

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON 6 MAY 2009.**

**Mr DARREN HINE**, ACTING COMMISSIONER, **Mr MICHAEL BRAZENDALE**, A/ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER CRIME AND OPERATIONS, **Mr ANDREW GRIFFITHS**, **Mr DAVID SINCLAIR** AND **INSPECTOR JOHN COOPER** WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Welcome, and thank you for being here. We look forward to hearing your views on road safety and having discussions with you and asking you questions. Mr Acting Commissioner, would you care to make any comments?

**Mr HINE** - Thank you for the opportunity to come along today to present in relation to a very important aspect of traffic law enforcement. The most significant road safety outcomes are achieved by the implementation of strategies across a number of areas, in particular engineering, education, vehicle safety, and enforcement which is obviously within our purview.

In relation to traffic law enforcement, research on both a national and international basis consistently recommends that the most significant deterrent effect is achieved as a result of an increased perception of the risk of apprehension. Perceived risk of apprehension can best be achieved by a combination of both overt and covert traffic law enforcement. To achieve this deterrent effect Tasmania Police have implemented a number of road safety enforcement strategies specifically targeting a range of offences, driving behaviours linked to motor vehicle crashes and injuries. These behaviours include inattentive driving, speeding, alcohol and drug driving, failure to wear occupant restraints or seatbelts. The strategy is regularly reviewed and required to ensure that the best practice principles are adopted and maintained. In addition, enforcement strategies implemented in other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally, are monitored and, if deemed appropriate, implemented by Tasmania Police with the necessary modifications. Strategies to reduce road trauma are developed in partnership with a number of road safety stakeholders, including the community, the Road Safety Council, the Road Safety Taskforce, DIER, the community road safety partnerships and various motoring organisations. Road safety strategies developed to achieve the desired performance targets outlined in the National Road Safety Strategy 2001-2010 aim to reduce the rate of road fatalities per 100 000 populations by 40 per cent in 2010. The Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2011 provides directions for this State to work towards meeting the national target.

Each police officer within Tasmania Police has responsibility for traffic law enforcement, but specifically there are various areas which focus on traffic enforcement, those being traffic services where throughout the State there are approximately 70 traffic officers, and the Road Safety Taskforce, which is separately funded by the MAIB on a three-yearly basis, with 16 police officers attached to that area. In relation to the traffic equipment that we utilise, there are approximately 150 speed-measuring devices available to our police officers.

With that opening, I will certainly answer any questions you might have, Mr Wing.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

**Ms FORREST** - You identified the risk of apprehension as being one of your major factors, I guess, in determining how you conduct your business. There have been many comments made and, as a frequent user of the highways and roads myself, there is a distinct lack of physical presence of police, except for two weeks ago when one Tuesday I drove from Hobart to Burnie and saw at least two bikes and 10 police cars, and that was between the turn-off where you come out of Richmond, because I came through Richmond that time, up to the north-west coast. Many, many times I can travel down the road and see none, and that is the majority of the time. In your view is a visual police presence one of those aspects you consider is increasing the risk of apprehension in people's minds, and can you discuss that in more detail?

**Mr HINE** - High-visibility policing is very important to us, and we have a number of strategies, including overt, as in we have police cars on the road that are plain police cars, so you may pass one and not know you have actually passed one.

**Ms FORREST** - That is not a deterrent to me, though.

**Mr HINE** - But it is a deterrent in relation to being caught, as in your mind you say, 'I won't speed because there may be an unmarked police car following or in front of me or on the side of the road'. As you may have noticed just recently, we have introduced highly visible police cars, and they will specifically target the highways, 110 zones and 100 zones, so they will be a more visible aspect of policing. One of our targets is to make sure that we have high-visibility operations within rural and urban areas, and we have a number of high-visibility operations, including random breath testing and vehicle checking as well. So we certainly want to maximise our police vehicles and our visibility on roads. Unfortunately on occasions when people travel up or down the highway they might miss a police car by one minute and therefore may not see a police car because it may be behind them and follow them all the way, and they may never actually see that police car. So we want to give the motoring public the thought that we are about, whether it is overt or covert, and if they choose to engage in risky behaviour or break the law, then the chances of getting caught are greatly increased.

**Ms FORREST** - In your view, does the Government support your current approach to the high visibility? The police were highly visible that Tuesday. I am not sure what was going on, but it was right the way across Tasmania as far as I went, from one end of the State to the other. I take your point that they could be behind me the whole way, and unless you are going really slowly they are not going to catch you. If you are sitting on the speed limit or thereabouts they are potentially not going to catch you or pass you so you are not going to come across them that way, but to be highly visible wouldn't they need to be travelling both ways on the highway?

**Mr HINE** - Yes. It is one of those strategies that we run what we call lock-downs across the State, so we will be patrolling the highways from the north-west coast down to the south of the State, so that when you are on the highway, as you have experienced, you will see numerous police cars, and that impression lasts with people for a number of days, if not weeks, that there are a lot of police cars on the road. That is one of the issues with these

even more highly-visible police cars, so when you see those it will stay in your mind and therefore you might think, 'Last week I saw a number of police cars around; I haven't seen one today', but it is still in the back of your mind. And we want to maximise the opportunities that people have to see police cars and see police officers. Whether it is in the mall or on the roads, we want to make sure we maximise people seeing them. But we also want it in their minds that if they don't see one it doesn't mean that a police vehicle or a police officer is not about.

**Mr HARRISS** - Your submission goes to that issue, Darren, that fear of being detected is one of the major deterrents. Is there any analysis or data that indicates whether the presence of marked cars or unmarked cars addresses that fear of being detected?

**Mr HINE** - There are a number of surveys in relation to whether it is a marked or unmarked car, some of the attitudinal surveys, which you may have had access to, about whether people admit to not wearing a seatbelt or driving with alcohol present in their body. I am not sure if you have had those surveys that are done on a national basis. We can supply those if you don't have them. Still about 9 per cent of the population in Tasmania admit to driving without their seatbelt on.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We sit just above the national average on the attitudinal surveys that suggest that people drive without wearing a seatbelt. We are in most of the categories that have been surveyed, with the exception of speeding where we are slightly under the national average. People expect to be caught for speeding in Tasmania compared to some of the other percentages across Australia.

**Ms FORREST** - Do those figures suggest that people who don't wear seatbelts are also more likely to speed or to drink and drive?

**Mr HINE** - At the moment disqualified drivers are overrepresented in our serious and fatal accidents. Those who are disqualified know they are disqualified but they still choose to drive. No matter what we do, taking them off the road, they are still choosing to drive and ending up in the courts. We are going to address that in the next financial year. We're going to increase our targeting of those behaviours which we know cause serious and fatal crashes. We are going to target seatbelts, disqualified drivers, those who speed and a number of other issues that we know cause serious and fatal accidents.

**Mr HARRISS** - Can we develop that a bit further? Back to that matter about the marked versus unmarked vehicles, does the data that are around that go to that issue?

**Mr HINE** - There are a number of surveys in relation to overt and covert speed cameras and overt and covert police vehicles, but the majority of our fleet is marked. We maximise the marking of our fleets across the State so there is only a small percentage that is unmarked.

**Mr HARRISS** - Is that because you feel that there is a better rate of deterrence with marked vehicles?

**Mr HINE** - You have to have that mix. At the moment our belief is that the marked cars have a role, as do the unmarked cars, but we have more marked cars just because our general patrol fleet is marked anyway. Every CIB car, all of our cars from an

administration point of view, have lights and sirens and everyone has an infringement book. We expect everyone driving a police car and police officers to enforce traffic laws. It is not just left to traffic people and it is not just those who are in uniform, it is everyone who has a responsibility to make sure that people obey the laws.

**Mr HARRISS** - Did I hear you right, Darren, that there are 70 traffic officers in Tasmania?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr HARRISS** - What number of motorcycle police officers do you have and what is the strategy or policy in regard to increasing or decreasing the number of motorcycles as part of this deterrent process?

**Mr HINE** - Each district has approximately four motorcycles and there are four districts, so about 15 or 16 motorcycles. That has been decreasing over the years because when it is raining it is hard to write out infringements notices and the risk factor increases. But they do have a legitimate purpose in traffic law enforcement, especially in high-density traffic areas. They can get in and out of traffic a lot better and for ceremonial occasions, but they a legitimate use. We have been decreasing number of the motorcycles over a number of years but we think we have the number about right. They were all part of that visibility in patrolling our highways and urban areas.

**Mr HARRISS** - Because progressively over the years the pursuit of an errant driver has become a really topical matter - how far do you chase an errant driver and at what speed? A motorcycle is pretty manoeuvrable and all of that but I guess you are restricted in that respect. I will get you to respond to that and then you might address your mind to the matter you raised about filling out an infringement notice. Is that a requirement? Do you have to do it on the spot or can you just radio through and get things done electronically?

**Mr HINE** - We have certainly adopted a very restricted pursuit policy over a number of years. People tend to, if they want to avoid apprehension, do it at all costs and they will actually drive faster and harder when a police officer is chasing them. That is where a lot of deaths have occurred, because of being pursued by police. Therefore if we are not pursuing then it is more likely that they will slow down. One thing we cannot do is bring people back to life if there has been an accident caused through pursuit, so we have a very restricted policy in that area. When certain criteria are met, and there is very much a control mechanism and a very strict regime in relation to it, then police officers have the opportunity to continue a pursuit, but it is very controlled and we have a very strict regime in relation to that. We will continue that because people do everything they can to avoid apprehension, so it is much better to let them go and do an investigation later to apprehend them.

**Mr HARRISS** - And the matter of filling out infringement notices?

**Mr HINE** - When it is wet, on the side of the road it is very hard, but you can actually identify the driver and you can put an infringement notice in the mail. That is not the preferred option, obviously, because then there is another administrative overhead. It is much better to apprehend them and give them a ticket there and then.

**Ms FORREST** - Going back to the issue of the unlicensed drivers - and I agree that a number of serious crashes have involved unlicensed drivers in recent times - how are you going to target that? We have already tried to deal with these people through the court system but it is not working. You might know who the person is but they could be in a variety of different vehicles.

**Mr HINE** - That is a good point and it is one of those issues for the next financial year. What we want to do is in relation to random breath testing is not just focus on doing the random breath test but actually check the driver to see if they are a legitimate licence holder, because there is a difference between an unlicensed driver and a disqualified driver. Someone may be unlicensed just because they have never held a licence or not renewed their licence but a disqualified driver is someone who has been to court or has been disqualified for a specific reason. We want to random breath test but also allow more time to check whether they are a licence holder, whether they are driving a safe vehicle or whatever it may be to check more vehicles and to check their status.

**Ms FORREST** - Are you adequately resourced to do that because that is obviously going to take longer? If you are pulling over cars on a roadside check for random breath testing, if you pulled over every driver you are going to slow down the traffic enormously. With the number of officers you have to conduct the checks and then the others keep going until those people have moved back into the traffic, you are going to actually capture fewer people that way.

**Mr HINE** - We will capture fewer people but check more people in that process. When you have a random breath test operation you will actually pull over the number of drivers that you can handle and not delay too much but also do the checks. You might check fewer people but check them more thoroughly than you normally would.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - By the end of this fiscal year we will have checked more than 700 000 drivers at RBT sites, so within the population of Tasmania that is effectively a high percentage. We are now random breath testing a huge number of drivers but we see the need to refocus and to look at the extension of issues around driver behaviour.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to be able to check even more?

**Mr HINE** - There is that maximisation issue but there are also some technology issues we are exploring where you can get your number plate recognised. It will then go into a database and identify if that vehicle is registered or unregistered and who is associated with driving the vehicle, whether they are licensed, unlicensed or whatever. So there are some technology issue we are exploring as well to help us at those sites.

**Ms FORREST** - So that is not available currently?

**Mr HINE** - We have one of those devices and we are just looking at how to upload databases and those issues. There is some development work that we need to do.

**CHAIR** - What is the cost of those devices?

**Mr HINE** - Best guess would be \$30 000 to \$40 000.

**Ms FORREST** - Is this something that is likely to be subject to cost-cutting measures within the department? We have been told the numbers of police officers should not be reduced. To carry out some of these enforcement activities do you need more police officers than you currently have because all departments are being asked to consider cost-cutting measures? Will this be something that could be put on the back-burner?

**Mr HINE** - We are developing it and having a look at it now. We all have x amount of resources and we do the best we can with those resources. So we are certainly looking at that technology and developing it. We have it now. We do operations with DIER, who have that technology as well. So it is here and now and it is just a matter of the databases.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - There are a couple of quite innovative developments in relation to that type of equipment in other States and we are looking at the opportunity to piggyback on the research and development of that equipment.

**Ms FORREST** - Obviously the people who will be involved in looking at the database maintenance, even the data entry and also the retrieval of data from those databases in a meaningful way, would not be considered front-line policing.

**Mr HINE** - I know what you are saying but at the moment we are just in the development stage. We do not know what resource it is going to take, whether we are going to have a look at further devices and so on. So it is a bit early to say how much it is going cost and how much development work is going to be involved with it. Again, it comes down to the resources we have and we have to look at how beneficial it is to us.

**Ms FORREST** - So it is a bit unclear as to what increased benefit that technology will bring?

**Mr HINE** - Everyone recognises that it is going to be a benefit to us but it is just a matter of how we can use it to our best advantage. We do not want one in every corner every time because that does involve doing policing differently. Maybe at a random breath test site we want to trial it because when the vehicles come in, if we can get a heads-up on what is unregistered or a vehicle where the driver may be unlicensed or disqualified, that will make it easier for us to check without checking every one as well. So, yes, we see some advantages in it.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - The technology is different from a speed camera, where there is no back office interrogation. It is at the side of the road. It is instant. The vehicle comes through, past the camera. It takes a photograph of the registration plate. It has optical recognition software in it and it says 'This is the number plate', then it compares that against the database in the computer and it says, 'This vehicle is unregistered'. So straightaway the people at the site know or this vehicle is unregistered or registered to a person who is disqualified or is unlicensed. So there is no back-end work apart from getting the databases into the computer.

**Ms FORREST** - So would this then encourage people who perhaps have had their licence removed from them, or who are unlicensed, to drive vehicles that are not linked to them in any way? If they are someone who has had a licence, had it taken off them and may still have a family vehicle that they are linked with, would that encourage them to borrow the neighbour's car?

**Mr HINE** - That is a risk they are taking every day. It is just because the technology does not identify that person, but obviously we can still check. It is just another one of those tools that can assist us. We are having that all the time - people will go out and drive a different vehicle. A hard and fast recognition at the scene might tell us the vehicle is unregistered, therefore you do a further investigation of who is driving. It is just another tool to assist us and help by identifying those who are breaking the law.

**CHAIR** - So with 70 traffic officers, are they full-time on traffic duty or do they perform other more general duties as well?

**Mr HINE** - All police officers perform all duties. There are 70 traffic officers and then there are 16 road safety taskforce people, so that is 86 people in all across the State who are involved in it - and they do other duties. If there are calls for assistance or there is a job that needs immediate response and they are available then of course they go and do that. Again, if a CIB car is in area and there is an accident to go to, or a general uniform car, they will go to it as well. To say they are purely traffic officers and that is all they do would be wrong but the majority of their time would be spent on that. Occasionally they do have to go and do other jobs, as we expect all our police officers to do.

**CHAIR** - Do you have officers who are solely engaged in traffic matters?

**Mr HINE** - The road safety task force are the ones who are solely engaged in traffic policing but, again, if there is an event where they need to assist then obviously they will go and assist.

**CHAIR** - So what do their normal duties involve?

**Mr COOPER** - Speed detection, random breath testing, detection of people offending against the traffic laws. Basically they are out and about all the time looking at traffic matters. They are a secondary response to motor vehicle accidents; the other traffic units attend traffic accidents. Their specific role is to deal with traffic-related issues.

**CHAIR** - Every day how many of them would be on duty and on an average night how many would be on duty?

**Mr COOPER** - We generally have the road safety task force commencing around 6 a.m. and they conclude around 2-3 a.m. the following morning and cover those shifts between. That is the road safety task force as well as all the traffic people. In some areas we have 24-hour traffic police working to cover the southern part of the State, the north and the western, so we do have full coverage. During the day, for example, in the eastern district we will have eight or so on during the day and six or eight on an afternoon shift.

**Mr HINE** - It is very much intelligence-focused. If there is a major public event where there is a lot of traffic movement obviously that is when we will have more traffic personnel on to police that activity. If there is a major, planned statewide lock-down that is obviously where we would have a lot of the traffic personnel.

Policing is a 24-hour, 365-day job, so every police officer is a traffic officer as well but these specific people are not on 24 hours a day, so it is targeted, intelligence-driven traffic policing where we see the best use of those resources.

**CHAIR** - So do other officers outside the road safety task force regularly operate in traffic patrol cars or is that only the road safety task force?

**Mr HINE** - Every police car is a traffic control car. There is no distinction between a traffic car and a normal police car that a general uniform officer would utilise. So every police officer is expected to and does intercept people for traffic offences.

**CHAIR** - Not even a difference as to whether they have speed cameras or not?

**Mr HINE** - There are some with mobile radar, so that is a difference, but some of those mobile radars go out to the country stations, so it is not traffic officers who are using them; some of the country stations get to use them as well.

**CHAIR** - How many of them are fitted with the speed cameras which operate outside the vehicles, the ones attached to the vehicles?

**Mr HINE** - There are 12 and then there is the moving-mode radar, which is on a police car.

**CHAIR** - Are they usually operated by the road safety task force officers?

**Mr HINE** - It is normally within the traffic section of the road safety task force.

**Mr COOPER** - A combination of the road safety task force officers as well as other traffic officers. Basically all the police cars we have in traffic across the State are fitted with the speed detection devices, apart from one or two breathalyser vans and things that are not suitable for that process. We also have one or two motorbikes fitted with them as well.

**CHAIR** - In what way do the 16 road safety task force officers' duties differ from the 70 traffic officers?

**Mr COOPER** - There is little difference other than that their primary focus is traffic. Their number one priority is traffic. The traffic officers themselves go out and patrol roads, but if there is an urgent call for assistance or another call to help in other areas, they are the first ones to respond - rather than the road safety task force people. So there is a tiered response level, but it depends on where the incident occurs and how close it is. It would be negligent of a police officer if there is a call for assistance around the corner and he does not provide it because he believes he has to pull over another car for another random breath test.

**CHAIR** - What percentage of the time, on average, would the 70 traffic officers spend on traffic matters?

**Mr COOPER** - Probably 90 per cent.



**CHAIR** - On an average weekday, how many of those 16 members of the road safety task force would be on duty during the day?

**Mr HINE** - It is hard to say on an average day because their rosters vary according to that intelligence-led policing. However, they are funded by the MAIB so there are specific criteria that we have to meet in relation to their funding. There are  $x$  hours that we have to provide for that policing. We have a breakdown of those things, which I do not have here at the moment. There is a breakdown of what hours they must be performing in various activities, including how many hours they have to work.

**CHAIR** - Could you later let us have details of that, please?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, I will certainly provide that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do you have any rule-of-thumb idea about it? With only 16 officers, and having regard to annual leave, sick leave and matters such as that, it seems very few officers dedicated solely to traffic matters to spread around the whole decentralised State.

**Mr COOPER** - One of the requirements of our contract, if you like, with MAIB is for that task force to be fully resourced. So if, for instance, one of those officers moved off on leave, if it is for an extended time the position will be back-filled out of another area. So the MAIB task force has a commitment to them, pretty well at all costs.

**Mr HINE** - I think maybe I have given the wrong impression. They are actually in addition to our normal policing functions. Those 16 have been separately funded by MAIB. That is an extra 16 that we did not have before. We still have those 70 police officers whose majority work is traffic. Then we have another 1200 police officers altogether and their duties include traffic. So it is not just 16 that are purely for traffic. The entire organisation does traffic law enforcement. I would not like to give the impression that there are only 16 doing traffic law enforcement, because that is not right.

**CHAIR** - No, I understand that perfectly. At the Christmas-New Year period and at Easter time greater emphasis is given by the police and the government to traffic matters, with more random breath-testing and more speed checks. How many officers would be involved in those? How many more officers on an average day or night would you have during those periods than on an average day and night during the year?

**Mr HINE** - We can get the figures to see how many people were working compared to an average day. When there is a major event like that we do not have days off, for a start; they are actually working the times that we need them to be working. There are more officers physically working. On every weekend you have to have people off at times but if it is Easter, Christmas or another major event they will not be on days off. They will actually all be working. Therefore, statistically we have more people and we have more people out on the road.

**CHAIR** - Would it be double the number you normally have dealing with traffic matters during these peak periods?

**Mr HINE** - We can grab the figures but it certainly would be a significant increase. I would not like to put a figure on it.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any impression?

**Mr COOPER** - May I just point out, for example, last Easter at my direction my office covered a minimum 16 hours a day for the whole Easter period where normally some days you have a day shift on and some days you will have an afternoon shift on and because of days off I ensured that the rosters were changed. So from the Thursday prior to Good Friday right through to the following Tuesday or Wednesday, we had a full coverage of traffic people. That may well have been where you saw those people on Tuesday -

**Ms FORREST** - It was that Tuesday, yes.

**Mr COOPER** - Because it was part of that process.

**Ms FORREST** - No it was not Easter it was the following week.

**Mr COOPER** - But then we look at where incidents occur. One of the areas of concern for us is the Coal River Valley, those roads up through there, so we give specific attention to those areas.

Over the Easter period that was to the detriment of other days during the week because we have to provide people with days off and time off.

**Mr HINE** - And we actually drag people out of what we would class as non-operational areas. Sergeant Sinclair, for example, works mainly Monday to Friday in an office so people like that would come out of their office duties and do the patrolling. So we maximise everyone that normally would not be out on patrol to bring them out during those times.

**Mr COOPER** - We also had the services of the recruits that we asked for from the Police Academy for that period. So we utilised those sorts of resources as well to boost our numbers on the road.

