with a flag walking in front of a car.

Prof. JOHNSTON - No, but my point is it's all about matching a speed that is survivable for the road you have.

Mr MULDER - Has any Treasury modelling been done on the impact of fine revenue as a result of reducing these speed limits?

Ms DAVIS - It was part of the economic evaluation, I believe, at the time the working committee did the initial work, but not Treasury.

CHAIR - We will take that on notice. Thank you all very much for your attendance.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Mr JOHN BRIAN GLEDHILL, CHAIR, ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL, WAS CALLED MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED, AND **Ms DEBORAH DAVIS**, MANAGER, LAND TRANSPORT SAFETY POLICY BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR - I do not think I need to remind you about the rules of the committee process. You know what goes on. Thank you very much and if you could speak up a little for the purposes of *Hansard* please.

John, I invite you to make a verbal submission to the committee if you would like.

Mr GLEDHILL - Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to attend today. I am here speaking on behalf of the whole council, to express their views in relation to safer speed limits.

I will try not to cross over the evidence that has been put forward earlier. I will start with the background to the Road Safety Advisory Council and table the terms of reference for you.

The Road Safety Advisory Council comprises all the major stakeholders and provides advice and recommendations to the minister on issues relating to road safety and the implementation of the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-16.

The Council's fundamental objective is to reduce deaths and serious injuries on Tasmania's roads. On the surface, the objective is simple but the execution is obviously quite challenging. A key role of the Council is to provide leadership in developing the government's road safety policy agenda and strategic alignment. The main function of the Road Safety Advisory Council is to provide strategic direction, oversight and critical assessment of proposed road safety initiatives and campaigns. It was established, in its current form, in 2010. I will not go through the membership of the council, but we have a cast of the key people in relation to road safety.

I will try to put safer travel speeds into context. We have heard a fair bit already this morning but I think it needs to be seen as just one of a number of initiatives that are either being implemented, or will be implemented, under the Tasmanian road strategy. The strategy the Council has embraced is based on safe system principles - and we have heard a little bit about that this morning - but it also has an ethical and moral basis, where there is no level of death or serious injury on our roads that is acceptable. That is a fairly important part of the thinking behind what we are doing.

A safe system has four cornerstones and I will go over them again - safe roads and roadsides, safe travel speeds, safe road use and safe vehicles. Also, the safe system approach recognises three major factors. First, the safe system approach recognises people make mistakes and crashes will continue occur. It is not a perfect world and we know, and we need to take account of, the fact people do make mistakes.

Second, the human body is frail and can only withstand a certain quantum of force before sustaining serious injury. Therein lies part of the focus on speed - whether speed is a causal factor, or a factor that causes a consequence, it is involved in every crash. I

cannot think of a crash situation where speed isn't involved. If you don't have speed, you don't have impact. Clearly something has to be moving, and has to hit something that is also moving or is solid. Third, the safe system approach believes the road environment should be forgiving, to help limit forces causing injury from crashes. Much work continues through the council and its education and enforcement subcommittee in areas other than speed. That includes road user behaviour and safe vehicles, and safe roads and roadsides - which is covered in the Safer Non-urban Road Network Strategy.

It has become very clear to the council that the most significant gains in road safety are now achieved by better aligning speed limits with the safety features and design of our roads and roadsides. Whilst at some stage that's been done, it has probably not been done on a holistic basis. Speed limits have been around a long time and in many places they have just evolved.

Why are we focussing on speed? We heard this morning from Professor Johnston that many gains have been achieved in road safety in areas such as seatbelts, alcohol limits and random breath testing, and the reduction of urban speed limits from 60 kph to 50 kph. All those occurred with bold decisions being taken, and, if I recall correctly, they all generated a fair bit of controversy when they were introduced. They weren't universally accepted. There were people who opposed all those things but, as time has played out, all those things have made big inroads into our road toll. The evidence is clear to the council on what will have the next big impact, and that is safer rural speed limits. We believe it will have a similar impact to those other bold decision changes that have been made in the past.

In setting its priorities, the council has been strongly guided by the evidence and developed a balanced approach that maximises the benefits of this investment. We have looked at Tasmania's crash history - the effectiveness of different counter measures, and proven responses to reduce crashes - and addressed all the four cornerstones of the safe system. The modelling done by MUARC - the Monash University Accident Research Centre - of the potential impacts of different initiatives in the Tasmanian context has been used as well. Essentially, the evidence is that more than 40 per cent of Tasmania's serious and fatal crashes are happening on high-speed rural roads. Infrastructure treatments are valuable and long lasting, but expensive and therefore limited. The council very quickly came to a realisation there is never going to be sufficient money to fix up all Tasmania's roads. Earlier, there was talk of Australia having a large land mass with a large road infrastructure and a relatively small population, and I believe the same is very much true in Tasmania. We have a small population and a fairly large road network that runs through very challenging terrain. It is very similar to New Zealand. They have similar issues and are going down a similar route to us in relation to speed limits. It is emphasised in New Zealand because of the terrain. Their roads, in many places, aren't at a high standard and they have a small population to provide the money for infrastructure road improvement.

It is proven that where infrastructure can't be upgraded, speed management is the best option to mitigate risk. The science is strong. Reducing travel speed reduces crashes and crash severity regardless of the cause. I will emphasise that again because it is not just about speed as a causal factor; it is very much that when you have a crash, the body is not resilient to sudden impacts and regardless of whether speed caused it, speed certainly plays a major - if not the total - role in the injuries.

Reducing the travel speed on Tasmanian roads would deliver greater serious casualty reductions than any other measure. I had some work done by Newark for the council a couple of years ago and they estimated the injury savings in relation to a number of measures. I like the graph and we will see if we can table it shortly. That graph is very compelling visual evidence that reducing travel speeds will make the greatest difference - far more than any other measure.

The council unanimously agreed that this was the highest priority; it could result in the most significant gains and should be progressed. This is about travel speed, not speeding. We are looking at reducing speed limits. There will still be people speeding; it will remain an issue but it is not part of what we are about here. We have other projects addressing issues such as driver behaviour and vehicle safety, learner-driver programs, and the like but we in this particular project are targeting speed limits and not speeding as such.

I will quickly go through the consultation process. At its first meeting in October 2010, the council requested that community consultation be undertaken on this safer travel speed proposal. The proposal had already been worked up and there had been a lot of work done prior to the new council forming in October 2010. The plan for consultation was endorsed very quickly after in December 2010. Letters were sent to all key road safety stakeholders advising them of the process and consultation and inviting feedback. That included all local government areas. Information brochures inviting feedback were made available from Service Tasmania shops and other outlets. There is a regulatory impact statement put on the Road Safety Advisory Council website. We took out advertisements in the three major newspapers. There was an email address provided for feedback and inquiries. Then, after the initial period, information feedback sessions across the state from mid-January until mid-February 2011 were undertaken. Additionally, community attitude surveys were taken.

The consultation results were presented to the council at its meeting in March 2011. The four main themes that came out of the feedback were: one, there was opposition to having a blanket approach of making every road in the state come under the 90 speed limit. A lot of people felt there was a need to look at roads individually instead of just putting on this blanket reduction. 'End speed limit' signs emerged very early in the piece as a very contentious issue. In fact, fixing that issue marries very well with the whole need to resign speed limits. People also felt that chopping and changing speed limits was aggravating. Through this process there will be opportunities to rationalise speed limits and remove some of that frequent chopping and changing. The fourth feedback theme was that a lot of people felt crashes were really about driver education and driving to the conditions. Those things were considered by the council and the initial proposal was amended to reflect these with in-principle recommendations at that stage being made to the minister.

Based on the feedback from stakeholders and the community, the council requested two new major pieces of work to finalise it. First, an individual road assessment set of criteria had to be developed; the second project was new signage and replacement of the 'end speed limit' signs. To oversee this work we formed a subcommittee which included Newark representative, Dr Bruce Corbiin, Allan Garcia from LGAT, myself, Harvey Lennon from RACT and Norm McIlpatrick from DIER. We had key players involved in

considering what needed to occur with the road assessment criteria and signage. As mentioned this morning, ARRB - the Australian Road Research Board - were engaged as independent consultants to develop the road assessment criteria. That was done independently of the subcommittee of the council.

After they had completed their work, we had it peer-reviewed by CASR, the Centre for Automotive Safety Research, and they ticked off on the proposal in total. The subcommittee considered the impact on Tasmanian roads and the criteria were adjusted to reflect Tasmanian conditions. Initially, a very rigid safe-systems approach was applied by ARRB and they came up with a model which we called the 'optimal model'. I think we, as the subcommittee, realised that clearly there was virtually no road in Tasmania that would have met that. We also felt that we needed to be pragmatic because without community support this was never going to get off the ground. We looked at how that optimal model could be varied to still provide safety but perhaps at a slightly lower level. That has now become the Tasmanian criteria endorsed by ARRB and supported by the peer review of CASR. Whilst the optimal model was their first work, they did actually go back and rework it. In some places it varies little, if at all, but quite obviously Tasmania did not have a lot of divided roads and divided roads with a medium barrier in rural environments with no direct abutting access were one of the requirements of the optimal model.

The optimal model has been detuned a little but we still believe that the criteria we are now assessing Tasmanian roads against are robust and will provide appropriate safety levels to allow roads so designated to be driven at 100 kph.

The subcommittee recommended the road assessment criteria and the new signage to the full council which accepted and endorsed them. At its meeting of September 2011 the council unanimously agreed to recommend to the minister that existing 100-kph roads be assessed using the independent Tasmanian criteria to determine if they could safely retain 100 kph. Those that do not meet the criteria should have a reduced speed limit of 90 kph, and 80 kph on unsealed roads. The criteria should be used to help guide strategic investment on Tasmanian roads. In other words, where roads do not quite make it at the moment, in the future there may well be infrastructure works or funds directed to improving them, so we can lift the standard and lift the speed limit from 90 kph to 100 kph.

There is work happening on the Esk Highway - I do not know whether it has started yet, but it is due this year - which will improve the shoulder width and the line marking on the first part of the Esk Highway, when you come off at Conara. At moment, that piece of road does not meet the criteria, but once the work has been done it will be at a level that supports a 100-kph speed limit.

The 'End Speed Limit' signs should be replaced with a new sign developed through the council and focus groups - and one of those was shown this morning - and a comprehensive public education and communications package should be developed. We spoke about that earlier.

In summary and in conclusion, all member of the council supported the recommendations to the minister. The council has kept this issue on its agenda and there has been no wavering of support by member for their proposal. The council strongly

supports the Safer Roads: Non-urban Road Network Strategy, released by the minister last year.

My final comment is; I believe, and the council believes, that this proposal will make Tasmania a safer place to live.

Mr FINCH - Mr Gledhill, I see here, in your terms of reference, a lot of talk about community engagement. I want to explore that a little bit, because you mentioned a process you went through to get the message out. I cannot remember all the detail of it.

Mr GLEDHILL - Sorry, I rushed through it.

Mr FINCH - No, that is all right. You suggested there were advertisements put in the paper. Was that to encourage the general public to have their say?

Mr GLEDHILL - Yes - very much so. Advertisements were taken out in each of the three papers inviting public comment. But also, the key stakeholders that we knew of - local councils and other authorities, and the transport industry - would have received letters. There was broad advertising and targeted advertising.

Mr FINCH - Can you give some detail of the response you received? Did the general public engage with this suggestion that there were going to be some changes, or were you looking for advice or help and guidance in setting some new guidelines?

Mr GLEDHILL - If I can refer that to Deborah, because she received the submissions?

Ms DAVIS - Through the community consultation process, there were 211 submission received. In addition, we held 26 community stakeholder forums where we took direct discussion and comment and fed that back into the process. There was also a -

CHAIR - Speaking of *Hansard*.

Ms DAVIS - There was also a randomised telephone survey undertaken of 1 000 residents throughout Tasmania on the issue, and that all formed the basis of the information provided to the Road Safety Council on the consultation process. A report was provided and a summary page of the information from the consultation process, and the responses, was on the website for quite a while. I hope you have all received one of the safer speeds packages. They were to be provided when we put our submission in. They contain a lot of fact sheets and the strategy. If not, we will make sure you get that immediately. We do have them available.

Ms RATTRAY - We did not receive the package.

Ms DAVIS - Apologies for that. They were supposed to come with our submission, so there has been an administration error there, unfortunately. We will make sure you get those packs immediately, with all the fact sheets, including the process we have been through to date - the results of the consultation - and also the process from now, some frequently asked questions and information on the strategy itself. So, apologies you do not have that at the moment.

Mr FINCH - Thanks. I am comforted by that, because we often hear about community consultation, but when we drill down, there is not too much of it. We received 31 submissions, which gave us a really good overview of what people were thinking, but you received 211, did you say, from the community?

Ms DAVIS - Yes, the community and key stakeholders.

Mr FINCH - And 1 000 on the questionnaire, which would have given you a good indication of what people thought about driving limits.

CHAIR - To follow on from that, what was the breakdown of positives and negatives? Did you do an analysis of what you had?

Ms DAVIS - Yes, as we expected, the majority of the submissions were not overly supportive. We had about an 80:20 split of people opposed compared to supportive, however, that would be quite standard when you undertake a consultation process. People who choose to submit often have more say, and people who support something often don't make a submission.

Various similar themes ran through both the stakeholder engagement we did in communities and the written submissions, which were the main key issues John mentioned. It was quite interesting that the randomised survey found basically the opposite split. People were asked whether they believed 90 kph was an appropriate speed limit for those roads. We ended up with -

CHAIR - Depends what questions were asked and where you asked them, of course.

Ms DAVIS - Absolutely, and I have the report here, which we are more than happy to table. It is interesting that when you do it in a randomised way across the broad community, you get quite a different response than you do from the people who choose to submit.

