

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON FRIDAY
27 MARCH 2009.**

Mrs CAROL THOMPSON WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Thank you very much, Mrs Thompson, for your submission and for coming to speak with us.

Mrs THOMPSON - The biggest problem we had was getting the boys and their bikes off the public road. We made numerous phone calls to police at Dover, Geeveston and Huonville, only to be told we needed photos of them without their helmets. They are too slick for that; they are always going to have their helmets on when they are riding on the road. They were using the road to get from two residences and access onto private property, where they were riding around the hills at Surveyors Bay. At that stage they were riding in paddocks. One day only 300 metres from us there were 18 bikes riding in the paddock. They all accessed it along Surveyors Bay Road.

Ms FORREST - The land they were on was private land?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, private land.

CHAIR - Did they ride along Surveyors Bay Road?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, to access the land.

CHAIR - Is that a public road?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes.

CHAIR - You would think they were too young to have licences?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, they weren't registered bikes. They were unregistered bikes on public roads.

CHAIR - Do you know whether the riders were licensed?

Mrs THOMPSON - To my knowledge, no. They are just dirt bikes. The police said we needed photos of them without their helmets, but they had their helmets on. I feel that was a big ask of us to get photos of them without their helmets.

Mr DEAN - I don't want you to name them -

Mrs THOMPSON - I can, but I won't.

Mr DEAN - You know who they are -

Mrs THOMPSON - Oh, yes.

Mr DEAN - and you were able to provide that to the police?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, we did.

Mrs THOMPSON - And they still said you needed photos?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes. Chris Ellis, the sergeant at Huonville, called a meeting of the parents of the riders and the riders themselves and he said, 'I have spoken to them and told them it is against the law and you will get the Press in'. It stopped for about two weeks and then it started again. Then we approached the council and the owner of the land about the noise. He locked the gate to stop them and that stopped them from going along Surveyors Bay Road and up through a gate. That kept them off Surveyors Bay Road but now they ride along Esperance Coast Road, which is a very public road. It got them from behind the shacks where we live but took them up onto a much busier road.

Ms FORREST - Do they do this regularly?

Mrs THOMPSON - They were doing it every weekend.

Ms FORREST - So they tend to go at the same time of day?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, it varies.

Ms FORREST - I am just wondering why the police didn't come and be there waiting for them when they headed off down the road.

Mrs THOMPSON - I don't know either.

Ms FORREST - Did you let them know when they usually went?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, that it happened most weekends. But by the time you ring -

Ms FORREST - They'd have to be there waiting, I appreciate that.

Mrs THOMPSON - We did have some photos but none without helmets because they knew what we were doing.

Mr DEAN - I can't understand that. I take it that you are concerned, other than that they are unregistered and might be unlicensed, for their safety and the public's safety.

Mrs THOMPSON - Their safety and the safety of the children using Surveyors Bay Road. Paul would know the road I am talking about. You come along Surveyors Bay Road and there is a rather steep road, up past your aunt's, and they would go up there on one wheel. The majority of that stopped in the Surveyors Bay area after the landowner locked the gate. He gave a key to his relative.

Ms FORREST - So the landowner is not local?

Mrs THOMPSON - Oh yes, he is, but he doesn't live locally. He stays locally sometimes.

Ms FORREST - So he is not there all the time on the site?

Mrs THOMPSON - No. Part of my submission was about how long it took. A lot of these bikes have numbers on them; the boys must ride regularly at tracks. I think it should have been enough that we had a photo of the bike with number '25', '46' or whatever on it. There should be a rule where they take the bike.

CHAIR - How far away from the police station is this?

Mrs THOMPSON - Dover is about 15 minutes, but I don't think there is a policeman there all the time. From Huonville it is about 40 minutes.

CHAIR - When they are riding there, how long do they ride for?

Mrs THOMPSON - They only use the road to access the riding area, which I will get to next. We went to the council and we got them moved so that they were more than 500 metres. This is a photo taken earlier of tracks they made on still the same property that can be seen from Esperance Coast Road. There is a gate to it that is unlocked. Anybody can come off the road and ride on it. It does not matter how old they are. Since I took this they have put in big steel ramps so that they come up the dirt and go off the ramps. The Westpac rescue helicopter landed there one day - the date of that was in my submission - and took out a lad with multiple injuries. Since that there have been two broken legs that we know of and a broken wrist.

Ms FORREST - This is with the permission of the landowner?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes. This is a private track. If this were a public track or belonged to a bike club, surely there would be safety regulations? There is nothing here.

Mr DEAN - Do you know here whether or not there is a group involved, whether CAMS or some other group? Because they might have liability insurance. If a private person allows people to set up bike tracks on their property they still have to have some cover. Do you know if that is the case?

Mrs THOMPSON - I do not know. The council put an environmental protection notice on them. But there is nothing about safety there. It is six bikes at a time. They cannot ride three consecutive days in a row but they can ride four times a week, I think it is. There is no safety.

Mr DEAN - Do you know whether or not there are supervisors there?

Mrs THOMPSON - I know there are no supervisors there. To get the council to do something, we took a petition. We got 116 signatures because we thought they were trying to set up a dirt-bike riding club. That is when the council became a lot more involved and put the environmental protection notice on them. But as I said, there is nothing in that about safety.

Ms FORREST - So were you opposed to them setting up with an approved motorcycle club?

Mrs THOMPSON - Probably not if they played by the rules. We hardly hear them now because the bikes have to be tested for noise because some of them were very, very noisy.

Ms FORREST - So the petition you had, what was that?

Mrs THOMPSON - That was to stop them setting up a motorcycle club by stealth because it was not designated to that area. They were just off 500 metres from a lot of people and we thought if it was a club there would be more than six. Once the EPN went in we found out that it was six and they had an area that they had to ride in. But every weekend - not very often during the week now - someone will be riding on the track and they will come off the track and ride on the top of the hill where they are not allowed to, and that breaks the EPN. We have never complained about it.

Mr HARRISS - How long ago did the council activate the EPN?

Mrs THOMPSON - I can give you that. This was allowed to be built because there was an anomaly in the planning scheme. I had to go through freedom of information to get the EPN. The formal EPN was issued on 23 October 2007. We started complaints on 5 August 2006 because we were having a Coastcare clean-up. After the clean-up we were having a barbecue in the reserve at Surveyors Bay and that is when the bikes were coming along the road and accessing the private land. It took from 5 August 2006 to 23 October 2007 to get the EPN and they were still on the road in June-July 2008.

Ms FORREST - So they are not using the road now?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, they are not using the road now. Why they are not using the road now is - and Paul would know this - the Esperance Coast Road was upgraded. It is now sealed. There were a lot of earth-moving graders. With the landowner's permission again, they have pushed an entrance in so they are now going with their trailers and their big white vans and they only have to cross Esperance Coast Road or drive down in. We got them off the road.

Mr HARRISS - The EPN would have been activated against the landowner, wouldn't it, not against the users?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, against the landowner. I have that here but I had to get it under freedom of information.

Mr HARRISS - Did you ask the council about that? They weren't forthcoming?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, they weren't. I had to go through freedom of information.

Mr HARRISS - What did that cost you, \$25.

Mrs THOMPSON - It did not cost me anything.

Mr HARRISS - Didn't it?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, it did not cost me anything but there is nothing in there about safety.

Mr HARRISS - Can I have a look at that photograph, please, Carol?

Mrs THOMPSON - I should have taken one so you can see it now with the big steel jumps.

Ms FORREST - With the issue of safety - and you are right to be concerned about that - if they did become part of an official motorcycle club, and there are some around the State, my understanding is that they have a number of requirements, that the bikes are checked, the riders are -

Mrs THOMPSON - The bikes and riders, yes.

Ms FORREST - And they have restrictions on what they can do and where they can go. Wouldn't that be a better outcome potentially as far as addressing safety is concerned?

Mrs THOMPSON - It would be a lot better. I say that because they have to stay that side of the hill now. There are a couple of shacks and there are still residents that are just on the 500 meters.

CHAIR - I assume that there is no supervision of these young riders by licensed adults as far as you know?

Mrs THOMPSON - As far as I know no, there is not.

Ms FORREST - Some of them might be licensed adults - that is, 18-year-olds?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, probably the main three boys are over 21.

CHAIR - Oh, I see.

Mrs THOMPSON - They are not young boys.

CHAIR - So there may be supervision by some adults?

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes, I cannot answer that.

Ms FORREST - How young do you think the youngest is?

Mrs THOMPSON - I don't know.

Ms FORREST - Are they little kids?

Mrs THOMPSON - No, they are not little kids, they are teenagers and older, and we are led to believe they come from all over the State to ride there.

Mr DEAN - Have you made any inquiry to find out whether or not there is a club that is behind this, whether it be CAMS or whatever?

Mrs THOMPSON - They say there is not. The council says there is not. It is just I can say a relative of the landowner and his friends.

Mr DEAN - There would have to be, in my opinion, some liability insurance there somewhere -

Mrs THOMPSON - I don't know.

Mr DEAN - like a landowner because a landowner would be liable.

Mrs THOMPSON - That is what I thought.

Mr DEAN - I cannot quite understand what the position is.

Mrs THOMPSON - Who paid for the helicopter that day?

Mr DEAN - We probably did.

Mrs THOMPSON - Yes.

Ms FORREST - It was an ambulance service.

Mrs THOMPSON - I deal with Matthew Grimsey at the council, who is quite good - he is their legal eagle - and I don't know whether he would know that. They also had an environmental lady, but she has left now.

Ms FORREST - I am not sure that on private land you do need to have that, do you, because on a farm you don't have to.

Mrs THOMPSON - It's farmland.

Mr DEAN - No, but it is open to the public, you see, as I understand it, it is not just a private thing -

Mrs THOMPSON - No, no the gate is unlocked.

Mr DEAN - run by this group so it is open to the public.

Ms FORREST - But it is still private land so if I decided to go down there and go for a ride, the landowner could rightly prosecute me for trespass if he did not like me for some reason, because I had not been invited. Maybe these people are invited. I do not know that they would have to be.

Mrs THOMPSON - I don't know.

Mr DEAN - I am very confident that if you allow an activity on your property, you are responsible for any of the things that might happen as a result of it.

Ms FORREST - It is an interesting one to look at.

Mrs THOMPSON - It is the safety of that and how long it took to get the boys off the road. They knew that we were not happy. That is why they go up the road on one wheel.

Mr DEAN - Councils are reluctant to allow activities on their properties because of the insurances that are necessary to cover them.

CHAIR - Mrs Thompson, thank you very much for taking the trouble and the initiative to contact the committee and for coming here today.

Ms THOMPSON - That is fine. Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr TIM STREDWICK, TASMANIAN BICYCLE COUNCIL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Mr Stredwick, thank you very much for coming to speak with us and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Mr STREDWICK - I am here as Chair of the Tasmanian Bicycle Council, which is the peak body for transport and recreational cycling in Tasmania. We are a member-based organisation but our members are organisations who are involved in recreation and transport cycling in some way or other. Those members range from small workplace bicycle user groups to Bicycle Tasmania, which is the largest organisation in Tasmania promoting and advocating cycling for transport and recreation.

My role is to represent those member bodies in any forum as necessary and this seems like a good opportunity to put a cyclist's point of view towards road safety. There is undoubtedly an increase in cycling. There is an awareness of the health benefits and the general community benefits, which tie into a greater awareness amongst the community for increased levels of physical activity, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and so on. So the two are sort of coming together and people are realising that they can obtain those two big benefits plus others by riding a bike for transport and recreation.

It's obviously a good thing and it's not going to go away. Cycling is very likely to increase in the next few years as more and more people are realising the personal benefits as well as the wider benefits. In some ways the road authorities, including road safety, I believe need to catch up with that. All levels of government are valuing cycling to a greater degree than they did a few years ago, but road safety is perhaps one that is lagging a little bit behind. The current emphasis on road safety is almost solely a reactive approach to identified causes of deaths and injuries. I do not have any problem with that at all; that obviously has to continue and perhaps be intensified, but that is out of my sphere.

However, I think for a number of reasons that the road safety approach should not only be reactive but also proactive. Where that relates to cyclists is that, given the increasing number of cyclists on our roads, there will be, but I think that it can be hastened along, a cultural change of attitude on our roads to be generally more cooperative and considerate towards cyclists. I admit also that there is a lot to be done from the cyclists' point of view to promote a greater awareness of the road rules amongst cyclists and using lights at night or what have you, but that is certainly one way I see that developing in a proactive sense.

CHAIR - Do you mind if members question you as we go along or would you like to make your opening statement without any interruptions?

Mr STREDWICK - Not at all, I don't mind being interrupted. I would like to clarify anything I say.

Mr DEAN - You are talking about making cyclists use lights at night and so on. We were told by Mr Price, I think, that in most accidents involving cyclists around 60 per cent are deemed the fault of the cyclist, not the other driver. However, what I want to say is that

when you talk to the motoring public out there they say that we need to treat bicycle riders as equals on our roads but the bicycle riders do not treat us as equals and they ride all over the place, they ride between vehicles, they go against red lights. I am a bicycle rider myself; I try to comply, but there is a lot of evidence out there. So how do we get control of that?

Mr STREDWICK - That's what I was coming around to in that obviously there are improvements to be made on both sides. The improvements that I can see that are potentially possible on both sides are what I mean when I'm talking about a proactive approach to road safety in preventing accidents happening in the first place. I see that as a very targeted 'share the road' campaign to both cyclists and motorists to reduce the angst, if you like, between the two road user groups.

