

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET
AT THE HENTY HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM, LEVEL 4, 1 CIVIC SQUARE,
LAUNCESTON ON WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2008**

Mr JOHN CHARLES YOUL, RETIRED FARMER, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Could I ask you to give us your full name and occupation.

Mr YOUL - John Charles Youl, retired farmer and company director.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for your thoughtful submission. We are very pleased to have the opportunity of getting your views on road safety and I do know of the intense interest you have in this. I would like you to address your submission in whatever way you would like, knowing that we have read it, and detail any matters and then we would like to ask some questions as we go through that.

Mr YOUL - At the end of my submission I have said that I do not believe you have to have a university degree to be able to work out some of the things that need to be done, but in looking through the 2001-05 strategy it says:

'Any response to the road toll must be scientific and strategic',

so that puts me out there -

'Road safety strategies need to be approached using scientific evidence and as part of the overall strategic framework and measures that are selected for inclusion in road safety programs need to be supported by process of development, trialling, implementation and evaluation.'

I think one of the problems there is that it seems to take forever to get some of the things implemented that a lot of people feel are absolutely essential.

Ms FORREST - If you wanted to list the things you think are absolutely essential, John, what you say they are?

Mr YOUL - Absolutely essential is the education of children at a very young age to change the attitude to driving as a whole. I think the second one to try to change the current problems we are seeing in drivers is that they ought to be retested for their licence at a minimum of every 10 years. I think you will all admit that if you knew you had to go for a licence test say in the next week or so, you would be doing everything possible to make sure you knew all the road rules and were driving in a manner that you thought would get you through the test.

Mr DEAN - I would probably lose my licence, John.

Mr YOUL - This is it; I think a lot of people feel that way and I think a lot of people would until they realised that they had to change their attitude. I think the attitude is the main problem we have at the moment.

Ms FORREST - With the education side of it, we have seen some evidence about considering driver training as a program that starts in year 9 through to year 12, ending up with a Certificate II I think it was.

Mr YOUL - But that's later in school than what I am suggesting.

Ms FORREST - Yes, but as part of the process in that time they also get their driving experience after 200 hours. Do you think there needs to be something earlier on in school?

Mr YOUL - Yes, it is too late by then.

Ms FORREST - Do you think that has any value?

Mr YOUL - They have already been, if you like, trained probably by their parents or other people in the way they drive. It is too late because they cannot then all of a sudden say, 'Yes, I'm going to be a safe driver'. It has to come right down from the beginning. If I take my grandchildren out and I make a mistake, I am in big trouble, and they tell their mother, 'Mum, you shouldn't do that', because we have taught my children and my grandchildren about safety at a very young age.

Ms FORREST - So whose responsibility it, then, the parents?

Mr YOUL - Parents are not capable, that is the trouble. Well, not all of them; some of them are of course but parents are passing on the dangerous habits that you see everywhere on the road at the moment.

Ms FORREST - You are talking about very young children. Very young children will not be able to control a vehicle and we do not particularly want them to.

Mr YOUL - No, that is right, but eventually they will.

Ms FORREST - I am getting to that. If you instil these values and attitudes in the young children, whether it be through parents or some other program, when they go to get their licence and are able to drive, do you see the current program of obtaining their licence appropriate, or something more along the lines I was talking about, like a competency-based assessment process that deemed them competent to drive as opposed to passing a test?

Mr YOUL - Well, I think you've lost the chance to change or to instil in people safeguarding attitude.

Ms FORREST - No, I am saying if you do something early as well, but obviously they are not going to be driving a car at that stage. When they get to the age when they can, what do we need there?

Mr YOUL - I think what you are doing already is pretty good there, but you want to keep this safe attitude all the way through the school years, I think. People will say that it is a huge problem to probably have that in a curriculum but what is more important, the person's safety when they get out on the road or the ability to spell properly or whatever? If they have the right attitude on the road it makes a huge difference to the road problem.

Ms FORREST - Would you agree then that the safe attitude issue could be across many areas and not just road safety? A school bus is a road safety issue, but even alcohol and drug use, their sex life activities and all those sorts of things which come back to that safe attitude and knowledge. Is that something that could be encompassed in a more broad educational framework from very young kids? We have sex education for very young kids. If you can follow that safe approach into those areas as well, would that be a way of integrating it into a curriculum?

Mr YOUL - I think so, but I think we could probably leave that to the experts. I think what is being done at the moment is good from the point of view of what you are planning to achieve but when you have people of 15 to 25 before they are really getting the education on road safety it is too late. The adrenalin is out there; the young people are indestructible in their own minds. I think you have to start right at the beginning and keep it going all the way through.

CHAIR - Until they qualify for a licence?

Mr YOUL - Yes. Mr Jim Cox has said that he is dead against advanced driver training because he feels that it gives them more confidence. In other words, they are more inclined to think that they're better than they are. He did make the mistake, I think, on the ABC at one stage saying 'defensive driving' - but I think it was a mistake. Defensive driver training is essential. We have that available but it's not compulsory, is it, to get a licence.

Ms FORREST - The Government has projected defensive driving courses as having the same effect, though. They have said that defensive driving courses cause this attitude and aggressive behaviour - the defensive driving, not the advanced driving.

Mr YOUL - Have they done defensive driving courses?

Ms FORREST - No, they haven't. I did it recently and made a comment and that was the suggestion they made.

Mr YOUL - What did you think?

Ms FORREST - I didn't agree.

Mr YOUL - Exactly.

Ms FORREST - But they lump them in together, that's the problem. The research they were using was a combination of both and with a lot of it you couldn't determine what was being assessed, whether it was defensive or advanced. That is why I think there is some confusion when they switch between defensive and advanced. You say that defensive is essential. Do you have an issue with advanced or do you think there's a place for it?

Mr YOUL - I think in some respects in the younger age group advanced driver training may be a problem but if they already have instilled in their mind the safe driving attitude from a very early age then advanced driving might not cause the effect that Mr Cox thinks it does.

CHAIR - At what stage do you think learner drivers should undertake the defensive driving course?

Mr YOUL - I think it should be before they get their licence.

Ms FORREST - Before they get their learner's licence or their provisional?

Mr YOUL - At least before they get their provisional. I think probably they need to have some basic skills before they go to it. To make them do a defensive driving course before they have learnt to drive wouldn't be very satisfactory, I think.

CHAIR - As to the funding of that, what would you suggest?

Mr YOUL - That's the problem. As I said in my submission, it seems that the amount of money put to the road safety issues is minute compared with what is needed. Where it comes from, I am not sure, but Mr Cox had some statements in the paper not long ago about the cost to the community of road carnage and if we can reduce that, obviously the Government is still going to be better off, from that point of view, on the cost. Whether it is Federal or State, I do not know. But it is such an important issue.

Mr DEAN - I think the \$20 levy that we currently all pay on registrations was earmarked, wasn't it, for road safety issues?

Mr YOUL - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Looking at budgetary constraints, there is only so much, do you think there would be more value in funding a defensive driving course for students during that learner year perhaps before they get their provisional licence, rather than running advertising campaigns on TV, which are quite expensive? It is a matter of opinion whether you think their messages are good or not, I guess, but do you think that would be a more beneficial use of that money?

Mr YOUL - I think it would. Defensive driving, I think, is so important. But are the TV ads working? I do not think they are because you cannot change somebody's attitude that is just ingrained. We have had the problem with the defensive driving training that you bring people in, say, from a company and they have two days of defensive driver training, both practical and from the point of view of instruction, but I have been with some of those drivers later and they have just gone back to the same thing because you cannot just change the habits that are ingrained there over the years. That is why it needs to be done right at the beginning, so that it is there and they carry that forward.

Mr DEAN - How do you see then - you talk about a defensive training course and so on, and I do not disagree - the current training that is given to learner drivers to get the first part of their licence?

Mr YOUL - I am not familiar with it so I am not quite sure. It has basically, probably, been passed down by a parent or whoever has taken them to get the hours up.

Mr DEAN - Yes, hours and certain things and there is quite some difference between the way we do it and some of the other States do it, with certain modules and competencies and so on.

Mr YOUL - If you have an incompetent parent teaching a child and taking them for the hours that they have to get, you are not achieving what you want.

Mr DEAN - The issue that has been raised with us is that you have it that learner drivers must comply to the 80 kilometre speed limit where ever they are under all circumstances. Do you see that as a problem? They go from a learner driver to a provisional licence holder on the 80 kilometre speed limit and then, all of a sudden, as some people said yesterday, I think it was, a fairy waves a bit of a wand, and they can do 100 to 110 on the open road et cetera, with no training between the 80 and the 110 kilometres whatsoever. Do you see that as an issue?

Mr YOUL - This is where advanced driver training would come in, I think. But I do not see how else you can change that really. You need to have the restriction in the early part of their driver training, but you cannot really graduate over a long period.

Mr DEAN - I suppose you could under the close tuition of a driving instructor.

Mr YOUL - Yes, but there are not enough driving instructors.

Mr DEAN - That is another issue.

Mr YOUL - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Regardless of who the supervisory driver is, and I take on board your comment that not everyone is competent to be one, but they still fulfil that role, if after 50 hours, say, of supervised driving the student undertook some sort of test to determine their competency in managing the vehicle at 80 kilometres an hour in various situations -

Mr YOUL - Do you mean on the basis of defensive driver training?

Ms FORREST - Well, whatever; some sort of test, basically; some sort of process. So if they pass that they could then travel supervised for the remaining time up to 110kph, depending on where they are, and gain that experience under supervision.

Mr YOUL - Yes, well, I'm not sure exactly how you are going to bring it into the system. I mean, obviously there's going to be a problem of enough skilled defensive driver trainers. In the education of children in schools, teachers are going to have a pretty comprehensive map in front of them as to what they should be teaching the children all the way through. It's not easy; it will never be easy, Ruth, but I think you probably agree that you can't just suddenly change those bad habits in one or two days' training.

CHAIR - What are some of the most common bad habits that you've observed? You mentioned a number of them in your submission.

Mr YOUL - Driving like that -

CHAIR - With one hand?

Mr YOUL - Or talking on the phone,, everything that distracts from the concentration on what they're doing. There are quite a few things I've said in here. If you stood in the middle of the street and watched them coming along I reckon you might say one in 10 is really sort of expecting something might happen and is ready, but the others are just charging through, probably driving with one hand, probably with a phone, et cetera. I think it all comes back to education.

From the point of view of the practical way that I've looked at life, with modern inventions changing the equipment we buy because they're not up to scratch, I've always thought of finding a simple way of doing things. I think when it comes to the training, obviously if you are going to put that in the curriculum, it's going to need a lot of input, isn't it, to get it right.

Something that probably annoys other drivers a lot is the incorrect use of indicators. Hardly anyone uses them correctly. They're supposed to say, 'I am now turning; I have turned', not, 'I'm going to turn or I'm going to change lanes'. They do it after it's happened or halfway happened.

CHAIR - If at all.

Mr YOUL - That's right. I can't turn the wheel without putting the indicator on. No matter where it is; a car park, on the road or anywhere. It has to be a habit to just do it.

Would you like me to go through any of these things?

CHAIR - Yes, by all means, and please highlight or refer to any that you wish.

Mr YOUL - We talked a lot on the training side of it -

CHAIR - Holding the steering wheel?

Mr YOUL - Well, you see, a lot of people don't believe that. Many think that holding the wheel means holding it at the bottom to steer, but if you're driving around the road and you've got cars coming towards you, how far away are you before that car starts to veer towards you? It could be a couple of seconds; it could be 10 seconds, it could be a fraction of a second. If it's a fraction of a second and you're not holding that wheel correctly you've got no hope. If you're not concentrating, they run into you before you even start to move the wheel. If you are expecting them all to run into you and you are holding the wheel correctly, you have a chance to deal with it quickly. You can't do it with one hand.

CHAIR - What is the best position to hold the wheel? Is it 10 to two or quarter to three?

Mr YOUL - There is a bit of debate. Ten to two is my ideal because if you go to quarter to three you have the spokes in the way of your hands. I noticed on TV there is an ad with, I think, one of the racing drivers saying that he believes that is where you should hold it.

CHAIR - At a quarter to three?

Mr YOUL - Yes, but I think that if you hold it at 10 to two, you have those spokes below and you have a good grip of the actual wheel instead of half-gripped with the spokes in the way.

CHAIR - That's what my father taught me, 10 to two.

Mr DEAN - My father taught me one hand on the wheel and one on the gear lever!

Mr DEAN - On distractions, do you have a view on all of the gear inside a car, such as car hi-fis and directional finding items?

Mr YOUL - They are getting to be essential. I think if they develop them further, they actually make them safer, but at the moment many of them are a big distraction. The science can go a lot further to the point where the cars can tell the drivers they are too close or you are doing or not doing what you should be.

Ms FORREST - Some of the newer cars have the controls - the radio and stuff - on the steering wheel so your hands don't leave the steering wheel to change channels or volume.

Mr YOUL - That's right, you don't even have to look away.

Ms FORREST - No, that is right, you just adjust it.

Mr YOUL - I think some of those things are good but as far as CD players, phones et cetera, you would have to leave those to the passenger or if you don't have a passenger, wait until you stop.

Ms FORREST - Even for cruise control in some cars, you have to let go of the steering wheel to adjust it, like mine currently. For the other ones I have had the control is not the steering wheel so you don't have to let go of the steering wheel to adjust your cruise control. These are the sorts of features that perhaps need to be looked at more closely.

Mr YOUL - Absolutely, and no car is the same. I have cruise control, radio control and so on all on the wheel, at my fingertips.

CHAIR - The dip switch on the wheel - I have often wondered why that is not still on the floor rather than on the steering wheel.

Mr YOUL - Especially on an automatic vehicle.

CHAIR - Yes, because it is a bit of a distraction, even though it is on the steering column, to have to release the pressure on the steering wheel to hit that.

Mr YOUL - Yes, that is right.

CHAIR - It seems to me that the old system of having the dip switch on the floor -

Mr YOUL - It is something else for your foot to do and some people, as I have said, can't coordinate hand and foot action.

Ms FORREST - Some people don't wear sensible shoes.

Mr YOUL - Yes, high heels, sandals.

Ms FORREST - Or thick soles are bad too.

Mr YOUL - Another thing is with the latest Honda CRV; the previous one had the handbrake in the normal position but this one has a foot-operated park brake. I think they've gone back 20 or 30 years with that and it is automatic. It is in the way of your left foot. If you have a crash, it is another thing that can break your ankle. I can't believe that companies do some of the things they do, but there are a lot of good things coming out and, as you say, there are a lot of things that distract.

CHAIR - Do you know why they have the dip switch lever on the steering column and not on the floor as it used to be?

Mr YOUL - I think probably it is fairly easy to get to. Most of time you have to drive with you lights dipped anyway because there is constant traffic. As you did, I got very used to the floor-operated one. In an automatic vehicle you have a foot free to do it all the time. I think there are certain things that distract us, certain things that are good and I think they will get better generally. As I was saying, the single most prominent fault is that most drivers do not expect something untoward or dangerous to happen and they are therefore not willing or able to react in the right way or quickly enough to avoid the problem more than likely resulting in a crash of some sort. I think that is where it comes to concentration on what you are doing. It is so easy to drive modern vehicles, isn't it? You can drive them with your little finger until something goes wrong. That is where the trouble is, because people are not expecting something to go wrong. You have to be ready for it all the time so that you control your life, what you are doing.

CHAIR - Another fairly common practice, I think, is for drivers, when talking with a passenger in the front seat, to look at the passenger. I never do that. I always look straight ahead and the passengers get to understand after a while that this rule applies. But we do not hear anything about advice to that effect.

Mr YOUL - That is a detail of defensive driving and defensive driver training. All those little details come up. I simply cannot believe the Government has not done something about legislating to use headlights in reduced visibility - rain, fog, smoke. I think in Italy now all cars have their lights on all the time.

CHAIR - In Italy, yes.

Mr YOUL - I cannot believe that sensible people cannot see the difference between having their headlights on and having their park lights on.

Ms FORREST - Park lights are for parking, I understood. That is one of my pet hates.

Mr DEAN - You cannot see them.

Mr YOUL - I have talked to people and ask why that should be the case. The whole thing about having your headlights is to make your car visible. Say, in fog and people have their headlights on, the first thing you see is the lights and then you see the vehicle. People who use their park lights, you will see the vehicle probably a lot closer - probably three times as close - as you would with their headlights on. As they go past you see that they have their park lights on. That is how useless they are. I cannot understand people not realising the difference. You see it with bus drivers, even police.

Ms FORREST - Dawn and dusk are bad, especially dusk because usually at dawn they start driving with their lights on but at dusk there are so many cars and it is getting too dark to see them.

Mr YOUL - To take it step further, if you are driving with the sun behind you in the morning or late afternoon, and there are cars coming towards you they are having a job to see you because of the sun. If you had your headlights on then, it would make it easier to see those vehicles. A lot of people do not even think that those people probably cannot see because of the sun.

Mr DEAN - There is an argument against having lights on all the time. The argument is that if vehicles have their lights on all the time, as another driver you are not really conscious of that after a while, you switch off. Whereas if they are only used as you say in fog and at dusk then it is a much better system.

Mr YOUL - There is an argument both ways there. I think some of the European countries have decided that it is better to have them on all the time because people can't decide when they actually should be on.

CHAIR - In British Columbia in Canada apparently they are required to have lights on all the time, I'm told.

Mr DEAN - The automatic system is obviously improving things there where, even if the sun goes under dark cloud, the lights will automatically come on.

Mr YOUL - As I say, I think a lot of those things will come to be right in time.

Ms FORREST - If cars are designed to turn their lights off once you get out of the car, the risk of leaving them turned on is not such an issue.

Mr DEAN - While we are on that point, can I raise another issue that has been raised with me, and that is car colour. The position put to me is why do we now allow grey and some of these hard-to-see colours on a road. Why isn't something done about that?

Mr YOUL - I don't think you are ever going to change that. If they have their headlights on it covers the problem.

CHAIR - For marketing reasons it won't change, you think?

Mr YOUL - I don't think it will. You are always going to have people using older cars that still have those colours. You can't expect everybody to have the latest car. As I said a few minutes ago, I can't understand why they don't legislate - when I suggested it in, I think, 2001 they said, 'It's too difficult to write up the legislation'.

Ms FORREST - It would be easy to enforce. Things such as smoking with kids in cars is difficult to police and enforce but if your headlights are on or off, that is pretty easy.

Mr DEAN - It is not easy at all.

Ms FORREST - Well, it is pretty clear whether it is happening or not.

Mr DEAN - I don't disagree that they should legislate now. If you legislate something most people comply - 99 per cent of people comply and they go along with the law. It is difficult for police to get convictions in certain circumstances, as to whether it was dusk, when the sun is down, whether it is foggy.

Ms FORREST - But if you legislate to have the lights on all the time a car was driving on the road, that is easy. They are either on or off. If that was the rule, rather than at certain times -

CHAIR - Then they will be complaining that with daylight saving there is an extra hour when you have to have them on.

Mr YOUL - If we legislated to have lights on in reduced visibility - you say police are going to have difficulty in prosecuting because of the argument, but they could have a go at those who are blatantly without lights on in fog or rain. People say, 'Why do you need them on in rain?' A very close friend of ours was killed on the Midland Highway because he went to pass a truck in rain, neither he nor the car coming the other way had their lights on. The spray from the truck blinded them. If you say you need them on in rain, they might argue that one.

Mr DEAN - On that one, John, I don't think it is compulsory at this stage that trucks must have those side curtains on the wheels.

Mr YOUL - It won't stop it though.

Mr DEAN - But it certainly cuts it back. Do you think that ought to be a safety thing that we ought to be looking at, that it ought to be compulsory for trucks to have those side curtains?

Mr YOUL - I think it is a good thing. There are a lot of things when it comes to truck safety that I think probably could be changed, and that is one of the things.

CHAIR - So with rain, the visibility of the driver is obscured even with the rain coming on the windscreen.

Mr YOUL - Yes, that is right.

CHAIR - You have mentioned that you would like to see legislation on this subject. Are there any other matters that you would like to see legislated?

Mr YOUL - Some of the changes that need to be done to the road structure that I mentioned - if you look at the roundabout at Breadalbane, you will see that one of the poles has been hit so many times it is all shapes, with bumps and so on. They are in the worst possible place on the outside. If vehicles happen to slide on a greasy road in light rain or something, that is the first thing they will hit.

My step-daughter was recently on the back of a motorbike with a friend and came off on the roundabout and she went sliding sideways into the pole, resulting in multiple injuries. It might have been different if the pole had not been there. The rider did not hit anything and he was okay up and walking. The other thing is the electricity suppliers - HEC as it used to be - how many could we say they have killed on the road by having the poles along the edge of the road? And it is still happening.

There are high raised culverts, concrete culverts, up this high above the road; there are lots of things like that they could change.

I am not sure on the rules as they apply in roundabouts. Is it correct that you must give way to a car in the roundabout?

Mr DEAN - No, the rule, and I don't think it has been changed, is give way to your right.

Mr YOUL - Thank God for that. Somebody told me you had to give way to the car in the roundabout and that would be impossible.

Mr DEAN - That is a nonsense; you must give way to your right only. So many people don't understand roundabouts and they try to give way to everything, which clogs up traffic and causes harassment. On one roundabout here recently I got out of my car to tell the driver at the front to not do it because they had pulled up and there was a whole heap of traffic held up. Unfortunately the lady drove off just as I got there.

Ms FORREST - She thought you might have a go at her probably.

Mr DEAN - I was going to.

Mr YOUL - Yes, she was scared stiff.

Mr DEAN - The law is that you give way to your right on the roundabout only.

Mr YOUL - That is good then because I think there are a lot of people out there who are under the wrong impression.

Ms FORREST - Most of the cars on your right are in the roundabout coming towards you so that is where the confusion has come.

CHAIR - You make the point in your submission that there should not be visual obstructions in the middle of the roundabouts.

Mr YOUL - Let's say you are going out from here and as you approach you have the direction signs and they are just at the height that in most vehicles it blinds your view of the other cars' indicators. I think they need to be down low so that they don't block the view of anybody, no matter what car or vehicle they are in.

Ms FORREST - Give way signs often fall into that situation, and at intersections too. They seem to put them out right at the end. The idea is to sit them back from an intersection a little bit, not for them to be right up there -

Mr YOUL - That is probably right.

Ms FORREST - There are number around Burnie I have noticed that block your vision of the car coming from the right.

CHAIR - There is an interesting roundabout at the intersection of Brisbane and High Streets, Elphin Road and Lawrence Street. One of the Government drivers describes it as the peanut one. It is well designed, really.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it is.

CHAIR - It suits that intersection very well; it is a complicated one. It has a brick wall in the middle of it which provides obstruction to some extent.

Ms FORREST - They plant trees and stuff inside some of them.

CHAIR - I think that they are starting to wake up and think. Some of the ones that had severe obstructions have been removed.

Mr DEAN - One of the reasons that the engineers put up is that it gives protection to other vehicles coming into that roundabout because they come down the hill and some vehicles have skidded through. The wall will give protection from a vehicle coming right through the roundabout. That is one reason for it. They have kept the roundabout low on the ends, with an obstacle in the middle, so the drivers can have good vision. The middle is slightly higher because they say that does not really cause a driver too much of a problem. I think Michael Shipp, an instructor, was very critical of it earlier, but Michael has now come out in support for it. I may need to be corrected but I think he said that.

CHAIR - Which one are we talking about?

Mr DEAN - The one at City Park.

CHAIR - The top end of City Park.

Mr YOUL - I think that is good.

CHAIR - It is well designed, but it is unique I think.

Mr DEAN - It is.

Mr YOUL - My son has been in Italy a fair bit and in the last 12 months he has noticed a big difference from using traffic lights to replacing them with roundabouts. He said the traffic continues to flow whereas before there used to be queues of traffic waiting for the lights.

CHAIR - If there is sufficient space or you can make sufficient space they are ideal.

Mr YOUL - I have written letters to the appropriate authorities asking why they cannot synchronise the lights all the way from the first light at the bottom of the hill right through to the Mowbray outlet, or the highway.

CHAIR - The bottom of the hill in Wellington Street.

Mr YOUL - No, the bottom of the hill at the Southern Outlet.

CHAIR - They are coordinated through Bathurst Street.

Mr YOUL - But not till you get to Bathurst Street. In other words, you come down the hill, you wait for the light to change, go to the next one and you could wait there again. You go to the next one and you can wait there again. From there on they are synchronised. It is the same with Wellington Street. It is terrific and I think one of the lady mayors organised that years ago. Think what it costs trucks and so on to pull up at all those lights.

Mr DEAN - The carbon emissions and so on.

Ms FORREST - They drop oil on the road when they are changing gears like that too.

Mr YOUL - Probably a gearbox occasionally.

Ms FORREST - I have not seen many gearboxes but you see oil.

CHAIR - If you are going down Wellington Street, travelling north to that T-junction with the Southern Outlet road you very seldom get the green light at Balfour Street. It is the first one but after that they are coordinated.

Mr YOUL - The answer I got was they had more important things to do. I just cannot understand it. There were complaints about the traffic hold-ups around Launceston and it could be done quite simply. They have the facilities to do it.

Ms FORREST - Maybe the Launceston City Council aldermen need to get onto that.

Mr YOUL - That is who I approached first.

Mr DEAN - It's not Launceston City Council aldermen, it's DIER.

Ms FORREST - They can approach the relevant authority.

CHAIR - When those lights in Bathurst Street going north and in Wellington Street going south were coordinated, Roger Groom was the Minister for Transport. I think it was his decision and I remember the official switching them on.

Mr YOUL - They are set up for a constant 40 kph speed through.

Ms FORREST - Maybe you should write to the Climate Change Office.

Mr YOUL - Should I?

Ms FORREST - It is a climate change issue.

Mr YOUL - I am hoping that somebody here will take it up.

Mr DEAN - The argument against it that DIER will put up is a reasonable argument. If you have them synchronised for too long a stretch, drivers know that and therefore they increase their speeds; they travel at speeds which really are not safe, even though it is 60 kph in most of those areas through there - Bathurst St and Wellington St. That is not the speed you should be travelling at most of the time.

Mr YOUL - They will soon find that they are blocked because they're going too fast.

Mr DEAN - That happens and they get blocked, but they say that they need to let vehicles know that they have to be very cautious and one way of doing that is by not synchronising too many. They synchronise through a built-up area, as they have done in Bathurst and Wellington streets, but when they go towards the end they change them over infrequently.

CHAIR - At the moment, if you have vehicles coming out of Wellington Street turning right into Bathurst, at the bottom of the Southern Outlet, there is a tendency for vehicles to travel too quickly after turning into Bathurst Street to try to catch the first of the coordinated lights at Balfour Street. That counterbalances the fact that some may go through a bit quickly once they are in sight.

Mr DEAN - That raises another interesting point, too. DIER will tell you that is exactly what happens going down Bathurst, Wellington and other streets, drivers know that they are all synchronised and therefore if they miss the first one that they have to wait for the whole thing to change.

Mr YOUL - But surely they will learn eventually that you will catch up that car that got through at the next light.

The biggest problem is that people are not expecting things to happen and therefore are not ready, not holding the wheel properly and so on. As I have said in my submission, as a fire officer on the Midland Highway I have seen a lot of head-on collisions that could have been avoided if they had just turned onto the edge of the road and they would have had plenty of room to go through. I remember there was one at Woolmers turn-off where a truck driver was travelling south and an elderly man coming north veered across and eventually ran into the truck. The truck driver said to me, 'He just kept coming'. That driver had the full width on the left where he could have turned away from him.

Ms FORREST - Did he fall asleep or have some medical condition?

Mr YOUL - I don't know. I think he might have had a medical condition. The truck driver could have avoided him. He just stayed in his lane and then afterwards said, 'He just kept coming straight at me', and he didn't divert. This is the real thing that I push about holding the wheel properly and expecting something to go wrong with the cars coming towards you.

Ms FORREST - The truck driver in that instance obviously was watching him. He said he kept coming, so he was obviously thinking, 'He's going to wake up in a minute and redirect his course' -

Mr YOUL - Too late.

Ms FORREST - I have been faced with that same situation with a car going across the Midland Highway in front of me. You have to make a decision to go to the right or the left. If they wake up and you go to the right, you're going to hit them head-on; if you go to the left and they don't wake up, you are going to hit them on the verge. It is a hard decision. For a truck driver to make that decision, they have a big vehicle that takes a lot more slowing down than my vehicle does. In that case I went to the right because there was four lanes of road and nothing else was coming. The person did not wake up but just kept going off the side of the road. She was asleep. I was watching but I braked heavily and thought, 'Which way do I go?' You've got to do it all very quickly -

Mr YOUL - That's right.

Ms FORREST - and with a small car you can do it.

Mr YOUL - As I said, modern vehicles have ABS braking systems. A lot of people have never done a panic stop with them and they don't realise what the pedal's going to do.