CHAIR - It is probably reflective of the submissions we have, too - 80 per cent or thereabouts against and 20 per cent supportive.

Can I put to you, John, a statement from somebody who travels a lot on rural roads?

It is obvious to me with 40 years experience as a commercial traveller that a 90-kph speed limit on our long haul distance country roads will significantly lift the inattention span of drivers. This factor is now being reported as a major factor in crashes.

He goes on to say:

I have recently experimented driving on roads at 90 kph and not only is it boring and fatiguing, it is 'go to sleep' speed.

It follows on from what Tania said a minute ago, too:

For instance, I have noted some call for a 90-kph speed limit at the Scottsdale sidling and I question what sort of impact this would have when

the average speed over that section of road, from my experience, would be about 60 kph, with many corners that have to be negotiated at speeds less than 30 kph and very few sections, if any, over its length that one could safely drive at 90 kph. Yet several straights prior to the winding section that are suited to passing slower vehicles can be driven safely at 100 kph.

It seems what is being proposed is introducing a limit that imposes mediocrity and penalty on drivers. In fact a 90-kph limit is effectively going to reduce experienced and sensible drivers to provisional driver status.

This is an opinion we received, and there were a lot of similar opinions received. I would like you to make some comment, particularly on the issue of inattention for people who have to drive exclusively on these roads, and very experienced drivers who now have to go from 100 kph back to 90 kph if these regulations go through.

Mr GLEDHILL - I understand that point of view but I don't believe there is empirical evidence that supports greater problems with falling asleep inattention, driving at a slower speed. The overwhelming research from all around the world is that lower speed limits result in fewer crashes and casualties. For some people that may well be true, but we are taking a broad brush. There is not one single treatment that will be suitable for everyone. I acknowledge there are sections of road that will be posted 90 kph where there's no way you can drive safely at that speed. There are plenty of Tasmanian roads where that would be the case.

CHAIR - Conversely, there may be some section of 90 kph where you could easily do 100 kph.

Mr GLEDHILL - There are probably sections now with 100 kph where there's no way you can do 100 kph or a lot less. At the moment the default is 100 kph and we are talking about a reduction of the default to 90 kph. I honestly do not believe it is going to make any difference dropping it to 90 kph. There isn't any evidence base that I am aware of to support that point of view,. All the evidence we have before us very strongly suggests a reduction is going to reduce our injury rate. That is what it's all about - not about anything else. That is what the council is vitally interested in - reducing injuries. If I fall asleep at 90 kph, the results are going to be significantly less than falling asleep at 100 kph. People fall asleep at 110 kph now on our highways.

Mr DEAN - I don't think anybody is suggesting this is not about road safety - decreasing the speed limit. What I am saying is I believe some of the arguments to reduce the speed limit are flawed. In relation to the heavy vehicles, from my background experience, if you are saying a rural road is only fit for a vehicle travelling, say, at 90 kph and will not sustain a speed of 100 kph, that is for a motor vehicle. How can you then say - and it's against the argument put by the member for Western Tiers - that to travel on those roads at 90 kph is perfectly safe for a heavy vehicle, which is much wider than a motor vehicle and less stable with the heavy loads? If you are able to continue with the speed limit for a heavy vehicle at 90 kph, how is it the same is required of a car? Isn't there a difference in the capacities of the vehicles?

Mr GLEDHILL - We could argue around the capacity of modern trucks - they are capable of safely driving at speeds - but at the moment we don't draw a difference between car and truck speed limits.

Mr DEAN - We do. On 110 kph roads we are reducing it to 100 kph; so that significance is identified there. Why isn't it considered in this instance where a car is able to travel at 100 kph or 90 kph because we are saying that by reducing the 110 kph to 100 kph for heavy vehicles, it is probably not as safe to drive the heavy vehicle at 110 kph as it is for a car? We are identifying a difference here.

Mr GLEDHILL - I'm not aware of any evidence around this and I don't believe the council has considered any evidence in relation to trucks and speeds. I also believe, and I will have to take advice, that trucks are not represented in the crash statistics on the roads. They are not causing problems now.

Mr DEAN - That is going to be my next question and I will ask it now. What statistics do we have in relation to heavy truck involvement in incidents, crashes and so on on rural country roads and so on that fit into the category that we are talking about? Do we have that or let's take it on notice.

Ms DAVIS - I think we will take that on notice to make sure we have it correct.

Mr GLEDHILL - The speed limit is not the speed that trucks or any car has to travel; it is the maximum speed. Any professional truck driver will drive that truck at the same speed, you would hope.

Mr DEAN - That is the same for a car, isn't it?

Mr GLEDHILL - It is the same for a car. When I am towing a boat behind my car on 100 roads, I don't drive at 100. I drive slower and I think that is probably the same for trucks. They know where they can safely drive. They are professional drivers.

Ms RATTRAY - John, you there earlier when I talked to Mr Rutherford about being able to overtake in appropriate areas. I think I understand and know my roads well. I am one of the 60 000 kilometres-a-year members in this parliament so I think I am well qualified and luckily haven't had a serious accident. There are times when you need to overtake for all sorts of reasons - for safety, as well as for merely getting from A to B. So to reduce the limit, particularly over the sideling, I suggest is going to be more detrimental - not being able to overtake at 100 because you haven't got a lot of area to be able to overtake. Would you give me some sort of comment on that? The sideling is just a topical one for me, but I could use other instances as well where that same scenario could well be used where you have got a short distance to get past somebody and to do it at 100 is a lot safer than slowly doing it at 90, or more slowly doing it at 90. Can you give me some sort of feedback about why you think it is not appropriate to overtake at 100?

Mr GLEDHILL - I think I understand your point of view there, but I can't say I can throw some evidence forward that says that you are wrong or you are right. I don't know. I understand your point of view. I have been in similar situations when I have been driving but really this whole exercise hasn't drilled down to that depth. It is about a general reduction which will bring about a reduction in severity of crashes. It is as

simple as that. I don't believe that not overtaking is going to cause crashes. It might make your journey longer if you can't overtake safely but I can't see how it can cause additional crashes or reduce safety by people not overtaking. Overtaking is a hazardous exercise and there is a risk when you overtake. I guess you assimilate a whole lot of information when you do overtake to ensure that it is as safe as possible.

Ms RATTRAY - But you also do it as quickly as you can to get back on your side of the road. That is how I do it and I expect most people do it. So the sooner that I can overtake somebody and get back on my side of the road then that in my mind reduces the opportunity to run into someone coming in the opposite direction.

Mr GLEDHILL - I guess I'm thinking on my feet here. You have mentioned a specific situation. If the speed limit is lower, then all the traffic is hopefully going to be doing that. So overtaking at 90, the truck or whatever you trying to get past may be doing 80 so you will still be able to get past the truck. Okay, it will take longer. Maybe you won't be able to. Maybe it will make you journey a bit longer, but your journey will be safer. You are safer if you don't overtake than if you do overtake.

Ms DAVIS - If I may, as part of this road assessment process which we are currently going through, that is where we have the ability to look at whether there are some of those sections which are shorter which may meet the standard for a higher speed to allow overtaking. We have to balance that against the community's desire not to have a lot of chop and change of speed limits and that is part of the discussion that we would like to have with local government when we take these results back as to, in their communities, are some of these shorter stretches appropriate to sign up or would it be better to have the lower limit through the whole section to reduce the level of chop and change? It is not being ignored in the road assessment process but we still need to go back to whether it is safe to have that higher limit on that section of road, even though it may be a short stretch. I am not sure if that might help to acknowledge the fact that it is part of the consideration that is happening and it is not being ignored.

Ms RATTRAY - I still think it is a debate that needs to be had.

My second question is, in the department's submission, John, it suggested and I quote, 'It has the potential to be the next silver bullet in road safety in Tasmania.' I want to understand how the department can come to that assessment when you are still telling us that there areas of it that have not been really fleshed out yet. Is that something that you support, the next silver bullet theory?

Mr GLEDHILL - I fail to call it a silver bullet.

Ms RATTRAY - The department has, with all due respect.

Mr GLEDHILL - I am not part of the department; I am an independent chair.

Ms RATTRAY - No, I know. But I am saying, obviously they have taken advice -

Mr MULDER - John, I think you produced a PowerPoint slide with the words 'silver bullet' on top of it when you talked about it at the last presentation here.

Mr GLEDHILL - I do not know whether I produced it, maybe the department did.

Mr MULDER - You were talking to it.

Mr GLEDHILL - I may have talked to it, Tony. But we do believe, whatever you define a silver bullet as, it is likely to produce a reduction in casualties that seat belts, random breath testing, 0.05, has done in the past and I did mention that earlier. The point of view that was provided by Professor Johnston this morning, where he said that everywhere in the world where speed limits have been reduced, casualty rates fall. Where their speed limits go up, casualty rates increase.

I do not believe Tasmania is going to be any different. I would be very surprised.

Ms RATTRAY - We are not talking about putting them up, we are talking about leaving them as they are.

Mr GLEDHILL - But the council has a responsibility to do what it can to reduce death and injury on our roads. We believe, based on the evidence that we have looked at, that there is a strong case for reducing speed limits and that they will make a difference. The research was for every kilometre per hour reduction, you can expect to get something like about 3 per cent reduction in serious casualties. Hence, 30 per cent for 10 kilometres and that is probably stretching it a bit and a more conservative approach was considered when the number of 100 over the next six years was worked out. But we can expect a significant downsizing in the number of people injured and killed on our roads. To me, it is not just an off-chance that this may happen, there is a very strong chance and we are talking about significant numbers. We are not talking about just a 2 per cent decrease. They are significant.

I am sure you have and know people who have been affected by road crash. It is a terrible thing that is happening on our roads and yet we all jump in our cars and choose to ignore it. We all do that, as a community we do that. We accept that we are scared to sit on a plane but sitting in a car is much more dangerous. But we accept that risk for some reason. What we are proposing is going to reduce that risk.

Ms RATTRAY - Why aren't we doing the Midland Highway then? Why aren't we reducing the 110 back to 100?

Mr GLEDHILL - If we were true to our beliefs we probably would. But we know what community support would be for that. Here we are having to defend something that has a very chance to make a difference and yet -

Ms RATTRAY - No. I think it is just an explanation that we are looking for - an explanation, or I am.

Mr GLEDHILL - The 110 roads generally are - and there are a few that do not meet those criteria, the optimal criteria. Really, in any other state probably would not be signed at 110 kph. We are looking at the crash record on 110 kph roads and 40 per cent of serious casualties are occurring on our 100 kph roads.

Ms RATTRAY - What is the statistic on the 110 kph then?

Mr GLEDHILL - We have it but can we take that one on notice?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, thank you.

CHAIR - With due respect, Mr Gledhill, time is grinding by and a lot of people here have questioned very much the Monash report and we will get to those in further evidence when we talk to one of the witnesses. There was quite a lot of conflict in that.

Mr MULDER - I was pleased because the conversation was heading into the area that I would like it to go in and this is where I was going to go. You have this hard science about how much an impact it has lowering the road speed limit - and I think you used the time frame of six years - have you set yourself a benchmark or a key performance indicator, if you like, about what the impact of this will be?

Mr GLEDHILL - There have been words used like 'will' reduce by 100 over the next six years. There was some discussion this morning about 'will', 'should' or 'could'. The science says it will but we are talking statistics and fairly small numbers but we strongly believe that it will make a difference of around 100 people over the next six years. I don't know that we are using that as a hard performance measure but I think after six years, if there is not a significant reduction, it will certainly well and truly reviewed and revisited and in fact it will probably happen before that. I should say statistical numbers are fairly small and it probably will take a couple of years before we do see a change that is not due just to chance in the statistics.

Mr MULDER - Because you also spoke about the impact of other - and we will not use the SB word - measures to reduce and I am sure you said with the seat belts and the reduction of 0.05, can I suggest to you that on the data that I have seen in the past it was actually the introduction of 0.08 that had a dramatic effect and that the introduction of 0.05 basically did not have a blip at all?

Mr GLEDHILL - I agree, there was a significant reduction at 0.08 -

Mr MULDER - And 0.05 had?

Mr GLEDHILL - I don't know that we even have 0.05 -

Mr MULDER - This is this argument about incrementalism, that from open slather to 0.08 had this big impact and then people trotted out saying that the introduction of 0.05 had an impact and in fact it did not and that is the important point we need to make about this incremental adjustment.

Mr GLEDHILL - If I look at the road strategy table and if I can speak to that, there is a bar chart in there which does show in different colours the effect attributed to different strategies and, in fact, if I remember, 0.08 came in the 1970s -

Mr MULDER - I was far too young to understand.

Mr GLEDHILL - I remember it when I was first driving that there was a high introduction, which would have been around 1970 -

Mr MULDER - That had a significant impact and no-one doubts that.

Mr GLEDHILL - Okay, but it is not shown on this graph but the 0.05 reduction in 1983 does appear to have a corresponding reduction in serious casualties .

Mr DEAN - But we don't know what 0.08 was doing?

Mr GLEDHILL - We haven't the data for 0.08.

Ms DAVIS - Unfortunately, our statistics do not go back further than that.

Mr GLEDHILL - It would probably be fairly hard to get. There was not a lot kept prior to -

Mr MULDER - I just want to go back to base two, I do take exception to the tenor when you start to say that we have a responsibility for road trauma and lives and we have all been touched by it. Yes, we have. Most of us have lost a family member, relative or a close friend; some of us have gone there and scraped up the roads and helped pull the burnt bodies out of cars; some of us have also had the experience, which I think is even worse, of knocking on someone's door at 3 o'clock in the morning. I really think that we need to get that sort of emotion out of this, which is a reasoned debate. I ask you to take on note that people will fire up when you use those sorts of reasons. No-one is remotely interested in anything that would increase the carnage on our roads. We all would like to see measures to do it. What this committee is set up to do is to try to get some sense that this measure will work. We all hope it does but we cannot go blindly running into new policy moves time after time on the hope that it does. I will make that as an observation and let us keep this as a rational level of argument.