**CHAIR** - You mentioned in 'your section', what is your section?

**Mr COOPER** - I am officer-in-charge of eastern district traffic, which is the east coast - everything over the river, basically.

**CHAIR** - So substantially more police hours and police personnel are involved on these occasions, Christmas, Easter, New Year.

**Mr HINE** - When we know that people are travelling, especially on days such as the first and last days of the Easter break when people are travelling to their destinations and when they are travelling back. Then you combine that with the Road Safety Taskforce, Driver Reviver and education and advertisements as well. We try and maximise our numbers as best we can so people see that police are about.

**CHAIR** - And that is in keeping with your policy of increasing the risk of detection which is, I agree, the greatest deterrent. Are they usually effective those increased measures during those periods?

**Mr HINE** - We would like to think that they are effective because during any of those periods we would like the road toll or serious accidents to be zero. Obviously we do not always achieve that but we would not like not to do it to see what the result would be. One of the greatest risks to road safety is complacency. Talking about traffic law enforcement and road safety and always addressing these issues and getting them out in peoples' minds is very important..

**CHAIR** - Do you think that people take more care during this period generally? There are exceptions and there always will be, but generally are they effective?

**Mr HINE** - We are finding them effective, that they see more police around. They are conscious when they travel from point A to point B that it is a greater distance. But it is just a matter of reminding people that no matter what time or period of the year they have to obey the traffic laws.

**CHAIR** - Given that that involves a greater physical presence of police and increased numbers increasing the risk of detection, would you like to be able to do that all the year round?

**Mr HINE** - It just would not be sustainable with the resources we have. We cannot have recruits coming out all the time because they would not be able to do their training. We cannot have people coming out of other areas because they could not do their jobs. So we maximise our presence on the road at various times of the year, whether as a statewide lock-down or during various blitzes. So you maximise when it is going to be of most benefit to you. Would we like a police officer on every section of the road all of the time? It is never going to happen anywhere in the world.

**CHAIR** - I am not suggesting that.

**Mr HINE** - And what would be the best formula? I don't know what that is going to be, but we've certainly maximised the resources we have.

**CHAIR** - So if you had sufficient resources to enable you to do the same thing throughout the year as you do at Easter, Christmas, New Year, would that be an advantage?

**Mr HINE** - For a start, I'm not actually saying we haven't got enough resources to be able to do it.

**CHAIR** - I thought you said you need extra resources.

**Mr HINE** - For those periods, because that's when you're going to get the maximum benefit, and there's a lot more people moving around. I am certainly not saying for one minute that we haven't got enough resources to do the traffic policing that we currently do. When you've got a lot more car movements for those periods of time, you maximise your visibility, but you don't have those car movements around all the time. So I'm certainly not saying that we need more resources to do traffic policing.

**CHAIR** - You don't have them to that extent, but you have traffic movements all the time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 12 months a year, so there are always traffic

movements. I agree that the visible presence of police acts as a deterrent and saves lives undoubtedly, but personally I see very few police cars on the road, as my colleague, Ms Forrest said. Wouldn't you like to have more patrol cars and more officers involved in traffic matters, law enforcement traffic rules?

**Mr HINE** - I think it's one of those issues of how much is enough. At the moment we have *x* amount of resources that we actually put into traffic policing, and it's how you use those resources. We know there are traffic movements at three o'clock in the morning, but they are greatly reduced, so therefore your policing requirement is greatly reduced. We know during our Christmas and Easter periods that there are lot more people moving about. Therefore we have to be moving about as well.

My greatest desire would be that people comply with the law, and law enforcement is just one aspect of road safety. More police, more police cars doesn't mean to say you're going to get an increased benefit commensurate with the investment you've got to put into that. It's about people obeying the law and complying with the law and driving sensibly and safely is the greater issue. Law enforcement is just one aspect.

Some of the research says that law enforcement may only have a 22 per cent or 23 per cent influence on road safety, so it's a matter of where do you put the best investment of money and resources to get that best road safety outcome.

**CHAIR** - But increasing the risk of detection is one of the key points of your policy, and that must be designed to reduce accidents, to enforce the law to a greater extent, and to increase the risk of detection.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. In relation to what some of the research says that's what we can influence - about 20 per cent of fatal and serious accidents - therefore we have to maximise the law enforcement aspect of it. But there are many other issues in relation to road safety. We want to maximise our visibility, we want to maximise the fear of being detected, but road safety is a far greater issue. It is education, it is a lot of other things as well. Law enforcement is one aspect.

**CHAIR** - Driving from Launceston to Hobart this morning, I saw one police vehicle that was a four-wheel drive, and I assume that wouldn't be fitted with a speed detection device and that its main function wasn't to deal with traffic, it seemed to be going from point A to B.

**Mr HINE** - I think that's where some of the misconception is. Its main function is law enforcement, including traffic. Just because you see a police car, whether it is a four-wheel drive or a motor bike, or whatever it may be - an unmarked car - one of its functions is traffic law enforcement. So it has the same ability as a traffic or patrol vehicle that is used by a traffic officer; the police officer driving has the same responsibilities no matter what they are driving or what they are doing.

**CHAIR** - So are four-wheel drive vehicles as effective in road traffic patrol as sedans?

**Mr HINE** - It all depends on what you say is useful. There are some areas in our country stations where they are very effective, that's what they use to intercept vehicles. So it doesn't matter what you're driving, it's a matter of, firstly, how you drive it and, secondly,

how effective it is for that person actually using the vehicle. Some States have pursuit cars; we don't have pursuit cars, we just have standard cars. Whether it is a four-cylinder vehicle, a four-wheel drive or a six-cylinder vehicle, they are all effective in traffic law enforcement.

**CHAIR** - I am not sure what the situation is in Hobart but certainly in Launceston of an evening there is hooning. I walked from the theatre one night fairly recently to Henty House and I saw a car with a P plate with four young people in it hooning around the central blocks. They did three laps while I was walking about six blocks. I didn't see a police officer in sight until I collected my car and drove up Wellington Street. I saw a car up there away from the area where the hooning was going on. It was readily apparent to everybody in the CBD that that car was driving in the other direction. There didn't seem to be enough personnel on duty to deal with what is happening on a pretty regular basis around Launceston streets. Is that through lack of resources?

**Mr HINE** - No. Again, I think it is one of those situations that occurs. Hooning is an issue for us and one we address regularly. We have had 1 064 vehicles confiscated under the hooning legislation since 2004 and we will continue to do that. It is also working in partnership with the community to report those issues to us so that we can address them. We are always going to get situations where something is occurring that maybe needed police attention and we're not there. That is unfortunately a fact of life, but it is also working with the community so that we can have it reported and we can act on it. How many is enough? It would be nice to have a police car there when a situation occurs, but that is not always going to happen. That doesn't mean to say that we can't address it with other strategies as well. I think the hooning legislation has had an effect on those people driving in that manner.

**CHAIR** - On that subject, do you support confiscation of vehicles for repeat offences by disqualified drivers?

**Mr HINE** - This legislation is going before Government at the moment in relation to those matters, so Sergeant Sinclair can probably give an overview of that.

**CHAIR** - It may include other actions in addition to disqualified drivers?

**Mr SINCLAIR** - I think the bill is on the table in the lower House at the moment to add some additional offences to the confiscation legislation. At the moment the confiscation legislation covers the offences under the Police Offences Act such as taking part in a motor vehicle race without a permit issued by the Commissioner of Police, making unnecessary or unreasonable noise, an exhibition of speed, and trespass where a motor vehicle is involved. Under the Police Offices Act a police officer has the ability to direct people to disperse if there is a motor vehicle involved in that action. If they don't disperse then confiscation applies. The bill will add to those offences speeding by 45 kph or more above the posted speed limit; dangerous and reckless driving, disqualified driving for a second offence - and we are working through some issues with that. A new offence - 'evade police' - will also have confiscation authority attached to it.

**Ms FORREST** - I want to go back to the holiday periods, Christmas and Easter particularly. We have had some evidence and data that suggest that we might expect historically that there would be significant increases in serious injury and fatal road crashes at that time.

Whilst there has been a small increase over those periods it is not significant. When you consider the number of vehicles on the road and the number of kilometres driven, it could relate to a fall in real figures when you look at the big picture. There have been suggestions from other States that double demerit points at that time are an effective deterrent, but the evidence doesn't really support the fact that there are more instances at that time. There may be more in number but in comparative terms there are less.

I drove up the Midland Highway on Thursday before Easter and it was pretty much wall-to-wall cars. Everyone was going quite slowly because you had so many cars. There was no point in trying to pass until you got to the passing lane, even then you could only get past a few. It seemed to me that the people at that time were driving in a safer manner because they were forced to slow down, whereas I have driven at other times of day and night, on various country roads and highways, and the fear of detection after about 10 or 11 o'clock at night is pretty minimal. That is where you tend to see people going particularly fast, probably overtaking in unsafe areas and in an unsafe manner because the risk of detection and the risk of other cars on the road coming the other way are less.

So how do you balance all this up? I do not disagree with the increased police presence around Easter and Christmas, I am sure it has a positive effect, but when you look at other things like double demerit points and other avenues of penalising people do you think that is a valuable suggestion?

**Mr HINE** - It is not an exact science, and your committee will be able to add to the road safety debate, because complacency and not being able to address these issues and talk about them is one of the dangers in road safety.

Sometimes in those periods we have certain periods where it is very busy on a highway and sometimes you can predict that and sometimes you cannot. On that Tuesday when you saw a lot of police cars, it is fresh in your mind and it stays with you a long time. Some of the surveys and studies have shown that if you have an interaction with a police vehicle or see one the effect can actually last up to three weeks. You say, 'Okay, I won't do that because last Tuesday or two weeks ago I saw a police car'. You might not have seen one for the next couple of weeks but you have that memory.

**CHAIR** - So if you increased the numbers every three weeks it could be very effective.

*Laughter.*

**Mr HINE** - It is like random breath testing. People go for a period of time without seeing one so obviously the deterrent effect goes down. However, we test over 700 vehicles and that will obviously increase the memory, so you say, 'Yep, I was out a week or two or three weeks ago or even a month ago and drove past one', therefore it is back in your memory. It is not an exact science. You deal with what you have at the time and the evidence you have. We have to use our resources and an intelligence-based process to make sure that we are maximising the use of our resources to stop people driving against the road rules.

**Ms FORREST** - So do you think double demerit points would be a greater deterrent when compared with increased police presence and greater risk of detection?

**Mr HINE** - There are various debates about double demerit points and I know the Road Safety Council has looked at that. Everyone has an opinion so it is really an issue for the Road Safety Council to consider as part of their deliberations. I think they have actually done that.

**Ms FORREST** - Just going back to the issue regarding hooning and inappropriate and unsafe driving behaviours, do you think there is any value in having an easy to remember phone number like, say, 1300 POLICE or whatever, that people could easily recognise rather than 000. If someone sees someone hooning around the city block in Launceston they are not going to ring 000 or they should not ring 000 to deal with that.

**Mr HINE** - There is a standard Australia-wide police number now that we have introduced as well - 131444. So we would rather that people not ring 000. We would rather people ring the standard police number, and that is Australia-wide now.

**Ms FORREST** - How do we know about that, because I did not know about that?

**Mr HINE** - It has been advertised, it is in the phone book and those things and it is on registration labels. It is one of those things to get people more used to those numbers.

**CHAIR** - I rang the number about a month ago because I had a driver in front of me that I thought was drunk.

**Ms FORREST** - You know how we have these signs on the side of the road, and I appreciate that we don't want too many signs because they can be a distraction in themselves, but perhaps we could have that number on a sign, just as we have the Fox Task Force phone number on the side of the road. Mr Wing has it in his phone.

**CHAIR** - I have it here: 131444.

**Ms FORREST** - I had better put it in mine then, too, with a speed dial on it.

**Mr HINE** - And again that is a message we need to get out there. We are advertising it as well. We all have phone numbers in our heads that we try and remember, but Mr Wing has given a perfect example of having it in his phone.

**Ms FORREST** - Every now and then on the side of the road as a reminder there are the 'Just Like That' signs. You could even add that number to those signs so that people are aware and it makes it easier for police to target their activity. Is that a fair comment?

**Mr HINE** - Yes. I think any of those issues that can be raised to make sure we get our number out there and people are able to report bad driving, as Mr Wing did, the more likely we are to get the people off the road, so I think it is a fair suggestion.

**CHAIR** - Is that number to be used only for traffic matters, or generally?

**Mr HINE** - No, it's general police. Triple O is for those life-threatening emergencies. 131444 is for those general calls, for example the one you made.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - I do a road safety talkback session on radio every month -

**Ms FORREST** - I have heard you do that, thousands of questions.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - and there wouldn't be a month go by where I don't mention that number. It is a narrow audience but at least it is also getting out there.

**Mr HARRISS** - With regard to hooning, it seems to me that with drink-driving offences, drug offences, there are mandatory penalties once the threshold has been reached, and so too with hooning. Is there a frustration amongst the police forces Australia-wide that penalties which are administered by the courts are not adequate for some traffic crimes in particular?

**Mr HINE** - Mr Harriss, I suppose it is one of those issues that we have a role to play and we then place these people before the courts and then it becomes a judicial issue. Is it frustrating for us? I suppose our main role is that of law enforcement, and we will actually put them before the courts, and then it is up to the courts to deal with them as best they can with the tools they have, and they get the tools from the Parliament who make the laws. I think our main concern is law enforcement and getting it before the courts, so it is up to the Parliament and the courts to deal with them with the tools they have. There are always going to be different opinions, as we all have in relation to what we perceive should or should not occur with people, but we confine ourselves to law enforcement, to getting them before the courts, or dealing with them with the powers that we have.

**Mr HARRISS** - I suppose the distinction there is that there are mandatory penalties for some traffic infringements such as hooning, drink-driving thresholds and so on, and Sergeant Sinclair has indicated that the bill before the Parliament is going to be an extension of all of that. Is it the view of Tasmania Police that we are about right once this bill goes through, or are there extensions so that there are - and I know it is a horrible term, because the Northern Territory tried this - mandatory penalties for a range of crimes, not just traffic offences, but we do have mandatory penalties in a sense? Could we be taking this bill, which is currently before the Parliament, even further?

**Mr HINE** - I think it is an interesting debate to have because there are various opinions in relation to it, so I think it is up to the broader community and the Parliament to have that debate to see if it is an issue for this State.

**Mr HARRISS** - Just as an example of that, I recently became aware of the traffic officers in the Gippsland area of Victoria specifically around Traralgon. They have a reputation for zero tolerance and they are tough coppers by their own admission, but whenever Victorians drive in that area they know that they had better behave because the cops in that area are going to exercise zero tolerance. I understand anecdotally that that is probably one of the lowest areas of significant or major crashes in Victoria, because the police unashamedly have this tough attitude. Are we in that sort of a situation across Tasmania, do you think?

**Mr HINE** - I think we have a zero tolerance to drink-driving. We have a zero tolerance to disqualified driving and we have a zero tolerance for those matters that we do know cause fatal and serious accidents. In relation to some of the speeding offences we have a



cautionary regime, and in some of the other offences we have too, where 43 per cent of those intercepted by a police officer for various offences get a caution and we think they are just as effective as giving someone a fine as well. We certainly have a zero tolerance on a number of aspects but also police officers need discretion as well. Sometimes an informal caution or a chat or whatever in relation to their driving behaviour will be just as effective, so I think the term 'zero tolerance' will not apply to everything that police do and I do not think it should apply to everything that police officers do because there is always that discretionary aspect.

**Mr HARRISS** - Can I just go to another area of heavy vehicles. If there is a heavy vehicle rollover and it is heavily laden, the possibility for significant injury is elevated. I understand that across the world there are GPS technologies available because again my research and understanding indicates to me that the weight of the vehicle is not necessarily going to cause a specific problem but over-dimension will. The weight may impact on the road surface and the deterioration of it but an overloaded vehicle has the potential, of course, to be more dangerous. Are you aware of this GPS? It is all linked, I understand, to not only tracking the vehicle but its load will be immediately identified electronically through the GPS process. I just think that that would add an extra dimension to road safety.

**Mr HINE** - I am not aware of that research, Mr Harriss, because the enforcement of heavy vehicles is a matter for DIER - they are responsible for overload and overweight vehicles. We certainly attend when a heavy vehicle has an accident and we certainly work closely with DIER so their transport inspectors can come along and have a look at it as well but the actual policing of heavy vehicles is a DIER matter.

**Mr HARRISS** - It is probably a question better directed elsewhere than at some stage, Mr Chairman, but it impacts clearly on road safety so it is probably a policy matter that we can take somewhere else.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any statistics on the percentage of disqualified drivers involved in both serious and fatal accidents?

**Mr HINE** - We have a breakdown of those ones that occurred for this financial year. I think Mr Brazendale has that.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - I had a look at the fatalities from 1 January to date so I have added 27 fatalities and if I can just quickly go through them it might be easier for you.

**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We have one unlicensed - this is a combination of things but in answer to your specific question -

**Ms FORREST** - Unlicensed or disqualified?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - Unlicensed. One disqualified, another disqualified, another unlicensed so that is four altogether out of the 27.

**CHAIR** - Are the statistics you have just for fatal accidents?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - Just the fatalities.

**Mr HINE** - DIER have the specifics. They have done a lot of work in relation to that and they have those figures for a number of years in relation to fatal and serious accidents with the involvement of disqualified drivers so that is certainly available.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - From a traffic enforcement point of view we are seeing a growth in disqualified driving detections.

**Mr COOPER** - And those percentages tend to cross over into the serious mode of vehicle accident category as well.

**CHAIR** - A similar percentage?

**Mr COOPER** - Similar percentages.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any theory as to why there is an increase in that category of person being involved in serious and fatal accidents?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - I have probably an informed view over a long period of being a police officer and that is quite often people that disregard the law in one aspect will generally disregard the law across a broader range of activity, including, we know - and there is international research to show - there is a strong correlation between crime and disqualified driving and unlicensed driving, that type of thing. What you see is that such people have a poor regard for the law. They do not just restrict it to one particular aspect. In some of these fatalities they have also been drunk and they have been probably not wearing a seatbelt -

**Ms FORREST** - Is that the case in these four you referred to?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - Some of them. I guess the best way of answering is that people are not always that discreet in respect to which part of the law they worry about.

**CHAIR** - So, how do you see this problem best handled?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We must keep in mind that in the last few years there has been some legislative change relevant to disqualified driving. That would lead to a higher opportunity of catching people driving disqualified. So I think that is one important aspect.

One of the things we talked about earlier is the camera recognition system; that is likely to assist us. One of our key priorities in the next 12 months as part of our strategic planning for the next reporting year is an emphasis on disqualified driving, for example, in the impact of this last couple of months. So we need to ensure that we have good current data and access to good data relevant to the status of a driver. That is important. Another strategic issue that we are looking at is trying to improve our opportunities to realise more intelligence out of our data collection, as well as working with DIER in approving our opportunities for that. That is really important in relation to this particular aspect of traffic enforcement; having the knowledge at hand for our police officers to

design their strategies for the next week or whatever and also at the time they pull you over, they have the information that you are unregistered, unlicensed, disqualified, et cetera.

**Mr HINE** - If there is a zero tolerance in relation to disqualified drivers, that is it, we will make sure that we target them. We make no apologies for going out and targeting disqualified drivers and we will put a lot more effort into taking them off the road. Parliament has a bill before it so we can also confiscate their vehicle on the second occasion.

**Ms FORREST** - With all due respect, those drivers have already been taken off the road and they are back on there. So if you take them off again, they will perhaps get back on there again.

**CHAIR** - Take their car away?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, but there are other cars that they could borrow.

**Mr HARRISS** - Doesn't the legislation allow you to keep doing that, just keep confiscating vehicles if their friends are mug enough to lend them a car?

**Mr HINE** - That is the debate before Parliament. But I think the main message is that we will continue targeting disqualified drivers and we will continue to put them before the court.

**CHAIR** - Before we go onto another subject, you have the 70 traffic officers and 16 Road Safety Taskforce officers, how do these numbers dealing with traffic matters compare per 1 000 population with other States?

**Mr HINE** - I do not have the figures in front of me but it comes down to the ratio of police officers to 100 000 population, and we are certainly right up there - we compare favourably with other jurisdictions. I keep emphasising that every police officer is a traffic officer, just as they are a general duties officer and as they are a detective as well. So it is sometimes hard to make those comparisons.

**CHAIR** - Having such a dispersed, decentralised population in Tasmania, we really need more than the States where, you might agree, the majority of citizens live in the capital cities. You need fewer numbers to operate in a large urban area, would you not?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, we constantly monitor where our police officers are and the changes in demographics and all those issues to make sure that we have the best spread of police officers we possibly can. Obviously, within the city environment we have more police officers. In small country towns we have fewer police officers. But we also then have the availability of traffic personnel going to patrol these towns. We also have CIB and our port teams and all those other resources that come in and out of those towns.

**CHAIR** - So we compare well with other States in the overall picture?

**Mr HINE** - In the overall picture of the police officer per population, yes.

**CHAIR** - If you could let us have some figures later about the percentage of time that the other 70 traffic officers usually spend on traffic matters that would be advantageous.

**Mr HINE** - I am not sure.

**Mr COOPER** - We do not actually record that time but I would say, in my experience with it, it is above 90 per cent.

**Mr HINE** - We do not actually do activity surveys where we can give you the definitive, 'Yes, this is what they do'. I think that is the best estimate we can give you.

**Mr COOPER** - Their primary role of the day is traffic duties. If, on occasions, they get called to assist with another incident that is non-traffic related then they go and assist. But that is not often.

**CHAIR** - Right. So if you had the say in emphasis placed on traffic matters each month, as you do at Easter and Christmas and New Year, how many extra traffic officers would you need? Can you estimate that?

**Mr HINE** - I think that is a hard question. We could estimate it if we did some calculations but I think it would actually be to the detriment of other policing.

**CHAIR** - I am looking at the focus only on traffic, how many you would need, and the reduction in the numbers available for other areas is a different subject. I am looking just at the interest of traffic at this stage.