Ms FORREST - Yes, that's what defensive driving teaches you.

Mr YOUL - Yes.

Ms FORREST - How to use the brakes.

Mr YOUL - If they do it the first time to avoid somebody they'll probably take their foot off and think something's gone wrong.

Ms FORREST - That's right.

Mr YOUL - I've avoided head-on collisions six times in my life now and the most recent one was just south of the Symmons Plains property entrance. There's a sliding vertical curve there and there were three cars coming towards it and a ute trying to pass through them. I didn't have to leave the road in this case but I have before, on one occasion resulting in a very serious accident. I hit the brakes and almost stopped and he had time to get back in, but a lot of people wouldn't hit the brakes. They'd just think, 'What do I do?'. They're not thinking of what they're going to do in that sort of situation. You've got to have it in

your mind. It's the same as saying, 'If this light goes yellow I'm going to stop'. It has to be there in your mind.

CHAIR - I think there are an increasing number, but probably a small number, of people now who on the roads driving are pretty alert to what might be coming around the corner ahead of them.

Mr YOUL - I think there's -

CHAIR - More consciousness of it.

Mr YOUL - Yes, there are quite a few middle-aged and older drivers who are more alert because they're probably a bit concerned about their driving. So there are some better drivers in the middle-aged group but the percentage is very low, Don.

CHAIR - Yes, and there's really nothing being done by the authorities to create that awareness and attitude but it could be done perhaps through media tips.

Mr YOUL - Well, as we've said, it's very expensive media, and what do you decide that you'll put on? I suppose you could alternate with those different sorts of things.

CHAIR - And probably try to influence the media to make time available at no cost in the interests of road safety -

Mr YOUL - Yes.

CHAIR - for tips that are well thought out by people experienced, such as yourself, in driving.

Mr YOUL - I think probably the ABC would be willing to do that, wouldn't they?

CHAIR - I think it should be explored -

Mr YOUL - Yes.

CHAIR - the possibility of that.

Mr DEAN - You are probably getting to it. I am pretty anxious to get to speed cameras.

Mr YOUL - What do you think about what I've said there?

Mr DEAN - I don't disagree with you. America went down this track a long time ago of having signs up all over the place and having cut-outs placed along their roads and they said it had a marked decrease in the number of accidents and offences committed by drivers. So I don't disagree with this. I was seeking your view on the speed cameras; you get the notice about seven days later and sometimes even longer than that after you've gone past the speed camera. So if the speed camera is out in the open, people see it, then they know very well that they've got themselves a ticket if they've gone through too fast. I don't disagree with the comment.

Mr YOUL - Yes, and that's the common argument by the public, that it's happened - damn - but there probably won't be another one before they get to Hobart so off they go again.

Mr DEAN - The comment was made to us yesterday about how many accidents have speed cameras prevented. There is no evidence that they've prevented any accidents at all really. Devonport is a good example of that, the Devonport accident where three people were killed. They went through a speed camera at 150 or 160 kilometres an hour, or whatever it was. Within 200 metres of the speed camera they had an accident and all three were killed.

Mr YOUL - A speed camera cannot stop that.

Ms FORREST - Would a marked police car sitting on the side of the road in the same location potentially have changed it?

Mr YOUL - It might not for that sort of driver that has just seen red - the red mist - and he is off. It might not change that but it would for most drivers, wouldn't it?

CHAIR - A greater visible presence of police vehicles and motorcyclists on the road would be a deterrent?

Mr YOUL - It is. We would probably all admit that if we are driving and we see a police car we think, 'I'd better make sure I'm doing the right thing'.

CHAIR - That is right.

Mr YOUL - I think it affects everybody like that.

Ms FORREST - I do not follow them. If they are going under the speed limit, I will go past them. Other people follow them. It is interesting watching that behaviour.

Mr YOUL - Do you think what I have said there is okay?

Mr DEAN - I think it is good.

Mr YOUL - I might have to change one thing. It might not be able to say that they are operating; it might have to say 'may operate'.

Mr DEAN - 'Cameras are operating in this area'. By that you are not saying they are operating today, but they could be operating tomorrow or next week. So you could say that: 'cameras are operating in this area'.

Mr YOUL - I am not sure what the lawyer would say.

Mr DEAN - That is acceptable at law. The police have looked at these things before as to what you can say and what you cannot say. Can you mislead people? No, you cannot deliberately mislead people but if you have a sign with something like 'cameras are operating in this area', then it could be operating tomorrow, it could be operating the next day or next week.

Mr YOUL - In other words, the sign is wrong on some days and right on others?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr YOUL - It might say 'may be operating'.

Mr DEAN - Yes, 'may be operating' would work; 'from time to time will be operating'. Whatever. You can have those signs. It is about road safety, it is not about deliberately trying to cause false apprehension or what have you.

Mr YOUL - One person could do a good job on that, couldn't they?

Mr DEAN - Absolutely.

CHAIR - It is just a matter of terminology, isn't it, how you phrase the sign.

Mr YOUL - Yes, and carting them around and moving them around to new areas and so on.

Mr DEAN - Do you have a view on where they ought to be placed? There is evidence given to us that they are placed in areas where it is very clearly not a road safety issue - and the Bridgewater Bridge is a good example down south where the camera is there now -

Ms FORREST - Nine trips out of 10 when I go it is there.

Mr DEAN - Nine times out of 10 when I have been there it has been on the Bridgewater Bridge. I do not know of any fatalities on that bridge for many, many years. But at Perth and in some of those other areas do you believe -

Mr YOUL - I think that you would obviously need to have somebody with a bit of nous and pick areas that are potentially more dangerous. Sometimes you might say it might be a good idea to have some where there is a big open road and they tend to really get over the speed.

Mr DEAN - The police did have a system - and it has now been changed - where because of the quota system they had to get so many speed camera bookings per hour. That caused them to have them set up in places like Campbell Town and Perth and on the Bridgewater Bridge and so on. That has been done away with and the cameras are better placed now than they used to be. But it still needs work, I might add.

Mr YOUL - I noticed, for instance, that they have one - I presume it is one - in a vehicle just as you approach the northern roundabout on the old Midland Highway. It is a ute and the windows are all blacked out so I presume that is one. That is in an 80 kilometre speed area. I think most people when they get nearer to the roundabout probably get well below that anyway. It would not photograph a car until it is, what, 20 metres away. I do not know how many they get there per month but I suppose you have to use your head a bit there.

CHAIR - I think even though they have been used as a fundraising measure in some obvious cases, generally they do help to create the right attitude of drivers and discourage speeding -

Mr YOUL - If the drivers see them.

CHAIR - The very fact that they could be anywhere makes some people drive within the limit.

Mr YOUL - I have been a bit reluctant to put this out into the public arena previously because I did not want people to know that we were going to try to fool them with dummies and the signs in areas where there are cameras and so on. I guess we could have publicity of the fact that there are to be a lot more speed cameras in the areas that you would not expect them to be in, or something like that.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr DEAN - John, do you think there is a case in Tasmania, as we have in Victoria in particular and some of the other States as well, for the overhead sign across the road that registers your speed as you go through, showing what speed you are doing? Do you think that we ought to be looking more at selective signs as well?

Mr YOUL - I think they are good but very expensive, I would think.

Mr DEAN - They are.

Ms FORREST - I have seen mobile ones around the State that are being used.

Mr DEAN - There are some good mobile ones around but the static ones -

Mr YOUL - There is one at the top of the hill on the Southern Outlet that tells you there is slow traffic ahead, which is good I think.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr YOUL - The other one going off to the left tells you that you are going too fast, but the trouble is that it only alerts the car that is going straight on, it is not directed on the cars that are going to turn left. The car going straight on that is doing 110 is setting it off when the other car that is going left is probably only doing 60 or 80 or something.

CHAIR - On the question of speed limits, I imagine you would agree that they should be reasonable, and to get maximum observance they need to be perceived to be reasonable. Do you have any views about the reduction of the speed limit on the northern section of Campbell Town from 80 to 60?

Mr YOUL - Too far out I think.

CHAIR - That was the second-highest location for speed camera infringements for some period of time and it was quite unjustified I think. When there was the publicity about that they ceased having a speed camera there as much. It just seems to me that is an unreasonably low speed limit for an area where there are very wide nature strips and hardly any pedestrians.

Mr YOUL - Yes, I think it is too far; they need to put them further into the township before you get down to the speed.

CHAIR - As it used to be?

Mr YOUL - Yes.

Ms FORREST - John, you made comment earlier about speed cameras and I know pretty much where they are going to be between Burnie and Hobart. They don't move them very often so once you have gone past that one you know that there is not going to be another right up the road. That is the way it is at the moment -

Mr YOUL - You probably think that way but -

Ms FORREST - What I am saying is, does that actually discourage speeding? People see them as they go past and drivers flash their lights to let them know they are there, so they watch out for it and once they have seen it they can just take off.

Mr YOUL - Yes but then occasionally you get the police car further down the road as well.

Ms FORREST - You did mention though that you thought it did not necessarily modify behaviour because people see it and then move on. Do you think that is an issue with them?

Mr YOUL - I think it is, and this is why I think that if you have these signs about, drivers are not going to be sure where exactly one operates, and maybe they would have to think twice about speeding.

Ms FORREST - But where there are no signs about, I know and most other road users would know that there are spots where speed cameras are put. It is not always in the same place, there can be a few different spots -

Mr YOUL - I often that would be a great place to have it and they do not have it there.

Ms FORREST - True, but if there were fake ones out there and more signage, people would never know where they were going to be, even though they have ideas where they might be. Do you think it really would make a difference? If people are conscious of it and people care, they know there could be speed cameras along the way anywhere, so what is the difference between what we have now and having a heap more signage and dummies?

Mr YOUL - It is just that you would have so much more visual warning that there might be a camera.

Ms FORREST - So the constant reminding, do you think, is the issue rather than the fact that they might take your photo?

Mr YOUL - Yes. You do not think so, Ruth?

Ms FORREST - I do not know. To people who are seriously focusing on their speed and watching what they are doing, I do not know that it would make a lot of difference because most of those people are already doing the right thing. But to those who do not really care, will it make any difference? It is just human nature and you cannot change people's attitudes easily.

Mr YOUL - They may be caught now because the camera could be there. That is what I am saying, that the cameras are there now.

Mr YOUL - As Ivan said, in areas where they have used this system it has been found that it works.

Ms FORREST - Do you have evidence of that?

Mr DEAN - In America. I can get you statistical evidence, I should imagine it would be available; they used them and there was a lot of good evidence, and Tasmania Police did too at one stage. They had cut-out cardboard police vehicles.

CHAIR - They do that with the figures of policemen in Japan. You mention in your submission the use of devices that prevent the switching on of vehicles' ignition if the driver is above the legal blood alcohol level.

Mr YOUL - I think that came up in 2001 or 2004, with the use some device that stopped repeat drink drivers?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr YOUL - I think eventually it needs to be on all vehicles because a lot of the time they are out with their breathalyser in what they consider to be danger areas. What about all the drivers who are thinking they are getting away with it on the back roads and so on and do get away with it a lot, sometimes to their own detriment but probably sometimes to somebody else's as well? If they were on all vehicles so that you could not drive you had alcohol on your breath, I think it would make a hell of a difference.

CHAIR - Do you have any views on the limit, whether 0.05 is reasonable or whether it should be lower or zero?

Mr YOUL - With a device that stops you from starting a vehicle, unless you have to blow -

CHAIR - No, I did not mean with a device but the limit generally.

Mr YOUL - One glass of alcohol, one glass of whisky or whatever, bacardi and coke, will have an effect and the more you have the more it affects you. I think there is a graph from 2001 submissions showing what the effect of alcohol is and how it increases. It used to be more than that didn't it?

Mr DEAN - Yes, it used to be 0.08.

Mr YOUL - I think 0.08 is getting too high for sure. At 0.05 I think they are about at the stage where they are feeling pretty confident but if it came to the test they would find that

their reaction time is down and their abilities are down, even at that. But I guess we are stuck with alcohol, the biggest curse of the world, I think. We can't wipe it all out. I suppose we have to have a limit somewhere. What do you think, Paul?

Mr HARRISS - It doesn't matter what I think, John. The chairman raised the question as to whether you have a view that it ought to be zero.

Mr DEAN - There are some countries that do have zero tolerance.

Mr YOUL - For everybody?

Mr DEAN - Yes, the driver that is. A driver must have a zero reading.

Mr YOUL - Not just the provisional drivers?

Mr DEAN - No, all drivers.

Mr YOUL - A lot of people would be in trouble if they had a big night out and then wanted to drive to work in the morning, wouldn't they.

Mr DEAN - But that is just as dangerous. The police have a lot of morning random breath testing operations and they do pick up a lot of people. They are just as dangerous the next morning as they were the night before.

Mr YOUL - I'd be all for zero tolerance.

Mr HARRISS - I was interested to hear you say that you think there is some graphed data around which gives an indication of the effect at 0.05 and then it jumps exponentially from there. It sounds as though there has been some reasonably scientific assessment of that.

Mr YOUL - I have it here somewhere.

CHAIR - You mentioned the 2001 submission, John. That is the government strategy 2001-05.

Mr YOUL - I have one in my submission that says if you don't have both hands on the wheel after 10 seconds you get a warning; I don't know whether that would be acceptable. The truckies with their two-way radios and all that sort of thing - you're probably not going to get that through.

Mr DEAN - I would like to get back to the alcohol issue. The current problem we have with 0.05 - there was a similar thing with the 0.08 when they had it and they used that argument when they reduced it - when people drink they say, 'I can have two or three light beers' or 'I can have two heavy beers and one light beer and I'll be right'. You currently have that attitude about how much they can drink to make sure they are under the limit. A zero system would get rid of all that, wouldn't it, because you'd know very well that you have to have a soft drink if you are the driver.

Mr YOUL - Yes. I know that one of the advanced driving courses on the mainland - I think in Queensland - had done tests on the effect of one drink, two drinks and so on. One drink definitely affects you straightaway and it affects your abilities more as you have more. So zero by all means, but I don't know how you get that through either. Shut the pubs at 10 o'clock.

Ms FORREST - There is also the issue of some medications containing alcohol, such as cough medicines and desserts that have liqueurs in them. These are issues that you would have to consider, wouldn't you?

Mr YOUL - I think you would.

Ms FORREST - Certain things have an impact on you and maybe this is relevant.

Mr YOUL - I guess you just have to be more careful. If it's zero, you have to make sure, 'Does that cake have any alcohol in it?' and don't have it.

Mr DEAN - You are unlikely to get a reading on the breathalyser by eating a cake with liqueur in it unless it was absolutely laced.

Ms FORREST - It depends on whether the alcohol has been cooked or not.

Mr DEAN - Can I revisit the speed issue? John, do you have a position on the open speed limits currently that we have, the 110 and 100 kph. Are you comfortable with them or do you have a view on what that speed limit ought to be on the open roads?

Mr YOUL - I am pretty comfortable with them as they are. As I have said, you do not have to have more and more laws to cover the worst drivers. How far do you go? I think the 50 kph limit in the built-up areas is good. I am not sure what is going to happen with the 80 kph limit on country roads. Is that through yet?

Mr DEAN - No, they are trialling it in the south.

CHAIR - In Kingborough.

Mr YOUL - It can be too much of a blanket, I think. Some of the country roads are really good, probably as good as the Midland Highway in some respects. Bringing the limit down to 80 kph on those roads does not make sense. I do not think we want a blanket system like that.

CHAIR - Speaking of the Midland Highway, what are your views about long-term planning and construction of a four-lane highway?

Mr YOUL - It would be a lot cheaper to put a divider straight up the middle of the road, wouldn't it?

CHAIR - How would that affect overtaking?

Mr YOUL - That is the big problem, of course. We would need a lot more passing lanes and they would want to be done better than they are at the moment where you have passing

areas. I think having them all coming to a single lane again at one point is just asking for trouble. They have a 200-metre division between one side and the other side. If they could afford to put a dual highway through, that would make a huge difference. Some accidents are caused by people entering the road and not seeing a vehicle coming and that sort of thing. Around the Oatlands area there is quite a lot of that happening. I do not know about the estimated costs but I think they vary from very little to a lot. What is right, and who can afford it? It would be nice if it were dual all the way like the Southern Outlet for instance.

CHAIR - And it would save lives.

Mr YOUL - It would have to. The other thing is the ripple strips. I know that one of the arguments for the ripple strip down the left-hand side of the road was that if people didn't have that and they get out into the gravel, they tend to lose control and go across the road to the other side. A lot of people don't know where their wheel is within a foot to 2 feet. You should know where it is within a couple inches but a lot of people don't and if they tend to keep away from that ripple strip, it means that they're 2 feet or more closer to the opposing traffic and the time they have is a lot less. The ripple strip down the middle in my opinion is where it ought to be because then at least the person near the centre of the road will turn the right way.

Ms FORREST - There have been some concerns about motorcyclists, I understand, with that, that it is not an even surface and if they are passing vehicles and that sort of thing it can be a bit of a hazard for them in the middle of the road.

Mr YOUL - We have a lot of Harley-Davidson riders who want to sit in the middle of the road all the time.

Motorcycle riders tend to sit so that they can see past the car in front of them. I believe that the driver training for a motorcyclist is really good here, is that right?

Mr DEAN - It is quite good.

Mr YOUL - An accident that happened - this was in Western Australia - to my step-daughter was caused by a Tasmanian rider and he just did something stupid - missed a red light or something. The ads on TV saying, 'You're on your own' et cetera, directed at motorcycle riders, I think are good because they aren't taking notice when you see what they are doing. Some of them are off the air.

Ms FORREST - Some car drivers are too, you have to admit, though.

Mr YOUL - Yes, that is the trouble, it is both. It is over the whole spectrum, isn't it?

Mr DEAN - The ripple strips on the side of the road have been proven to prevent accidents and perhaps prevent death, I don't know. It is said that when you are driving a vehicle and you start to get drowsy, as some do, unfortunately, and they keep driving, there is a tendency in most cases to veer to the left, for some reason or another, and therefore once you hit the ripple strip, it brings you back and away you go again. I must admit it has happened to me once.

Mr YOUL - That is probably right. It depends how badly you are dozing off, I guess. There was one recently who just drove off the edge and took a Hydro pole with him. It didn't stop him from going off.

Ms FORREST - Some people stop because they think there is something wrong with their car. I have heard that happen. That was some time ago.

Mr YOUL - There is one other question I want to ask. Is there a rule that says - Ivan, you can tell me probably - that you are not to cross the solid white line on the left of the road?

Mr DEAN - No.

Mr YOUL - There was a perception that that was a rule too.

Mr DEAN - No, to my understanding there is no rule to say that. In actual fact, the rule in the national guidelines says that you can cross a double white line in certain circumstances - if there is a very slow-moving vehicle on the road, a tractor or what have you, you can cross a double white line to go past. To my knowledge, the white line on the side is simply a guide to motorists. I stand to be corrected.

Mr YOUL - I was reading somebody's letter to the paper where they said they were booked for crossing the white line. That is why I asked the question.

Mr DEAN - It could occur, but I didn't think that was the law. You are talking about on the open road and the line on the left-hand side of the road?

Mr YOUL - Yes.

Mr DEAN - To my knowledge, that is not the case.

CHAIR - That is on the edge of the road.

Mr YOUL - It would be terrible if that rule did exist.

Mr DEAN - I will see if I can find out, but I don't think it does. I could be wrong.

CHAIR - I can't understand why it would be there because if there is enough space you can pull off the side of the road at any time.

Mr YOUL - Exactly. I couldn't understand it but that letter made me ask the question.

CHAIR - There must have been some misunderstanding there, I think.

Mr YOUL - I think everything that I have said here is important. I think the most important thing is the education and the re-testing of existing drivers to try to break the terrible habits that are going on at the moment. I think re-testing has to have a big effect on people because they are obviously going to work hard to make sure they pass the test. It is refreshing what they should know but I don't think you will change the whole attitude of everybody until you do it from a very young age in the schools.

CHAIR - To be totally effective re-testing should be required nationally with so many vehicles coming across on the ferries.

Mr YOUL - Yes, absolutely. That's what it wants. You can imagine how many testers you have to have, and even some of those make mistakes. A friend of a friend of mine recently did not pass his test because when he entered the roundabout at Breadalbane he didn't indicate left. He wanted to go straight onto the airport road and the tester said he didn't indicate left when he entered the roundabout, and of course he shouldn't have until he had passed the old Hobart Road. So some of them still make mistakes. Even in the document that you can get on road safety with all the rules are a couple of mistakes. I do not know whether they have been corrected since I got mine. It seems that money is the big problem, isn't it?

CHAIR - The Government receives a lot of revenue from road users and so there is money available. When it is a question of lives and injuries, that is costly to governments, too.

Mr YOUL - Yes. It would be much better to have the cost of prevention than the cost of the damage.

CHAIR - John, thank you very much for your excellent submission and all the helpful information that you have given us. We appreciate that, particularly as you have such a keen interest in road safety matters, as I know you do. You have been such a successful racing car driver and an expert in this field and we value your input.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr TONY HENNESSY, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Thanks Tony, just for the completeness of the record can you indicate in what capacity you are appearing before the committee today, please?

Mr HENNESSY - First, I am a past governor of the Rotary organisation and was asked on behalf of this Rotary district to prepare a document. However, I do stress that even though it has been read by the District Governor it has not been taken to any specific committees to be ratified by them so, in essence, it is my opinion but having been read.

As well as that, I am a physiotherapist who has worked for 30 years, a lot of that in road trauma. I am a motorcyclist, a cyclist and drive cars so I have had a long experience on the road in lots of capacities.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Okay, thanks.

Committee members have your submission which followed up the initial letter which indicated that the detailed submission would be forwarded. If you would like to speak to that first, because it is important for these processes to have some transcript for ourselves to reflect upon at some later stage and that raises questions by committee members as we proceed.

Mr HENNESSY - No problem.

The first part to me is that I believe we really do need to have a reward and punishment system for people who are doing the right or the wrong thing on the road. I see the MAIB premium at the moment being neither. I believe we have a fantastic MAIB program but the premium has absolutely no relationship to the driver; in fact, it almost works the opposite way by being applied to separate vehicles rather than being applied to the driver. I have put a proposal that the MAIB premiums should be applied to the driver and part of the driver's licence so that, like all insurance, it can contain an element of risk and over a period of time good drivers will receive a reduction in their MAIB premium for not causing concerns on the road while those people who are causing concern should be punished and frankly punished quite heavily if they are breaking regulations severely.

My view is simply that it is an absolute aberration that a person who has lost their licence three or four times in their driving career due to serious infringements, such as drink driving, pays exactly the MAIB premium as a person who has never done anything like that. I think it needs to be applied strongly and obviously you need to take into account that people who drive without licences have no MAIB premiums, so we need to be very forceful about that. That, of course, was made very clear recently in a court case in Devonport where a driver, who had no licence for 16 years and killed a very well-known doctor, was given a \$200 fine and it was recommended she should get a licence. I find that absolutely objectionable.

That is the first part of it and I have put some protocols there. I am not for one moment saying that those protocols are exactly the way it should apply. Obviously, you need to have people assess what is workable, but I certainly see that as useful and that, since a

person can drive only one vehicle at a time, they should have one MAIB premium that covers their driving, not one for every vehicle they have. To me, the benefit of that for the driver is they are likely to have vehicles for separate purposes and that is going to help with things such as premiums paid on sales tax and the rest of it anyway. The dangerous people on the road should be the ones who are paying the high premiums to MAIB.

Ms FORREST - From memory one thing you mentioned - and I read it a little while ago - was the issue of no fault, when you can clearly demonstrate there was no fault in a crash. Would that impact on this at all? You are talking about infringement, aren't you?

Mr HENNESSY - I am talking about serious infringements. For example, we can come later to speeding infringements, but I am talking about the serious things, drink-driving, drug-driving, dangerous driving, including high levels of speeding and so on. Road accidents happen and one of the hardest things to realise is that sometimes they really are accidents; not all the time, I know. You certainly do not penalise someone who is involved in an accident in which they were not at fault. That would be totally unfair.

Ms FORREST - If you can demonstrate negligent driving or something similar, those are the people who would fall under this process you are talking about.

Mr HENNESSY - Even then, some people would be charged with negligent driving, taken to court and given a monetary penalty, but not subjected to a significant suspension of licence. It is really the ones that result in serious suspension of licence that the premiums should rise with and particularly when it is more than once.

Ms FORREST - In minor speeding offences, the placement of speed cameras leaves a bit to be desired.

Mr HENNESSY - My argument with that is that the bonus of reducing premiums by about 10 per cent a year for five years, would not happen in any year that you attract any penalties at all. You would not get the benefit of that but you would not get a premium boost. If you were picked up for a speeding fine and you lost a couple of points, that would mean you would not get the 10 per cent reduction for that year. There is a minor negative impact but it is not serious, but the escalating cost relates to proven dangerous activity on the road.

I have a very serious concern about the number of people driving on the road while on prescription medication that they should not be on the road with. I get the forms all the time. I have people come in to see me and I look at what they are taking and say, 'You are not even safe to get out of bed.' They drive there because no-one says that if you are on heavy levels of Valium or whatever, you should not be driving a motor vehicle.

Ms FORREST - It does say so on the packet of medication though.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, but who knows about it? Wouldn't it be a simple to say to the GPs that if they prescribe some products to people they should notify the road traffic authority to suspend their licence until they come off it? Tough? I do not want to be driving down the road with someone coming at me full of something that has their minds in another place.

Ms FORREST - Some of the over-the-counter medications you can buy, some of the antihistamines, for example, would have a similar effect.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, that is very minor compared to the effect of serapax, diazepam and it gets much worse when you're talking about the psychotropics. Believe me, the cocktails that I see on some people are just staggering. I've had one person that was taking 70 different medications at once.

Ms FORREST - Did you write back to the GP about that?

Mr HENNESSY - Well, I - it's a different issue but it's when you look at what they are - I mean, if these things do not allow you to think straight you shouldn't be driving a motor car.

Ms FORREST - Your drug interactions are also an issue; one drug on its own might not be a problem until you introduce another one.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes.

Mr DEAN - On that, I understood it was a requirement in those situations for the doctors to identify to the patient that they are not to drive while they are taking that medication. Isn't there a requirement there for that to occur?

Mr HENNESSY - There possibly is but I'll tell you it doesn't happen. Obviously for people who are on heavy morphine-based drugs, there are some requirements for reporting of those, but the heavy psychiatric drugs which are handed out for non-psychiatric purposes; one person out of four that hurts their back will be given a heavy dose of Valium to help them sleep. Well, it does help them sleep; all bloody day as well as night, and they drive. That is something I really do believe needs to be addressed. I didn't write it in and it's something I meant to do.

Ms FORREST - Do you believe that the GP who prescribes the medication that has significant impact on that person's capacity to operate a vehicle should inform the patient that they shouldn't be driving and that they should notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles that the person is on this medication?

Mr HENNESSY - I believe in going one step further. I think you list the medications and the doses. You might say 2mg of Valium is not significant but 5mg is, so you list the thing and you say to the GP, if you prescribe this medication to someone, at the time you prescribe it you ask them to hand you the licence and that licence will be returned back to the department until that person is no longer taking that medication.

Ms FORREST - Tony, I hear what you're saying. We have some patients out there who need psychotropic medications to manage their medical condition and when it's prescribed they are told by their GP that the Registrar of Motor Vehicles will be notified and that they won't be able to drive while on this medication. Then they will say they don't want the medication, or they will just go. When the police pull them up and tell them that they're not licensed, according to their GP, they'll say they haven't been taking

the medication because they wanted to drive. Does it open up a whole heap of problems here that are just not policable?

Mr HENNESSY - I don't believe so. I think the protocols just have to be set. You're not going to deal with it if you're talking about small amounts and I think that's a significant thing. I'm not going to tell you where they should be set because that's not my expertise but I think it is well known that there are a lot of drugs on the market that just do not allow a person to think straight and those drugs should not be allowed to people who are driving. There are regulated medical concerns; there are regulated sexually transmitted diseases and doctors have no choice about it; they have to report it.

Ms FORREST - That doesn't stop people having sex.

Mr HENNESSY - You're right, but there are things that have to be reported. What I'm saying is the drugs that are seriously affecting people's capacity to drive should be on a list and if you prescribe it, it has to be reported. Whether you say the doctor takes the licence or the people on the roads look at it and make a decision, that's not for me to say but we have nothing in that regard at all at the moment. People can be given all kinds of medication, which is legal medication, that has serious effects on your ability to think and nobody knows except you and the doctor. I believe that, if you are going to have a licence to drive, those things should be notified and the authorities should have the right to look at those things and say, 'Well, we are going to do some tests of the person while they're on this drug; we'll test your driving capacity.' Maybe that's the way you do it. I don't believe that such drugs should be handed out to people who then drive all over the place.