Yes, there are statistics. I have heard that, but I think also a lot of the deaths and injuries on the road caused by motor vehicles are also caused by those vehicles not following the road rules - the driver may be drunk or speeding or whatever. So there are faults on both sides. I am not sure of the statistics either way, but that is where I see a proactive approach as a really comprehensive 'share the road' campaign to promote cyclists following the road rules and taking their cycling seriously as a viable method of transport. But there is also a lot that can be done to educate motorists as to the hazards that cyclists encounter all the time on the road that motorists might not be aware of, and a cyclist might react to that hazard in a certain way and the motorist is not sure what is going on.

A classic example of that is when a cyclist, if they are aware of the danger, will ride well clear of kerbside-parked cars so that if a door is opened they are not in the danger zone, but that quite often means, particularly in an urban area, that they are taking up a traffic lane. They are basically utilising a whole traffic lane as they move right, and a motorist who is not aware of the hazard that that cyclist is reacting to may become frustrated at being held up by the cyclist for a short period until that hazard is over. I know from my own experience and talking to many other people that once a motorist is aware of that hazard and they know why that cyclist is taking up the whole lane there is not a problem, but it needs that proactive approach to inform the motoring public that the cyclist will do this, that and the other.

Mr DEAN - Just on that part of it, I know when I am riding a bike that I tend to ride out in the lane because if you don't, what happens is you have cars going past and cramming you. They believe that they have the right to go past you wherever and put you right in the side of the lane and they take risks in doing that and push you across further. Some bicycle riders say it is much safer to ride out in the lane than it is to ride on the side of the lane.

Mr STREDWICK - Well, we are getting into details. That depends very much on the situation. Basically, the TBC response to that would be 'when appropriate'. If it is appropriate - and the door opening on kerbside-parked cars is an example - it is safer for a cyclist to ride out in the lane. I would maintain that when that hazard is not there, when you come to the end of the kerbside-parked cars, then the cyclist should move left and enable the obviously faster traffic behind them to continue with their journeys. That is one of the difficulties in getting a clear, consistent and simple message across, because

there is that change. The road situation is a very dynamic situation and things change very quickly.

A good example of that is another aspect that I am in discussion with the Road Safety Task Force about at the moment. The Road Safety Task Force recommends in its media releases and statements that motorists should pass cyclists giving at least a metre's room. In some US states, the imperial equivalent - roughly three feet - that is a legal requirement. That is unique in the world that some US states have a legal requirement that a motorist must pass a cyclist by three feet. I am not sure how useful the law is because it is of course extremely difficult to actually police, and you know, who measures the three feet?

An advisory passing distance I think is much more sensible. I believe that the advice the Road Safety Task Force is giving and other road authorities similarly of one metre is too small, because in their head the motorist thinks of a metre and it is very hard to judge a metre. There are also varying speed differentials. In an urban area the speed differential between cyclists and motorists is less, so maybe the passing distance could be a little bit less. Where the speed differential is greater, then I would hope that motorists would give cyclists a greater distance. Bicycle Tasmania promotes one-and-a-half metres on the principle that if you ask for one-and-a-half metres you might get a metre from some motorists - again, partly the difficulty in judging -

CHAIR - An ambit claim.

Mr STREDWICK - Yes, that's right. Two years or so ago a cyclist was killed on the East Derwent Highway after being hit from behind; the motorist didn't give them any space at all. The coroner in that case recommended two metres, and so I am in discussion with the Road Safety Task Force at the moment to basically come to the happy medium, perhaps, of one-and-a-half metres.

Ms FORREST - Tim, that cyclist was hit from behind as the car was attempting to overtake them. The two metres would mean nothing. You need a distance between the back of the bike and the front of the car.

Mr STREDWICK - No, this is passing distance, while they are overtaking.

Ms FORREST - That is what I mean. So unless that car was attempting to overtake that bike and hit it from behind in that manoeuvre -

Mr STREDWICK - You are right in that whatever the advisory passing distance would be, it probably wouldn't have made any difference in that case; it really came down to driver inattention. There were other factors as well, but it was basically driver inattention. They didn't really recognise or react to, in that particular road situation -

Ms FORREST - They lacked hazard perception awareness.

Mr STREDWICK - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - I think it is valuable that you mentioned the coroner's recommendation because I was going to ask you about that advisory distance, and it is something the

committee may take account of here. That was a well-publicised case of an elderly cyclist, and that distance is significant because if there is a topple effect when you are riding your bicycle, is two metres enough, but at least it gives you half a chance.

Mr STREDWICK - I would say two metres is perhaps too much of an ambit claim, to use the chairman's phrase. Again I would tend to believe that in motorists' minds when they think two metres they think, 'That's ridiculous, why do I have to give them that much room?' whereas one-and-a-half metres is perhaps somewhere in between. It gives the message to motorists that they are not to skim past a cyclist and not pay them any attention, yet it's not so outrageously large that they think it's ridiculous and won't take any notice of it. The Road Safety Task Force is very positive to the idea of changing the advisory passing distance to one-and-a-half metres. Those discussions are still continuing but the task force is quite positive on that idea.

That alone might not have made any difference in that particular situation, but that also brings me back to the general 'share the road' sense of cooperation. Educating both road user groups as to both sides' needs and requirements and obligations on the road would potentially prevent this sort of accident happening in the future. There will always be motorists who perhaps do not pay attention or are distracted by something, or in that particular instance there may have been an effect of low sunlight shining through the windscreen, although surprisingly that was not mentioned in the coroner's report, so officially they did not recognise that as a potential contributing factor.

Ms FORREST - Did the coroner make any other recommendations apart from that?

Mr STREDWICK - Yes, but you've got me there; I don't remember what they were.

Ms FORREST - Nothing sort of stands out in your mind, obviously.

Mr STREDWICK - No. The most significant thing was the coroner recommending that two metres would be - I don't remember the exact words used, but it certainly was not a legislative recommendation; it would be an advisory or recommended passing distance. The kerbside parked cars and the passing distance are just examples of a number of other issues that a proactive 'share the road' campaign could tackle and make a big difference.

Basically from my point of view, given the increase in cycling, and I think it is fair to assume that that is only going to increase, I do not want to see an increase in cycling injuries, cycling accidents, which one would logically think would come with an increase in the number of cyclists on the road. That is why I am trying to push for a proactive approach. We anticipate that, given the number of cyclists, there may be an increase in cycling accidents over the next few years and the road safety authorities, the road safety recommendations and the campaigns are targeted towards trying to proactively prevent that perhaps logically assumed increase in cycling accidents.

Ms FORREST - Tim, you mentioned the share-the-road campaign is a good, targeted campaign. Do you have other specific examples of where you think the Road Safety Task Force should head with this proactive approach?

Mr STREDWICK - Again, yes, lots but before we get to that stage, the Road Safety Task Force funding is purely based on a reactive approach and so we have not got to that level

of conversation yet in that I want to try to change, not reduce, that reactive approach to current accidents and road casualties but add to that the proactive approach.

Ms FORREST - If you had an unlimited budget - let us forget the budgetary constraints at the moment - where would you head?

Mr STREDWICK - I would obviously be going for a very comprehensive share-the-road campaign along the lines of the Road Safety Task Force campaigns - TV adverts, hoardings on the side of the road, little slips that come with your rego reminder - all those avenues that the task force uses. That would be value-added, if you like, in that that pure road safety share-the-road campaign could also be a promotional cycling campaign; it could start a cultural change and promote and educate the public that cycling is a good thing, as well as giving a road safety message. So there are a number of messages that could come from such a campaign.

The other thing I would really like to see in Tasmania or Australia as a whole is a much wider acceptance and availability of adult cycle skills training. Given the increase in cycling - and I think it is not too great an exaggeration perhaps to call it a boom at the moment - most of those cyclists are new cyclists on the road and I really am a believer that if you are going to promote cycling and encourage people to cycle for all the best reasons, they have to be skilled up and given the ability, the skills and knowledge to ride safely and legally, and understand their obligations and responsibilities on the road.

Just towards the end of last year - mid to late last year - was the completion of the development of a national standard for adult cycle training in Australia so it is in its very early days. I have been involved in adult cycle training in Tasmania for eight years with Cycling Safe through the local government. The cycling organisation in the Hobart area has been running adult cycle skills courses for some years. I am totally convinced as to the efficacy of empowering cyclists, giving them the skills and knowledge to cycle well and competently on the road and, most importantly, follow the road rules because that is one of the cardinal rules for safety. Whatever the stats are, you know the 60 per cent you brought up -

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr STREDWICK - basically if you follow the road rules in any vehicle, you are much less likely to be involved in an accident.

Mr DEAN - You talked about the training of new cyclists coming in and so on. A position put forward has been that a lot of bicycle riders infringe the laws almost all the time, unfortunately, or a lot of the time it would probably be fair to say, because there is nothing really out there to support cycling or very little out there to support cycling. For instance, if you are at a red light, wanting to turn left, there is no reason a cyclist should not be able to turn on the red light because they keep next to the kerb, close to the kerb and there is no danger to anybody.

Mr STREDWICK - Yes, in the same way as at the top of the Southern Outlet, coming into Hobart, you can take a left turn.

Mr DEAN - Exactly the same, and it does apply in some mainland States and it does apply in other countries in the world where bicycles can turn against red lights provided they keep within that kerb control and so on.

Mr STREDWICK - Yes, that is actually on my list here. It was just the infrastructure side of things.

CHAIR - There are some places in the United States - sorry to interrupt you - where cars can do the same, turn left on a red light if they are satisfied there is no danger.

Mr STREDWICK - I did not know that. That is interesting. I am certainly aware of the cyclists being able to do that in some jurisdiction somewhere or other. Yes, that is a classic example and there are others where it is almost as simple as putting a bit of white paint on the road to denote that left-turn lane or whatever it might be. That then makes that manoeuvre legal which otherwise some cyclists might, rightly or wrongly, do anyway, but it is also keeping cyclists moving and reducing their time at junctions. Basically, the biggest number of cycling accidents happen at junctions, turning and crossing manoeuvres, not generally just running along the straight road. So any infrastructure improvements that can be made in that way reduces the time that a cyclist is in that danger zone, if you like, and they are away and they are on the straight open road, having manoeuvred around a junction in a simple way, so they are out of the danger zone as quickly as possible.

So, yes, certainly it was on my list and I had not quite got to it. I would certainly highly promote exploring the opportunities for those relatively simple actions on the road, infrastructure improvements that can make a big difference.

Ms FORREST - In that circumstance too they are not holding up traffic either. Essentially, it is the cars then that have the capacity to move straight off when the light is green and it is safe to do so.

Mr STREDWICK - There are similar infrastructure improvements happening in Hobart in the next month or so in the Hobart City Council bike lanes in Argyle and Campbell streets. I just found out yesterday that they are starting to be placed on the road. They have incorporated for the first time in Tasmania what is called advanced storage boxes so that the bike lane takes the cyclist past all the other vehicles stopped at the red light and enables them to pull ahead of the other traffic and they are then away clear, generally ahead of the motorists. That is the first time in Tasmania that advanced storage boxes will be used on the road. So it was a good move.

Ms FORREST - Can you explain how that works, the storage box?

Mr STREDWICK - Basically, as the junctions are currently, there is a stop line and all the traffic stops at that stop line. What the advanced storage boxes do is give a little space, a legal space, beyond that stop line -

Ms FORREST - Off to the side?

Mr STREDWICK - Sometimes it is off to the side but quite often it comes across in front of the other traffic. One of the issues with cyclists and traffic-like controlled junctions is

that initial 10 or 15 metres when the cyclist is moving relatively slowly as they are going from a stop to cruising speed where they are more likely to wobble. Once you get going balance is easier, you are less likely to wobble. So what those advanced storage boxes do is give the cyclist a head start, if you like, so they are ahead of the other traffic. By the time that traffic is overtaking them, either they are pretty much clear of the junction or certainly they have reached their cruising speed and they are away.

Ms FORREST - They are back in the cycle lane?

Mr STREDWICK - They are back in the cycle lane or whatever is on the other side of the junction.

Mr HARRISS - I will come back to road laws. What is the council's belief or do you have a policy about young riders? Kids jump on a bike, they have their helmet on and they can ride on any street and if they do not have a clue about the road laws, they can be a real problem to themselves more than anything else.

Mr STREDWICK - I started talking about adult cycle training and the value of that and if I just digress slightly or stay on the adult cycling theme, I am convinced of the value of that. I have been involved with putting probably 150 to 200 cyclists through the courses that Cycling South run and then have seen those cyclist as local people around town and talked to them about how they are going. There is no hard evidence but I am convinced that it is a fantastic thing.

Given an unlimited budget, I would like to see such adult cycle training being either heavily subsidised or free because one of the difficulties is getting people to do the courses. The attitude seems to be, 'I learnt to ride a bike when I was five, what more do I need to know?' It is really hard. Once you get people on the course they go, 'Oh, yes'. It is a whole world out there that they are just not aware of. Many cyclists cycle too close to the kerb; they are in the danger zone of a kerbside car door opening. Simple things that they weren't aware of. To answer your question, Paul, I would extend that further to include bike education which is an established primary-school-age cycling safety program. It has been established in Australia for a lot longer than any adult cycling courses. Most people are aware of the cycling proficiency scheme in the UK, which I did when I was so high. I would like to see that as an integral part of every grade 5-6 child's education.

Mr HARRISS - Would you go back even further than that? It is a terrific thing to promote personal wellbeing for kids to cycle to school, but at other times it is necessary because the family may live sufficiently close to a school but not far enough for a bus and so cycling is the most appropriate way for the kid to get to school at grade 3.

