

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY
15 OCTOBER 2008.**

Mr BARRY RAYMOND McDONALD, COLLISION RECONSTRUCTIONIST, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - Thank you for your submission, which we've been able to read. Please make any comments about your submission and then we would like to ask you questions.

Mr McDONALD - There is nothing specific. The reason for the additional evidence this morning is that this issue came to my notice on Monday when I was at Spreyton. I thought the illuminated sign was so much more visible than ordinary signs are and I know they cost more money than ordinary signs do.

CHAIR - Is the fencing, as you've mentioned in your submission, controversial as far as motorcyclists are concerned?

Mr McDONALD - Some people in the motorcycle lobby believe it could kill them, but although some may be very badly cut up or decapitated, because of the speeds they're going nothing is going to save them.

CHAIR - I think one of the objections I have to the type you mention, Brifen, is that it potentially slices the motorcyclists. There was a case that may be subject to a coronial inquiry. Has that finished?

Ms FORREST - I think it has.

CHAIR - It seems that there was excessive speed there.

Mr McDONALD - I have had secondary evidence that there was very high speed in that case.

CHAIR - Yes, it seems to have been the case.

Ms FORREST - As a collision reconstructionist with the information you have, what would have happened if that same cyclist had hit Armco railing, or some other type?

Mr McDONALD - He would have been catapulted across it, travelled some distance through the air and landed, depending on his speed, quite some distance away and from quite some height too. Instead of being stopped by that and his body cut up, his body would have stayed physically in one piece but I don't know whether he could survive anything crashing at that speed.

CHAIR - No. Do you favour that type of fencing, the Brifen?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. The main reason, and I've described it in here, is that if a car hits ordinary Armco fencing it bounces off it and is in the lane it was travelling in, with

vehicles coming behind or, if it's a side barrier, it bounces off across it and back into the path of oncoming traffic. Brifen fencing is different. At a conference we set up cars to crash into both types of fencing and saw that when a car hits the Brifen fencing, it grabs it which slows it down and holds it within the fencing.

CHAIR - What's your understanding of the use of that in European countries in particular, and whether they're moving away from that system or maintaining it?

Mr McDONALD - I don't know. I only know the Australian model.

CHAIR - Is that fairly standard in other States, to your knowledge?

Mr McDONALD - Yes, there's still a lot of Armco around. Where Armco exists I don't know of any situations where it's been replaced but there's a lot more Brifen fencing being installed than Armco.

CHAIR - Any questions on that subject?

Mr DEAN - Not on fencing; I think it's clear.

CHAIR - You also deal with the question of roadside furniture and point out that in Victoria that there is some requirement that there be no trees or other fixtures for 9 metres from the edge of the main surface but that is often breached. Do you know what the situation is in other States?

Mr McDONALD - No, I don't. I was in Victoria last week and it was brought up at conference.

CHAIR - It is the roadside furniture which often causes the serious injuries and fatalities. Because there is none on race tracks where the drivers are going over 200 kph when they lose control they usually are not injured as they don't come into contact with fixed objects.

Mr McDONALD - I have another example, and I know it'd be costly to implement throughout. I noticed when driving in the midlands the other day, somewhere between Oatlands and Tunbridge there was one section of electricity poles well inside the boundary fence of properties whereas a bit further on they are right on the road edge. As far as putting new Hydro equipment in, I know it is encroaching on people's private property, but get them further away from the road -

CHAIR - It would save lives.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Mr DEAN - Are you also saying that there could be some form of Armco railing or something around those pieces of furniture that are close to the road, and the poles and the trees?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. There are a lot of situations where this would be appropriate. Take for instance overpasses on more modern roads. They have put either Armco or Brifen fencing adjacent to the abutments of those overpasses.

There was an example in the United States many years ago where one of these overpasses, which was well off the road, had a lot of fatalities from vehicles crashing into it because it was unprotected. They put Brifen fencing there and in about eight to 10 years only one vehicle hit it. It is assumed that most of the others had been suicides because having put the fencing there the impacts stopped.

Ms FORREST - The matter of suicides is a very difficult area and in some cases very hard to determine, but in cases like that where is the decision made that it is suicide rather than a crash?

Mr McDONALD - It is very difficult to determine. A person who wants to go down that path does so for varied reasons - wanting to eliminate the stigma for their family, or insurance purposes. I investigated a couple of cases in the midlands which were not very far apart. One person had recently been charged with serious sexual offences and another one was under investigation by the police. They drove along a straight section of road, came to a truck and went straight in front of it. It was never completely established by the Coroner that it was suicide but given the prize, as I will call it, of the two people and their antecedents, there was a strong case that that was so. It was a straight section of road with no other vehicles, a heavy vehicle coming at them and they drove into the path of that vehicle.

Ms FORREST - Obviously there may be some cases where someone leaves a suicide note or something like that, but that is not your experience?

Mr McDONALD - No, in the ones that I have been involved with and others that I have heard of they wanted to disguise the suicide so there was no note or reference left. You also get people who are depressed. There was a woman on the Eastern Shore who was in the mental facility at Rokeby. She got in a car and drove to the abutment near Mornington that had safety rails on it but she drove into the middle of the road beyond the safety rails straight into the post. That was one that we could clearly identify as suicide in that she had taken a positive manoeuvre to avoid the safety rails and driven straight into the post.

CHAIR - How was that recorded, as a fatal accident? Is it in the statistics as a fatal accident?

Mr McDONALD - I am not sure whether the Coroner recorded it as a suicide, but I think more likely as a death by misadventure. This is going back about 25 years.

Ms FORREST - Would it still show up in the road crash statistics?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. Certainly the other two that I investigated would have been in the road statistics in that there was no positive evidence. In the lady's case I have just given, there was positive evidence but in the other two there was no positive evidence to eliminate them. These incidents do falsely increase the road toll.

CHAIR - Not long ago there was a fatal crash near St Peters Pass where apparently a 59-year-old man left a suicide note. Would that be recorded in the road trauma statistics as a fatal crash?

Mr McDONALD - Initially it would but I would assume that DIER would treat that similarly to a person who has a heart attack. If the person dies of a medical condition, that initially shows in the road toll. Then it is later corrected when it is determined. I would guess that that one would be same.

CHAIR - It is a fatality in a crash but if it is found to be a deliberate one it is still a fatality in a road crash but the practice is to remove it from those statistics if it is found to be suicide?

Mr McDONALD - With one rider: if it kills the other person we still have to complete it, yes.

Ms FORREST - You only count the other one?

Mr McDONALD - I am not sure what they would count - whether it would be one or two.

CHAIR - If there were not another person would it be counted as one?

Mr McDONALD - DIER would have to confirm it but I would presume not.

Ms FORREST - That is only after a coroner's report. A man, whose age I do not know, crashed outside the Burnie Hospital. His cause of death has probably been determined by now -

Mr McDONALD - I think it has, that one.

Ms FORREST - Probably, yes. It was thought he had some sort of medical condition. Where it happened you would think it would be hard to die from a crash there. In that particular case you are suggesting it originally would show up as a crash statistic but that could change if the coroner found that he died of a heart attack?

Mr McDONALD - It would not even go to a complete coroner's inquest in that once the post mortem report came in showing it was natural causes, the coroner would give a finding.

Ms FORREST - And at that point the statistics would be adjusted?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - We could confirm that with DIER.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that?

Mr HARRISS - Just an observation, Mr Chairman. Barry might give a view on it. We hear the term - and you have referred to it here - 'roadside furniture'. Is that trees and all sorts of other obstructions?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - Also, we should not refer to road accidents but rather to crashes. Why don't we bash it and say 'roadside hazards'?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. 'Roadside furniture' is a term that we in the collision reconstruction community developed at a conference a few years ago. It is probably an internal term with us. But 'roadside hazards' is probably a more appropriate term.

Mr HARRISS - DIER and everybody else refer to it that way. If we started to call it hazards it might focus the attention of some the authorities on getting rid of these hazards.

Mr McDONALD - And the public is certainly going to understand that better than the term 'roadside furniture', for sure.

Mr HARRISS - Wearing another hat, Barry, I am part of the Public Works Committee and we investigate and inquire into road reconstructions and so on. The committee has heard of occasions where, for so-called heritage purposes, significant trees are left when a road is being reconstructed or re-routed. What are your views on that?

Mr McDONALD - Wasn't there a soldiers' avenue or something somewhere recently? Or was that on the mainland?

Mr HARRISS - I can think of one on the Esk Highway a couple of years ago.

Ms FORREST - There is one on the Bass Highway. Heritage trees are left there too.

Mr HARRISS - There is one coming up at Granton. There is a big, old tree right on the corner near the bridge. You look at it and you think, hit it with the chainsaw, who cares? Seriously. It is right smack in the road reserve.

Mr McDONALD - I am not a conservationist. If, for heritage values it is considered essential to keep them there, at least protect them with Armco or Brifen fencing.

CHAIR - That happens between Snug and Margate or in that area. There is a row of trees. When I was on the Public Works Committee we dealt with that.

Mr HARRISS - Kingston and Margate, Don, yes. It was.

CHAIR - Quite a row of trees and there is protective barrier.

Mr McDONALD - Yes, once you have put in the Brifen or Armco fencing there, you are preventing the vehicles hitting it. I consider it is a reasonable compromise that goes towards road safety but at the same time protects the heritage value of that particular tree.

Mr HARRISS - You are more reasonable than I am.

Mr McDONALD - You would chop the tree down?

Mr HARRISS - Correct.

Mr McDONALD - I probably would too.

Ms FORREST - On highways such as the Murchison Highway and others into the west coast, you would have to put Armco or Brifen fencing the whole way in some areas because if you have to clear 9 metres back, particularly down the Lyell Highway heading down to Hobart through the World Heritage area, it presents a whole heap of challenges.

Mr McDONALD - Yes, as far as that principle goes. You said you were on the road committee didn't you, Mr Chair?

CHAIR - I was.

Mr McDONALD - The better roads are great for us; they get us there quicker, but you take the more winding roads, the west-coast roads. How many fatalities do you get on the west coast?

Ms FORREST - They are mostly tourists.

Mr McDONALD - I was at Queenstown - not in this job - as a detective for almost four years. In those four years there was not one road fatality on the west coast.