**Mr COOPER** - We do not just do those operations at Easter, Christmas and major public holiday times. We do them throughout the year on a monthly basis. We look at what is coming up through the month, where the major accident rates have been occurring, we look at all the available data and we conduct major operations.

**CHAIR** - But not in the same way, do you? There is not the same publicity and emphasis?

**Mr COOPER** - Not with the publicity.

**CHAIR** - But that is a very important part of it, I think, that people know that there is an increased risk of detection.

**Mr COOPER** - Not with the publicity but we do have statewide operations where my staff will go over to the south and help them, or travel north. So there is a large number of police around at a particular event and time. It is not just specific for Easter or Christmas.

**CHAIR** - No, I think we are aware that the times of the Hobart Cup and the Launceston Cup and other events -

**Mr COOPER** - But even outside event times it is based on our intelligence in relation to accident rates and things like that.

**CHAIR** - I see.

**Ms FORREST** - Like times of day, days of the week and that sort of thing?

**Mr COOPER** - All that data we take in and we look at. That may well be why you saw a lot of police on that particular Tuesday.

**Ms FORREST** - On a Tuesday. So on Tuesdays be careful.

**Mr COOPER** - Yes.

*Laughter.*

**Mr HINE** - As a parting comment, I do not think that the increased resources to traffic duty is the panacea. I think it is about how you use your resources at the time in relation to traffic policing. Just increasing the number of police officers that do traffic is not a panacea in relation to road safety.

**CHAIR** - No, I agree. It depends on how you use them. I would like to see a few more around the streets of Launceston when the hooning is going on.

*Short suspension.*

**Ms FORREST** - We were talking earlier about zero tolerance and blood alcohol levels - having a zero tolerance once you are over the 0.05 level then the penalties apply. What we tend to see, and I ask for clarification on this, is that the majority of crashes seem to involve people who have been under the influence of alcohol considerably in excess of 0.05; they are not just 0.06 and 0.07. Is that a fair comment and do you think there is an argument also to maintain the 0.05 as the level or should it be reduced? Should we have zero tolerance? What is the way forward in your opinion?

**Mr HINE** - There is a lot of debate about what the alcohol level should be. I think there is a general acceptance that it is 0.05 and I think maybe the majority of countries around the world have a 0.05. Again, it is one of those debates in which everyone has a different opinion. At the moment it is 0.05, that is what Parliament has given us as the law that we will enforce. There are some accidents involving people who are way above the limit and there are some that are just above the limit so unless I had a breakdown of the figures, which I do not have in front of me, and which we can certainly get you -

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Perhaps I can help. I am a forensic scientist with the Forensic Science Service Tasmania and we do an analysis of the samples the police collect from drivers. I have done an analysis of the road safety samples that are submitted by police. Alcohol was found in 43 per cent to 44 per cent of drivers who were injured in motor vehicle accidents - and that is both serious or minor.

**Ms FORREST** - Not killed?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Not killed.

**CHAIR** - What level of alcohol?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - That was what I was about to get at.

Seventy per cent of those cases had alcohol levels above 0.1. There might be some bias to those results because obviously we are only analysing the samples the police are sending into us and only analysing them for alcohol and/or drugs based on their request as well. Alcohol was found in a higher number of cases and it is undeniable the link with alcohol and accident risk and accident fatalities as well.

**Ms FORREST** - What percentage would be below 0.05 and what would be above 0.05 in those tests that you have done?

**Mr HINE** - Just to give a background, when an accident occurs and police attend if you give a breath test at the time and they are under 0.05 if it is a minor accident then they do not go on to the full blown test. Therefore if they are under 0.05 we do not keep some of those statistics. DIER might from their accident forms but they do not go on to a blood test or they do not go on to the full breath analysis.

**CHAIR** - Even in fatal accidents?

**Mr HINE** - No, fatal accidents are different.

**CHAIR** - I see.

**Mr HINE** - That is when we do a full-blown investigation.

**Ms FORREST** - That is only minor accidents you are talking about?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, I am talking about minor accidents.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - So out of those 44 per cent of drivers who are positive for alcohol around about 80 per cent of them are over 0.05.

**Ms FORREST** - That was with crashes where there were injuries but not fatalities?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Yes, surviving drivers with no major injuries.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have the breakdown of how far over 0.05 the drivers were?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - The highest one 0.362.

**Ms FORREST** - Incapable of driving. I do not know how you would stand up.

**CHAIR** - You don't usually when you are driving.

**Ms FORREST** - No, true.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Over 50 per cent had between 0.1 and 0.2 and 20 per cent had over 0.2.

**Ms FORREST** - So more than half are significantly over?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - Exactly.

**Mr HINE** - As Andrew said the correlation between going above 0.05 and drink driving is undeniable. That is one of the areas of research where there is very little room for manoeuvre. If you go to those sorts of levels then your ability to control a motor vehicle is significantly reduced.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - It has been shown that as your alcohol level gets greater so does your likelihood of being involved in an accident.- At 0.05 it has been estimated that you are about two times more likely than a person with nil alcohol in their system to be involved in a motor vehicle accident. But at 0.15 you are about 25 times more likely and 0.18 is even greater; you are about 50 times more likely.

**Ms FORREST** - So in those figures do they include restricted drivers? Like the provisional drivers who are on a zero blood alcohol level?

**Mr GRIFFITHS** - It would include all blood samples that have submitted to the laboratory. The police may have figures on which ones were disqualified or unlicensed or P-plate drivers.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have any idea about the number of P-platers who would fit into that?

**Mr HINE** - In relation to serious injury accidents or crashes?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - We would certainly have the breakdown but whether we have it at hand probably not at the moment but we can certainly get it for you.

**Ms FORREST** - It would be helpful to include that in the overall picture. P-platers know the rules, they know it is zero. There has often been an argument that someone can have up to 0.05 and still legally drive but where that point is reached is a bit of an arbitrary guess in that everyone's metabolism is different as is their body mass and how much they have eaten and a whole range of other factors that come into play. So people might genuinely believe that they were at a level that would have been safe to drive but P-platers know that the rule is zero.

**Mr HINE** - With some of the advertising that has come out of the Road Safety Taskforce at the moment, if people are actually stopping and calculating how many drinks over what period of time then they should not be driving. If you have to make that calculation you are taking a risk, therefore do not take the risk. That is what is starting to come out now.

We have had a number of operations of a Sunday morning where people have had their night out and are driving the next morning and we have caught a number of people, including those who should have zero, exceeding the limit. They thought, 'I have had a sleep therefore I am safe to drive', when they are not.

**Ms FORREST** - In the Road Ready courses in the ACT, the course they do for learner drivers before they get their learner permit, they went through how to calculate your

blood alcohol level. They said how long it takes to process the alcohol that is contained in a drink, depending on your sex and your weight and it went through this whole process. The message was that it is so complicated to come anywhere near getting an accurate calculation, unless you have a calculator and a formula in front of you, you would not bother. I thought that was a really good message to get through to young people - or anybody really. It is a really complicated analysis. It is not just saying, 'I have had three drinks in a period of four hours and a meal so I will be right'.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - In relation to those figures, this is not crash-related; it is charge-related - that is, people that we have charged with a drink-driving offence last financial year. There were 5 664 offences - not people because individuals could commit a combination of offences. Of that 5 664, 774 were learner or provisional. More interestingly, 1 023 were unlicensed. So there were more unlicensed drivers caught with alcohol in their body than there were learners or provisionals caught with alcohol.

**Ms FORREST** - Provisional is three years with no blood alcohol?

**Mr SINCLAIR** - Yes, and unlicensed is restricted to zero as well.

**CHAIR** - I read a suggestion just recently that establishments that sell alcohol should have some breath-testing equipment available for customers. What are your views about that?

**Mr HINE** - There have been lots of occasions where you can buy these off-the-shelf devices. People should realise that they are an indicator for them. Obviously there are commercial opportunities for people to sell these things, but unless you calibrate them and all those things then you have to make sure that they are only an indicator. The taskforce operates some of these where people have an opportunity at various events to do breath testing before they drive. One of the things they do tell them is that it is only an indicator because you may have had your last drink 10 minutes ago so therefore for the next two hours your blood alcohol level will go up. So they are just an indicator for people to help them make decisions. Again, if you are in that stage where you are trying to make a decision, always err on the side of caution.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - Our roadside testing devices, the new ones that we are using and which are the majority now, they shut down after three months if they are not calibrated. So our devices, at least every three months, have to go through a calibration process. If you buy one or there is one in a licensed establishment, when it was last calibrated and how accurate it is could be anyone's guess.

**CHAIR** - On this general subject, as you know we asked for officers involved in the planning and operation of the Falls Festival breath testing to be available because we have concern about that and we wanted to discuss it and get some more information. Would somebody care to advise us what happened, whether it is likely to happen again and why it happened in that way?

**Mr HINE** - Inspector Cooper was the person in charge of the planning and operation of the Falls Festival event. Can I indicate that there is a report from the Ombudsman in relation to the Falls event that he has now published in relation to the various complaints that were received. I will just read his conclusion.



'In conclusion, I was satisfied that the Tasmania Police operation was a necessary response to concerns raised by both members of the public and government organisations who have an interest in the event. Despite the perception of the complaint component and other festival goers that police tested the drivers of each vehicle leaving the site, police statistics show that only about 16 per cent of all vehicles were stopped and tested.

Traffic congestion was an issue that arose as a result of a number of factors, including the RBT operation, but this issue is being addressed in the context of planning for future events. Although the proportion of drivers returning a positive reading may appear quite small, I am satisfied that the operation was necessary in order to address an identified road safety risk.

I was not prepared to find that there was any deficient administrative action on the part of Tasmania Police in the circumstances.'

**CHAIR** - Does he indicate that it could have happened in a different way, say with two lines of traffic rather than one and not blocking everybody else in?

**Mr COOPER** - Late in November I sent staff down to meet with the Falls organisers and the site management. They inspected the site adjacent to where the random breath tests actually occurred, which was at the intersection of Burnt Hill Road and Marion Bay Road. It is a paddock. At that time it was my staff's wish to use that paddock to get cars off the road into that location. They even went to the point where they offered to provide a portable toilet for our staff because they knew that we were going to be there.

About a month later my staff went to visit that site again and indicated that they would like some road marking painted onto the grass into that site, and also placement of witches hats to allow half a dozen cars or so at any one time to be taken off the road into that location. A week before the event they were again contacted and told, yes, those arrangements would be put in place.

When my staff arrived there early on New Years Day, they found a multitude of cars parked in that location, belonging to various people associated with the event and other areas, and patrons. They had parked over the road markings that had been painted on for us and all sorts of different things. My staff at that point in time made a decision to pull over cars on the side of the road.

The road itself is a gravel road and very narrow. As soon as they pulled cars over they got tests, and in the first hour alone they were at capacity. In the first 10 or 15 minutes they conducted a number of tests where they got positive results from drivers. That forced the closure of the RBT site until those people were processed, breathalysed and went through the system. They then went back out onto the road, got a heap more and went back off the road. They did it like that throughout the few hours that they were there.

**CHAIR** - Were there some cars going through while that was blocked off?

**Mr COOPER** - That's right. Whenever we intercept a car for a random breath test and that person then is required to submit to a breath analysis, the police officer associated with intercepting that car stays with that driver. That took all the police doing the random testing off that site.

**Ms FORREST** - Where did they go to at that point?

**Mr COOPER** - Into that paddock.

**Ms FORREST** - There was room in the paddock?

**Mr COOPER** - There was enough room to put in our police vans, but in the area we had allocated for the cars to drive in and back out, there were other people's cars.

**Ms FORREST** - So the cars were left on the side of the road and the drivers were taken to -

**Mr COOPER** - No. There was enough room to take those cars into that paddock, but away from the entrance. We had to drive from down the back of the paddock because it would have blocked the road totally.

**Mr HINE** - About 16 per cent of the 6 000 vehicles were actually tested, so it wasn't every driver. As a result, 31 drivers were charged with various offences - exceeding their prescribed limit.

**Ms FORREST** - How were patrons informed, then, about this? The issue is that you have all these patrons back further down the road waiting to leave, allegedly being informed by Falls' organisers that it was the police's fault as they had done everything they could and the police were causing this problem. Consequently a lot of angst built up, but there were still young people driving home and taking 17 hours to get there.

**Mr HINE** - The report that you have there is that it was between 4.30 p.m. and 5 p.m. when the last cars left. The Ombudsman indicated that the previous year it was about 2 p.m. Some of the issues recorded were about people doing various U-turns to try to get out of the line and so on. But we have had meetings with the organisers and they have been very positive for planning for next year to address these issues that have arisen. We are quite pleased with those discussions for planning for next year to minimise the impact of RBTs but, can I say, there will be RBTs conducted next year. We will certainly work with the organisers and we have already had the meetings with them to make sure that we minimise the disruption but maximise the effect to take those who are exceeding the limit off the road.

**CHAIR** - Could you have two lines of traffic?

**Mr COOPER** - No, you cannot because the road is such in that particular location you need an off-road location and we were prevented from using that.

**CHAIR** - But if you can use that next year you will have two lanes going?

**Mr COOPER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - How many officers were involved this year?

**Mr COOPER** - There were 25, plus a nurse.

**CHAIR** - And to have two lanes next year how many would you need to have?

**Mr COOPER** - The same number. We believe we were adequately staffed but it was the circumstances on the day that resulted in the delays and the large number of patrons that were driving over the prescribed alcohol limit for their licences.

**CHAIR** - Because of the frustration of others who were locked in, do you believe that contributed to the number of people who were booked for speeding at Sorell?

**Mr COOPER** - Those people were booked at Sorell before noon.

**CHAIR** - I see.

**Mr COOPER** - No, it was not later in the day. The speed camera was set up from 6 a.m. through to around noon and we did not continue with that in the afternoon. So I do not believe so, I think it was just one of those events. Also patrons were advised that we would be conducting random breath testing.

**CHAIR** - Before?

**Mr COOPER** - Before, in their hand-out books and things like that.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, I think they were well aware. The patrons certainly knew that was what was going on and that was what was causing the hold up - and my son was one of them. But a lot of parents on the north-west coast contacted me as a result of their children getting home very late. My son did not get home until midnight that night but that was also because the car broke down at Oatlands or somewhere.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We weren't responsible for that.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - Are you sure? But anyway the feedback that was coming through these families was that there was no communication back down the paddock to these patrons about what was actually going on.

**Mr COOPER** - I went into the site. I decided to go down there that day just to see how things were going and just check on my troops -

**CHAIR** - And how were they going?

**Mr COOPER** - They were very busy, but anyway. I then drove in straight to the organisers and asked them at that time to point out over the PA system that there would be traffic delays associated with the way people were trying to depart from the site. I do not know what was said over the PA -

**Ms FORREST** - Are you suggesting that it was the way people were trying to leave the site? Is that putting blame with the patrons themselves?

**Mr HINE** - We have had positive interaction with the Falls organisers out of all this and there are learnings on both sides. We want this to be a festival that people can go to and enjoy themselves but we also want to be confident that there are no people breaking the law including exceeding the alcohol limit.

**Ms FORREST** - Also they can be too fatigued to drive home, too.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We do not want them to be drunk driving home and when you look at the percentage of people that were caught in the numbers that were checked it is a significant issue. I think that should never be overlooked in this debate.

**Ms FORREST** - No, I do not think anyone is suggesting that it should, but there is evidence to suggest that fatigue can affect a driver in similar ways to a blood alcohol level of 0.05. So when you have young, inexperienced drivers who have done the right thing and they are not over the limit and they have not drunk at all because they are on their 'P' plates and so they are zero and they are driving -

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - We caught a number who were not zero.

**Ms FORREST** - I know. Questions were asked in Parliament and we received answers that some were provisional drivers. But I am talking about those who did not do the wrong thing.

**Mr HINE** - But I think the main message that we are trying to sell, is that, yes, we are working really closely with the organisers for next year so the planning gets even better. We want to take those who drink and drive off the road and we make no apologies for that. But also, we recognise that we have to work with them as well to make it as efficient as we can and that has occurred and we are really pleased with the organisers, the Government and obviously various other stakeholders, to make sure there is planning again.

But people have to recognise that there will be random breath tests. We all accept that and we want to make sure that those people who should not be driving are not driving. We are well into that planning stage already for next year with the organisers.

**CHAIR** - Let me now turn to off-road motorcycle accidents involving young people - I would be interested to hear your views about that. Any experiences the police have had and any suggestions about how to deal with that increasing problem involving, in some cases, quite serious injuries.

**Mr HINE** - Off-road vehicles and motorcycles are normally represented in some of the accidents. I think about 10 per cent -

**Mr SINCLAIR** - Yes, 10 per cent.

**Mr HINE** - of these serious and fatal accidents are off-road. It is a difficult issue for us to police. We have a number of various operations that we run, especially in the urban

areas where they all ride their motorbikes, pocket rockets or whatever you are going to call them, across public land and private land, but it is not easy to catch them. So we have to implement various strategies. We are concerned about it. Are we putting more policing effort into it? We are. Have we confiscated more motorbikes? Yes we have and we will continue to do that.

Some of the strategies we have are in our police officers riding motorbikes themselves. I will not give out too many strategies because otherwise we will alert those who we want to catch to what we are doing.

**CHAIR** - These are the on-road ones?

**Mr HINE** - These are the off-road ones - in paddocks and the bushes and so on. In the bush there are no formed roads and often the motorbikes are not registered.

**CHAIR** - In public areas?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, in public areas. We have various strategies. Also, we want to give a message to those parents who tend to give their children some of these off-road motorbikes for birthdays and Christmas. Be responsible and inform your son or daughter about the responsibilities and where they can ride and where they cannot ride. But, the short answer is, there are some issues with it and we are concerned about it. We have certainly confiscated a number of off-road motor vehicles and motorbikes in the last 12 months.

**CHAIR** - So you are dealing with the situation where these motorcycles are used in public areas. You are not addressing the private areas, are you?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, the private as well if it is private land and there is a noise issue in relation to that. But, obviously, if someone is on a farm and they are riding their motorbike around, there is nothing wrong with that, but we would like people to act safely and wear helmets and all those things. That is a different policing issue. In fact, it is not a policing issue because they are on private land on the farm and that is part of the things they can do on their land, though bearing in mind the environmental issues, within 500 metres of a house.

**CHAIR** - Quite a number of young people are injured in riding these types of vehicles on private property. I realise that is not a policing issue. Do you have any particular views on that?

**Mr HINE** - Unless it is within 500 metres of another house, then that is illegal under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act. You cannot do that and then it obviously becomes a policing issue. But if it is in relation to a farm or other private land that is not within 500 metres of another house, it is a concern when people get injured but from a policing point of view, it is not a law enforcement issue.

**Ms FORREST** - You have no jurisdiction on private land.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. It is like anything. We would like people to remain safe. If someone is killed, obviously it is policing issue because we have to do a coroner's investigation.

**CHAIR** - So when they use them on streets they must be licensed and the vehicle must be registered.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And the same would apply, would it not, to public property that doesn't have made streets?

**Mr COOPER** - Where you can drive on, say, crown land or somewhere like that that is accessible and it is a track or a road you need to comply with the same sorts of laws as when driving on a road. Registration, insurance, licences and all those provisions are necessary. You need to be able to drive on it as you would on a road. If it is through scrub and bush, they have to get to those points one way or another. We conduct operations to try to detect these people.

**CHAIR** - Are there any statistics to show how many of these types of vehicles are unregistered and/or ridden by unlicensed riders on public streets and public land where there are no formed streets?

**Mr HINE** - We have some statistics in relation to off-road motor vehicles but the actual breakdown of whether they have been involved in an accident, whether they were unregistered or unlicensed, we can probably get those for you. I think, as a rule of thumb, those ones who are involved would be unlicensed or unregistered.

**CHAIR** - The ones on public streets and public land?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Most would be unlicensed and unregistered?

**Mr HINE** - Probably unregistered rather than unlicensed. They know that they are breaking the law because the motorbikes that we are seizing aren't registered, aren't capable of being registered and are unroadworthy as well. It is not as if they're going out and riding on the road and think, 'I'll go onto public land and do some riding'. Most of the time we're finding anecdotally that they know they are breaking the law.

**CHAIR** - How common is this? Are there many cases?

**Mr COOPER** - Yes, weekly. For example, in the Bellerive division, we seize a few bikes a week at least.

**Mr HINE** - Some suburbs have a real issue with it. In fact, some say it is one of their number one issues and so therefore we put a lot of policing into it. People should be able to enjoy their neighbourhood quietly and not have motorbikes riding around having little regard for other people's safety. We are putting some effort into those areas where it is a problem.

**CHAIR** - What happens to the bikes after they have been confiscated?

**Mr COOPER** - We seize them generally under the environment protection laws, that is riding within 500 metres of dwellings. Many of those bikes are returned to owners, but it is dependent on the local councils, who we liaise with, in relation to their laws associated with the disposal of those motorbikes. Some are returned, some are sold. It depends on which council we are working in partnership with and the by-laws associated with that particular council.

**Mr HINE** - A couple of police station compounds are full of those motorbikes. We will continue to take them off people when they're breaking the law.

**CHAIR** - If they are returned, do they have to pay a fee to get them out?

**Mr COOPER** - It depends where they are located. Some locations within Tasmania Police are required to pay. It depends on whether the bike was towed or not or if we took our own vehicles out to convey the motorbikes back.

**Ms FORREST** - This has been an issue in a number of rural communities as well. Hellyer Beach is one recently that you may be aware of. One of the issues is that for people, particularly in rural communities where it is a very common and, for those who partake of it, enjoyable pastime, getting to those areas where they can ride the bikes without annoying other people or creating an unsafe environment is an issue. Do you think there should be some suggestion or support for developing areas where people can go? They still have to get them there, they still have to put them on a trailer to take them there because they can't ride to those locations often. Rather than just confiscating a bike and then giving it back, do we need to find a way of allowing those people to partake of that activity without breaking the law?