Mr STREDWICK - That comes back to infrastructure and is really out of the bounds of your terms of reference in that what I am also pushing for is the development of safe routes to schools. I think grade 5-6 is the optimum age for imparting some of those road skills but I would be willing to discuss a reduction to grade 4s maybe. Once they have completed a bike education program at school, given that that school has safe routes for them to ride to school within a certain radius, they can ride to school and it becomes the default travel option for those kids.

Ms FORREST - Tim, I would agree with Paul that we should look at children who are a bit younger. Only recently in Wynyard an eight-year-old fellow - he was most likely not aware of his surroundings, as kids aren't - was hit by a car. He was wearing his helmet. He survived and was basically unhurt - his helmet had a hole in it, and that was the promotion they had, on the importance of helmets. But that is a kid well below the year of 5 or 6 at school.

Mr STREDWICK - Where you get into a little bit of difficulty with primary school ages and road use is that physiologically children don't develop the peripheral eyesight that we have as adults until they are 11 or 12, grade 5 or 6.

Ms FORREST - And then it is only starting anyway.

Mr STREDWICK - Yes. In my mind, in some ways, if you are in an ideal world and the kids do bike education and their default option is to use those safe routes to school as a method of transport to school, if you go younger than grade 5-6 you are getting away from that physiological development that will aid their safe use of the road, whether they are on a footpath or not. I am not saying I am totally against it, I just think we need to be careful in talking about the ages.

Ms FORREST - I accept that kids do not have the peripheral vision at that young age. It is a bit like doing sex education, though, you make it age-appropriate.

Mr STREDWICK - Sure, absolutely right. I have also been involved in bike education but I haven't been for a number of years now. We certainly ran courses, again age-appropriate, for grades 1 and 2.

Ms FORREST - So you are not ruling that out?

Mr STREDWICK - No, I just think there needs to be further discussion as maybe the ideas progress on the age appropriate; maybe just the grades 5-6, that is their option to ride to school. Under that they do a bike education program where they are encouraged to wear their helmet and whatever else. There is no hard evidence at all, that I am aware of, that indicates that the bike education programs in primary schools benefit the children in their general road safety, their general road awareness, not just in relation to cycling. So it has spin-off effects potentially, which are unproven. Basically what I am proposing is that sort of compulsory Bike Ed as part of the curriculum at primary school and the development of safe roads to schools. Just that process has been established in the UK for years. So all the data is there about its efficacy. It is not just an idea off the top of my head. There are at least two or three schools in Melbourne that have been working with Bicycle Victoria and the bike education people in Victoria to do just that. They are developing just what has been well developed in the UK, that package of Bike Ed in primary schools and safe routes to school to enable the children to ride.

I have a bit of data here. AAMI do some great surveys on road user behaviour and motorists' attitudes and what have you. They released a press release last year that indicated that 63 per cent of the drivers surveyed - 2 500 drivers across Australia - view cyclists as a road hazard. Again, that brings me back to sharing the road. There needs to be some targeted sharing of the road; let us cooperate. Both cyclists and motorists have an equal rights and obligations on the road -

CHAIR - And pedestrians and slow drivers and everybody. It is a matter of everybody understanding that everybody has the right to use the road.

Mr STREDWICK - That is right, but at times, unfortunately, the road environment makes it hard to share. When there are cycle facilities or footpaths or whatever else it becomes easier. Rather than waiting for the infrastructure, which is expensive and slow - and I call that the 'hardware', so a left-turn lane is hardware to me - there is so much that could be done on the software side. The Tasmanian Bicycle Council is pushing that software side, whatever is deemed to be the best software actions. If you pulled anybody off the street outside there now and said what is the best way of promoting cycling or promoting cyclist-motorist interaction, nine times out of 10 you would get more cycle lanes. It is always the hardware. The hardware is there in people's heads as the answer. It is not, it is one answer, it is the hardware answer, but there is so much that could be done on the software side in education and promotion - the proactive approach that I am talking about.

Mr DEAN - Some of the letters that you read in the paper suggest that cyclists are treated with contempt because they pay no registration fee, no licensing and nothing else. What is your position on that?

Mr STREDWICK - All levels of government are now valuing cycling to a much better degree than they were a few years ago. They are realising the benefits of cycling to the community.

CHAIR - Especially local government.

Mr STREDWICK - Especially local government. Most of the roads that cyclists use are local government roads, so yes. The more awareness of those benefits then the fewer calls for bike rego or whatever it may be. It is about 10-12 years old, but a study was done by the Cyclists' Touring Club in the UK. It is basically the nationwide bicycle advocacy organisation in the UK. They funded some research and came up with a paper called The Value of Cycling or something like that. They put the cost savings to society at 50 cents a kilometre when somebody uses a bike instead of a car in an urban area for a journey to the shops, work or wherever. You can argue with statistics. Statistics are notoriously unreliable or can be interpreted in certain ways but that tallies with other figures. I have just come across another study in the last week or so from the UK from Cycling England, which is the government department that looks after cycling within the UK. What this paper does is enable local authorities to find out how cost-effective is money spent on cycling facilities. It is talking only about infrastructure, not the software side of things. At its minimum it came out as one to one. There is a table of so much spent and how many cyclists it needs to use that new facility to recoup the cost. For most of it, it is one to one. You just need one extra cyclist to use that facility and it has paid for itself.

Mr HARRISS - Is there a reference you could provide for us, Tim?

Mr STREDWICK - I can certainly pass that on to you. I did bring one of the AAMI press releases where it says that 63 per cent of drivers think cyclists are a road hazard.

Ms FORREST - Did those 63 per cent of drivers also see other cars as hazards on the road?

Mr STREDWICK - No, not in that research. That is where I am always a little bit wary of bringing up the 60 per cent figure. I am not aware of any data in regards to motorists where equally 60 per cent of motorists are breaking the road rules while they have a crash.

Ms FORREST - I was not saying they were breaking the road rules. One witness was suggesting that 60 per cent of the cases were actually the fault of the cyclist. The cyclist might not have been breaking the rules but might have failed to look.

Mr STREDWICK - I am interested where that figure came from. I have not come across that.

Ms FORREST - A lot of the cycling crashes that result in injury and potentially death do not always involve a vehicle. So when it is only the bike then of course it is the rider - though it may be the surface condition at the time.

Mr STREDWICK - There were two in the last week and a vehicle was not involved.

Ms FORREST - That is correct. In that case it was not the driver's fault because a driver was not involved. So I think 60 per cent might not be a really accurate representation.

Mr STREDWICK - That is where it brings me back to promoting adult cyclist skills training because, before you get out on the road, you have to be able to operate that vehicle competently. Most cyclists on the road, in their operation of that vehicle, are the same standard as somebody who has taught themselves to drive in a paddock, and they are out in the road. To my mind they should not be there. They should be skilled-up in the same way. That is fraught with difficulty and you cannot really legislate because that does not really work.

Ms FORREST - You can but it might not be accepted particularly well.

Mr STREDWICK - That is right. So that is where I come to your unlimited budget in that you basically make it free or heavily subsidised knowing or hoping that there will be a reduction in cyclists-motorists problems, whether it is just angst or accidents. You are going to have more competent cyclists on the road, which is going to mean more cyclists on the road because people are going to ride more often because they feel confident in what they are doing. They are empowered to do what they are doing. Basically my response to that would be to skill-up the cyclists.

Ms FORREST - In countries where cycling is more common, such as the Netherlands and places like that where it has always been done, there is a greater awareness of that anyway, but we have to build that culture.

Mr STREDWICK - You have beaten me to it. That is just what I was going to say. I was not going to refer to Holland as such but what has been lost in Australia, the UK and the US is that in the 1940s and 1950s - and I do not have the figures - there were probably as many if not more bicycles on the road than cars. Cycling was much more commonly used as a method of transport. While the skills did not need to be quite as high hat

because there was less traffic to deal with on the road, there was a structure there where children rode from a very early age, their parents rode, those skills and knowledge were imparted informally, if you like, through the family, through just a culture that accepted cycling. As cars dominated and cycling dropped away in the transport mix, that informal passing on of skills has been lost basically in Australia, the US and the UK. There is a gap. Now we are getting a boom in cycling again and people's parents do not ride. They buy a bike with all the best intentions, they get out on the road and they are potentially a hazard to themselves and everybody else. When they get out on the road they find that they do not like it, the bike gets put in the garage and they go back to their cars.

Ms FORREST - You have to re-establish that culture.

Mr STREDWICK - You have to re-establish that culture and do it perhaps in a more formal way. You have lost that informal way so it has to be done in a more formal way. It has to be very accessible which means it is free or totally subsidised.

CHAIR - In cities and built-up areas some local government councils provide bike lanes on the side of the road. Usually in Australia they are on the outside of the cars, to the left of the roadway, between the centre line and where the cars are parked. But in Budapest, for example, the cycling lanes are between the parked cars and the kerb. Do you have any view as to which is better?

Mr STREDWICK - Like many things on the road there are pros and cons. Those bike lanes are generally termed Copenhagen-style bike lanes.

CHAIR - Which ones?

Mr STREDWICK - The ones between the footpath and the kerbside parked cars. That is the term they have been called. They are in many other places, as you say, but Copenhagen.

Without going into the details, there are pros and cons. They only really work where there are long stretches of road or blocks in an urban area where it is possible.

CHAIR - You mean on either side?

Mr STREDWICK - Just where there is room on the road. Also it has been mooted, it has been suggested as one of the concepts for Sandy Bay Road between the casino and Lower Sandy Bay. Hobart City Council put out a big public consultation on the cycling and walking potential of Sandy Bay Road last year and the Copenhagen-style lanes were one of the three proposals for the section of road between the casino and Lower Sandy Bay shops.

CHAIR - How long ago was that?

Mr STREDWICK - Last year. They are a long way from actually putting anything on the road of course. It was just one of the concept plans that this is possible. I bring that up because that section of road is a good example of where that sort of infrastructure would be quite appropriate. There are no, or very few, left-turn junctions and so it is potentially a feasible option for that section of road, but there is a section of Copenhagen-style bike

lanes in Melbourne which I think - the name of the street escapes me now but it does not really matter.

CHAIR - Is it in the CBD?

Mr STREDWICK - It is right in the CBD. I think it covers two blocks. It will come to me as I am talking to you. I think it has been installed over at least one block, I think two. I have had a close look at that infrastructure and you can see each side of those one or two blocks where it has been currently installed, it is not possible because of road infrastructure, logistical reasons. So you wonder at the value of installing that and all the public consultation that goes with it and moving kerbside-parked cars, and it was not cheap. Whether the benefits that you might gain from installing those sorts of bike lanes - and they do have benefits over and above a bike lane on the outside of the kerbside-parked cars - is worth it just for that block or two -

CHAIR - What are the main benefits?

Mr STREDWICK - The main benefit is that the cyclists are one step more removed from moving traffic. There is an argument, though I do not know how valid it is, that there is less likelihood of being hit by a kerbside-parked car door opening. The argument is that if the cyclist is to the right of kerbside-parked cars it is generally the driver who is opening the door to get out - that is the most common occupant in the car -

CHAIR - There is always a driver but there is not always a passenger.

Mr STREDWICK - There is not always a passenger and the argument goes that a driver getting out of a car is more aware and more likely to look in their mirror and make sure there is nobody coming before they open the door so that reduces the risk but that action is going to happen more frequently.

The other argument is that, although there are fewer passengers exiting kerbside-parked cars on the left-hand side, they are less likely to look.

Ms FORREST - The rear-view mirror is not right for them, it is for the driver.

Mr STREDWICK - That is right. There are arguments that it is safer as far as the kerbside door-opening hazard but -

CHAIR - Are there any statistics?

Mr STREDWICK - No, other than that argument, basically saying it is more or less an equal risk, there is a greater likelihood but it is less common on the right, there is a lesser likelihood but it is more common on the left, from Bicycle Victoria and I do not think there is any research to back that up that, but Bicycle Victoria would not be saying that if it was not true. It is a very respectable organisation and they would not be saying that in public if they did not have good reason to say so.

CHAIR - So about equal?

Mr STREDWICK - Yes. You can see the logic in that argument and I would tend to agree.

What other pros and cons? You have lost me really. Personally I am not a fan of that sort of infrastructure. Infrastructure is expensive and slow.

CHAIR - So you don't favour cycling lanes either side?

Mr STREDWICK - Sorry. No, I am not so much in favour of the Copenhagen-style lanes -

CHAIR - I see.

Mr STREDWICK - but one of the advantages is that because of that extra separation from moving vehicles, it is more accessible to a wider range of cyclists whereas the bike lane which is adjacent to potentially traffic that is moving at 70 or 80 kilometers an hour, certainly in a Melbourne situation, will deter some cyclists. So families are more likely to ride in those Copenhagen-style lanes.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you very much indeed. We appreciate your help.

Mr STREDWICK - Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP, SHADOW MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - You make the presentation as you wish, Jeremy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will make a brief opening statement. Firstly, thank you very much for having the investigation and setting up the committee, Mr Chairman. My submission of October 2008 no doubt is before you.

CHAIR - Yes, it is and it is a very helpful, interesting and good one. We thank you for that and for being here.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

It is in three parts. Essentially the first part is outlining what is already Liberal Party policy or State Opposition policy. The second part is not currently our policy but what we and the committee should be considering. A third part of the submission is just further general ideas for discussion.

There are a couple of additions that I wish to make to my submission. They are that our policy positions on some of those issues have changed. We are advocating that the committee consider a double-demerit system, which is now Liberal Party policy, and high-visibility patrol vehicles are also part of our policy. So those two ideas would essentially be now incorporated into part 1 of the submission.