Ms FORREST - Because you have to concentrate when you drive.

Mr McDONALD - You have to concentrate on the winding roads.

CHAIR - It's the same as the Sideling on the way to Scottsdale.

Mr McDONALD - Yes. You are still going to get accidents there but -

Ms FORREST - If you have lower volumes of traffic that is another aspect, surely, because you get frustrated - drivers getting behind the campervans in the summer, getting them four or five in a row.

Mr McDONALD - Take our Midland and Bass highways - beautiful roads. I am guilty of it myself - yesterday I was driving back from Devonport -

Mr DEAN - The Chairman might not agree with you about the Midland.

Ms FORREST - The Bass Highway he would know.

CHAIR - Patches of it.

Mr McDONALD - Yesterday there was a truck and a campervan in front of me on the overtaking lane. I accelerated to get past them, just to make sure I got past them in that overtaking lane. There was I merging back into the traffic, a vehicle coming towards me, two vehicles closing at 220 kilometres plus - a very dangerous situation.

CHAIR - That is right. Would you favour a four-lane highway from Hobart to Launceston?

Mr McDONALD - With a permanent divider like the Brifen fencing they have put between here and the airport. A lot of people said that, as there is a great divide between the roads, there is no need for it.

CHAIR - There needs to be more.

Mr McDONALD - It is needed, yes. Once you separate the two directions of traffic you have not completely but virtually eliminated head-on collisions.

CHAIR - Very important.

Mr DEAN - We were talking about roadside hazards and Paul raised a couple of issues there. The country roads are a real issue. You would know better than I that in many of the accidents on country roads, death is caused through hitting a tree. My brother was one who lost his life in exactly that situation. We are advocating that there should be protection provided to the rural roads as well as the main roads. We need to clear those as well and it is not an easy thing.

Mr McDONALD - No, it is not. A big proportion of the roadside fatalities that I dealt with were single occupants in single vehicle crashes, in country areas late at night, the vehicle leaving the road and hitting either an electricity pole or a tree. There were other collisions but that was the predominant scenario.

Ms FORREST - What would be possible reasons for that? I have lived in the country and driven in the country and seen a couple of people wrap themselves around telegraph poles.

Mr McDONALD - Alcohol.

Ms FORREST - Well, various reasons. If those people had not actually hit the pole they would have just gone off into the paddock and unless there was a cow in the paddock that they had hit, which is a pretty serious business too, they would have just kept going and then ground to a halt. They would have been in trouble with the farmer and would have had to fix the fence, but they would possibly not have even been injured.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - It is only because that pole or that tree happened to be there. Unfortunately we had this young guy up in Forest who recently hit a black Angus cow at three or four in the morning on his way to work. You can't see a black Angus at night when there are no street lights.

Mr McDONALD - If there is no hazard there for them when they go into that paddock they are either, as you say, going to just grind to that halt or roll over. If the person is seat-belted and they roll over they have a lot better chance of surviving.

Ms FORREST - Particularly with airbags.

Mr McDONALD - Airbags might not come into play in a rollover. It is sudden deceleration that brings the airbags into play, but seatbelts certainly would help.

Mr DEAN - Barry, what is your position in relation to the fencing of our roads because many accidents are caused by people unfortunately trying to avoid hitting an animal. That has happened and it is still happening. A number of deaths have occurred that way. Do you believe, with your experience and background, that our roads should be fenced properly - that is, wire netting fencing to keep the animals off the roads to the best of our ability?

Mr McDONALD - It would be just too costly and the animals are still going to get there. I think that is more a matter of education. I suppose we all do it. I know do it - if I see an animal I tend to swerve.

Ms FORREST - At 'em! Unless it is a cow!

Laughter.

Mr McDONALD - Yes, but we have to get it into our mind that we don't swerve.

Mr DEAN - Well, Barry, can I clarify it a little? There are certain known areas on the Midland Highway which are prone to a lot of animals on the road. One is through the area just north of Oatlands; another one is at Conara, Epping Forest, where the road is lined with kangaroos just about every time you come through. Would you support the fencing of those notorious areas where animals are known to be?

Mr McDONALD - In theory, yes. But it is still somewhat of a cost thing and I don't know that it's going to still keep all the animals off the road.

Ms FORREST - If you only fenced those areas would you just be moving the problem?

Mr DEAN - No, because animals by nature inhabit certain areas; they do not move off just to get across a road.

Mr McDONALD - No, they go to mainly areas where there is a lot of vegetation, trees and the like, beside the road.

Mr DEAN - So they'll stay in their areas.

Mr McDONALD - I think the more feasible option is the educating them to your standard - if an animal is there, hit it.

Ms FORREST - That's part of the instruction those driving courses give; you don't swerve to miss an animal. It depends how big it is, I think.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - You try to brake and stop rather than swerve.

Mr McDONALD - Yes, well I invariably stop for echidnas and things like that, but I have hit other animals. It still does go through your mind to swerve, though, doesn't it? I think people have to be taught not to do so.

Mr DEAN - I'm probably going into another area, Mr Chairman - the speed limit. What is your view, Barry, about 110 kph versus 100 kph, which is a much-discussed subject at present?

Mr McDONALD - You reduce that speed and we are talking about people travelling at a closing speed of 200 kph, as opposed to 220 kph. At 200 kph you will still get a lot of fatalities but any reduction in speed will save lives. An example is the 50 kph speed limits in most residential areas - if that were applied to all residential areas, lives would be saved. People normally react in about 1.6 seconds to a perceived hazard so before they physically do anything it takes about 1.5 to 1.6 seconds to react to a perceived hazard. The slower you are going, the more distance you have to react before you start braking, swerving or taking other avoidance action. So any slower speed is going to be safer.

I went to Devonport the day before yesterday and came back yesterday. I travelled right on the limit of 110 kph - yes I crept over it a little bit - but if we had 100 kph limit, we would still get people creeping over it and you are still going to get a lot of fatalities, but any lower speed will give you more reaction time to that imminent danger.

Ms FORREST - I guess there comes a point in that discussion, then. I mean, you could say that everyone must drive at 60 kph on the Midland Highway -

Mr DEAN - We'll be reversing up the road before long!

Ms FORREST - That's right. This is the point though. The comment is that every reduction in speed will make a difference, but if you take that to the nth degree you would not be moving. I know that's not realistic, but where is the point of balance? Do you think that a reduction should be considered?

Mr McDONALD - I think it should be considered. I am not advocating completely that it be reduced. There are arguments that it be left at 110 kph, which is a convenience and a time argument for people. The argument to reduce it is a safety one. So where do you compromise between the two?

CHAIR - The other element is that if it is too slow and the distance is great people will doze off at the wheel, which they would not do if they were travelling faster.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - If the speed limit is reduced to 100 kph on the Midland Highway it is likely to add a whole six minutes to the trip from Hobart to Launceston.

Mr McDONALD - I have not done my maths but that sounds very much right.

Mr HARRISS - The takes account of the current 60 kph limits in the occasional town and of the fact that you might not get a chance to do 110 kph for most of the trip anyway. The difference is only six minutes.

Mr McDONALD - So it is a matter of leaving five minutes earlier if we did reduce the limit. That is a strong argument for reducing it. You have the other problem that a large percentage of the people who breach these rules will breach them by large amounts anyhow, no matter what the speed limit is. You will still have people who drive at 140, 150 or 160. There is a deterrent there if they get caught, but we are never going to eliminate them. The worst part about is that as well as harming themselves they are going to harm the poor innocent person coming towards them or crossing the road.

CHAIR - Any other questions on speed?

Mr DEAN - Yes. Barry, as an accident reconstructionist, in your position with the accidents that you have attended and identified speed as a factor, what are some of the other things that you advocate we ought to look at changing in that area? Are there any other issues? That is a pretty tough question for you.

Mr McDONALD - No, it is not. In the period that I was there I attended more than 200 fatal accidents which involved about 226 fatalities and the three predominant features of those collisions were speed, alcohol and inexperience. There was not the same testing for drugs then. Drugs probably posed a problem but there was not the same testing for them. In several collisions that I was involved in - and Paul might remember the one at Cygnet where four young boys were killed - all three factors were involved. Speed, alcohol and inexperience. The driver was 17 or 18 years old. Two brothers, a cousin and another friend were all killed in the one accident.

Ms FORREST - Do you think that is an issue that should be considered - the number of passengers in a car with inexperienced drivers? What is your view on that?

Mr McDONALD - Certainly it should be considered. Take the young teenager who has just got the P-plates. If they have a lot of mates in the car they are going to be showing off. I think I am a little bit past being a teenager but -

Ms FORREST - But you can remember, can't you?

Laughter.

Mr McDONALD - Yes I can. As teenagers we wanted to show off in front of our mates and things like that. If you have not got that carload of mates with you until you are more experienced, you won't be tempted to show off or to egg on. The zero alcohol is brilliant. I did one fatality over near Clarence High School, where a car went off a cliff. The last words of the girl who was killed in the car were 'Go faster, Joe'. The car went over a hill and over the cliff. There was a girl in the back seat egging the driver on and in fact she was the person that died in the accident.

Ms FORREST - I have teenage kids, three of them with licences, who go out to parties. One of the kids is about to turn 18 so the whole eighteenth birthday thing is happening all around at the moment because all his mates are that age as well. Obviously they want to

drink and they want a designated driver and they want to go together because it means that only one person out of the five friends has to refrain from drinking.

Mr McDONALD - That is a good counter to the argument I have just put up. When you are talking about a designated driver, it means that four or five others in the group can drink. It does not avoid that egging on but it is a counter to the argument that I have just put up.

Ms FORREST - If that person, in their mind, is the designated driver then they are less likely to listen to their drunken mates in the back, we hope.

Mr McDONALD - Very true.

Ms FORREST - I am not sure how it works in reality. That is always the question, someone asking who the designated driver is.

Mr McDONALD - That counters what I have just put.

Mr DEAN - Barry, what have you seen in the area of speed, alcohol and inexperience that you think we ought to be changing or to be looking at to try to reduce deaths occurring through those factors? Are there some strategies that you have thought about or put forward?

Mr McDONALD - As far as speed goes, the police certainly are undertaking very good speed measures although I would question some of the locations for cameras. When cameras were first brought in they were supposedly for black spots.