**Mr HINE** - Any activity where people can enjoy these things in a lawful and safe way is going to be better than their going into a public area. Getting them there is obviously an issue, so I think anything to get these people into a safe environment is going to be a good thing. Finding those areas and working with various governments and local governments I think is a sound suggestion, because the main thing we want to do is to make sure that in those areas where you can't ride motorbikes, they don't. If there are areas where they can in a safe manner, yes, I can't see any issue with it.

**CHAIR** - Could you give us some indication of how you are dealing with hooning? We know the legislation giving the power of confiscation is there, and other antisocial activities like donuts and burn-outs et cetera. Is that an increasing problem? How is it being handled, and what measures should be taken in the future?

**Mr HINE** - I do not have the statistics in front of me, but as I said we have had 1 060-odd vehicles seized since 2004, and it probably initially surprised us that we were seizing so many, but the second and third time apprehensions -

**Mr COOPER** - It drops right off.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it certainly drops right off. That gives an indication that people are not doing it a second and a third time and we had the increased seizure rate time so instead of 48 hours it is now seven days. I think it is having a positive effect on that sort of driving behaviour - there are a lot of people who still don't get the message - and also Parliament

considering increasing the number of offences where we can seize motor vehicles. Again it is one of those extra tools in the things you can do to get these people off the road, because no one wants to see black marks on the road. It is dangerous. We have seen many accidents occur through people driving irresponsibly, whether it is donuts, whether it is racing or any of these things. We have employed various tactics to catch these people, including encouraging people to report them to us and we will follow it up later on. We have had many seizures of motor vehicles where off-duty police officers witness an event. They might not react to it straight away, but we have 10 days to go round to a house with a tow-truck and go and seize the vehicle, and that certainly has a ripple effect around the community. So I think the laws are working, and we will continue to target that sort of behaviour, because again it is just irresponsible driving. It is not only unlawful but it is also dangerous.

**Ms FORREST** - There has been some recent comment in the media and some suggestions from the Government about reducing the uppermost speed limit from 110 to 100, and the rural roads back to 90.

**Mr HINE** - Back to 90, and gravel roads to 80.

**Ms FORREST** - From your experience out there policing and seeing the major causes of crashes and serious injury and fatal crashes, do you have a view on that? Would that make a difference in your mind?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose one of the main things we do is to police the speed limits that are currently in the law. We want people to obey the speed limit now, whether it is 110 or 100. The debate to lower the speed limit is a healthy debate to have within the community and within governments to ascertain whether it will reduce accidents. But our main focus is enforcing the law that people have given us the responsibility to do at the moment, and whether it is 110 or 100 or whatever the speed limit is, we will enforce it and we want people to obey those speed limits we have now.

**Ms FORREST** - I knew you'd give me that answer. It is the only answer you can really give in many respects. However, from being out there at the coal face, not so much now perhaps as the Acting Commissioner, but when you were out there at the coal face you must have come across car crashes where people were dead or seriously injured. Also, knowing the way our roads are built - and we know there are issues with ongoing work on trying to improve the quality of our roads - and acknowledging that people will make mistakes - even 'good drivers' will make mistakes - do you think that lowering the speed limit would actually make a difference on our open roads?

**Mr HINE** - Speed is a factor in any collision, and some of the experts say it is a matter of what society and the community will put up with. If we want to reduce serious and fatal accidents, or any accidents, we would have a very slow speed limit, but what your community will actually put up with and tolerate is another issue. And a lot of those accidents occur because people go above the speed limit they should be going at anyway. The physics are that the lower the speed of an accident or a crash in, the lower the injury. It is an interesting debate to have and I think it is one that should be continued.

**Ms FORREST** - People are still killed in crashes at 70 kph.



**Mr BRAZENDALE** - That is right. It is about driving to the conditions at the time.

**Ms FORREST** - And how you hit the object or are hit too.

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - That really is the key issue. As Mr Hine said, you could have the speed limit down to 70 and people still would have accidents. Speed limits are designed for what would be reasonable having regard to that road and its use. The important thing is about people driving within the conditions at the time. Many people die who are either observing the speed limit or are under the speed limit. So in answer to your question, it really is about responsible driving.

**Mr HINE** - It is about the conditions. Whether it is 110 or 100 - whatever it is - not all corners can be taken at that speed. Again, it is a limit, not a challenge. Just because it says 100 - not everyone is capable of driving at 100. Not everyone is capable of driving at 110. Not every corner should be taken at 110. Whether it is windy, wet or whatever, you drive to the conditions.

**Ms FORREST** - It is interesting when you look at the Northern Territory, which had no speed limit. They introduced the speed limit of 130 kilometres an hour and their fatality rates have actually gone up. I had this thought, 'Why would that happen?'. If someone sees a sign that says 130 does that mean it is a challenge, or the authorities say that I can drive at 130, so I will. They might have driven that road perhaps at 110 otherwise, but they think, 'It is 130 so that is what I will do'. Northern Territory is the only Territory or State that has a higher fatality rate per head than Tasmania. If you compare Tasmania with every other State and Territory except Northern Territory, we have a higher per population fatality rate. What do you put that down to? What is the next silver bullet?

**Mr HINE** - It is a good question. That is where we look to this committee as well, to assist us and the community to lower that rate to the national average. I think we are about 8.8 per cent and the national average is about 7 per cent.

**Ms FORREST** - And Victoria and New South Wales are down to fives and sixes.

**Mr HINE** - Yes. There are a number of issues obviously - our dispersed population, for example. In Melbourne or Sydney the opportunity to drive fast is very limited because you have a huge population within those areas. It is part of these reviews that are going on in relation to the matter. By the time we actually stop reviewing, and look back about how we are doing things to see how we can do better, that is when we are not doing the right things. So we are continuing to target the law enforcement aspect of it, and will continue. We will continue to do the research to see how we can do it better. I think if we get down to seven it means about 23 fatalities.

**Mr SINCLAIR** - The percentage is 5.6, which is the target. It would be around 28 for us.

**Mr HINE** - So 28 fatalities.

**Ms FORREST** - In the year?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - And we have had 27 this year already.

**Mr HINE** - That is right. There would be nothing better for us than to get it down to zero. That is always going to be our aim and our target. We know it is not a reality but we want it as low as we possibly can. In the last 10 years there have been huge decreases. In the last 30 years there have been huge decreases.

**Ms FORREST** - You can often relate those to specific events like seatbelts.

**Mr HINE** - And random breath testing.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, so do you think there is another area that should be targeted specifically in an area that has potential to be the next thing that has the major impact? It might not take it back to zero but it has a significant impact.

**Mr HINE** - I think the world is searching for that as well. We have driven down the rates pretty low and it is fluctuating now between various times. What is the next silver bullet? I am afraid that I do not have the answer.

**CHAIR** - If there could be a more visible presence of police on the roads, if there were some extra resources to make that possible, would that help?

**Mr HINE** - Again, it is how you use your resources. We are one aspect of road safety. If you had a police vehicle every kilometre are there still going to be fatal and serious accidents? Yes there will be.

**CHAIR** - I understand that it depends how you use the resources but does it not stand to reason that if you had extra resources and were able to have more visible policing presence on the roads that that would help? It is undeniable, isn't it?

**Mr HINE** - It is an interesting issue. Again, we use the resources that we have in the best way we can to reduce the fatal and serious accidents. I think that every police service in the world would love to have more resources

**CHAIR** - Exactly, that is why it is undeniable, isn't it?

**Mr HINE** - But, again, how many is enough?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - The important thing is getting a balance between available technology that causes us to be in a position to place what resources we have in a more strategic way and a more appropriate way at the time. There is technology that we are currently working through that will be available to us in time. That is more the key, rather than just staying you need some more. You really do need to work and use tools that optimise your ability to use what resources you have. That is where we have made significant inroads in the last few years and I think it is the big challenge for us in the next three to five years. That will be important to ensure that we do get people in the right place as often as we can.

**CHAIR** - To have more resources and more police officers would both help, would they not?

**Mr HINE** - And we would like people to drive the most modern car, the safest car that they possibly can, so that when they do have a crash then obviously survivability is going to be greatly increased.

**CHAIR** - That is another factor and there are many of them, but to have more resources for the technology and even more police officers would both help.

**Mr HINE** - We could have all the resources in the world; it is how you use them and deploy them.

**CHAIR** - I know that. Do you say you do not need any more police officers?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose the politically correct answer is always going to be that we would deal with how many police officers we have at the time and we will deploy them as best we can to get the best value out of them.

**CHAIR** - A very political answer. I think you are not acknowledging what is really undeniable. I appreciate the position that governments make policies and you cannot come out and say that you need more police; I am not suggesting that. I am just asking you really to acknowledge the obvious, that if there were more police officers it would be an advantage, not whether you can afford them or not. It would be an advantage, would it not?

**Mr HINE** - I suppose it is one of those things that comes out of all your deliberations and speaking to various people. It is also a matter for the committee to say whether it is going to be an advantage for a police service, law enforcement whatever to have extra resources. As I said, there is not one police service in the world that would say they would rather have extra resources in teachers, hospitals and those things.

**CHAIR** - You do not seem to be saying that, though.

**Mr HINE** - Every government service would love to have more resources; we know that. I am not going to deny that and I am not going to say I would not like a police officer on every corner of every street in a police car but we just know that is not a practical reality.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you believe that more police officers visibly present on the roads could have a positive impact on the number of traffic offences that are occurring and/or the number of crashes?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - There is quite a bit of research to answer that question. It talks about the balance between high-visibility policing and however you are placed and your enforcement techniques.

**Ms FORREST** - Your interpretation of that research, what would that tell me?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - That would tell us - and it is telling us - that our most effective model is to try to get the balance right. The one thing that we probably still have to do some work with, and we are doing it with the Road Safety Taskforce and the Road Safety Council, is getting the work that we do from an enforcement angle in line with the media campaigns, advertising and the campaigns that more appropriately affect and control the

indicators to driver behaviour. That is clearly what much of the research is telling us and it is clearly one of the more challenging things that we need to work towards in the next few years. The Road Safety Council and the police accept that and are doing quite a deal of work on it.

**CHAIR** - Could you let us have a copy of one of those reports?

**Mr BRAZENDALE** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - The other issue is what happens when police aren't there. That is when a lot of these accidents occur. Sometimes even when police are there we have had examples where serious and fatal accidents occur.

**CHAIR** - I see what you're saying; if there were more police there would be fewer occasions when they were not there and that would be an improvement.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - You are aware of the point-for-point speed testing that applies on highways such as the Hume Highway, where a camera checks the number of the vehicle travelling one way and that is checked a couple of hundred kilometres or 300 kilometres further on and the speed is assessed. Are we likely to have such a system here in the foreseeable future?

**Mr HINE** - We have it on our list of things to look at. We are looking at a lot of new technologies, including the numberplate recognition. It is one of those issues that we have to see how effective it is, the cost benefit and all those issues. There are a lot of technologies out there that may be of benefit to Tasmania.

**Mr HARRISS** - In terms of driver education, does Tasmania Police have a view about driver education in schools as a mandatory component of addressing road safety?

**Mr HINE** - I am not aware of anything. There is a lot of debate about driver education and that is another department's purview. We have a number of programs where we work in schools to give people information about the do's and don'ts on the road. It is an interesting debate and there is a lot of debate around the community as to whether it works or not. Our main concern is about law enforcement so therefore if people are better informed about what they can and can't do and what is safe driving behaviour it is a good thing from our point of view. How formally you get into that education is a matter for greater debate.

**Ms FORREST** - With regard to fatigue - and we mentioned that in regard to the Falls Festival debate - there has been some comment about the fatigue of truck drivers when they are monitored and have to log their hours. The issue has been raised about other people operating commercial vehicles, not trucks, and even fatigue affecting drivers generally. Do you believe that people driving commercially, whether it be a car, a van or a truck, should all be monitored and have restrictions placed around the amount of time they drive?

**Mr HINE** - Fatigue is an interesting issue. We have had a number of accidents that have been caused by people falling asleep at the wheel. Whether you are driving a van or whatever or whether you are doing a lot of driving, as you no doubt do on the highway, it

is not what occupation you are in or what you are driving it is the driver themselves. If they are starting to fall asleep and not recognising the signs, they are at a greater risk. It really doesn't matter what occupation you are in, if you are doing a lot of driving and not recognising those signs or taking the time to pull over. For example, I was following someone the other day and they were all over the road. I pulled them over and they had worked a couple of shifts and were tired and falling asleep.

**Ms FORREST** - They were lucky you pulled them over.

**Mr HINE** - It is not the occupation or what you are driving, it is the driver themselves. It can be a very small motor vehicle that can cause a lot of carnage on the road. In answer to your question, it should be everyone and not just targeting those who drive commercial vehicles or whatever.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that issue then comes down to a workplace health and safety matter rather than a police matter?

**Mr HINE** - I think if someone is driving so much that they are getting regularly fatigued then obviously you have to look at it as an employer and they have to recognise themselves about getting fatigued. I know that a lot of politicians drive a lot of kilometres so therefore they should be educated about fatigue and how it affects them. I think it is driver-based rather than occupation based.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think there needs to be more education around that? It is not just the amount of hours you have been driving, if you drive at a time when you normally would sleep, it might only be a short distance but you're normally asleep at that time, that could potentially be a factor. Do you think there needs to be a greater focus on this as an issue? You say you have come across crashes where people falling asleep has been issue.

**Mr HINE** - There definitely has, and I think it is definitely an issue. Part of the Road Safety Taskforce education campaigns have addressed that very issue, to educate people about falling asleep at the wheel, taking Driver Reviver stops, every two hours take a break. There has been an education campaign around those issues as well.

**CHAIR** - In information in tables provided by the minister's office it shows a number of people in different age groups who were booked for speeding, on the one hand by road safety cameras, on the other by on-the-spot policing. It showed more people in almost all the age groups had more charges against them as a result of road safety cameras than on-the-spot policing, except young people in the 17-20 age group where the trend reversed. Do you know the reason? Were you aware of that?

**Mr HINE** - Speed cameras don't recognise P-platers. If you go out on the open road at 100 kph there are certain tolerances that you set a speed camera at so they don't recognise that they should only be doing 80 kph, but a police officer with a hand-held device can recognise the P-plater and pull them up at the time.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, gentlemen, for all the information and help you have given us. We appreciate that.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY  
REGULATION, HOBART 6/05/09  
(HINE/BRAZENDALE/SINCLAIR/GRIFFITHS/COOPER)**

**Mr PAUL SALTER AND Mr MIKE BROWN, TASMANIAN FIRE SERVICE, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Welcome, Mr Brown and Mr Salter. Thank you very much coming. You have not actually made a written submission, have you?

**Mr BROWN** - No.

**CHAIR** - We look forward to hearing your views on road safety in accordance with the terms of reference.

**Ms FORREST** - We actually invited you to come, I believe?

**CHAIR** - Yes, because apart from anything else, one of the terms of reference involves the treatment and caring for people who sustain injuries in road trauma. With your experience in dealing with the aftermath of crashes we thought it would be very helpful to hear from representatives of the Tasmanian Fire Service. If you would let us have your views on that.

**Mr BROWN** - Can I give you some background then on our involvement in road accident rescue?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr BROWN** - Prior to 2006, road accident rescue services in Tasmania were provided by the Tasmanian Ambulance Service in the metropolitan and surrounding areas and the State Emergency Service in rural. Today it is still provided by the State Emergency Service in the rural areas but following a decision from the Minister for Health and Human Services after an inquiry into road accident rescue services, Tasmania Fire Service began undertaking road accident rescue from December 2006.

There was some controversy and industrial issues in relation to that. It had been with the ambulance for quite some time, probably 20 or 30 years prior to that, but Tasmania Fire Service were attending motor vehicle accidents anyway and the ambulance service, while they did a terrific job with it, clearly in turning out with crews of just two people they were handling a lot of work in patient care and patient management on one hand, and also motor vehicle patient extrication on the other hand. It made some sense, given it is the standard practice throughout the rest of Australia and indeed most of the world, that the fire services should undertake the extrication role in road accident rescue.

From that we commenced services in December 2006, and that followed a fairly intensive period of Tasmania Fire Service gearing up and equipping ourselves for road accident rescue, and even more so the training of our personnel, because we needed to train all of our career fire fighters in all of our career brigade areas in road accident rescue. So we needed to gain the appropriate people or access the appropriate people to conduct that training, and they trained the trainers, if you like, and we rolled our training over a seven-day-a-week day and night training schedule. Pretty much everything was dropped for three months to train up all our people to an adequate standard of skill in

road accident rescue, and they were trained to nationally accredited competencies under the Public Safety Training package in those skill areas.

From the morning of 1 December 2006, our people started to undertake that role. There was probably understandably some trepidation in that, particularly in earlier times, because Ambulance were attending too, and perhaps there was a feeling from our people that there would be some fairly critical observation of their task and the way they were doing their role in motor vehicle extrication or patient extrication, but I believe that's gone very well. The feedback we've been getting since that point in time is in fact one of, for the most part, compliment from the ambulance service and other people involved in road accident rescue scenes.

To date, since December 2006 we have handled or responded to statewide 2 827 motor vehicle accidents, and actual extrications involved in those accidents totalled 196. Does that answer the question for you, Mr Wing, or at least given you some background?

**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you. So you're not replacing or performing any of the functions performed previously by the ambulance service, except with the extrication.

**Mr BROWN** - Not in terms of patient care.

**CHAIR** - Except extrication.

**Mr BROWN** - Except in extrication, or unless it's an absolutely life critical incident. Our general rule is that our people won't perform any patient care operations until Ambulance arrive, but if there's imminent danger of the motor vehicle catching fire, or in some cases where a motor vehicles might crash into a river, if the immediate risk is drowning then our people will do what they have to do to get the patient out into a safe area.

**CHAIR** - So with serious crashes, people would normally seek assistance from you now, the Ambulance service and the police. Who usually arrives first?

**Mr BROWN** - We haven't given any direction to the public to change the way in which they would call for assistance to a motor vehicle accident, so predominantly we would still get our call initially from the ambulance service or the police service. We didn't want to confuse the public, so we thought it best to leave it that way. There are emergency hotlines or established lines between ambulance control rooms and police control lines to us, anyway, so there's no time delay in doing that. As I say, we didn't want to confuse the public.

**CHAIR** - So as a general rule, does one service or the other usually arrive first? Who usually arrives first?

**Mr BROWN** - That's variable in that from time to time, particularly in rural remote areas, our services might arrive first. When I say our services, that may well be often the local volunteer fire brigade, so it is variable as to who arrives first. There are cases where it might be Police, it might be SES or it might be Fire or Ambulance that arrives first. I don't know if you've got any other comment on that.

**Mr SALTER** - Largely in the built-up areas it would more likely be Police who would be there first with more vehicles on the road, and they tend to be within the vicinity. The Fire Service I reckon would be second.

**Ms FORREST** - In the circumstance where you arrive at a crash scene before the ambulance, is there an expectation from people that you will do something? If someone is in a car obviously injured not enough perhaps to be life threatening at that time but requiring some assistance is there an expectation that you will undertake some patient care? How do you deal with that?

**Mr BROWN** - Yes, I probably should clarify that. We will under the vast majority of circumstances not extricate the patient but if we are observing that the patient, for example, cannot breathe or has serious bleeding injury our people have first aid qualifications again up to a Public Safety Training package standard and can render that initial first aid assistance.

**Ms FORREST** - Then you would do so?

**Mr BROWN** - But the advanced life supports are most certainly left with advanced skills of the ambulance officers.

**Ms FORREST** - You would not start CPR on the person then?

**Mr BROWN** - That is possible.

**Ms FORREST** - You would?

**Mr BROWN** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Obviously if you are going to undertake CPR you would need to get them out of the vehicle. Effective CPR needs to be outside a vehicle.

**Mr BROWN** - That might be the case but if someone has stopped breathing we would have to get them out of the vehicle to do that, if we have to commence CPR. But what we are hearing is in most cases that is not the case and then the risk is spinal damage. So clearly the advanced medical qualifications and experience of paramedics is better to handle that.

**Ms FORREST** - Including if a person could have had a heart attack and proceeded to crash?

**Mr BROWN** - Yes, I see what you mean.

**Mr SALTER** - Any life threatening situations are obviously the priority.

**Ms FORREST** - I know it is only a year, well it is 2006 isn't it?

**Mr SALTER** - December 2006.

**Ms FORREST** - So we have had a couple of years?



**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that there is a better utilisation of resources with the way it is done now?

**Mr BROWN** - I think there is because the fire service was attending the incidents anyway because of fire service response to not only fire but also potential fire. Clearly at a motor vehicle accident where there is quite often spilt fuels there is potential for fire. So it is a better utilisation of those resources because they have another very important role to do that frees up ambulance personnel to do the work that they need to do in maintaining life and managing the patient and transferring the patient to hospital.

**Ms FORREST** - We will also ask the ambulance officers their view of that same argument because they are the ones who have effectively had that as part of their traditional role in Tasmania.

**Mr BROWN** - Yes.

**Mr HARRISS** - What sort of debriefing process is followed? I am aware that happens with the ambulance service after attending to whatever the situation. Is there a requirement for you to be involved in that?

**Mr BROWN** - Yes, there is. One of the things I did not mention is that when we got into road accident and rescue so to speak we had a committee, and we still have the committee, the State Road Rescue Committee chaired by the Deputy Police Commissioner, to assist in the introduction of TFS undertaking road accident and rescue. But we broadened the roles of that committee fairly early in the piece and said it was better to have a whole-of-State approach to road accident rescue services in terms of making the decisions about who will respond to where and in setting guidelines about what training requirements people need to have et cetera.

One of the things that it does point out in there is the need for debriefs, they need to be across agencies debriefs. So where there are serious incidents we will have a debrief with our responding crew and the ambulance responding crew as well to sort through any issues that may have arisen from that incident. Those debrief requirements are in the arrangements document, which we can put forward if you wish.

The other point is that all four agencies share a critical incident stress management program. Facilitators and providers, and where people have been exposed to significant trauma, use that program and its debriefers and that has been very successful.