Rather than adopt a wholly punitive approach to road safety, we believe that the carrot-and-stick approach is the way to go, so you can also reward drivers for good behaviour as well as come down very heavily on those that do not abide by the laws. We believe that the carrot-and-stick approach is a better way to go overall.

The deployment of high-visibility patrol vehicles, police cars, is also now part of our policy.

CHAIR - You use the expression 'candy cars'. I have not heard that before.

Mr DEAN - A common phrase of the police.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it is a common phrase. We debated this in the Parliament the other day, Don. I remember as a young P-plate driver, most police cars were all white or one colour. You saw them on the horizon and you thought, 'Gee, I'd better check how fast I'm going - foot off the accelerator'. Having a specified colour is a deterrent.

CHAIR - So it refers to marked ones as distinct from unmarked?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I have also included some alarming facts about why we take this issue very seriously. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has found that young drivers aged between 17 and 25 are 11 times more likely to be killed or injured in crashes. Young drivers were also more likely to be involved in road crashes, whether or

not deaths or injuries occur. Holders of provisional licences have a significantly higher risk of being involved in crashes during the first few months of solo driving.

CHAIR - We have quite a lot of evidence about those matters. You issued a press statement probably six or eight weeks ago. Are there any matters in that which are different from matters you have covered here?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not essentially, except there are a few things I wish to highlight in terms of funding for road safety initiatives. It has been Liberal Party policy for quite some time that all speed camera revenue, for example, should be diverted into road safety measures.

CHAIR - We have heard yesterday from DIER that if that happened they would be a very happy department.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Very good. I accessed how much money that would be from freedom of information. Some \$3.84 million was receipted for electronically issued speed camera infringement notices.

Ms FORREST - Jeremy, do you see that as being in addition to the road safety levy that is currently charged and that goes directly into road safety initiatives?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, the road safety levy, as highlighted by the minister a few days ago, is obviously providing some benefit. We believe there is no silver bullet to road safety measures. Rather, a comprehensive package is needed to address these issues. If people are clear about where funding is coming from and where it is going, I think that is a fairer way of going about things, particularly with respect to the speed camera revenue.

We also have a policy of permanent fixed speed cameras throughout Tasmania. I can highlight the example that I have every week when I come down from the north-west coast to Hobart. There is definitely one place where I know I have to obey the law and that is the Longford turn-off. The speed camera is there permanently and whether it is working or not you do not go above 80 kph.

Ms FORREST - Do you have a view on the point-to-point speed cameras where you are picked up at a certain point on the highway with limited access to it? Obviously you would not put it where there are lots of roads coming in. Your time is clocked over five kilometres or whatever - it can be a varying distance. If you cover that distance more quickly than you would if you were to maintain the posted speed then you have obviously sped somewhere within that period.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. I am aware of it but have not looked into it in detail. Certainly it would appear to be an incentive.

Ms FORREST - You need to have it on a section of road where you cannot have people coming in.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure where you would have that in Tasmania.

CHAIR - It might be difficult in Tasmania. They do it on the Hume Highway, for example, over a distance of 100 or 200 kilometres.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe there was an article in the paper today about reducing speed limits on the Midland Highway. As part of the mix of our road safety initiative, which is perhaps not mentioned in the submission, we have a policy for a dual-lane Midland Highway. If over a 20-year period the extra 120 kilometres required is made dual lane then we believe that road would be safer and that would reduce the number of road crashes and deaths and injuries.

CHAIR - I have publicly supported that.

Ms FORREST - Are you saying it should be built to a standard where 110 would be a reasonable speed limit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - What do you think of the appropriateness of the 110 speed limit on the Midland Highway now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is important to be as consistent as possible between Hobart and Launceston. It is very difficult because there is a lot of chopping and changing, at Bagdad for example. The most important thing is highlighting to motorists where those changes occur. Where there are dual lanes now the roads are safe at 110.

CHAIR - Do you have any view about the appropriateness of the 60 limit between Pontville and Brighton and the 60 limit at the northern end of Campbell Town, which used to be 80?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, except that I do obey it.

Laughter.

CHAIR - How painful is that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is painful from Sassafras into Devonport where you now have a 90 zone and then an 80 and then 100, and it is painful to a motorist, but as motorists we should not exceed the speed limit.

CHAIR - They should be reasonable, though, and perceived to be reasonable.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and well marked.

CHAIR - I was wondering whether you thought those two cases were reasonably marked?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I simply do not have a view on that, except that I do notice them and I have not been caught at Pontville for many years.

Our double-demerit-point policy has caused some debate. Despite the Government being against this policy, during public holidays, Easter, long weekends, Christmas time et cetera when we know there will be more cars on the road, it is important to highlight to motorists that if you exceed the speed limit or drive dangerously or whatever you will

cop a double-demerit-point fine. Hopefully it would make people think on those days that they have to be very aware of the speed they are going and the vehicles around them. Evidence that we have seen in places such as Western Australia is that this does have an effect. I know that others have said it doesn't but evidence we have seen suggests that it does.

Ms FORREST - Are you able to provide that evidence, Jeremy? It is a contentious issue and there is conflicting evidence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am happy to provide the evidence that we have seen in terms of statistics, which is contained in more detail in our policy on this issue and which was written after this submission. The Deputy Commissioner of Police in Victoria is supportive of this measure, although his Minister for Transport has said that they are not looking towards that. If the deputy commissioner of any State is an advocate for such a move to reduce the number of crashes and deaths on our roads then it should be seriously considered by any government.

Ms FORREST - I was in Canberra recently talking to the people there and they were shocked and amazed that we didn't have a double-demerit system. They just assumed that we did. It does present some challenges. We heard of a young P-plater on the P-off program who on a long weekend had been caught speeding only a few kilometres per hour over the limit, but because of the double-demerit points, just one more slip-up and he would lose his licence. In that situation it can put a lot of pressure on people but, at the end of the day, they shouldn't be speeding.

Mr DEAN - The statistical data that we have been provided with doesn't stack up at all to say that there are more accidents on public holidays, so why shouldn't we have double demerit points at any other time when accidents are happening?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Easter and Christmas holiday road tolls are advertised. Why is that? Why do they publicly announce that? Obviously because traditionally there are more road crashes, deaths and injuries over those periods. The evidence we have seen is that it is simply because there are more people on the roads and perhaps they have more on their mind at that time of the year. If we can make people think that little bit more about responsible driving by double-demerit points -

Mr DEAN - Some people think it causes people to say, 'On public holidays I have to be ultra careful to ensure I'm doing everything right, but the rest of the time I don't really need to be so careful and I can drive the way I want'.

CHAIR - The other thing that creates the same impression is the additional police on the roads on public holidays and then they ease off for the rest of the time.

Jeremy, we appreciate the detail of the submission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much for the opportunity and I look forward to your findings.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr KEITH MIDSON WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Mr Midson, thank you very much for coming. We are looking forward to hearing your views on road safety and the details about your involvement in that. Perhaps you would care to tell us first of all about your involvement with road safety through your engineering practice or your degree.

Mr MIDSON - I am a traffic engineer and transport planner with more than 13 years' experience in those fields. I have a Bachelor of Civil Engineering as well as two Masters degrees, one in traffic engineering and one in transport planning. I have extensive experience in road safety both from an assessment point of view as well as a high-level strategy development point of view where I have been involved in the preparation of road safety strategies in Victoria. One I am currently doing, which is almost finished, is for the Shire of Melton, which is just on the outskirts of Melbourne. I have also been involved in road safety strategies for Bayside and Glen Eira in Victoria as well in my time in Victoria. I have also presented numerous papers on road safety in recent years, the most recent being in Queensland last year, and also at the International Road Safety Conference in Perth two years ago.

One of my research areas is strip shopping centres and the interaction between vulnerable road users such as pedestrians with the high vehicular activity like parking and unparking, land use, pedestrians crossing all over the place.

CHAIR - Strip shopping centres? Sounds a bit like Kings Cross.

Laughter.

Mr MIDSON - Yes, areas like North Hobart and Moonah, and very busy areas where you have trams in Melbourne as well - the name eludes me now.

Ms FORREST - Bourke Street Mall?

Mr MIDSON - Yes, that would be a good example, although they have moved a lot of traffic from there now.

Ms FORREST - Yes, there are only trams in there now.

Mr MIDSON - It is in Richmond.

Ms FORREST - Bridge Road?

Mr MIDSON - Yes, that is the one. I have always had a passionate interest in trying to resolve some of those very complex interactions between those users and how you deal with those.

I have lived in Tasmania most of my life and have always had a very active involvement in Tasmanian projects and a very close association with DIER and other council agencies as well in preparation and the analysis of road safety, where I have worked on projects including road safety assessment of projects such as the Kingston Bypass, Brighton

Bypass, Brooker Avenue, Southern Outlet, smaller projects as well, and breakdowns of individual crashes looking at the actual or likely cause of crashes and what could have been done to overcome them. So I guess I have been involved from the very technical aspects of looking at an individual crash right through to the forming of road safety policy and strategy.

Ms FORREST - Would you agree, then, with the findings that by far the majority of road crashes are caused by driver error, not road infrastructure?

Mr MIDSON - That's correct; I concur with that. I guess there are a number of factors and sometimes they overlap; it can be a combination of driver error and infrastructure or the vehicle. It is rarely the vehicle, even though older vehicles are often blamed for crashes. They do not cause the crash but it is the post-crash trauma where the older vehicles fall over quite badly compared to the newer cars.

I don't plan to really go into any formal structure, I just have some points that I want to talk to, so it's good if you ask me questions along the way, otherwise I will forget.

From my perspective, I would like to think that I am here today to help guide you as a committee and give you my perspective of where I think Tasmania is at a national level and also how far we have come in time. I think it is important when you are looking at road safety to look back in time and see how we've got to where we are. I love the old streetscape photographs of Hobart, and if you look back to the 1830s you could have a combination of horses and carts, cars - which were very rare - pedestrians, motorcycles, bicycles all intermixing on the street.

CHAIR - There wouldn't have been any cars at all in 1830, would there?

Mr MIDSON - Sorry, I meant 1930; in 1830 you really just had pedestrians and horses. It was in the 1930s that we started to see a mix of everything. Perhaps that wasn't a very safe thing to do. I do not know what the crash history was like back then but I don't think it was really foreseen at that point that the motor vehicle would become such a dominant feature of today's society as it is now. So it is easy to look at our society in the last 10-20 years and say nothing has really changed, we just have more cars on the road and more people and that sort of thing. We are trying to deal with that, but I think we need to take a longer view and say that in our society cars are really only a fairly new invention and they are causing a lot of problems.

One of my favourite quotes that I use quite often is by Tingvall et al, a number of authors of a paper that was presented in Hobart in 2000. It says that the road transport system is a non-forgiving, man-made machine system that in the long term must be redesigned so as not to generate one of the largest public health problems in society. It is a fairly bold statement.

Ms FORREST - When was that made?

Mr MIDSON - In 2000, so it is fairly recent. They were looking at it from a public health perspective that the motor vehicle is right up there with the top five causes of death in the developed world. We need to do something fairly radical to overcome this problem. I think as a society we become complacent. We have a target that we would like to

achieve and we are probably not going to get there in 2010 but we have certainly come a long way in reducing our road toll, but what we are saying by doing that is that we will accept that people will die on our roads. I think there are some moral and ethical issues that we need to deal with when we say that. I do not know that we can suddenly reduce it to zero without doing something very radical indeed.

Ms FORREST - Take all the cars off the road, that would work.

Mr MIDSON - Yes, that would be a solution, but then someone might die because they get hit by a bicycle or they might fall over a pothole and hit their head and die anyway. I am not trying to advocate that we need to make it zero straight away and just make it happen because I don't think our society is ready for that. I think we all love our motor vehicles, and a lot of us love our bicycles and we like to walk everywhere. The combination of those things as it stands at the moment is a high-risk activity. When I say 'high risk' I don't think any of us are in any real danger of getting killed - touch wood - as we leave this building, but it certainly something that we need to be aware of.

CHAIR - Unless somebody comes around the corner on the wrong side as we are approaching and crashes into us.

Mr MIDSON - That is right, yes. But it is something that we all accept in society. We teach our children to be fearful of cars and roads and we have panic attacks when they step too close to the edge of the kerb. So this is a society where we have accepted that motor cars rule, they dominate our roads and they are a safety issue.

That statement I read before really gives a high-level philosophy of, 'Okay, maybe we need to do something fairly radical here'. The good news is that Tasmania introduced a road safety strategy in 2007 and in that strategy they adopted what is called the 'safe system' approach. Has everyone heard of the 'safe system' approach?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr MIDSON - The 'safe system' approach takes a fundamentally different view of road safety to what we have done traditionally in the past. If I can highlight an example, for years and years since we invented the car we have said we will have two lanes of traffic, generally, they will be in opposite directions to each other, we will delineate those lanes by painting a white or yellow line in the middle of the road, and that tells drivers they must not cross that road because they could have a nasty crash. What has happened is that cars occasionally do cross the road and hit another car and people get injured and killed, in a worst-case scenario, yet we still paint white lines in the road and say, 'You must not cross this line', and in the rare and unfortunate event that it happens we can place an ocean of blame on the person who crosses the line. We can look at the crash scene and say that car *a* is the car that crossed the white line and hit car *b*, and that is the cause of the crash. Whatever the causing factor was we may never know but we know that that is what happened. But it does not solve the problem because we know that it continues to happen. Drivers make errors. People can get distracted, people drink, take drugs, people may fall asleep at the wheel, some people may wish to commit suicide. There are a whole range of possible factors as to why that person crossed the line.