CHAIR - An undertaking was given that they would be confined to those black spots.

Mr DEAN - Is the Bridgewater Bridge not a black spot?

Mr McDONALD - I can give an example closer to home. Going out of Sorell towards Port Arthur, quite often there is a car on the hill. I have never known a fatality there but on the section of highway between the Hobart Airport and the Tasmania Golf Club, which has now been reduced to 80 kph, over the last 30 years there have probably been 30 fatalities and I have never seen a speed camera there. The police strategy of enforcement and deterrence is great, both in regard to speed and alcohol. The licence procedure for -

Mr DEAN - Do you believe that the alcohol limit should be zero for any driver?

Mr McDONALD - No, we would exceed it. I can give the example of Monday night when I took a friend to Devonport to have an operation. We went into Devonport for tea and watched the cricket. I had driven up, so I had a few beers and spirit drinks at the hotel. We were going back to Latrobe and he was driving. I said to him on the way back that I felt all right to drive although I am sure I would have been over the limit and I certainly was not going to drive in that condition. I do not know that we should reduce it any further. If you started reducing it would eliminate the reasonable person going home from work, stopping at the pub and behaving -

CHAIR - Responsibly.

Mr McDONALD - Responsibly by just having an end-of-day beer with his mates.

Ms FORREST - In your experience, when alcohol has been a factor in a crash, is the driver normally well over the limit or just a little over? I guess it comes back to finding out where people are impaired

Mr McDONALD - I am trying to remember figures that far back but there were certainly a lot of high readings and readings that were just over the limit.

Ms FORREST - Were they still involved in crashes?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. An example of a reading is one involving a pedestrian killed this side of Buckland. The driver was schoolteacher. His reading 0.06 and there was no blame attached to the driver as far as our investigation went. In fact, he was over the limit for alcohol and convicted although the person killed was a drunk who stepped out into the middle of the road.

CHAIR - How was that recorded? Was it recorded that alcohol was a contributing factor even though it was not?

Mr McDONALD - The only time that alcohol received a reference was when the driver was charged with exceeding the breathalyser test and appeared in court for that.

Ms FORREST - Didn't you say the pedestrian was drunk?

Mr McDONALD - The pedestrian was drunk.

Ms FORREST - That means it would have been an alcohol-related death then because he was drunk.

CHAIR - Although it was not recorded that the driver was affected.

Mr McDONALD - No.

Mr DEAN - I think you have partly covered inexperience in your answer to Ruth about the fact that there ought not to be large numbers of youths in cars with inexperienced drivers. Are there any other strategies in that area that we ought to be looking at?

Mr McDONALD - If you can divorce speed and alcohol from the inexperienced, give them the opportunity to learn and take away those two factors they are going to develop into more responsible drivers and, at a later stage, be able to handle at 0.05 speeds of 80 kph, because they have developed that experience. That is while those two things are apart. Once you get the chance to get them together you have a very dangerous cocktail.

Ms FORREST - Should we be allowing learner drivers and P-platers to drive at the speed limit?

Mr McDONALD - No.

Ms FORREST - Why not? You're saying they are inexperienced and they need to get experience in all settings -

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - so why do you say no?

Mr McDONALD - We need to keep them at that slower speed where they're at less risk until they have developed the experience. Having developed that experience and confidence in avoidance manoeuvres, seeing hazards in front of them and, let's say, driving on automatic - which I presume we all do at times - then let them develop into those areas of higher speeds and low amounts of alcohol.

Ms FORREST - But if they've never driven at 110 kph on the open road under supervision and they drive at 80 kph and learn how a car handles at that speed, then one day they are allowed to drive at 110 kph and they've never done it.

Mr DEAN - Yes, today 80 kph and tomorrow 110 kph.

Ms FORREST - How do you reconcile that? Obviously cars handle differently at those speeds.

Mr McDONALD - I'm in favour of the present model. I can see where you're coming from but with the present model they have the L period at 80 kph, they have their first P-plate of I think 12 months when they physically display the P-plates, at 80 kph. At that stage they should have had two years' experience, with a certain number of hours under supervised driving and whatever hours they have in the second year. Then they are going to have a lot more confidence to deal with the dangers involved at those higher speeds.

Ms FORREST - But they've never driven at that speed.

Mr McDONALD - No. I think you're suggesting that they should be allowed to drive at that speed with supervision.

Ms FORREST - I am wondering whether that is the way it should be.

Mr McDONALD - No, I don't think so.

Mr DEAN - When you attend accidents and put forward the reasons in relation to the accident, where you have identified the road as a problem, such as the camber or whatever has been an issue in the accident, you put that in your report which goes through the system. To your knowledge, are those issues acted on fairly quickly or not? What is the position with DIER? Do they take your advice?

Mr McDONALD - I am talking about seven years down the track and I don't know what the current situation is. If there was a roadside feature that was a problem, sometimes they were very slow to move but they always took it into account. One problem area - and it is still a problem - is when you come up to an intersection when there is a 'Keep Left' sign and a median island. That 'Keep Left' or 'Give Way' sign is invariably in a position

where you are looking to the right and it is blocking your view. There are a couple of areas where that occurred, I pointed it out and they were changed. You have a look next time you come up to a 'Give Way', there is that sign blocking your view of the traffic to the right.

CHAIR - You have dealt with our term of reference 2 and that is the adequacy of the current data collection and the fact that Tasmanian police are not trained to do reconstruction work. You said that this had been commented on together with Western Australia as lacking very badly in that area. We welcome your comments amplifying this because we are concerned to know what lack of adequacy there is in data collection because it is very important in road safety, determining the reasons for accidents and what measures should be taken to try to reduce them, to have very adequate data collection. How would you describe the current practice in the police force as far as that is concerned or the process of collecting data?

Mr McDONALD - Are you referring to providing data to DIER or the investigative data?

CHAIR - Investigative data apportioning the factors that have led to crashes.

Mr McDONALD - I am with you now.

CHAIR - That is what you are referring to here in your submission.

Mr McDONALD - Firstly, I was at a conference last week and when I said that I would be giving evidence, I received the okay to provide the complete paper. I gave it to you. I do not know if it has been put into the papers. It is quite okay for that whole paper to go in.

If you read through that paper you will see the difficulty that there was in convincing administrators and senior police administrators that collision reconstruction is a science, not a magic formula. Ivan, as a former police commander, I do not know what your mindset was at the time but I certainly struck that obstruction from senior officers' thinking of 'just go out and do the accident and we do not want any of this'.

Mr DEAN - You do not want me to comment on it really, do you?

Laughter.

Mr McDONALD - None of this namby-pamby science. I even had a situation where in the south of the State at one stage Constable Shepherd and myself were the only two trained reconstructionists. We were developing training and we were going to a course in Newcastle, a two-week course conducted by the University of North Florida in Newcastle. Just before the course our direct supervisor said to me, 'One of you can go only, the other one is not to go. We need a trained investigator to stay in the State'. I said, 'This is an opportunity for us to develop our skills. We both need to go. Other officers who we have trained in the field can gather data for us. We can work on that data when we get back'. 'No, you are not going'. I will admit to this committee I directly broke a command from a senior officer. We both did go, even with that command. That was the attitude of administrators and I think you can see in my comments about the three courses in 14 or 15 years -

CHAIR - And two officers having to pay for themselves in one of them.

Mr McDONALD - Yes. It was a thing that was and I assume is still not high in the Police department's priorities.

Ms FORREST - In regard to that, when the data is collected about the causes of a crash and the police make the assessments, are you inferring that they probably are not experienced enough or qualified adequately to fully assess the crash scene to say that inattention was an issue here, or alcohol was or speed was or whatever?

Mr McDONALD - They are certainly not in a position to reconstruct the accident for the court - in other words, calculate the speeds of the vehicles, the positions of the vehicles on the roads, who was on the wrong side of the road, which is all vital data to obtain the convictions in serious criminal matters. In Tasmania Police at the moment they have two people - I have long left; I was qualified as an expert in the Supreme Court several times - that have been qualified by the courts, Sergeant Davis in Launceston who is now back in accident investigation after quite a period - he was forcibly taken out of there - and Sergeant Shepherd in Hobart who is working as a general duties sergeant in Glenorchy.

CHAIR - Wasting his talent in this respect.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

CHAIR - You obviously regard it as a serious lack of expertise in our force and Mr Axup -

Mr McDONALD - Yes, A-x-u-p. He is not a foreigner, he is an Australian actually.

CHAIR - puts us in the same category as Western Australia as being the only two States that are lacking in this?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

CHAIR - What training do police have in the other States to qualify them to make these assessments?

Mr McDONALD - An example I can give currently, because I have done two recent courses with them, is the ACT police. They have developed a lot since that paper was written. They have a squad of about 14 people and every year they put them through a course. Most of the courses are run by IPTM which is an adjunct of the University of North Florida which is one of three institutes in the United States that concentrates on accident investigation. There are no universities in Australia that do it now. Monash did it for a while but there are no Australian universities.

The ACT police have a turnover of staff but of all their staff - I was with some of them last week - there is only one who has only recently joined them that has not done the basic course - that is, data gathering - and he will certainly be on the next course. Most of them have done motorcycle courses, heavy vehicle courses, pedestrian courses and advanced reconstruction courses. I have not done the heavy vehicle course, I have done most of the others, but they are similar courses to those I have done. Apart from

Sergeant Davis and Sergeant Shepherd, who is working at Glenorchy in uniform, no-one in Tasmania Police has these competencies and people are going to continue to offend and get away with, in some cases, that offending because there is not professional data presented to the courts.

CHAIR - What overall effect do you feel that that has on the efforts to improve road safety measures in Tasmania?

Mr McDONALD - The conviction and sentencing of offenders by the Supreme Court for serious offences has a deterrent effect on other potential offenders and because it is well publicised, the public become aware of it. Not all of them are going to take that advice, you are still going to get others, but they are going to have in the back of their mind, 'If I continue with this errant behaviour, there's the potential that I could end up in jail like him'.

Mr DEAN - It is a real deterrent to people out there who know and realise that there are officers in Tasmania Police with the absolute expertise to accurately reconstruct an accident scene and to give accurate assessments and particulars and details in relation to it.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

CHAIR - How many officers in Tasmania do you feel should have that capacity and be trained to that effect?