Mr HARRIS - Yes, we've only just started, Mr Chairman. Tony was addressing his mind to MAIB premiums and the like and then he went onto prescription drugs and so on.

CHAIR - If you'd like to make any reference to your submission or other matters.

Mr HENNESSY - All I can say about the MAIB premium is that I do believe the premium should be related to one's driving record and the only way that can be done is for the MAIB premium to be related to one's licence, not to the vehicle a person drives. On that basis drivers with good records get a reduction in their MAIB premium. People who are serial offenders pay a significant rise in their premium and on the second or third occasion a dramatic rise in their premium.

Ms FORREST - We are informed that when provisional drivers get their licence their risk jumps considerably. Should provisional drivers then pay a higher premium in that first year?

Mr HENNESSY - I do not believe you should ever punish people who have not done anything to warrant punishment. A person receiving a P-plate licence has a clear licence unless they offend but I do believe you have to be very serious about that. Try 10 o'clock on Paterson Street in Launceston any night of the week and you could pick up 40 or 50 people who should have their premium tripled.

CHAIR - Hoons.

Mr HENNESSY - Absolutely. I was at a CPA course last Thursday night and you take your life in your hands crossing the road. It's just unbelievable, and all in cars they shouldn't be driving, but anyway we can come to that.

CHAIR - Did you see many police officers in the area?

Mr HENNESSY - No, in fact I saw none.

CHAIR - That is a problem too.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, particularly where you know it has happened, and it is happening there all the time.

The second thing I put in my submission is about training. Being a motorcyclist myself I believe the motorcycle training program is excellent. Anything that happens amongst motorcyclists I do not believe can go back to their training. With some of them it goes back to their method of thinking but not to training. The people who run the motorcycle training programs are fantastic. I took my son through one of those courses.

Ms FORREST - How long ago?

Mr HENNESSY - Not all that long ago.

Ms FORREST - Who was running the course when you did that?

Mr HENNESSY - That was done at Penguin and I cannot tell you who it was but it was professionally run. I remember the instructor lining up these young fellows when they finished. He walked along the line, shook hands with everyone and took their photo and said, 'That goes on my gallery at home. I do not want to see you, your names or your death notices in the paper.' He said it straight to their face and it was just fantastic.

CHAIR - How long ago did you say that was?

Mr HENNESSY - It was probably six or seven years ago. It has been done well, I believe, for some years.

Ms FORREST - Tony, there has been a change recently in that training. Stay Upright was the one that was providing that training up until more recently when it has become DECA. Do you know which one it was that you were going to?

Mr HENNESSY - It certainly was not DECA.

Ms FORREST - Okay, so Stay Upright.

Mr HENNESSY - There are a lot of things about motorcycling that I think should transfer to car drivers. The first of those is quite obviously that we have no regulations on what motor vehicles can be driven by people on L-plates and P-plates. I find it obscene that we have a driving school here in Launceston using WRX Subarus. Those things will go faster than a Porsche and we have L-plates on them, teaching people to drive. But worse is what they can now buy because an early model Subaru WRX for \$3 000 or \$4 000. It

is a car that kids will buy if we let them and we should not let them. Thursday night was a case in point. The cars racing around the street were all high-powered cars. They Subaru Impressas and Hondas - I cannot think what the particular model is called, but it is a very a very powerful car. There was a Nissan GTR. With that thing, you just put a couple of stripes and you can stick it on the racetrack. Yet these are being driven around the streets on P-plates. It just makes no sense at all. In the motorcycling world you do not have an argument about what you are allowed to ride; you can ride a bike that is on that list and if it is not on the list you cannot ride it. We need to have the same thing with cars. The cars that can be driven need to be basically reasonably low-powered motor vehicles.

Ms FORREST - Tony, in point 6 you make the comment that learner drivers should not be in control of a vehicle with more than two passengers. All the evidence suggests that learner drivers are the safest drivers on the road. It is only when they get off their Ls and they get out on the road that their risk jumps up. Why would you say that they should not have two passengers?

Mr HENNESSY - I do not believe for one moment that they are the safest people on the road. They might have the least number of accidents but they are in situations of prime levels of distraction. It concerns me that you can have a situation where a family is being driven around by a learner driver - it did not happen in Tasmania but it happened interstate less than 12 months ago. An entire family was killed, including an exchange student, not with Rotary but an exchange student whose family had to come out from Europe to pick up the body to take it home. That was a girl on her second driving lesson in her father's Commodore SS with a car full of people. I think all of them died; one might have survived. I just think you lower the risk. People who are learning to drive are not skilled enough to be putting whole car loads of people at risk and I think two passengers are enough - that is mum and dad or it's dad with one of the other kids or whatever. I think it reduces the risk.

Mr DEAN - The one you referred to I think was at Dilston, wasn't it, and they were all killed in that Commodore?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, and one of them was an exchange student.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr HENNESSY - Was that here in Tassie?

Mr DEAN - Yes, it was in Tasmania.

Mr HENNESSY - I think the girl was from Europe or South Africa. I remember the family having to come over and claim her body and I thought, 'What a penalty to pay for someone who decided to teach their kid to drive with a full family in the car'. It was just crazy.

Mr DEAN - On the power of vehicles, the argument that I think I put up or some people put up is how do you get across the position where the only car in the family is, say, a six-cylinder Commodore SS, for instance, and the person is taught to drive in that car?

Mr HENNESSY - I do not see any difference between that and saying how do you get over a young bloke wanting to ride a motorbike and the only bike in the place is a ZZR1100? The reality is you are not allowed to drive it, you are not allowed to ride it, it is too dangerous. My view is you pay a driving school to teach the kid to drive and you get them an appropriate car or they do not drive. I just do not see that high-powered motor cars are appropriate for inexperienced drivers.

CHAIR - You say in point 1 that L-plate training on a closed course with professional instructors should be mandatory. What do you have in mind in the nature of a closed course for learner drivers of motor vehicles?

Mr HENNESSY - I am not talking about for the full length of their L-plate licence but I am talking about for the first two or three lessons, places like the Symmons Plains track or Baskerville where you can be under the supervision of a skilled driving instructor to get you through what is to me a very dangerous time. Getting onto a public highway to have your first experience of driving a motor vehicle to me does not make a lot of sense.

CHAIR - Why would you recommend, say, learner drivers from Queenstown shouldn't have that experience?

Mr HENNESSY - I do not know the west coast well enough and I do not know whether there is a facility available or whether you need to take a section of road that is not used often and put a public notice in the paper to say that piece of road is closed from 12 o'clock until three o'clock next Sunday to enable driving training. If you pick the areas I think you can do that.

CHAIR - And King Island, Flinders Island, the east coast?

Mr HENNESSY - So long as there is a piece of road that you can close for a period of time I would not see a problem but where you have specific places like Symmons Plains then obviously that makes sense.

Ms FORREST - You still have to get there, though.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, but as a learner you are not going to drive down to it anyway; someone is going to go with you.

CHAIR - Should that happen before a learner driver drives on a public street, do you think?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Usually that is the first experience any learner driver has on a public street, unless they have access to farms.

Mr HENNESSY - Many years ago now the changes that said that you had to do your theoretical testing before you started driving was obviously a very sensible move but it was not always like that. It was fairly typical that you drove around for a few months and then you did your test. I think that makes sense. Those first ones I believe should be in an area which is better controlled.

CHAIR - Good, thank you.

Ms FORREST - Regarding the question of learner drivers and provisional drivers only driving at 80 kilometres an hour and then one day they are allowed to drive at 110 without any supervision at that speed, do you have a view about that?

Mr HENNESSY - I definitely do. There are not many things I ever agreed with Jeff Kennett about, but Jeff Kennett said that provisional and learner drivers should not be mobile chicanes on the road and I agree with him. I do not believe that anyone should have a P-plate until they can drive the car at the speed limit so that they are not sitting there waiting for everybody else to run up close to them and have to duck and run. To me, the training process should take a driver to the point where they can drive at the open-road speed limit and they should not get their licence until they can do it and prove they can do it in the conditions they are likely to meet, which includes knowing where not to do the speed limit.

Ms FORREST - As far as the training and testing of our learners going for their provisional licence now is concerned, what is your view of that current process?

Mr HENNESSY - I think the process is pretty good but we need to have a situation where we do not say that if you can drive at 80 kilometres an hour on the road, that is enough and go and learn the rest on your own. You should be able to drive the car at 110.

Ms FORREST - You just said a moment ago that people should not be given a licence until they are basically competent to drive and drive at all speeds that are appropriate on the roads. The current testing regime we have is basically a tick sheet to say, yes, you can handle a car. It does not test your competency. Would you agree that a competency-based system would be better, that does more than just ticks the boxes that, yes, you have done a three-point turn, yes, you have done a hill start and, yes, you have done this?

Mr HENNESSY - It is a long time since I did my driver's test, so I -

Ms FORREST - It has not changed much, I think.

Mr HENNESSY - It probably has. I was just told to drop a wheelie around a bowser and come back. So it probably has changed a bit since then.

Laughter.

CHAIR - Where was that?

Mr HENNESSY - In England.

I would agree with you. I think you should have to prove that you can drive a motor car under those circumstances and it should be an open-road speed limit and show that you can judge when to overtake vehicles and have a reasonable standard of knowledge of how quickly that car can be brought to a stop.

CHAIR - Off-road motorcycle training and activity?

Mr HENNESSY - I have heard people mentioning licences and I think that is not the right word at all. But a certificate of competency I think is important and that should be across all age groups. It would not be hard to ascertain, but a certificate of competency does not give them the right to ride on the road, it just shows that they are able to handle that motorbike off-road and have some understanding and some commonsense stuff about it. Someone from the testing authorities could go to somewhere like Scottsdale for a Saturday afternoon and they could have 400 people turn up and it would not take all that much time to say, yes, that person can ride it and that one cannot.

For a start, they have to be able to sit on the bike and put their feet to the ground and a lot of them cannot. The number of young kids you see, they lean a bike up against a dirt bank and they climb on it from the dirt bank and hit accelerator and go. If they have to stop, they cannot put their feet down and all they can do is fall off. We really do need to say, 'This bike fits them' and we also need to say that they are going to wear appropriate clothing.

CHAIR - Where do they do the training up to that stage?

Mr HENNESSY - Most kids who are doing these things live on farms or whatever and they ride the thing around there and I am not going to say they should not be able to do that. I am talking about once they go off their farm and then they are going onto tracks and into parks and all those kind of things. They should not be on those properties without it. You might even say not on any property other than the ones that the family owns because you are not going to stop them from going around on a farm, I would think.

CHAIR - So you would not suggest any measure of control or regulation for young people on the private farming property?

Mr HENNESSY - I would be very happy to see a regulation that said they had to have done some training to ride it at all. I am not sure whether you can enforce it. I would see four or five a year that will never ever be the same again and a lot of the times it is because of totally inappropriate clothing, no helmets, bikes that they could not control, jump on it for the first time and crash it. If it could be that they had to do some kind of training before they even rode on a farm, I wouldn't argue with it, but I am just not too sure you can enforce it.

Mr DEAN - The problem with that is if you have kids and piwis or the very small motorcycles, in my case, my kids were riding them at about four years of age. It gets difficult to create some sort of training for that.

Mr HENNESSY - I think it does but it is not difficult to say you can't go onto any - if I say 'public roads' I am not talking about roads, but I am talking about tracks through the bush.

Ms FORREST - Public reserve areas and that sort of thing.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes.

Mr DEAN - I thought you were saying that before anybody rides a motorbike, there ought to be a level of training.

Mr HENNESSY - No, I would be happy if that was the case but I don't think that is enforceable. I think you have to say that on private property people are going to jump into an old car and race around a paddock or whatever, and we have to live with that.

CHAIR - And the injuries that flow from that because apparently there are quite a few.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, horrific levels.

Ms FORREST - Are there ever any statistics about the number of injuries, right from the more minor soft tissue injuries right through to the -

Mr HENNESSY - No, I don't have any statistics. I just know we see a lot of them.

Ms FORREST - Do you know if those statistics are kept anywhere?

Mr HENNESSY - Anything serious, the Launceston General Hospital would certainly have plenty. You can talk to John Batten as he has made a few noises about it. In Burnie, I know that he certainly made quite a lot about the number coming in.

CHAIR - And Gary Fettke.

Ms FORREST - A lot of them would just go to GPs though, wouldn't they, Tony - the less serious ones.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, the minor ones. I had a young fellow only a few weeks ago, aged 17 or 18, jumped on a bike for the first time and ripped both cruciate ligaments out of his knee. Fortunately for him - he didn't have a motorcycle licence - the bike was covered with an MAIB premium. He had what would have amounted to \$30 000 worth of medicine that would have cost him every cent of that had he not been on a registered bike.

CHAIR - Did he have a licence?

Mr HENNESSY - No, he had a car licence, no motorcycle licence but MAIB would still pay that because he was on a vehicle with a premium paid on it and that was not on a public road, that was out near Tomahawk.

Ms FORREST - You say that you see lots of them. Do you have any idea how many? Obviously, it varies with the different times of the year because people are out much more in the summer time.

Mr HENNESSY - As I said, I would see four or five a year with serious injuries and I don't even count the number with minor stuff, like sprained ankles or wrenched knees or whatever, you tend to treat them as an orthopaedic injury. It is the serious ones that are of concern.

CHAIR - It is my understanding that MAIB would not provide any coverage unless the driver has a licence for their appropriate class.

Mr HENNESSY - I would have to check his records. I am pretty sure he never had a motorcycle licence but he certainly had it paid by MAIB.

CHAIR - I see, that surprises me because it is not my understanding of their requirements.

Ms FORREST - Because it was a registered bike, they might have waived it.

Mr HENNESSY - It was a fully registered motorcycle.

CHAIR - I see.

Ms FORREST - If it was an unregistered bike, which most of these off-road trail bikes are -

Mr HENNESSY - Then they have no cover at all.

Ms FORREST - That's right, but when it is registered they do make some concession sometimes with it.

Mr HENNESSY - I saw him and sent him to the hospital, where he had surgery and came out going, 'Oh my God, this is going to cost me everything'. I suggested he talked to MAIB. He came back and said they had agreed to pay.

CHAIR - I see. Anything else on off-road motorcycle training?

Mr HENNESSY - We don't do off-road motorcycle training, but we should. As I said, I think we need to be much stricter about lots of things in relation to it, particularly levels of clothing, safety gear, certificate of competency. I also think that off-road motorcycles should have a mandatory MAIB premium.

Mr DEAN - We were told that it is possible to get MAIB cover for an off-road bike irrespective of whether the bike is registered.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, you can.

Ms FORREST - It is not compulsory, though.

Mr HENNESSY - Adding to that, at the moment we have an influx of horrible things coming on the market mainly out of China. Some of those are totally unroadworthy but they are on the market. If you go to Mowbray during school holidays on any given day you will find a half a dozen of them being ridden by kids under the age of 10 in the main street, through the traffic, no helmets, nothing. Not on the footpath, on the road.

CHAIR - The next topic you have dealt with is road maintenance and reconstruction.

Mr HENNESSY - Road surface, particularly for a motorcycle, is something that sometimes is a major concern. I mentioned the one in Wivenhoe, where the road was chewed up for putting a new surface and it has stayed like that for probably three years. On a motorcycle that is pretty horrible because those things are not lined up straight. They will throw a bike around fairly severely. It is a good move to do that chewing up of the surface to get the bonding of the next level but it should actually happen. Roundabouts,

particularly ones which are dumped in the middle of an intersection, are frightening. There is one in Smithton - do you know the one I am talking about there?

Ms FORREST - This end of Emmett Street?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, it is. Here the road was not altered at all, a roundabout was dropped in the middle. There are four different angles of roads coming to it and a roundabout dropped in the middle that changes camber at every 90 degrees, it leans the wrong way to start with and it has water running off the roundabout back across the road. On a motorcycle, the first thing to do is just do not go near it. Find another intersection.

Ms FORREST - There are other ways to get into town.

Mr HENNESSY - But if you do not live in Smithton or if you do not spend time there it is a real trap.

Ms FORREST - Neither of the main streets is particularly good.

Mr HENNESSY - The one in Ulverstone on Risby Street is probably the worst I have come across. It is just horrible. We need to be saying if you are going to put a roundabout in, reconstruct the corner to make the thing consistent, not only for motorcycles, for cars and everything else. Those ones were mentioned because they really are very dangerous.

As I said, road signage is something that really worries me. Coming towards Westbury is one of those cases in point where you have a big green sign saying, 'Turn left to go to Westbury'. If you do you go into a information bay with a solid end to it and then people come flying sideways out straight in front of traffic. It only needs to be moved 50 yards down the road to be past that information bay and it would be perfectly safe.

Ms FORREST - I did note that when I drove through this morning.

CHAIR - Two of our former members were caught by that a few years ago.

Mr HENNESSY - Also the one here on the Midland Highway north of Campbell Town where you have the truck weigh-station which is very well made. But if you come across that in fog it is very easy to think that it is just a divider telling you to stay left of these arrows. If you do you then have a closed steel gate. I have spent a lot of time on the road and those things stand out to me. I think we really do need to be very clear about how we mark things and signpost them. The other one, which is now gone, is the entrance into Ulverstone from the east where the left-hand lane took you off the road and the amount of times that people would realise that at the last moment and just drive back across the traffic island.

CHAIR - There is a very complicated road network there. I think it is an indication of how intelligent people are in Ulverstone that they are able to get in and out through that.

Ms FORREST - It is good now. They have even put the speed limit back up.

Mr HENNESSY - Another thing that drives me nuts is inconsistent merge rules with zip lanes and merge lanes. Nobody has ever given me a reasonable explanation why we

need two different ways to do the same job. I just think you need to make a simple rule that either says you follow the zip procedure or you fit the merge procedure and you have one, not both. It makes no sense to me at all.

Mr DEAN - I saw a good example of that yesterday when driving up for this inquiry. A give way to the right applied because the lanes came together and it was clearly marked but the driver on the inside refused to do that. The other car had to drive up outside the double white lines to try and get back in but they should have stopped as well, of course.

Mr HENNESSY - Another place that each of you would know well is the Brooker Highway going into Hobart. Every one of those intersections has an extra lane on the left-hand side; you go through to the other side and it vanishes. It's a race track. They just gun hell out of the motor and try to get across in front of the traffic.

CHAIR - Appropriate speed limits: I agree with your views there; they must be seen to be reasonable.

Mr HENNESSY - And clearly marked because there are so many places where the limits change so often. I get caught every time; you come from Brighton up to about Bagdad and three or four times on that piece of road you're thinking, 'Am I in a 100 kph; have I not seen the sign; am I in an 80 kph; where am I?'

CHAIR - Do you think it's reasonable to have a 60 kph limit at the corner of Brighton army camp area?

Mr HENNESSY - Absolutely not.

CHAIR - And the northern part of Campbell Town?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, particularly the one at Campbell Town because of the rigidity with which that's enforced. I don't know if it's still there or not but I had an impression there for a while - with all respect to you, Mr Dean, and your previous job - that a police officer was there without enough to do because he just used to sit there and book every second car that came past. It was ridiculous.

CHAIR - For a period they had the second-highest number of infringement notices issued.

Mr DEAN - The camera has now moved to the Bridgewater Bridge.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - Tony, as far as Campbell Town goes there has been a lot of discussion about that end, but right in the middle of town there was Banjo's, Zep's and all those other eateries. Some of the staff that work in the area said there've been a lot of near misses, particularly involving pedestrians. People coming south tend to park on the left hand side in the angle parking there. Do you think that should be 50 kph through there? If you look at Brighton, you will see that no-one actually crosses the road at Brighton very much.

Mr HENNESSY - From a personal perspective I think the 50 kph speed limit in town is a nonsense. I just don't see any benefit for it. I think there are a lot of things there. That angle parking, I think, is a real problem because in trying to get out of it you're just going to create havoc.

Ms FORREST - The big trees.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, the big trees and all the rest of it. I think the parking needs to be looked at. I would go so far as to say you need a lane of traffic down the centre and you need to have traffic islands to take the parking away from access to the road and then they've got to come back onto it. There are plenty of towns on the mainland where that has been done, on towns with very wide main streets and it works really well.

Ms FORREST - Centre parking?

Mr HENNESSY - No. Basically, you have traffic lanes down the middle and then off the side you've got concrete barriers and people park over there, so they pull out and come along and then they've got a place to come back onto the road. There's no risk of backing out into traffic.

CHAIR - Road design; roadside hardware?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes. There is a thing about visible policing and I think that's pretty obvious.

CHAIR - I think there'd be a unanimous view on that.

Mr HENNESSY - I just believe we need to have visible policing.

Road design and road hardware furniture, to me, is a concern. We have several things in relation to those. Brifen wire is a very good piece of design. I just think it needs to be made safe and the way to make it safe, as far as I'm concerned, is to put a reasonably solid plastic cover over it that goes to the ground - whether it's for a motorcyclist or not. I mean, if you drive a Mazda MX5 sports car and hit Brifen wire, it'll rise up over the windscreen, drop down and take your head off. We really do need to have a situation where those things have a good quality plastic cover over it which will allow the Brifen to do what it needs to do, take the car off and bring it back again, but without the situation of having the potential to go through it.

CHAIR - Plastic cover over all the wiring?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, from top to bottom.

Ms FORREST - Tony, if the action of the wire is to grab the car and hold it, isn't it the wire that grabs it, so if you put covering over it aren't you defeating the purpose?

Mr HENNESSY - That may be what they say. I think the reality is that, because it distorts and you slide along it, it is going to slow you down without bouncing you back. I do not think that the plastic would have any serious effect on that.

Ms FORREST - We had evidence yesterday that it was the posts in the Brifen wire. A motorcycle organisation said it was the post that caused the severing of limbs and decapitation and the like, not the wire.

Mr HENNESSY - I would argue with him but he is entitled to his opinion, I guess.

Ms FORREST - Are you saying that the posts should be covered for that reason, not the wire?

Mr HENNESSY - I am including the wire. I believe it should have a reasonably firm plastic skirt that goes over it, down to the ground, joined at the bottom, so that it can still distort and rip the poles out of the ground or whatever and slow you along it, but not go through it.

CHAIR - Wouldn't the impact of a vehicle be likely to tear the plastic apart?

Mr HENNESSY - I would talking about heavy duty stuff. I am talking about the same kind of stuff you make the water filled road barriers out of, but you are not filling them with water of course. Yes, it will break if you hit it but it is not going to enable you to go straight through it. If a car hits it and breaks it, so what? But a motorcyclist's body is not going to break it.

CHAIR - Unless the car is the Mazda type that goes under it and the person is decapitated.

Mr HENNESSY - Yes and that is serious. That is one. The other is these new things we are putting on the end of Armco railings now, these flat plates with two sharp edges on them that are acting as car catchers. That is what they call them and they are marked with yellow and black stripes on them. Stop and have a look at one of those and imagine what would happen if you hit that with your body. Those sharp edges are designed to catch a car and hang onto it. The thought of what it would do to a human that hit it is just not worth thinking about. Armco were asked about that in the last few months, published in a motorcycle magazine so maybe a little biased. Armco's answer was, 'Don't crash into them'.

CHAIR - Do not have vehicles on roads and there will be no crashes. You mentioned the four-lane highway concept and you support that?

Mr HENNESSY - Yes, strongly support it. I still also believe, where possible, that the best way to separate it is with natural vegetation that will slow the vehicles up. I am not talking about trees, but shrubbery which is just going to slow the vehicles down.

CHAIR - You have some interesting views on speed cameras?

Mr HENNESSY - I do. Driving a motor vehicle of any type, your number one job should be your safety, concentrating on the road and defensive driving by checking everybody else. You should be making sure about the car parked on the side of the road; if there is a driver sitting in it you have to be wary because they may pull onto the road. You have to be checking all of those things. With speed cameras you are checking the bushes to find out where they are hidden and you are using your other eye to keep a constant eye on your speedo because you do not want to get a speeding ticket.

When Judy Jackson was a member of parliament I came across a road accident she was in at Elizabeth Town. It was caused by a young fellow jumping on the brakes when he saw the speed camera just at the speed limit and went straight through her BMW. I can guarantee that newspapers did not carry the story that it was caused by a speed camera, but it was.

I have a real problem with the technology as it is used. You use them in areas where you need to slow people down, like they do in New South Wales. You make them very public. You put up public signs and you tell people they are there and they will slow traffic down. Nothing slows a driver down more than a police officer in a marked car pulling you up and wagging your finger in his face and saying to you, 'I am going to give you a ticket' or 'I am writing your name in my little black book and if your name comes up again you are in trouble, buddy'. You slow down. With a speed camera you do not know about it for two weeks, so whatever you were going to do you have already done.

CHAIR - Anti-hooning: we have touched on that, but not the confiscation aspect.

Mr HENNESSY - We hear all kind of things, including people suggesting that we need to have special places where hoons can go and have their fun. I do not agree with that in the slightest. A motor car is not for entertainment, and should not be. If they want to go and do that then let them go and join a racing club, get a CAMS licence and race at Symmons Plains on race days. There is no sense that I can see in encouraging people to be idiots in motor cars. I was a bit surprised about the definition of hooning. A person playing a stereo loudly comes under the legislation and it might be a bit heavy-handed to start talking about confiscating the car. There is behaviour on the road such that you take the car off them for three days; that is not a bad idea. Take it off them the next time for three weeks. Next time take it off them permanently and put it through a crusher. If it is mum or dad's car they will not get a replacement very quickly.

CHAIR - Road safety advertising?

Mr HENNESSY - The road safety advertisement in Victoria with Chopper Read was the best I have ever seen. Chopper Read with all his tattoos is saying, 'If you are in a road accident that you cause and someone dies then you are likely to go to jail. Just remember, your cell mate might be me'. That is really a great ad. Advertising that is not truthful or not the whole truth, I do not think anybody is going to accept that. This thing about saying if you hit me at 60 I will die but at 50 you will break my pelvis but I will survive is patently stupid because it depends on what you hit them with. Give me the choice of being hit at 60 kph by a Hyundai Excel or hit at 50 kph by a Mack truck and thanks very much I will take the Hyundai Excel at 60 kph any time. If we talk about the design of a motor car, I have a photo of a motor car that has a home-made bull bar on the front of it, made out of RSJ steel, and it sits that far in front of the car. Now if someone hits you with that then I would not care if they are doing 20 because they are going to break you into pieces. The advertising really does need to be truthful because I cannot find anyone who actually believes that advertising.

Ms FORREST - Tony, it is interesting that we had evidence from a bus association that said a school child was killed at 35 kph, so that just confirms your point. It was from a bull

bar. They said it hit the child's head so it is obviously where you get hit and what you get hit with.

Mr HENNESSY - I had a patient in Burnie some years ago, a very senior executive lady. She was hit by a car with a bull bar right in front of the Voyager Motor Inn in Burnie and it literally broke every bone in her body. She never went back to work. It just totally destroyed her. That car was not speeding, so I think the ads need to be straight and to the point and accurate. The motorcycle one about when you are on your bike you are on your own is a great ad. Even though this guy said he does not know if they take any notice, they do. That is a great ad.

CHAIR - There is one more topic in MAIB, if you would like to comment on that - and the tax aspect.

Mr HENNESSY - I work all over the country. In most places motor accidents create enormous legal turmoil. In MAIB it does not. It is a great thing and it runs really well. They look after their people exceedingly well. You could hardly fault them. I do notice that we have gone from being the cheapest in Australia to getting up now into the dearer segment but if you delete the taxes applied to it we would still be in the cheaper range. I do not believe this is where we should be taking government dividends. I think MAIB has a job to do. If the Government decides they need that money then they should be up front and honest about it and stick it on the registration of the motor vehicles so people can say that is the government taking that, not the Motor Accident Insurance Board.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Welcome and thank you for coming in. You said you preferred to give oral evidence but you have put quite a few points in writing. Would you like to raise any points that you wish to discuss?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - You went through that gentleman's submission. I would rather talk, and it is a bit of a jumble.

CHAIR - No, it's not a jumble, you just deal with that in any way you're comfortable with.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I listened in to a bit about motorcycles and I have to agree with what that chap said. The other note I have is that motorcycling in general is good for the north-east's economy. The girl at the Winnaleah hotel where I had dinner told me they'd had a large group of motorcycle riders for lunch the day before, so it is a pretty big thing.

There are a few things that I worry about. I think the greatest promoter for road safety is a new car. There is no doubt that people are safer in a new car, and the wealthier you are the better the car you can buy, and the better car the better protected you are. I worry about what would happen with downsizing. I don't know if any of you know what a Smart car is?

Mr DEAN - Yes, those little things.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - They're about as big as a rollerskate. I have always assumed that a larger car would be safer than a smaller car, but as a nation we will downsize. In this State we have a bit of a quandary - the statistics are so misleading. I have followed it fairly closely for quite a long time. Statistics show speed as the cause of death being from 8 per cent to 52 per cent. That is a terribly wide variation in the statistics. Also, I notice that they call 'young' drivers the drivers between 17 and 29 years of age. That is a very wide variation in a person maturing, so I don't know if that is quite right.