My last point is this. John, could you give us a quick rundown on your Road Safety Council, its membership and the expertise it brings to the table?

CHAIR - If you could do that very quickly because we are running out of time. It looks as though, given that we are going to take evidence contrary to what you are presenting, we may have to come back and test some of that evidence with a few more questions. I am just flagging that to you at this stage. So if you can give us the membership of the Road Safety Council, I think we might put that down as a question for next time.

Mr DEAN - This might be a question on notice if I could ask it?

CHAIR - Ask it now and then John will give us the information.

Mr DEAN - I do not think it was asked. With the survey that was done, what were the questions that were put to the people and what other information was provided to them at the time that they were asked to do this survey? It might be that you need to take it on notice or do you have it all there? Can you table that document?

Ms DAVIS - What I have here is a range of documents which we are more than happy to table. There are documents which support the evidence base which the council made its decisions upon. So there are documents by researchers and also the Monash University information that was prepared for the council. There are documents about the

consultation process. There is a summary that went to the Road Safety Council. There are the reports from the attitudinal surveys that were done, and that includes the questions as well as the surveys that were done in the Kingborough and Tasman regions as mentioned. There are also some documents which are copies of the reports done by ARRB and CASR on the criteria. If there are any questions, we would be happy to try and provide some answers. There is a summary of the documents.

CHAIR - As far as a doctor's wallet. I hope they all have an executive summary with them - have they?

Ms DAVIS - They should do and we would be more than happy to answer questions on those rather than try and go through all of that.

CHAIR - Thank you.

John, just to finish up, would you detail the membership for the record?

Mr GLEDHILL - The membership of the Road Advisory Council is myself as the independent chair. We also have the chief executive officer, or equivalent, from the Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources, Police and Emergency Management, the Motor Accident Insurance Board, Local Government Association of Tasmania, the RACT, the Tasmanian Motor Cycle Council, and the Tasmanian Bicycle Council. We have a road safety expert who is from Newark.

CHAIR - So nobody from the private transport industry at all?

Mr GLEDHILL - No.

CHAIR - Thanks John, and thanks Deborah for your forbearance this morning. We will now move on to the next witness.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Mr ALLAN GARCIA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA (LGAT), WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Welcome, Allan. You know the rules in regard to privilege - I am sure you've given evidence to plenty of committees before.

Mr GARCIA - Yes, I've been here once or twice before.

CHAIR - You are here wearing two hats because you are a member of the Road Safety Advisory Council. At the same time, you are here to give the views of your member councils. Would you like to give an introductory statement?

Mr GARCIA - Yes, I will try to keep it to local government but, if you want to ask some questions in the context of being a council member, please do so.

From local government's perspective, the importance to us is as asset owners. We have management and responsibility for the roads on which motorists travel and are subject to any speed decisions taken by the state government. Largely, where local government sits on speed is that it is a decision taken by state government ultimately, but the councils work with state government to ensure we get sensible outcomes. Most of you would be aware that most councils in the state have road safety committees, so this hasn't come as a massive surprise. This whole issue of reduction of speed limits across all road categories has been on the agenda for approximately five years and has been subject to toing and froing from state government to council through the Road Safety Advisory Council and the department.

I haven't had councils ringing me saying this is a terrible thing, although there are some councils that have raised concerns. I am aware of Northern Midlands, Meander Valley, and West Tamar to a lesser extent. Certainly Break O'Day has been quite outspoken in its lack of support for the speed reduction. The first two, Northern Midlands and Meander Valley, have cited the significant network they have of rural roads as being one of the key reasons they have concerns- I will not say they are not supportive, but they have concerns about the reduction. From the Break O'Day perspective, they deem themselves to be a council a long way from either centre - Hobart or Launceston - so there are travel distance times and issues about taking a risk anyway when you get into a car.

In terms of how councils have responded to the proposition to reduce the speed limit from 100 kph to 90 kph, on rural roads in particular, and the subsequent reduction on gravel roads, they were all offered the opportunity for briefings, particularly at the elected member level, because there had been a lot of officer discussions. There was not a lot of take-up by the elected members around the state, either through the fact they were satisfied or unavailable. I think they were trying to be dealt with when members were available. In large part, the issue coming out of councils is that their concerns are they would believe some roads are capable of being travelled at 100 kph and, if not all those roads, certainly parts of those roads. I don't know whether The Sideling [✓] is one of them, but I heard what you were talking about in the evidence before. They have a view that there are certain areas of that road network where you should be able to 100 kph. In many cases they have put up their hands for an assessment to say, 'Let's have a

look at these roads and see what component of it needs to be done'. As we speak, they are working with the state government on determining whether sections of those roads could remain at 100 kph. Then there is the debate around the standard: Is the standard too high? Is that an appropriate standard? Isn't it being set to insure there is a blanket? That is probably for experts other than me to determine, not being an engineer.

I was asked this morning on radio - and I wasn't on radio for this issue - 'Isn't this just a ploy by local government to spend less money on roads?'. We are not making the decision but ultimately I do not think councils are seeing this as a means by which they can suddenly bank the money they would have otherwise spent on roads and not have to upgrade them. I would suggest to you many councils are trying to spend their money as quickly as they can to get their road limits up to a standard where 90 kph would be safe - and 100 kph would be wonderful if we could do that. Councils are not seeing this as an opportunity to stop spending money on roads, quite the contrary. That is probably as much as I could say about where local government is at. I would say there is mixed support across the board and if we spoke to any council we would find that there were probably some people on council not supportive of this process and some on council that were very supportive.

CHAIR - I think that is a fair assessment, Allan. I think you would have to agree that many of your member councils are perhaps metropolitan councils who have no interest anyway because there are very few roads in their local government area that these criteria are going to affect. Indeed, some of those local topographically restrained councils where it is impossible to go very fast anyway and I cite Tasman and Kingborough where they have done those two trials for example. They are totally different from other local government areas. That is why, of course, there is going to be some mixed views and messages out there with regard to that. I will pass it over to Kerry.

Mr FINCH - Allan, can I explore a little bit about that standard? We had some evidence earlier about the fact that there was some allowance made for some of the local government roads or the rural roads - that in fact they might not have got up to that standard of 3.5 for each lane and the one metre shoulders. How did that allocation or allowance come about at the Road Safety Council discussions?

Mr GARCIA - The allowance probably was more of a technical one between DIER, I would expect. It is more of an engineering one. I do not know that at the council we had that discussion about the tolerance of that. I think in the main it was really about there was a technical specification as to what fit the criteria. I would anticipate that when you are out on the road, physically look at a road, and you can contemplate probably there are some opportunities to say, 'While this doesn't strictly meet it, you might miss by I would say 20 centimetres,' or whatever the issue might be, I would expect there would be some capacity within a range. If you are asking me what the range is, is it plus or minus, I don't know the answer, but I expect on a physical inspection where the evidence has been able to be put forward by the council engineers compared to those who are making the assessment, there might be a margin where it has been sensible. Or, indeed, some advice has been given to say, 'This is pretty close, in the next works you do, if you bring this to this standard the likelihood is that it is going to get a pass.' I am not particularly aware of how much allowance has been given or where it has been given or the extent to which it has, but my anticipation would be that it probably isn't a black and a white. It is probably

a darker shade of grey, or a lighter shade, whichever way it is, close to the mark and I would expect that sensible arrangements have come into play.

Mr FINCH - I am wondering whether this process has been helpful to councils to get a real handle on the condition of the roads or would they have that information anyway about the condition of the roads in their municipalities?

Mr GARCIA - We have all councils moving down the path of asset management plans and part of that asset management planning process is condition assessment. I do not think this comes as surprise. What is being said here is that effectively we are going to start from a base that all council roads that were 100 are now going to be 90 and there might be elements of those roads where we deem it to be capable of 100. That's an assessment that has been made. I am not sure that councils would have said had that gone to 80, all you are doing is a differentiation. Councils, in terms of whether their roads are satisfactory or unsatisfactory, that is not going to be the criteria, that the speed factor probably is not really a wake-up call to them that their roads are either fantastic or not fantastic. The issue here is to say that if we are going to have roads being travelled at 100 kilometres, these parts of those roads are adequate. That is not to say the others are therefore extraordinarily inadequate, it is just saying that the standard that has been set and from a council perspective, if they are a road manager, they might say that is a very arbitrary standard in the context of us maintaining roads. But in the context of the road safety factor that is the standard that is being set to ensure that we are working to some commonality, I expect.

Mr FINCH - Is there any appetite that you can sense, from either local government or from your work on the Road Safety Council, that there might be a compromise of areas that might stay at 100 because they are entirely up to scratch and will accommodate that driving situation and there are others where 90 would probably best suit the objectives of the Road Safety Council?

Mr GARCIA - I think that is the case. There is an accommodation there. But again, there are some criteria that have been placed around those. Councils have effectively been invited to identify the areas where they believe it might be appropriate to have the road maintained at 100 kph. A number of councils have been through that process and said, 'We think from here to here,' or 'The whole road,' or whatever and there have been discussions about that as to whether or not those do make the grade. To the extent that there is a view from council that they do and from others that they do not, the question is, what is the gap analysis. What would need to be done to bring not only that section, but mainly that section and/or other sections, up to the 100 kilometre an hour speed. That dialogue is taking place. How many of those get up I do not know, but certainly there is a dialogue.

Mr FINCH - This imperative that the member for Apsley was discussing before about when this might be implemented. It sounds as though there is still quite a journey to go before some definitive assessment about what might be left in and what might be left out.

Mr GARCIA - I do not think that is a monumental task in terms of understanding. There will probably be a default to the circumstance where in most cases it will not make the grade. Then the issue for councils will be, okay, is there a time frame in which we are now going to do the work? I do not think everyone is going to sit back and say, 'We will

just wait for council to see how long it will take them to bring their roads up to scratch'. I think it would be more about saying, 'We will sign it at 90,' and to the extent that councils then decide to put it in their forward program to either upgrade or do the works that are necessary; at a point in time there would be future review of that and perhaps for section there would be a differential of the speed arrangements there.

But it will not be question of waiting until councils get the work done. The assessment process of itself, not being an engineer, should not be too dramatic. My understanding of what has been identified by councils around the state is not volumes and volumes of quantities of road; it is very targeted. It is probably in line with the member's view on areas where there is a belief that there should be a speed -

I cannot recall specifically what the distance is but that is where the issue might come into play, that there is a balance between chopping and changing speed limits. If you have a section of road here that goes for three kilometres and you are travelling at 90 and then you have two kilometres that are good and it is 100 and then you have three that are not so good and it is 90, then you are back to 100, the question becomes, notwithstanding the fact that you have a capability to go more quickly on segments of the road, is it necessarily in the driver's interests in particular that they are going 90, 100, 90, 100 or would you be better off to keep them at 90? That is the trade-off, I expect, in terms of that relative attention issue.

One of the criticisms that we get, and I am sure has been provided in this place before and was probably one of the reasons why there was a review of signage in the first place, was that people did get sick of going 100, 80, 70, 80, 100 and I think the Campbell Town area used to be the one where you used to start off doing 100, 80, 70 and so on.

Mr MULDER - Try to go from Lauderdale to the city.

Mr GARCIA - Now or before?

Mr MULDER - Now. I think it is something like 12. Maybe we should come around the back way. It seems to me that there is a lot of discussion here about the standard of the road determining what the speed should be. From the council's perspective, what has been driving the standard of the road is the volume of traffic that uses it? The missing link here has been that the volume of traffic using it should be driving the standard of the road and the standard of the road should then be determining the speed, so you get a connection with how you get people moving around the place.

Mr GARCIA - Not an invalid point. If you take as an example in Kingborough, the Channel Highway, it is probably in the state the most traversed road on any given day. The traffic counts down there suggest that it is probably one of the most heavily trafficked and to drive the thing of a morning and of a night is a horror show. Of itself you would say, therefore, it should be upgraded to carry the volumes and if it was upgraded you would bring the speed limit up to the point or you might keep the speed limit down, but I don't know the answer to that. But you are right, traffic volumes should dictate standards of roads, should dictate speed. The fact of the matter is we have a network now, for better or worse, that people say the network as it is should remain as it is - 110, 100, 90 or wherever we have those - and I note there was a vehicle in the car park that said, 'Slow

down everybody, you're not on the mainland now.' I don't know whose car that was, would it be yours?

Mr MULDER - Of course. 'Slow down - this ain't the mainland'.

Mr GARCIA - Yes, but it is an interesting point because on the mainland you probably would not travel our roads at our speed. The fact of the matter is that we have a situation in this state where we have adopted a national framework of 110 and 100 and, in reality, in fairness, if we took the National Highway, I would suggest to you, that if that National Highway were in Victoria, you would find areas of the Bass Highway that would certainly meet the 110 standard and you would find most of the Midland Highway would not meet 110 standard, so before we began, if we are looking at interstate comparisons, we probably would be travelling the Midland Highway at 100 kph and we would therefore by default probably be travelling all the rest of our roads at 90 kph now and that is not what the Road Safety Council is saying. We are not saying that therefore we should adopt that process, I am just making the point on standards that probably we have been driving to a speed above standard for quite some time and now it is like taking a baby's toy away, quite frankly, and if you take the toy away then you get some screams.

CHAIR - You will get your other hat on now?

Mr GARCIA - I have sort of just crossed over, Greg, and now if you want to smack me you can.

Laughter.