Mr McDONALD - At the moment in the south of the State in the two districts there are two officers performing accident investigation, in the north there are two officers and in the north-west there are two officers. They, as a minimum, should have those skills, together with others that may come to relieve and others who may be interested in moving into the area. You then have a pool to take over from those people who move on with promotions or leave the force. That would be a police matter as to what sized pool. But certainly, at every scene attended, there should be at least one person with those skills.

Ms FORREST - Are these skills ever brought in because we are lacking them in the State?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Do you get an expert seconded from another State?

Mr McDONALD - Yes, I investigated a motorcycle fatality recently in the capacity for the MAIB and Mr Ellis had brought in Sergeant Peter Bellion from Victoria to investigate it for the police there was not anyone here who was in a position to investigate that.

CHAIR - So, Mr Ellis, being the DPP?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Would you have any idea of the cost of doing that?

Mr McDONALD - That was not very dear in that Victorian Police Department did not charge.

Ms FORREST - So if that happens there is no incentive for Tasmania to train their own, would you suggest?

CHAIR - That would have been very good value for money.

Mr McDONALD - That one certainly was. The only reason in that case was that Mr Ellis saw a deficiency and asked for an outside opinion. I have heard a couple of times that the police have been looking to ask me but someone up there does not like me and that has been blocked. You can see why I am giving evidence here today - not many of them would like it.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that or on any other topic?

Mr DEAN - I just want to make the point, Mr Chairman, the reconstruction of the accident on the Kingston Road - in Mr Harriss's area - where the young motorcyclist was killed. At the recent coronial inquiry the accurate reconstruction of that scene, as I understand it, saw the conviction the offender in that instance?

Mr McDONALD - He was convicted in the Supreme Court and went to jail. I spoke to the two officers that gave evidence - and I should never criticise the Supreme Court - but I do not know how they got their evidence in. Their evidence was very accurate but they had not done any courses.

Mr DEAN - The police?

Mr McDONALD - No. They had picked it up from probably things we had taught them and the courts allowed them to give the evidence.

CHAIR - Any further questions?

Mr HARRISS - I will take Barry back to the matters that he raised with regard to the challenge of reducing blood alcohol readings to zero for any driver. You testified earlier, Barry, that the reaction time was 1.6 seconds?

Mr McDONALD - That is for a sober, rational person.

Mr HARRISS - How then can we sustain any defence to allow any alcohol reading at all if alcohol affects that 1.6 seconds? My first question is, does alcohol in the bloodstream affect the 1.6 seconds and, if it does, how can we sustain any defence of this position?

Mr McDONALD - Yes. For a start, the alcohol reading in a person's body is affected by body size. It is the effect of alcohol on the brain that matters. At low readings, yes, it still has an effect but that effect is minimal. In the perfect world, yes, no alcohol. I am not going to say no alcohol, but in the perfect world that should be the case..

Mr HARRISS - Is there any scientific support for the increase in that 1.6 seconds?

Mr McDONALD - Yes there is. I have read the tables and as your alcohol reading increases there is a multiplier effect. Doubling the alcohol reading from 0.05 to 1.0 does not mean just doubling the reaction time. It is exponential. The higher the reading, the much greater the risk.

Mr HARRISS - So it is an easy process then to do the sums between the increased reaction time at various speeds as to the effect on striking an object and that object may be a pedestrian.

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - Could it well be contended then that there may be a strong case to ban any alcohol reading for any driver.

Mr McDONALD - There is a case but I am a practicalist - is that a word? I think we would cause too much social disruption and too much angst among the more general law-abiding community if that were ever brought in.

Mr HARRISS - Don't injuries and deaths cause that same social problem.

Mr McDONALD - Yes, they do.

Mr HARRISS - How do we strike the balance?

Mr McDONALD - I am not going to put the figure on it. A reasonable balance to me I consider is the present reading of 0.05. I say that as a lay person who socially drinks myself.

Mr DEAN - A limit of 0.03 would allow probably one drink only and people would know that.

Ms FORREST - It depends on your body weight though.

Mr McDONALD - Yes it does.

Mr DEAN - Would you say there is an argument for reducing it to say 0.03?

Mr McDONALD - I will not quantify it. I will leave that to you people.

CHAIR - Are you aware that some people have a theory that a small quantity of alcohol makes drivers more alert?

Mr McDONALD - Yes, that has been argued too. Alcohol is a depressant, but I have seen that argument in relation to a very small quantity. I do not know that there is any scientific backing for it, but I have certainly seen that argument addressed.

CHAIR - I have not heard that advanced in recent times but I am aware that there are those who have put forward that theory.

Mr DEAN - The other issue I was going to raise is this: what is your position in relation to drugs in the body - a list of drugs and prescription drugs? Do you have a position on that?

Mr McDONALD - Firstly, detection of drugs is a lot harder than detection and quantifying the effect of alcohol. But certainly any drugs in the body that have similar effects to alcohol - depressants or drugs to buoy up the person - are going to affect their driving behaviour. As to the practicalities of examining them for it, I know there have been advances since I left the police force, but it is the same problem as alcohol and there are a lot more drugs in our community than there ever were before. In my days as a teenager drugs were not heard of. It is now a real problem both generally socially in the community and affecting drivers.

Mr DEAN - So the zero tolerance in that regard is acceptable for drivers?

Mr McDONALD - Yes.

CHAIR - We are over time, so would you like to make any closing comments Mr McDonald?

Mr McDONALD - No thank you. The only closing comment I would want to make is the one I used to close my paper. I, in theory, would love to see our road toll fall to zero so that no family loses a loved one. Over the course of 20 years I saw the effect on families and a big proportion of the deceased in accidents that I investigated were teenagers or people in their early twenties. All of a sudden, the family is faced with the police knocking on the door, and their kid with their whole life in front just doesn't exist any more. That is cruel.

CHAIR - A tragic waste. Thank you very much. We do appreciate your valued contribution.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

**Mr STEPHEN ALAN RICHARDSON, SALES MANAGER EURO CENTRAL CARS
WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED**

CHAIR - Obviously you have an interest in road safety and we appreciate the fact that you have come to talk to us, especially on items 3 and 5 but you are not restricted to those.

Mr RICHARDSON - Thank you very much. I have had two submissions to the committee, one on the proposal for zero blood alcohol for all drivers and the second for a bounty for older cars to reduce the age of the vehicle fleet in Tasmania. I would like to talk about the zero blood alcohol concept first. There are a couple of things I would like to put on the table up front. First, a proposal for zero blood alcohol would affect me personally. At the moment I am prepared to have a drink and drive home, assuming that I am under the 0.05 limit -

CHAIR - Assuming that you are under the 0.05 limit?

Mr RICHARDSON - Assuming that I am and that I have taken some care to do my best job to judge that. I am not coming with an agenda to eliminate alcohol for any reasons other than I see it as a genuine safety issue. I believe the zero blood alcohol idea for all drivers has the potential to be the next silver bullet in road safety in Tasmania. Historically we have seen the two major initiatives of the introduction of compulsory seatbelts in cars and then the introduction of 0.05 limit coupled with random breath-testing.

I do not have the numbers, which are publicly available, of definite reductions in serious injuries and fatalities post the introduction of those two initiatives, which are widely known as the silver bullets of road safety. We hear continuously calls for the next silver bullet and what it will be, yet all we see in action is a continued effort at focusing on things that have been worked on over a long period of time, such as our demerit point system, our speed limits, various manners of enforcement, but nothing that advances to the next stage of how to eliminate the factors that increase the risk of a collision or that could result in serious injury or a fatality.

I have looked at this from a risk perspective. To put some structure around that, every time we get in a car and drive we increase the risk of having a collision with another moving car. Unfortunately, as human beings we are responsible for the decisions that we make as we drive, so the process is not automated and there is a risk every time we drive. If we were to eliminate the risk of speed we would have to eliminate automobiles altogether. The reason we have the automobile is that we are not prepared to walk, so we have to have some tolerance of risk around a moving car. That is why we put speed limits in place. The speed limit is 100 kph on the open road, 50 kph around town, with road signs to make exceptions to those rules.

I believe that while we tolerate that risk of speed we also have to tolerate consequences of that risk, and they will be collisions. Those collisions will from time to time result in injuries, and they will from time to time result in fatalities. On that same basis the idea of having zero fatalities and zero injuries on roads is not a practical goal to set while we have vehicles that move. Measuring of the risk of speed can be done quite accurately. We are able to see a vehicle on a road and set a risk that we are prepared to accept as a speed limit. The driver of the vehicle is able to accurately measure how close they are to

that maximum. Enforcement agencies are able very accurately and instantly to detect breaches of that. The risk that we are prepared to tolerate in relation to speed is measurable, enforceable and practical and easy for everyone involved in taking that risk.

The driver of the car knows how fast he is travelling and whether he is under, over or on the limit as does the person enforcing that limit or other people on the road who may see it being breached or going at different speeds. On the same basis while we can see need to travel at a speed and accept that there is a risk involved in doing that, applying that same principle to a driver having alcohol in their system really supports the argument for why we tolerate that risk. The current limit for an open licence driver is 0.05. There are already a number of categories of drivers who are banned from having any alcohol in their systems - young and inexperienced drivers, drivers of commercial vehicles and heavy vehicles, drivers who have been banned from having alcohol for offences in relation to alcohol, and people in breach of other regulations such as driving unregistered motor vehicles or driving while unlicensed. These people are all banned from having alcohol in their system, as is the driver of a motor vehicle. I do not know what the proportion of those drivers on the road at any one stage would be but I would think that that would be a measurable number.

People who do not fit into those categories are allowed to have a limit of 0.05, that is 5 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. That limit is present in 35 countries around the world at the moment, which is the majority of countries that have blood alcohol limits. The 0.05 can be accurately measured by enforcement agencies but it cannot be accurately measured by the driver. The driver of a motor vehicle or any person who consumes alcohol is always taking a guess at what their blood alcohol limit has become as a result of the amount of liquor that they have consumed.