**Mr HARRISS** - It would be good to get that document if you do not mind, Mike. I guess there has been a perception out there or a misconception even that the notion of first response to an emergency may well have necessitated the Tasmania Fire Service taking the medical attention further. That is a perception and I think you have cleared that up and that debrief document will probably be valuable information for this committee as well. Do you want to table that one now or do you want to get it to us?

**Mr BROWN** - Thanks, Mr Harriss, we can table that now.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr BROWN** - As a supplement to that, we have a memorandum of understanding between the emergency services about notification and communications because we do run separate communications and it is important that such incidents are dealt with and the appropriate responses sent so we needed to have protocols around that too. We will tender that too.

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

**Ms FORREST** - Another matter that we were informed of when we were interstate looking at road safety matters in South Australia when we talked to the director of their trauma centre in Adelaide is that when there is a response and the ambulance go out to a car crash, certainly in the Adelaide immediate vicinity but I am not sure how far it extends into the regional areas, I am not sure whose responsibility it is but someone within the first-line response takes photographs of the vehicles involved and the setting, not the victims as such, but that will obviously be in the photos at times. The reason for that, they described, is that sometimes when a patient comes into the Department of Emergency Medicine they can appear well. He showed us an example of one young man who had been in a car crash who had a significant seatbelt mark on his chest and abdomen and he was happy, walking around saying he was fine and he wanted to go home. They looked at the photographs of the crash and the car was extensively damaged; I think it was a head-on in that particular instance. The doctors thought he looked okay, his vital signs were stable and he seemed fine. But after looking at the photos of the crash they thought they should investigate a bit further. They did a chest X-ray and a few other investigations and found that he had a leaking aorta. So he was not going anywhere, except to the operating theatre at that point. Effectively, he could have walked out and ruptured his aorta and died in the street an hour or two later, who knows.

Has any consideration been given at all to that process? Those photos have been destroyed, I understand. They are not ever used in evidence or in any court proceedings or anything like that, they are just used for the purpose of identifying other injuries the patient may have sustained because of the impact, where the car was hit, what it hit, the potential speed and those sorts of things.

**Mr SALTER** - We had discussions in relation to photos, but not so much for evidence of mechanism of injury but more so we are looking at security matters. It is pretty much left to police to take the photography and it has not been asked, medically, to provide that evidence at all, as far as I am aware.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that call would need to come the medical profession? Is that what you are suggesting?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes, otherwise we would not be taking photos, especially of patients or vehicles.

**Mr BROWN** - We do ensure, though, that our people will not stop an ambulance response. What I mean by that is, if we get to an incident our people might believe it is relatively minor, particularly in terms of what the driver or the occupant of the car might have

suffered, but it is not for us to make that decision. It is for the better-trained paramedic to make that decision. So that is one thing that is very clear in our arrangements.

**Ms FORREST** - The ambulance crew probably liaise more closely with the emergency medicine staff when they present with a patient. But you do not ever accompany the patient to the DEM?

**Mr BROWN** - No.

**Ms FORREST** - So your role stops as soon as the patients leave the scene and you ensure the car is not on fire or whatever?

**Mr BROWN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - On that subject, you have attended about 2 800 crashes, I think you said?

**Mr BROWN** - Motor vehicle incidents.

**CHAIR** - Was is 2 800?

**Mr BROWN** - Total motor vehicle incidents, 2 827. That is since December 2006 up until February.

**CHAIR** - How many of those involved a vehicle burning or catching fire?

**Mr BROWN** - I do not have that data with me at the moment.

**CHAIR** - What would your feeling be, a high percentage or a very low percentage?

**Mr SALTER** - It is a low percentage. We will not filter that because once it becomes a fire then it gets entered into our database in a different mechanism. It is not classified then as a rescue but as a fire.

**CHAIR** - Any of those would not be included in the 2 827 or would they be in both records?

**Mr SALTER** - They would end up in both.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any views about the desirability or importance of motor vehicles carrying fire extinguishers?

**Mr BROWN** - We would say it is preferable that motor vehicles carry fire extinguishers.

**Mr SALTER** - It would be more for somebody helping, a bystander being able to help but not necessarily the vehicle that is involved.

**Mr BROWN** - I have carried a fire extinguisher all through my driving experience and I have used it once for someone else. It was not for me. It would be rather embarrassing probably if it were for me.

**Ms FORREST** - But at least you have one.

**Mr BROWN** - Yes.

**Mr SALTER** - As a safety measure for fire, we find that very beneficial that a percentage of the population do carry them in the vehicles as it can help somebody but a large percentage of fires start from the motor essentially and not necessarily from an accident.

**CHAIR** - I see, not from collision?

**Mr SALTER** - A large percentage of our vehicle fires are not involved in accidents.

**CHAIR** - It is a malfunction of the engine?

**Mr SALTER** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - They catch on fire when people get out.

**Mr SALTER** - Yes, and somebody comes along with dry chem and sprays them down.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your time and your views. We appreciate your help.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**Mr ALBERT OGILVIE** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Mr Ogilvie, welcome and thank you very much for your two submissions and for coming to share your views and the considerable experience that you have had in legal practice with road trauma and damages. We have had the opportunity of reading your initial submission and then the one elaborating on that. I would like to give you the opportunity to discuss any or all of the matters that you have referred to in that and then we would like to ask you some questions.

**Mr OGILVIE** - On 20 September 2008 I submitted a written submission with 12 suggestions related to road safety. I then amplified each of those suggestions in written comments, e-mailed in on 29 April 2009. My fundamental thought process was that the protection for life and limb in the workplace is far greater than the protection for life and limb on the roadways. That disparity, it seemed to me, was key to seeing some possible breakthrough in improving the outcomes on the roads compared with the workplace. That was the fundamental driver of my thinking.

**CHAIR** - Perhaps for the record and the transcript, would you like to give some details about your experience with damages claims and the numbers you've referred to in your submission?

**Mr OGILVIE** - I have spent some 40 years in legal practice acting for hundreds of persons injured in road traffic crashes and also for insurers in hundreds of such cases. As I have said in my submission, I have spent countless hours in court cases examining and debating the responsibility of motorists for road traffic crashes. That involved much evidence from police officers, engineers and road traffic experts as to the inferences that could be drawn from debris on the road, damage to the vehicles, visibility, speed calculations, reaction time calculations, braking distance calculations. The minutiae that was involved in that was quite extraordinary to attempt to disentangle the precise causation of something that effectively had happened in a split second. It all seems a bit sad in a way to think of the time and effort put into that when the outcome is the same; people's lives were damaged or destroyed.

I have acted for many people who have suffered quadriplegia, paraplegia and severe brain damage. The motivation to put in my submissions was the fact that I was so aware of the devastation these injuries caused to the persons involved and their families and friends. It is a terrible thing that, sadly, we appear to tolerate as a community.

Without repeating all of my suggestions, the key opinion I formed was that in contradistinction to the industrial situation, we are told in *Mercury* on 17 April 2009 that thousands of Tasmanians were caught breaking the law on the State's roads during the Easter holiday period.

**CHAIR** - Did that really mean thousands?

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes, it did. They quoted the numbers: 1 500 for this, so many hundred for that.

**CHAIR** - Just over the Easter period?

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes. I am not sure if I have that clipping with me. Here is the clipping - would it assist the committee to have it?

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will have it copied and return the original to you.

**Mr OGILVIE** - That gives the numbers where I have marked it. It seemed to me from that, that if thousands of people are breaking traffic laws, traffic laws are not going to stop accidents. That brought me to the fundamental proposition that I have arrived at, that there could be a dramatic reduction in injuries resulting from road crashes by making roads substantially crash tolerant. When I researched that I found that much more expert persons that I had been developing this idea. I quoted the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-16 which referred to the Swedish practice and the Netherlands practice. I was very pleased to read the Swedish practice, which said:

'Sweden's Vision Zero approach represents one government's uncompromising commitment to safety based on the moral standing that human life must be protected whatever the cost.

Vision Zero requires government to provide a forgiving road environment to accommodate inevitable human error.'

The Netherlands quotation I provided ended with the words:

'The road user is considered to be the weakest link in the chain and largely unpredictable.'

I concluded that section of my submission with these words:

'We must outmanoeuvre bad drivers with error-forgiving roads.'

I know that this committee has had far more input and has far more knowledge than I have of these matters, but this was my focus after a lifetime of working in this area, that we have probably reached a point of diminishing returns with all the other matters. We want vehicle safety obviously, and we want driver behaviour, but this looks to me to be a fruitful line of attack on this terrible problem.

**CHAIR** - And you prefer the solid central barriers and the solid small barriers on the side, but not wire rope barriers. We'd be interested to hear why you feel that.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I've formed that view on intuitive grounds, but as I said in my expanded comments in relation to that under the heading on page 7, 'The nature of barriers', I said why I would prefer that. I personally would rather strike a glancing blow in a motor vehicle against a smooth, solid barrier rather than hit posts supporting wire ropes, with the risk of the vehicle being spun or overturned. I referred to the fact that motorcyclists are concerned about these structures. I then said -

'However, if authoritative vehicle impact testing supports the use of posts and wires as being more effective in minimising crash outcomes than solid barriers, I would of course accept that conclusion'.

Since writing that, I have now added, 'This may be a matter upon which the committee would seek expert evidence, or may already have it'. Since writing that, I took the trouble to spend an hour on the Internet looking at this very question last night, and I am rather comforted to find that wire rope barriers are criticised. I came across - and I will tender this - a letter from the Institute of Advanced Motoring, which is a British body, as I understand it, writing a letter to MCN, which I take to be a peak motorcycling body in England, with the heading, 'Deadly wire rope barriers for UK roads - MCN 12 December', which I took to be last year. The writer from the IAM says -

'I can assure your readers that the IM Motoring Trust is not campaigning for wire rope crash barriers on UK roads. In a study we commissioned at the beginning of the year, reported in MCN on 18 April, we identified both wire rope and Armco-type barriers as being potentially lethal to riders, particularly their supporting metal posts.

Following that initial scoping study, the IAM Trust is sponsoring a major international research study of the potential risks of crash barriers to riders and how designs could be changed to make them rider-friendly.'

There's more to that effect in that article, but it just left me with the view that this is a rather contentious issue, with expert engineering factors involved which the committee might well explore further.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We have had quite a bit of evidence on the subject, and we were interested to hear your views.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I don't offer them as any way based on any engineering expertise. To summarise my submissions, the primary submissions I made were related to road safety in terms of making roads, as far as possible, crash proof - I emphasise 'as far as possible'. Then there were some 10 other suggestions.

**Mr HARRISS** - You've gone to the notion of the possibility of a dedicated court to facilitate quick processing, because we have a number of traffic offences. The other one amongst that miscellany which you have described is the notion of free breath testing at alcohol distributing premises, because as you have indicated here it's a crazy law allows people to break the law and we don't ever find out about it until we random test, rather than let them self-test. Do you want to expand on those?

**Mr OGILVIE** - I will take the second one first. I took the trouble to get myself an alcohol tester for about \$150 from one of the local stores. I, like I hope all responsible people, try to be very careful with this. I was quite astonished to find my alcohol levels were higher than I thought they were. When I thought I'd been careful and hadn't had any alcohol that would be too much to drive, I checked and found that I was above the limit by one or two points, when I thought I would be two or three points under it and therefore I did not drive. It makes me wonder what I had done on other occasions when I

thought I had been careful, thought I had adhered to the one-drink-an-hour principle. So I had a shock and that is why I suggested it.

**Ms FORREST** - On that point, we have had some evidence that those devices should only be used as a guide because unless they are calibrated regularly their accuracy is anything but that -

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - so people could be safe to drive when they are told by the machine that they are not, or the opposite. Would that potentially create a whole new set of problems? If people said they will rely on that machine, but it might not have been calibrated for three years because there is no legislative requirement of the pub or club to have it maintained and calibrated regularly, are we potentially creating a whole set of new issues?

**Mr OGILVIE** - The submission I put was that you should require free breath-testing machines to be available to all establishments providing alcohol to the public. That imposes a cost but it is a penalty or an offset for the profit that is made out of selling something that leads to death and injury on the roads frequently. I do not see the slightest problem in requiring the machines to be properly installed and properly maintained.

**Ms FORREST** - That would be part of your submission?

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes. My personal little breathalyser came with a warning that it needed to be recalibrated every six months or after so many blows. After a period I did send it back to be recalibrated and was pleased to see a report that it was reading high.

**CHAIR** - You were not as high as you thought.

**Mr OGILVIE** - No, but it meant it was safe. The effect of that was that I basically adopted a policy of never driving where drink was involved. In other words it educated me in a very healthy way in terms of driving and drinking.

**CHAIR** - Even one or two drinks?

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes, it is too risky now. The level was far higher than I thought it was. I do not see any problem in requiring the publican who is supplying alcohol to require the machine to be recalibrated every six months. There would be provisions in it to protect against false readings and wrong readings, but assuming that modern science is fairly reliable and competent it would be an enormous help to anyone leaving a restaurant. 'My gosh, I am not driving home tonight; look at any reading.' That is just my suggestion.

**Ms FORREST** - Can I draw your attention to a case where a fellow was driving a motor bike or it might have been a car, gave his keys to the publican, had way too many drinks, knew he was not fit to drive but decided he might drive home after all and asked for his keys back. The publican refused. He told him he only wanted the key to his house, so the publican gave him his keys. He took off, drove home and had a crash on the way and was killed. The family, I believe, sued the publican and won. If there is a facility in the



hotel or whatever it is, in the event that someone chooses not to use it could we potentially have the same risk for a publican there?

**Mr OGILVIE** - It had not occurred to me to make it compulsory. I have read the facts closely because I was interested in it legally. There was talk of it going on appeal to the High Court. Had the publican said to him, 'Look, there is the free breath-testing machine on the wall. I will give you the keys back if you pass.', I think he would have been in the clear because the man would have failed.

**Ms FORREST** - My understanding is that he handed the keys back because the man wanted his house keys to get in when he got a taxi home.

**Mr OGILVIE** - That is not my recollection. He was insisting that he drive home; that was my recollection of the facts.

**CHAIR** - When he arrived at the hotel that night he gave the keys to the publican so that he would not be tempted to drive home. Then after he had too much to drink he insisted on getting them back, and at his insistence, which was pretty strong, the publican returned the keys to him.

**Ms FORREST** - Okay, maybe it was another case and I might have confused the two. Someone else gave the keys back on the understanding that the person was going to take their house key off it so that when they got home in the cab they could get into their house.

**Mr OGILVIE** - No, that was not my memory of that one.

**Ms FORREST** - It must be another case the publican told me about.

**Mr OGILVIE** - In this case, the one that we are referring to now, the full court as I recollect said, 'The publican should have rung the man's wife to come and get him'. Well, that seems to be getting a bit involved in domestic activities in my opinion. It might not have suited the wife, who knows. But had a machine been there and the publican had said, 'Let's see how you blow' and he blew 0.3 or something, that would have been the end of the debate.

**CHAIR** - He was obviously intoxicated anyway.

**Mr OGILVIE** - It was a high reading that was recited. The comment was made about this strange law, that we are just flying blind. We go out and have alcohol with a meal and jump behind the wheel.

The first point that you raised was the question about the dedicated traffic court. That is a major revenue suggestion. I suppose it would involve a lot of cost but from practice - I did a lot of traffic cases as well - I think the lower court is now very much more efficient and effective in the disposition of its business but they used to go on for months and months with some speeding charge that six or eight months ago was coming up to be examined. It was that long after the event that there was no sense of connection between the event and the penalty. So that submission was to make special arrangements for

court cases to be heard very soon after the date of alleged traffic offences and I added there may be a case for a dedicated traffic court to deal with traffic cases properly.

I envisage if some person were pulled up for a traffic offence and they were in court within four or five days it would have a very salutary effect on them.

**Ms FORREST** - It is like punishing a child, isn't it, if you do not link it to the event quite soon afterwards.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I do not want to have this taken out of context but with an animal if you are training it, it is no good having the training after the event has occurred. But this is different; these are human beings. The connection I think would be a good idea.

**Ms FORREST** - We had some evidence this morning that disqualified and unlicensed but particularly disqualified drivers which we are focusing on at the moment are overrepresented in some of our crash statistics, fatalities and serious-injury crashes. From your experience, have you seen that as a significant issue, that you are seeing a lot of disqualified drivers involved in the setting that you have practised in?

**Mr OGILVIE** - No, it was not my experience. In all the hundreds and hundreds of injury cases I do not think that I can recall an unlicensed driver being the guilty party. It must be a very small percentage.

**CHAIR** - We just heard evidence that of the fatal accidents so far this year there have been two disqualified and two unlicensed.

**Ms FORREST** - That is in 27.

**CHAIR** - Four out of 27.

**Mr OGILVIE** - That was for fatalities?

**CHAIR** - Yes, fatal accidents; they all died.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I am not sure. You would probably know the number of injuries to fatalities is a factor of whatever it is - 10, 15, 20.

**CHAIR** - That varies because this year so far the number of fatalities has been higher than in the last couple of years. So it does vary but I am not sure what the ratio normally is.

**Mr OGILVIE** - Again, in my practice most of the cases were the injury cases. The fatality cases were relatively promptly dealt with. It was the injury cases that were drawn out. They were represented more on the contentious list, I suppose. It may be the point that you are making, that the unlicensed or suspended drivers are doing even more damage.

**Ms FORREST** - That was the suggestion, that they are becoming more of an issue and the police intend to target that sector.

**Mr OGILVIE** - It is a bit hard to know when you hear the police officers regularly on television saying, 'We do not know what we can do to get the message across because these people are just not listening'.

**CHAIR** - Yes. On that issue, do you feel there is a case for requiring learner drivers to undertake some course of instruction even if it is only information, not involving driving, not driver training but a course where they are given hints about what to do in certain potentially dangerous situations, such as wet conditions and in skids?

**Mr OGILVIE** - I would absolutely support that. My mind is going to other areas of activity that I have been involved in. With bushwalking, we had a very good mandatory training overnight camp with an expert and a mandatory three or four walks with tips and advice. I remember those lessons to this day, and the same with snow skiing. It is potentially a very dangerous sport. Again, the advice and instruction you get is crucial. So, yes, I would support that.

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Ms FORREST** - Would you suggest the same in the area of off-road trail bikes and those sorts of things? We are hearing that a lot of parents buy these bikes for their kids because they would like to go riding as a family or whatever, but there is no requirement for those riders to be licensed and often they are under age anyway, so they could not hold a licence. Do you think that would be a positive step in providing some education about appropriate gear, safe riding and those areas?

**Mr OGILVIE** - If the incidence warrants it, I do not know. But you are saying you are hearing a lot of that.

**Ms FORREST** - We are hearing of a number of off-road crashes here, certainly injuries more so than fatalities, although there are fatalities.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I read yesterday or the day before of a girl on a quad bike who was rushed to Hobart - probably an off-road vehicle, I do not know. I was exposed to a situation with them at the weekend in the country and I said to my friend who I was with, 'These would have to be the most dangerous things on earth. There is no roll bar, there are no crash helmets, there is no seatbelt and you are going over terrain where the four wheels are going through all the dimensions'. They certainly could warrant some instruction and advice, all of those things - trail bikes and quad bikes, off-road.

**Ms FORREST** - Quad bikes are mostly used on farms, generally, the serious quad bikes, and we do see fatalities on farms from quad bikes.

**Mr OGILVIE** - I know. A friend and I were taken out on quad bikes on the weekend with nothing beyond the four wheels and the seat. It struck me that is a very dangerous situation. Helmets are compulsory on motorbikes but I do not know if there is any requirement on quad bikes off-road. They did not have a crash helmet, let alone instruction. I would agree with you on that.

**CHAIR** - With your reference to the solid central barriers and the small solid barriers for the edges of the road, you say that there are examples of them in Tasmania, are they ones that extend about 1 foot high?

**Mr OGILVIE** - They about the wheel height, I think.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I think they are at the top of the Southern Outlet Road in Launceston. Can you tell us other places where they are?

**Mr OGILVIE** - If you drive to the airport you will see a variation on the theme. From Hobart to the airport you will see some wire ropes, you will see some Armco rails, metal rails and I think we also have some concrete.

**CHAIR** - Some of them in the middle?

**Mr OGILVIE** - I think so. They are all over the place but I do not have any specific examples.

**CHAIR** - So that would be a divided four-lane highway section, I suppose?

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes, and two things occurred to me leading up to this hearing in that connection. There was the sad case over Easter of the policeman who hit the pole and died. He would not have been able to hit the pole if there had been some barrier there. Also there was the poor motorcyclist who got mixed up on the lanes on the bridge the other day. According to the letter to the paper from his mother, he got confused about the lanes. It may or may not be his evidence, of course. Driving over the bridge with a strip of paint and cars going past each other a metre or two apart worries me.

**Ms FORREST** - Unless you had a moveable barrier in that case. My understanding was that at certain times of the day they had three lanes going one way and two the other and then they will swap them.

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes, that is right.

**Ms FORREST** - So unless you could move the barrier to enable three lanes one way in the mornings and then two that way in the afternoon that would be very difficult to achieve.

**Mr OGILVIE** - It would not be easy but at least maybe red poles every three, four or five metres - something to stop the motorcyclists getting confused.

**Ms FORREST** - I can see how it could happen because he is coming out and then thinking, 'Is it three lanes this way or two?'

**Mr OGILVIE** - Momentary inattention.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. When entering the bridge at that point there is nothing that tells you immediately which way the three lanes are going at that particular time.

**Mr OGILVIE** - Again, on the bridge you come up from the airport at, I think it is 110, and then you hit 80 and then you hit 70 in a very short space. Once you get past that 70 sign

and you are on the bridge there is nothing to tell you what the speed is. I have often wished there was one hanging off the gantries. I know it now as a long-term resident but what do the visitors find? Do they miss the sign on the side of the road?