Mr MULDER - But you now drive an interesting point that it is the volume that drives the standard that drives the speed and in fact, given our volumes the standards are probably okay. But to get the point, though, of course, is that much of local government funding comes through commonwealth funding, as I like to say, laundered through the state, and the fact is that as volumes increase - and we have had some interesting registration statistics pointed out this morning - as the number of kilometres being travelled increases, these are all fairly big windfalls to the federal government in terms of excise and to the state in terms of revenue being generated. There was a time that those revenues were hypothecated to road maintenance and my point is that if we went back and had a look at volumes, it not only should be driving the standard but it also should be driving the revenue to match the standard.

Mr GARCIA - The difficulty with road maintenance versus what we need to increase standards to cope with speed -

Mr MULDER - Infrastructure improvement.

Mr GARCIA - Yes, it is infrastructure improvement. We are talking about road realignments and we are talking about reconstructions as against maintenance so, invariably, the money that comes from the commonwealth through either Roads to Recovery and/or financial assistance grants directly for roads is largely about maintenance. The reconstruction and the construction work comes - we have one of those wonderful election times coming up at the moment and you will find that there will be some amazing grants given for construction works.

Mr MULDER - Not too many in the southern councils.

Mr GARCIA - Not too many in the southern councils, as they are fairly safe seats down here, one would assume.

Mr DEAN - Because they spent all the money in the last 12 months.

Mr MULDER - In your electorate, Windermere.

Mr GARCIA - In reality there are big licks of money required to bring roads up to standard for that issue of increasing the speed limit or putting pressure on a speed limit scenario. It is not maintenance; it is really the reconstruction jobs.

Mr DEAN - To your knowledge - and this started mid last year, is that where it started? They said this morning this whole concept of reducing rural road speed limits has been attacked.

Mr GARCIA - It has been a debate for five years. Certainly in the context of making the move to put this into effect, it was the middle of last year.

Mr DEAN - Was this to your knowledge an issue or a concern for local governments? Did local governments come to DIER or to the government and say we believe there is a problem here and we need to reduce the speed limits? So it was never raised by local government?

Mr GARCIA - Local government has never agitated for a decrease in speed from 100 to 90. The majority of agitation about reduction in speed limits has come probably largely through urban councils for reductions where there have been - when we moved from 60 to 50 there have been councils that have sought to increase the 50 limit. Indeed, there have been councils who have sought to reduce the 50 in places down to 40. To my knowledge, there have not been councils saying that we must reduce the speed limit from 100 down to 90; that is not my understanding.

In terms of whether or not they think it is a good idea I suppose they -

Mr DEAN - That was my next question.

Mr GARCIA - I suppose they will view it in the same way that you are seeking to assess it, as well on the basis of a safe systems approach and the research that is available and, I suppose, the demonstration that in other jurisdictions, be they predominantly Europe, that where this process has been implemented the evidence has shown that there has been a reduction in casualties and deaths. In that regard, you would suggest that councils would look at that and say, 'Okay, there is a body of evidence that suggests that that is a good thing.' Do they necessarily all support it and say they must have it? I think they are in exactly the same situation as you saying, 'There is a body here that has had a look at this, they have gone through a process and they are not coming out.'

There are some councils, some councillors, who are vehemently opposed, but in general terms I have not had the association's door being knocked down saying, 'You must stop this.'

Mr DEAN - The other question is: local government have, most of them, traffic engineers of a high quality, a high calibre, and who address the road situations they are responsible for. Have any of those people come forward to your knowledge and said they believe that there will be quite a reduction in the number of fatal accidents and serious injuries if we reduce from 100 back to 90. Has that come out from any of those people with that responsibility? Have they been asked that question?

Mr GARCIA - I would suggest to you that is a loaded question at one level.

Mr DEAN - It is a loaded question.

Mr GARCIA - They have not come and asked me if would that reduce the number but equally they have not come out and said the contrary. In fairness, I have had no approach from any engineer to say that this is going to end the world -

Mr DEAN - Or through the general managers.

Mr GARCIA - Or through the general managers. I think I have had one mayor who has spoken to me vehemently opposed to it, one mayor -

Mr DEAN - What area was that?

Mr MULDER - One former mayor.

Mr GARCIA - One mayor who might happen to drive a Trans Am Mustang and who formerly may have lived in Europe, who cites the fact - and in fairness to him he says, 'I have driven in conditions in Europe where the road speed limit has been reduced to take account of not only of the infrastructure level but also the conditions.' So if you are living in a snow-laden country where it is icy a lot of the time and it is mountainous and somewhat treacherous in terms of its topographical nature, the fact of the matter is that you are probably going to reduce the speed limit. That might in itself say therefore we save 'x' number of lives because people were not going as fast on those types of roads that were affected both by the infrastructure level and the climatic conditions. He maintains that Tasmania does not have those climatic conditions and that therefore this is probably taking evidence from a place where those come into play and may not be necessarily an appropriate fit. That is the one significant representation I have had and he also holds the view that every person who gets in that vehicle - it is a bit like someone suggesting they get on to a plane - and turns that key understands that at that day they are - well, I don't want to be as dramatic as saying putting their life on the line.

Mr DEAN - There is a level of risk.

Mr GARCIA - But there is a level of risk associated with driving a motor vehicle.

CHAIR - It is not that we do not like you, Allan, but we are all starting to get hungry. Thank you very much for your attendance.

Mr GARCIA - My pleasure.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr HARVEY LENNON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AND **Mr VINCE TASKUNIS**, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING, RACT, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you, gentlemen and we will be informal with some of this. First name basis. I think, Vince, you have appeared before a parliamentary committee before. You know the rules. Whilst ever you are in here you are protected by parliamentary privilege; however, you may not be outside if you are talking to the media or whatever. Thank you for that. We had an extensive submission from you which we were very grateful to receive. Whichever one of you two gentlemen, if you would like to have some opening remarks and comment on the submission, we would be very happy to hear from you.

Mr LENNON - This is clearly a slightly divisive issue. It is fair to say that the representation of our members who believe that the current speed limits are appropriate is around about two-thirds, and one-third are open to alternatives. Notwithstanding that, our organisation believes in not just effective mobility but safe mobility and we are concerned that there are still too many lives lost on our roads and we would like to the incidence of road trauma reduced.

I think in the longer term there needs to be a commitment to applying appropriate safety standards to our roads, and especially roads which are of strategic significance which carry high volumes or where there is a demonstrated higher risk to motorists.

We all know that it is probably fiscally impossible to get all the roads that we would like improved in a short space of time and I guess as an organisation, we are applying some support or offering some support, to a direction which provides some reduction in road trauma and the significant cost to the community as an interim measure ahead of being in a position where perhaps some of the work that needs to be done to remediate our extensive rural network can be undertaken.

CHAIR - Anything else you would like to add, Vince?

Mr TASKUNAS - Just in respect to the attachments to the submission, we are very keen to get the fullest amount of feedback and commentary from our members and other respondents to our surveys so that we were able to add some member voice and public voice to the process about the situation and, as Mr Lennon said, there was quite a lot of response to the surveys we did. Some people support the measure, other people don't and it is about a two-thirds/one-third split for support versus not.

CHAIR - Whilst you are on that particular subject, Vince, as I recall, your survey, as you have just said, two-thirds were negative towards it or something like that, which was quite contrary to the results that the department got when they did their survey. Can you enlighten us on why that might be?

Mr LENNON - I am quite surprised because I don't think the nature of the questions we asked - and we have undertaken a second survey with the questions slightly reworded, but we obtained almost exactly the same results.

There is still some complacency about road safety issues in our community. Unless people have been confronted with trauma directly associated with a family member or a close friend being involved in a serious injury crash or fatality, then perhaps they think it will not happen to them. You have to be measured in interpreting results where you are proposing a change, and a change that people do not know. People know what they have and they are going to lean that way unless there is action taken to convince them that something else would be better, or have better outcomes for the community.

CHAIR - With your survey, can you quantify how many respondents were from an urban situation and how many were from a regional situation? How did you sort that out and did you number crunch that mix?

Mr TASKUNAS - We did a random survey of our members so the first part of the 2011 survey was randomised. That included a geographical spread, but we did not specifically ask whether they were regional/rural. In the first survey in 2011, we asked about the proposal for a blanket reduction from 100 kph to 90 kph. That first survey was different, in that respect, to the modified version down the track. We were specific about the roads and where they would be, and we also asked other questions about serious crash incidents on rural roads.

CHAIR - I have a document that shows the number of vehicle registrations has gone from 200 000 to 500 000, over the period from 1977 to 2010, but in the same period fatal and serious injuries have dropped from 1 200 to a bit over 200, so there has been a significant decline statewide, which is good. That is due to the 0.05 PCA, and compulsory seat belts and all that.

Mr LENNON - And safer vehicles. Generally, they have a significant part to play in improved trauma outcomes.

CHAIR - The bottom line the committee is trying to get to here is: is a reduction in the speed limit going to make that much difference? Have you had a look at the MUARC report - have you analysed that? A lot of people have and there are apparently several flaws in it.

Mr LENNON - We have both seen that report and both had a detailed look at it. With any scientific research, there are probably opportunities to pick flaws or pick holes. One of the important things to consider is: reducing the speed limit from 100 kph to 90 kph is probably not going to significantly reduce the number of crashes - it is more about effect. The physiological consequences for someone crashing at 90 kph are going to be significantly less than for someone crashing at 100 kph, and that is one of the immediate benefits. Hopefully, people, especially in modern cars with good safety features, will be better off with that speed reduction. I do not think it will significantly reduce the number of accidents. Cars are driven by people, people are human, humans make mistakes and we are going to continue to see people go off road and hit trees, et cetera. The more we improve the road infrastructure with shoulders and tactile line markings and those sorts of things, the more we will provide an early warning and a little bit of extra time to help the motorist, but motorists will make mistakes and driving is inherently dangerous.

CHAIR - Do you think that improving road marking and some of those shoulder issues may have a greater effect, perhaps, than reducing speed?

Mr LENNON - Absolutely, and over the longer term that ought to be the objective, but we have to be realistic. In this state we have something like 11 500 kilometres of non-urban roads. We are not going to fix that overnight - it is going to take time and there is a fairly significant cost in undertaking those remedial works. We have to be realistic.

Mr MULDER - You mentioned the idea that somehow or other the standard of the road is what should be determining the speed limit. It is commonsense that if you are travelling slower you cause less injuries, but that argument seems to deny the law of diminishing returns - sooner or later you will not have too many serious fatalities, when no-one is moving. We need to go back to the more realistic issue, which is the standard of the road, which should lead to the relevant speed.

We also heard this morning that the national standard of the ARRB has been relaxed somewhat to allow for the fact there will be no community acceptance if we strictly apply the ARRB, which probably says more about the condition of our roads than it says about the ARRB rules. During that discussion it has also come to light that the volume of cars using the road should set the standard, and that should then set the speed.

The other point that came out of discussions is that the volume of traffic raises the revenue, which should then be hypothecated back to improving the standards. It is about the demand side, which should be driving this whole equation, not the supply side.

I would like your comments on that cute little circle, that no-one seems to want to take to its conclusion.

Mr LENNON - If we had a lot of time to address some of those issues, perhaps there are other ways of going about it. But doing nothing will perpetuate the same road trauma statistics we are currently seeing. The change associated with improvements that are already built into vehicles is not going to produce better outcomes in the foreseeable future. There are still too many people dying on our roads. There are still too many families torn apart by the incidence of serious injury crashes.

The demand question, in the long term, is the right question. But we cannot bring those economics to bear in a short period of time. The reality is that there are still people dying and still people suffering serious injuries on our roads. The issue about the ARRB - ultimately our roads ought to be designed to comply with the full ARRB standards.

I understand, from my role with the council, that the decision to slightly reduce the standards in the state is a good transitional measure because it still applies an assessment standard to our roads.

From our perspective, the government of the day should be committing to raising the standard on key roads.

Mr MULDER - But, money is raised by the state government through things like registration, drivers' licences, et cetera, and there is also federal money in the form of excise and fuel taxes and GST and things like that. Volume is driving that revenue, which ought to be hypothecated back into the infrastructure. What are your views on that?

Mr LENNON - We have no argument with you on that score. At the moment the amount collected, federally, for example, through fuel excise is \$14.6 billion and federally, the government is spending \$3.6 billion on road infrastructure. We would like to see that gap diminished. We believe if fuel excise is to stay as it is, and it is a significant impost on the motorist, there ought to be more of that returned to the motorist in infrastructure.

Mr MULDER - Then we could lift the standard and then the speed limit. I would have no difficulty with saying that is the time but could we live with the lower speed limits, which means the standard of the road, knowing full well that such a program is running.

Mr TASKUNAS - A further comment on what Mr Lennon was saying in respect of your question there, Mr Mulder. Motorists are paying a lot of taxes already and there is no link between the investment and what the contributions are that are being made. The issue of assessment and standards of roads was part of our initial opposition to the plan. There should be some - and we have campaigned previously, and before my time and Harvey's in the CEO role - before taking a risk-based or assessment-based approach to road improvements and road funding in Tasmania. In some respects, we would see this process as a step forward from where it was previously, which was a one-size-fits-all approach as opposed to assessing things, which wasn't part of the initial proposal.

Mr FINCH - Mr Lennon, does the RACT have a representative on the Road Safety Council?

Mr LENNON - I am the RACT's representative on that council at the moment.

Mr FINCH - How long have you been involved?

Mr LENNON - Just over two years.

Mr FINCH - I want to ask you about this campaign you established in 2011 to end the confusion. How did that campaign go? It seems there is a recognition that confusion needs to be stopped and is going to be changed, but I saw something the department had here today about the sign that may go on the new limit that people are going to drive to was changed road conditions, when your campaign suggested people should drive to the conditions. Yours is more an educative approach and this is the new paradigm for me, drive to the conditions: it doesn't matter whether your maximum is 100 kph, if it is wet and windy and there is ice on the road and you can only drive at 50 kph, you drive to the conditions. That was the suggestion I got from this, which I thought was much better than changed road conditions.