That 0.05 is a number that historically has been worked out as a line at which response times and the capacity to observe and avoid a collision is within another risk position for us. As a society we have said that at 0.05 we accept that your reaction times will be slower but that you still should have suitable reaction times to avoid a collision or to respond and brake or steer away. However, 0.05 affects different people in different ways. It affects the same person in a different way on a different day. The capacity for the brain to cope with any amount of alcohol varies from day to day. It varies from individual to individual. The amount of alcohol that a person takes into their system will also vary from day to day to get to that limit. It is not a measurable risk. The driver is unable to say, 'I've had two beers this afternoon; they were light beers, so I should be right to drive home.' In theory he should be able to; in practice those two beers after a very long day where you've missed lunch and have been fairly stressed and think you'll have a couple before you go home may be the two that aren't metabolised as well as if you had had your lunch and were feeling fit and healthy. We are not able to measure that in a practical manner, short of having a device that allows us to accurately test and find that we are in a certain range, and there are other issues around that.

I believe the simplest thing to do is to put a blanket ban on alcohol for all drivers. That way you are eliminating a risk that we don't have to take. If you ask the same question: why would we tolerate the risk of alcohol in drivers, there is no rational answer to that. There are plenty of emotive ones but nothing practical and rational to say that we should tolerate it. It is proved that alcohol is a factor in a lot of collisions in Tasmania. It doesn't need to be in any driver's system. We already educate communities and society

on how to handle having a drink - designated drivers or staying at home. Those education programs are already in place. It's possible to extend exactly what we are doing today in enforcing the 0.05 limit to make it 0.00 with very little expense or change in the infrastructure or even public education around it because we are already doing it. If we eliminate alcohol completely from the roads we have the opportunity to eliminate it as a cause of collisions.

Mr DEAN - With this 0.00 limit, I think there is already a calculated error adjustment provided in the reading of alcohol rates, and the calculation is point something of a per cent. If you had 0.00 we need to obviously bring that into the equation as well because alcohol can be found in foods and a number of things other than the alcohol that is drunk.

Mr RICHARDSON - The current technology that we use to measure blood alcohol is not perfectly accurate. The blood test is the only completely accurate way to measure blood alcohol. The reality of a driver being at 0.01 in the way that alcohol is metabolised through the system is that at a roadside check finding someone at 0.01 it is unlikely that the person would end up being prosecuted after breath analysis, depending on when their last drink had been. That's mainly because alcohol peaks two hours after your last drink. Most people don't understand that but it continues to be metabolised into your blood for two hours and then it starts to reduce in a linear fashion on an hourly rate after that time.

For someone who has other factors that affect breath-testing devices, and the roadside breath test is not as accurate as a breath analysis, there would need to be some operational method of handling whether that was an alcohol-related thing or not. I believe that is already in place; policemen are doing that practically at the side of the road. Even at a 0.06 or 0.07 reading they will let the driver wait for 10 minutes to ensure there's no mouth alcohol that's affecting their reading before they actually give them another test and then decide to proceed to breath analysis. So, those factors of handling the minor or the suggestion of detection are already in place as well.

CHAIR - Any other questions on this topic?

Ms FORREST - I hear the arguments you are putting and the risk-based approach is an interesting approach to take. When there are P-platers, for example, who are already on zero and they have the higher crash statistics once they get off their learners onto their Ps, does that defeat your argument in any way?

Mr RICHARDSON - It doesn't because the collisions that those P-platers are having - there would be a proportion of them that are alcohol related but a lot of them are actually related to the risks of speed and poor observation.

Unfortunately I was involved in a collision last night on the way home with a P-plater in peak hour traffic who ran into the back of my car. It is unbelievable. The police attended, we were all 0.00 blood alcohol but as he hit me I saw him in the rear view mirror and just managed to hardly damage my car while his was a write-off. He was doing about 60 kilometres an hour through Franklin Square and just ran clean into the back of me. It was a freak event but alcohol was not a factor. Inexperience may have been, certainly poor observation was and, as with every single collision that ever happens, speed was a factor, and inappropriate speed for the situation.

To answer your question, I think the inexperienced drivers have a higher risk just from the fact that they are younger, they consider themselves immortal to some degree, and inexperience affects their ability to drive.

Ms FORREST - I can see that in the mornings the police will be out in force with their breath test getting people on their way to work, which is probably because if 0.00 is your limit and you know that it is. If you had a celebration that went to 2 a.m. and then you are going to work at 7 or 8, you could still have some alcohol in your blood. How do people assess that? You talk about the difficulties in measuring alcohol levels, and alcohol consumption affects me differently on different days, it affects people of different sexes and body weight differently. Would that open up a whole new set of problems for morning drivers?

Mr RICHARDSON - It would to the extent that more drivers of a morning may be exposed to the risk of prosecution but at the same time we already have police doing morning enforcement looking for people who are over 0.05.

Mr DEAN - You have caught a few too.

Ms FORREST - I have been breath-tested in the morning - not in this job but previously on the way to work.

Mr RICHARDSON - If you had your last drink at 2 o'clock in the morning and you had reached the level of, say 0.2 and fell into bed, at 4 o'clock you would reach your maximum of about 0.22. The alcohol comes out of your system at about 0.02 an hour while you are asleep. If you leave for work at 6 o'clock you are still going to be 0.1 so you are at just as great a risk under the current legislation as you would be with a zero enforcement and you are still just as dangerous, if not more, to drivers on the road because you are not considering yourself a risk, you are just wishing you could get that coffee, so your mindset is different as well, first thing in the morning.

Mr DEAN - I was going to move into the second submission in relation to the vehicles of 10 years and older. I have read with interest your comment in relation to the bounty if a car is more than 10 years old. The difficulty you have there is that it really targets more the person who is financially burdened already. It is normally the persons in the lower socioeconomic group that will have a vehicle that is older than 10 years; some of their vehicles are 15 to 20 years old. I read in your submission what you are saying should happen there. They should be tested every 12 months, I think you are saying, after a certain period of time, so there would be a financial burden on those people who could probably least afford that sort of an expense. Could you address that?

Mr RICHARDSON - That is where the difficulty is. I suppose this submission would not be popular in my industry, but seeing the cars that are on the road, seeing cars that are practically commercially worthless that are still registered on our roads, driven primarily by people who are - you are absolutely right, Mr Dean - in lower socioeconomic areas and unfortunately more exposed to the dangers of older vehicles, the concept of the bounty really is to give people that are driving around in old and unroadworthy cars an incentive to take the money, to surrender the car and get it off the road, recycle it, do whatever happens to it to get it off the road, but to give them a quantity of money beyond

what their car is most probably worth to find something better. As to how you actually then get them into a newer vehicle, how that is managed, I do not have the answer.

You see these cars on the road. Ten years might not be the exact right number but Tasmania does have very old cars. There are still cars on the road that are 20 to 25 years old being used on a day-to-day basis. They are the ones that we see that are broken down on the side of the road. They are the ones that we see that smoke, that leak oil. You look at them and think, 'How can that car still be on the road?' But we do nothing. As long as those people renew their registration every six months or 12 months, we do nothing to actively keep those vehicles in a safe condition.

Ms FORREST - There is another aspect of it too. The financial wherewithal of our new drivers, young kids that have licences, is often limited to the older cars. They are the ones without the safety features, without the reliability that a newer car would have, and they have the inexperience and the factors that put them at risk obviously. It would be great if young drivers could be put into newer cars with all the features that we are now seeing.

In the used car market what sort of impact would it have getting rid of all these old bombs, for want of a better phrase, and there are an awful lot of them in my electorate, I know; you see them everywhere. Getting those out of the marketplace, what would that do to the second-hand dealers and the prices that would be required for the lower socioeconomic people I am referring to getting into a vehicle and these young people who may rely on a vehicle for work?

Mr RICHARDSON - I suppose in the used car trade there is an old adage that everything is worth \$500.

Ms FORREST - Depending on where you are.

Mr RICHARDSON - Everything is worth some money.

Ms FORREST - Scrap.

Mr RICHARDSON - The fact of the matter is that it is bought, it is traded, whether it is done privately or whether it is done through dealers or how it is done. From a dealer perspective, I think they would be quite happy to see this come in, especially for the very old cars. Cars that are worth more than \$2 000 would still be actively traded, assuming they could be reconditioned to the new standard.

A lot of the bombs that come in are a problem for the trade because they are hard to sell on, there is an ethical element of should we or shouldn't we because clearly it is not safe. From my own personal experience in the last 24 hours, I can tell you I would have been really happy if that 1991 Corolla last night had had anti-lock brakes because he might have had some chance of not running into my car. I did not set that up but it just seems to have happened right there on the spot.

Ms FORREST - You said that one option was testing the vehicles every year. Do you think the cost incurred with that should be borne by the Government so that the Government

takes responsibility for getting these unroadworthy or old cars off the road or should it be the car owner? Who should it be?

Mr RICHARDSON - I have said here it should be the car owner, in reality, because I think if you have a bounty and you have the car kept going, you are getting a double opportunity there that may not be fair to the rest of society that has cars that are newer and safer. It is most probably the case that someone has a car and they decide, 'I need to get this car to pass the inspection' and it is over 10 years' old. It does a shaker test, which we do with trucks and commercial vehicles to ensure that brakes, suspension, steering are all operating correctly. We do an emissions test to make sure that the vehicle emissions are at the standard of the day. Once the car has been brought up to that level of roadworthiness, maintaining it there should not be as expensive as the first time that it is brought back up. But, if it has not been done in 10 years, that first time round there is going to be some expense to that.

CHAIR - What effect do you think these older vehicles have on road-crash statistics?

Mr RICHARDSON - I would think that they are disproportionate in their representation in serious injury and fatality collisions but I do not have the number.

CHAIR - We had evidence yesterday that in New South Wales an assessment was made and the effect of older vehicles or the condition of vehicles on road crashes was virtually nil - imperceptible, I think was the word used or something similar to that. Do you have any comment on that?

Mr RICHARDSON - That could mean I am completely wrong.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - That belies your experience last night, though, doesn't it?

CHAIR - A similar result came from the road safety section of the University of South Australia 20 years ago. I remember when we had another committee on road safety the experts there said that the condition of the vehicles had virtually no impact on road-crash statistics.