**CHAIR** - And in other places as well, particularly if there is constant changing of the speed limit.

**Mr OGILVIE** - While driving to Sorell I have asked several times, once I passed the airport roundabout and if I have not paid special attention, is this 80 or 100? So I drive at 80 because I am not sure. I have learned that off by heart, I hope, when I am down that way, or know to look. So that was another one of my submissions.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have a view on the open road speed limit of 110 on the Midland Highway and others. We have had evidence that sections of the Bass Highway - the new sections between Devonport and Burnie certainly - could easily be signposted at 110. Do you have a view on that open road speed limit?

**Mr OGILVIE** - I am no expert on this but personally I think 110 is fine. I would go with national standards on this. If it is good enough for other States it should be good enough for us to have 110. I do not see that lowering speed limits is going to make much difference.

**Ms FORREST** - A lot of other States do have 100.

**Mr OGILVIE** - Okay. I would go with the national standard.

**Ms FORREST** - It does depend on the quality of the road, as I understand.

**Mr OGILVIE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - That is an assessment that is made by people more skilled than me.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Mr Ogilvie. We appreciate your interest in what the committee is doing and the information you have given us.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Ms TRACEY CURRIE**, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS COUNCIL OF TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Welcome Ms Currie. Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Ms CURRIE** - I am here principally to focus on alcohol and drug issues that are related to road safety. In reading the terms of reference and seeking information to write our report we received information from a number of different sources, such as the university. We received it from our national peak body for alcohol and drugs and other experts involved in alcohol and drugs and road safety.

Some of the key recommendations that our organisation would put forward would be that you implement those strategies that the Australian Council on National Road Safety has put forward, particularly the ones in the safe-system principles. They would be the communication strategies to engage the community in road safety, improved performance monitoring and progress measurement, and more effective partnerships between road safety agencies and the public health sector and other agencies involved with road safety. I am sure you are probably aware of those.

There are a few more recommendations that we would like to put forward. One would be that the State maintain its strategies of publicising and enforcing drink-driving laws. I guess that would be at a national level as well. The other one would be that there would be ongoing implementation and review of best practice community programs. Most of this, I am sure that you are aware, comes from the Australian Transport Council and the ongoing implementation of responsible serving of alcohol programs.

One of the main issues that I looked at in terms of the State level is diversionary programs. We have diversionary programs for people who use illicit drugs but our State does not necessarily have diversionary programs in terms of licit drugs, so if we are looking at alcohol, if someone gets caught under the influence there are not any diversionary programs for people who are under the influence of alcohol.

I also looked at how the State of Tasmania is implementing the strategies in the action plan. Regarding road safety and the safety of people who are under the influence of alcohol and drugs, mainly alcohol if they are out drinking and they need to get home, I noticed that some other States have booze buses and that would probably be a welcome strategy in our State, particularly as our transport system is not of a high standard.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you mean a booze bus to take people home as opposed to testing them?

**Ms CURRIE** - Yes, to take them home.

**Ms FORREST** - Our booze buses are colloquially known as the breath-testing unit.

**Ms CURRIE** - That is right, that is what I meant. There are a lot of issues but those were the main recommendations that our organisation would support this committee implementing.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have an opinion on the use of alcohol blocks in vehicles for people who are recidivist offenders? That does not provide a diversionary program, that is very much a control measure, but do you think that they have a place and if they do, should they be a part of or linked to a diversionary program as well because we need to address the problem not just identify it? What is your view on that?

**Ms CURRIE** - I guess it depends on the different levels and if a person was caught in maybe one or two instances then they would need to have to look at attending a rehabilitation program. That could be in the form of having a psychological assessment, it could be medical assessments, it might be that they would have to go to an ongoing treatment program for a period of time.

**Ms FORREST** - In your submission you said that a high proportion of recidivist drink drivers have alcohol dependence problems. Do you think that anyone who has more than one offence, bearing in mind that if they have been caught twice they have probably done it a lot more -

**Ms CURRIE** - I am sure.

**Ms FORREST** - Do we need to wait for them to be caught twice or should a first offence mean that they have some sort of mandatory program to address their alcohol dependency or establish that they do not have an alcohol dependency?

**Ms CURRIE** - Yes, I think that would be welcome, to have a mandatory program. We could model it similarly to the illicit drug police diversion programs. We do not do that at the moment. We do not do it on licits.

**CHAIR** - There is a feeling in the community that repeat drink-driving offenders should be quite harshly dealt with. Do you have a view on this or do you think that is contrary to rehabilitation? How should repeat drink drivers be dealt with?

**Ms CURRIE** - I think that we should have a program that looks at repeat offenders. We need to look at educating people who are repeat offenders. We need to also look at support programs and, again, it goes back to these treatment programs that we have. Yes, with repeat offenders there is a range of things that you can do. If we want to rehabilitate someone then throwing them in jail is not going to rehabilitate people and if it gets to that point where they have had too many offences and they have to go into jail, then alongside that sits a program that looks at treating that person for that substance use disorder.

**CHAIR** - In jail?

**Ms CURRIE** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you have a view about the set level of 0.05 being a reasonable blood alcohol level or do you think, from your experience in the field, that should be higher or should be lower? Where do you think it sits?

**Ms CURRIE** - At the moment I think it is reasonable. There are new guidelines on alcohol use coming out. I do not know what they are at the moment but I can provide that to you. What is a safe level of drinking? If you have one pot or two pots, is that the safe level? Sometimes people do not understand that if they drink a certain amount then they are going to be over the limit. So, yes, I think it is matching those two up together as well and -

**Ms FORREST** - Where does that paper come from?

**Ms CURRIE** - Ann Roach is an expert in that area. She has developed that just recently but I have not read it yet. That is why I cannot comment any more on it but I have read the summary of it.

**Ms FORREST** - Clearly we acknowledge through our laws, as they stand, that alcohol does affect driving because we restrict provisional drivers who have other issues of inexperience and their age, perhaps, whether that inexperience or their age are separate or whether they are combined is a bit hard to tell. They have a zero requirement for alcohol. But once you get past that, once you are off your provisional licence, you can have 0.05. There are some claims that that is a reasonable level and once you get beyond that then your capacity is severely reduced. But there is also some evidence that your judgment becomes impaired after 0.02. Does the council have an opinion on that level as such?

**Ms CURRIE** - I cannot respond to that because I do not have that medical background to say whether or not it impairs. I would need to get that information from another source.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Ms Currie, for coming and for the submission that your organisation has provided. We appreciate that.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



**MR DAVE DANNALS** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Mr Dannals, we look forward to hearing your evidence.

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you. The data I have with me are simply supporting and acting as several adjuncts to the information presented to you earlier. For example, in looking at the road toll I am mindful that in this State we are currently statistically, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics as my reference point, killing twice the number of people per head of population than they are on the Australian mainland. This concerns me and obviously would concern any thinking individual. What can be done to ameliorate this?

If I may just refer to the Workplace Health and Safety Act of Tasmania dated 1995, the onus is put on the employer and the employee to do what is reasonable in terms of law to make workplaces safe and healthy for our workers. This step was undertaken some 22 years' ago - 1986 - with Australia's recognition that our workplace death toll was a bit higher than the average in a first-world country. So we have a precedent set by the State Government. The death toll on our roads, reasonably speaking, is far and above what would be reasonable for a first-world country.

I note, as a parallel example, Sweden. A couple of points come to mind. In Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Austria, Holland and Switzerland it will cost somewhere between \$1500 and \$3000 in Australian currency to get a drivers licence.

**CHAIR** - Because of the training required?

**Mr DANNALS** - And the statutes needing to be met. Germany is a bit expensive at \$3 000. In Sweden, a defensive driving course is mandated, as it is for Tasmania's ministerial drivers. That is one of five facets. The second criterion is that the operator of a car must have basic mechanical knowledge, the ability to move a car out of harm's way if it is broken down, to change a tyre et cetera. This is regardless of whether the person is a 5 foot 2 inch tall girl or a 6 foot 6 inch man - whatever that may be in metric.

**CHAIR** - Or vice versa.

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you.

*Laughter.*

**Mr DANNALS** - So it is across the board. In doing that sort of thing the person is trained in how to do it safely, which means putting out high-visibility triangles on the road and putting on high-visibility gear, as we would wear in many work places and as you would have seen with the various works going on in this facility over the last few years.

The third component involves learning how to prioritise a situation, how to manage an emergency. Part of the course involves going through the emergency ward, not the casualty department but the accident ward of a hospital. For any of the folk here who are parents you have probably heard the term 'I have told him a hundred times not to do that' - but show him once. The person who has seen an accident will not wish to repeat it. Support for that is the ABC *Quantum* program 'Hidden Killer', which video I left with

Mr Fewkes so many weeks ago. One of the comments in that production reads as follows, quoting Australia's figures:

'Of all the people who have had accidents in Australia involving injury to themselves or other people, very few are repeat offenders'.

I refer also to a television program, which is a rough corollary - ABC's *Catalyst* of 21 April, where they interview a West Point graduate. This fellow spent several years as a first lieutenant in Afghanistan. What he had seen defies the imagination. He is now so anti-war it is incredible. I need not go on because I think we all know that our war veterans have seen similar things. There has to be a better way. The point I am making is about the visual impact of injury. We see this in parody on our television programs. Somebody injured on a television program has stitches and a bandaid. It is not the long-term thing for life. Why are our hospitals clogged up? I refer again to the *Quantum* program where it notes 40 000 injuries every year in workplaces and the like.

A workplace by definition is the road if the person is a commercial traveller; that is his workplace. Is he entitled to the same sanction of the Workplace and Health and Safety Act? I do not have the answer to that but it would seem reasonable.

**Ms FORREST** - The workplace can be a work vehicle.

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Then it is classified as a workplace.

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes, exactly.

We have the means at our disposal to perhaps ameliorate the situation. Hospital involvement costs Australia \$1 700 per person per day. I do not have the capacity here to calculate that for over 40 000 for several years, but it would be an enormous amount. Three years ago I wrote to Minister Jim Cox suggesting that simple first aid treatment could considerably reduce our road toll. The reply that came back, to which I think this committee is privy, indicated that the cost on the motorists would make licensing of that motorist cost prohibitive and it would therefore disadvantage that motorist. Excuse me while I boil for a minute because what is a life worth, particularly in a first-world country? I am sorry if this sounds like a sales pitch but it is.

Going back to the Swedish driver's licence: the fourth point that the operator must satisfy to the extent needed for the examiner is to be able to safely extricate a person from a car or to manage that person in a car. In 18 years' work as a paramedic in this State - which is what I used to do before I started working at Savage River Mine - I have lost count of the number of times and for how many people I have climbed into the backseat of a - you guessed it - Volvo and simply held their airway open or stopped them bleeding or put a drip in their arm or whatever. That is all it takes. Which comes to the fifth point that one must have for getting a driver's licence in these aforementioned countries: a first-aid ticket.

The import of that: I will quote, if I may, Professor John Pearn - spelt P-E-A-R-N - who is the immediate past Chair of the Australian Resuscitation Council which is a body of

medicos. In reference to the tsunami of December 2004, Professor Pearn, who is also a paediatrician and surgeon general to the Australian Army, quoted, 'We do not need surgical teams on the deck, we need people first-aid qualified to enable people to live, breathe and reduce infection risk'. Degreed surgeons did not come into the equation but first-aid qualifications did. The fifth point: the driver's licence requirement in those Nordic countries mentioned and several others is first-aid accreditation. The reference to that analogy here in Australia is the following ABS statistic, that tells me that 2.5 per cent of Australia's population is first-aid qualified, which is one out of 40. Subjectively speaking that is a pretty small percentage.

It means that the reciprocal of that, 97.5 per cent, do not have a clue. What is relevant to that is that, according to ABS statistics, 25 per cent of the death toll - never mind what causes accidents; we will get into that - is from nothing more than a blocked airway or they do not breathe. First-aid knowledge or no first-aid knowledge, if I may just ask a rhetorical question, can a first-aider in general terms keep somebody's airway open and/or enable them to breathe? The answer is a pretty strong 'yes'. Most of the remaining 75 per cent bleed to death. In the twenty-first century in a first world country, they are bleeding to death on the side of the road. Would that cause a ruckus in the workplace? Did it cause a ruckus at Port Arthur?

I mention that very carefully because the ruckus caused by Port Arthur - if I am touching a nerve here I apologise more sincerely than you could imagine - is one week's worth of Australia's road toll. One week's worth of a recurring weekly road toll. And we can do nothing about it? I do not believe it. I thank this committee for its function. Some people die because they are going to die and there is nothing on God's Earth that can prevent that. But let us go back a few years if we may, just for a moment to an incident in Germany where a handful of Australian cyclists were skittled by a car. It should not have happened. By the way, in Germany, to have an ambulance operator's job you need a medical degree. Within 15 minutes of that incident all of those people were in a hospital. I am sorry that one died. So when something bad does happen there are the means available to deal with it. Ms Forrest, gentlemen, I feel that is even more relevant here because of the tyranny of distance that we have in Australia. We are not a stone's throw away from a hospital. If somebody has an accident near a hospital it is fortuitous.

**Ms FORREST** - They still die sometimes, as the elderly gentleman did just recently outside the Burnie Hospital.

**Mr DANNALS** - Exactly, sometimes the fingers point together.

**Ms FORREST** - I think he had a heart attack, though. He crashed into the wall just outside the hospital.

**Mr DANNALS** - The clock does tick but, as any war veteran will mention, if it has its numbers on it you'll know it. What we can do here with the balance of probabilities is mitigate this. Sweden has a population of 12.5 million and the death toll on their roads is not the 1 200-odd it would be pro rata if we were taking Australia's death toll. The death toll on Sweden's roads per annum is 100 human beings. It takes that country a whole year to kill three weeks' worth of Australia's road toll. They're not happy with that, it is 100 too many. So far it has been nobody that I know but whoever has died there has

been somebody that somebody else knows. They have a policy of zero vision, a vision of a zero road toll.

I'm sorry, but I must laugh at the recent TV advertisement, 'Limit the Speed, Limit the Damage'. The wording implies that damage is acceptable, but limited. I'm sorry, no damage is acceptable. I have a note here - and I have a copy for you -

**CHAIR** - Thank you, we'll take that into evidence.

**Mr DANNALS** - which calls for zero tolerance. I got it out of the *Herald Sun* the other day. They are talking about zero tolerance to alcohol. May I just pursue the Swedish track for a moment? In the Nordic countries if one drink-drives one loses one's driver's licence. It is not negotiable. Having done that, they will give you time to organise your affairs for a month because you're going to jail for a month and your fine is A\$1 000. I am unsure as to whether you will then get a driver's licence again. I think not, but I am unsure. I know that after the second offence, which involves a six-months' jail sentence and a \$7 000 fine in Australian currency, you will then have no need ever for a car again because you will not get a licence to drive it. Newspapers mentioned recently in Great Britain a Kate Middleton - girlfriend or fiance of the British Prince William - had been pinged on camera driving while operating a cellular phone. A possible jail sentence - it is not \$80 and two points; it is two years' jail in the UK.

**CHAIR** - Minimum or maximum?

**Mr DANNALS** - I would say maximum. She faces that potential but I doubt that will happen. In other words, the sword of Damocles is above the offender's head. The seemingly draconian rules that are applying in more heavily populated countries are not often practised because they don't need to be. People are not going to take a punt on losing their car, licence and livelihood. It is very easy in this part of the world to say, 'She'll be right, who's looking?' It takes a split second, as I think we all know, to go off the side of the road and/or into somebody else.

I have a different article from the *Herald Sun*. It is talking about infection control. The article says:

'We are happy with our she'll-be-right attitude, 'It won't happen to me'. You don't need to wear masks for the swine flu'-

I wonder. Can we exclude the possibility?

It is possible the Government is considering P-plate people going back to different stages if they flout the rules, so to speak; am I right on that?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr DANNALS** - But why stop at P-platers? It would knock the ego of the persistent offender who probably never had P-plates in earlier years, this is a person in our age group, if he had to go back to P-plates. Would that make him think about his behaviour?

**Ms FORREST** - And have the restrictions placed on them as P-platers do?

**Mr DANNALS** - Exactly. That would be something about which to think, in other words some accountability. I will take this walk of life at the moment as an example. Mr Fewkes saw me into this building. He did not say 'Head up those stairs and turn right'. He escorted me through properly and professionally so that I know where I am because the most important thing I need to do if there is a fire in here is to get out of here.

**CHAIR** - That is what he was thinking.

*Laughter.*

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you, I have no doubt. Somebody is accountable. In the workplace we are all accountable - the employer and the employee. The skipper of a ship is accountable, that includes the Lake Illawarra; her skipper is accountable. Who is accountable in the car for his life and his unseatbelted passenger in this very high non-compliance rated State - second only, I think, to the Northern Territory? If we have a yachtsman and his children, the fellow in charge of the ship is the fellow responsible for it. He can ask his children to drop the anchor, to row the dinghy, to whatever but somebody is accountable. It does not seem to happen in the world of the car driver and yet we are using a very dangerous piece of equipment.

**CHAIR** - Or the car driver's employer in some cases.

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you, yes, or indeed the employer because if that is indeed a company car then the onus falls on the employer. This is wonderful stuff if that happens but do we have two standards on the road? It is sounding as if we do. The company man in his company car must account to his employer as well as to the State law but Mr Smith, Mr Jones or whoever does not have that onus.

Forty-four years ago in Tasmania I bought myself a beautiful car, a second-hand black Ford Fairlane compact model with red seats. It came from Launceston. It was a beautiful car I am looking at the owner at the time. There is no way I would have damaged it and I would have been heart-broken if something had happened to it.

**CHAIR** - Looking at the owner?

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes, sir.

**CHAIR** - Mine?

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes. It was a 1964 model Fairlane.

**Ms FORREST** - Can't you remember selling that?

**CHAIR** - Not a black one; I have never had a black car. I have had a black and white one, with red upholstery St Kilda Football Club colours. It was a Holden Premier.

**Mr DANNALS** - This one was black and red and the dealer advised me of that fact that it had belonged to Mr Don Wing.

**CHAIR** - I see. That was just to have an extra price on it.

*Laughter.*

**Mr DANNALS** - I was happy to pay it but if something had happened to that machine I could buy another one. It is not the case with the person driving it.

**CHAIR** - I will be in touch when I am ready to sell to one I have.

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you, I look forward to that. So we have several issues that may indeed help. If the employer is responsible for his employee then surely, to maintain parity for all road users, other folk should share the same degree of responsibility.

We have training has a valuable adjunct. We have policies, procedures and practices. The Traffic Act of Tasmania 1925 was enabled by the Parliament in order to determine a means of moving people and goods throughout Tasmania by road, rail and sea, hence TT-Line and Tas Rail, as it used to be. So with that act in place we then need to have the regulations which will enable that to happen safety to today's standards and in compliance with general workplace health and safety. We all need the roads in order to get to work and from work. In general terms there is no other way to do it.

I have police officers telling me when I take them for training classes which may be on health and safety or first aid that in coming over the Tasman Bridge and looking out from the window of the bus, the driver in the car next to them is using a laptop while he is driving. This is tolerated or the penalties are absolutely minimal. From what I read recently and I understand Mr Dean would have empathy with this one. It must be frustrating for our law enforcement folk to see this sort of thing happen, spending much time in court instead of a fine, and just like that and people wriggle out of things. The thing they are wriggling out of is their accountability.

What Europeans tend to do is look at the potential and deal with it effectively or draw a line in the sand and get people off the road before they kill somebody, not afterwards. I do have empathy for, and I think any reasonable person would, the person who has done whatever and who must have some regret. It can be prevented. I do not have proof of that but I do have an adjunct which perhaps somebody may be able to corroborate. I have heard that people who are repeat drink-drivers get let off time and time again with a hand slap. When they finally lose their licence and receive a stiff penalty, my understanding is that they are, in fact, relieved. That does make sense. They do not have to play the game anymore; the line in the sand is drawn. In other words, if we have a penalty system which is realistic it will make people aware of their accountabilities. Is that a point for consideration? The rest of the world does seem to think so.

There is a little three letter acronym that we use in work - ABC - attitude, behaviour and consequences. Somebody's attitude leads to their behaviour. The person who goes out the door in a huff catches their finger in the door. If their attitude had been different, the behaviour which led to the injury would not have followed. Our attitude does indeed influence our behaviour. We use this in the workplace. Our behaviour then influences the consequences. There are consequences for all our actions. We are accountable, and so we should be. It is part of being part of the social fabric of our society.

There is a move in popular thought to increase the age limit to 18 in order for people to obtain drivers licences. I am probably on my own here, which is okay, but would it seem radical to actually reduce the driving age?

**Ms FORREST** - The ACT have reduced their learners to 15 and a half. You still cannot get your Ps until your are 17 but it gives you more time for practice.

**Mr DANNALS** - Thank you, and that practice time is giving people time in the red zone without the risks, in the danger zone without the risks. So they are learning, experiencing, getting to know the pitfalls before they are cut loose with the machine, so to speak. I will paraphrase Mr Al Gore who, in his production, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which is an environmental production, mentions a family event whereby at age 14 he drove the family car into a bridge which was on a public road. What he was doing in that particular state of the American union, as with many others, is quite legal provided he had a competent adult with him. Just as the person operating the boat, he can work the steering wheel and whatever else but somebody else is with him who is accountable. Since that day I do not think Mr Gore has had an accident. We learn more when we are young. Would it be better to start learning and get the experience under our belt before we get to what the newspapers are calling the 'testosterone stage' or whatever?

**CHAIR** - What age do you think that should start?

**Mr DANNALS** - There has to be a limit which would be reasonable.

**Ms FORREST** - They can see over the steering wheel?

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes. But 15, 15 and a half or so would seem to be reasonable. That is that terrible in-between age - sorry, am I touching nerves here with people's memories?