Mr LENNON - There have been several goes at the words, including 'variable road conditions', 'changing road conditions' - we are trying to come up with a set of words which would be understood by the majority of motorists on the road. Bear in mind that we get a significant number of tourists on our roads every year and some of those are non-English speaking, so coming up with words which would be understood by people - it is recognising that at the moment there are sections of our roads, whether it is at 90 kph or 100 kph, which probably aren't at the standard that some people, especially from Europe, may expect when they're driving vehicles. We want to make it as safe as we can. We know statistically that there are quite a few people from interstate and overseas represented in the serious crash injuries in this state and we want to make sure they don't get left out of the loop when we're coming up with a set of words.

'Drive to the conditions' is also used more broadly as a marketing phrase. I believe there was some concern that there would just be a marketing term stuck underneath the sign and there was a desire to keep it separate from that.

Mr FINCH - I would probably suggest that is more an educative phrase rather than a marketing phrase. Ivan may have a similar view, but this is the message that comes through from the police now. You may have an accident at 100 kph and the speed limit is 100 kph, but if it was wet and slippery and you've had an accident, you could be charged under erratic driving.

Mr DEAN - Negligent driving.

Mr FINCH - Negligent driving, because you did not drive to the conditions. I would say you should pursue this a little bit harder when you get back because that to me is a better message.

Mr LENNON - Perhaps we will. I suppose the other element in there is climatic elements are only one factor in the risk and that almost hints that climatic change or seasonal change, whereas there are lots of other deficiencies in our road network around shoulders, line markings et cetera which can add to the danger and that is there regardless of the time of day, the day of the week, weather conditions et cetera.

Coming back to your earlier point, this issue around end speed limits has been a major one for our members for many years. We have been advocating for this to be reviewed for some time and we know that the level of support amongst our members is extremely high to change that.

Mr TASKUNAS - When the minister announced that he would be discontinuing the use of end speed limit signs he asked the council to look at that as well. We saw that as a win for our members who had told us for quite some time that it was confusing and misleading. I like to see the sticker in there, Kerry, you have the RACT sticker in your file there that was placed on a lot of cars; we were able to get rid of thousands of those stickers across Tasmania and people were very supportive of that campaign because they saw the end limit sign was not helping.

Mr FINCH - Those who could remember the speed limit from before were okay but a lot of time roads are travelled by people who are unfamiliar.

Mr LENNON - Correct.

Mr FINCH - Tourists and people who are visiting a new area.

Mr DEAN - On the speed limit signs and so on, there seems to be a resistance to implement the variable speed limit signs in this country, or in this state, in fact. If you travel through the world you will notice that in some of the highways there are signs that light up in wet conditions to tell you to reduce your speed; the ring road is a good example in Melbourne, of course, with the variable speed limit sign there if it is wet, inclement weather that immediately reduces the speed right back. I have been through there at 60, I think at one stage. There is 70 in wet conditions; do you have a view on that here?

Rather than continually decreasing the speed limits, should we be focusing in that area as well?

Mr LENNON - We are getting mixed feedback about the current variable speed limit trial. I believe that it will be good, but I think we still have some work to do in the actual implementation - making sure that the varied speed limits are realistic and that the motorist sees them as realistic.

Mr TASKUNAS - It is expensive technology as well. Like everything, it is an expensive investment.

Mr DEAN - I suspect they would run similar to the school signs wouldn't they? Off solar power?

Mr LENNON - For this one here there is an infrastructure network to support it, but it probably does not have to be the case.

Mr DEAN - My other question was in the survey that you did - and I am looking to make note of some of the responses you received and the certain things people put forward as to what we should be considering rather than reducing the speed limit - one of those areas is the old one that continually comes up and that is more education on driving to the conditions; that is what we are talking about now. The greatest number, in fact, of your membership, I would suspect, has supported that as the main and most important issue here. What else have you done? From your point of view, what else could DIER do or this state, or the government do to improve it?

Mr LENNON - I think starting the educational campaign in an intensive way at an earlier age. I think the Rider Program demonstrates that there are significant benefits in getting to people at 16 or 17 before they are out on the road behind a steering wheel and think they know it all. Let us try to re-educate thinking and help to establish an understanding about the risks associated with driving and try to soften their stance and aggressiveness. I think that is definitely one opportunity. Continuing broadly based campaigns, I think, are really important and the other thing in education is that reminder and high visibility policing is one of the best reminders to people that if you do the wrong thing you are going to get caught. I think it is good to have as many of the patrol-type cars out on our roads and seen as possible.

Mr DEAN - I think you are absolutely right there. The high visibility vehicles have an absolutely great deterrent aspect and we should be more focused on that.

CHAIR - Harvey, the minister made a statement this morning and I have picked it up again now. I hadn't noticed before, but Mr O'Byrne said the proposed changes were about reducing serious crashes and I will quote this. This came out of the *Examiner* this morning.

Speed is a key determinant in our crash data. In the next six years over 100 fatalities and serious injuries will be avoided because of these.

There is a bit of a bash-up between Mr Hidding and Mr O'Byrne, as you know. We are all independents around here, so we don't get into the party bashing-up game.

Laughter.

CHAIR - If I could just comment on that, because apart from the criticism that has been done of some of the Monash stuff, some people in my office - other people who are very pedantic - went through all this stuff with a fine-tooth comb. They went through the Report on Serious Crashes 2006-2010,

Mr LENNON - For Tasmania.

CHAIR - Yes, in the 100 kilometre an hour zone. What they ended up with was that out of 570 crashes - this is on sealed roads - only 31 of those were due to excessive speed and most of those were excessive speed in the conditions. If you look at that, that is a very small proportion, yet the minister is saying it is a key determinant. I am finding that totally at odds.

Mr TASKUNAS - We did a similar analysis at the start of the proposal.

Mr LENNON - I think there are a couple of points here. Sometimes there are multiple reasons why a crash occurs and sometimes only one of those factors is noted. From our research, recalcitrants, recidivist drivers, vehicles that are unregistered, unlicensed drivers, are recurring major themes in our crash statistics as well. There is certainly some evidence of alcohol, of inattention, of people not driving to the conditions. Whether that relates to the speed or not, it is certainly a factor. There are multiple reasons why people do crash and I think we have just make sure that we don't think that one move will be a panacea.

CHAIR - Not to put you on the spot ere, Harvey, but the question comes, of course. Is the minister overstating the speed issue here? That is what I am trying to say. It would appear from those statistics that he is very much exaggerating the importance of the speed.

Mr LENNON - I think the other element, whether the speed was the cause of the accident, certainly can have an effect in the accident being classified as a serious injury crash. It is challenging; I think that you will get some benefits out of a reduction to 90, but it doesn't solve all our problems and we have still to keep working on improving the infrastructure and improving education. I think combined, we will probably get some short-term benefits. In the longer term let's hope that all our roads could be reinstated at 100 because we have the other pieces of the puzzle right.

CHAIR - Have you seen the maps?

Mr LENNON - I did have a look on the iPad over the weekend. I was sent a copy. It was a little bit hard to follow but I think I got the gist of it. There are probably some areas on there where we might personally have views that perhaps they are being a little bit too draconian, but on the whole it would be consistent with an ARRB-type assessment process.

Ms RATTRAY - I want to go back to your opening statement, Harvey, where you talked about your support for this proposal that the committee is looking at as an interim

measure. Could you give me some idea of what your interim measure would be? Are you thinking 10 years?

Mr LENNON - I would have hoped that over, say, a decade, with the right focus and a strategic focus around improving the safety elements on our roads that we could achieve a much better outcome and have people driving at 100 kph on urban roads. It is going to take a lot of time as we have a lot of kilometres.

Ms RATTRAY - Can I put this scenario to you? My understanding is, and I have not researched it to the hilt, since 1948 there has been one fatality on a piece of road between Launceston and Scottsdale called the Sideling, so do you think it is likely that the Sideling is ever going to be upgraded to meet the standard of the ARRB given that we have had one fatality since 1948?

Mr LENNON - I do not think the fact that a fatality is the key determinant because we all know a fatality can happen on any stretch of road. Also, it is much more important for us to be looking at serious injuries rather than just the fatality measure. Serious injuries can have a greater cost to our community in terms of a load on our health system and impact on families, reduced incomes, unemployment consequences and so forth, so focusing on serious injuries is more important. But if a road carries a significant amount of traffic and is not safe it ought to be fixed. If it carries nearly no traffic maybe it does not happen in the next decade or maybe it is further down the track but let us be strategic and focused and work towards the highest probability that we are going to achieve safer outcomes on our roads.

Ms RATTRAY - So that I am really clear on this, your support for the proposal that the minister and the department have put forward is prefaced on the fact that this is only an interim measure because, obviously, your members do not agree with your position or the bulk of them do not agree?

Mr LENNON - It is something to get an immediate improvement in our serious injury crashes, something which will reduce road trauma immediately and I think that is worthwhile but I do not think we ought to necessarily be looking at slowing people down. As an organisation, we support mobility. Mobility is important for a whole bunch of reasons around people getting to work, family connections, access to health, moving freight and improving the economy in this state. We want to support safe mobility as an organisation and we ought to be still trying to pursue improved mobility options right around the state.

Ms RATTRAY - Mr Chairman, I do not want to labour on a point but can I have your view on being able to overtake safely could require a bit faster speed at times, and I instance some of those roads where there are not wide open stretches; I drive on some of those roads regularly and I noticed in the submission it is something that is supported - lowering the limit to 90 kph just makes it more difficult and you exceed the limit when you overtake and then the safety issue becomes less. Can you give me some comment on that?

Mr TASKUNAS - It really does go to the heart of this proposal and one of the key tasks, and that is the educational task. Obviously, as a group of stakeholders and as a community across the board, we have more work to do and the government has a substantial task

ahead of it to implement education around this whole idea and that is a classic example of it. We see it and our members tell us all the time, not only on bigger roads but on the types of roads in your electorate you are talking about. They come across these safe driving problems all the time because there are not enough overtaking lane opportunities, or a there's a speed limit that does not support them to safely overtake. It is a big issue and that is why from our perspective it's positive there is methodology in place to assess things and have some sort of approach to taking a risk-based assessment of roads. It is why there should be - and I suppose that is part of our work going forward - a very clear priority list and approach to investing on those sorts of bases. If you need more overtaking opportunities on that part of the road, it's because you know that it has been assessed and people have looked at it, or even driven it and worked it out themselves.

Ms RATTRAY - So you and your members would be aware that there is not one overtaking lane between Launceston and Orford?

Mr LENNON - Yes, that is correct. I know the law is the law but, equally, sitting on the wrong side of the road for an inordinate length of time overtaking too slowly can be dangerous.

Ms RATTRAY - My point exactly.

Mr LENNON - People need to be educated to get through an overtaking manoeuvre in an appropriate manner.

CHAIR - Are you aware of any other jurisdiction going down this track at this stage?

Mr LENNON - Not in Australia, no.

CHAIR - I mean varying speed limits in varying localities but not going down a fundamental change as we have here?

Mr LENNON - In talking to my colleagues interstate, other governments are looking closely at what happens here. They look at some of the same data and methodologies we are looking at through Monash.

CHAIR - Setting aside the safety issues, a lot of people in rural and regional Tasmania believe that reducing the speed limit overall has a big economic disbenefit for a lot of users, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania with transport operators and all sorts of users.

Mr TASKUNAS - We are aware of that.

Mr LENNON - It depends on what the true average is you can do safely on our roads. Having done quite a few trips to Barrington with my son for rowing in the last few weeks, there are some roads where you're not going to be sitting on 100 kph. The reality is people aren't sitting on 100 kph a lot of the time and if we encourage people to keep the foot off the accelerator a little bit, that has some genuine benefits as well.

Mr MULDER - As to this community acceptance, and everyone says they accept it, that is the key task; 80 per cent of people accept the lower speed limits in the trials that have

been done. I had a quick look at the news this morning when this story broke all over the paper. Of 25 people who made a comment on which you could determine for or against, 22 - that is, 88 per cent - are opposed and think it is a waste of time. I just throw that on the table about the community acceptance. Accidents are caused by the speed at which you're travelling, not the speed on the sign down the road somewhere, so I am wondering what this causal link is. The member for Apsley raised, quite rightly, that it's not so much that you're going to save five minutes on a two-hour trip by overtaking the truck. It's the nature of the road users that when you get caught like that, the human mind says, 'I've got to get past this thing if I'm going to get where I'm going', and you end up taking risks that are not based on rationale but on human behaviour. You can send all the campaign messages about, 'Do not overtake; follow the tractor down the highway, or down the country road at 40 kilometres an hour for the next three years', but the bottom line is that people will overtake. I think you have the deal with the reality of people's behaviour, not the way you would wish they would behaviour.

Mr LENNON - I agree with all that. On your first point about acceptance, I was just old enough to remember seat belts being introduced. I think there was a fair negativity about it; I know a lot of people at that stage who did not support that move at the time. I am horrified these days when I see people who have not used that most simple of devices and put a seat belt on.

Mr MULDER - The point is that the message is out there and people do not see it. There is a difference between introducing something new like breath testing or a seat belt to an incremental adjustment of an existing speed limit on roads that people are used to travelling at a certain speed that they consider to be safe.

Mr TASKUNAS - There is no doubt that if this is going to succeed, it has to have broad community acceptance and people's behaviour will have to change.

Mr MULDER - Good luck. I have 18 kilometres of double white line in my electorate on one of the state's most highly-travelled tourist roads. It is not people travelling up and down the Midlands. On the Arthur Highway there are 18 kilometres of double white lines between Murdunna and Taranna.