What the 'safe system' approach does is really changes the mindset. Okay, let us accept that humans make mistakes or even cars can make a mistake - a wheel could fall off and you might veer into the road or a tyre might pop or something like that. Let us now take the philosophy of what is the fundamental physical tolerance of the human body? What force can the human body can sustain before it is seriously injured or killed? Let us try to create a transport system - which includes the road, the road user and the physical infrastructure - that uses the benchmark of human tolerance to physical force as the centre of that system, and let us design this system so that if things go wrong we are not going to kill this person. So that is taking a different approach to traditionally where, 'We painted a line there. They crossed the road. It was driver error and that was the cause of the problem. There was nothing that could be done to stop the crash'.

Ms FORREST - You're talking about a duty of care model, aren't you, in a way?

Mr MIDSON - In a sense, yes.

Ms FORREST - It is sort of like a duty of care, isn't it?

Mr MIDSON - Yes, it is really just changing the mindset. Rather than just accepting 'That driver made a mistake and that caused the crash and someone died', let's say, 'That person made a mistake but did they need to pay for that mistake with their life?' So what is happening more and more is that we are seeing the separation of carriages that travel in opposite directions with things like wire rope and those sorts of things because we know that the installation of that wire rope will prevent 90 per cent of fatalities on that road for a head-on situation, which is a massive increase. So whilst it involves increased cost and the like, if a driver makes a mistake he will hit this wire rope but not the car and he will be deflected back onto the road and will not die as a result of that. He will have to pay his insurance bill and get his car fixed and the post will need to be put back in, but nobody died.

So that is the philosophy. I am trying to explain it by saying how this system works. What it is based on is that we have a combination of making safer vehicles - so if we make our vehicles fundamentally safer we can protect the occupants of those cars and we can also even now protect pedestrians better by designing the cars in a way that are less likely to kill pedestrians. So we are doing things in the motor industry that can improve road safety as well. That is one element of the system.

We can design safer roads and roadsides. We can put in wire rope barriers, we can put in edge lining which can, hopefully, alert motorists. We can build safer roads that are clearer, better defined and generally safer through best practice engineering principles and road safety engineering principles. But where all that fails, if those things mean that if someone makes a mistake and they pay for that mistake with their life, the only thing that we have left is to reduce the speed because we know that the kinetic energy is the main cause of the injuries that are sustained to a body.

So the three elements that we can play with, according to the safe system approach, is have safer vehicles, design safer roads and where you cannot achieve what you need to, you need to reduce the speed. It has been recognised in recent years that speed is - I will not say a silver bullet, it is a bit too much of a bold statement - but it certainly is one of

the tools that is being very widely used in recent times, right across the world, including Australia and Tasmania, to assist in the road safety problem.

Every year we have more cars on the road, more people driving those cars and more people, as a population - hopefully we are still growing in Tasmania - and, as a society, we are expecting to see a reduction in the road toll and a reduction in serious injuries because, importantly, our Tasmanian road safety strategy does not just look at fatalities, which is a great step in the right direction, we are also looking at serious injuries because serious injuries cause so much pain, grief, suffering and financial burden to so many people so it is something that really needs to be focused on. As a society we are expecting to see less road trauma occurring on our roads, yet we have more cars and more people on the roads, so it is a very difficult challenge to overcome.

We also expect there to be mobility. No one wants to be caught up in congestion but they still want to drive their car.

Ms FORREST - Keith, listening to you, the cynic would say we are totally unrealistic then - we are kidding ourselves.

Mr MIDSON - Yes, something has to give, I think.

My next point is that I am very pleased to see that the Government is now looking at things such as bus lanes. I was involved in designing or modelling the impacts of the bus lane on the Southern Outlet. I think we are reaching a point in Tasmania now - and certainly as a motorist myself I have experienced the frustration of dropping off kids at school and driving to work or wherever I am going - where there seems to be more traffic on the roads.

People are noticing that now, they are complaining to government agencies about increased congestion and those sorts of things and they are demanding something be done about it. Rather than the traditional methods of predict and provide, let us put more lanes on, let us build a new road to deal with this, I think the Government is taking a much better view of, 'Okay, what's a more efficient way of getting people from A to B? Let's look at things like bus lanes, let's look at trams, let's look at those sorts of things'.

I think those types of treatments will have a positive impact on road safety if we get it right. I think the public are becoming more accepting of these solutions because they can see that Tasmania is constrained, we cannot pull down a bunch of heritage houses and build another road or lane. We have steep hills, we have narrow roads, we are not going to get more capacity through those roads. We need to find other ways and a bus can fit 40 or more people in it, which can take 30 or 40 cars off the road.

These types of steps are really going in a good, positive direction for Tasmania and it is pleasing to see at a higher level that Tasmania has a leadership to embrace those types of principles. They are some of the very high-level things that can be done to address some of these road safety problems.

Tasmania has some very hilly, windy roads; we have some old roads that have lots of trees right next to the road, which can be a hazard. We are seeing things like a very high rate of motorcycle crashes so the vulnerable road users are very much an issue. From the

stats that I have here, motorcyclists represented 20 per cent of Tasmania's road toll in 2008 yet they are only 2.3 per cent of the registered vehicles in Tasmania so that is quite a disproportionate crash rate. I think we are more likely to see more motorcycles on the road in coming years. With the state of the economy they are a very efficient way of getting around. With increased congestion they can help people get around. So I don't think we can ignore that problem; I think that is something that we need to look at very carefully. It is pleasing to see some very positive steps in the right direction where we have, say, W-beam barriers with some steel at the very bottom edge so that the motorcyclists, if they do come off the road, are not going to get snagged by the posts of the guardrail.

Ms FORREST - Rub bars, I think they're called.

Mr MIDSON - When I first saw them I didn't know what they were. I had to find out, and I was very pleased to find out what they were used for. We are seeing them on a lot of roads where motorcyclists love to, rightly or wrongly, open up the throttle and go fast and enjoy Tasmania's scenery.

Ms FORREST - They can do that at the same time, can they, enjoy the scenery and drive fast?

Mr MIDSON - I think it is more the adrenalin rush. That is an example of Tasmania taking the safe-distance approach and saying, 'Okay, we probably can't stop these people from doing that, apart from having a policeman on every corner to try to catch them'. But if they do get it wrong, misjudge and come off their bike, they may not get killed on that section of guardrail, which is very likely if it was left as it was.

As to the wire rope barrier, I don't think it is as much of an issue for motorcyclists now as it was perhaps 10 years ago. I think when it was first introduced the motorcycle lobby was very much against it. They still are to some extent; in fact in Victoria they banned it for a number of years, rightly or wrongly. Now we know statistically that it still prevents 90 per cent of crashes - motorcyclists, cars, across the board. Maybe motorcyclists ride more carefully when they see the wire rope barrier because they see it as scary or a risk to them. Statistically speaking, we know it works. There are also some recent developments in providing padding on the rails. We also know from research organisations such as the Monash University Accident Research Centre - MUAR - that it really doesn't matter what a motorcyclist hits if they are travelling at speed, they have a very high probability of being killed, whether it is W-beam, wire rope barrier, concrete barrier or a tree, because of the lack of protection that they have compared to a car which has airbags and a steel cage around you. It really doesn't matter what they hit, they have a high likelihood of being killed. That is very unfortunate and very difficult to deal with. I think it is a challenge everywhere, but particularly for Tasmania because we do seem to have an interesting problem.

Mr DEAN - In the information you said that the 90 per cent in relation to wire rope barriers was prevention of head-on crashes or deaths. What was the word again?

CHAIR - Reduction in deaths, wasn't it?

Mr MIDSON - It was reduction in deaths. In terms of head-on, it is probably more than 90 per cent. That is probably a conservative figure in terms of reduction of head-on, but certainly in reduction of fatalities it is 90 per cent. Where they have used it extensively in places such as Sweden and Norway, they have had that sort of effect over the years, which is fantastic.

I don't pretend to know all the solutions for the motorcycle problem but I know it is something that really needs to be looked at carefully over the coming years. I think it will pose itself to be a bigger problem over time if it is left unchecked because there will be more bikes on the road.

Another issue for Tasmania is the incidence of single-vehicle run-off-the-road crashes. Again, I think that is the nature of our roads. We have a lot of rural-type roads. We don't really have any freeway-type roads in Tasmania compared to Melbourne, Sydney and some of the larger States. We are not likely to ever see anything built to that standard because we don't have the population to support it. We don't have the road width or the alignments that they can have on flatter terrain or where they have reserved the road corridor for tens of years or 50 years or so. We are stuck with what we have. We also have the interesting challenge of balancing the environmental constraints with the road safety constraints. What I mean by that is that we have a lot of lovely old trees right next to roads on the Arthur Highway, even the Midland Highway. Some of our major roads have very infrangible poles in the form of trees that pose a very real risk to an errant vehicle crashing into them and causing death and injury on our roads, and it is a very difficult thing to deal with. I think this is probably more a case of protecting those trees with some sort of protection such as wire rope and those sorts of things, and identifying on a very large scale where some of the key areas of run-off-the-road crashes are.

CHAIR - That is happening now?

Mr MIDSON - I was getting to that. We are starting to look at that. The problem is that they tend to be very random occurrences and it is very hard to predict where someone might leave the road but what you can do is look at the crash information, which DIER has been doing extensively over a number of years, and try to find some patterns where the best places to protect them are. Also, through the road safety levy that we are now applying we are seeing mass installations of this stuff. The Southern Outlet is a good example of those sorts of things. So it is happening and that will help address run-off-the-road crashes and unfortunately these are the crashes that tend to get all the media publicity as well, so if a crash happens on the Midland Highway it is on the front page of the paper generally.

I don't think it is realistic to expect that we will duplicate a road like the Midland Highway and I don't think that will address the road safety problem, because I think to do it properly you would need to address the issue of the roadside hazards. They are not all head-on crashes that are happening there; a lot of them are single-vehicle run-off-the-road crashes. The head-ons get more media publicity, but I guess that is something that will need to be addressed in the longer term because it will take some time to address those sorts of problems.

CHAIR - What is your view about a four-lane divided highway for the Midland Highway?

Mr MIDSON - I don't think it's warranted, to be honest. We don't have the volume. The volume drops off; it is something in the order of about 6 000 vehicles per day in the middle and it grows right through to about 40 000 on the Brooker Highway, from memory. Most of the traffic at the northern and southern ends is more localised with people doing the short to medium journey trips, like Hobart to Brighton or Hobart to Granton or something like that. Not everyone is going all the way through to Launceston or beyond to the Bass Highway, so it is very difficult to justify from an economics point of view to build the four lanes.

I think there is some merit in providing more overtaking opportunities. There is an element of frustration there for some and I think that may lead to some irrational or risk-taking behaviour by some drivers. Again, it is about being careful about where you put those extra overtaking lanes. It is certainly better than it was 10 or 20 years ago because over the years DIER has been progressively installing more.

The Brighton Bypass is a good example of where it is probably appropriate. The biggest delay point from an efficiency point of view is through that whole area. There are lots of different speed zones, lots of built-up areas, lots of risk for collision for vehicles coming in and out of properties, which is not ideal on a major national highway. I think that section is a good example of where it is appropriate but beyond that I don't think it's really necessary to extend that right through.

Ms FORREST - You made the point that you look at safer vehicles and safer designed roads and where you cannot achieve that you reduce your speed. The Bass Highway is a different kettle of fish for a lot of it because it's a much better road than the Midland Highway, but do you think that 110 kph is a reasonable speed limit for those sections of road where there are only single lanes? There are lots of sections of the road that are at that capacity where you do not have wire rope barriers where there are trees or poles on the side of the road in many of those areas.

Mr MIDSON - That is a very good point, because I have often thought there are some sections that probably are not appropriate, to be honest. In the United States when they had the oil crisis - I cannot remember exactly when that was - they reduced the speed limits from 60 mph to 50 mph in order to conserve fuel because they were worried about the fuel situation. They saw a dramatic decrease in fatalities and serious injuries during that time but then, of course, there was public outcry to raise the speed limits to increase efficiency and of course the road toll went up again.

Ms FORREST - Do you have figures that show that?

Mr MIDSON - I could provide them.

Ms FORREST - That would be helpful.

Mr MIDSON - There has been research on that event and I think that started people thinking about safer speeds and those sorts of things. From a safe systems point of view I think it would be a good ideal to either reduce the speed or upgrade the roads to make it more conducive to a 110 kph road.

Ms FORREST - Just flowing on from that, you stated that you didn't think the traffic volume on the Midland Highway warranted the expense of having a four-lane highway potentially separated all the way. How would you then best address upgrading that road to a standard where you could have a 110 kph limit potentially? What would we need to do?

Mr MIDSON - I think you would need to look at measures such as perhaps putting a wire barrier down the centre to prevent the head-on risk, and then on the curves perhaps protecting the environment, by either clearing the environment so there is a clear zone, an area where someone can try to maintain recovery or, if you cannot remove the hazards somehow protecting them in a way that doesn't actually cause a hazard itself. I have seen some bad examples where a steel barrier has been used to protect trees, but of course the car has come off at right angles, hit the barrier and killed people, so you need to be careful how you apply -

Ms FORREST - So that would be a location where wire rope barriers should be used, because it would not actually -

Mr MIDSON - Potentially, yes, or changing the angle of the collision so that you are not hitting it like that - make the angle so that you actually deflect off it.

Ms FORREST - The more acute angle they hit it at?