Mr RICHARDSON - On the flip side of that, we see the RAC and a lot of the road safety agencies now are talking about the virtues of electronic stability control and its capacity to allow a driver to actively avoid a collision and the life-saving benefits of that technology in motor vehicles. Older cars do not have any of those technologies that are in today's cars. An ESC or ESP, or whatever you would like to call the stability control systems, are now available in 13 990 entry-level new cars. In 10 years' time when those cars are 10 years old and that technology is out on the road, we may be able to see some difference because there is just more of the technology out there. It was interesting hearing the end of Mr McDonald's submission when he talked about where agencies are putting the reason for the collision and how they are analysing it. I know last night that I would have been satisfied if the policeman said he was not paying attention because he was not. I could see that in my rearview mirror. My eyes were bigger than his. I do not think the policeman would have looked at the car or reported in any way that this car was

incapable of avoiding that collision. He has just looked at the driver and said this driver - and the driver is absolutely at fault, especially from my perspective -

Laughter.

CHAIR - He probably was too.

Mr RICHARDSON - He's locked up his wheels, he's lost control of his car. That was all because he wasn't paying attention in the first place.

CHAIR - That's right.

Ms FORREST - He wasn't looking ahead, particularly, otherwise he would have seen you.

Mr RICHARDSON - That's right.

Ms FORREST - That is one of the skills that we are told is not taught to the learner drivers - spatial awareness. They are taught how to pass the driving test. Do you have any views on our current driver training - the learner driver and provisional driver programs and even the testing process?

Mr RICHARDSON - My dad is nearly 70 years old. He knew how to ride a horse and drive a cart and he taught me how to drive. I have no idea how to drive a cart but was he the right bloke to teach me to drive a car? I think we rely heavily, still, on people who don't have the experience. I haven't had a prang for - I don't remember the last one -

Mr DEAN - Not since last night.

Laughter.

Mr RICHARDSON - Until last night. I might put myself and say, 'Oh look I'm a good driver, I haven't been involved in a collision. It doesn't mean that -

Mr DEAN - You haven't caused many!

Mr RICHARDSON - It doesn't mean there hasn't been carnage behind me!

I think that educating drivers and getting mentality for drivers right is just such a tough field to tackle. I have some opinions about it, but -

CHAIR - Do you think all learner drivers should undertake some compulsory course where they receive advice about the correct way to drive, how to avoid risks and what to do in particular situations such as skids?

Mr RICHARDSON - I think that should be done in schools.

CHAIR - Only in schools?

Mr RICHARDSON - It should be started in schools and completed once they can actually get out on the road in cars. The more we can get a driver's head right in terms of

understanding the risk and managing it while they're on the road, that is probably at least the equal of teaching them the practical skills of driving the car.

Ms FORREST - So, do you think generally young people, generation-wise, understand risk? I mean, what you're talking about is a risk-based approach. You're saying that there is a risk out there on the road and this is how you can avoid that risk. Do you think they understand risk?

Mr RICHARDSON - I don't think so and I don't think it's unique to Generation Y.

Ms FORREST - No.

Mr RICHARDSON - I look back at myself -

Ms FORREST - A Generation X-er?

Mr RICHARDSON - Yes, just. When I was younger, single, driving, riding motorbikes, I took risks that I would not take today.

Ms FORREST - And the Baby Boomers, if we go back again; were they any different, do you think?

Mr RICHARDSON - Not when you hear the stories that are told when people are standing around having a beer!

CHAIR - So, the RACT have courses available for schools and we are told that they are in about 60 per cent of the schools in Tasmania now. As for courses for learner drivers after school, once they start driving, what would you like to see in the nature of compulsory courses there?

Mr RICHARDSON - I think the foundation of a lot of the courses - and they are developing - is still commercially driven. It is a matter of saying, 'How do I get this person to get that qualification?' We don't test actively the mentality of the driver and their comprehension of the risk; we test on their ability to park close and parallel to the kerb and do a three point turn in a narrow street, which are valuable skills; you have to have those skills and your ability to operate the car is paramount. You can go out with the best attitude in the world and still run into everyone if you don't know what to do. There has to be some balance towards the communication of risk in a manner that a young person doesn't just think, 'There's the old fogey bashing me up on how they drive; I'm better than them; I'm faster; I can see better.' Quite possibly they're right, but how do we get them to actually understand that we do have limits; we need to watch where we're going because old people have accidents too for all the same reasons. I suppose their cases are just not as prevalent as those of young people involved in the same situation.

CHAIR - As to the type of course, what would you like to see? How would you like to see that conducted in general terms?

Mr RICHARDSON - I really have not thought that much about that. It is not something I can comment constructively on.

CHAIR - No, I understand. Any further questions of Mr Richardson?

Mr DEAN - Just on both areas, on the zero tolerance and on zero alcohol - does that apply anywhere else in the world?

Mr RICHARDSON - There are 10 countries in the world at the moment that have zero blood alcohol.

CHAIR - Japan is one.

Mr RICHARDSON - I actually think Japan is 0.03.

CHAIR - Ten years ago it was zero, I thought.

Mr RICHARDSON - I actually thought the Scandinavian countries were zero, zero. There are a number of countries where alcohol is culturally banned which are not included in those numbers but there are 10 countries where zero is the level and most of those are ex-Soviet bloc countries, eastern European. I always understood that the northern European countries - Sweden and Norway - were zero zero but they are 0.02 and 0.03.

Mr DEAN - My other question was in relation to older vehicles. Is there a system like that anywhere else, in some other countries, that you are aware of?

Mr RICHARDSON - Not that I know of. I know other States certainly have regular testing of cars, mechanical testing for roadworthiness, but I am not aware of a bounty or a buy-back type scheme for older cars to get them off the road.

Ms FORREST - Just on that point about disposing of those old cars - if the compliance plates and the registration are handed in, then what do you do with them?

Mr RICHARDSON - I said in the submission that is a task for the owner. We have regulatory ways of getting rid of cars. Your local municipality will dispose of a car sometimes at a cost at an appropriate place. They then recycle them. Wreckers will buy them and recycle some of the parts so there are avenues for people to pay or be paid to dispose of cars that would go off the road.

Ms FORREST - There would be less interest from the wreckers, wouldn't there, because if they are 10 years old their parts would not be as sought after by a wrecker's yard?

Mr RICHARDSON - I think it would probably improve the wrecker's stock because they are getting cars that are not half-broken up already and for the people who decide to maintain their car and keep it on the road, panels and I suppose non-electronic or wearing parts would be more readily available. It would reduce the cost of actually reconditioning the car.

CHAIR - Any further questions? That is excellent timing. Would you like to make any comments to round it off?

Mr RICHARDSON - No. I have probably talked too much.

CHAIR - No you have not. It has been very interesting, thank you. You have put a lot of thought into that and we appreciate it.

Mr DEAN - Could I just ask one question? You have talked about alcohol and the older vehicles and so on. Do you have a view in relation to the speed limits on roads? In other words 100 to 110 - do you have any position on that?

Mr RICHARDSON - I think the speed limits as they stand are quite acceptable. I suppose both of these submissions are looking at measures apart from massive spend on infrastructure. Certainly there are parts of the Midland Highway where you have to question whether doing 110 kph is safe just because of the nature of the road now. While there are a couple of views on what is to be done about that, our current economic times might mean that more money is spent on roads but in reality that is a long-term structural agenda that isn't going to fix anything today. There are certainly roads that are probably best not travelled on in Tasmania, but hopefully people, in their management of the speed risk, will modify their speed accordingly despite those roads being signed at a greater speed.

Mr DEAN - Thanks.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We appreciate your contribution. You are welcome to stay if you'd like.

Mr RICHARDSON - Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

MR GARY RONALD MYORS, MARKETING MANAGER MOTOR SAFE TASMANIA WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Would you please give your occupation?

Mr MYORS - I am the Marketing Manager of Motor Safe Tasmania. Motor Safe Tasmania provides organisations and individuals with road user education and training programs to help them better manage the risks associated with driving.

CHAIR - Please let us have your views on the issues.

Mr MYORS - I will explain the company a bit more. We offer venue-based courses at Symmons Plains and Baskerville and classroom-based cognitive courses, accredited four-wheel drive and recovery programs, school programs, on-road driver assessment and road safety consulting services. It is Motor Safe Tasmania's belief that successive governments have failed to provide the right course of action for road safety. Advertising spending seems to be up, policing is up, but generally the road statistics stay roughly the same, with a bit of variation here and there. We are worried that the revenue raised from the increase in enforcement appears to disappear into government coffers. Although there has been some extra spending this year, we are concerned that instead of aiming it at the right end of the market it will go into advertising and consultancy fees, rather than taking it and aiming it at poor technique and bad attitude on the road.

We ask why we are not starting at the beginning and addressing the problems of poor technique and bad attitude. We would like to make recommendations for improving road safety. First, to fund a school education program that focuses on attitude and responsibility of using a motor vehicle, with emphasis on consequences of road death and trauma both at a personal and legal level, and maybe use presenters who have experienced the aftermath personally. Second, introduce driver training and testing that focuses on attitude and consequences before issuing a learner's permit, so not only do they get a taste of it at school, when they want to apply for their learner's permit they have to do a presented course teaching them about attitude and responsibility. We all know, and everyone identifies with the problem, that we have people who are trained to pass the test. All the training focuses on is teaching road skills to pass the test and learning the questions to pass the examination. It does not really teach them about spatial awareness, attitudes and responsibilities.

Ms FORREST - You talk about the kids being taught to pass the test and they do not learn about the spatial awareness and the safe driving approaches. Is there a method, in your view, by which you can test those skills adequately?

Mr MYORS - You can but a lot of the time they are not even explained. I think the previous chap touched on what qualifies somebody to teach another person to drive. I know that when our girls were learning to drive my wife was very uncomfortable with the process and did not feel adequate, although she is quite a safe driver and to my knowledge has never had - or not for 30-odd years - a car accident, whereas I spend a lot more time on the road and I have had a couple of dingles here and there. I feel I am probably more equipped to teach my children to drive because I am so much more experienced.

Ms FORREST - I guess that the question more is, though, if these people before they get their Ls are presented with a course that addresses some of these issues that you have mentioned, is there a reliable way of testing them to ensure that they have it before you hand them either their learner's licence or their provisional licence?

Mr MYORS - No, I do not think there is beforehand. It is probably a case of a particular program like we are using called the Crash Free Driving program. It actually talks about reading the traffic, looking for possible places where -

Ms FORREST - Exit points.