Ms RATTRAY - You are lucky they can see them. On most of my roads, you cannot see double lines; there's no paint.

Mr MULDER - There are tourist coaches and there is a logging industry going on down there. There are lots of vendors and trucks and things on that highway. These are some of the issues we need to look at if we are going to talk about balancing the free flow of traffic against road safety - not just the odd prank or two. The roads are there for a very valuable, economic function for the state of Tasmania.

Mr FINCH - We seem to get some positivity about unsealed roads; the drop to 80 kilometres per hour is a good and acceptable move.

Mr LENNON - Fewer of our members are against that move, it would be fair to say.

Mr FINCH - With Tony talking about tourists, will this have any impact at all on the insurance for hire cars using unsealed roads?

Mr LENNON - I do not think it would be significant, to be honest.

Mr FINCH - Not mentioned, not talked about?

Mr TASKUNAS - We can take that on notice and come back to you.

Mr MULDER - On that point, isn't it a fact that most hire-drive insurance forbids you from travelling on gravel roads? It is a great way of getting the road toll down, by the way.

Laughter.

Mr FINCH - I was wondering whether that was the insurance company's view of their vehicles being on unsealed roads because they are driving at a safer speed.

Mr LENNON - It is a good question.

CHAIR - You negate your insurance if you have an accident; you do not get any cover if you have an accident on a gravel road and it is a hire car, at this stage in Tasmania. Particularly in my electorate, if people want to use the Great Lake - come through the middle.

Mr LENNON - Absolutely, why wouldn't you?

CHAIR - You take that risk.

Mr DEAN - I wanted to this position to you about speed. All the statistical data that we get back from the department is that speed is normally a contributing factor in just about every crash that occurs on a country road. My position here is that I do not know when speed would not be contributing factor. We have people who are affected by alcohol and if you look at statistical data you get, they say this driver was affected by alcohol, however, speed was a contributing factor. Excuse the expression but if you are pissed and driving at 50 kilometres an hour and have an accident, speed is a contributing factor if you exceed 0.05.

Mr TASKUNAS - Much of the literature refers to it as an aggravating factor.

Mr DEAN - My position is that speed is a contributing factor in just about every crash that happens. But it is only a contributing factor in as much as your vehicle is moving. They use that too liberally, in my view. They use that to say this is a good reason to reduce the speed limits in vehicles on rural roads. I have asked the question of the department: how many of these crashes have occurred where the vehicle has been travelling at or under the limit? Those figures will be interesting. They were previously when I received them and we are now getting some up-to-date figures.

Mr LENNON - We have asked for that in the past ourselves, and we will be quite interested in that. I don't think we have ever had that data and I am not sure how well that data is kept, but it would be interesting.

Mr DEAN - We have asked for that data on notice to this committee so we will have that and it probably may well go on the net.

CHAIR - Thank you gentlemen. Anything else you would like to add? That is one reason why we have two former senior wallopers on the committee.

Laughter.

Mr TASKUNAS - Fine, thanks.

Mr LENNON - Thank you.

CHAIR - We appreciate your evidence.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Dr GRAHAM BURY, MAYOR, AND **Mr IAN HOLLOWAY**, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ian and Graham. We will keep it informal.

Dr BURY - Does the informality work both ways.

CHAIR - It does indeed. You are aware that you are covered by parliamentary privilege whilst you are in here. Whatever you say outside you may not be covered by parliamentary privilege. You understand that system.

Thank you very much. I would like to invite you, Mr Mayor, or Ian, to make an opening statement if you would like to the committee.

Dr BURY - Briefly, from the point of view of council all the elected members were pleased to be involved in this.

CHAIR - I suppose you are going to address the fact that you have had that trial in the Kingborough area. That is what you are going to address?

Dr BURY - The council fully supported the trial and has been enthusiastic about the trial or demonstration and throughout the process we appreciated that getting useful statistics in an area where there are not a lot of crashes is quite tricky or difficult. It obviously has to be conducted over an extended period of time to get anything significant and I think we are a relatively low crash area anyway. On gravel roads, I think quite a lot of minor or moderate prangs don't get reported.

We have been very keen to participate in this. I suppose I have a bit of bias anyway - I have worked in quite a lot of emergency departments so I have a kind of personal bias in this regard, but the whole of council has been very supportive of the process.

I am pleased to give whatever evidence that you wish us to give; Ian can perhaps talk a bit about the process.

Mr HOLLOWAY - The reduction from 100 to 90 on our sealed roads and a straight 80 for our unsealed roads - when that was first introduced there was some concern within the community regarding the reduction. However, a lot of that was based around two issues. One was the perceived impact on travel times and the other was a lack of overtaking opportunities on the Channel Highway south of Margate and therefore the lowering of the speed limit to 90 was perceived in some quarters to be a retrograde step.

Monash University, who undertook the project on behalf of DIER, had telephone surveys conducted and the overall perception within the community from the first contact in 2007 through to 2009, when they conducted another survey, there was a marked change in attitudes. The percentage of residents who supported the reduction had dramatically increased and I have a copy of the report for committee members if they would like a copy. The report on page 18 details the statistics relating to percentage, but overall there was acceptance of it. It also increased the public's awareness of speed limits. At the start of the program there was some lack of knowledge within the community about what

were posted speed limits and how they applied, but the survey after this program was introduced did increase percentages and people became much more accepting of the reduction in speed limits.

CHAIR - For the benefit of the committee, the Kingborough Municipality starts whereabouts on the Channel Highway?

Mr HOLLOWAY - On the Southern Outlet - halfway between - but the Southern Outlet and the Huon Highway from Kingston through to Huonville, the municipal boundary was excluded from the project. So we are talking about the Channel Highway from Kingston through to the municipal boundary at Verona Sands.

CHAIR - So, nothing north of that back towards Hobart?

Mr HOLLOWAY - No.

CHAIR - So that was not included in the study?

Mr HOLLOWAY - Correct. The Channel Highway from Kingston to Tarooma was a 60 kilometre zone anyway so it did not apply.

Dr BURY - The other thing that was attractive to council about this study was that it was being conducted through Monash University Accident Research Centre and there was a comparison from Kingborough to the Central Coast where these restrictions in speed limits were not being undertaken. There was a scientific study.

CHAIR - Thanks, Graham. Was Bruny Island part of the study?

Dr BURY - Yes, it was.

CHAIR - If I could suggest to you both that Kingborough and Tasman, in respect of their topographical - or more so, I suppose, Kingborough - you do have some high volumes of traffic but topographically the terrain does not lead itself to any higher speeds any way under any circumstances. From my memory of the road going down there - I have cycled down it a couple of times - there are not many places where you can do 100 kilometres an hour. Compared to other local government areas in the state - the northern midlands in particular and other areas - so in some ways to me it has been a bit of a skewed type of arrangement where they should have conducted one of those surveys in another area of the state where you have much more open roads and less traffic volumes.

Mr HOLLOWAY - That could be argued but I think there are two things about the program - is it is not just the lowering of the speeds, but it is the proven increase in public awareness. That is a very important issue. If you increase public awareness and understanding of speed limits, it lifts the whole debate about road safety, and its profile, and that, of itself, is a positive thing. You could argue that the roads are not conducive to 100 kph but that is a minor thing. The Southern Outlet and the Huon Highway, which are the two highest speed roads, were not included so they remained at 100 kph. It was only the Channel Highway that really had any impact, but the 80 kph on gravel roads also received a lot of positive feedback.

CHAIR - I don't think there is much argument about that one.

Mr HOLLOWAY - No.

CHAIR - There is not much dissent about that - it is the 90 kph.

Mr FINCH - Graham, you mentioned your personal bias in your opening gambit. Can you elaborate on your stories, to give us a better idea of your opinion, and how you feel about this reduction?

Dr BURY - I have a bias because I am a physician by trade. In the early years as a doctor, you have to work in casualty departments, and you see a lot of people in serious trouble as a result of involvement in car accidents. My bias is that almost anything that reasonably reduces the speed of vehicles on the road is to be welcomed. Has that answered your question?

Mr FINCH - Yes, we got a sense of that, but were the accidents you dealt with really speed related?

Dr BURY - All I know is the evidence is that you get into more trouble, and you have more people killed, and you have more severe accidents, the faster you are going at the time of the accident. I would not pass judgment on the cause of the accidents - we just dealt with the results of the accidents. There is evidence that lower speeds alter the incidence of people being killed or seriously injured. It can be very significant from a relatively small reduction in speed, but we are not talking about that - we are talking about gravel roads.

We have more gravel roads than sealed roads in our municipality, so we are very keen to see the speed reduction on gravel roads. We have about 250 gravel kilometres and about 240 kilometres of sealed roads. Mr Holloway is fixing up sealing the roads for us.

Mr FINCH - The message is: the faster you go, the faster you go.

Dr BURY - Definitely. To answer your question about speed, Greg, the Bruny Main Road is one that can now be used at great speed - certainly more than it used to be. I drive down there fairly regularly and people drive comfortably at more than 100 kph on the Bruny Main Road -

Ms RATTRAY - Not if this goes through, they won't.

Dr BURY - Residents on Bruny complained a bit more than others about the reduction in time getting from Adventure Bay up to the ferry at Roberts Point but, as Ian said, we did not have a lot of complaints. People were concerned about Algona Road, which is a connecting road from the Channel Highway down to Blackmans Bay - that there were no speed reductions there. You can go at 100 kph on Algona Road and it is only -

Mr HOLLOWAY - About 4 to 5 kilometres.

Dr BURY - It is not a lengthy stretch of road.

Ms RATTRAY - Short distances.

Dr BURY - My understanding of the data that we have so far - and I must confess it is a little bit disappointing we do not have more up-to-date information from the accident investigation area. Maybe that's something this committee can do something about. Compared with the comparative council - which was, I think, Central Coast - the incidence of crashes on sealed roads was reduced and it was thought to be just statistically significant, but there was no reduction in comparison with Central Coast on gravel roads.

Mr DEAN - The document we were given this morning by DIER refers to 'serious casualties on 100 kph roads 2003-12' - in your area in that period, which is a 10 year period, you had one fatality and five serious injury crashes. Are you saying you haven't been given the statistics on the number of crashes during the trial period?

Dr BURY - No, we have, but it would be nice if the accident research centre provided data up to 2013. There should be more information available in the comparison trial. We were being compared with a municipality that was not having the same speed reductions, but the municipalities were considered to have somewhat similar numbers of gravel and sealed roads. In other words, we were compared with an area that didn't have those restrictions. Do you have fewer accidents, and this sort of thing? That study needs to be conducted over a long period.

Mr DEAN - What were the crash statistics in relation to the trial period? Was there a decrease?

Mr HOLLOWAY - Kingborough's crash data is so low, as you pointed out, you only have to have one fatality and the statistics can be skewed. That is one of the issues if you're looking purely at a reduction in the number of accidents. Kingborough has so few that it makes it difficult to come up with a meaningful result, from an accident number perspective only.

Mr DEAN - So, we really can't say whether this trial period was successful or not? There is no measure of success in it?

Mr HOLLOWAY - It depends whether you take public attitude as a measure of success. If you take public attitude as a measure of success, I would argue that this project was successful. The statistics within the surveys conducted by MUARC support that conclusion.

Dr BURY - It seems there was significant community support. They did community surveys for this project, and they followed up those surveys. The people who were surveyed suggested the speed on gravel roads should be reduced further. That was the community opinion. But there is some evidence comparing crashes in the Central Coast municipality on sealed roads over a four-year period with those in Kingborough. In Kingborough, there was a reduction in the number of crashes on sealed roads compared with the municipality where the speed limits were unchanged. That information is in the report. People also drove slower.

Mr DEAN - There was some evidence of that this morning - about the median speed of vehicles in these areas. I thought it was only reduced by a relatively small amount, not even by 1 per cent.

Mr MULDER - Less than 1 kilometre an hour.

Ms RATTRAY - It was 0.9.

Mr DEAN - Yes, less than that during this trial period. To me, that doesn't equate to a great result.

Dr BURY - If you look at the information in some detail, the speeds were measured before the demonstration was started and then they were measured after the demonstration and it was found that people were exceeding the recommended speed in both circumstances. Okay? But the average speed was reduced, people were driving slower, I suspect, given the limited number of police on the streets.

Mr DEAN - I think that is right. The evidence this morning was that the speed limit wasn't exceeded. There was a marked change in that area, but the median speed of the vehicles was, as Mr Mulder has said, had been reduced by not even one kilometre an hour.

Mr MULDER - It is here at page 8, Ivan. "Overall there was a 0.9 kilometre reduction in the mean free travel speed."

Mr DEAN - I knew it would be here somewhere.

Mr MULDER - That goes back to your point. You are not the only one who has seen some of the mess that this incurs but it is the actual speed, not what is written on the speed limit, that causes the problem. If all these trials and all these things, I mean people are not travelling slower, it just doesn't seem to make any sense. What do you have to do to get them to travel slower? Forget about telling them to travel slower. We have been doing that for a long time. That is the sort of data, and in the Central Coast municipality where there was not a trial it fell by 1.6 kilometres. So perhaps doing nothing is more effective.

Laughter.

CHAIR - Yes, touché. Mr Mayor, could I ask do you know how, come, or why Kingborough was selected as a trial municipality? Did you put your hand up and say, 'We want to be part of this'?

Mr HOLLOWAY - Huon Valley was approached but they were not interested. Council has had for some time a road safety committee with its focus around public education and so when the offer was made, council of course took the opportunity to do that because it was seen as worth trialling and it fitted into the council's philosophy around road safety. At the end of the day it was quite a simple decision.

Dr BURY - We have DIER representatives on the committee and I think that that is why we were selected.

Mr FINCH - On that point, we have heard some evidence this morning that there was quite a bit of negativity in respect of the drop from 100 to 90, yet your respondents in the Kingborough municipality seemed to be positive about the reduction from 100 to 90. Does that still hold?