Mr MIDSON - Yes. I think there is some scope for that. I guess the challenge will be to gain public acceptance. People already don't like the changing of speed limits on an open road like that, so that would be an interesting challenge, but over time you probably would see an improvement in road safety if you did that. It would be a question perhaps of how you sell that through the media or through government announcements, or perhaps it is a short-term solution while you are looking at repairing that section of road, upgrading it to a higher speed standard.

Ms FORREST - We did have some evidence from another person with an engineering background about the skid resistance of roads, and he contended that there really should be a cost-benefit analysis for any treatment of the road, and basically contended that in a lot of cases there is probably a greater cost benefit of dealing with skid resistance rather than necessarily with wire rope barriers. Do you have a view on that?

Mr MIDSON - I have not seen any evidence to suggest that. Skid resistance plays a very important role in road safety, particularly on high-speed roads. I would be surprised if skid resistance were more important than something like the clear zone, because once they leave the road the skid resistance really doesn't mean anything. And they can leave the road not just through skidding; it can be because they fell asleep at the wheel or lost concentration. If they can try to recover whilst they are still on the road, the skid resistance will help them stay on the road, but once they leave the road they have to try to stop and get back on the road or they will hit something. So I think things like the clear zone and their travelling speed will probably play a much more important role than the skid resistance itself, provided the skid resistance is to an acceptable level. I guess where it does become a big issue is where it is deficient, it has become polished or is perhaps not suitable. For a high-speed road, you don't want to have ponding of water on the top of the road and those sorts of things, so that becomes a design issue - is the

camber right, does it have the right profile, does it allow water to drain through and those sorts of things.

Ms FORREST - You said you are actually involved in investigation of crashes and that sort of thing yourself.

Mr MIDSON - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Do you look at all of those aspects, skid resistance as well?

Mr MIDSON - I do.

Ms FORREST - Do you measure that?

Mr MIDSON - I don't personally measure it, someone else usually does that. There are a number of different tools that are used to measure it. The name escapes me, but one of the most popular ones is like a pendulum with a rubber shoe on it, and you see how far it actually falls to the ground and that gives you a very rough measurement of the skid resistance. There are other methods as well, including photographic methods, I believe. But it is important, it can't be overlooked, and it is unfortunate when you see a new road built and perhaps they get the aggregate mix wrong or something like that, and you can see it has areas of bitumen without aggregate and that sort of thing.

Ms FORREST - Is that what happened at Burnie after the crash that killed the five women from Circular Head? There were four lanes, and they were divided but not with a barrier. There was a concrete section.

Mr MIDSON - I do recall that.

Ms FORREST - Yes, and so they reduced the speed limit immediately, which was the sensible thing to do, then put a wire barrier in. But they also redid the surface, because there were some claims even from the guy who was coming the other way in the 4-wheel drive that they ran into that the surface may not have assisted his ability to stop either. But within weeks of having that road resealed and redone, they were ripping it up again.

Mr MIDSON - I am not away of the circumstances of that, but maybe they did get the mix wrong. Maybe the road surface was not appropriate for the design. But it may have also been reactionary too. It may have been a matter of being seen to do the right thing and trying to address what may be an issue. I often get involved in expert witness work for crashes and that sort of thing and sometimes if a council or State government reacts in that way, it is almost admitting fault to some extent. So it is a difficult one where, for them to have done that, there is probably a good chance that they were fairly certain that the skid resistance was a factor in that crash and they wanted to be seen to be doing the right thing straight away to prevent that from happening again. So, it may well have been but I am not aware of the circumstances of that crash.

CHAIR - Do you have your own firm?

Mr MIDSON - Yes, I do.

CHAIR - Have you ever had an association with DIER?

Mr MIDSON - I started the company in November, Midson Traffic Pty Ltd. Prior to that I was with GHD for four years and GHD has a panel contract with DIER. I still have a memorandum of understanding with GHD and do a lot of work for them and a lot of our work is through DIER, so I have a very good working relationship with DIER. I know all the staff in there and I have done assessments on road safety for various things. The most recent one would have been a road safety assessment of the Brooker Highway. There is a section between Clearys Gates and I think it is Warwick Street, which has a disproportionately high crash rate and I am trying to get to the bottom of what is causing that. It is mainly access issues but there is deficient sight distance and other things, so it's not about finding the solution but really just trying to work out what is causing these crashes.

Mr HARRISS - In which direction, Keith?

Mr MIDSON - Towards the city, so as you come up over the hill and back through. I really enjoy working for DIER. I was nearly employed by DIER. I was offered a position some years ago but I was about to start at GHD so I just stayed on with GHD and have helped DIER in another capacity ever since.

CHAIR - That is good. Please proceed or are you finished.

Mr MIDSON - I think I am finished. I think I have covered pretty much everything.

CHAIR - It has been very interesting and helpful.

Mr DEAN - There has been a lot of discussion - and you may not have followed this because it is in the north of the State - in relation to intersections, seagull junctions and under-overpasses versus roundabouts and so on. What is your position in relation to that infrastructure? It is a general question.

Mr MIDSON - At a local road network level?

Mr DEAN - It is the East Tamar Highway. The Dilston bypass is to be built on the East Tamar Highway as a part of the East Tamar Highway and it will bypass Dilston. We can access Dilston at the southern end and access out of Windermere, Dilston on the northern end at the bypass. The bypass is about nine kilometres in length. We have heard evidence in Victoria that roundabouts are a panacea in some way to a lot of the problems that are experienced where roads come together.

Mr MIDSON - Absolutely. Roundabouts are another wonderful solution, more for a local road network, not so much applicable for a higher speed road like a highway. I think the statistics are that, on average, about 80 per cent crashes can be reduced at an intersection through the installation of a roundabout. Where it falls over is where you have unbalanced high flows, like the Brooker Highway to Howard Road, which is a bad example of a roundabout.

Mr DEAN - That is pretty much the same - in fairness to DIER and everybody else - there will be an imbalance of traffic coming out of the Dilston, Windermere, Swan Bay area, so that the traffic moving on the highway will be much greater than the other traffic.

Ms FORREST - They get frustrated because they cannot get on.

Mr MIDSON - The flipside of that is that if you have a small amount of traffic on a minor approach, it can cause massive delays for the major approach. An example of that would be the roundabout in Midway Point, where there is not really a lot of traffic coming out of Midway Point but just the occasional people coming out can really cause major queues in the order of kilometres going back up the Tasman Highway. That has been fixed to some extent with the installation of the very quick-acting signals, so the signals let one car through at a time.

Mr DEAN - Are there are signals there now?

Mr MIDSON - Yes. They only operate in the morning.

Mr DEAN - The problem there was that you have to turn into the garage directly opposite it as well, which complicated the whole thing. It was a real road safety issue.

Mr MIDSON - So it is still a roundabout but it is metered, so as one car goes through the lights go red so they stop, and this continues through. Then the next car goes through so it has less of an impact on the major traffic flow. It is not an ideal solution but it is probably all you can do in that location.

In general, roundabouts are a fantastic road safety solution to a lot of problems. I have done a lot of research on the roundabout in North Hobart, interestingly enough. That in itself has reduced pedestrian crashes in particular by quite a substantial amount along the entire block of North Hobart, not just at the roundabout. Because of the congestion that it causes the cars are going a lot slower. It is probably very frustrating for drivers but again it demonstrates the speed issue. If cars are going very slowly pedestrians can sort of filter through the cars and if they do get hit they might touch the bumper bar and that is it.

Mr DEAN - Do you have any statistical data available in relation to accidents at intersections and fatalities on intersections and junctions?

Mr MIDSON - I do. There is some information available through Austroads. I could summarise that and provide it.

Mr DEAN - It would have been interesting because it has come up.

Mr MIDSON - I know the Dilston bypass is an interesting issue. At one stage DIER were looking to engage me to go to the RPDC tribunal, because it had to go through a planning process to get through. DIER did not want to put the roundabout in there because of the efficiency and the unbalanced flows, which I concur with. It probably would not be the best solution there.

Ms FORREST - Are they going to put an underpass and overpass there.

Mr MIDSON - I think they are. It is an interesting case that one. So roundabouts are very good in certain circumstances but they cannot be the answer to everything because they can cause a lot of congestion if not done correctly.

Another bad example is probably the Mornington roundabout, where there has been a lot of work trying to fix that.

CHAIR - I have heard that consideration is being given to abolishing the roundabout at Elwick on the Brooker Highway.

Mr MIDSON - Yes. I was actually involved in the modelling for that that through GHD.

CHAIR - Are you able to say what is going to happen there?

Mr MIDSON - The best solution, on balance, looking at the costs and the improvements to efficiency for all approaches, is to modify the two signals at Elwick Road and Goodwood Road. So leave them staggered but provide phasing changes and more lanes, moving the left-turn lanes back further so people can actually turn into the Brooker Highway further back and not be stuck in a queue, and getting rid of the roundabout at Howard Road and making that signalised, and then timing it. Part of the problem at the moment is that the roundabout offers no coordination between the lights at Goodwood Road and the next set of lights down the road. You get quite unusual traffic flow.

CHAIR - They are not coordinated, the two sets of traffic lights?

Mr MIDSON - No. Some effort has been made to coordinate all the lights on the Brooker Highway in the peak direction only. You cannot get both directions at the same time but again it is very difficult to do that because the roundabout breaks up that flow so you cannot get that progressive stream. Vehicles leaving, say, Goodwood Road and arriving at that next intersection and the next green light may get delayed by traffic on the roundabout. The modelling shows that that will work very well but of course it has gone into the political arena. Glenorchy Council are not very happy and they would like to see a grade-separated interchange. The problem with a grade-separated interchange is that it is very difficult to fit it onto the land that you have available. So you need to purchase a lot of land to do that. It is a fantastic solution and provides some great travel times for that link of road, but the problem again is that whilst you get the cars through there without any break they still arrive at the next signals and they are caught. They do not actually get an overall travel time benefit by doing so. If you could grade-separate all the intersections along the length you would achieve fantastic results except they would arrive in Hobart in one big clump and you might have to deal with some of the issues further down the track. One isolated grade-separated interchange in amongst a whole bunch of traffic lights probably does not give you the benefits that you or the community would like. It sounds great but when you look at the details of the interaction between the intersections on either side, it doesn't really provide you with the benefits that the community wants.

CHAIR - On the question of speed, we were told yesterday - I think it was the British Columbia report - that in some circumstances, if the speed is reduced, the accident rate increases. Are you aware of any suggestion of that?

Mr MIDSON - No, I have not heard that one. Are we talking about highway speeds?

CHAIR - There was also evidence that in the Northern Territory, when the speed was decreased to a maximum of 130 kph, the accident rate increased, but that is an unusual speed. The British Columbia report was based on general statistics, as I understand it. It was probably in the range of 110 kph.

Ms FORREST - The suggestion was that a safer travel speed was the issue rather than safe speed. If everyone is travelling at a similar speed on the road then that is safer than a P-plater limited to 80 kph in a 110-kph zone. The majority of traffic is travelling at around 100-110 kph, and if there are one or two cars that are limited to 80 kph because of their licence restrictions, that makes them more dangerous because they are not travelling at that mean speed.

Mr MIDSON - That's true. A better example is on the Tasman Bridge. Before the speed cameras went in, crashes were much more pronounced. It is the busiest road in the State, upwards of 70 000 vehicles per day. Before the speed cameras people were tending to drive at around 60-80 kph. There was quite a spread of vehicle speeds, and it is that spread of vehicle speeds that can increase the crash risk. Once the cameras went in, everyone stuck at 70 kph fairly uniformly. It brought the range of speeds right down and the crash rate dropped off quite significantly. It wasn't the speed, so maybe travelling at 80 kph is safe. I don't want to advocate that, but if everyone was doing that it might be safer than just a few people doing it. Definitely a busy road having consistent speeds provides a higher level of safety. There have been some studies done in Europe that look at managing freeway speeds - getting people to speed up if they are going too slow and reducing the speed limit according to the conditions or the congestion. It might be 100 kph in the middle of the day but once peak hour hits it goes to 60 kph. People don't have the expectation that I can drive at 100 kph so I am going to weave and dart all over the place to try to get my speed up. If I can only drive at 60 kph and I'm stuck behind these cars, it is okay. That helps improve road safety.

Ms FORREST - You are talking about variable speeds at different times of the day depending on the amount of traffic?

Mr MIDSON - Yes. That is something the State Government is considering on the Tasman Bridge. It is a recommendation that I made in a report on the Tasman Bridge tidal flow operations. They should look at reducing the speed limit during peak times to try to reduce the crash rate at those critical times. Apart from the fact that we don't want to have crashes, if you have a crash on the bridge it causes all sorts of issues for the economy as well.

Mr DEAN - Variable speed limits should apply at places such as Pontville, Brighton and those areas.

Mr MIDSON - Yes, they probably should, or even the Southern Outlet or Macquarie Street. Macquarie Street is difficult because of the traffic lights.

Mr DEAN - We have never embraced that concept here, have we? On the mainland and in Victoria they are doing it well now, with variable speed limits on a lot of their highways.

Ms FORREST - Maintaining a consistent speed rather than the speed itself being the issue?

Mr MIDSON - That's right.

Ms FORREST - That is an important point that would need to be explained to the public. If you are going to reduce the speed or allow an increase in speed the idea is that everyone travels the same speed, so we don't want the heroes out there thinking, 'Because it's gone up a bit I'll go even faster'. The whole approach is to maintain a mean driving speed within a few kph of each other.