In a country area, if there is one cop in the district a policeman can have a huge influence on all the citizens. We have had a couple of policemen at Scottsdale with such a lot of commonsense and I think they had enormous effect on the youth of the town. They became very attached, I would say, to both of those men.

One of them, Ted Calvert, was just a gentleman. I have observed policemen who do not like leaving their cars at gatherings or in crowds. Ted Calvert could walk amongst a crowd at the show, at the football or wherever he was and you would see his head moving among the crowd. No-one would ever be cheeky to him or anything. I think he was just a wonderful man.

CHAIR - We have had an opportunity to read your submission, so please raise any points that you might want to make.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Not everybody can afford to buy a new car, I know that. But I have a photo of a new car hitting a small, older car with fewer safety features.

CHAIR - Did you say the statistics were not reliable?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - They are not. Bryan Green claimed there were 80 lives lost per year during the 1980s and it was now down to 30 in a good year and 40 in a bad year. The actual figures were a lot different to that.

I do not know who you have had before your inquiry. People are not shy about taking credit if things are going well but if things are not going well, it is always put down to speed. I have an idea that we over-emphasise speed in this State. There are causes of accidents other than speed.

Ms FORREST - What do you think those main contributing factors are?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Inattention and diverted attention - for example, if there is an accident or something unusual happening. I was travelling from the Gold Coast to Brisbane on a multi-lane highway but there had been a traffic accident in the opposite lane and because people were staring at it, traffic was slowing both ways. People do not pay attention and part of the inattention is boredom. For example, if you are driving a modern car to Hobart and you have cruise control and a comfortable temperature, you can dream a bit and driving just does not take very much of your attention.

I have driven in the Northern Territory before they had speed limits and I really thought it was great to be allowed to do that. I am not suggesting that is suitable for here, but for example, on the Sideling there are very few accidents. That is because driving on it takes all your attention. Every corner that comes up you need to give your full attention to negotiate it. The other thing that does worry me, and it must worry other people, is that there is absolutely no doubt it is the chosen method of suicide in recent times. People undo their seatbelt and cross over the lanes into an oncoming truck. It really is not a nice thing for the truck driver. I do not know whether TV campaigns would be useful. I really do not know what you can do about that. It is a delicate thing to speak about but I do not know what could be done about that. It is an horrific thing for the truck driver. It is just something that appears to be becoming more popular.

I honestly believe cyclists would be better off riding on the pedestrian section. Coming up a hill, if you meet a cyclist - he is wobbling, he is standing up on the pedals - I think he should be given the opportunity to travel on the other side of the road if he so wished.

CHAIR - As pedestrians are required to do.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Yes, as pedestrians are certainly advised to do. I think a bike, as someone said to me one day, is just a flash way of walking. I know it could not be done in the city because of traffic lights and crossings and that sort of thing but I really do think it would be better if you could do that on the open road.

Mr DEAN - Sorry, you are saying that they should be able to ride on the opposite side of the road and not with the traffic? Against the traffic?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Yes, exactly. It would be on the right-hand side of the road. They would see oncoming traffic. They must sit in wonder. They can hear the traffic

coming but - not many of them have rear-vision - I just think that we should at least give them the option. I know it would be a bit innovative, but I cannot see why it would be wrong for cyclists to ride on the opposite side of the road. I think they would be more comfortable. I just thought that was a fairly good idea. I raised it at a meeting at Scottsdale with the Police Advisory Committee, I think it was called, and there was not a lot of support for that idea.

I could not agree more with the previous witness about the different speed changes. I recently drove from Lismore to the Pacific Highway and I bet there were a hundred different speed changes. Imagine what inattention to the road there is with the car travelling at, say, 100 kilometres an hour or even 110 in just glancing at the speedo. That man was right about the area north of Campbell Town - I could not agree more; that is just an absolute joke.

CHAIR - What was that?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - The speed limit north of Campbell Town and at Bagdad. I really know the towns there but the speed limits change and the signs are behind bushes. It is a nightmare. I am sure that people from DIER are sensitive about the fact that there are too many speed limitations in some areas. I live in the north-west and travelling from St Leonards to Triabunna there is not one passing lane. Road rage is a problem. I think I finished my submission by saying you drive as you live life. I stole that off Peter Brock.

I like going to the Gold Coast and often I will pick up a rented car. I get off onto a side road to get used to the car - it is generally a different one - and suddenly there will be someone in the boot of the car, giving you the finger.

CHAIR - In the boot?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - You know, on your bumper bar.

Laughter.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Driving should be more pleasant and to me, it is generally pleasant but I think you need to show some courtesy and be observant. It is a skill that I enjoy. Not all that long ago I attended a driving course and it was just about the best day of my life. It was user-friendly; there were just two of us, and we had one instructor and a Mercedes Benz car. It was a fairly expensive exercise but I loved it. You can learn skills, no matter how long you have been driving. I am not suggesting that you should have to do it.

CHAIR - Do you think it would be an advantage if learner drivers did, and were recommended to do a course on -

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - It was quite expensive. In my submission I have included a letter from a fellow called Barry Oliver - he is not related to me - which I thought was a superb letter. I actually rang him up to congratulate him.

CHAIR - He will be giving evidence to us this afternoon.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - That is good. I think we need people like him on the Road Safety Task Force. I think he would have such a lot to offer. We are paying \$20 per registration for road safety. Why shouldn't we have somebody we pay? Just because you work for DIER or some of these government departments, I wouldn't say that that necessarily qualifies you. But they have access to a lot of money.

CHAIR - Do you have any views or do you have any knowledge about the method of testing learner drivers before they are licensed?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I do. I have read in the paper that kids, at a very critical time in their life for their employment, have had to wait a very long time to get an appointment to take their licence test. It took some about a year to get tested. Most were having to wait three months and that was shameful. People of that age are not catered for. It is hard for them to use political force. I thought it was very shabby treatment. I talked to young people about it. I have two grand-daughters of that age who are getting their licence. They know that the first time they go they will not get it; none of the kids up our way get it the first time. They accept that fact. Then they have to wait - and I think you have to pay again. I don't know how much that is.

Ms FORREST - It is \$70.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Each time you front?

Ms FORREST - I think so.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I have spoken to them and their friends. I have asked them, 'Have you got your licence?' 'No, I've only been the once'. They did not even expect to get it the first time. Then they had to wait three months and I thought that was shabby so I wrote to Tanya Rattray-Wagner about that. I thought something ought to be done about that.

Ms FORREST - In that three months, what did they do? Obviously they failed a test -

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - No, the three-month wait was to do your first test. When you turn 17 -

Ms FORREST - They are going for their provisional licence and they fail the first test, what do they do in that time before sitting the next test?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - They can't go to work.

Ms FORREST - I appreciate that, but so far as improving their driving. They have obviously failed the test for a reason.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I suppose the tester tells them, 'You didn't put the indicator on when you were leaving the roundabout' or whatever.

Ms FORREST - So if a student fails a test, for whatever reason, do you think there needs to be some sort of program they are assisted into to correct errors or help them to be more ready for their test the next time?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I think to get your licence you definitely need to go to a professional person and get them to take you. They know when you're ready, I think. The mums and dads teaching are probably a problem. Barry Oliver will discuss that with firm conviction, I'm sure. In my day, getting a licence wasn't difficult. I don't know that you can be the complete driver on the day you get your provisional plates. I'm not sure they are allowed to drive at night - is that right or wrong?

Ms FORREST - They can drive anytime.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I think there were limits on it at one stage in my life.

Mr DEAN - Going back a learner driver couldn't drive at night.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - So they have had no experience at full speed. I would be out of step with everybody else you've ever listened to, but I think even if they are not perfect they should get their licence. I find it difficult to work out how you can learn to drive until you actually get your licence and you're out on your own. I can remember the day I got my licence. I was let loose in a car and came upon a corner when going too fast, how I got around it I don't know. It was such a great thing that that happened because that was such a learning curve for me.

Ms FORREST - Would you say that if you'd hit another car and killed someone?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Whether I should have got my licence?

Ms FORREST - You said it was a great thing to get your car, go out there and take the corner too fast and get round it.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - No, it was such a great thing to learn to control the car.

CHAIR - A great learning curve.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - That taught me that I was inexperienced, that I had a lot to learn and I did. I thought that that was good that I at least had the experience. Straight after I got the licence I went off in the car. I think mum came with me and I must have dropped her home.

Ms FORREST - Isn't it better to have those experiences when you have some supervision? Isn't it better if you have a supervising driver who can assist you to learn rather than doing it on your own where you really are very vulnerable?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - The whole time you have someone telling you what to do or watching your speed, you do not learn your limits. But you are so right that if you have to learn those limits and cause an accident, that is not a good thing at all.

CHAIR - Do you mean that the practical experiences are the best way of learning to drive, particularly when you are alone, providing you are acting responsibly?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - That is what I would have thought. I thought while you have somebody continuously telling you that you are going too fast or you have to watch the corner. I really do not think you can live life till you are loose. I do not think you can.

CHAIR - Not too loose.

Mr DEAN - Do you think that in the learning stage, under tuition you should be able to drive at a higher speed than the 80 kph to learn to control a car at a higher speed?

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - There is no gradation for licences. If you are in a 1960s car it takes from here to the town clock to slow down from 30 kph. You forget how bad they are if you have not driven one in recent times. Perhaps the learning period should be longer or have a two-stage process for learners. I have never really thought about that but I do know highway congestion is not a good thing. Anything that congests the highways is not good for road rage and for safety in general.

CHAIR - Time is almost up but you make two or three points that I would like to refer you to. You say that Tasmanians are not good at merging, not good at roundabouts and not good at indicating.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I believe you can tell when you come back from driving interstate. I do not what it is, but I can tell immediately I come home. I have driven a lot. When you are merging you really want to be going at the speed limit or even above because it is easier to brake than it is to accelerate. I visit the Gold Coast a lot and they let you in but as soon as you come back to Tasmania you know you are going to have a bit of trouble. There is a difference. I heard Peter Cundall on the radio the other day saying, 'I can tell as soon as I get back to Tasmania'. What was the other issue?

CHAIR - There was indicating.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - That is another thing about merging. They do not use the highway between the Gold Coast and Brisbane as a cash register. Cars will move across but they continuously use their indicators. I recently hired a car and the indicators were on the wrong side. It was awkward.

Ms FORREST - You kept turning the windscreen wipers on.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Yes. Indicating is very important.

CHAIR - The next thing you raised was roadworks signs not being taken down.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Yes.

CHAIR - Yesterday morning, driving to Devonport, there were roadworks and at the end it said, 'Roadworks finished 100 kilometres an hour limit', but it was 110.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - I think sometimes they are much too far away. It is as though you are going to take a couple of kilometres to slow down. There is no need; even trucks can stop within a certain limit. I do not know why they put them so far apart but I get

crabby when they leave them there at the weekend when there are no roadworks at all. They should be picking them up.

CHAIR - The last point is the location and placement of power poles.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Yes. I took a photo of one. There is one as you drive into Derby which is placed so that if you did not take the corner you will collect the power pole. It is dreadful.

CHAIR - Yes, we have had quite a few comments about power poles. The time has expired. Thank you very much, Mr Oliver. We appreciate the fact that you have gone to the trouble of preparing the submission and coming in and giving the evidence and travelling in.

Mr EDWARD OLIVER - Thanks very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr PAUL ANTHONY HOGAN AND Ms TONI SYDES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED

Mr HOGAN - I am the Chairman of the Road Safety Task Force and have been since its inception in 1996. The history of road safety in Tasmania, if you track back a number of years, has not been particularly good. But there has been a marked improvement, not only because of the Road Safety Task Force from its inception in 1996 but also because of a number of other factors that have happened since then.

In 1971 there were 130 fatalities on Tasmanian roads and of course the population then was much less. There were fewer motor vehicles on our roads and yet we still had 130 fatalities in 1971. The point of raising that is that we have come a long way in dealing with road safety as a major community issue.

Then, if we look at 1973, there were three silver bullets. In 1973 it became compulsory to wear seatbelts, which was certainly a positive move. Sadly today, while we have about 94 per cent compliance there are still too many people choosing not to wear a seatbelt. We do know that if you do wear your seatbelt it does reduce the risk of serious injury by up to 60 per cent in the case of a crash.

CHAIR - Your should feel undressed unless you have it on?

Mr HOGAN - Precisely, Don, you should.

Ms FORREST - I used to have this raised by a lot of pregnant women, particularly those well into their pregnancy who had concerns about the lap part and even the sash part of the seatbelt. My advice to them was to always to wear it, but what is your advice?

Mr HOGAN - That is a good question. I do not have the answer, to be candid. Yes, you raise a very good point that should probably be asked. I am sure the law is the law and they are meant to comply.

Ms FORREST - The question is whether hitting the steering wheel is worse for your baby and placenta than a seatbelt?

Mr HOGAN - That is a question more for a medical person than for me. I take the point that you raise, that it is of concern.

In 1982 was the second silver bullet when random breath testing was introduced. The third one was in 1992 when speed cameras were introduced. On each of those occasions, if you track the history, you will see that they have made a significant contribution in the reduction of the road toll.

CHAIR - We have a graph showing that at each stage.

Mr HOGAN - There is a graph. We do not have it here but we can provide it to you.

I will talk about legislation for a second, if I may. Governments now are struggling to come up with ways and means, not only within this nation but internationally, of

reducing the toll further than where we are currently. There are increased penalties and there has been some excellent legislation, introduced by governments over a number of years now, which has leveraged the work that we have done, and the work that we have done has helped leverage the legislation introduced by government.

It was the Rundle Government, and minister John Cleary at the time, who undertook a feasibility study to see what Victoria were doing with the Transport Action Commission. Because in 1989 the Transport Action Commission in Victoria decided enough was enough and they commenced campaigning to reduce the road toll. You may or may not have seen some of those very graphic early commercials that TAC produced. If you have not then it is worth having a look at them. That is when the offensive started in Victoria in trying to reduce the road toll.

So the Tasmanian Government at the time, the Liberal Government, decided to do a feasibility study and they modelled it on what TAC were doing in Victoria. The feasibility study was completed in early 1996 and part of that feasibility study, as we well know now, is that the Motor Accidents Insurance Board were going to be a stakeholder. They were going to fund it, and indeed they did, to the tune of \$1.264 million per annum in the first three years of our operation. If you think of the aggregate that MAIB have now contributed since our existence in 1996, it is a large slice of money.

The feasibility study did show a positive cost-benefit analysis, if they undertook this based on the Victorian model. That is how the task force was born. John Cleary rang me out of the blue. I was sitting on the Road Safety Advisory Council that existed many years ago. It would meet quarterly and we would have a chat about various issues about road safety. That no longer exists but the Road Safety Council does exist. John rang me and said, 'Paul, would you care to take the Chair's role of this new road safety task force body?'. I said, 'Yes, that's fine. I'll undertake that'. Since then we have moved a long way. Prior to the existence of the Road Safety Task Force the efforts to reduce the road toll at best were ad hoc and at worst they were non-existent. I think you people have been around long enough to understand there was not much commitment to or focus on the task of dealing with road safety.

CHAIR - You could hardly find who was dealing with it or where the funding was coming from. At one stage I think there was a bit in each of three departments.

Mr HOGAN - It wasn't a concentrated or committed effort as the task force brought to bear.

What I am not saying about the task force is that we are the be-all and end-all of road safety. Since our inception we have been a catalyst for many things that probably wouldn't have happened otherwise. I think we have facilitated many things and created a greater awareness in the State of road safety, hence we have this hearing today. I think there is a greater focus than ever before on road safety. We have a very deep research culture about what we do, as you would have seen in the overview document we provided. We work closely with enforcement and education because that is the key. One or the other in isolation does not work to its optimum, so coordinated public education through campaigns and enforcement activities deliver the best outcomes.

I think out of all that we have also delivered much more of a road safety culture in the State. If we go to the last page of the overview letter we sent you, you have to have some meaningful figures that you can compare, otherwise what are you comparing to. In our wisdom, or otherwise, we decided to compare the Road Safety Task Force performance since our inception through to 2007 and take the same number of years back so that we have a comparison with what was happening prior to our existence and after our existence. Just to explain those figures a little more, the 8 582 serious casualties, comprising fatalities and serious injuries, has decreased 34 per cent since the existence of the Road Safety Task Force.

I would add to that what I said a while ago about legislation. There are some excellent pieces of legislation - 50 kph on streets, anti-hooning, drug legislation, automatic disqualification and so on - that have helped. If you look at this in totality, 2 953 fewer people have been involved in a crash. That is a measurable and meaningful figure and that is what we compare to. That is the only real figure we can compare. In addition to that, there were 291 fewer fatalities over that period versus the corresponding period and 2 662 fewer serious injuries when you compare those corresponding periods. That has all happened in the same time as our population has increased: there are more motor vehicles on our roads, more licensed drivers on our roads, and more tourists in our State. So in spite of the fact that there is higher risk on our roads, we have had success in reducing the road toll. We don't go out purposely and talk about these figures because we know it is a never-ending story. It is not a job you've ever fixed and you can't fix. We have to persevere. We take some solace out of these figures that we have made a positive difference to the road safety landscape in Tasmania.

If you look at the most current figures - and this came out of our meeting on Tuesday in Hobart - serious injuries this year are 172 to the end of August, compared to 220 at the same time last year. That is 48 fewer people who have been involved in crashes, in serious injuries. An MAIB calculation shows that serious injuries each cost more than \$2 000 while a DIER calculation shows 24 hours in hospital. Nonetheless, it is fewer. It is 67 fewer over the five-year average as well. Now that is positive. We are not going to carry on because the moment we say this is terrific there will be a multiple fatality down the road. It inevitably seems to happen doesn't it, when we talk about these things in a positive light, but I just want to share these with you. At the moment we are tracking very well.

Mr HARRISS - The challenge is I think that because we have a relatively low base, any significant major fatality, which would only be three or four people, would have a fairly high effect in percentage terms of change.

Mr HOGAN - I could not agree more, Paul. That actually happened a few years ago. You recall we had about four or five multiple crashes that year that took nearly 20 lives in the one year. You would remember some of the tragedies here in Burnie, where there were a number of people involved. You are quite right, these figures are small and there is that volatility. Nonetheless the figures that I have presented to you here at the moment at least are positive.

Ms FORREST - I take on board what you are saying about the reduction here. Between 1995 and now we have seen significant improvements in cars in their safety features. Even in 1996 and through to 2007 we still had a lot more old cars on the road in

Tasmania than in any other State. What credence do you give to the car safety improvements and the state of the roads?

Mr HOGAN - There are three factors about getting a reduced road toll, Ruth, and they are certainly safer cars, safer roads and safer drivers - better drivers. They are the three factors we know. Our portfolio we are charged with, as part of our charter, Don, as you would be aware, is the funding from MAIB and we said in the letter we give some funding for police. That funds the employment of 16 police officers in the four districts around the State. We have a public education campaign that Toni administers. We have a PR budget and we have a research budget. That is our focus.

I take your point. I agree that cars have improved, let us say roads have improved but I would also like to think some of the driving has improved. If you consider that we have over 300 000 licensed drivers, or thereabouts or in excess of that, it is the minority that causes the grief typically and particularly, as you would know, Ivan, from your previous employ, the recidivist bunch, but no amount of public education or legislation would change their attitude to the way they choose to behave on the roads. They probably have other issues that manifest themselves on our roads. They are lawless.

Ms FORREST - On that point, the group that persistently break the law and do it by exceeding the blood alcohol level and driving at highly excessive speeds, we have had a submission that suggests that the MAIB premium should be linked to the driver's licence not to the vehicle because you are only driving one vehicle at any one time and that the people who have serious offences should be penalised. If you commit an offence, your MAIB premium should go up - and it could double or whatever. The principle of the matter is that if you have a serious offence, you have a significant increase in your MAIB. If you go for a year without any offence it goes down, so the people are being rewarded for good driving, it is not related to their car, and those that continue to cost the system money are the ones who are paying the higher premium. Do you think that is a reasonable suggestion?

Mr HOGAN - There have been suggestions that are not dissimilar to that, Ruth, over the years, that have talked about rewarding good driver behaviour. My short answer is I do not know. I do not know whether it happens in any other jurisdiction. One thing that we are very conscious of, and Toni keeps an eye at what is happening in other jurisdictions, particularly nationally, which is why I was able to tell you about TAC in Victoria, but the short answer is I do not know.

Ms FORREST - Do you think this is a possible way to reward those and punish others?

Mr HOGAN - I think rewarding good drivers has some merit. What we do is evidenced-based, or we like it to be evidenced-based if possible. Hopefully there will be some way that this can be researched before it is introduced because if you knee jerk something and say this is a good idea, let us pop it in as a piece of legislation or a good idea, you might not be rewarded. I would be reluctant to support it; not that it is up to us to support it as this would be through the Road Safety Council or through MAIB themselves, but the point I am trying to make is it would be best if it were evidence-based so that you did some research. You could undertake some research to find out, do some focus-group testing of drivers and say if we were to reward you for this would it change your driving

behaviour. That is what I would recommend you do rather than just say this is a good idea we probably ought to introduce it.

Ms FORREST - Do you have a view on linking your MAIB premium to your licence rather than the vehicle?

Mr HOGAN - Not particularly, no I don't really.

Ms SYDES - I think it is pertinent to remember though, as Paul was saying, our role is about educating driver behaviour not about legislation, not about infrastructure, so whatever the infrastructure reason, whatever the legislation or policies at the time, our role is to educate people on that, not to change legislation or take a position in that role.

CHAIR - So speaking about the role, could you tell us the main differences in your task force's role and the Road Safety Council's role and any advantages of having them separate rather than one combined body?

Mr HOGAN - Our focus is purely operational. We develop public education campaigns that Toni oversees. As a matter of interest, we are launching a new drink-driver campaign on 31 October in Hobart by way of a new television commercial and other material, other mediums that our advertising agency Clemenger have produced.

Then, of course, we fund, through this, 16 police officers statewide, four in each district.

As far as policy issues are concerned, consultative and policy issues are all dealt with by the Road Safety Council, whose chair was Graeme Sturges.

CHAIR - It is Bryan Green.

Mr HOGAN - Bryan Green is in the chair now. Pardon me, I am being forgetful in my old age. They deal with all policy issues, Don, we deal with operations and that is probably the best way of describing the separation.

Why are there two bodies? If you combined them both I think there would be too much on the agenda and you might lose your focus. We pride ourselves in what we do; Toni does an excellent job as do the members who contribute to this, who are all the stakeholders from DIER, Tasmania Police and Peter Roche, of course, the CEO from MAIB. To have an absolute focus on operational issues versus combining them with policy is probably an advantage. We will offer an opinion on policy and we will pass that on to the council because we have Greg Goodman who sits on our task force. Greg is a great contributor, and Peter Roche also, so if we have an idea we will certainly pass it on and ask it to be considered.

Ms SYDES - I think too a good example is the 50-kilometre change. The councils are the ones who are involved in developing that sort of thing and changing it to 50 kilometres an hour whereas we are the ones who communicate that to drivers, that this is what has changed, this is why it has changed and this is why you should drive at these speeds rather than actually creating the changes.

Mr HOGAN - It is a good partnership.

The other thing I can tell you, Don, is that if we have a view we will pen a letter and we penned a letter to Commissioner McCreadie, so it is going back a little while now.

Ms FORREST - Yesterday, Monday.

Mr HOGAN - I am not going there!

I penned a letter to them strongly recommending - and I know it was Jack Johnston's intention, but anyway everything has changed, so we will see where it goes - reducing the speed tolerances. Speed tolerances is one of the problems we have in the State. If you want a silver bullet, here is the silver bullet. This is the absolute silver bullet that will make a difference to the road toll in this State, in my humble opinion, because it has done in Victoria. They reduced it to almost zero tolerance under the Bracks Government - as you might know - about three or four years ago. We could creep the tolerance down. Most motorists in the State know in a 110 kph zone they can travel at probably 118 kph or maybe a bit better, without getting a ticket. You know this, Ivan, from your policing days. If we could reduce the tolerance by a couple of kilometres an hour and gradually sneak it down I am sure we could have a significant impact in the reduction of the road toll in the State. I have said this to Mr McCreadie and Mr Johnston, and I know Jack was intending to look at moving that down by whatever - I am not sure.

Mr DEAN - There is some evidence available - I do not have the document here, I had it this morning but I left it in my office - that, I think in the Northern Territory and one other State there was a reduction in the limits put on speed and tolerances and it was found it had no impact at all. In fact, I think it was found that there was an increase the other way. It went the opposite way. I need to get that document.

CHAIR - Was it the tolerance or the maximum limit?

Mr DEAN - Maximum limit as well.

CHAIR - They did not have a maximum limit in the Northern Territory.

Ms FORREST - No, they pulled it back to 130 kilometres an hour.

Mr DEAN - The information we have is that there was an increase then on the number of fatalities and serious motor vehicle accidents from when there was an open speed limit. It has been suggested to us that imitative driving is a real cause of accidents. From the evidence we have heard, a great focus is put on looking at the speedometer all the time with changing speed limits and all the rest of that. Therefore your mind is being taken off the road and what is happening around you to focusing on the speedometer to make sure that you are not going over the limit. A lot of drivers have cruise control so that is not a problem but many do not. The majority of vehicles in this State do not have cruise control still, I would think. When we talk about decreasing tolerances, people now drive at about the mark - one or two over, one or two under or whatever it is. What evidence do you have to suggest that that would make a big difference to the road toll?

Mr HOGAN - Based on what has happened in Victoria. We could find that information.

Ms FORREST - If you could provide those figures, we have other evidence that says that the Victorian protocol of no tolerance for imposed limits has seen a rise in death rates rather than a decrease.

Mr HOGAN - It did not initially. Maybe that has changed in recent years.

Ms FORREST - I am not saying this person is necessarily right.

Mr DEAN - We need to check it.

Mr HOGAN - We will check the Victorian figures and come back to you.

Ms FORREST - The figures related to the change.

Mr HOGAN - Clearly though, Ivan, there is a problem with the fact that people do not obey even the law, the posted speed limits. Let us be honest. You have a posted speed limit of 60, 50 or 110 kph and yet 886 drivers were still booked the other weekend when the police blitz was on. We publicised the blitz, so everybody was told; they were forewarned that there would be a higher number of police, a higher number of hours spent on a speed operation - yet 886 people still exceeded the limits.

Ms FORREST - Because they were too busy watching for the speed cameras and not watching their speedos.

Mr DEAN - How many fatalities and serious vehicle accidents occurred over the weekend when you had those people booked?

Mr HOGAN - We had this discussion yesterday morning so I do not think that is the point. There were no fatalities that weekend, which is terrific. I think the point is if you can reduce the mean average speed that people travel at - because we know speed is a major factor in killing people on the road, even low-level speeding in suburbia will kill people - there is a considered view that it would reduce the toll. There may not have been any fatalities or serious accidents, but 886 people out there were booked for speeding. That is not something to be joyful about. If we can change the attitude of people to speeding and reduce it, it would have to reduce the road toll over time.

CHAIR - Do you know what the level of speeding those 880-odd were travelling at, whether they were lower level, middle or excessive ones?

Mr HOGAN - I do not have that statistic.

Ms SYDES - I cannot do any actual statistics off the top of my head. There were about four or five whose speeds were quite excessive. There were about three P-platers who are limited to 80 and were in 100 zones but driving at 130 or 140. I think there were about two others who were doing 140 to 150. They immediately lose their licence if they are over 137 kilometres per hour.

CHAIR - If we had more police available to do that more frequently, then there would be more people affected by being booked and that would surely have a beneficial effect.

Ms SYDES - There is an attitude of, 'I am not going to get caught'.

Mr DEAN - Were some on speed cameras and some on hand-helds?

Mr HOGAN - I reckon both, Ivan. I could not tell you the numbers.

Mr DEAN - We are interested in the breakdown of those figures. Those caught on the Bridgewater Bridge, for instance. There is no doubt the camera would have been there and many would have been caught on the Bridgewater Bridge. There are probably cameras also in Campbell Town, I might suggest. It would be good to identify just where those bookings occurred because we get the bookings there all the time.

Mr HOGAN - We will get to those.

I would now like to talk about drink-driving. Drink-driving largely has become antisocial. We have seen evidence of that. If you go back to 1996 with our figures in October, there was consistently well over 1 per cent of all drivers caught who were over the blood alcohol limit. Now that is consistently under 1 per cent. That does not make it good but it is sign and it is partly generational, where younger people are showing more responsibility than probably I did when I was a young fellow. There is a different attitude coming through generations. Drink-driving is broadly considered as antisocial.

Ms FORREST - Footy has helped with Richmond's 'bloody idiot' on the television.