Mr MYORS - Exit points and entry points that could cause an accident. A lot of that is overlooked in driver training at this stage. However, when they do go to do their test there should be tests to ask them while they are driving, even if they are sitting in the passenger seat with the examining officer driving and him saying, 'You identify the next 10 possible hazards that you are going to see. It is quite a simple solution, really.

Ms FORREST - That is what I am asking, I guess. Is there a way of testing that the people have actually understood the message? It is all well and good for people to rock up to a course because they have to, put your bum on the seat for the duration of the course, do what you have to do, and then at the end of the day tick that you have done it. But applying the learning is the issue. You are saying it does not seem to be happening.

Mr MYORS - No. We have done a lot of really good things like increase the number of hours that people have to get experience but if the experience they are getting is not really doing anything other than ticking the box, if it is not giving them a good attitude and a responsible attitude to reading the road conditions, like people who drive at the speed limit in rain or on a bad surface, they do not think about it; they just say the speed limit is 100. Boom, off we go. It really comes back to having the right mental state of mind to know what you are going to do when you actually are a licensed driver and you get out there on the road for real.

Ms FORREST - I guess the information I am trying to seek here is how you think it should work. I hope you can give a bit of an overview, I guess, of what should be the process before a learner licence is issued and then what should be the process before a provisional licence is issued?

Mr MYORS - Okay. The view that we take is probably that, when somebody reaches the age where they are going to go and obtain their learner's permit to learn to drive, they actually have to do a three- or four- or five-hour course so that they understand the basics before they even get in the car with their supervisor, and I have that as my next point; learner driver supervisors should be required to at least pass the road rules test before they take on training somebody to drive. If you were to examine a large percentage of the drivers that are out there on the road at the moment, I would guarantee that some of them would not pass the driver's test.

Mr DEAN - Probably me too.

Laughter.

Mr MYORS - I recently did my public vehicle licence and I was surprised because it was the first test I had done in 40 years and some of the questions really threw me so I had to go home and study after I failed the first time. I thought, 'Well, there you go, there's a real good example', and some of them are quite technical.

CHAIR - Your experience would be quite common if everybody had to do that, I think.

Mr MYORS - Exactly.

Ms FORREST - To go back to supervising drivers, so they should have to pass a basic test as well. But then what happens to the learners?

Mr MYORS - The learners and the supervisors have done a basic course in what your attitude and responsibility should be while you are out there on the road. I do not have the answer to how long it should be. Then they go and do their number of hours practical driving.

Ms FORREST - Do you think 50 is enough?

Mr MYORS - Probably not. Out of my two daughters, one at the end of 50 hours was very good but the other one at the end of 50 hours - and she has been driving for five years in about four different countries of the world - is still a shocking driver.

Ms FORREST - I am sure she is pleased to hear that.

Laughter.

Mr MYORS - Well, she is in Canada driving someone else's car at the moment. With the job I am in now, when she comes back to Australia I am going to suggest she does the responsive or the Crash Free Driving program because she scares the heck out of me. But I bet you there are a lot of parents that would say exactly the same thing, but they have a licence, they are qualified to drive. Whether they are a bad driver or a good driver does not really mean anything.

Ms FORREST - What about before issuing a provisional licence?

Mr MYORS - Before issuing the provisional licence, as I said before, I think adding to the practical test so that they actually identify hazards is important. Using my daughter again, the poorer driver of the two, she only ever sees the car in front of her. She does not really look past that. No matter what I say to her or what I do, she is still not reading the traffic so she is always driving in the stop/start manner because she does not look ahead. She will be doing 60 when the light is already red.

Ms FORREST - Do you believe you can test someone's capacity? A driving test only lasts varying amounts of time, we have heard, but perhaps half an hour. In that time can you actually assess that adequately, do you think?

Mr MYORS - Probably not, so maybe the test needs to be extended and maybe it will cost more, but again with the revenue that is raised from all the speeding fines and enforcement basically, more of that money should be going back into the actual cost of

running the training. At the end of the day with the statistics we have Australia wide, the cost to the community must be so much more.

Ms FORREST - Do you think that provisional drivers do not highly value their licence enough and if we did charge more they might? Would that be a way of making them value it more?

Mr MYORS - As I move along here, I have a couple of suggestions about provisional drivers.

Ms FORREST - Maybe we should keep going. Sorry.

Mr MYORS - That is okay.

CHAIR - At the end of your verbal evidence, would you be prepared to tender the written document you are reading from?

Mr MYORS - Of course.

I will continue: introduce compulsory driver training which develops proper attitude to defensive and responsive driving not less than six months after attainment of their provisional licence so they have to go and learn other skills. They have passed their basic skills test and they have to do that before they can get their full licence. It is like a middle step between a provisional and open licence.

CHAIR - What in detail would you like to see happen then during that period?

Mr MYORS - They have to do, I do not like to use 'advanced' driving test but more a defensive driving test.

CHAIR - Test or course?

Mr MYORS - Course and test to demonstrate that they can do certain things. I am not saying that my previous idea or point and this one would go hand in glove, I am saying either or perhaps. If you do not do it at that level then if you are left at the same then the next level is to make sure before they get a full open licence they have been re-examined.

Successful completion of the assessment would qualify the new driver to advance to an open licence when the appropriate time came. This point received a brief mention in section 10.3 of the 2007-2016 Road Safety Strategy. There was a mention in that section about beefing up training for early drivers..

Compulsory training and/or re-education for at-fault drivers who have accidents or convictions during their probationary period: if somebody is an at-fault driver or loses their provisional licence for offences then they should have to be re-educated and retrained before they can go back on the road. I know that where I live, it is the P-plate drivers who lay the rubber and go round the corner sideways every day of the week.

To plug the loophole that is known as fine swapping, penalties should be levelled against the owner of the P vehicle who allows their car to be driven recklessly and in a dangerous manner. Are you aware of this fine-swapping thing?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr MYORS - That way it should pretty much stop it because the person who actually committed the offence is blaming one of his mates and that sort of stuff; they swap backwards and forwards. In the end they don't lose any points, they just pay the fine.

Ms FORREST - With regard to the changes that will see rewards if you go through your provisional licence without committing an offence and you get the cost of your licence taken off next year - I'm not quite sure how it works but there's going to be financial rewards for being good.

Mr MYORS - That would be a great idea.

Ms FORREST - Would that negate the need for that sort of measure?

Mr MYORS - I don't know; reward the good ones and penalise the bad ones.

Ms FORREST - Yes. There's a double whammy there.

Mr MYORS - Well, you fund rewarding the good ones, don't you?

Ms FORREST - True, yes.

Mr MYORS - Compulsory practical driver assessment and re-education for all drivers who lose their licence once they're on an open licence regardless of the offence, even if it's just an accumulation of speeding fines. It shows that they've not really had the right attitude.

Many of us have been fined, I'm sure, but if you lose so many points that you lose your licence you really need to reassess what you're doing out there, I believe. It doesn't have to be a very expensive course; just a reassessment.

CHAIR - For those who lose their licence?

Mr MYORS - Yes. Probably different levels of assessment, depending on the gravity of the offences for which they lose their licence.

Drivers of work vehicles should be assisted by their employers to undergo responsive and crash-free driver training under OH&S regulations. A vehicle provided by a company is basically your workplace. If you rock up with a licence in most jobs and they want you to go somewhere in the company car there's no 'are you a good driver?' or 'how many points have you got?' or whatever, it's 'can you drive?' and 'here's the car'. When people are sent out of their workplace in a company vehicle they should have the skills to drive a vehicle that they've never driven before. A lot of people drive one car and then they're expected to jump in and out of various cars, particularly things like four-wheel drives.

I had a meeting with a chap yesterday. He was telling me that they hire four-wheel drives for their staff to drive over to the west coast to work and they've had several accidents going across there because people can't drive four-wheel drives properly. They try to drive them like a normal car and end up off the road instead of going round the corner.

Penalties should include compulsory re-education of offending drivers of work vehicles. How often do you see somebody in a sign-written car speeding and cutting in and out of the traffic because it's not their car and they don't care? So maybe an extra point for people that are working on the road; if they lose an extra point they could stand to lose their licence and their livelihood quicker. Although the exact figures are not readily available, the number of workers compensation claims from work-vehicle accidents would have to be similar to the 3 277 MAIB claims last financial year. It stands to reason it has to be a fair percentage of the people having accidents during the working day, because most people spend more than half their life working.

Mr DEAN - What is your position on the double demerit points for public holidays?

Mr MYORS - I think it is a really good idea. I tend to think that anything that makes people slow down through the silly season is a good idea. I do not whether we have even looked at it here yet. Something I saw in America that really impressed me was that if you break the law in a road construction area you get double points as well - when there are workmen on the road, speed signs, dropping the speed limit.

Ms FORREST - What about the situation I drove through this week on the Bass Highway near the Ashgrove Cheese farm? There was a roadworks sign at Parramatta Creek for 80 kilometres an hour. I knew there were roadworks there as I have been through there a few times recently, and the whole length of that road until I got to the other side of Elizabeth Town had no workmen, not witch's hat, not a person, and no end-of-roadwork sign.

Mr MYORS - Therefore, who should be penalised?

Ms FORREST - I have been caught up in a roadworks area that was 80 kilometres an hour every day, and on a Saturday apparently it was 60.

Mr MYORS - I cannot explain that.

Ms FORREST - I know, but you are talking about double demerit points for holidays. I was only warned on that occasion because I said that I could not see any workmen and it had been 80 every other day I had driven through there. It is just one of those things; if you make a blanket rule and people get caught up in that sort of situation there's going to be a bit of a backlash.

Mr MYORS - I realise that, but imagine the ramifications of dad who goes out to work on the roads and gets killed by a driver who is doing 110 in an 80 zone.

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr MYORS - It's breaking the rules. There are places where people should be able to work safely and if it says 40 or 60 or 80 and there are people working there, but if they are not working there whoever left the signs out should be in trouble. I have seen that myself.

Ms FORREST - It is happening quite a lot.

Mr MYORS - So that is pretty much what we are suggesting. If these strategies were implemented with positive results the only downside would be a loss of revenue to the Government. This should not be the reason not to address the root cause of the problem.