Mr MIDSON - Yes, and interestingly you get a better efficiency because of that. The average speed can increase even though you have reduced the speed limit because everyone is travelling at a uniform rate. Once you have people doing lane changes and those sorts of things you can cause shockwaves that propagate backwards in the flow and it slows the traffic downstream. If everyone is travelling at the same speed with fewer lane changes and those sorts of things -

Ms FORREST - That's how the autobahns work, isn't it?

Mr MIDSON - Yes.

Ms FORREST - When they do have a crash it is pretty bad, but they do not have that many.

Mr MIDSON - The crash rate is quite good.

Probably one area I did not touch on is intelligent transport systems. One example of the use of intelligent transport systems in helping to improve road safety is variable speed limits and giving people an informed decision-making choice. If they are travelling on a major road, they can see - like you see on Tullamarine Freeway - that Hobart Airport is 20 minutes or 40 minutes away. They can then make a choice because maybe something has happened upstream, so I will take a different route. That takes some of the traffic off the road, rather than getting people frustrated and sticking it out.

I have seen examples where it says 'airport 22 minutes' or here is a train station and that will take you 10 minutes if you pull over into the carpark, so you are giving them a choice of modes of transport as well.

Those systems are not necessarily applicable to Tasmania but we can use technology now on our road systems to inform drivers better of what their choices are and how they can get from A to B, or even of hazards that are ahead of them so they know what is coming on.

CHAIR - During the last 12 months there have been quite a number of trucks capsizing, mainly log trucks. Do you have any theories why we have those?

Mr MIDSON - No, but I have been watching that with interest as well. I had quite a lot of involvement in the pulp mill and the assessment of the log truck movements throughout the State and that sort of thing. I was looking at the crash statistics going back about 15 years, trying to make sense of them. It does seem to fluctuate quite significantly. There are not a lot of numbers but we might see three in one year, five the next, none the year

after that - they seem to fluctuate fairly randomly. Perhaps more could be done on the design of trucks or even legislation to say how high they can stack them and how much weight they have. Those sorts of things can perhaps help. It is an interesting one. I do not know what is causing it. I do not think there is necessarily more logging activity. Maybe it is the way the drivers are told to deliver the loads, maybe employers are forcing them to work long hours or deliver as quickly as possible, or maybe they are doing it because they know they will earn more money if they deliver it quickly. I do not know.

CHAIR - Have you had contact with the Australian Road Research Bureau in Melbourne?

Mr MIDSON - I have, yes. I know some people quite well.

CHAIR - Given enough information relating to a capsized truck, they can determine the reason for it from their model. They have that system, which Tasmania contributes funds to, but we are not using it.

Mr MIDSON - I know they have similar models for things like motorcyclists. They can model the impact on the computer if a motorcycle hits different surfaces and what is likely to happen to them and where the injuries were likely to be sustained. It is a very fascinating area of research.

CHAIR - It is. Thank you very much for your evidence.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr BOB HOLDERNESS-RODDAM WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Welcome. I see on the agenda that it says in camera. Perhaps we can discuss that now. We did have a discussion once before about this. It depends on the nature of some of the evidence you wish to give and if it were to be naming people or identifying people which could prejudice them if it were publicised because it has been given under privilege. Did you want to show us a film from which people could be identified.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I submitted a VHS tape but I would not necessarily expect that to be shown today. Has the committee seen that?

Mr HARRISS - No, we haven't yet.

CHAIR - We will deal with the public submission and then go in camera. You tell us when you think that should be. We look forward to hearing from you.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - So you want me just to fire away?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - There were two submissions. The first one is the road safety off-road crashes dealing specifically with road safety. There are a number of points but the first one is what I regard and which experts like the Monash University Accident Research Centre also regard as the incompatibility of four-wheel drive and SUV vehicles, or the larger ones anyway, with smaller vehicles on the road - for instance, something like a Honda Civic or a Toyota Echo. Smaller vehicles would certainly come off very much the worse. In fact in my submission I did include the transcript of the coroner's report on that very nasty accident near Burnie a couple of years ago.

CHAIR - Where the five people were killed?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Five people were killed. Both vehicles were being driven correctly and apparently in accordance with the conditions on the road. I think the road was given the blame for the actual accident occurring. However, what I think surprised me was the fact that no-one, neither the investigating officers nor the coroner, seemed to see any significance in the fact that I think it was a Holden Commodore that was hit side on by a Mitsubishi Pajero. I am not saying that people would not have been hurt if it had been a smaller vehicle but there is a possibility there may not have been as many or any fatalities because with these large four-wheel drives, of which a Pajero is a fairly good example, they not only have considerable extra mass but they are of a very solid construction and therefore do not give too easily; the crumple zones are not as good. In fact I have shown an example of another type of four-wheel drive in my submission photograph where you can see very clearly the box-member chassis which gives these things - it is a bit like being hit by a travelling railway line, as it were.

Also because of their much higher ground clearance they are able to intrude over the side cell of another vehicle; rather than pushing that vehicle, they are intruding into that

vehicle. There has been quite a lot of evidence and discussion about this from different sources. I have here size divide makes our roads even more deadly -

CHAIR - What is that document?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - This document I downloaded from the Internet but it refers to a leading crash expert from Monash University Accident Research Centre. It said that small cars are no match for 4WDs in the evidence of accidents and warned that record sales this year - and I downloaded this on 2 June and I think it probably was released in 2008 - of 4WDs, especially sports utility vehicles, and smaller cars had increased the likelihood of more catastrophic road accidents. The growing gap in average car size meant more motorists than ever were driving vehicles that were incompatible in crashes, with drivers of smaller cars the obvious losers. The figures at the end of April show SUVs made up almost exclusively of 4WDs have increased their share of new vehicle sales to a record of 20.4 per cent in one year, a rise of almost 2 per cent in one year.

Ms FORREST - What year was that published?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think it was 2008. I certainly downloaded it on 2 June 2008. The final bit says that it makes our roads even more deadly, and then there is 20080531'. So I suspect that was probably released on 31 May 2008.

Ms FORREST - It is surprising when you think about the fuel costs at the time leading up to that when you talk about the sales of four-wheel drives.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - But it is recorded. Do you want me to table these?

CHAIR - Thank you, we will take that into evidence.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - This is an article, I think this is from the United States, on the social highway, its price against Hummer.

Ms FORREST - We do not have many Hummers here.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - But we do have an agency and they have sold a couple.

CHAIR - There was one circumnavigating a private prison near Brisbane several years ago anyway.

Laughter.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Funnily enough when Motors started their Hummer sales the year before last - and I went along just to have a look at this thing - it was very interesting to see the other people there sussing this vehicle out. One was a typical middle-aged suburban couple and they were quite intrigued with it, and the other was a couple of young fellows who you would imagine would spend their weekends out hunting, shooting, fishing. They were saying, 'Gee mate, she'd be really good if we put a big bullbar on it'. The whole attitude worries me.

There is one here '4WDs and a girl who didn't have chance' from the *Daily Telegraph* 2 December 1999. A young lady called Lucy Singleton was hit. It says that she drove her Daihatsu Charade down Spit Road towards her harbour home: '20 year old student Lucy Singleton is like many of us who drive cars in Sydney, a sitting duck for the suburban killing machines known as four-wheel drives. At 4.30 on that sunny Saturday afternoon as she headed home for the last time, Lucy's 900 kilogram car was hit head-on by a 2-tonne Toyota Land Cruiser 4WD with bullbars which had crossed the median strip'. It was a 17-year-old P-plate driver who was driving that four-wheel drive, which is another area of concern for me. These vehicles, as they age, will become cheaper and easier for young people to get. Of course, as a vehicle ages the motors tend to keep going but the brakes, the steering and the suspension start to wear out and perform not as well as designed. It really concerns me when I see these vehicles being driven with P-plates and L-plates on them. I just do not believe young people have the experience to drive these vehicles, particularly given the testosterone levels of young males.

Ms FORREST - Bob, with that case you just mentioned, was the P-plater in the little car that was hit.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - The P-plater was in the big car. A 17-year-old was driving a two-tonne Toyota Land Cruiser. He crossed the median strip.

Ms FORREST - I was not sure which one was which.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Another article: this is a write-up from the Pedestrian Council of Australia, which is Sydney-based. It is a write-up in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 18 December 1999. It says: 'The equipment needed for serious off-road work can make 4WDs an urban traffic hazard. Peter McKay looks at moves to rein in not only the vehicles but also their city drivers'. That is an article based on a statement by the Pedestrian Council of Australia.

This is about four-wheel drive vehicle operation, put out by the Skills for Emergency Services personnel, so they obviously feel that people need extra help.

This is an article from the *Dominion Post* in New Zealand: 'Oafish roadhogs are fouling our air', and again it is highlighting the gas-guzzling, nutter behaviour of four-wheel drives. There are 250 000 in New Zealand.

Four-wheel drive feedback: 'news.com readers have had plenty to say in the way that New South Wales coroner Jacqueline Milledge has recommended that drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles be required to acquire special licences and that four-wheel drives be banned from the grounds of all State primary schools'. That was in the wake of a terrible incident where a four-wheel drive was just driving through, delivering a student to the primary school, and it ran over another child and killed her. The driver said she did not see that other child, which again raises another issue of four-wheel drives - though not limited to four-wheel drives - the situation of visibility for the driver of the immediate environment. They are over-represented in driveway deaths where people reverse down driveways and run over children.

There have been a few studies too about the behaviour of people behind the wheel of a four-wheel drive. 'Unsafe Driving Behaviour in Four-Wheel Drive Vehicles - an Observational Study' came from the *British Medical Journal* of 2006.

Mr DEAN - You said that four-wheel drives were over-represented in driveway accidents. Do you have the statistical data on that?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - They would be somewhere in my submission. I am quite happy to go and find further information.

The results of this study were that drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles were more likely than drivers of other cars to be seen using hand-held mobile phones - 8.2 per cent compared with 2 per cent - and not complying with the law on seat belts - 19.5 per cent versus 15 per cent. Levels of non-compliance of both laws were slightly higher in the penalty phase of observation. Breaking one law was associated with increased likelihood of breaking the other.

CHAIR - So who is making that claim?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - It is in the *British Medical Journal*. It is a paper by Lesley Walker - research associate, Jonathan Williams - medical student, and Konrad Jamrozic - Professor of Evidence-based Health Care.

Another one, more a press thing than a paper: 'Ford settling class action in Explorer rollover case'. About 1 million owners in four States have claimed vehicles were dangerous. Four-wheel drives, or the larger ones certainly, do have an increased risk of rollover in the case of accidents. They tend to hit safety barriers and it trips them up.

CHAIR - That is generally accepted, I think.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think so. I have driven a number of four-wheel drives because I grew up on a farm in the north of England. We started off with ex-army jeeps and then I had an Austin Champ at one stage and then a Land Rover.

From BBC News: 'Four by fours should carry health warning benefit', by Richard Blake, BBC environment correspondent:

'Four-wheel drive vehicles, those rugged beasts designed for the open hillside but more commonly found doing the city school run, are so polluting and dangerous that they should carry a cigarette-pack style health warning. That is the view of UK think tank, the New Economics Foundation, which outlines arguments about the vehicles.'

I don't know anything about the New Economics Foundation. Anyone can start up a foundation, I imagine, so I am not in a position to assess their credibility.

This was broadcast by ABC on Radio National on their environment program on 2 June 2001 - 'Four-wheel drives in the city':

'Man, yes four-wheel drives. Of course you need a four-wheel drive to get up to the school and to get to the supermarket. Maybe there can be little places around the back of supermarkets where they can get muddy creek water' -

He is being sarcastic -

'and put it on their bullbars to make it look like they have been out in the country. Give us a break. They don't even go 5 kilometres out of the CBD. The whole thing is a power thing.'

That was looking at people's attitudes towards four-wheel drives. Some are positive and some are not so.

'Vehicle-to-vehicle compatibility in real-world accidents', put out in May 1996 by Melbourne ICE Ergonomics. It is really a comparison of different vehicle sizes and the effects they have on the road. 'This conclusion illustrates that crash compatibility is not only influenced by mass but also by vehicle structure', which is what I have alluded to before about the height and the lack of crumple zones.

'Bumper mentality' is just a review of Keith Bradshaw's book, which he published in the United States. He is a journalist but a fairly highly regarded one. He was the senior person for *Time* magazine at one stage. This is a book review summing up what he had to say. He was very down on four-wheel drives and felt that they had caused a lot of unnecessary accident trauma in the United States.

This is again from the Internet, talking about serious brain injuries, which most of us would realise is a hidden area of motor accidents. You tend to look at the fatalities and think they're down a bit this year, so that's good, or they're up a bit this year, and that's bad, but we forget all about the serious spinal and brain injuries.

CHAIR - Most people do, but we don't.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Yes. It says:

'There is a hidden toll on our roads of trauma and serious brain injury. To understand why we need to see what really happens in a car crash. This *Catalyst* special report'-

this is from *Catalyst*, the ABC science program -

'looks at the cutting-edge science of crash testing and investigates one accident that changed a woman's life forever. The latest computer-modelling techniques reveal for the first time what happens to the human brain at the moment of impact, and what can be done about the way we design our vehicles.'

CHAIR - Thank you for all that material.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I hope I am not overloading you. I feel a bit in two minds about that, but on the other hand I think it is important to get this information out.

Finally I have a sheet that I produced myself that I have put in libraries and things called 'Why Some Four-Wheel Drive Vehicles are Bad for Your Health'. I have said 'some', because some of the smaller ones like the smaller Subarus and things probably are not going to make any difference because they do not have that solid, rigid structure and they do not intrude over other vehicles' side entry.