Mr HOGAN - Yes. The point I am going to on speed is that our challenge is to make speed a moral issue. If we could make speeding antisocial, I would suggest we would see a turn in the tide in the road toll again. Our speeding campaign that was launched a couple of years ago, the latest campaign, 'Limit Your Speed, Limit Your Damage', is purely based on making speeding antisocial, a moral issue in the belief that we can turn the tide. How long it will take to that? Don't know. Clemenger's view is three years. I am not sure I would agree with that, it is probably more like five years. But I think if we persevere with some assistance from legislation and reducing your speed tolerances, you could start to see a reduction in the mean average speed that most people travel at and we would see a reduction in the road toll.

CHAIR - Do you suggest there should be reduction in the overall limit of 110 kph?

Mr HOGAN - It is interesting you say that. I lived in Mildura for a period of time in 1990 and travelled between Melbourne and Mildura on two or three occasions which is 650 kilometres. It is 100 kilometres an hour all the way. Here in Tasmania, there would be an outrage, I reckon, if you reduced the Midland Highway to 100 kph, wouldn't there?

CHAIR - Is that for the whole of Victoria or just that road?

Mr HOGAN - No, not the whole of Victoria, there are roads in Victoria that are 110 kph, but they are generally highways that are separated, two lanes.

Ms FORREST - Are you saying it is 100 kilometres all the way from Mildura to Melbourne?

Mr HOGAN - Yes.

Ms FORREST - There is nowhere you have to slow down to 60, to 50?

Mr HOGAN - No.

Ms FORREST - We have had a comment that if you could drive from Burnie to Hobart at 100 kilometres an hour all the way people would probably accept that, but when you have to slow down to 50 through Brighton, 80 at Epping Forrest, 90 at Cleveland and 60 in Campbell Town -

Ms SYDES - There are also statistics which I do not have that show the minimal time saving if you were to slow down from say 115 or 110 to 105 or 100 kph, you would only save five or six minutes on the trip. I drive from Launceston to Hobart every week and -

Ms FORREST - It was Burnie to Hobart, six minutes, I think it was.

Ms SYDES - Yes, there you go, it is really measurable.

Mr HARRISS - It was Launceston to Hobart.

Mr HOGAN - That was not what I meant about the Mildura trip because you still go through townships on the main roads.

Mr HARRISS - Paul, you made the observation that there would probably be an outrage if we cut it from 110 kph to 100 kph on the Midland Highway. Can I be very provocative and say, 'Who the hell cares? Let's do it. Let's stop pussyfooting around and do it because the figures prove that every kilometre per hour reduction has an effect'.

Mr HOGAN - Yes, it doesn't bother me. That is what I was saying about speeding. If you reduce the tolerances and the mean average speed, we would have savings of lives on our road. There is little doubt about it.

Mr HARRISS - And positive contributions to the environment with regard to wear and tear on the vehicle, tyres, greenhouse - the whole shooting match.

Mr HOGAN - You're quite right.

Mr DEAN - The argument the public up here though - and you can be even more provocative and say, 'Let's reduce it to 80 kph'. Where do you go? What is the cut-off point to be reasonable and to provide a reasonable access between certain areas and States and so on? How far do you go with it? Some people have said to us that actual speed itself, without anything else, causes very few accidents.

CHAIR - Two witnesses have said it causes none; it is just what you collide with that causes the fatality.

Mr DEAN - A lot of people are saying is that with that normally goes alcohol, drugs, fatigue, hooning, people just being stupid. It is not the actual speed. There is some evidence of that as well.

Mr HOGAN - It's not totally right, though. There is evidence to suggest that if you drive to the conditions and slow down, you won't run off the road. I can think of two specific crashes that probably wouldn't have happened had those people been driving slower in rainy and icy conditions. Speed will kill you if you're going too fast to take a particular corner which you should be taking 10 kph an hour slower.

Mr DEAN - That is education, isn't it, and failing to get the message through. Wet roads are dangerous and, whilst the limit may be 100 kph, you probably should only be doing 60 kph or 70 kph.

Mr HOGAN - Absolutely.

Mr DEAN - So it is an educational thing, I think.

Mr HOGAN - A lot of it is education. Nonetheless if you don't take the foot off the pedal and you're going too fast in a particular circumstance, speed without any other factor can kill you. I agree with you, Ivan, that there are many contributing factors and you would know better than I because of your policing days. I think of police out there trying to identify the primary and other causes of a crash and they can be multiple. We were discussing this yesterday morning.

CHAIR - Because there is a limit it doesn't mean that it is safe to reach that speed in a whole lot of circumstances. You can drive, theoretically, 50 kph an hour through the avenue in Brisbane Street or up St John St past Myer, but it wouldn't be safe to do that in most circumstances. You could be charged successfully with negligent driving. It is just the maximum limit in desirable circumstances.

Ms SYDES - That is why we say it is a limit not a challenge.

Ms FORREST - I had to remind my kids learning to drive that was the case.

CHAIR - Do you have any view on the question that Ivan raised as to whether the limit should be decreased from 110 kph or 100 kph? Do you think that is impractical? We had a witness this morning who said he didn't think it would make any difference.

Mr HOGAN - I don't think it is impractical. And I take Paul's point, 'Who cares. Just do it', if the Government has the will to do that. My preference would be to see a reduction in the speed tolerances on the cameras that we currently use. I guess we are talking policy here and that is generally outside of our domain but we are allowed to offer opinions - probably greater penalties, to be perfectly candid. With recidivist drivers, it is not the monetary penalty for most people if they can afford to pay it. How many outstanding fines are there? Don, you'd know there are millions of dollars in unpaid traffic infringement notices. The greatest deterrent is the fear of losing your freedom, which means loss of licence. That is the biggest single fear for most people - and probably embarrassment with your peers that you've lost your licence. A more rapid rate of loss of demerit points has always been one of my pet ones, rather than necessarily an increased monetary penalty. At the moment I think - and correct me if I am wrong - with demerit points the smarties know that if you lose one every three months that is okay because you get them all back in three years.

Mr DEAN - Increased penalties for speeding, increased penalties for driving without a licence and increased penalties for disqualified drivers; the three of them go together.

Mr HOGAN - Yes they do. They do go together.

CHAIR - On a similar subject. The blood alcohol level, 0.05, do you think that is appropriate or should we change that?

Mr HOGAN - I do not profess to be an expert in that field, but I think it is. We all know you can be under 0.05 and start to feel as though you have had a couple of drinks even without being over, so one of our things that we talk about with drink driving is that you do not have to feel drunk to be over 0.05.

Ms FORREST - That raises the point, Paul, of how do you know. A slightly-built woman might have one drink that could actually put her to 0.06.

Mr HOGAN - That is correct.

Ms FORREST - But we are all told one drink is okay. So if you had a zero tolerance, for example, you would know that if you are going to drive you just do not drink at all. Simple. Is there any merit in having a zero tolerance?

Mr HOGAN - There are plenty of other options without being too draconian and the options are these. Education about what represents a standard drink is nothing short of appalling. You can get a wine glass in some restaurants that big, sometimes that big and they will fill it up to different levels, so it is absolutely a minefield for anyone to identify what a standard drink is.

Ms FORREST - That is what I am saying that at zero you would know.

Mr HOGAN - But here is the answer. If you are in doubt, do not drink and do not drive. We have a public education campaign of 'what is your plan?' It is aimed at young people but I would suggest that some of our baby boomers ought to take a lesson from it. If you are in doubt, do not drive, either get a cab or have somebody else drive you, but do not take the risk. We are about to launch a campaign on the 31st, which is exactly like this, and I will give you a little insight into it. It is a crowd in the bar. It is based on: here is this lady, do not push your luck. It is very much a colloquialism, very Australian, do not push your luck.

CHAIR - Here's a slogan from Paul Hogan.

Ms FORREST - It still goes back to the point of how you know. I could have a glass of wine and feel quite okay and then still blow over the limit.

Mr HOGAN - That is absolutely correct. That is what happened in Hobart to this lady here a few weeks ago. I have forgotten her name.

Ms SYDES - Vanessa Goodwin.

Ms FORREST - She said she had two glasses though.

Ms SYDES - But were those glasses of a standard?

Mr HOGAN - It depends on your make up, your body size, your metabolism, whether you have you eaten. I have not got with me to show you but have you seen the thing put out by the AHA, Toni, about the various standard drink sizes?

Ms SYDES - Liquor and Gaming put it out.

Mr HOGAN - If you look at that you would have to be checking everything before you even, you know. It is a minefield and I do not mind admitting it. That is not a part of our charter but it is a problem that needs fixing.

Ms FORREST - One of the ways of fixing it would be to make it zero tolerance.

Mr HOGAN - I know that, but I am saying I think that is too draconian. I do not know that you need to go that far. If there was proper education about what represents a standard drink and you had consistency in what is a standard drink provided to you at the restaurants and hotels, the problems could be overcome.

Mr DEAN - The problem we have here, Paul - and Ruth is making a good point - is that because you have a figure of 0.05, people will believe that they can drink sufficient to remain just under 0.05, but they are being impacted on mentally and it impacts on their driving but they do not really think about that. All they are thinking about is keeping under 0.05 so that they will not be booked. The fact that their driving is impaired makes no difference to a lot. As long as they are under 0.05. What about a reduction to 0.03?

Mr HOGAN - They are things that I am sure you people will consider in your recommendations.

Mr DEAN - What I am asking is whether Road Safety Taskforce supports it or does not support it. You must have a view.

Mr HOGAN - I am offering my view. My view is that I see some other methods for dealing with drink-driving other than resorting to going back to zero tolerance, that is all I am saying.

Mr HARRISS - Paul, you gave a silver bullet with regard tolerances with speed. Isn't this another silver bullet?

Mr HOGAN - It probably is if you wanted to reduce it even to 0.04, 0.03, as Ivan said.

Mr HARRISS - Or zero.

Mr HOGAN - Or zero.

Mr HARRISS - Don't tolerate anything on the road which can be avoided.

Ms FORREST - P-plates have to do it, don't they? Truck drivers have to comply.

Ms SYDES - There is still an issue there. The traffic sergeant in Hobart has an issue with P-platers, and I suppose it is the same as keeping under 0.05. If they get caught over 0.00 - it might be 0.01 or 0.001 - their comment is, 'I stopped drinking an hour ago'. It is the same issue as 'How many can I have to be under 0.05?' The same issue is there at a different level. It is not quite the same but I am saying if the question is 'I don't know whether I'm over 0.05', you still do not know if you are over 0.00.

CHAIR - So it is a matter of looking at statistics, I suppose, to see what contributing or causal factors there are for people who have had accidents when they have been under 0.05.

Mr HOGAN - Yes. I am not privy to it at the moment but again, I guess, we can ask that question, Toni.

Ms SYDES - Yes. I don't think alcohol comes up as a factor if it is not over -

Mr HOGAN - Unless it is over the limit, okay.

CHAIR - I think we would need to use some evidence to show that that is going to have a significant effect or a reasonable effect -

Mr HOGAN - Quite right.

CHAIR - on road safety. Anyway, as you say, that is not your area of policy.

Mr HOGAN - There are other countries, as you would know, in the world that have zero tolerance.

CHAIR - Japan I think is one.

Mr HOGAN - Yes.

CHAIR - So there would be some statistics and we can gather those.

Mr HOGAN - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Can I get clarification? When you say a reduction is not supported, is that your personal position or the Road Safety Taskforce's position?

Mr HOGAN - I have to say it is a personal one, Ivan. Toni has made a very good point. We have to be very careful that we are not quoted here outside of our portfolio, outside of our charter, because if we do that, that is not representative of the Road Safety Task Force. Some of the views that I am putting to you are consistent with my experience of being on the Road Safety Task Force but it would not be fair to say this is the policy of the taskforce, Ivan.

CHAIR - Our time is up but you would probably like to make some other comments. You may be prepared to come back again, perhaps early next year after we have taken some other evidence -

Mr HOGAN - Sure.

CHAIR - and then we can deal in more detail or with other matters. Would you like to make any other comments today, Paul?

Mr HOGAN - Probably the only other thing - and I guess you will be speaking to Peter Roche from MAIB at some stage too -

CHAIR - This afternoon.

Mr HOGAN - Okay. I think this is the key thing from MAIB; they as our major stakeholder - we would not exist without their funding - purely took it on obviously as an investment, a return on investment. I can tell you, and I am not wanting to pre-empt Peter but it is the lowest their total claims have been in 20 years. They never thought they would get below 4 000 claims a year; they are now down to around about 3 100, I think, Toni?

Ms SYDES - Yes.

Mr HOGAN - It is the lowest they have been in 20 years. There is clear evidence that something that we are doing - the taskforce and these other partners that have been referred to like Tasmania Police, legislative changes, better vehicles, better roads and I would like to think that we have seen an improvement in drivers - is making a difference.

The other point that I want to touch on is that a piece of legislation that I think is excellent is novice driver training. Novice driver training was introduced two or three years ago where they had to do the 50 hours compulsory and, as you know now, there are a couple of staged ones coming in I think next year, Toni? The importance that I place on that is that I think as the years roll by, we are going to see generations of better drivers coming on our roads. We can assume that we are going to see a better standard of driver, a better behaved driver, a driver with a better attitude, and you would like to think that would have some influence on the road toll. Up until that was introduced in Tasmania most young drivers obtained a licence under 24 hours' experience, so less than a day's experience sitting in a car obtained a licence. Provided that education is thorough I would like to think we will see a better class of driver coming through too. That is not a part of our portfolio, Don, as I say.

CHAIR - You would like to see more education?

Mr HOGAN - Personally, yes. I think the right education is the key. I do not know what that model is but the gentleman behind my shoulder here might know what it is.

CHAIR - I am sure he will.

Mr HOGAN - I am sure he has some ideas.

Defensive driving I think is a phrase that is generally not liked because it has said that some young drivers do defensive driving and come out thinking they are -

CHAIR - Advanced driving?

Mr HOGAN - I think advanced driving and the right education - which Barry will tell you about - is the key, not the skidpan type of thing necessarily because the research did say that it made these people overly confident. They thought they were 7-feet tall and literally bullet proof and wanted to drive like Allan Moffat or Peter Brock.

Ms FORREST - That is the advanced driving course you are talking about. Defensive driving is not that.

Mr HOGAN - No, no, I was talking about defensive driving. This is the research that we got through DIER. This is going back a number of years, Ruth. I am saying that if there was a component of this and this and this put together, I think education would be very worthwhile. Why would the Government introduce legislation to do 50 compulsory hours of driver training if it is not worthwhile? And indeed the new legislation has some other imperatives in it. That is a question I would put to government: 'Why do you believe that training is good but this other training would not be beneficial?' I do not understand that.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Paul, and also Toni for coming and for what you have been able to share with us. We do appreciate that very much. We wish you well in your efforts.

Mr HOGAN - Yes, and you too with your findings.

CHAIR - I hope we will be able to get together again before we present the report.

Mr HOGAN - I would love to if that is possible.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Mr BARRY DAVID OLIVER, MANAGER, ADVANCED DRIVING TECHNIQUES, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you, we are looking forward to hearing your views, knowing your expertise and experience, both as a navigator and as an educator in road safety.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I might point out, Mr Chairman, that I have prepared a submission and there is a copy for each member of the committee as well as the secretary. If you do not mind, I would like to read from that submission.

CHAIR - Yes, present it as you wish.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I want to start of with my preamble. The purpose of this preamble is to establish my credentials and those of the business which I operate and, based on many years of experience in the field of defensive driver training, to address some of the issues contained in the terms of reference.

Advanced Driving Techniques was established in September 1992 by Greg Crick, who asked me to come onboard and set up and manage the business. Subsequently, in February 1994 my wife and I purchased the business and continue to run it to this day. The primary function of the business is to conduct structured, one-day defensive driver training courses, to meet the occupational health and safety requirements for the corporate and government sectors as well as providing an opportunity for private motorists to have a better understanding of the need for safe driving practices.

There are two main objectives with the course. First, for drivers to have a better understanding of their limitations and to take appropriate action to address any identified short-comings. Second, for drivers to have a better understanding of the limitations of their vehicles. The course is limited to a maximum of 12 participants with two instructors. Courses are conducted at Symmons Plains International Raceway in the north and Baskerville Raceway in the south. The minimum requirement is a provisional licence. The maximum speed is limited to 80 kilometres per hour. The course consists of approximately three hours of theory sessions and four-and-a-half hours devoted to practical exercises and demonstrations.

Enclosed in this document is a reference, a 12-page document, which sets out 11 specific training modules and their expected outcomes. It should be noted that this document is the intellectual property of Advanced Driving Techniques and is provided specifically as a reference document to enable the select committee to have a better understanding of the course and its objectives. It should also be noted that since ADT was established, almost 700 courses have been conducted in the State.

The first issue I want to address -

CHAIR - You do not want anything to be treated as commercial in confidence, do you?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No. The interesting thing is that Paul Hogan raised the issue of the novice-learner-driver training program and that is the first issue that I want to address.

The drivers most at risk on our roads are those who have the least amount of experience and specifically those who have just gained their P-plates. In 2005, there were 413 serious injuries and fatal crashes in Tasmania. Seventeen- to 25-year-olds held 22 per cent of the drivers licences but accounted for 44 per cent of the serious injuries or deaths. Of the 181 people in the 17- to 25-years age group, 121 or 67 per cent were males. Inattentiveness, 30 per cent and speed, 26 percent, were the most common crash causes listed.

Under the present system, learner drivers are required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of supervised driving before they can undergo a test to establish if they meet specific criteria. There are several fundamental flaws in this system which need to be addressed if we are to reduce the risk factors to our young drivers. The first issue concerns the supervising. How many parents can afford to send their son or daughter to a licensed, experienced driving instructor at approximately \$50 per hour for 50 hours? I would suggest very few, so the net result is that the parents, in the main, become the supervisors and that raises the question, 'Are they equipped to carry out the training in accordance with the requirements of the Supervisory Drivers' Handbook?'

Over the past 16 years, more than 7 000 drivers, many of whom are parents, have completed the advanced driving training one-day course and in many cases those same parents have experienced difficulty in competently completing some very fundamental driving tasks. What hope do they have in supervising a learner-driver to a level that will not only pass a test but, more importantly, ensure a degree of safety once they get their P-plates? An examination of the Supervisory Drivers' Handbook reveals that there are certain criteria to be undertaken, but overall there are critical issues that are either glossed over or not included as part of the training process. Observation skills and the ability to scan for hazards should be a critical component to safer driver. In my view, there is insufficient emphasis on the issue in the handbook. Basically it says that there should be perhaps a component of commentary driving. The idea of that is to see just how far ahead and so on that the drivers are looking. What we are finding is that the parents don't have very good observation skills so they are unable to establish whether the kids are doing well.

The RACT recently advised me that of all the different types of crashes approximately 15 per cent involve drivers running into the back of another vehicle. Again, there is insufficient emphasis on the need for more space, particularly in a following-distance situation. The critical issue of reaction times is not even mentioned. If you ask a driver, 'What is the first thing you do if you see the stop lights of the vehicle in front?', I can almost guarantee inevitably they would say, 'Brake'. Very few people will say, 'React'. Most people don't realise that it is going to take them the best part of a second, if they're paying attention, to react. In that reaction phase, however long it might take, nothing has happened to their vehicle but the driver in front has already finished the reaction phase and is into the brake phase. Hence the reason we are having so many rear-enders. I observe young drivers, particularly young women, and they are tailgating something fearful.

CHAIR - You're describing what happened to me this morning. A young woman was driving a car almost touching my bumper bar. It was most irritating. If I'd applied the brakes suddenly she would have been right into the back of me.

Ms FORREST - Just touch your brakes a few times.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - That is not something that we recommend, Ruth.

Ms FORREST - No, I know. I know it's not ideal but it is to give someone behind you a message.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - We normally say to drivers when they do the course, 'What's your response to a tailgater? How do you deal with that?'. Inevitably the answer we get is, 'I touch the brake pedal'. Some give rude signs. We have had all sorts of answers but, at the end of the day, we tell them there are two options available to them. The first one is you put your indicator on and pull over so you get rid of the problem and it doesn't become an issue. The second is to give yourself more space from the vehicle in front so that if there is an emergency in front of you, you have the extra space and therefore the time to come to a controlled stop and therefore reduce the risk of you being hit from behind. The thing we have to be aware of at the moment is the increase of road rage. What we say to people is, 'You cannot afford to do anything with your driving that is going to induce road rage'.

Ms FORREST - On the open road it's not, I dispute that because a lot more men come right up behind you than women do.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I am specifically talking about young women in city and suburban areas.

If the parents can't get it right, and that is frequently our experienced, how are they going to impart to their kids? How are they going to explain to the children what they should be doing?

The impact of loose objects in a vehicle barely rates a mention. I could quote many examples where a driver has either been killed or seriously injured, not as a result of a crash but as a result of being struck by a loose item in the vehicle.

Ms FORREST - Including animals?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Including animals. For example, Safe-n-Sound did an exercise some years ago, which we quote, involving a mum driving down the road at 60 kph with an unrestrained child in the vehicle -and sadly we still have parents driving around at the moment with their children unrestrained, which I can't understand. Let us say that child weighed 15 kilograms and the child was unrestrained and mum was distracted and she ran into the back of a stationary vehicle at 60 kilometres an hour, that child is going to take off. That new force is now 550 kilos, the equivalent of 22 bags of cement. We are not saying people have to put the baby in the boot but, to take up your point, an animal could crush you to death. Now bear in mind that at Baskerville some years ago we had a course participant tell us that he had a Newfoundland - now that is a huge dog - which lay on the back seat unrestrained. The last time they went to the vet they weighed it and it was 86 kilos. I said to that guy that if he ran into a pole at 60 kilometres an hour, the combination of his airbag and his seatbelt may well save his life, but his beloved dog would probably crush him to death.

CHAIR - How many cement bags was that dog?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Goodness knows. You are probably talking 1 000.

CHAIR - A big dog.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Exactly. Two years' ago we ran a course and the following day I got an e-mail from a course participant who said he had heard of a case in Burnie where a woman had her neck pierced by a pair of scissors that had been left lying on the back parcel shelf. We had a case at Symmons Plains a few years' ago where one of the course participants said, 'Can I tell you of an example that happened to a member of my family?' The example was that the member of his family was a passenger in a vehicle that was involved in a heavy crash. In the crash there was an object that struck that person here and turned them into a vegetable. All it was was a little biro. And when the man told the story he actually broke down and wept, so I have no reason to doubt what he told us.

CHAIR - I often put my briefcase on the back seat.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I can tell you that there was a president of Renault many years ago in France who was killed by his briefcase, a painter in Devonport killed by a tin of paint, and a guy in the Northern Territory killed by a screwdriver.

Mr DEAN - Barry, what do you think is the answer to that? Obviously education, but do we need any laws in regard to that? We are saying animals must be restrained. The law needs to cover that. They do not currently cover animals. It is simply a person, isn't it?

CHAIR - Children.

Mr DEAN - Children, that is right.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - There is something in place as far as animals are concerned, but I think it is only related to animals on the back of a ute or a flat tray.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it certainly relates to animals on flat trays and utes. They must be restrained. But I do not think there is anything to say they must be restrained inside a vehicle. I could be wrong, but I do not think there is.

CHAIR - I doubt it.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No.

Mr DEAN - So you are saying that is probably an answer for animals in a vehicle. And with loose items in a vehicle, is there anything else that we could do other than education?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - With station wagons we say that people should be getting an Australian Standard guard along the back seat. They are available.

Ms FORREST - Some of those have quite big holes in them though. Pens and things could go through them.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - They could, but we also say that you should not rely entirely on that barrier. It is only there for large items. You should also ensure that you do not have loose items. They should be in boxes and at least up against the back of the back seat. In other words, we have to minimise the amount of loose stuff in a vehicle because in a crash, which is very violent, all that stuff is going to fly around with you. We had a case some years ago when we were doing work with Forestry where a vehicle rolled and an object hit the windscreen. Now the windscreen of a motor vehicle is tougher than glass. It is not your ordinary household glass. This object not only broke the windscreen but started to push it out. All it was was a one litre plastic drink container that was only part full. All of this stuff I am mentioning now is not contained in the supervisors' handbook, and we are relying on mums and dads to use this to train their kids to be good, safe drivers. I am trying to highlight issues that I think should be included in there.

Tyres are our only contact with the road and obviously critical for the maintenance of control, yet the handbook simply says 'enough pressure in the tyres'.

Ms FORREST - It does not tell you what the pressure should be.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Most drivers do not know what pressures to run and hardly ever check their tyre pressures. That is one of the functions that we perform with our course. We check the tyres. It just frightens the life out of me. Bear in mind these are people who are coming to do a defensive driver training course, and frequently when we check their tyres they should not even be on the road. Underinflation is very common. They have no idea what the legal requirements are regarding tread depth and the amount of tread surface area. If you ask people how much tread is necessary the inevitable answer that you will get is a match head. It has nothing to do with a match head. I have no idea where that came from. Most people do not know that you are supposed to have tread across the full face of the tyre and yet we are running around with underinflated tyres and wearing them at the edges and technically those tyres are illegal.

Ask a driver why we have tread on tyres and the standard answer is for grip which is wrong. The tread is there simply to disperse water and has nothing to do with grip. What do the tyres look like on a racing car if I can use some motor racing here?

Ms FORREST - They have no tread because they have to hang on to the road.

Mr DEAN - Smooth.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes, they are as absolutely smooth as my head. So where does all the grip come from?

Ms FORREST - The rubber on the road, is it?

Mr DEAN - The more rubber on the road, the more grip.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - It is not the surface area, it is all to do with compound of the rubber and heat. When a racing car is travelling at very high speed, particularly around a corner where you have lateral g loads and you create drifting, you would call that friction. That friction generates heat and when you generate heat together with the soft rubber compound, they work like an adhesive. That is why race tyres wear out so fast. The

softer the rubber compound, the better the grip. The harder the rubber compound, the less the grip, the longer the life. But at the end of the day the tread has absolutely nothing to do with the grip whatsoever.

CHAIR - I am learning.

Mr DEAN - It would certainly have an impact in wet conditions though, wouldn't it, because if you have the right grip in wet conditions it will give you better grip, while if you haven't you lose control of the vehicle.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - If I use the race tyre analogy again, a wet-weather race tyre has two things. It has an extremely aggressive tread pattern, big deep grooves that go all the way around the tyre, grooves that go out to the side. Water is not compressible and when a tread can no longer get rid of the water what does it do? It rides up on top. It is what we call aquaplaning. When you aquaplane you have absolutely no control over the motor car, you have no steering and no brakes.

A wet-weather race tyre is unbelievably soft, so even in wet conditions they still generate a great deal of heat and good grip. That is why they can go so fast in the wet.

I often use motor sport simply to try to highlight these things. But none of this is contained here; the parents don't know this. As I said, we have put through over 7 000 drivers.

CHAIR - The authors may not know it either.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - The handbook is virtually silent on maintenance tips. In my experience the majority of drivers rarely check a vehicle between services and in many cases have little idea what to check anyway. So where does that leave the learner?

How a driver holds a steering wheel and the steering technique required to safely control the vehicle is clearly important, especially with the fitment of airbags, yet the handbook is silent and most drivers haven't a clue about these issues. You may not realise that when an airbag activated it but it takes up the entire steering wheel. I took two driver assessments this morning. Where do you think the first driver had his hands because he is a tall driver?

Ms FORREST - Up the top.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Sitting up on top. Now if that driver was to run into a vehicle and activated the airbag where do you think his fists are going to finish up.

Mr DEAN - In his face.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - In my case it would have smashed my glasses into my eyes. And how do most drivers turn around a corner? So what happens if the airbag goes off? Where do you think my arm is going to finish up? Wrapped around my neck.

These are all fundamental things in which we really should be training our young drivers. There is not much we can do for the people who already have licences. We can try to educate them, but surely we had better start now right at the base with the young people.

CHAIR - You could probably educate some of the long-term drivers if there were programs on television explaining some of these things one at a time. What do you consider the ideal position is?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - The way we are teaching them now is that they should hold the wheel at a quarter to and a quarter past. The old system was ten to and ten past. We are now saying come down so that you are directly opposite each other with the thumbs on the rim, not wrapped around the wheel, that is not on. If your hands are there it gives you maximum control of the wheel and the airbag can do its job. As far as technique, you have to start working the wheel in your hands, none of this business of crossing your arm over. That is pretty standard.

Mr DEAN - I don't think I will drive again.

CHAIR - I am not going to answer any more of these questions.

Mr DEAN - Don't say it.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - The next issue is being able to stop a vehicle in an emergency without locking up wheels. It is one of the most fundamental requirements to avoid a crash and yet nowhere in the handbook is there mention of threshold braking.

The standard response from a driver when confronted with an emergency is to jump on the brake. If the wheels do happen to lock, especially if the road is wet, more often than not a driver will press the pedal harder the closer they get to the crash. That is a very standard response.