Mr HOLLOWAY - Yes. Probably the only issue that fell out of the project was in relation to signage and that was the ongoing battle over the removal of end of speed limit signage and replacing it with the posted speed limit that is applicable from there beyond. There were some people from outside the municipality who found that they were on the wrong side of the law because they did not have an understanding. As I said, that was more related to the fact of the wording on the end of speed limit signs, rather than which is being addressed now where they are going to be changed to the posted speed limit.

Mr FINCH - Yes, but 85.3 per cent said that they supported it or were in favour of it.

Mr HOLLOWAY - Yes, it has received good support. I think that is to be congratulated and not ignored. There is always going to be opposition to whatever laws are introduced. There is always some opposition, and I do not know what else you can do to try to improve road safety. The policing program gets criticised. The road conditions get criticised and people want to drive faster and things like that. Somewhere along the line someone makes a valid judgement as to what can be the best situation.

CHAIR - It is the road infrastructure? A improvement of road infrastructure is obviously one way that safety can be improved, of course, as well as education. Speed is one facet of the whole thing.

Mr HOLLOWAY - The other one is driver behaviour and especially driver inattention. If you see people crossing to the wrong side of the road, et cetera, and having head-ons, is that the road's fault?

CHAIR - Or is it speed?

Mr DEAN - Or inattention?

Mr HOLLOWAY - Or inattention or a combination of everything.

Mr MULDER - They are obviously distracted by telephone calls, or sneezing or -

Mr DEAN - You are right.

Dr BURY - Greg has a good point. Our roads are not designed for the foolish driver; I think in Sweden they have a target of having no deaths on the road by 2020 and I think their roads are designed for the stupid driver who is inattentive; that is, they do not kill themselves. The Lisbon Highway is a good example. We have 16 000 vehicle movements just north of Margate on the Channel Highway and the Midland Highway has 12 000, I think, north of Kempton once you get suburban traffic off, so it would seem a cheaper way of stopping people bumping into each other would be a median like we have on the Kingston Bypass.

Mr DEAN - Dividing roads.

Dr BURY - Rather than a few hundred million. Anyway, everyone has their own opinion on road safety, that is for sure, as you would know.

CHAIR - Of course they do there are many experts.

Dr BURY - I think one thing we do not need to do is to reduce the police budget; if we want to have people safe on the roads we need a few more police driving around the roads than since the budget was decreased.

CHAIR - You are preaching to the converted here.

Mr MULDER - No, it makes economic sense: the more policemen, the more fines, the more money to fix the roads.

Dr BURY - I know. Anecdotally; there is no question there are not as many police around in motor cars catching people speeding; there is no question about that. So that is one way of keeping death off the road.

CHAIR - Any further questions to the Mayor or Ian? If not, thank you very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Ms JAN BARWICK, MAYOR, TASMAN COUNCIL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - You have given evidence before at a parliamentary committee and you are aware you are under privilege whilst you are here and when you go out it may not be the case.

Ms BARWICK - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and we are aware that the Tasman Council, along with Kingborough and DIER, has been part of pilot program. I invite you to say a few words about that, and how you see it ending up.

Ms BARWICK - I am here to speak against it, to be honest. I am probably wasting my time -

CHAIR - No, not at all. That is what we are here for.

Mr MULDER - If we did not agree with you, we would not be having a committee meeting.

Ms BARWICK - I think we all accept that 80 kph is fine for gravel roads. I think all of our councillors accept that. But we are not particularly in favour of the 90-kph speed limit on the Arthur Highway, and the rest of our sealed roads. But, from what I understand, there are fairly strict criteria for sealed roads, so I guess I will just fight for the Arthur Highway.

We had a community road safety partnership with DIER, and we still do. A committee was set up and they still meet. On 19 December 2008 we agreed to a Tasman Council safer speeds trial. After the first 12 months, DIER said they did not have enough information - they did not have enough to run comparisons on, and work out whether the trial was successful. I believe it wasn't, but we will get to that. We were guilted into going for another 12 months, because you feel like you will possibly be considered a bit of a redneck if you say, 'No, we do not want to continue any further'.

We continued for the two years and the statistics were released on 2 June 2011, and we are still stuck doing 90 kph on the Arthur Highway, two years later. The statistics showed that we had more deaths and serious accidents during the period of the reduced speed limits.

Mr DEAN - More accidents?

Mr BARWICK - Yes. This is a Monash University Accident Research Centre report. Break O'Day Council was the council they compared Tasman with - they used baseline and 24-month crash numbers for both municipalities. Tasman municipality had six casualty crashes on a sealed road, and 15 crashes in total, with a 100-kph limit, for 2006-08. Over a 24-month period, after we reduced the limit to 90 kph, we had casualty crashes of nine and total crashes of 18. Our comparative council, Break O'Day, stayed at the 100-kph speed limit the whole time. For 2006-08, they had 17 casualty crashes and a total of 35 crashes. For the 24-month period when Tasman Council had the speed limit reduced to 90 kph, they had 10 casualty crashes and a total of 24 crashes - a good reduction.

The statistics came back showing that a 90-kph speed did not decrease accidents, but we have not heard anything much more from DIER. The Community Safety Committee still continues and we are still doing 90 kph and in the past two years they have not bothered to conduct any new surveys to find out what our crash statistics are now. As a council - and I am not just speaking for myself - we have tried it and we did not like it. I am speaking from a point of knowledge, in the fact that we have gone through the trial. It was not successful. The purpose was to reduce injuries, deaths and accidents and it did not do that. As a council we decided to oppose the proposal for the Arthur Highway. It would also be good to have the Nubeena secondary road back up to 100 kph but, having looked at some of the criteria, it probably will not meet them.

We are very keen to put the Arthur Highway back up to 100 kph, because it is a highway after all. It's standard is debatable, I have to say - we have certainly pushed to have it upgraded for a very long time. We have had \$18 million promised and we are still waiting for that money to be spent.

We have 270 000 tourists a year on that highway. I dare say it is the worst highway in the state. We have thousands and thousands of vehicles towing boats and trailers down to the Tasmanian Tuna Club at Pirates Bay. That has really taken off over the last four or five years.

We need to stop following log trucks, campervans, buses, et cetera. Here I am having a whinge about the Arthur Highway, but I do not want this 90-kph speed limit to be a substitute for upgrading a really bad and dangerous highway. The reduced speed limit did not achieve what it was supposed to achieve and that was to reduce accidents. The survey showed that accidents increased. The Arthur Highway is already a very frustrating road to drive. If we do not count the turn outs we have two overtaking lanes on the whole Arthur Highway. The turnouts are just that, turnouts - complete and utter turnouts. They are totally dangerous.

Mr MULDER - That is Sorell to Port Arthur?

Ms BARWICK - Yes. There are two overtaking lanes. The fire did not do any good, but it did burn a lot of the vegetation along our highway and increased our visibility. We would like to see DIER maintain that in the future, because most of the highway is double white lines. There are very limited overtaking opportunities and you have to really know the road to overtake safely. I have noticed there are a couple of sections now, since the trees have all been burnt, where you can get a clear view to overtake but it is still double white lines. I have not utilised them to get here today. You are not in the police force, anyway, are you?

Mr MULDER - I still have my contacts. Your infringement is in the mail.

Ms BARWICK - Yes, great.

I do not know how Kingborough's trial went. Did they find it reduced accidents?

Mr MULDER - The answer you will always get when it does not, is that it is too small a statistic to be relevant, which makes you wonder why you needed it in the first place.

Ms BARWICK - Absolutely. Their community is positive about the change?

Mr FINCH - Yes, they are positive about the change.

Ms BARWICK - We are not. You have no choice but to accept it, unfortunately, because you will only get booked if you do not obey the 90-kph speed limit. To read our statistics -

Mr DEAN - I was going to ask on that. It was just for a trial period wasn't it?

Ms BARWICK - It was, but it has never ended.

Mr DEAN - It is still in place?

Ms BARWICK - It is still in place.

Mr DEAN - It is not regulated? It is not in the regulations or anything. How is it done?

Ms BARWICK - I believe we would still be booked for speeding if we were doing over 90 kph.

Mr DEAN - I am wondering if you would, because if it is not in a regulation, in a statute -

Mr MULDER - But the road signs are up.

Mr DEAN - If it is not in a statute, or in the state regulations, it does not matter what signs are up.

Mr MULDER - Yes it does. You drive past the road sign, and you get booked for exceeding the speed limit on that road sign.

Mr DEAN - Okay.

CHAIR -We will keep going, we will let the two policemen argue that out later, Madam Mayor.

Ms BARWICK - It is an issue and I would like it clarified. If I were pulled up for speeding - not that I do - I always thought I would say -

Mr MULDER - It's the mayoral prerogative.

Ms BARWICK - that the Arthur Highway is not a road, is it? It is a highway. The signs clearly say - 90 kph on sealed roads, and 80 kph on gravel roads.

CHAIR - There are sections that are going to be upgraded fairly soon, as you would be aware. I am on the public works committee and some of that will improve the alignment and everything else and give you some clear vision.

Ms BARWICK - We have been really hanging out for that - really hoping for that.

CHAIR - If that is done, does it clearly allow the Arthur Highway to be a 100-kph speed limit road, in your view?

Ms BARWICK - It should be, absolutely. It should be in line with all other highways. The \$18 million will do a bit. I would love another \$18 million to do a lot more but that is something for me to work out at some stage. It will help to straighten some of the really bad corners and some of the really, really bad sections of the seal, which is all broken away.

CHAIR - We might move on to Kerry with some questions.

Mr FINCH - I am interested in the feedback you had from the community during the trial period. How did they feel about it?

Ms BARWICK - I could get into trouble for being ageist, but these are the statistics.

The acceptance has declined. Initially, telephone surveys were conducted - 52.5 per cent of those surveyed were over the age of 65, and there was general acceptance from them initially. Then, a year later, there was less acceptance, and less compliance -

Mr FINCH - From the same age group?

Ms BARWICK - From the same age group. I am not being ageist, but the community road safety committee is made up of retirees - they meet during the day. The working people cannot attend these meetings, so we have one demographic being represented who, good on them, are not in a hurry to get anywhere, anyway. For those who travel the highway for work, et cetera, time is money and they do not want to be dawdling around, being the Sunday driver. Unfortunately, they do not get any representation on the committee because it meets during working hours. They are all out earning a living. I am meant to be on that committee, but I do not attend because I have made too many enemies.

Mr MULDER - Are there any left?

Ms BARWICK - Many left. I have got one nearly 80 living with me. I do not attend the meetings because I am very against the 90 kph speed limit on the Arthur Highway.

Mr FINCH - As you move around your municipality and talk to people, how do they feel, anecdotally? Is it a hot topic? Are they vociferous?

Ms BARWICK - People were always having a go at me about reducing the speed limit to 90 kph on the Arthur Highway. I don't hear it as much now, but when we discussed this issue in council and decided to put in a submission, five of the nine councillors voted that they did not want to keep it any more. They wanted to go back to a 100-kph speed limit. Two of those who voted against going back to the 100-kph limit were members of the community road safety committee, and therefore getting older. One of the committee voted for it to be put back up to 100 kph. She attends the committee meetings, but obviously doesn't get much say. We no longer support it because we don't really have any statistics to prove it made a difference. In fact, it made it worse.

Mr FINCH - I think for the title of worst highway, the West Tamar Highway would probably compete.

Mr MULDER - No, my highway is worse than your highway.

Ms BARWICK - The Arthur Highway is the absolute worst highway. Here we go now for parochialism, as well.

I have touched on the 270 000 tourists. Our population swells over Christmas and Easter to probably 10 000, with our shack owners, et cetera. I do not know how many thousands - we are talking thousands and thousands of vehicles towing boats and trailers down that road. I feel that our municipality isn't afforded its due importance to the state, and the state's economy. Obviously the Arthur Highway indicates that, considering the state it is in. It is bad.

Mr MULDER - People assume that if you hit a brick wall at 90 kph you are going to do more damage than if you hit it at 80 kph, and that is quite obvious, but speed limits should be relevant to the standard of the road.

Ms BARWICK - And I believe the road should be upgraded to accommodate the speeds.

Mr MULDER - But the standard of the road should be determined, not by the speed you can travel on it, but by the volume and the kind of traffic using it.

Ms BARWICK - Absolutely.

Mr MULDER - The volume of traffic using that highway generates an enormous amount of revenue through fuel taxes and registrations and things like that. The RACT pointed out to us that around \$18 billion dollars a year is raised in fuel excise, but only \$3 billion of it is spent on roads so you have made a very valid point in saying that the Arthur Highway does not get the attention that it deserves.

Ms BARWICK - No, it does not. I talk about these boats and the registration on recreational boating as well.

Mr MULDER - I know.

Ms BARWICK - You see these rigs going down the Arthur Highway and they are worth millions and, of course, naturally, we love them all but it can be very frustrating to be stuck behind some of this sort of stuff and nowhere to overtake.

Mr MULDER - Which goes to my next point. A highway like the Arthur Highway, given the volumes of traffic and the kind of traffic that gets on it and tourists dawdling around looking at things really ought to be a three-lane highway all the way through at worst - and four lane, preferably - but three lanes with switching things so there are constant passing lanes.

Ms BARWICK - Absolutely, yes.

Mr MULDER - Just to let you know I am on side.

Ms BARWICK - Good.

Mr MULDER - The other point with your trial, which came out in Kingborough - and I am sorry I haven't the Tasman one here, it is down in my office - was they are saying that the idea is to reduce the speed that people travel at because they cannot get into the traffic accidents too well because the statistics are too low. I was really interested to note, and I would be interested to see, if you can lay your hands on what the same figures are for Tasman but the figure that we got in the Kingborough report - it is under 4.2, changes in mean free travel speeds. Have you a section I can have?