I think we have dealt basically with four-wheel drives and bull bars -

Mr DEAN - So what I think you are probably saying is that we ought to be looking very clearly at restricting learner drivers and P-plate drivers?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think that would be a good start, but a lot of this is not really a State thing, it is a national thing, and therefore we need to be talking to the Federal Government, encouraging State road safety people to bring this up at national road safety ministerial meetings and things, and saying this is an issue that needs addressing. As far as I can see, even with the current financial situation, the cars that people are not buying are the Falcons and Commodores, they are still buying the big four-wheel drives and the smaller vehicles, as that first article I introduced highlighted. So long as they keep selling these machines, there is a proportion of people out there who are not responsible drivers, and a proportion of them will get hold of four-wheel drives, for whatever reason, and they have massive potential for damaging other people.

This is a message I received on my message-bank on Friday 21 July 2004 in response to a letter I had published in the *Mercury*. The language here is a little bit, you know, if you have tender ears. It says:

'G'day, Bob. I just read your letter in the *Mercury*. Piece of shit. You want to watch your back writing things like that. See you on the road one day, Arse-wipe.'

That is probably the worst comment I have had, but I have had similar letters and things written to me by individuals who don't agree with what I have to say. They are entitled to, but I think the way in which they go about it perhaps indicates the attitude of people who get behind four-wheel drives.

CHAIR - We probably don't need to have all of that in the *Hansard* transcript. We might delete that letter.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Unparliamentary language!

Ms FORREST - It was a quote though, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR - Thank you. Yes. Now the next topic.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - The next one is the prevalence of vehicles capable of speeds far in excess of legal maximums. Just about every vehicle that is sold these days is capable of going much faster than the speed limit. I have a Ford Falcon about 10 years

old. It was given to me by a daughter who had three other vehicles and didn't really need a fourth. It is not the vehicle I would have chosen for myself, because I prefer smaller vehicles, but that thing is probably capable of nearly 200 kph. I think there is a good case for limiting vehicles, putting governors on them, to bring them down to, say, 130 kph so that people don't say, 'If you bring us back to 110 kph we can't accelerate out of an emergency'. Of course, having completed a defensive driving course many years ago, I say they should recognise that they should be driving in such a way that they don't get into emergencies, not that they have to accelerate out of them.

But things like these fins and spoilers and things: do they really have a place on vehicles that are being used for day-to-day transport on the public roads? I would suggest not. Okay, we're going to see plenty of them whizzing around the streets of Melbourne on Sunday when the Grand Prix is on but that is where they ought to be and that is where they ought to stay. I just think it is inappropriate and it sends people the wrong message. They jump in these vehicles and think, 'I'm Lewis Hamilton or Stirling Moss', depending on what generation they are from, because there are still plenty of older people out there. I think the oldest hoon they've picked up was in his seventies.

CHAIR - Yes, we read about that.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - That is all I need to say on that because I think it is probably self-evident that we are building very high-powered vehicles that really do not have a place on the roads.

There is a certain amount of evidence to show that vehicle visibility has a bit to do with accidents. I think there is a good case for vehicles having to light up 24 hours a day because lights are not there only for drivers to see where they are going, but for other people, including pedestrians and cyclists, to see vehicles coming, and not only that, but to be able to make an informed assessment of that oncoming vehicle's speed. It is easy to focus in on a light source rather than something looming out the mist and say, 'Right, it is safe for me to cross the road or pull out into the lane or overtake, because that vehicle is a long way away'. So I think there is a good case for that.

There is also a bit of information on colour. There have been articles in the *Mercury* and also from the RACT journal, if I remember correctly, stating that in an accident index rating from the worst to the best, based on car colour, black comes off worst, then gold, green, blue, red, silver, white, cream, beige and yellow. I can believe that. Many years ago when my wife and I were first married I bought her a yellow VW. She was not very impressed with that colour but I said, 'That is a colour that people will see and therefore, to some extent, reduces your chances of being in accident.'

CHAIR - Because they'd avoid her?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Possibly, yes.

Ms FORREST - Or notice her, one or the other.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think she only had one accident and that was someone running into the side of her, from memory.

Mr DEAN - Did it refer to grey in that?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - They talked about silver.

Mr DEAN - The reason I mention that is that we had a grey one and my wife hated it because of the colour and the visibility.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I would think grey would have to be fairly bad because there is not the contrast and one of the things people overlook is the contrast between the vehicle and the background, particularly at dawn and dusk. Another issue is that just after sunrise and just before sunset, the sun is very low in the sky and if you are driving and you have the sun behind you, you are going to be much more difficult to pick up by drivers who are driving into the sun, so I think that is an issue that needs to be considered.

Ms FORREST - That is the unfortunate thing about the Bass Highway running east-west; it makes it particularly bad.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Exactly; you would be driving home into the sun.

Ms FORREST - Either way, driving home or driving out; it depends on the time of day.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I drove across the Nullarbor many years ago and, again, coming into dusk, you just couldn't see anything coming towards you and, likewise, driving back the other way.

New studies show white cars are the safest. I don't have the copies of the academic material here.

CHAIR - That is generally accepted?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I wouldn't expect any argument on that, but the fact is people still buy all sorts of coloured vehicles and manufacturers still make all sorts of coloured vehicles, regardless of the safety aspects.

Ms FORREST - Because they want to sell more cars. It is for marketing.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Yes, that's exactly it. They are looking at marketing vehicles and therefore making people feel that they can compete with Lewis Hamilton or whoever.

Mr DEAN - But if you had your lights on all the time, that would resolve a lot of that, wouldn't it?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - It would, and there is a paper, which I do not seem to have with me, unfortunately, but there was a study done a couple of years ago in Australia where they did a massive literature research and concluded that on balance, it was of benefit. Sweden and places do it and although the Swedes have very short winter days with very little daylight, they also have very long summer days where there is plenty of daylight, but you still have to have your headlights on.

Ms FORREST - One of the potential issues with lights is that for people travelling for a particular period of time, they can start in the daylight and then not put their lights on and then they do not seem to realise that they have not got their lights on when it is starting to get dark.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I have my lights on the whole time when I am driving. Was it last night, or the night before, I headed off somewhere in the evening, it was not dark, but certainly people should have had their lights on because it was light-up time which I think is an hour before sunset and there were a lot of people there, a bit of rain and stuff, but people still were driving without their lights on.

Ms FORREST - And you cannot see them.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Sometimes I flash my lights at them and sometimes they will put their lights on but others will just go past either cursing me for not minding my own business or they are just oblivious.

Ms FORREST - Or looking for the cop down the road.

Mr DEAN - Or they believe there is a speed camera down there.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think that is the main thing; they are looking for the speed camera.

I used to drive a lot. I have been driving since I was 18 - and it would be obvious that was a few decades ago - but I also use public transport a lot and I walk a lot. When I started walking more than average about 10 years ago, I became aware that vehicles are very bad at giving way to pedestrians at uncontrolled intersections where they are meant to give way to them. If they are turning at an intersection, they are meant to give way if there are no lights controlling the process. They fail to signal when drawing out from the kerb. In fact often they pull out and the left-hand indicator is still operating, even though they have pulled into the main stream of traffic. In fact a couple of years ago now - it was a real eye-opener for me - I was crossing the road and suddenly a vehicle drew up, drove towards me and the driver was not even looking at the road, he was reaching over the front passenger seat, looking behind it, looking for a document or something, with no concern at all; no recognition that he had a responsibility.

CHAIR - We probably know him.

Laughter.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think it happens quite a bit or, more frequently, they are putting on their seatbelt.

The other one is visibility through vehicles. Over the last few years there has been a big move towards tinted glass in vehicles. That might be all very well for keeping the vehicle cooler in hot weather but it makes it more difficult for other road users, whether they be in vehicles or pedestrians, who need to look through that vehicle to see if there is something coming up the other side of it or, indeed, if there is someone in that vehicle

who might be about to start their motor and take off into the traffic flow. It concerns me. I know the Australian Institute of Advanced Motorists has had a bit to say about it but they were told it was a national road rule situation. It had to be compatible with the rest of Australia and therefore people could put on -

Ms FORREST - Up to a certain tinting.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Up to a certain tinting. I suspect sometimes that that maximum is not observed.

We discussed speed cameras a moment ago. I am firmly of the opinion that speed cameras should be there to catch people for speeding because once you have been caught and lost a few points, I would think you would modify your driving behaviour. If the local radio station tells you where the speed cameras are, you are going to slow up for a kilometre or two either side of where that location is and then you are going to speed up again so it has done nothing really to modify your behaviour except in the extremely short term. And I do realise I am talking to members here who have to travel quite long distances at the end of the parliamentary sitting week.

Ms FORREST - And tonight when we go home as well.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I personally think radio stations broadcasting the location of speed cameras should be banned because they are not being effective if people know where they are. They are only effective if they are catching people and people are having to put their hand into their hip pocket and pay a fine or two and lose some demerit points. Then they might sit up and pay a bit of notice and say, 'I'd better moderate my speed'.

Mr DEAN - How does that account for the fact that speed camera infringements continue to go up from year to year, they don't drop or they remain about the same? I think they have continued to go up for the last decade.

CHAIR - And some of the highest number that are booked are booked on the Tasman Bridge with a fixed camera and they know it is there all the time.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - There is that element in the community who really couldn't give a damn about rules and regulations. There are others who are possibly daydreaming or in a hurry to get to the airport - so many people leave it until the last minute to go. I still think that we shouldn't be warning people. I have to confess that I have to look at my speedo, particularly once you go over the crest of that bridge. Particularly in a reasonably powerful car, and this comes back to the power of vehicles, it is very easy to let your speed creep up. I can talk with a clear conscience about this because I have never been booked for any traffic offence in my entire driving career. I don't say that means I am a good driver, I am not and I have certainly broken the speed limit, particularly when I was younger, but I was lucky and learnt very early on. Having learnt to drive around the time that motorways were introduced into the UK, you always kept your eye on the rear mirror, firstly, for a police car and, secondly, for someone coming up behind you a bit faster.

Ms FORREST - In relation to speeds on roads, when we have our provisional drivers having to drive at 80 kph an hour on roads that are posted 100-110 kph, do you think that is an issue?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I suppose it is if the roads are so bad that you can't see safely to overtake a vehicle doing 80 kph. I know I sometimes get a bit frustrated if someone is not doing the speed limit. It probably is an issue, although I think the main thing we should be pushing is that people should be driving to the conditions. If the conditions include a slower vehicle in front of them, that is something they have to accept. However, I have driven down to Port Arthur and been immensely frustrated by caravans and campervans going well below the speed limit but which were failing to use the lanes put in on the sides of the roads specifically for them to use so that other people can go by. There is a lot of thoughtless driving. My wife and I had an elderly Bedford campervan for many years and if we saw a build-up of traffic behind us we would make sure that we pulled over to let them by, but I don't see that happening now.

Ms FORREST - A lot of our roads don't allow for it. Up the west coast you get a lot of campervans and there are many, many kilometres without anywhere to pull over. It is an infrastructure issue.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Yes. We need more pulling-off lanes.

Ms FORREST - To pull off is more dangerous in those circumstances, or to try to pull over to let someone past.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I think you need to tell people what is expected of them. Again, interstate and overseas people I understand are over-represented in accidents on our roads -

CHAIR - Yes, particularly on gravel roads.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Yes, they are just not used to our roads.

If I can table a couple of documents, there is one here: *National Off-Highway Trends in Australia*, a report to the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries Motorcycle Division, and this is about motorbikes nationally, the trend of off-road motorbikes nationally.

CHAIR - With solutions?

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Well, discussions and possible solutions.

CHAIR - You did say before we went back into open session that motorcycles should be registered.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - That is correct. I think they should be registered. I think possibly there should be a bit more resourcing for the police, but I appreciate that that is not going to be an easy situation, given the current State budget financial situation.

CHAIR - Unless we have volunteer police added to the service.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - Well, I am working on a submission to Glenorchy council to have volunteer monitors, I suppose, who can be in reserves, record things that are happening and be made aware of the by-laws affecting reserves. I think probably the most important thing is to at least be able to get these bikes registered so when you see one you can give the registration number to the local authority or to the police.

That brings up a side issue, not so much to do with motorbikes but people walking dogs illegally in reserves, you get a number -

CHAIR - We don't have that in our terms of reference. We need to confine this to road safety matters.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I realise that, but I am only mentioning it in passing because the situation is, as I understand it, that when a council goes to the department of motor registration and says, 'We would like ID on this particular registration plate', they won't get it very often, unless it is strictly to do with a parking situation. So if someone is breaking some other by-law and it is reported, the council can't take action against that person. I have written to the Honourable Graeme Sturges on a couple of occasions and I think he is probably happy with the situation, but a lot of people aren't. I spend a lot of time keeping an eye on this reserve because I like the place and I don't want to see it trashed but unless councils, if they have a legitimate need, can get the ownership details of vehicles that are reported to them, there is not much point in doing anything. I think that could be a side issue. Whether it can be followed up through this committee or not I don't know.

I also have here the update for South-East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils which have also been looking at the trail-bike issues. They are talking about things such as regulatory reform, providing places to ride, laws applying to trail-bike riding et cetera.

CHAIR - That is helpful, thank you.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I have another from the same people. It is off the Internet - South-East Queensland Trail Bike Management Forum. I might table it, but it doesn't actually tell us much more.

CHAIR - If it doesn't, there's probably not much point tabling it.

Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate your interest and the trouble you've gone to in preparing the material.

Mr HOLDERNESS-RODDAM - I appreciate the opportunity to be able to present some of this to you and your colleagues.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.