The fact is that very few drivers have ever been taught how to control pedal pressure nor do they understand that once the wheels are locked they have no directional control. If you lock up the front wheels you might as well put your hands in your pocket. You can turn the wheel as much as you like and you will not change direction. The single-most important reason for anti-lock brakes - ABS brakes - is so that you have directional control while at the same time you have maximum braking in place. I can tell you that probably 70 to 80 per cent of the drivers that come out and do our course that are driving a vehicle with ABS have no idea what it is about.

Ms FORREST - Never felt it.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Never felt it. Have no idea. Now we have had to actually include that component in the course where we get them to do ABS stops so that they understand how the system works and what the benefits are and what to expect from the vehicle when it occurs. There are cases now where people who are not aware of it have jumped on the brake and all of a sudden they have a pulsing back through the brake pedal and they think they have broken something. So what do you think they are doing? They are taking their foot off the pedal because they do not understand what has happened to the motor vehicle. In short, most drivers have no idea how to respond to lock up. They do

not know what to do. You certainly have to ease the amount of pressure on the brake pedal, which unlocks the wheels, which therefore gives you the chance to change direction. These are just some of the issues that I believe should be mandatory requirements for the learner drivers, that parents and other family members and friends are not equipped to pass on.

The minimum requirement to be a supervisor is that you must have a full licence and have had no licence disqualifications or suspensions in the past two years. No examination is required and there is no testing to establish that the supervisory driver is competent. Contrast that to the licensed driving instructor who is required to complete a competency-based course to Certificate IV standard at a cost of \$3 500. The anomaly there is that one hour with dad is treated the same as one hour with a driving instructor. That seems crazy to me.

Ms FORREST - How long does the Certificate IV course take to complete generally?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I have no idea, to be honest with you. It has not long been introduced but this is what one of the driving instructors told me. This is what he said. It was \$3 500.

The next issue of concern is the maintenance of a logbook to record the actual hours spent driving. Dishonest recording is virtually impossible to detect. There have been numerous times over the years since the introduction of the 50-hour system where parents have admitted to fudging the records on the basis that 'I reckon Junior is right up to speed and is okay'. That has been said to us numerous times. We have chastised those people and told them they are not doing the right thing by their son or daughter by doing that. That is just not acceptable. The present system requires as a minimum approximately two hours per week for 26 weeks and it goes without saying that the instruction process can become tedious and boring, leading to anomalies in the records. For example, parents tend say they drove from here to Longford and back so they will claim two hours instead of one hour or whatever the case may be. They are definitely fudging the records.

As indicated in the third paragraph, there are some serious shortcomings with the present system and it is now critical for authorities to recognise the issues and be prepared to consider a fresh approach. In the past when I have suggested all learner drivers undergo a compulsory defensive driver training course as part of their training, the responsible minister has denounced the idea as not appropriate. Interestingly, none have ever done the course and, based on their response, have very little idea what the course involves.

CHAIR - Do they give reasons for saying it is not appropriate?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes, and it is exactly what Paul mentioned, that overseas research has indicated that skidpan-based advance driver training courses tend to make people overconfident. The thing is we are not comparing apples with apples. At the end of the day, Don, what I am presenting to you, and I am giving you the modules of this course as a reference, is a structured defensive driver-training course. It has nothing to do with speed.

CHAIR - You can be assured that we are very receptive.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Thank you. The next heading I have here is cost of training. The standard response when mandatory training was suggested is cost and who was going to pay. In May of this year I was advised by the Australian Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics that the estimated cost to the community for a road death in Tasmania was \$1.74 million. At the same time I was advised that for each fatality there are four cases of serious injury at a cost of \$430 000 each. Based on the current road toll of 31 as at 20th of this month, the cost to the community so far this year is \$107 million. While I appreciate this is a long-term cost as distinct from an immediate figure, clearly this is an unacceptable cost to the community and should be another tangible reason why a different approach is required. On that basis it would seem reasonable to suggest that the State Government should consider subsidising mandatory defensive driver training courses for learner drivers. The expectation would be that a reduction in deaths and serious injury and therefore community cost would more than compensate the cost of training. Let us not forget the even more important issue of the impact on families and friends whose lives are scarred by the trauma of a road crash and its consequences.

The next item I have on my list is funding priorities for roadworks. Much has been said in recent times regarding the Midland Highway and the need for an upgrade. While I would certainly agree that improvements could be made, I believe it would be a gross misrepresentation to label the highway as 'dangerous' and the cause of major crashes. It is time we stopped externalising the problem and accept the fact that the overwhelming majority of the crashes were the fault of the driver. Clearly there is a limit to the amount of funding that is available from both State and Federal governments for roadworks, in which case surely projects should be prioritised. Incumbent in that process is to ensure that the money is spent in the areas of greatest need and to maximise the best possible safety outcomes. To highlight my point on prioritising the spending, I would pose the following question to the committee as just one example of what I consider to be inappropriate expenditure: which is more dangerous, the section of dual-lane carriageway from Devonport to Burnie with a 100 kph speed limit, where the converging traffic is separated by a central median strip which in some places is several metres wide versus the section of single-lane carriageway from Perth to Bagdad which for the most part has a 110 kph speed limit and where the converging traffic is separated by a white line?

Ms FORREST - It is 110 kph on the Bass Highway. That's the only error with that.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Is it all of that section?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - At the end of the day it's the same speed, so which is more dangerous? Which would you consider more dangerous?

Mr HARRISS - The white line separating the traffic.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes. The answer should be obvious and yet we have the ludicrous situation where hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars have been spent on the erection of wire-rope fencing in the central median strip on the newly-constructed section of the Bass Highway. I am not questioning the effectiveness of the fencing, although I

understand there is some evidence available that the positioning of the fence is critical for it to meet its design parameters - and there is a question mark on that. There are also grave concerns from the motorcycle fraternity regarding what will happen to a rider who is forced into the fence by an inattentive driver who suddenly changes lanes without looking. My point concerns the spending priorities and not whether or not the fence is effective. Surely it would be far more effective to spend this money on more passing lanes and improving the road surface on the Midland Highway. Again, that is just one example but it could be applied to many other situations, bearing in mind the proliferation of wire-rope fencing across the State. It is going up everywhere.

Ms FORREST - I don't whether you have driven on the Bass Highway recently, but I took particular note when I drove home from Devonport yesterday to Burnie and on the long Lilloco straight, where the motorcyclist was killed, the Brifen fencing seems to be quite low. It is in the gully and I reckon if you were in a car at speed you would go over the top of it if you became airborne.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - You are absolutely right, Ruth. In fact, the new section that has just been completed - and it is on the approach to the Leven River, coming from the east if you're heading towards Burnie - there is a section there and I would say at a guess, I haven't physically got out and done a level - I would suggest to you that the bottom half of that fencing is below the level of the road.

Ms FORREST - There are several sections on that road - and I was taking note last night. Your wheels might well get trapped in the top of it. There are other sections where there are four rungs and that is much higher - that is near Turners Beach - but that has been there for much longer.

CHAIR - Could you write a letter to the department about that?

Ms FORREST - Yes, well -

CHAIR - As you have seen it. I have not seen it.

Ms FORREST - I noticed it last night when I drove home, but I did not stop the car and get out.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Do you understand the point I am making here because I do not know what the cost of that fencing is but I would guess it has to be at least \$100 a metre?

CHAIR - I was amazed to see so much of it between Launceston and Ulverstone.

Ms FORREST - Barry, to you have any idea or would you like to make a suggestion about the impact in numbers, if every learner driver, before they get their provisional licence or just after they get their provisional licence, had to undertake a defensive driving course, could have on the road statistics?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I am not sure that you can quantify that, to be perfectly honest with you. I suppose one of the things I can say to you is that we have had young people come out and do the course. When the parents booked them in they expressed concern about attitude and that is obviously one of the critical things, as far as safety is concerned, the

fact that they are tailgating and they are travelling too quickly and all the rest of it. Then we have had them come back to us at a later date and say there has been a transformation, they seem to have taken things onboard. I do not know that you can quantify that.

Ms FORREST - I did a course with a number of young kids and I communicated with some of them afterwards who said the same thing. One girl was not an aggressive driver at all but she said that it has impacted on the way she drives with the gap that she allows and those things. She will not tailgate you.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - The next thing I want to cover is vehicle inspections. The average age of vehicles in the State, as I understand it, is 12 years and from my experience over the years, it is obvious that generally speaking the older the vehicle, the less maintenance is carried out. Vehicle service facility operators and mechanics have often over the years related horror stories about vehicles that have major suspension issues such as badly worn components, oil leaks, faulty lights, leaking exhaust systems et cetera. These older vehicles are also the ones that are usually fitted with tyres that are in poor condition because the driver does not consider the vehicle is worth spending money on. In recent times it has been suggested that a tyre which is more than five years old should be replaced. Not only do tyres wear out, but also because they are constantly going through heat cycles, the rubber compound, which provides the grip, is getting progressively harder. When you get in your vehicle in the garage in the morning, your tyres are cold and subject to how far you travel, believe it or not, you build up some temperature in the tyres. When you park it at work or whatever the temperature goes down again. When you think about it, your tyres are constantly going through heat cycles and what that does is kill the rubber. Many years ago, people, particularly those involved in the transport industry, used to buy their tyres and put them in the rafters in the garage, underneath the iron. In the morning when the sun came up it heated up the iron and the tyres and at the end of the day when the sun went down, the temperature went down. They would leave them there for 12 months and then put them on the vehicle and they would last forever, but they had absolutely no grip. The older tyre is, the less grip it has.

Combining an old tyre with minimal tread and a very hard compound and you have a recipe for a crash, especially in wet conditions. Going back to the tread issue, let me point out that at the beginning of this year we ran a course at Symmons Plains specifically for young drivers. We had a P-plater who drove from Scottsdale via Golconda in the wet to Symmons Plains to do the course. When we checked the tyres on that vehicle, both front tyres were as smooth as this table. One back tyre you could barely see the tread pattern and the other tyre was half worn. I said to him, 'I would like you to drive home at 60 kilometres and when you get home, you talk to your mother about those tyres.' It worried the life out of me, so 24 hours later I rang her and I said, 'Did your son speak to you about the tyres?' She said, 'He told me that I should do something about them but they must be all right, they are only three years old.' I said, 'Have you actually looked at them?' She said, 'No.' She had no idea. She let him drive from Scottsdale to Symmons Plains in the wet with those tyres and that, by the way, is quite common.

It goes back to what I was saying that people do not know what the minimum tread is and most people leave them well beyond the wear bar indicator which is on tyres. We

talk about wear bar indicators and they say, 'What are they? What do you mean? Will you show me on the tyre?'

Ms FORREST - It is hard to get that through people's minds as tyres are not cheap. For a young kid to buy tyres can be a real challenge to meet the cost. It is something they tend to put off, do you agree?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Absolutely. We see it all the time. The bottom line is that you get what you pay for. If you buy a \$59.99 special, don't expect to get a very high performance tyre. We advocate that people spend extra money and buy a better quality tyre. Recognising that there is a limit to what people can do, I am not a great fan at all of recap tyres. Personally I think they should be banned; I wouldn't even put them on a jetty to stop a boat from being damaged. If people are seriously considering putting recap tyres on a vehicle, we would say, 'Go and buy a cheap new tyre, but you need to recognise what you've put on the motor car and drive it accordingly. Don't expect to get the performance out of that that you're going to get out of a better quality tyre'. Again, it gets right back to the education factor. They have never been taught, nobody has ever told them what they should be doing and they are all very fundamental things.

Unfortunately when determining the cause of a crash the answer will usually be inappropriate speed for the conditions when in fact the poor tyre condition was probably a major contributing factor. When was the last time you saw that mentioned in a crash report? The causes most often given are speed and alcohol. I don't disagree with that but I am saying -

Mr DEAN - The only time you would see it would be if it was a fatal accident and there would probably be a proper testing and checking of the tyres.

Ms FORREST - They could all be down by then, though.

Mr DEAN - But they could still test the rubber.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - The present system of vehicle inspection relies on the police and, to a lesser extent, the transport inspectors whose primary function is to inspect heavy commercial vehicles in response to their impact on possible road damage. I believe there needs to be a greater focus from the police and the transport inspectors on this issue. In addition, I believe it is time to introduce compulsory vehicle inspections for safety certification for all vehicles over three years old prior to the point of sale.

CHAIR - Do you have any statistics to show what effect defects in vehicles have had on road traffic statistics?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No, I don't.

CHAIR - Most of the evidence is that it is minimal or imperceptible.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I heard a figure of 2 per cent, but I don't know if that is correct or not. I am coming from the point of view of all those vehicles that have come through this course and I wonder how some of them can stay on the road, to be quite frank with you.

Mr DEAN - On that point, and it was raised the other day, when police go to an accident, unless it is a serious accident or a fatality, normally the police only want to find out whether an offence has been committed - in other words, failure to give way to the right, failure to keep a proper look out and therefore run up the back of somebody - rather than identifying whether it was under-inflation of tyres, poor brakes and other things. They don't do that. I suspect you would support that there ought to be at least some examination of the vehicles in most accident situations?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Absolutely.

The next item is public perception of police activities and speed-detection devices. The public is constantly advised that speed is a major contributing factor in serious crashes that result in death or serious injury almost to the point of indoctrination. Unfortunately, it now seems that many people are of the belief that it is a campaign to not only justify the use of speed-detection devices but also to provide a means of revenue-raising. The police deserve and have every right to expect the support of the community in what is a difficult and usually thankless task, but the situation is not helped by instances that occur from time to time. This is something that frequently comes up from our course participants. I would say almost every time we run a course we get this sort of comment. It should be noted that speed-detection devices do not differentiate between the driver who quite innocently and without intent exceeds the nominated speed limit versus the driver who simply ignores the signs and mostly likely is a serial speeder. Both are treated the same. Let me give you a recent example: George Town Road is an arterial road that has a signposted 60 kph speed limit; Alanvale Road is an arterial road that has a signposted 60 kph speed limit. Tompsons Lane is classified as a suburban street and as it has no speed limit signs displayed the maximum permissible speed is 50 kilometres per hour. Tompsons Lane joins both George Town Road and Alanvale Road in an east/west direction, is 10 metres wide and for the most part is downhill. It is exactly the same width as Alanvale Road. Motorists travelling from George Town Road down Tompsons Lane could be excused for believing they are still in a 60 kilometre zone. Last Wednesday, late in the afternoon, there was a vehicle parked in Tompsons Lane facing east with a camera mounted on the dash to catch the drivers who, without realising, were exceeding the speed limit downhill. The following morning there were two police officers standing in the junction of Helenwood Grove with speed-detection devices doing the same thing. I have to say that this is almost a weekly occurrence on Tompsons Lane.

Mr DEAN - Are we still on the Bridgewater Bridge?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Sorry?

Ms FORREST - He is saying it is revenue raising, it is not really about road safety.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I am saying that there are instances like this where the public can be forgiven for saying you are only there just to raise dollars.

CHAIR - There was no record of accidents there.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No.

Mr DEAN - Tompsons Lane is a wide street. I agree with your observations - they are absolutely spot on.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Is it any wonder that there is a public perception that it is all about revenue raising and what does this do for the image of the police force and their need for public cooperation? I am not saying that speed is not a factor, I am saying let us be a bit sensible about this and start doing things so that we at least get the public on side with us. I have used this just as one example but we frequently have this sort of thing bought up.

CHAIR - So you have maximum observance of rules if they are perceived to be reasonable and enforcement seems to be reasonable.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I will give you an example. Mount Leslie Road, up where St Patrick's College is, that is obviously a 40-kilometre zone. When you come out of the 40-kilometre zone into Mount Leslie Road I think you will find - and it is a while since I have been up there - there is at least one and possibly two 50-kilometre signs warning drivers that it is 50 kilometres. At the other end, at the western end, you have a similar thing. My sister-in-law lives up there and she tells me she travels that road several times a day and she cannot remember the last time she saw a speed detection device. Why? Because there is a sign there and people know.

It also raises the question about the revenue raised from the fines and how that money is utilised for the community good. Unless I am mistaken it is simply swallowed up into consolidated revenue instead of being earmarked for road safety issues, driver training and improving the safety aspects of our roads. If I could go back to my paper on vehicle inspections, surely some of funds could be used to carry out more regular on-road inspections.

CHAIR - So far it has not been possible to find out how much money has been raised by speed cameras. They say it is in the other funds and they cannot give an answer, the last time I checked anyway.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - That concludes my submission. In the back I have included an outline of the 11 modules that constitute our one-day defensive driver training course. So at least the committee can see just how the course is structured and I think that is important because there are within the Government some misconceptions about defensive driver training courses. Just to give you an example, some time ago I was quoted in the paper in relation to defensive driver training. Bryan Green was the minister at the time, and when he was asked he made the comment that he felt there was no particular value in this particular course. I actually wrote to Mr Green and sent him the same document I am giving you people. I asked him to at least tell me which of these components he felt were inappropriate, and there was no answer.

Finally I wrote to him again and asked for acknowledgment of my correspondence and I received a two-paragraph letter, obviously written by a staff member, that simply said the old chestnut that: overseas research has indicated da-de-da, da-de-da.

Ms FORREST - Did you invite him to undertake a course?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No I have not.

CHAIR - Was he Chairman of the Road Safety Council at the time?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No, he was the minister. Prior to him Jim Cox gave a similar response as well. Just as an aside, I would be prepared to run a course at Symmons Plains and invite members of the Government to do the course at no cost.

CHAIR - I think you made that offer before, some years ago.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - One politician has done this course in 16 years.

Ms FORREST - Some others have done another one.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Okay. I am pleased to hear that.

CHAIR - But it is only members of the Government, is it?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes.

CHAIR - One in 16 years.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - One in 16 years. No longer a member of parliament.

Ms FORREST - Can I just ask you, Barry, about your views on learner drivers and provisional drivers being able to drive at only 80 kilometres an hour? Do you think that they should be able to at least have some supervised time up to 110 where it is appropriate?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I think once they have plenty of miles under their belt, provided the road conditions would allow it, I do not see a problem with them, if they under supervision, being allowed to go up to at least 100 kilometres. I have no problem with that.

Ms FORREST - Do you think it is important they have that experience before they can do it on their own?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes. Absolutely. One of the things that we find, Ruth, is that young drivers do not really have a very good perception of speed. I will give you an example. Whenever we run a day specifically for young drivers we add an extra component. Toni, my off-sider, and I take half each. We actually take them for a number of laps of Symmons Plains and we stress that it is not to be treated as a racetrack; it is to be treated as a public road. So you are not on a racetrack, you have to stay on the left-hand side of the road, at a maximum speed of 80 kilometres. We say to them, 'I want you to drive around this as a public road and show me how you would treat this'. Now I do not know whether you know Symmons Plains or not but when you go down the top straight at the end of the that you have a hairpin. You travel down there and you say to the driver, 'What is coming up?' 'It is a corner', 'What sort of a corner is it?' 'It is a tight corner'. 'Okay, you need to think about how much braking you are going to do and what gear you need to be in'. 'Yes'. 'Now, think about it. Can you see the corner?' 'Yes'. 'Can you see the exit point?' 'Yes'. You are saying this to them and I can tell you now,

almost every time, they arrive at that hairpin going too fast and in the wrong gear. They have no perception of speed. Inevitably they are in the middle of the corner, they are trying to turn and at the same time they are stabbing at the clutch to try to change back because they are in the wrong gear and they are stabbing at the brake because they are going too fast. They finish up on the wrong side of the road. It happens every time.

Mr HARRISS - Hands are in the wrong place on the steering wheel to exacerbate the problem.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes. And we are talking about kids that have their Ps. They have been through the system. They have been classified as competent drivers. So in answer to your question, they do not really have a very good perception of speed so I think, once they have done a significant number of hours and provided they are under supervision, if they are out on the highway I can see no reason why they should not be allowed to run up to 100 k.

Ms FORREST - It has been suggested that if kids undertook a competency-based program and didn't actually need a test at the end of it because they were deemed competent along the way at various tasks, say in year 9 going through to year 12 and end up with Cert II at the end of it and getting all the hours of supervised driving in that time, would that be appropriate?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Provided we have the components in there.

Ms FORREST - Yes, from the information that you provide as part of that Cert II that would be included in that. They do not actually have to go for a test; we just tick the boxes, they are deemed as competent - or you are not deemed competent until you are.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - One of the key things though is who is doing the supervising. At the end of the day, that is an issue as well.

CHAIR - Do you have access to any statistics to show any decrease in the rate of road trauma with young people, say between 17 and 25, who have undertaken courses such as yours compared with those who have been taught by members of the family?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - No. I do not, I have to be honest.

CHAIR - We were told yesterday that such courses are compulsory in South Australia, Northern Territory and the ACT but the statistics did not show any significant reduction in fatalities or serious accidents - certainly fatalities - in those States compared with some others, except Tasmania and Western Australia where the numbers were increasing in that age category.

Mr DEAN - Can I just ask a question in relation to road rage? Road rage is becoming a fairly big issue. It has always been a big issue but it is now getting more publicity, I think, and it is akin to bullying. What do you think is the answer to that? Education, quite obviously, again, but how do you go about trying to stop it? Should it be included as an offence, for instance? Should we have an offence somewhere in the statutes in relation to road rage? In that way you could at least get through to people that it is an offence to do that. You can drive up fairly close behind a vehicle and you can poke your

fingers at them and so on and that is not an offence. So maybe it ought to be. I was just wondering what your view is of this.

CHAIR - So you avail yourself of all those opportunities?

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - Well, he got out of the car at the roundabout and was going to have a go at someone.

Mr DEAN - I think we do need to look at that.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Often when we ask people how they would deal with it, we get mixed answers. One chap, a fortnight ago said, 'Oh well, when they get very close to me, the first thing I do is drive off the road into the gravel and shower them with gravel.' Another guy said, 'I have my windscreen washer set up in such a way that when I activate it, it goes over the roof onto their windscreen.'

Mr DEAN - I was talking to a female the other day who said she was confronted with it and she became so emotional she could not drive after, she had to pull off to the side of the road and get somebody to come and pick her up. She was so upset at the screaming, shouting, the abuse and so on that she could not drive. That is not acceptable.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I think there are two things, Ivan. The first is the people who tailgate do not realise that it is an issue. It is not done with any particular intent, versus the other person who deliberately tries to harass the person to get out of the way because they are coming through. I think there are two distinct things.

Ms FORREST - Can I ask Barry for his opinion on the blood alcohol level? Do you think that 0.05 is reasonable or should we consider a lower level or even zero tolerance?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I found the comments when I came in to this hearing interesting. Everybody's metabolism is different and I think you made the point that people look at the figure rather than how they are feeling. Maybe there is some reason to consider perhaps 0.03 or 0.04, drop it down a little, but I do not think we should go down to zero tolerance, to be honest with you.

Ms FORREST - Why do you say that?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - I think it is too draconian. I do not know that it is necessarily going to capture the people who are going to do it anyway. We have to bear in mind that, in my view, there is element in the community who are going to continue to drink and drive irrespective, and you must have found that, Ivan.

Mr DEAN - Yes, certainly.

Mr BARRY OLIVER - You are not going to change those people.

Ms FORREST - So why penalise the rest? Is that what you mean?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Yes, so why penalise everybody else?

CHAIR - Is there anything you would like to say in closing the session?

Mr BARRY OLIVER - Thank you very much for the opportunity. I am very pleased that I have been able to be a part of it and I hope that I have been able to pass on some points that are worthy of consideration for the future.

CHAIR - You have, indeed and it has been educational for us. Thank you very much and we appreciate having the benefit of your expertise. Thank you for your time, it is appreciated.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

MR JOHN CUFF, JOHN BOWE DRIVING, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Please take a seat. Ivan Dean has just had to go out and he apologises. He will be able to read what he misses when the transcript is available. You are with John Bowe Driving and we are looking forward to hearing any evidence that you are able give us on road safety.

Mr CUFF - Barry has probably taken a bit of my thunder, but what I heard him talking about was very much what we believe in as our ethos is very similar. I have a few short notes.

Mr CUFF - There are a couple of things that I would like to show you as we discuss the issues.

To give you a little bit of background, I set up John Bowe Driving with John and his brother Terry in 1997. I was previously involved in a driver training school for three years prior to that. I have been in the industry for 13 or 14 years. We set up the business to teach post-licence driving in different courses. Our main one is our defensive course which is called Drive to Survive and that is available to anyone with a licence or on L-plates after they have had six months' experience driving. We do private individuals, we do some company people who drive for work et cetera and get sent along for OH&S issues by human resources to try to reduce their crash rates and also keep their work place as safe as possible. We have been different level courses from advanced to high performance but Drive to Survive is our main course. We have been doing that all around the country. We are based in Melbourne so do most of our courses Melbourne, but also some in New South Wales and the other States.

The course is it is a mixture of theory, classroom-type activity and practical and the theory is to work on the right driver attitude. We have some theory sessions in the classroom during the day. In that period we work on driver attitude and trying to instil the right attitude to drive safely. I think it is really important, particularly with younger drivers. Generally, there is a consensus with particularly male drivers that they are good drivers anyway. I don't know where they get this from but generally most men think they are -

CHAIR - Probably through compliments by women.

Laughter.

Mr CUFF - They often think they are good at two things and driving is the other one but they may not be good at either.

Laughter.

Mr CUFF We run this part of the course to instil the right attitude but it is no good having the right attitude unless you have some skill. Skill is not necessarily being able to put a car into a slide and skid a car around; skill could be something as simple as sitting in the car properly so you have maximum control. I think you only have to observe young

drivers, particularly on P-plates late at night, and you can see through the back window that at some points they have no control of the car if something goes wrong. We teach even the skill of knowing how to hold the steering wheel, how to sit in the car. You would think that all this should be done prior to driving. That is often not the case and it is the most important part of being in a car, sitting correctly and holding the steering wheel correctly. When it is logically explained why this works a lot of particularly younger drivers start to appreciate and understand why it makes sense. Often it is not pointed out why it makes sense.

Skill can be something as simple as vision, looking further down the road, lifting your head, throwing your eyes further down the road, further through corners so you can see more of what is going on ahead and make judgments on accelerator, brake and steering et cetera because you have more information and your brain has more time to process that information. You could see on a multi-lane road a problem developing right down the road by throwing your vision down the road further and that is a real skill.

Those are the skills and also something as basic as telling someone to leave a two-second gap in traffic so you minimise the chance of having a rear-end collision. A two-second gap involves wait for the car in front of you to go past maybe a pole or a shadow over the road and you count to yourself 1001, 1002. If you have reached that same point before you have counted 1002, you are too close. Why this method works so well is that when some of you got your licences you might have been told, 'You need to keep one car length per 10 kph an hour' - and it is a very complicated system to work out - whereas this way it doesn't matter if you're doing 20 kph or 100 kph, the gap increases accordingly, it is still two seconds. It is easy to understand. And it is a long way. You can say to any driver, young or old, and they say, 'I don't think we are that distance'. It's only when you get them in a practical situation, which we do on the day as well, to brake in an emergency as if a car has stopped in front of them and they see how long it takes to stop, that it registers. Then you pace it all out, look at the distance and say, 'That's how long it's going to take you from 60 kph to stop'. They say, 'Oh, that's a long way'. 'Go and do one more just 5 kph quicker'. They think they have mastered it all and that extra 5 kph completely throws out the distance, the perception, and usually they go so much further. They can't believe the difference with just that 5 kph.

Ms FORREST - That seems really fast, though. We did this course, going 60 kph and then you say 65 kph, and it seems as though you're flying down the road.

Mr CUFF - But you know something's coming up as well.

Ms FORREST - Yes, you know you're going to have to stop.

Mr CUFF - And then you say, 'Do one at 55 kph' and they stop halfway in the area we have designated.

CHAIR - It seems very slow driving at 60 kph in the northern part of Campbell Town.

Mr CUFF - It does, doesn't it? Basically it is a mixture of theory and practical. As you can see, I have given you a run-of-day which goes through what we deal with in the theory sessions and the practical sessions et cetera. It is a full day and runs from 8.30 a.m. until about 4.30 p.m. It is basically knowledge and that is what we work with.

CHAIR - With the participants' own vehicles?

Mr CUFF - Yes. We believe it is very important that they do it in a car that they drive every day. As Barry said to you, a lot of younger drivers in particular can't afford a good car; it is their first car. There is no point in their coming in their father's new company car that may have ABS brakes, stability control and all the terrific electronic aids and thinking they're pretty good because they can stop in this distance. Then they hop in their 10-year-old Camry or Commodore and it's a totally different kettle of fish. The technology has changed so much and it is only when they put their car into an emergency situation they know what it is going to do. There may be a problem with it that they can then get it fixed or, if it is a trait of the vehicle, they drive with more space, knowing that it's not very good.