**CHAIR** - No, we do not have much memory.

*Laughter.*

**Mr DANNALS** - At that age we are still learning and wanting to learn. This is at grade 9 or 10. Out of the scatty grade 8 group, that are realising they have wings but they do not know what they will do for them, we can learn things here before we have to become independent with the onus of responsibility on our shoulders. That sounds a wonderful idea that the ACT has been doing. I had not been aware of that. I am surprised I missed it. But at that age people can learn. And learning is good. When do we learn? Why do we go to school early in the piece? So that by the time we are 17, 18, 19, 20 then we can go out and start learning about life instead of having it cut short.

**CHAIR** - So you favour more education of young drivers?

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - That is good.

**Mr DANNALS** - Unequivocally. An analogy I draw there - and this is in paraphrase - is with workplace health and safety. I understand there is a saying between legal people: 'Worker's compensation claim coming up. If he has not been trained, add \$100 000 to his claim'. The more we know the better off we are.

**Ms FORREST** - Dave, are you aware of the ACT road-ready course?

**Mr DANNALS** - No, Ma'am.

**Ms FORREST** - I will just give a brief description.

**Mr DANNALS** - Please.

**Ms FORREST** - I mentioned that kids can get their licence at - I am not sure it is 15 and 9 months or 15 and a half but anyway, it is earlier than anywhere else that I am aware of. But before they can get their learners licence they have to do a course offered in school - it is free when provided through the school - over a 10-week period, I think a couple of hours a week for that time or they can do it for a whole weekend. It is all in-class activities. It talks about what the risks are, safe driving practices, what a complex activity driving is. They show some videos that show the lifelong impacts of a crash on a girl. They have to participate and be involved in it to pass but there's no test. They have to do that and they have to live in the ACT and prove residency there. They then have to pass their road rules test, as we do we here, an online road rules test. They can't get their learners until they do that and they can't sit for their Ps - and they have P1 and P2 - until they are 17.

**Mr DANNALS** - So it is staged progressive?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes.

**Mr DANNALS** - Good, because then they have something to aspire to and something to draw back on.

**Ms FORREST** - They also have a P-off course six months after they get their Ps, but they can go along and do another three- or four-hour course where they go through some of these things again and talk about driver attitude, safe driving behaviours and that sort of thing, all in class again. The benefit of doing that is that they get some extra demerit points. They often get kids who have gained a couple of demerit points because of misdemeanours, so it is a way to drag those kids in and give them another talking to, and they also get to remove their P-plates. They still have the restrictions on them but they don't have to display them any more. Do you think that's a good idea?

**Mr DANNALS** - My word I do, because instead of just throwing them on the scrap heap, it is a carrot and a stick. Young folk need this.

**CHAIR** - It is very interesting what you are telling us. Would you like to round it off with any concluding remarks?

**Mr DANNALS** - Tasmania is often insulated, buffered, from the mainland - economic cycles, health ups and downs, et cetera. Instead of following the mainland we can lead,



we can set the agenda. Let the rest of the nation follow. At the moment they are ahead. Although their road toll is great in numbers, percentage-wise they are way ahead of us. We can hit the lead with this. A few years ago we had little diamond-shaped registration stickers but we went for the rectangular one because that is what the mainland does. Why? We can set standards here. If we want to be the guiding light, we can do that. The Intelligent Island concept has merit. We can do it; we are small and cohesive enough and enough people know each other on the island that that can happen. If that then happens and spreads, why are we getting an influx of people? They are recognising it as a good place to be. Let us concrete that; we can do it.

**CHAIR** - We are well situated to do it by being isolated, aren't we?

**Mr DANNALS** - Yes, we are. We are not so spread out and diffused that it would be hard to oversee.

**CHAIR** - Compact and separate.

**Mr DANNALS** - Exactly.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. It has been a very interesting coverage. We appreciate your contribution.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Ms LAUREN SCOTT WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** - Lauren, thank you so much for your submission. It is one of the neatest we have had and the smallest print I think. That is very good to have. Thank you very much for coming to give evidence. We would like to hear from you about your experience and your view, so we have that on the transcript.

**Ms SCOTT** - I will start by telling you why I came today. I met Ruth when I did the John Bowe defensive driving course at Symmons Plains, run I think, about every couple of months. I found it very helpful. What I learnt in that one day of an eight-hour course has absolutely impacted on my driving since. I have become just so much more aware of potential hazards on the road. I think the course would definitely benefit young drivers most of all, but everyone should be able to get a benefit from it.

For example, that day we learnt how long it takes a car to stop at 60 kilometres an hour -

**Ms FORREST** - At 50 kilometres I think it was, I have forgotten now, Lauren, but it was further than you think.

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes, it was a considerable distance and I know how far that distance is now in front of me when I am driving. I find I am very careful to keep that distance. Just little things like that should be able to help because I know there have been a few instances where I have had to slam on the brakes, I've been very close to the person in front of me and to keep that distance has helped even a little bit.

Having listened to the previous gentleman's submission about the ACT course, I think that would be very helpful as well. My little brother has just turned 15 and I definitely think he needs all the help he can get. He is a boy, he rides motorbikes, he rides jet skis, he likes speed.

**CHAIR** - Where does he live?

**Ms SCOTT** - He lives up on the north-west coast near Devonport.

**CHAIR** - In the country?

**Ms SCOTT** - Turners Beach.

**CHAIR** - A lovely place.

**Ms FORREST** - That is where Lauren is from.

**Ms SCOTT** - Anything that would help anyone of any age to be more confident on the road and to be more aware of the risks, definitely has to be helpful. We see so many articles in the news about someone who has died in a car crash. If anything can be done to stop that or reduce that or anything, it has to be worthwhile.

**Ms FORREST** - Lauren, when you did the John Bowe course were you on your P-plates?

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes, I have had them for 11 months.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it would have been of benefit to you at that time, looking back, to have undertaken a class session about the perception of safe stopping distances and all that sort of thing before you had your learners?

**Ms SCOTT** - I think that would be helpful and I believe that St Brendan's, which is the school I was at previously, do have that sometimes. So, yes, any theory, even it is just a little bit for each person - anything that helps.

**Ms FORREST** - What do you think should be included in a course such as that?

**Ms SCOTT** - Real life examples where something has happened, possibly unfortunate, and how it could have turned out otherwise. Statistics I find helpful. The previous gentleman was absolutely amazed about Sweden and had all of the other information. I found that very surprising and I think it will stick with me.

**CHAIR** - Would you favour all learner drivers being required to undertake a course such as the defensive driving course that you did or something similar that is tailor-made for learner drivers?

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes definitely. The John Bowe course that I did I found very helpful. I have talked to other people and they found the cost of the course a bit of a deterrent.

**CHAIR** - Were they young people just learning to drive or had recently received a driver's licence?

**Ms SCOTT** - Eighteen- to 19-year-olds.

**CHAIR** - They favour the concept but were concerned about the possible cost of it?

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - How much did it cost you?

**Ms SCOTT** - I believe it was about \$250.

**Ms FORREST** - The cost is a factor. With a family of three or four kids obviously the costs would add up, but what if it was provided through the education system as a compulsory course? In the ACT you attend it at school or you go and do a weekend. Some of the kids go and do the weekend one because they turn 15 and nine months before that course is offered at school. It is offered as a year 10 elective or whatever. There is a cost if they go on the weekend; it is not free. So do you think if there was the option to undertake such a course free of charge would that make people more likely to go?

**Ms SCOTT** - I would think so. Although I definitely thought it was worthwhile and I paid it, for others I am not so sure. It depends what sort of value you put on it.

**Ms FORREST** - You made mention in your submission that you do not think having a driver's licence is valued enough. Do you want to expand on that a bit, and what brought you to that point?

**Ms SCOTT** - A driving licence is taken for granted. When you turn 16 you go for your Ls and when you are 17 you have Ps and you get your own car. It is not whether I will or won't, or about the benefits of going for it and getting it and then really realising it. Down here it is so different and I do not drive as much. At home I would not have been able to go out in my car for a week. I am very dependent on it.

**Ms FORREST** - How do you make it more valued? Do you charge them more money for it? Do you require them to go through more hoops to get it?

**Ms SCOTT** - The public perception might have to change there. Penalties for it would definitely have an impact I believe, anything that deters risky behaviour.

**Ms FORREST** - So if that was a great risk and you did not have to do much wrong to lose it, do you think that would make people value it more?

**Ms SCOTT** - I definitely would because I do value my licence because I need it. It would be very hard without it. I know people who have lost their licence. One of them resorted to riding a bike to work every day. I remember how much he disliked that so he changed after the penalty was incurred.

**Ms FORREST** - Did that change his attitude and behaviour?

**Ms SCOTT** - I think he has improved.

**Ms FORREST** - The restriction on provisional drivers to drive at 80 kph for the first 12 months, do you have a view on that?

**Ms SCOTT** - I thought that was fair. I didn't find it was a problem. It helps because I can remember when I did progress to 110 kph it did feel a lot different.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it would have helped to have had some experience with someone with you - one of your parents or a supervising driver - driving at 110 kph an hour on those roads prior to being out there on your own?

**Ms SCOTT** - I am definitely not against that. I'm not sure how it would be achieved. That would definitely would be worth a try, I believe. Any experience, I find, is helpful.

**Ms FORREST** - Did you find that cars tailgated you when you were doing 80 kph?

**Ms SCOTT** - When I was on my Ls and Ps, my parents would have me drive to Hobart. We have family down here so when we came down I would drive for about an hour. Where the double lanes go back to the single lane, everyone tries to push past you and it is quite intimidating. I found it really scary and I used to hate driving because of that, just knowing it was coming up.

**Ms FORREST** - They saw you had the P plates and thought, 'This person is going to be going at 80 kph so we have to get past them'.

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes, and at that stage I wasn't confident with merging. I found that very intimidating so if that could be changed it would be great.

**CHAIR** - They should have been doing just the opposite if you had L plates.

**Ms SCOTT** - I was being tooted at.

**CHAIR** - At what age do you think driver education in a formal way should commence?

**Ms SCOTT** - Anything before 15 and you're not really thinking about getting your licence. Coming up to 15 you think, 'I'll have my Ls test next year'. That is when it is becoming more conscious in your mind.

**CHAIR** - How did you come to know about the John Bowe course?

**Ms SCOTT** - My cousin had undertaken it and my parents thought it would be a good idea for me. They had heard good reviews from my cousin.

**CHAIR** - And you found it was a good idea?

**Ms SCOTT** - I thought it was great.

**CHAIR** - And you have been recommending it to others since?

**Ms SCOTT** - I have, yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Lauren had a car without ABS braking and you did very well.

**Ms SCOTT** - I made a horrible clunk.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - But it was good to feel it in a controlled environment.

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes.

**Ms FORREST** - Lauren, there has been a lot of discussion about the distractions inside and outside of cars, particularly mobile phones, iPods and even laptops. As a young person who is au fait with all the current gadgetry, have you found that an issue either for yourself or your friends? How big an influence do you think it has on your ability to drive?

**Ms SCOTT** - From the start - and I know my friends are very similar - I don't take my phone when I am driving. There is no point. If it's a call you can pull over; if it's a message then that can wait. I find things such as the CD player et cetera to be a distraction. If your phone is going off, you think about it for a second, so it would definitely impact on driving. I have been lucky enough not to be in a situation where that has ended badly.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think mobile phone use should be banned in cars altogether? We have had a discussion that even with the hands-free kit, where you just press the button and talk, it can be distracting.

**Ms SCOTT** - No, sorry, I don't use a hands-free.

**Ms FORREST** - You just don't use the phone when you're driving?

**Ms SCOTT** - Generally not.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think provisional drivers should have restricted passenger numbers? There has been some talk that one of the major distractions in the car is other passengers, particular peers. Siblings don't seem to be quite as much a distraction as friends. Have you driven with two or three friends in the car and how has that been for you?

**Ms SCOTT** - I generally find there is a conversation going but basically you just keep driving during the conversation if you need to but I have not been in a situation where it has been overly distracting. I know there are other people whom you just would not want to take with you in the car because they are too loud and rowdy. I am sure that would have an impact but I just do not take those people in the car.

**Ms FORREST** - You do not take those people with you.

**Ms SCOTT** - No, they go with other people.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think that this is more a girl thing or a boy thing? This is subjective, obviously, but do you think boys are more vulnerable to that -

**Mr HARRISS** - That is all. Next question.

*Laughter.*

**Ms FORREST** - When I went to the ACT Road Ready Course they showed a number of Victorian television advertisements featuring young people, one of which showed a young guy picking up his younger brother and then having a crash in which his little brother was killed. There was another where two girls are driving in a car and the boys were in the car behind. The boys were running the red lights and the girls were laughing about that and saying, 'Those idiots, look at them, we're so good, we're driving along at the speed limit and not going through the red lights' but when they got distracted by the guys behind they went through a red light and killed a mother with a baby in the back of the car, and the boys caught up to them and found the mother dead - things like that; very graphic stuff. The ad highlighted the risks of distraction either from your friend in the car or from what is going on around you. There is a perception that boys are worse, but do you think that is the case?

**CHAIR** - Or better.

*Laughter.*

**Ms SCOTT** - In my experience, girls in a car have louder music and there is more singing but the guys are probably talking more, just very animated conversation. I find everyone looks around generally in that kind of situation but it probably is much of a muchness, there are just different distractions.

**Ms FORREST** - Clearly there is distraction of one sort or another. Do you think we should restrict the number of passengers in the car for provisional drivers and young drivers?

**Ms SCOTT** - I would suggest that that be tested somehow, but in my opinion and from my experiences, I don't see the need. Maybe there should be a restriction on L-platers but I'm not sure if there is already a restriction -

**Ms FORREST** - No.

**Ms SCOTT** - because when I had them I was led to believe that there was.

**Ms FORREST** - That was so that you could leave your little brother behind, I reckon.

**Ms SCOTT** - I remember at the start that I would only really take one or two people, generally either my best friend or my boyfriend because I just did not like anyone else seeing my driving.

**Ms FORREST** - Were you worried about them criticising your driving?

**Ms SCOTT** - No, just if I did something silly like slamming on the brake or crashing the gears. I was not very confident in my driving at the start so I would not have taken many people. I did not like taking many people at that stage but then that might actually support what you are saying, that P-platers should be restricted.

**Ms FORREST** - But you recognised yourself that you did not feel overly confident so to have other people in the car could have put more pressure on you.

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes, definitely I felt under pressure. Not that they would criticise me, they were my friends -

**Ms FORREST** - Friends can be your worst critics, can't they?

**Ms SCOTT** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Any more questions? Lauren, thanks very much, you are setting a fine example for young people and if we convince the authorities to have compulsory driver education they should engage you to promote it on television.

**Ms SCOTT** - That would be embarrassing.

**CHAIR** - I do congratulate you and commend you on your attitude and your positive action in coming here to make your submission and give us the benefit of hearing from a young lady who is very serious about driving. Well done and thank you very much.

**Ms FORREST** - I think a lot of young people would feel reluctant to come to a committee of the Parliament such as this because it is fairly daunting. It is good that you have, and it was good too to talk to your friends about it and gauge their reaction.

**Ms SCOTT** - They were all positive about it being very worthwhile.

**CHAIR** - We wish you many years of enjoyable, safe driving.

**Ms SCOTT** - Thank you very much.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



**Mr ANDREW O'BRIEN AND Mr PETER DAMIEN MORGAN, TASMANIAN AMBULANCE SERVICE, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Wing) - Thank you very much for coming, and coming back. There seemed to be a bit of disorganisation at the beginning but we are pleased that you are here now and we are looking forward to hearing your views that may help us in the considerations that we are giving to making recommendations to improve road safety in Tasmania. Over to you.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Since we left, we have had a bit of a discussion about some of the terms of reference. Obviously some of these things we cannot answer as an organisation. We just do not collect that sort of information.

**CHAIR** - No. It is just any of them that you feel comfortable in talking about.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - In point 2 about the short and long-term care of crash casualties and the adequacy of current data collection, we operate under a process called clinical practice guidelines and in recent times we have changed some of our clinical practice guidelines to improve pain management and resuscitation. When you are talking about short-term care that is the sort of stuff we do. We do the first interventions obviously. We are the front door into the health-care system, we hope, for a lot of unwell people, including those traumatised through motor vehicle crashes. So we have improved our CPGs. The other thing we have done, which you may be aware of, is that we got some funding through MAIB to develop a simulation centre in Hobart. That is to improve the training in crash simulations for our ambulance staff and other medical-type staff, including nurses on Bruny Island -

**Mr MORGAN** - We are starting with nurses on Bruny.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - who assist with the responses on Bruny Island with the volunteer ambulance officers. So that simulation centre is quite good. We have a car crash set up. It is a bit like this. It is recorded and videotaped and you can dissect how you approach it and how you deal with the incident. So it is quite good.

**Mr MORGAN** - And there is a motorcycle simulation as well.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, there is a motorcycle crash as well. The other part of that one is the adequacy of the current data collection. We have traditionally collected our data in a paper form and in the last 18 months we have gone to a computerised system. It is called VACIS. The V stands for Victoria. That is an interesting comment. It is for Victorian Ambulance Computerised Information Systems. But not only have we taken it on board, New South Wales, ACT and Queensland all have as well. Part of that will be 25 fields of information that will be identical across those services so we will be able to compare data. This will include trauma data for motor vehicle crashes. In fact later this month the software developer is coming over to help us develop our information system so that we can report on the information we have in our data bank. Hopefully it will give us a better picture of what we deal with. We anecdote like any organisation and say, yes, we

go to certain types of crashes and there seems to be more of this and more of that but it is anecdotal, there is no solid evidence. Hopefully that will help us in that area.

I do not know that there are a lot of other things that we would say organisationally, but there may be some things you would like to ask us.

**CHAIR** - One thing is whether people who are injured seriously or fatally wear seatbelts and how many of them do not? Is that a problem as you see it?

**Mr MORGAN** - Certainly here we would only be guessing, I think, and I do not think that is fair to do that.

**CHAIR** - Do you see many cases where people, seriously injured or killed, have not been wearing seatbelts?

**Mr MORGAN** - I suppose I would like to restate it and say that what frustrates me, over 30-odd years of service, is the people who show complete disregard for the law and that is across all levels, whether it is seatbelts, speeding or drink driving. No matter what legislative penalty is there it does not seem to worry them and even taking their licence off them does not seem to worry them. It is that group of the population that I do not know how we get to. We just see it over and over again.

**CHAIR** - Are they similar in background or type or age groups?

**Mr MORGAN** - Without being stereotypical, obviously we see the young male in a greater proportion than females and we see those in greater proportion than older males. But without statistics in front of me, I am giving my perception.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I think it is backed up by a quite a lot of evidence.

**Mr MORGAN** - Yes, that is right. I guess my personal frustration is how do you get to that group of people because the penalties of the law do not seem to impact on them. We heard evidence from the young lady here previously. She is of a socioeconomic group that is great and she has a very great conscience, and her friends are the same. But it is the people who are not in that group who do not care that worry me.

**CHAIR** - They are not required to have any form of driver education whatsoever. Should they be?

**Mr MORGAN** - I might flick that to Andrew because Andrew has been a driving instructor for ambulance for many years and he has some fairly strong views. The type of training that ambulance gives its people is a low-risk driving policy. Mr Dean, I think, would be well aware of that from his previous occupation. I think some of the principles of that are very good. Andrew, I will flick it at you.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - There are a number of courses around. One of them is Crash-Free Driving and it is not a particularly onerous course. Do you know Alex Jerrim?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. He has spoken to the committee.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Good. The sorts of things that Alex tries to get through in that course is what the young lady was talking about, which is how to work out your distances to follow so you are at a safe distance so your crash avoidance space is reasonable. Driving bumper to bumper is not driving in a safe manner. You are not going to avoid a collision if something happens in front of you, quickly. You are not going to have enough reaction time and enough braking time to stop the car before you hit the one in front.

The other principles are about not overrating your driving skills. You ask most people and they will tell you they are very good drivers, and what have they compared it to? It is based on years and years of self-assessment which may not have the necessary assessment tools in place to make a reasonable assessment.

*Laughter.*

**Mr O'BRIEN** - A good racing car driver is not necessarily a good road driver. They are totally different skills. One is about interacting with everything else that is going on around you, whereas the other one is about getting to the front of the queue and a bit of argy-bargy that goes on does not really matter. But if you talk about what Peter was talking about, how do you change people's attitudes so that their behaviour is safer and less risky, which is not only for their benefit but it is for that of everybody who has to deal with them when they drive alongside, behind and in front, do not take this the wrong way but there is a lot of ignorance about things like stopping distances from 60 kilometres. You talk about how long does it take you to stop a car. Most people do not know. When you measure it out and show them they are usually quite surprised -

**Ms FORREST** - I think it is 17.5 metres, is that right?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I think that could be right.

**Mr MORGAN** - In fact last year in our professional development program for qualified ambulance officers we took them out onto a straight bit of protected road and got them to stop in the distances - go out and mark out with a cone how far they thought and they try to it at 50 kph and 60 kph. For experienced professional drivers they were quite surprised.

**Ms FORREST** - That would have been removing their reaction time.

**Mr MORGAN** - Yes, that's right.

**Ms FORREST** - So you have to add on to that the reaction time.

**Mr MORGAN** - There's a little trick we do with that and that is there is somebody standing at the point and you can only apply the brakes when you see him drop his hand, and he doesn't always drop the hand. It just makes it a bit tougher for them.

**Ms FORREST** - When I did that activity I found it very hard to maintain a speed at 60 kph. I was watching the speedo and watching the man to see if he was going to raise the flag or not - he raised it rather than dropped it. I felt I was under pressure at the time to make sure that I kept the speed because he knew if you weren't going at 60 kph too. It was interesting.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We think modern cars are good. Some of the safety features in modern cars have changed, we think anecdotally on the nature of the work we're getting. There are still the unsurvivable motor crashes which we read about on an all-too-regular basis. Anecdotally, a number of our intermediate or in-between crashes don't seem to present us with the level of trauma that we used to get. That is due to things such as traction control, stability control, ABS, airbags. Interestingly enough, one of my colleagues said, 'It's often that we buy the good car, mum and dad who are quite safe with their driving drive that one and the kids get the bomb', when in actual fact mum and dad should be driving the bomb because they are the ones who demonstrate far less risky behaviour or ignorance about what is going on around them because they've had a lot more experience, whereas the kids should have the safest-possible car you can afford.