Ms BARWICK - I did have that somewhere.

Mr MULDER - That does not mean stingy people who will not pay either.

Ms BARWICK - As I said, we had a great compliance initially and that faded as well.

Mr MULDER - But this is the speed at which people are actually travelling now and you see something here - and this is in the Kingborough municipality - overall there was a 0.9 kilometre reduction in the mean free travel speed. What a huge lowering of actual travelling speeds.

Mr BARTLETT - Yes.

Mr MULDER - So instead of travelling down the Arthur Highway at 100 kph they are now travelling down it at 99 kph with no foreseeable impact upon the accident statistics, for some reason.

Mr DEAN - In fact, that is worse.

Ms BARWICK - We were actually better than that - and I just cannot find it - we were quite good to start with but we got sick of being good.

Mr MULDER - The figure I was using was after the 24 months.

Mr BARTLETT - We have no figures after 24 months and this is four years.

Mr MULDER - The other note, of course, is the Central Coast Municipality which was their twin municipality, and the actual overall speed fell by 1.6 kph and they did not have a speed limit trial.

CHAIR - Jan, would you be prepared to table that report?

Mr MULDER - We have it. It is included in the Monash University accident -

Ms RATTRAY - We have only just got that today.

Ms BARWICK - It was completed in June 2011.

CHAIR - I am leaving the table for a moment, so Mr Mulder will be Deputy Chair.

Ms BARWICK - Free travel speeds - were you looking at the actual graph there?

Mr MULDER - At 4.3, just below the graph in the Kingborough one that says, 'Free travel speeds,' and it is between that and the table.

Ms BARWICK - The extent of compliance with the posted speed on sealed roads in Tasman fell from 88 per cent in the baseline period where the speed limit was 100 kph to 68 per cent after 24 months when the speed limit was 90 kph. Speed compliance in Break O'Day, where the limit remained at 100 kph, was effectively constant, 85 per cent, then 84 per cent.

The reduced speed limit in Tasman was also accompanied by a small change in the overall speed distribution whereby slightly more drivers travelled within the 80 kph to 90 kph range while the proportion of drivers above 90 kph fell from 36 per cent in the baseline period to 34 per cent for the 24 month period.

The free travel speed distribution in the Break O'Day municipality also showed little change with slightly more vehicles travelling above 90 kph.

Table 2 shows the proportions of vehicles with free travel speeds as reflected in the baseline 24 month et cetera.

Mr MULDER - For the record, I am reading from the Monash University Tasman Safer Speeds Trial 24 Month Report.

There was a 2.1 kilometre reduction in mean free travel speeds in the 12 month period compared to the baseline. In the 12 month period, people were travelling, on average, 2.1 kilometres slower. It is a significant improvement.

However, the 24 month evaluation shows only a 0.02 kilometre reduction in mean free travel speeds compared to the baseline.

With those figures, mayor, would it be fairly safe to conclude that if the purpose of the trial was to reduce the speed at which people were travelling on these roads, it is an abysmal failure?

Ms BARWICK - It did not, yes.

Mr MULDER - Not putting words in your mouth.

Ms BARWICK - No. I might have mucked it up a bit because every time I saw one of the speed -

Mr MULDER - No. The observer participant.

Ms BARWICK - I was always doing 90 kph until I arrived there.

Mr DEAN - You said that originally you had a discussion with DIER and DIER was interested. Did I hear you correctly when you said that when the statistics did not look that good in relation to the crashes; in other words, that crashes had gone up, that there was little response or little contact between your council and DIER after that period of time?

Ms BARWICK - The Community Road Safety Committee still exists and we still have a representative from DIER who attends those meetings. The CRSC attempted to put a motion to council or tried to get the council to pass a resolution to decrease our speed limits to 90 kph but we did not do it. That was a bit confusing because it was basically presented to us as a report and then nobody prepared a motion or a recommendation on it anyway. All we did was accept the report and we have never ever voted to keep the 90 kph limit. After the two years, although all the signage is still there and all of us still think we have to obey the signage, four years later DIER released this and they still have their road safety committee that meets but council have never ever voted to retain 90 kph.

Mr DEAN - We were provided with some statistics this morning in relation to serious injury accidents and fatalities on 100 kph roads. This is from the period 2003 through to 2012, about a nine year period. There were three fatalities in your locality - your council area - and there were seven serious injury accidents during that period, which is not a lot but it is too many. Those fatalities - it is probably coaxing you - I would like to know whereabouts they were and I am trying to look at the map we were provided with as well.

Ms BARWICK - We had a really bad year prior to one of those years. I think we had about 10 deaths on our highway. It must have been just prior to those statistics. What years did you say?

Mr DEAN - That was between the period 2003-2012 and probably calendar years.

Ms BARWICK - I can show you. You wanted to see on the map where they occurred, some of them.

Mr DEAN - The triangles are the fatalities.

Ms BARWICK - Oh, it does show you.

Mr DEAN - They are not on the Arthur Highway, some of them, are they?

Ms BARWICK - That one is.

Mr DEAN - Obviously some of them have happened in the Sorell area because there were a couple recently.

Ms BARWICK - There are some recent ones that aren't here that have happened on the Forestier Peninsula. I would have thought they were in that 2012 period. There was certainly a death in this general vicinity which is not marked. There was another death here that is not marked.

Mr DEAN - They are all sealed roads, aren't they? There are no gravel roads in any of those marked.

Ms BARWICK - They are sealed. This one here, I suspect, is to Roaring Beach which is a gravel road. There was a young girl killed out there.

Mr DEAN - That is right. On the end, wasn't it, where they hit?

Ms BARWICK - Yes, but there are some deaths missing. There is definitely a death somewhere near Oakwood that is not marked. There was another death on the Forestier Peninsula that is not marked.

Mr DEAN - If I can ask the question there, Jan - that crash that occurred at the end of that road was this one here. That identifies where that girl that was drowned, you think, off the end. Even if they ran off the end. What was that one?

Ms BARWICK - No. The people who drowned off Pirates Bay drove off the jetty. That is not identified either. That is not here either.

Mr DEAN - That would have been a public road, perhaps a jetty identified as a public road;. I don't know whether it would be or not.

Ms BARWICK - That is another death that is not identified. That was at Eaglehawk Neck. She was with her boyfriend, they were down for the day; it was just terrible - a young girl with her boyfriend speeding out at Roaring Beach which is gravel road, rolled, and killed her.

Mr DEAN - That was a gravel road one, that one?

Ms BARWICK - That one was a gravel road and to be honest, with Roaring Beach you have chosen probably one of the worst roads. I would think 60 would be too fast for that road.

Mr DEAN - That was my next question. Are the gravel roads in your area, if you are going to reduce it to 80, but I guess there would be gravel areas, very clearly roads that should be reduced to 60, shouldn't there?

Ms BARWICK - Yes, and that is one of them. In fact the crazy thing about that is that is almost in the debatable road. It has been signposted at 60 but then we have erected this big - that causes other confusion when you see gravel roads at 80 kph and sealed roads at 90 kph where in actual fact Roaring Beach, I would consider, should only ever be a 60 kph road.

Mr MULDER - It is a problem with the default thing, isn't it? Every road should be marked according to the appropriate speed for the duration of the road rather than -

Ms BARWICK - It is. Absolutely. To be honest, I remember going to the bakery or whatever, it doesn't matter, I remember a gentleman who lived at Roaring Beach said to me, 'Jan, why have they increased Roaring Beach road to 80 kilometres.' I thought. 'What is he on about. It should only be 60, it has always been 60, why has it been increased?'. Then I realised that there is a 60 kph speed sign but a bit further down is

one of these general signs that say 80 kph on gravel and 90 kph on sealed. I hate to say it but that may very well have contributed to that young girl's death. The fact that it was signposted at 60 kph but -

Mr MULDER - Drive past the 80 kph and it is all right.

Ms BARWICK - Yes.

Mr DEAN - One further, if I can, on DIER. Monash put together the report and obviously they were controlling this whole thing with the statistical data. Has Monash come back to you at all as the mayor of the Tasman Council in relation to their report, figures and comments?

Ms BARWICK - No, they presented this to us. They came and presented the report; of course, you are quite right about the theory that there is not enough data to justify the outcome. That was what we were told after the first year and that is why we went on to the second year. I am sure they might have loved us to go for a third or a fourth year, but how long would we continue to try to get the data that they were looking for you?

Mr DEAN - I did not say that.

Ms BARWICK - He did come and present it.

Ms RATTRAY - Jan, we were provided with this map this morning of the proposed speed reduction roads around Tasmania. Have you had any consultation around that?

Ms BARWICK - No, we have not. Our general manager has been written to and obviously had the criteria listed. He - and I guess the Arthur Highway is here, no doubt -

Ms RATTRAY - It is, and you have been identified on this as being reduced to 90 kph and I cannot see any pink lines for you, but, please, you might -

Mr MULDER - I had trouble telling the red from the pink.

Ms RATTRAY - Pink is 100 kph, red is 110 kph and my understanding is that they are not going to be changed and then the black is going to be reduced to 90 kph. I am interested to see what sort of consultation, considering that your council was good enough to undertake the trial, whether the department or anyone has come back to you and sought some feedback before this map was printed and these areas had been identified.

Ms BARWICK - Not that I am aware of, unless it has been provided to them by the Community Road Safety Committee. I know our general manager received a list of criteria and he - I do not know that I have ever seen this, I do not know whether our general manager has -

Ms RATTRAY - I was interested to see if you were aware of any sort of consultation process following your trial before this was put together.

Ms BARWICK - No. I am perhaps being a bit cynical here as this was a spectacular failure. They probably did not consult us. I don't know.

Ms RATTRAY - I did hear on the radio this morning the Mayor of Central Highlands also indicated that they had not had any consultation or been informed about what roads might be put on to this map. It does say it is a draft, Jan, so there might be opportunities. Let us hope.

Ms BARWICK - From what I can understand from my general manager, he absolutely hates no response to anything like that; he seems to think from a criteria that we would not have any hope of ever getting the Nubeena secondary road back up to 100 kph, which is the road which runs you turn off at Taranna and it goes through Premaydena, Nubeena and around; it is the loop road around to Port Arthur. I have not read the criteria but he said it is that hard and that we will be hard pressed to even get the Arthur Highway back to 100 kph, so it is pretty tough, is it? The criteria?

Ms RATTRAY - It has been relaxed.

Mr MULDER - What they have said in there is that they have assessed all these roads and based on their condition, they have determined what the appropriate speed should be, and even that has been not assessed according to the national standards but a relaxed version of the national standards just to squeeze these roads even into the 90 kph sometimes and the 100 kph bracket. If they are already fiddling with the national standard, I would not hold much hope of getting them to adjust that even further. I am here to give you a voice and not to depress you.

Ms BARWICK - The way I see, if the Arthur Highway has to stay at 90 kph then I think they need to change its name to the Arthur Track or something, because basically that is what it is.

Mr DEAN - This committee will have an opportunity to report on these issues.

Mr MULDER - You will note on that map - and it is actually a draft map - and it was provided to us today. The green lines are the high-volume areas, where the idea is that the volume is where the money should go. The other map you saw was the accident map, and you might notice that there are yellow squares on it which relate to priority and actually funded projects. I am wondering why -

Ms BARWICK - I know what you are going to say, but continue.

Mr MULDER - they are all in the electorate of Bass - sorry, I am wondering why they are all in the northern part of the state yet you have an alleged funding commitment to the Arthur 'Track' for \$18 million and it does not even appear on the map.

Ms BARWICK - No. Again we get into the parochial stuff, so close your ears. But you would be aware that obviously we do feel a little bit neglected in the south and we have run, through the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, twice now A Fair Go for the South prior to the last two elections. I am sorry, but the fact is if you drive up north you have actually entered another world when it comes to roads. I am sorry to say that, but it is the truth.

CHAIR - I don't think we will get into a north-south here. We could start pointing that around the other way.

Ms BARWICK - We are talking about the football teams.

Mr MULDER - I would suggest perhaps that that cannot be accurate, given the fact that they have committed to \$18 million in the south -

Ms BARWICK - Well, who knows?

Mr MULDER - and I am wondering why we have been given maps which are blatantly incorrect. That is a question for the department rather than for you.

Ms BARWICK - Another question, then: the fatter the green line the more the volume?

Mr DEAN - The green line that is probably down the reader -

Mr MULDER - The green lines are the high volume routes.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Ms BARWICK - Some of them are thicker than others.

Mr MULDER - They could be, but I do not know.

Ms BARWICK - You are not sure because -

CHAIR - We only just got these maps this morning.

Ms BARWICK - Okay, because it can -

Mr MULDER - There are some issues that we need to clarify because, as I said, Mr Chairman, clearly the maps are not accurate and here we go again.

Ms BARWICK - Clearly, I have always thought that our volume was greater on the Arthur Highway than on the Tasman Highway and that would indicate, if that were the case, that that is how it is compared but -

Mr MULDER - We have come to a unanimous conclusion that we have incorrect maps and it is something we need to take up with the department. That is it for me, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR - Thanks very much, Jan.

Ms BARWICK - Can I just say also that I think frustration at not being able to overtake and everybody driving along at 90 kph or less - and most people get along at less when they are tourists, anyway - possibly is the major causes of the accidents, really, and so by reducing speed limits it just causes more frustration, which causes more risk-taking behaviour.

Mr MULDER - We look forward to your Community Road Safety Committee driving up the Arthur track at 70 kph because they are allowed to do 90 kph now.

Ms BARWICK – Yes, the Community Road Safety Committee only. There are about six members and clearly the rest of us do not do the right thing.

CHAIR - Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Ms BARWICK - Thank you for hearing me out.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.