CHAIR - What is the cost of the day-long course?

Mr CUFF - It is \$260 for the day, including lunch and GST.

CHAIR - You have plenty of people participating, do you?

Mr CUFF - Not as many as we would like. We find, particularly in Melbourne, generally the course is not brought by young drivers; their grandparents or parents buy it for them. They are not really attuned to buying it themselves. They probably don't think they require it because they already have a licence.

Ms FORREST - Do you often detect faults with their vehicles - brakes or tyres?

Mr CUFF - Yes, particularly with the older cars. They might pull to the left suddenly or pull the right but when you are driving normally that's not apparent. It is only when there is pressure on the car in an extreme situation, such as a pedestrian walking on to the street and you suddenly have to brake and have no idea what the car is going to do. I think I said to you, Ruth, when you were in my group during the morning session, 'Would you get onto a jumbo jet to fly to London knowing the pilot has never practised an emergency landing?'

Unfortunately you can't do this on public roads. You need a private area without any other traffic so you can do these activities and have people point out how all these systems work and differences in speeds and judgments and that sort of thing. We basically believe there is a science to driving and it is very complex to do it well. Everybody can drive but not many people do it very well. What we want to do is make people better drivers so they are safer drivers.

Mr DEAN - You have probably covered this in my absence, but is this subsidised in any way? Does the Government subsidise it, support it?

Mr CUFF - No.

Mr DEAN - Should it be?

Mr CUFF - Obviously we have a vested interest in that. If it were made cheaper, certainly, more people would do it. The problem is that venues are hard to find and they are very expensive. We have to use areas where there is no other traffic, which means we need an area where you can get to 65 kph within a reasonable distance and be able to brake on, with no trees and no gutters and that sort of thing, so you can set up different exercises which can show vision and braking distances and all that sort of thing.

CHAIR - Where do you operate? Where do you find those places in Tasmania?

Mr CUFF - Symmons Plains and Baskerville would be the logical ones that I can think of. There is a drag strip as well which would probably be okay, although I have not really looked at it. There may be some car parks around that I do not know of which are big enough and do not have speed humps and things in them where you could do it as well. And it needs a classroom environment as well.

CHAIR - You operate mainly from Symmons Plains?

Mr CUFF - Symmons Plains and Baskerville when we run our courses in Tasmania.

Mr HARRISS - David, do insurance companies provide a discount on premiums?

Mr CUFF - Some do, some do not. Some encourage young drivers to do this. Doing this type of course can often reduce their excess. There is usually some sort of reward but not a great deal.

Mr HARRISS - So it reduces the excess rather than the premium?

Mr CUFF - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - What about the MAIB? Have you had any negotiations with them in terms of premium reduction?

Mr CUFF - No, I have not.

Mr HARRISS - Is it something in which you might be involved?

Mr CUFF - Yes, it is. We have had discussions with the TAC and VicRoads and Government bodies in Victoria, but basically I cannot get anyone to come and even do the course. There is a real head-in-the-sand issue. We had a discussion like Barry did earlier on in the year with Jim Cox when he was Minister for Infrastructure. As Barry said, they just dismiss it, calling it advanced driving which it is not. There is a big difference. It is defensive driving.

CHAIR - There is a difference.

Mr CUFF - Yes. In the *Advocate* prior to Christmas there was a big lead-up because we were doing some courses. There were some young drivers who had been in crashes who came and did the course and one of them had lost control of her car up on the north-west coast on a wet day and hit a tree. She was only about 22 or 23 and her father had told her that if she had accelerated at the time she would have avoided the crash. If you think

about it logically, speed caused the crash which is caused by accelerating. To continue to accelerate, when your speed has caused the problem in the first place, what do you think is going to happen.

Ms FORREST - She might have been dead instead of just injured.

Mr CUFF - She would have crashed faster. This is where there is so much trouble with parents teaching children to drive. I find very few parents who can drive very well and only because they were taught by their parents. So there is no structure to it and there are myths that get passed down through the ages and a lot of these myths are wrong. When I explained to this girl's father that if this girl had merely when she felt she was going out of control had got on the brakes she would have had a softer crash because she would have taken off more speed. But there are these myths, 'when in doubt power out', and that is what the father believed.

CHAIR - I have heard that quite often. If you are in a skid steer out of it, do not brake.

Mr CUFF - If the car is out of control, chances are it is going to go off the road and hit something. How fast do you want to go off the road?

Ms FORREST - As slowly as you can.

Mr CUFF - Yes, but 'when in doubt power out' and this is why so many kids kill themselves. It happens in Victoria regularly and in New South Wales, you see this Commodore wrapped round a pole. Maybe their dad told them that and maybe another time their mate might have told them. There is an element, as Barry said, with drink and drive. People are never going to change. They are going to drive fast. It does not matter how severe the penalty is. What they see on television, they are invincible, blah blah blah. But if you can show them that they are doing the wrong thing logically, the chances are still that if they are in front of their mates they are going to hit the accelerator rather than the brakes because they do not want to look like a wimp. Things can go pear-shaped because if you continue to accelerate out of a problem the car crashes faster. If you can show them how that does not work in a logical manner it may just save a life.

Ms FORREST - When you talk about some of these attitudes, such as 'when in doubt, power out' in people who you have had through your courses who are adults, male and females, do you find the attitude distinctly different in the young people or do you find inappropriate attitude across the board?

Mr CUFF - No, it is across the board.

Ms FORREST - We have heard that young kids have all these attitude problems. Would you dispute that?

Mr CUFF - I think it is more likely to happen with young people because they are risk takers when they are younger. Older drivers who have been driving for longer have experienced certain circumstances and now are driving accordingly. Generally it is more with younger drivers, but there are older drivers who have been driving for 20 to 30 years who still have that same lack of knowledge about what you should do.

Ms FORREST - If everyone undertook a defensive driving course, do you have any idea of what impact that could have on the road toll? We are looking for a new silver bullet here. We have had seatbelts, the 0.05 limit, speed cameras. Do you think it could be a silver bullet?

Mr CUFF - Absolutely. The only reason I do this job is that I am passionate about trying to reduce crashes. If we reduce crashes - even minor ones - we are going to reduce the road toll. Let us get rid of the minor ones, even those that just result in car damage. If you can remove as many crashes as possible, the flow-on effect will be that you will reduce the road toll.

Mr DEAN - Do you think there is an opportunity for courts or magistrates, as a sentencing option in relation to accidents, to impose upon a person that they do a defensive driving course?

Mr CUFF - A lot do. In Victoria they do. We get quite a few.

Mr DEAN - We are not doing it here, I don't think.

Mr CUFF - I do not know about here.

CHAIR - I have never heard of it but it sounds like a good idea.

Mr DEAN - It is. Others have raised that with me.

Mr CUFF - That is right. We quite often get sent people from courts who are up on charges of dangerous driving or doing something wrong.

Ms FORREST - We have heard claims that people do a course but the next day they are basically back to what they were doing. Do you have any follow-up?

Mr CUFF - Yes, we do. We give participants a questionnaire to send back two or three weeks after the course and tell us about their driving since doing the course, give us a brief summary of what they remember. That feedback is that they do change.

CHAIR - If it were compulsory for any learner driver to undertake a course such as this, would you suggest that it be as extensive as this or is it possible to tailor-make a course for learner drivers to have the desirable outcome but that is less expensive and more accessible? Or do you believe this is the minimum and that there ought to be some government subsidy?

Mr CUFF - I think this is the absolute minimum. There is a lot of information that they need to know about.

CHAIR - Would you recommend this for everybody applying for a provisional licence?

Mr CUFF - We believe the ideal time to do this course for the current regulation is as soon as they get their P-plates. They have a lot to learn to get their licence. There is a lot of information they have to process and I think that is enough, do not overload to start with. When they have their provisional licence and they can drive by themselves, that is the

time to come and do the course, before any bad habits are developed or we change a lot of things their parents may have told them at the time.

CHAIR - Is it not too late after the parents have taught them?

Mr CUFF - No, I do not think so. That is why you need some credibility and it is very hard for parents to teach their children because they often rebel against that what they are telling them. You need someone with credibility to explain why you should do this and why you sit in a certain way.

CHAIR - Would you favour a two-stage licensing system as others have discussed? This would entail having a provisional licence granted but before the provisional licence holder gets a full licence there would be a requirement to undertake a course such as this.

Mr CUFF - Yes, I think that would be a really good idea.

CHAIR - Do you know of that system?

Mr CUFF - I do not know anyone doing it, no.

CHAIR - Have you heard of the suggestion?

Mr CUFF - I have but I think it is here. It is not so much about doing the defensive driving course but having a two-tier licence system.

CHAIR - I think the current situation is that it has been proposed but pigeonholed.

Mr CUFF - We did a course recently at Wangaratta in the saleyards for a school from Albury and -

CHAIR - Why in the saleyards?

Mr CUFF - Because that was the only venue where there wasn't any traffic and we could hire it from the council. It was large enough to have an area where they could do their braking and it had a little cafeteria which we used as the classroom so it became suitable for what we wanted.

We had them fill out the questionnaires and from the feedback sheets, in answer to 'In what way has your attitude towards driving changed?', the most common answer was that they understood that the driver was responsible. It was not bad roads or weather conditions; it was that they were responsible so they understood driver responsibility. The second major comment was that they felt more confident if there was a problem ahead and about minimising distractions. These answers were interesting.

The first thing we ask is, who has had a crash? In the 10 years that I have been doing this with John Bowe we normally have about 15 to 20 people in a classroom. When I ask who has had a crash 80 per cent of hands go up although you don't see that many when you are driving around and yet it is so common. Then you ask people about their experiences. The causes range from going to sleep at the wheel to running up the back of a car in front. We then ask how many were over the speed limit when they had their

crash. People are pretty honest at this point, and I reckon maybe one or two hands go up. Then we ask how many were over the alcohol limit when they had their crash? Maybe one hand goes up, maybe two hands go up out of about 15 people who had had crashes. The others happened for all different reasons; reasons you never see advertised, that no-one talks about. Generally distractions and lack of concentration are the major issues but you do not see ads for that on television; sometimes you do and it is great when you do, particularly for concentration.

CHAIR - Inattentive driving.

Mr CUFF - Inattentive driving which may be distractions. There are a lot of those issues and, like Barry, I suspect that those issues are unmeasurable; you cannot measure lack of concentration, you cannot measure distractions, you cannot measure those things so you can't make any money out of them. You can measure speed, you can measure alcohol they are measurable so you can make a certain case for them and you can make the public come onside very strongly. I do not disagree; alcohol and speed are major issues but there are a lot of other things which people do not know about.

One of the things we do since Ruth did the course, when they are coming down doing the braking and they have it pretty right we get someone to get on their phone and we ring them halfway down. We chat about the weather and then we blow the whistle to do the emergencies and they go generally another 10 meters further from when they were not on the phone. Do you reckon that is powerful impact for people's concentration?

Ms FORREST - Using your car kit if it was me.

Mr CUFF - You could be on your in car kit and your mind still cannot concentrate on -

Ms FORREST - Not if your mind is on the conversation on the phone.

Mr CUFF - Yes, so that is distraction and was what made me think about minimising distractions. Number three, their third one was, 'I now appreciate the effects of speeding but also feel more confident if faced with an emergency situation. Yes, more control, more aware of the dangers of speed, more positive and confident, special awareness - there are a lot of hazards out there and speed is critical. Yes, more aware of the car's capability, more aware of other drivers and how to deal with problems. Yes, it has made me aware of others and always look for potential dangers'. So a lot of those things they would not even have known about before they came on the day.

CHAIR - How many students filled in that survey?

Mr CUFF - Everybody did on that day.

CHAIR - And there were - ?

Mr CUFF - I think there were 25 there.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr CUFF - Over the third page it was just -

Mr DEAN - Just before you go over the page, just on the final comments made, 'definitely should be a part of licensing,' you have 100 per cent. So there was 100 per cent support for saying it should be part of the licensing procedure.

Ms FORREST - These were young kids. You have to think about it.

Mr DEAN - That is really good. These are young kids. What grades were they?

Mr CUFF - They were at grade 12.

Ms FORREST - So they had their licences.

Mr CUFF - Most had their licences, yes.

Mr DEAN - So 100 per cent were saying that.

Mr CUFF - Anyway, I received an e-mail which I want to read over the page. It was from one of the fathers who went along just to watch. It said:

'Yesterday I attended the Drive to Survive program in Wangaratta with my 18-year-old son'.

We do the special rate for adults. It is \$260 but if they are under 20, it is actually a 10 per cent discount. Because of the school we did a special rate which was \$220. He continued:

'It is the best \$220 I have spent in a long time. We learnt so much from the day, plus I also found it extremely valuable in reflecting on my own driving. The program was a wonderful mixture of theory and practice, lots of thought-provoking discussion, all delivered in a very effective way. I want to compliment Dean for his work with the group. It is not easy to hold the attention of a group of teenagers for a whole day but he was a wonderful tutor and mentor. The students were impressed by the amount of feedback they got throughout the day. Once again, thanks for the program and your contribution to safer driving on our roads'.

We do not actually teach, we have a transfer of learning and it is different from getting up and just writing something on the board and people make notes. It is training more than teaching.

CHAIR - Did Launceston Grammar participate in it?

Mr CUFF - Yes, we do a deal with them. Every year we have a special for the end of the year. We have been doing that for two to three years now.

CHAIR - So how many students do you usually have in those?

Mr CUFF - About 20.

CHAIR - Do you do that with other schools?

Mr CUFF - We are trying to, yes. What we do with Grammar is quite interesting way. We actually charge \$220 -

CHAIR - Special rate for the high school.

Mr CUFF - but we donate \$20. For each \$220 we give \$20 back to the parents' committee as a bit of an incentive.

CHAIR - I see. So you would be quite happy looking after the old school?

Mr CUFF - Yes, absolutely. That is the building fund.

Ms FORREST - David, I note on point 4 of your questionnaire you wrote 'instructor supportiveness'. One of the things that I found is that, for those of us who might not have done particularly well, it was not like 'you can do better', a supportive approach was taken. I should imagine young kids do not like to be told, 'that was not very good'. They would rather you say, 'That was okay, but to get better next time...'. I heard you talking to some of the young kids as well as myself about how to improve on what they had done. I think that is a really important part. Because we have had evidence that a lot of times when kids go out learning with their parents all you hear is 'do not do this, watch that corner, do not do this, you are going too fast'. All negative rather than positive instruction. I think that was a pretty helpful part. Do you think there is any way of getting out to the supervisory drivers that positive, constructive comments and support is probably better than negative.

Mr CUFF - It is very tricky because most of them are not very good themselves. Yes, it is really very difficult.

Ms FORREST - I do not know if you heard me talking earlier with Barry, but there was a suggestion that the driving courses should be a competency-based assessment program to be run over four years and go years 9 to 12, ending up with a Cert 2 at the end of it. Obviously the training components will be run by trained instructors who have a level of Cert IV, so engaging this sort of course into that program. Those kids do not have a test at the end, they are assessed as competent or not competent. Do you think it is an effective way to do it?

Mr CUFF - Yes, I think that is a good way of doing it. I am not sure how many years you do it over, whether you need to do it over four years. Maybe two to three years. But I think that is a good way of assessing it, yes.

Ms FORREST - Rather than going for a driving test on one day and have the boxes ticked that, yes, you can do the three-point turn and this and that.

Mr CUFF - Yes, I think it is generally just a bit too easy. I mean, to get your licence in Germany it is 3 000 euro, which is an enormous amount of money for a young driver, but they have to do lots of courses. And they are very disciplined drivers, they do not stay in the right-hand lane, they stay in the slow lane. Sure, they drive fast on the highways but

50 kph an hour through all the towns. They all generally stick to that sort of thing. They are just more educated.

Ms FORREST - Do they value their licence more because it cost them so much?

Mr CUFF - Absolutely. It costs them a lot. It is very expensive and they have pride in it too, so they want to do it well. One of the main things I also talk about during the attitude part of the day is that unfortunately, because we do have a set of rules, give way here, stop there, do this speed here, et cetera, people drive thinking that because of all these rules everybody is going to do the right thing because that is the law. However, what they do not think is that, as human beings, we make mistakes. People, being human beings, are going to do the wrong thing.

So at some stage someone is going to go through a red light, not because they are deliberately going through a red light, but because they are trying to think of what they have to cook for dinner tonight. You have to be thinking all the time that everybody is going to do the wrong thing and drive accordingly. So as you are driving down the Midland Highway and you see someone coming along on a gravel to join the Midland Highway, you think, 'if they do not stop, can I?' Then you adjust your speed accordingly. This goes on constantly as you are driving. Is that car going to do a U-turn in front of me? It requires an enormous amount of concentration to process all this information.

That is why concentration is such a major part every time you start the car. But because you drive so often it is very easy to slip back. So we have to show people that this is complex. Do you realise how much concentration it is taking you to do what you have done today? Because when you go out there, you have to apply that every time you start the car from now on - forever. Because one day something is going to go pear-shaped. Because you drive for so many years it will happen. You have to try to minimise it and be aware that it may happen. So you cannot give up. It just makes people think, because they have not thought about it before, because every body drives, don't they? Everyone has a licence.

CHAIR - Almost everyone, yes.

Mr CUFF - You need more training to drive a fork-lift around an empty warehouse than you do to drive a car.

Ms FORREST - John, do you think that all licensed drivers should be retested after a period of time?

Mr CUFF - Things change, new laws come in, and I think they should be aware of all these issues. I think every 10 years would be a good time to be retested.

CHAIR - What do you think of the testing process in Tasmania?

Mr CUFF - I have not been here for a long time, Don, so I am not quite sure. I think it is quite similar nationally.

CHAIR - We have had evidence that on the north-west coast it is a really good standard, but in southern Tasmania - I am not sure about Launceston - it is inadequate in many cases,

with the testing officers are looking for reasons to fail people unduly and lead them into trap situations, in Hobart at least.

Mr CUFF - I had not heard about that.

CHAIR - You are based in Melbourne, David?

Mr CUFF - Yes. I do not know of that happening so much there.

CHAIR - How often do you come to Tasmania professionally?

Mr CUFF - Probably four or five times a year.

CHAIR - For short periods?

Mr CUFF - Yes, couple of days here.

CHAIR - Yes, so you probably have not had much experience with that.

Mr DEAN - Getting back to the value of licences, I think it is clear, isn't it, that the greater the value of a thing is the better you look after it. For instance, if you pay for a good television set you look after it better. If you have a good car you tend to look after it better than you would an old one that has a bit of damage. It is the same with a licence. Licences are relatively cheap. I think it is about \$60 now for a five-year licence, isn't it.

CHAIR - Something like that. It is very reasonable.

Mr DEAN - That is right. It is a low-cost thing really, the licence itself. One of you mentioned that if the monetary value of a licence was greater, perhaps there would be a greater likelihood of people looking after it better.

Mr CUFF - And part of that monetary value is training.

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr CUFF - So you have to pay more because you have to train more.

Mr DEAN - Perhaps if you lose your licence it ought to be mandatory that you have to go through the whole testing phase again. At the end of a loss of licence now I think it is just a matter of reapplying to get your licence back.

Mr CUFF - Three months later it comes back.

Mr DEAN - That is right. Maybe there is some opportunity there.

Ms FORREST - David, I have asked the question of others about learners and the provisional restriction of 80 kilometres an hour. Do you believe that learners and provisional drivers should be able to drive to the speed limit in suitable conditions?

Mr CUFF - I think in suitable conditions. I think to start with, for the six months 80 kilometres an hour is probably enough. But after that, on major roads in the right conditions 110 would be fine because they have to do it anyway at some stage. Then they would feel the extra speed and the difference that makes so they would have some idea that there is a big difference, even though it is only maybe 20 kilometres an hour. That is a big difference.

Ms FORREST - Do you have a view on their blood-alcohol levels?

Mr CUFF - In my view 0.05 is quite good. It used to 0.08 here at one stage. We do not want to have to always go down to the lowest common denominator. We should be trying to bring everybody up to a better level.

Mr DEAN - It has been 0.05 in Victoria.

Mr CUFF - Yes, and it has made a huge difference but, as Barry said, there will still be people who will be at 0.16. Even if it is 0.00 they will do that, but you do not want to stop someone going out and having a glass of wine after work.

Mr DEAN - One argument that was raised here today on a number of occasions is that currently people play a bit of Russian roulette with it. In other words, they think, 'I can have three drinks' or 'I can have two full strengths and a light and I'll get away with it' or 'I can have four lights'. So they are playing a game with it, whereas if it were a very low limit or no alcohol at all, a driver would say, 'I can't have alcohol'.

Mr CUFF - I think they would still do the same thing, to be honest, Ivan.

Mr DEAN - Do you think so?

Mr CUFF - I think they would still take the risk.

Mr DEAN - I would argue with you on that because most people do the right thing most of the time. It is only those few that are prepared to throw it all up in the air and take great risks of course. But most people do the right thing.

CHAIR - On the other hand, I believe the philosophy is that people will observe laws more if they think they are reasonable. I think a lot of people would think this is unreasonable and therefore you lose respect for the laws regarding drink-driving.

Mr CUFF - That is my philosophy as well.

Mr DEAN - I do not disagree with that position.

CHAIR - Our time has expired.

Ms FORREST - David, we have had some evidence about the lack of tolerance for speeding in Victoria. If the speed limit is 100 and you are doing 101, you are fined.

Mr CUFF - Yes, it is a very low tolerance.

Ms FORREST - One of the submissions stated that that has seen a rise in death rates rather than a decrease. Do you have any knowledge of that?

Mr CUFF - I do not have any anecdotal evidence per se but I know it is so strict in Victoria that most people are tending to drive along with one eye on the speedo most of the time rather than looking ahead and seeing problems developing and it has got to the point where it is too restrictive. Everybody knows there are cameras hidden everywhere. In New South Wales I believe they have to tell you there is a camera in the area.

CHAIR - They have two systems. They have one where they have permanent cameras and they tell you where they are and they have another system where they move around and vary the location of them. They have some portable ones and some fixed ones.

Mr CUFF - With the majority of fixed ones you don't know where they are in Victoria. It is interesting that New South Wales is the opposite and has a 40 per cent reduction in the road toll this year so far.

Ms FORREST - Queensland has a lack of tolerance, too. Do you know what's happening in Queensland?

Mr CUFF - No, I'm not sure on Queensland.

Ms FORREST - I know you only have to be 1 or 2 kilometres over the limit there and they will get you too.

Mr CUFF - I didn't think so. I didn't know that about Queensland. I thought they were very similar to New South Wales.

Ms FORREST - My husband is up there and he said that's the case.

Mr CUFF - I think I have said all I would like to say.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We appreciate what you have told us.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr PETER JOHN ROCHE AND Mr GORDON JAMES HUMPHRIES, MOTOR ACCIDENTS INSURANCE BOARD, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Thank you both for coming along. For the record, would you give your occupations.

Mr HUMPHRIES - I am a real estate agent. I am here in my capacity as the Chair of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board. I live in Launceston.

Mr ROCHE - I am Chief Executive Officer, Motor Accidents Insurance Board. I reside in Launceston also.

CHAIR - Thank you for the documents you have been good enough to provide to us. We look forward to hearing your views and anything you would like to elaborate on regarding the contents of the documents or any other aspect of road safety. We do appreciate the very important role that the MAIB plays in funding road safety measures, police officers and in other ways.

Mr HUMPHRIES - Peter will highlight some of the things in the submission and then you may well want to ask us some questions. I was going to raise a couple of other things that are not in the submission but that might be of interest to you in your deliberations. Peter is a member of the Road Safety Taskforce as well as being CEO of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board, so he sees it from both sides.

Mr ROCHE - I had planned on talking about only a very small number of points in this submission. For the record, I guess we need to repeat that the MAIB has a vested interest in road safety in Tasmania. It has made a significant financial investment to reduce the incidence and severity of road trauma over the past 12 years. The MAIB essentially funds a range of medical rehabilitation and other services to people injured in motor accidents and for business reasons invests in road safety programs. Obviously as a government business enterprise the MAIB must operate in accordance with sound commercial practice so this investment in road safety is clearly a commercial activity that we are involved with and one that we believe has paid good dividends for MAIB and the people of Tasmania.

MAIB provides statutory benefits; it is underpinned by a statutory scheme and also includes common law damages. A couple of significant features of our scheme are that it provides lifetime care and support for seriously injured people and I think it is not unreasonable to point out that some other States in Australia are copying this lifetime care for the seriously injured people. New South Wales in the last two years has commenced to introduce a scheme for seriously injured people and I understand other States are looking at that as well.

The MAIB chairman just mentioned the Road Safety Task Force and we have provided some data in our submission. I think it is interesting and important that overall claim numbers have decreased by about 30 per cent over the past 12 years, not that anyone is claiming that the Road Safety Task Force is solely responsible for that because there has

been some important legislation introduced over that period as well so all of these positive things contribute to a positive result.

Significantly we have recently had the Road Safety Task Force program evaluated externally by the Centre for Automobile Safety Research at the University of Adelaide and following that review we have committed funding for a further three years to the 31 December 2011.

We have not put all our accident-prevention eggs in the one basket, we have also provided some money for motorcycle safety strategy, some money for road skills refresher courses and funded a public education campaign and also provided funding for a motorcycle rider handbook.

One of the other prongs of our accident-prevention program is some funding we introduced two years ago into the State Black Spot Program and the first of the funding was spent on the installation of barriers in both northern and southern Tasmania and there are some more Black Spot programs being addressed again in this financial year.

CHAIR - Next is the off-road vehicles, but that is not a question of funding, it is you giving details of that and that is part of our terms of reference.

If I might ask you at this stage about the coverage you provide for off-road vehicles, here it says 'claims for personal injuries as a result of off-road crashes are subject to the same legislative provisions as those that apply to motorists generally. A driver must have a driver's licence of the appropriate class and a premium must have been paid in respect of the off-road vehicle'.

We had a witness earlier this afternoon who was talking about a particular case and he understood that the young person who was seriously injured in an off-road motorcycle crash had his claim covered by the MAIB even though he did not have a licence because the vehicle was registered. I drew his attention to this fact and he was not 100 per cent sure but he had that impression -

Ms FORREST - He had a car licence apparently but his understanding was he did not have a motorcycle licence.

Mr ROCHE - As I said, subject to the same provisions as motorists generally. Where there may be a difference, if a person was riding on private property there is no requirement to hold a driver licence if they are injured on private property, but you would still be required to have a premium paid on the off-road vehicle.

In addition to that, the common law rules still apply. If a person was injured because of the negligence of another off-road driver - and that, unfortunately, does happen and we have had some very nasty accidents in recent years where these people have run into one another - whether they had a licence or not they would not be precluded from claiming common law damages if another off-road person was negligent.

CHAIR - They would be claiming against that person's licence?

Mr ROCHE - Yes.

CHAIR - But in the case of a one-vehicle motorcycle accident on private property, if the vehicle was registered and the juvenile driver did not have a licence, would that person be covered?

Mr ROCHE - That person would be covered.

CHAIR - Because it was private property and the vehicle was registered?

Mr ROCHE - The legislation talks about having a driver licence of the required class. So if they are on private property, you do not require a driver licence, so you escape that particular provision. But, of course, if you are on crown land or whatever and you have a car licence and you are driving a two-wheel vehicle, you are not covered because you are required to have a motorcycle licence.

Mr DEAN - But in that situation, I thought we were told in answer to this that you could take out MAIB cover for a motorcycle, for instance, to be ridden on public property or in a park or reserve or whatever it is. You could do that?

Mr ROCHE - Yes, correct.

Mr DEAN - But you would still have to have had a licence?

Mr ROCHE - Yes.

Mr DEAN - So an under-age person could not do that, just have MAIB cover on the machine?

Mr ROCHE - That is why I made the reference to the same provisions that apply generally to motorists and the no-fault scheme requires those two basic things. If you are driving a motor vehicle, you have to have a driver's licence, which we all believe is not an unreasonable legislative requirement and if you are the owner or driver of that motor vehicle, there should be an MAIB premium paid as well. Those same provisions apply to the off-roaders as well, except of course, as we said, if you are on private property.

CHAIR - We have been given some statistics that show that in the past six to eight years, I think, there has been a trend downwards in serious injuries for road crashes. But, in the same period, there has been no consistent downward trend in fatalities. They plateau but fluctuate up and down, about the same area. Is that your experience?

Mr ROCHE - Yes. We do not talk about this at work because once we start talking about it things will go in the wrong direction. Just at this present time, fatalities are down but when you look back a few years, and that might be three or four years ago when they were at about a similar level and then in 2006, 2007, in those two calendar years, I think the fatalities averaged about 50 for each of those two years. There is no consistency in the trending down of fatalities, it is up and down a little. Having said that, when we are dealing with very small numbers at around 50, it is difficult to get the same trend reduction that we have achieved in overall claim numbers or indeed serious injury claims as well.