We go on to say here, with all the money that is spent on sporting events and so forth, not addressing training, and I use part of an analogy that came out of the Rutherford Report to make that point, where they compared road safety to sport, or compared compensation to sport, in a football team the first point is the commitment to prevention - much care and training goes into avoiding injury. There will also be careful assessment of whether the athlete is fit to play and the safety of the playing environment. While it may be only a minor influence it is interesting that both the team and the individual are motivated towards fitness in avoiding injury.

We also know that many people have become more aware of the need to provide a safe working environment and there is evidence of better safety training. Really it should carry over into the driving area.

Money is spent on things to give us joy and entertainment but things that keep us safe and alive sometimes do not get a look-in. I do worry - and I do say that in there - about the revenue stream. If, through safety on the roads, we lost that there would be four sergeants, 12 constables and some booze buses redundant. That nice cash stream from enforcement disappears or dries up, so imagine a crash-free world. Which would be best? You know, I am just being a cynic there.

Ms FORREST - In regard to the driver training, do you have on a view on the restriction on learners and provisional drivers to 80 kph? Should they be able to drive at the limit - under supervision initially and then on their provisional licence?

Mr MYORS - No, I think the limit is probably okay and I say that for a reason. When things go wrong the difference between 80 kph and 100 kph is quite a lot. I can show you video footage of an accident at 80 and an accident with the same vehicles at 100 and there is a catastrophic difference between the two.

Ms FORREST - But if a young person has never driven at 100 kph and one day they are only allowed to drive 80 and the next they are allowed to drive 100 and they have never done it, how do we reconcile that?

Mr MYORS - Well, hopefully by the time they get to drive at 100 kph, which I think is at the end of 12 months on their probationary licence, by then hopefully they have a bit of experience. Again, I have suggested here that we introduce a testing mechanism at the end of the first six months - say, between six and 12 months - so that they can be assessed practically and theoretically or based on attitude and that sort of thing before they lose that P plate.

Instead of just making it 12 months, we could ensure that they have to be reassessed to see whether they can go off their P plate and finish their provisional time before they get their open licence. If they do not do it, they keep wearing that P and they do not ever get an open licence. We drop the speed limit to suit the common denominator driver, but what about all the good drivers that are being penalised and can't travel at what was the normal speed limit? Maybe there should be another level of licence again.

CHAIR - Has this happened to your knowledge anywhere else?

Mr MYORS - I believe they have a different level of provisional licence in Victoria, a different coloured P plate, but I do not know very much about it. I have not really had the time to research that one. I believe there was a submission put in some time back - and I am not sure whether it was to this same committee or an earlier one - that suggested there would be two levels of open licence - you go from provisional to an open licence and then there is another licence again. I have not read the submission myself but I do believe there is one around somewhere from a guy called Ian Sylvester. I don't know whether that means anything to anyone.

CHAIR - Could you give some detail about your organisation - Motor Safe Tasmania? What is the composition of it, what it does and who is involved?

Mr MYORS - Basically Motor Safe is owned by Motorsports Tasmania, which owns Baskerville and Symmons Plains and run all the motoring events at those venues. I am the one and only employee of Motor Safe Tasmania at this stage and I have been hired basically to have a close look at the marketing of their programs. They have several instructors who work for them. We have the venue-based training which is the responsive driving course that is run either at Baskerville or Symmons Plains. There is classroom stuff involved in both. We also run the Crash Free program, which is very popular with government departments. That is done usually in the clients' own venue, and that is theoretical with lots of video presentations and so forth. The company also do private assessments. The managing director might want somebody who has had a lot of speeding fines assessed as to their driving capabilities. We would take them out and examine their techniques. We have a self-assessment program. If somebody is in that situation then they take our self-assessment program away and they have to complete it every time they finish driving for the day. That comes back to us and we assess what they have said and then assess whether they have improved. We do anti-terrorism and security type driving courses.

CHAIR - Who takes the courses?

Mr MYORS - We have a group of instructors but the main training manager is Rory Hamilton. He is an ex-policeman. There are several other ex-policemen and professional drivers including some racing car drivers.

CHAIR - There seem to be a lot of ex-policemen around.

Mr MYORS - Yes.

CHAIR - We have one here. Are they paid?

Mr MYORS - Oh yes.

CHAIR - By the client?

Mr MYORS - By MotorSafe Tasmania.

CHAIR - But you said you are the only employee. You do have others then?

Mr MYORS - We have others that are the training staff, yes. Sorry. I am the only office staff, basically. The others are all contractors. They do not work full-time for the business. That is what I should have said.

Mr DEAN - What sort of evidence do we have that these responsive driving courses and these other courses that these drivers are put through are in fact successful? What is the benchmark?

Mr MYORS - There is the assessment process that they use. I am not exactly familiar with it. But the way it was explained to me: if somebody, like the Hydro for instance, decide to become a crash-free organisation as they are about to put 200 of their employees that use Hydro vehicles through the Crash Free driving program. They are then assessed and they study the statistics of accidents - statistics from within the Hydro. Obviously they have a lot of damage to vehicles from minor accidents and that sort of thing. So they use their own internal statistics and our model to measure the improvement. Where somebody is not driving they want then they go back and get reassessed.

Mr DEAN - The reason I ask is that - and you would not be aware of this - the police department went through a very similar thing about 15 or 10 years ago. What they did to correct driving problems, to fix a lot of the accidents, was to simply say to police drivers that if they were clearly negligent they would pay the damage. The police department can give you the statistics better than I can, but it fixed about 60 to 70 per cent of their accidents. There was no responsive driving course - it was simply making people responsible.

Mr MYORS - Was it ever tested though? Did anyone ever have to pay for a vehicle?

Mr DEAN - It certainly was. I do not know the numbers and so on. I do not know whether they still practise that but I suspect they do.

Mr MYORS - I cannot imagine that too many employers would get away with that.

Mr DEAN - There was a lot of discussion at the time, I might add. The Police Association were involved.

Mr MYORS - All police officers do get extra training though before they drive a vehicle, don't they?

Mr DEAN - They do now. They didn't, but they do now. I am not saying it does not work. I was just asking how you measure the success of it.

Mr MYORS - I can probably provide you with more detailed information about that if you allowed me the time.

Mr DEAN - I think some of our members did the course, didn't they?

Ms FORREST - I did the defensive driving course, yes. They talked about Aurora - we will have to ask Aurora for their statistics, I guess, but they have reportedly claimed a significant reduction in their crashes.

Mr MYORS - We are doing Transend at the moment. Our trainer was in Burnie doing the Transend people on Monday. That is a one-day course.

Ms FORREST - That is what it was. It was more about attitude and understanding spatial awareness and other things that you talked about such as safe driving and knowing your vehicles.

Mr MYORS - I have been working for Motor Safe for two weeks and what I have learnt has changed the way I drive although I have not done the course.

Ms FORREST - There were a number of young drivers on the course too, a couple on their Ps and a couple who had just stopped displaying their Ps but were probably were still on provisional licences. They said it had changed the way they drive and made them much more aware of looking around.

Mr MYORS - That is right. It is never going to be a perfect world. We are never going to eliminate fatalities and accidents on the road. I pulled up some really interesting statistics this morning to show the national road toll since 1925. In 1925 22 people for every 10 000 cars on the road were killed. Guess what it was in 2005? It was 1.8 for every 10 000 cars, so our driving is getting better but we have a lot more people driving. That figure is off the top of my head.

Ms FORREST - Where did you get those statistics from?

Mr MYORS - From a Federal government website. I can give you those details.

CHAIR - Are they national statistics, not Tasmanian?

Mr MYORS - Yes, they are. The national road database, road safety statistics.

Ms FORREST - They might break them down.

Mr DEAN - What were they again?

Mr MYORS - For every 10 000 cars on the road in 1925, about 22 people died on the roads and I think in 2005 it was 1.8, or let us say two people for every 10 000 cars. It does not matter what the speed limit is, it does not matter what enforcement and threats we make, the people with bad attitudes are still going to break the law. There are still going to be hoons out there so we should try to stop people from becoming hoons.

CHAIR - It is a difficult task. There are a few of them around.

Mr MYORS - We could try to reduce the number. There is a very good advertisement on television now showing peer pressure. Have you seen the advertisement with the finger? I think it is one of the best road safety advertisements I have ever seen. Basically, it alludes to his manhood; when he loses control going around a corner and some girls standing on the side of the road make a gesture. He looks embarrassed and drives off. I think that is the way to get the point across. You make people feel inadequate when they do the wrong thing.

Ms FORREST - Does it encourage them to perfect the skill of skidding around a corner without losing control?

Mr MYORS - I think it was meant to say if you act like a hoon then everybody knows about you.

Mr DEAN - Your position that you identified to us, have you taken it up with DIER or other organisations? You have only been there two weeks.

Mr MYORS - We work closely with DIER through the TTC. They book people in to a course that we run for them called Behind the Wheel.

CHAIR - To whom is that course available?

Mr MYORS - People that they recruit from government departments.

CHAIR - I see.

Mr MYORS - It's basically taking people who have the time and need the training to go and do it. They're venue-based courses where they sit in a classroom and get lectured before they go out and perform driving in wet conditions, collision avoidance on the track and that sort of thing, defensive skills.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr MYORS - A lot of departments that have four-wheel drives use it for showing people how they should -

CHAIR - How to keep them upright.

Ms FORREST - With the four wheels on the road.

CHAIR - Is there anything further? Do you have any comments you'd like to make in closing?

Mr MYORS - Only that having two daughters who both drive, I can imagine what it would be like to lose one of them. It would be a devastating thing. Anything we can do to bring the road toll down and make people more responsible can only be a benefit.

CHAIR - If you could let us know when your daughter gets back from Canada and we'll keep an eye out.

Laughter.

Mr MYORS - She's not that bad.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and good luck in your new position.

Mr MYORS - Thank you very much. I must say it's nice to be back at work. I've just had seven months off before going back to work after a motor vehicle accident. I broke my back in three places in a motorcycle accident. I was inattentive for a fraction of a second. The traffic stopped in a 70 kph zone and I was down on the ground and injured. I am living proof of that good training. I'd only recently done a motorcycle refresher course which I think saved my life. Training helps.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it certainly does, there's no doubt about that.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.