CHAIR - That is a point that Mr Harriss raised earlier this afternoon.

Ms FORREST - Can I get back to the off-road vehicles for a moment. It has been suggested that even under-age off-road riders or drivers should perhaps have some way of getting a restricted licence of some kind or a certificate of competency for a bike or whatever that they are capable of handling, so that then they would have a licence of sorts and obviously need the MAIB premium on the off-roader, whether it is registered or not. Part of that process would be getting some training probably to look at how they operate the bike so do you think that is an important consideration?

Mr ROCHE - If we look at the big picture situation, which the Government Prices Oversight Commission do every three years when they investigate our premiums, and I made a number of references in there that off-road vehicles get a mention in every GPOC report and it surfaces because of the costs involved. If you were a private general insurer you would find a way that you would not insure these off-road vehicles because they are a poor risk. Currently I think the premium is \$180 for an off-road vehicle. MAIB could charge double the amount recommended to government by GPOC but we have not implemented that higher charge because it is very difficult to get people to pay \$180 and I shudder to think what would happen if we introduced a \$330 premium. To finish that point, what would concern me is if the mums and dads had to subsidise the off-road people to a greater extent than they do now.

Ms FORREST - Mum and dads driving cars.

Mr ROCHE - Yes, that is right. Do we make special rules for a five-year-old running around the bush in a sort of a fully quasi-licensed arrangement? Would we consider doing the same for someone wanting to drive a car up Brisbane Street? I am not sure there would be any support for a temporary or partial licences for children to be driving cars on streets. I understand where people come from wanting kids to have the opportunity to drive these things but I think from an MAIB point of view we would be concerned about something being offered to off-road enthusiasts but not to other people.

Ms FORREST - Another suggestion that has been made on this issue is that those young people who are under age should join a motorcycle club or something like that, not a bikie gang. Would that be a better way of doing it?

Mr ROCHE - I am sure it would be a better way of doing it. The other thing about these very young people is that they do not realise the dangers of these things. From the report we see in the paper, they are at the LGH every weekend in the summer time getting their bones repaired et cetera.

CHAIR - In large numbers sometimes.

Mr ROCHE - It certainly is a difficult one but someone has to pay for this and I would be concerned if there were more cross-subsidisation from ordinary mums and dads.

CHAIR - Do you have copies of the GPOC reports you referred to that you could make available to us?

Mr ROCHE - The extracts or the whole report? I could have whatever you would like.

Mr HUMPHRIES - They come out every three years.

CHAIR - We can probably get access to it ourselves.

Mr ROCHE - They are on the Internet.

CHAIR - Would you be able to indicate to us how much money you have needed to transfer to the State Government each year for the last five years?

Ms FORREST - In dividends.

Mr ROCHE - I have a copy of the report that was tabled in Parliament yesterday but would it be to give this in writing in case I get it wrong because dividends are a bit funny. They appear in the year following the year to which they apply, so a profit dividend for 2007-08 is paid in 2008-09 but a special dividend allocated to 2008-09 is paid in 2008-09. We will set it out in tabular form.

CHAIR - Thank you. We would appreciate.

Mr ROCHE - For the past five years.

CHAIR - Yes, the last five.

We had some evidence today that whereas MAIB premiums some years ago were some of the lowest in the country, they are now up among some of the highest, presumably because of the amount siphoned off by the State Government which would affect the premiums. Would you like to comment on that?

Mr ROCHE - No, they have not changed for four years.

CHAIR - Is that so?

Mr HUMPHRIES - We can give you the information but they have not changed.

CHAIR - How do they rate against other States?

Mr HUMPHRIES - It is very hard to make a true comparison because you are not really comparing apples with apples. Different States give different benefits.

Ms FORREST - There is a table in the information you provided, on page 5 of the document.

Mr HUMPHRIES - But you have to work out what bang you are getting for your buck, in a sense. Someone might say they are paying a lower premium in New South Wales but there is no no-fault in NSW. There could be thresholds, excesses.

Mr ROCHE - These are the premiums in place for 2007-08 and first we will talk about the schemes that offer no-fault, that is Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Tasmania has the cheapest premium at \$332, Victoria is \$336 and the Northern Territory is \$426. Then you have New South Wales that in the last year and a bit introduced some

no-fault, only for the seriously injured though, their premium is \$347, South Australia which is simply a tort-based scheme, there is no entitlement to no-fault benefits at all, is \$382, Queensland's premium is less than ours at \$272, again it is just a fault-based scheme. Western Australia has the cheapest scheme in the country at \$235 and people there tell that everybody is making so much money in Western Australia they cannot afford to get injured. The ACT, which again is a fault-based scheme only, has a premium of \$386. MAIB sits very well compared across the spectrum as having the lowest premium for a scheme that offers no-fault and it sits pretty much in the middle of the fault-based schemes.

CHAIR - Well that is very good. We know how well MAIB is managed generally with its investments and claims et cetera. We generally do not hear any complaints about it.

Mr ROCHE - Plus we do have the future care provision which is no-fault based. Other States do not offer that. They pay the lump sum and if the lump sum is frittered away in the first year, they then go back onto government assistance, so they are getting a double dip in a sense, whereas with us it is pay as you go.

CHAIR - That is interesting to hear and refutes what we were told before so it is good to have that on the record.

Mr ROCHE - Could I just follow up on one point that Gordon made a moment ago that we have not increased premiums for four years? We had a board meeting this morning and the presentation by our actuary reinforced the fact that our claim numbers have continued to trend down over this period of time. They have been of the view that we must hit the wall soon, or we should have hit the wall a couple of years ago and flattened out. With this better performance and fewer claims, it means that there are lower claims costs so the motorists of Tasmania have been winners because we have not had to increase the premiums every year. The premiums order allows us to increase by AWOTE, which I think is probably about 4.5 per cent at the moment so it is a good result.

Ms FORREST - I am not sure whether this will affect premiums or not, but I noticed in your investment performance and strategy that you have money invested to provide an income. I saw in the paper a report of a \$22 million loss from the current global financial situation. Will that impact on your capacity to provide the same level of service without raising the premiums?

Mr ROCHE - MAIB has enjoyed significant profits in the last few years within the buoyant investment markets and whilst we do not like to be flippant about a loss and no-one wants to make a loss, it has reduced our solvency level so we are marginally less strong than we were a year ago but we have a level of solvency which is a sort of ratio of net assets to our claims liabilities. That goal is 20 per cent to 25 per cent and we are still within that 20 per cent to 25 per cent range at the moment.

Ms FORREST - In spite all the volatility in the share market it is still there?

Mr ROCHE - Yes it is.

The other thing that needs to be recorded is that when our actuarial adviser is making recommendations in relation to premiums they do not look at the share market return in

the last 12 months or what it might return next year, they look at middle of the road, a figure say about 8 per cent so if MAIB had a buoyant year last year or a loss year it would not alter their view of what the longer- term premium situation should be.

Ms FORREST - It is a bit over 12 per cent since 2003-04, according to your figures here.

Mr ROCHE - It is.

Ms FORREST - Okay, thanks.

Mr ROCHE - It is what is called a long-tail scheme so you have to take a very long-term view of your investments -

Ms FORREST - And your expenses.

Mr ROCHE - Yes, so that what happens this year - the same thing might happen again next year, but I think we were minus 8.7 in the average for pooled investment funds to which we would be compared with was minus 9. You always have to look at yourself in the marketplace how you are travelling against the others. If we were minus 15 you would probably be a bit alarmed. But, no, it will not impact.

CHAIR - I am just wondering if you have any views on the desirability or otherwise of learner drivers being required to undertake a compulsory course of instruction, say for a day, two half days, three-hour periods involving showing films about driving techniques and how to minimise risks and general tips on driving. Do you have any view about that or are you satisfied with the present system?

Mr ROCHE - Just a couple of points, Chairman, if I may. MAIB is not expert in best practice in driver training and has not done the necessary research to determine the benefit from such regimes such as defensive driver courses for young drivers. I know that there are different schools of thought in relation to it and we know that the Government has introduced novice driver reforms which hopefully will improve the skills of young drivers.

I guess driver courses are freely available from training providers at the moment and I am not sure that there is a lot of evidence to see that people voluntarily go to these courses. Just to reinforce that, I talked about our motorcycle investment in road safety earlier where we subsidised refresher courses. A refresher course by DECA or Stay Upright costs \$180. We have had some partnerships with them and MAIB subsidises that \$180 course to the extent of \$130 so that the participant only pays \$50. So when we announced that and the motorcycle groups know, my concern was that in six months' time we would have spent all our money on this training and what will we do then. Regrettably, in the two years we have had only about 200 people who have taken up this course and that is after a fair bit of hard work. There were flyers included in registration notices where there was a motorcycle involved so it is not as if people did not know about it.

There does seem to be a reluctance in the community to undertake driver safety training even where the cost is subsidised by MAIB. I know the motorcyclists are a different group to the people you are talking about but it has been said to me by a training

provider that parents are reluctant to invest \$100 or whatever it might be for their son or daughter to undertake a training course.

The other thing I am mindful of is if we make it too difficult for young people to get licences by increasing the hours dramatically and setting more mandatory tests for them to undergo driver training, it could be that some people may not be able to afford it and will drive unlicensed which is a bigger worry. I was at a seminar and a young lady from the east coast made that very point, that the people she was dealing with struggle to get a licence. She was pleading a case not to make it any more difficult because it is not a good outcome to have people taking the law into their own hands and driving without a licence.

CHAIR - There is probably more resistance to motor vehicle tuition because that would be more expensive, but if the Government provided the courses almost free of charge, do you have any view about the desirability or effectiveness, taking away the cost factor, of every learner driver being required to undertake such a course?

Mr HUMPHRIES - I would tend to think it goes further than that. Road safety is an issue for everybody. It is part of our life. Driving is part of our life and part of the onus of education is to prepare you for your life. I would have thought that learning to drive and the fundamentals of road safety as most of in this room learned at school when the road safety officer came to visit the school, is something that certainly warrants consideration because how else will they learn. Children usually learn from their parents. But, unfortunately, a lot of the parents who now have young children did not learn at school so if they are learning, they are learning bad habits and good habits. I would have thought that there is no quick fix to this. It is fundamentally part of our life, showing them films and doing whatever you do. I do not know how you do it. It should be part of the education process.

CHAIR - We have heard quite a bit of evidence to that effect too.

Mr HUMPHRIES - The Government would obviously play a part in that because a lot of the schools are government schools.

Ms FORREST - You said there was a poor uptake with the refresher course for motorcyclists, there was a reasonable cost involved in the defensive driving courses and the Government continued to mix them up with the advanced driving courses saying they were bad for young people, they make them too confident and the like. Those messages are going out to people and parents are hearing those messages which might be one of the problems in getting people to engage in these courses.

Mr HUMPHRIES - I do not know. It is really a matter for the Government. We are not in a position to determine that.

Ms FORREST - But unless you have people saying there are benefits in these things, why would you spend money on doing a course that the people in authority maintain does not have any benefit, in fact it will make you a worse driver?

Mr HUMPHRIES - I would imagine there are benefits in training, but who makes the law that training is compulsory is the legislature. It is for the legislature to decide whether

they are going to make that law. They have to decide whether it is a good or a bad law. A percentage of people in the population will tell you that every law is a bad law and there will be others who will tell you that every law is a good law.

Mr HARRISS - Is the Road Skills Refresher Course ongoing or are you reassessing that because there has not been a huge take-up of it?

Mr ROCHE - No, it is ongoing. There are some courses happening as we speak and they will continue to occur for some time into the future.

Mr HARRISS - Has there been no decision yet, Peter, as to when they might cease?

Mr ROCHE - We still have some funding available, so there would be no reason, I would think, for the next year or two for the program to cease. As I say, we had paid for about 200 the last time I looked and we were expecting many more than that. There are still funds available for this activity. Funnily enough, we have asked for feedback forms because obviously if everybody thinks this is no good at all we would not want to continue funding, but there have been some very positive comments on the majority of the feedback forms. Those who do participate have found it useful and very worthwhile.

Mr HARRISS - The obvious presumption is that such a course is going to be beneficial. That being the case, wouldn't it be reasonable to presume that some support by the MAIB for similar courses for motor vehicle drivers would be worth pursuing as well, either as part of the testing regime to obtain a licence or post licence? Maybe costs could be kept at a minimum to have at least some reasonable effect for part of the licensing assessment. Is that something which the MAIB has turned its mind to?

Mr ROCHE - The motorcycle activity was a specific program. Along with off-road bikes, motorcycles premiums are insufficient to pay for the claims costs. They are considerably insufficient so the investment specifically in motorcycles was to address a particular problem. As I say, the refresher course is one part of it, the education programs, there are some advertisements running at the moment and the handbook that is available at a very modest price to everybody. I think there is quite a difference between what MAIB funded for motorcycles, to address specific concerns, as opposed to what is done for the population generally.

As I said earlier we do not have the necessary research to determine what is the appropriate amount of training for novice drivers, so personally I would be guessing if I said it would be a good idea without having any concrete knowledge. It is my understanding that those who oppose it simply say that there is no evidence that additional mandatory driver training produces any different outcomes from people who have not undertaken that additional driver training, but that is not an area that we delve into so I do not think I can honestly answer that question.

CHAIR - We have started to delve into it but we have not come up with that evidence yet.

Mr HUMPHRIES - Maybe it is being done somewhere else. There are cars all around the world.

CHAIR - We have not inquired beyond Australia but there is no obvious evidence of that, which I find surprising. I thought there would have been for the 17 to 25 age group.

Mr HUMPHRIES - I do not know whether you have heard of the Swedish experience with the Vision Zero. We would commend that and I have some information on it. We became aware of it from Minister Cox when he was the responsible minister in 2007. He had been in Sweden and I went to Sweden last year so took the opportunity to visit Roger Johansson in Valenga and was impressed with what this program achieved. Roger Johansson also came to Tasmania, at our invitation, to address our board on Vision Zero.

There is quite a lot to learn from other parts of the world. I only know of Sweden because I have been there and Roger Johansson has addressed us. I don't think there is any particular magic about what you do or what you don't do but when Sweden embarked on their road safety strategy 15 years or so ago the rate of road accident death there was six in 100 000. I am not sure what the population was 15 years ago. It is around 9 million now and their road conditions would vary because they are a country that has 18 hours of darkness in the middle of winter and has quite heavy snow around the place. So their conditions would be pretty rugged.

Their rate of death 10 years ago was also six in 100 000. In 2006 it was 4.7 in 100 000 with an aim to be one in 100 000. In 2007 the death amongst Swedish children was in fact down to one in 100 000. In Tasmania if we say there are around about 50 deaths per annum and around about 500 000 people, then that calculates out at 10. In Sweden they tried to be innovative and not just do the tried and true things. I wish I could speak to this as well as Roger Johansson could. It took him an hour and I have about five minutes, so I will just highlight some things and you can look at them later. Then if you wanted to revisit it at a later stage I would be more than happy to. They do it with a shared responsibility between road designers, the makers of the rules and the road users. They did not just focus on the road users. They approached the safety of children as being a question for both parents and society. There was education for parents, school staff, traffic engineers, et cetera, and the measures focused on safe environment, for example, bicycle lanes, bicycle helmets, child seats, safe school buses.

Here you have probably noticed that we now have what I would consider safe school crossings. They are taking a long time to put in, but they are these ones that flash up rather than you have a sign that you are supposed to look at. Gee, it is 2 o'clock, how fast am I going? Well, you are supposed to be doing 40.

They paid great attention to the role of kinetic energy and there are some slides in there that will show you. On page 14 you see somebody walking down the side of the road and somebody walking across the zebra crossing and you turn to the next page and that shows you the real danger of what we are doing.

Ms FORREST - Page 20 and 21, I think.

Mr HUMPHRIES - Sorry. Is it page 20 and 21? Then you look over the next page and that shows you the relative safety of what they are doing.

Ms FORREST - This is only to focus on children though you say.

Mr HUMPHRIES - No, it is not just focusing on children, it is focusing on everybody. But they are putting considerable emphasis on children. They are talking about car safety. They are talking about personal injury being the problem, rather than accidents. So you are trying to create an error-tolerant transport system. It is a system where accidents can happen without severe human injury.

In Sweden they have made extensive use of what they call 2 plus 1 road. The Midland Highway has a lot of that where you have two lanes one way and one the other way and they have a wire barrier down, not the middle, but dividing the two lanes and the one lane. In some cases they have a wire barrier on the side of the road as well, so you are actually driving down a tunnel in effect. They have about 1 500 kilometres of that, which they believe works very well and is very much cheaper than widening the roads. They have found that the wired road with the wired run-off is not safe at all. It does not help people stay on the road, it just helps people to run off. At least they have somewhere to run.

Ms FORREST - Have they got many motorcyclists in Sweden, do you know?

Mr HUMPHRIES - I could not tell you. They have a lot of pushbikes.

Ms FORREST - Because motorcyclists have an issue with the wire barriers as opposed to the edge of the road.

Mr HUMPHRIES - They do. They have an issue with the ordinary concrete barriers as one poor devil that was doing around about 300 kph found at Turners Beach earlier in the year. But if you are doing 300 kph on a motorbike you have a problem with trees, with cars, with everything. While you have a problem with these things, I think you have to take a very holistic view of this. Everything you do in road safety will offend somebody. The beauty of road safety is if you have 100 people in the room they will give you 100 different reasons why you should do things. No two people would probably think the same. They may very well have a point. I am sure there have been motorcyclists killed in Sweden with these just as motorcyclists have been killed here because they have hit concrete barriers, or trees, or whatever they have hit. But if you are doing a couple of hundred kilometres per hour and you come off a motorbike then there are not too many places to go. They use roundabouts extensively. In Valenga, which is a town of about 70 000 or 80 000 people - not quite as big as Launceston - I think there are only four or five sets of traffic lights. There are roundabouts almost everywhere. The traffic moves quite freely although it moves slowly. They still have accidents, but they said they are only minor accidents, good for the panel beaters. They don't have any T-junction accidents at red lights because nobody is running the red lights. The roundabouts and the roads are constructed in such a way that you have to slow down to go around them, you do not have to tear straight through them. Full credit to Launceston City Council. It is an unusual design roundabout that was put in Elphin Road at the bottom of the High Street hill, but it is a good one because it slows people down.

CHAIR - That is the peanut-shaped one?

Mr HUMPHRIES - Yes. It only has one weakness. If you are going out of town and you want to turn right to go up High Street, you cannot put your indicator on until you go past the last bulge, because if you put it on at the beginning and you turn slightly left it

turns off and you have to put it back on again. That is the only weakness from a safety point of view.

They have hundreds of fixed speed cameras. They are all signed, they are all on GPSs, they are all on your road maps. They are there for everybody to see. They all go back to one central point. They appreciate that they are probably not very profitable because everybody knows they are there, though they still catch people, but they believe they work. They are very easy to run. They probably have hand-held ones to complement them.

I travelled about 1 000 kilometres when I was there, part on freeways, part on 2+1s and part on ordinary roads. I would say from my observation that the traffic on the freeways tended to speed a bit, but then they were two and three lanes wide going each way so we do not need to worry about that.

CHAIR - Very wide roads.

Mr HUMPHRIES - But on the narrower roads where there is 100-kilometre speed limit they pretty well stuck to it all the time. In one instance there were three signs warning of a speed camera - it was quite a twisty area - within a one-kilometre distance. And I bet they still catch people on their speed camera. It was there. That is quite a quick comment and I realise you don't have a lot of time, but you may find in that some interesting things.

Ms FORREST - Page 43 has a picture of a motorcycle exclusive lane -

Mr HUMPHRIES - Yes, I think that might be in an Asian country. I cannot remember which one.

Ms FORREST - It is - sorry, it is in Malaysia.

Mr HUMPHRIES - It is in Malaysia, yes, I thought it was.

Ms FORREST - There was a reduction in motorcycle crashes of 83 per cent.

Mr HUMPHRIES - We do not hold any brief for the Swedish system but if you were investigating overseas places it would certainly be one that perhaps would warrant a look.

CHAIR - We want to learn about what is happening in other countries as much as possible so that is very helpful, thank you.

Mr HUMPHRIES - I suppose there are only one of two ways; you either fly somebody like him out to speak to you or you go and see him and see some others as well. It might seem to be a lot of money to start off with but you are going to get it first-hand. You can ask them the questions.

CHAIR - What you have been good enough to provide us is very helpful.

Mr HUMPHRIES - When I went to see him at the university he gave me three hours of his time. He took me out on the highways and he could not have been more helpful. When he came here he spoke for about three hours, and spent the afternoon with Simon Buxton from DIER.

Ms FORREST - How long have they had this strategy in place?

Mr HUMPHRIES - They started it 15 years ago.

Ms FORREST - Okay, do you provide information about what effect there has been?

Mr HUMPHRIES - They are measuring on deaths per 100 000. They started at six and they are down to 4.7. They are aiming for zero, less than one. I guess you would probably never get to zero but if you could drop it from 10 to one it is a big a drop in percentage terms. Also, serious injuries will drop along the way because obviously as deaths drop you would hope serious injuries would drop as well. We have seen serious injuries drop but perhaps not so much deaths.

CHAIR - That is right.

Mr DEAN - Can I change the subject totally back to MAIB premiums? It came out in our inquiry that the current system penalises good drivers. In other words, what some people are saying is a driver who has been thrice convicted for drunken driving and had three bad accidents will still pay the same premium, even though you have had claims, as anyone else who has never had an accident or any prior convictions. Do you have a position on that to satisfy people who ask those questions?

Mr HUMPHRIES - Yes. This issue comes up in our GPOC investigations where the public are asked for input. I guess the majority of people are in the same position as you, that they have not had any accidents or claims. For example, you turned it to someone who has been penalised should pay extra premium. You could similarly look at the reverse and say that everybody who doesn't have a claim should get a no-claim discount. Let's say there are 450 000 registered vehicles on the road and we are receiving currently about 3 300 claims - I don't know exactly how many motor vehicles are involved in those claims, but let us say for example that there are 3 000; there might be 5 000, I don't know - it is a very small number. If you had a situation where 450 000 cars and 445 000 of those people didn't have an accident and were required to have a no-claim discount, you wouldn't be able to increase the premiums on the 5 000 errant drivers to the extent where you could give any meaningful discount to the 99 per cent of drivers. In a strange way you would almost have to increase premiums to give drivers a discount. Such is the difference in numbers between the vast majority who don't have an accident and the very small number who do.

Ms FORREST - It's not the people who have accidents that I was referring to, it is the number of people who break the law, people who might have a minor speeding infringement but are 15 kph over the limit or drink-driving above 0.05. That is what your system was -

Mr DEAN - I did refer to accidents as well.

Mr HUMPHRIES - It is not the cars that break the law, unfortunately, it is the drivers. I own a car and I have an unblemished record but it just so happens, let's say, that I have a family that has a terrible record. What if the family drives the car 75 per cent of the time?

Ms FORREST - But the question is, why don't we link MAIB premiums to the driver's licence then?

Mr HUMPHRIES - If you are going to penalise drivers you would introduce a licensing system where some people might pay \$500 for their licence and some would pay \$50. There are a lot of people who don't have a licence and have no intention of having one. If it cost \$500 they wouldn't get one. It is a very difficult situation.

Ms FORREST - But if you attach it to the licence rather than the vehicle, because as someone holding a driver's licence I can only drive one vehicle at a time.

Mr HUMPHRIES - That's fine, but that's not MAIB attaching them to the licence. We have nothing to do with licences.

Ms FORREST - No, but if the decision was made to attach the MAIB premium to a licence rather than to a vehicle registration so that everyone who holds a licence and is potentially driving a vehicle one at a time - one vehicle, you might own two or three vehicles; a motorbike and a car and a work vehicle - the MAIB premiums relate to your licence rather than the actual vehicle. If you then wanted to reward drivers who did not break the law and had no infringements on their licence and punish those who did and were the more likely to end up requiring the services, or causing someone else to require the services, of MAIB, is that a fairer system?

Mr HUMPHRIES - I wouldn't have thought so. If you're looking at road safety, you probably would be looking at what is happening elsewhere. That would be a most extraordinary trailblazing view to take and maybe it has some merit. Personally I can't see that it does. The system as it is now of paying a premium on cars seems to be a universal system. Road safety is universal too but it is all different and CTP is all different but to say that we think we will suddenly have third party on licences, I do not follow that.

Ms FORREST - So it has not been considered then?

Mr HUMPHRIES - It is not really for us to consider. The Government might want to consider it, but it is not for MAIB.

Ms FORREST - If that was a government recommendation, that that was the process, do you think that would pose problems for MAIB or is it something that could seriously be considered?

Mr ROCHE - I will make a couple of points. Our system is generally the same as the ones throughout Australia. Alternatives to premium collection have been discussed not in great detail in some of the GPOC reports over the years. Of course, in South Africa part of their premium is collected at the petrol pump but I do not think anybody in their right mind at the moment would be suggesting that -

Ms FORREST - I think we are paying more than we should at the moment anyway aren't we?

Mr ROCHE - we should be putting the price of petrol up.

There are other issues, of course, if you went to a premium attached to licences, such as where the hire-car operators fit in, people coming from interstate or overseas who are not contributing to the premium pool. At the moment the hire-car operators pay a premium; it is a reasonably high premium because they are a higher risk than a private car so people who come from interstate or overseas who drive those vehicles notionally pay part of that hire fee that would be for an MAIB premium. If you went to an MAIB premium based on driver licences I do not know how you would collect premiums for the hire car sector.

Mr DEAN - That is an interesting comment you make when you say that these people are a higher risk and that they pay a higher premium. I do not think anybody would argue with that. That harks back to my previous question in relation to the person who has three or four prior convictions for speeding or three or four prior convictions for drunken driving. Obviously they are a higher risk but they still pay the same premium as you and I pay. What has been put to us is that the premium on us could remain the same. You need to get a certain amount of money, and we understand all of that, but for the risk person who is in that high risk category, and you have already said that -

Ms FORREST - The hire cars.

Mr DEAN - the hire cars are really at high risk so therefore they pay a higher premium. So why does that not apply to the drunken driver and the person with three or four speeding convictions?

Mr HUMPHRIES - It is the vehicle that pays the premium. The premiums are levied on motor cars.

Mr DEAN - I understand that.

Mr HUMPHRIES - If you want to levy it on the skill of the driver, that is a legislative matter that obviously somebody would have to deal with.

Mr DEAN - I think the question we are asking is would the MAIB support that as a traffic safety thing. That is really what it comes down to. If people knew that, they might be more protective of their position of driving and so on, they might be more -

Ms FORREST - Less likely to break the law.

Mr DEAN - Yes, they might be more likely not to break the law, they might be more likely not to speed or drink-drive and all of those things if that system was there. So the question is would MAIB be supportive of that sort of process?

Mr ROCHE - In New South Wales they do have all sorts of ratings on people within a class. Ours is generally a premium for a particular class - a premium for a hire car, a premium

for a taxi and a premium for something else. Two things I would like to highlight about the New South Wales approach is, firstly, they immediately decide that anybody under about 25 is a high risk and even worse still I think if you live on the wrong side of the tracks you will probably pay a bit more. Personally I find that approach abhorrent and I do not think anybody should be penalised because they happen to be 18 and they probably are a higher risk but most of us were 18 once.

The other thing about the difference in this approach is that we pay a premium collection to the Motor Registry. It is a very modest collection, which happens in some other States as well, but in the State where you are doing your underwriting, you are looking at the age of the person, you are looking at something else, you are looking at some other way of changing the premium, the acquisition cost is about 10 times greater than Tasmania. So I would have to ask the question, if you are going to collect your premiums for about \$4 a vehicle on a generalised basis, is this extra spend in acquiring the business as it is privately underwritten there good value for motorists generally, and who is paying it? Does the motorist who is getting the notionally cheaper premium pay a premium because of this other system that is in place anyway?

I would suggest that on the figures the MAIB premium is pretty good value compared to the other States, and I can tell this committee that in some other States in Australia they do look on this scheme favourably, particularly with the benefits that we provide on the one hand and the premium we charge on the other. I would hate to think that we would have to have an army of people to rate people because of their age or where they live or what they might have done. I think it would be almost revenue neutral, but we would create a lot of work doing it.

Mr HUMPHRIES - I think the other thing to bear in mind is that we are talking about a body that has to insure everybody. In New South Wales, there are a lot of private insurers. If you have private insurers you can have what you like, because the private insurers can pick and choose who they will insure and how much they will charge for the insurance. They offer insurance and they charge a fee for it.

Ms FORREST - They might choose only to insure people who have cars that are less than eight years old.

Mr HUMPHRIES - Exactly right. We have to insure everybody and anybody. You have to always bear that in mind when you start talking about fairness.

CHAIR - We have a standing orders problem, because the Council will be convening in about four minutes and we cannot sit as a committee while council is in session. Thank you very much. We appreciate your input today and we will be in touch.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.