**CHAIR** - But they don't want the risk of it being damaged, I suppose.

**Ms FORREST** - And they can't afford the insurance.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - But that is not about dealing with behaviour, that is dealing with protection. How do you remove some of the external risks such as road engineering? I am sure you will talk about traffic engineering, and wire fences and so on; I am sure that will come up as an issue.

**CHAIR** - Yes, we have had quite a bit of evidence on matters such as that. I asked you whether you favoured compulsory driver education in some form for learner drivers? You then went on and talked about the different course but I don't think you responded directly as to whether you favour compulsory driver education.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - From a personal point of view, I would.

**Mr MORRIS** - And I would also, from a personal point of view.

**CHAIR** - I would too. It seems logical.

**Mr MORGAN** - Absolutely. The nature of this stuff that we are providing our people has significantly reduced the number of crashes that ambulances have been involved in over a period of time and so we are very keen to see that sort of education.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We are still having a significant number of minor non-injury accidents.

**Ms FORREST** - Is that your people on duty and off duty that you're looking at?

**Mr MORGAN** - No, we're not looking at off duty.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it has an impact on their off-duty driving?

**Mr MORGAN** - Absolutely.

**Ms FORREST** - Would that be a worthwhile exercise - you could probably do some retrospective work on that - looking at your work force and how many crashes they have been involved in, whether minor or major crashes, leading up to that time?

**Mr MORGAN** - I don't think they would tell us.

**Ms FORREST** - Maybe not, but it would be interesting. If you are changing people's approach to driving, logically it should flow through to their workplace and to their private vehicle, unless they see that they have to do the right thing in the workplace but when they get into their own car it doesn't matter.

**Mr MORGAN** - Anecdotally, the way that a lot of the emergency services were trained to drive 20 to 30 years ago was an English system that was developed to teach police officers how to drive. It was called Road Craft and was about how to drive fast.

**CHAIR** - They do, too, sometimes - retired ones.

*Laughter.*

**Mr MORGAN** - In partial answer to your question, we were well aware that while we were training our people at that stage something like 80 per cent of our people - and I suspect other emergency services had similar experiences - either crashed one of our cars or crashed their own car within three months of doing that course. I can see some encouragement elsewhere in the room. But the emphasis was wrong. The emphasis was on how to drive your car faster and theoretically not get yourself into trouble, but in fact it was not teaching them how to predict the troubles ahead.

**Ms FORREST** - Hazard perception was not part of the course.

**Mr MORGAN** - Yes, that is right.

**Ms FORREST** - So you would say hazard perception would be a vital part of the course?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I should have brought the contents of the course. There are a number of different headings. They talk about crash avoidance space, risk assessment and things like concentration. You talked about phones before. That is a classic example because it breaks your concentration when driving a car. There are a number of distractions in a car. You can only concentrate on so many things. By the time you are likely to crash, there could be a lot of things happening outside the car that you have to concentrate on before you get to that point where you make a decision to stop or drive around it or whatever the hazard is you have to deal with is. If you have a lot of distractions going on in the car you only have so much concentration you can apply to the driving situation.

**Ms FORREST** - Our last witness made the comment that she noticed when she was adjusting the volume on her radio or CD player that she tended to steer in that direction. That is one of the things I remember my mum teaching me when I learned to drive. She said, 'Do not watch friends coming up the road because you will drive into them'. When you look in that direction, when you are inexperienced you tend to drive in that direction.

**Mr MORGAN** - You are dead-set right. There was a nasty traffic accident here probably 10 years ago on the Lower Domain Road. A woman driving along the road relatively safely decided to adjust the radio. When she did that she drifted into the other lane. A semi-trailer loaded with zinc coming in the other direction saw it. He swerved to avoid the

crash, lost the trailer, hit a car and killed a child in it. That is a perfect example of something very minor with some absolutely tragic consequences. I know from just driving emergency service vehicles that you do not need much to distract you. When you are driving beyond the speed limit you can get yourself into trouble very quickly.

**Ms FORREST** - But unless someone specifically says that, or a course looks at these hazards and potential risks, how do you know? Is this not part of the value of the courses?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Most of us will probably have had a near-miss in our life when we have been driving. You think, 'I was a bit lucky there'. In fact I defy anyone to tell me that they have not had a moment like that when they are driving where they have thought afterwards, 'I was a bit lucky then. I could have had a lot of bother'. What you are saying is right. Most of us learn through experience. We either have the crash, whether it is big or small, or we have a moment where we think, 'That was lucky'.

**Ms FORREST** - A near miss.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - A near miss. You mark it in and you think, 'I will not do that again', but it is not always that easy to do it. You do not want to do it by experience because there is a consequence that you do not want, whereas you are talking about including things like that in the course. It is like the motorcycle stuff. You talk about the actual technical side of driving, which is the physical manipulation of a car. We talked about racing car drivers; they can do it very well. We need to talk about what is going on inside here and how you value driving, how you value other people's safety as well as your own, how you value the law as it applies to your driving et cetera. They are the sorts of things that you are trying to influence so that people will drive in a safe, legal manner and not take unnecessary risks, not continually break the law and have no regard for any other road user. If you can actually address the attitude then you influence the behaviour. You have talked about younger males who are prepared to take more risks than perhaps other age groups. If you can survive being a young male, generally life gets a bit easier.

**Ms FORREST** - If you can keep them alive until they get past that bit.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes. As we get older we are less prepared to take those risks than when we were younger.

**CHAIR** - So when you arrive at the scene of an accident, you are concerned mainly about the injured people rather than what has caused the accident, but do you have any perceptions about the main causes of accidents that you have attended?

**Mr MORGAN** - Because of the number of years I have been attending I get fixated on the stuff that just should not happen. It is the complete and utter disregard for the law, not the silly mistake. It is where you have somebody driving at 160 kph on P plates. That is an attitudinal thing. I do not envy you people in trying to come up with some sort of legislative answer to it because how do you get through the attitude 'I don't care'? You can take their licence off them three times but unless you put them in jail you will not stop them physically driving. That is the thing that frustrates me about it. Our people are very well trained to manage traffic accidents. They are amongst the best in Australia, but it does not fix the attitude.

**CHAIR** - No, some people will always take risks and behave irresponsibly and I suppose it does not matter what the law is, you can't control them.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We will try to assess what has happened but we deal with the consequence of the crash, the nature of the injuries and so on. We would like a picture of what took place, whether the car rolled over or spun after it hit a solid object so that you know whether there was lateral acceleration as well as axial acceleration. The injury on your head is about the worst thing you can do when you twist your head on your shoulders and rotate it. Obviously from the point of view of turning up at a crash we want to know what took place so we know what we might be faced with.

**Ms FORREST** - On Adelaide we had evidence from the director of the trauma centre. When they go out to attend a crash scene the ambulance service takes photos of the car crash. They instanced a young man who had been involved in a car crash. He had significant marks from his seatbelt across his chest and abdomen. He was conscious, he was happy and he wanted to go home. His vital signs were all stable so they would have let him go but they looked at the photos of the crash, which showed significant damage to the vehicle. They thought they would do a couple more investigations, did a chest X-ray and found he had a leaking aorta, so he was not going anywhere except to the operating theatre.

It is probably driven by the people in the emergency department who have to deal with them, but you are saying the same thing. You have the benefit of looking at the crash scene and thinking there has been lateral pressure on that body, but the people who are treating this patient back in the hospital do not have the advantage of that. They take the photos and they then destroy them. They do not use them in evidence for any court proceeding, just for the benefit of the treating professionals at the hospital. Do you think there is value in that in Tasmania?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I think in telling a story it is great. The Victorian Ambulance Service through Monash did retrospective research to work out whether mechanism was a good indicator of injury. The answer was that it was not a reliable indicator of injury. The best indicator of injury was presentation. In other words if you were going to have an injury then you presented with the injury. You have picked, perhaps, a rare one but even so the guy already had a definitive mark to say he had an injury. The fact that he has such a deceleration injury across his chest may have been enough of an indicator to say there is a high level of suspicion that there may be underlying soft organ trauma. We do not do it and I do not think we have seriously thought about it.

**Mr MORGAN** - There have been a number of staff who do take photos if they think it is significant enough, but mostly it is, 'God, look at this', rather than trying to take photos.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - And it will be on a mobile phone and they will show the DEM staff.

**Mr MORGAN** - There are a lot of issues about taking photos of people in that sort of condition -

**Ms FORREST** - That is why they destroy them.

**Mr MORGAN** - and being sure that is dealt with properly. I can see some benefit in it but I am not really excited about it as something that we need to do.

**Mr HARRISS** - Are you aware whether that procedure occurs in any other State? Do you have interstate councils where paramedics meet and discuss new ideas and the like?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We do. There is an annual conference each year run by the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals and that is a fairly big conference these days. There is also a body called the Council of Ambulance Authorities which is made up of all the government ambulance services and they have a number of subcommittees, including one of the clinical ones. I am unaware of any other service doing this on an official basis. I was not even aware of South Australia doing it until today. I definitely do talk to people from South Australia, so it is something that they assume is just part of their normal work practice and do not think it is worth discussing or -

**Ms FORREST** - I am not sure if it is widespread across South Australia. It was the Royal Adelaide, I think, that he was attached to at that time.

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes, the trauma surgeon.

**Mr MORGAN** - I have done it personally. A car goes into the tree, four feet off the ground. There is injury, say, on the left-hand side, which is fairly unusual but it is because of the way that he went into the tree and that did tell a story and it was useful.

**Ms FORREST** - There are probably times when it could be quite valuable.

**Mr MORGAN** - Yes, 90 per cent of the time, as Andrew says, it more what you are presenting with that -

**Mr HARRISS** - The situation, as Ruth has described from this trauma surgeon, who is highly recognised -

**Mr O'BRIEN** - It would not be Bill Griggs, would it?

**CHAIR** - It was Bill, I think.

**Mr HARRISS** - As he said the medical issue there to be resolved was so important just by showing how damaged the vehicle was, whereas the external damage to the patient was 'Send him on his way' but he probably would have died if they had.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - That is not our concern. Our part is if we can get them to hospital alive and in time for the surgeons to be able to do their bit we have done our bit. Hopefully we have influenced the outcome in a positive way, but longer term we are not going to basically fix people from motor vehicle traumas; we are going to put them into a holding pattern until a surgeon can actually do their bit.

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes, but in the case that Ruth has described the surgeons would not have even gone down that track.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - They would have let him go home.



**Ms FORREST** - Potentially they might have.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I do not have a problem with the idea actually. The more I think about it, the more I think it is probably not bad because it is the same as trying to relay an image to someone. It is so much better if you can just give them the image and say, 'He ran into the tree, there was a lot of intrusion into the car as you can see where the tree is and you can see where he was trapped with his legs'. You can paint a much better picture and, as you said, it actually gives them a higher level of suspicion.

**Ms FORREST** - In the Road Ready course, which is a driver instruction course for learner drivers in the ACT, they showed a video of an ad which was used on TV in which an 18- or 19-year-old guy picks up his little brother from school. His little brother was being a little bit annoying to his big brother saying, 'Can we have something to eat?'. He said, 'No', and then he was distracted as a car pulled out into the lane in front of him and he swerved to miss it and hit a pole. They were in town; it the crash occurred at 72 kilometres an hour, and his little brother in the front was killed.. This ad was based on an actual event. I asked the kids who watched that video at the same time what they thought about that because you always think of high speed crashes killing people and this was a lower speed crash and their comment was that they were staggered that there was not much damage to the car. And there was not, but the little boy took the full impact and hit his head.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - It was an older car without side air bags.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, an older car without a side air bag and that was the other thing. It is all those sorts of things that paint a picture. In the previous case we instanced had that accident occurred in a smaller rural hospital without all the bells and whistles that you have in the Royal Adelaide, for example, that young guy potentially may well have walked out that door.

**Mr MORGAN** - I have been struggling with what you are saying and I am not disputing that an ambulance officer along the line could say, 'Go home, you're okay' -

**Ms FORREST** - I am not saying that an ambulance officer would but doctors in the DEM could have.

**Mr MORGAN** - In my mind, any ambulance officer that has been dealing with that would have had a look at his chest and with those sorts of marks would have said 'You have to go to hospital and be assessed.'

**Ms FORREST** - I am not talking about the ambulance, I am talking about when they get to the hospital.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - No, it was done in hospital. The hospital were thinking about discharging -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, he got to the hospital. It was the extra bit of information that made them do a couple of extra tests.

On a different topic, up until 2006 ambulance officers were required to extricate patients and it has now been handed over to the Tasmania Fire Service in the urban areas. How is that working?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Fine. We have had the operational changeover issues but basically it is fine. There is a very cooperative air these days; there are no ongoing issues and as the Fire Service develops more and more expertise, it is fine.

**Ms FORREST** - Do you think it is better use of resources the way it is now because the Fire Service is there often just to deal with a fire if it occurred?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - A fireman with a fire extinguisher can deal with most car fires - not my quote. But we need the Fire Service there to make sure there is fire safety. They have fairly large crews - we have small crews - so from a resourcing point of view, they have perhaps more resources to respond than we have. From our workload point of view, our workload has continued to rise and so from that point of view it has not created a great gap in our work because we have more than filled it, and there weren't that many rescues done in any calendar year anyway. If you remember we only operated in the urban areas; this year we are still doing it in the outlying areas and at Triabunna the Fire Service were the rescue service.

**Mr MORGAN** - The change process has been difficult, I can't kid you with that, but when it is a very difficult extrication our people are still supporting the Fire Brigade. They have the expertise and we make sure in our rostering that there is somebody on each shift that has that degree of rescue expertise so that if the Fire Brigade do need it, it's there, and that was part of the agreement of the changeover. That is still working, they are relying on us very little now - they are developing the expertise, and it is really only the very high end stuff that they need us to support them in.

**Ms FORREST** - Over time, if the ambulance officers are not being required to do it, that skill will be lost eventually. Am I hearing you correctly, that by that time the Fire Service will not need that backup assistance.

**Mr MORGAN** - That's right. Our skill level is decreasing and theirs is increasing. The only concern I hear is from some of our country officers who have been qualified in rescue who are supporting the State Emergency Service people who have not had that level of experience. They get concerned, but in the metropolitan area I think it is a dead issue.

**CHAIR** - To what extent has modern technology and modern equipment enabled ambulance personnel to save more lives in recent years?

**Mr MORGAN** - I think it is preventing them. Andrew talked about side air bags and that sort of technology is unbelievable.

**CHAIR** - That is in terms of in the cars. I am thinking once the crash has occurred and the ambulance arrives at the scene, what advances of any significance have there been in recent years that may help save lives?

**Ms FORREST** - In the management of patients?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr MORGAN** - Management of incidents for paramedics has improved significantly and the Tasmanian Ambulance Clinical Council, who are our governing body, has been very progressive in the types of skills and drugs we are allowed to use. Andrew spoke earlier about the fact that we have far better pain relief, far better extrication devices and in fact one of our girls is just about to start a PhD on extrication devices. That sort of research is starting to occur but I would like to think that we are doing a pretty good job and the -

**CHAIR** - I want to acknowledge that you are.

**Mr MORGAN** - The Government is supporting us very, very well in doing that and Motor Accidents Insurance Board also has funded us significantly with the simulation centre. If you get the opportunity to look at that I would strongly encourage you to. We do not get the opportunity now to see the big jobs so we need to train people in a simulated environment just like a pilot does so that if something goes wrong they have had experience, even if it is only a make-believe experience, to see what it is and to manage it. We are starting to get some pretty good results out of that.

**CHAIR** - Good.

What are your views about the 0.05 blood alcohol limit? Should it be lowered, increased or made zero or left as it is?

**Mr MORGAN** - As somebody who drinks I would like to leave it as it is.

*Laughter.*

**Mr O'BRIEN** - 'For someone who does not drink much', is what you are supposed to say.

*Laughter.*

**Mr MORGAN** - That's what I meant.

**CHAIR** - The transcript will be amended.

**Mr MORGAN** - Thank you.

If you are really being hard-nosed about it a zero alcohol tolerance is where you go.

**CHAIR** - Would that be acceptable to the community do you think?

**Mr MORGAN** - I do not think so but if you are really serious about it that is what you have to do.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - In western society I do not think it would be well tolerated. It does not even allow anyone to have one drink and how long does it take and we all vary, so you could end up having a drink at lunchtime and driving home at 4 o'clock and at 0.01 feeling absolutely perfect but you are not and you are in strife. I do not think society would

accept it at that level. Perhaps even lower than 0.05 but I do not know enough of the science to know how much impact it has.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms FORREST** - Following a crash where there has been significant injury or a fatality I presume you have a debriefing process with the other services that are at the scene, or how do you manage that side of it?

**Mr MORGAN** - Not always.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - The nature of our job is that we deal with dead people, with death whether it is through a motor vehicle crash or natural causes or whatever. If we turn up to a fatal motor vehicle crash where there is a deceased person, we do our primary assessment, the person is deceased and there is nothing that we are able to do. We do not stay; we leave, obviously as there is no more for us to do. It is then up to the police to deal with the matter as part of their legal obligations and we probably would not debrief that sort of event.

The sort of events after which we may have a multi-agency debrief is, for argument's sake, a big crash where there are lots of victims, a number of cars, a number of patients and lots and lots of interaction, and if the crash involves children. We are all normal people and we tend to be affected more. Circumstances may require a debrief - for example, unusual circumstances such as a high-profile person being involved, or a high-profile location such as the railway roundabout, or the Premier being involved in a fatal road vehicle crash, for argument's sake. Obviously it is going to have a big impact on people. That is not an indication that I do not like the Premier -

**CHAIR** - No. You were thinking of a visiting premier.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes. The circumstances of the crash -

**Ms FORREST** - Someone who is known to you.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, one of our own.

**Ms FORREST** - And that is a reality in Tasmania.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We have had one of those. A daughter of one of our staff was killed on the Midland Highway, you may remember, and that had a big impact on us as an organisation, the people who were involved and the other services involved as well. There is a bit of camaraderie between the emergency services. We do get on well with the fire and police departments. Circumstances - not the fact of it being a fatality - will dictate whether we have a debrief. It would be the nature of the case and whether it was a very technical rescue. We talked before about expanding our fire services skills. Let's say it was a very complex rescue; trucks are difficult, especially truck rollovers and I think there was one on the west coast -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, there was; I passed it the other day.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - That was a very difficult rescue apparently.

**Ms FORREST** - Was it?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - I'm talking about the one up Mount Arrowsmith way where a semitrailer ran off the road. That was a very difficult rescue.

**Ms FORREST** - The one I saw was just a rollover and they would have been able to walk out of that one. It was a woodchip truck

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes. So it is the circumstances that will determine whether we debrief and whether there is a lot to be learnt. Basically, if we go along and there is nothing we can do we will just leave.

**Ms FORREST** - Is there an option, though, for any officer to seek a debrief?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes. CISM, our critical incident stress management process, is such that we would, as supervisors, pick up on things such as a job that had a level of concern about it because of the nature of what it was, who was involved, whether it was children or a whole family. Incineration is an awful thing and that generally does not make people feel particularly good because they stand back feeling extremely frustrated because there is nothing they can do and the people may not be dead when they arrive. There are awful things like that. The crews can either ring themselves or we will notify the critical incident team and that is a follow-up process where they will come back to the individuals concerned and contact them and then take them through a process if necessary and they will advance that as far as it needs to go.

**CHAIR** - A final question I would like to ask, as time is moving on. What percentage of the time of the ambulance services would be spent on road trauma injuries?

**Mr MORGAN** - It is low.

**CHAIR** - Low?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes, it is very low. In actual fact, as a proportion of our workload it is diminishing. The average ambulance patient is an older person with a medical problem, in my view, and I think I could probably back that up with some statistics. The proportion of motor vehicle trauma is diminishing as a proportion of our workload.

**CHAIR** - That is good.

**Ms FORREST** - Either that or there are more old people out there and it is a changed demographic.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We definitely have an ageing population.

**CHAIR** - There are certainly more old people. But the serious injuries numbers are decreasing too and usually the fatalities are as well. Who decides whether an air ambulance is to be called?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - When we respond we look at it from a primary response and a secondary response. If you look at the three major hospitals, there is the North West Regional Hospital, Launceston and Hobart. The ambulance services basically work on a hub and spoke model, so each of those hospitals has a normal collection area and if we go to a motor vehicle crash somewhere on the north-west coast, the first major hospital they will take that patient to is the North West Regional Hospital.

**CHAIR** - Who makes the decision to call the air ambulance?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Once the patient is assessed, if the hospital decides that the patient needs to go to a higher level of care they will then arrange that with the next hospital they want to go to and then the medical retrieval coordinator will start to liaise with us as well and the secondary transfer will take place, which is that the patient will be moved to next hospital which is going to deliver the care they need, and that could be surgical intervention. Things like neurosurgery are always done in Hobart. So, if someone has a spinal injury they will end up in Hobart or they may end up being transferred to the Austin.

**CHAIR** - Are there any cases where an air ambulance or helicopter is called to the scene of an accident?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Who makes the decision to call it then?

**Mr O'BRIEN** - We do.

**Mr MORGAN** - I wanted to clarify whether you were talking about fixed wing or rotary wing -

**CHAIR** - A helicopter.

**Mr MORGAN** - because when you talk about aircraft there are two different types.

**CHAIR** - I should have said helicopter.

**Mr MORGAN** - Andrew was talking about fixed wing response and then the helicopter. The helicopter is based in Hobart and it a State Government contract managed by police. We have a pretty good working relationship with Police Search and Rescue. From our perspective, the difficulty for the operational supervisor of the day who is the duty officer for the south makes the decision as to whether the helicopter will go. That is often based on intelligence provided to us and sometimes when people make a call for an ambulance they can tell us wonderful things about a patient's condition without realising that they are doing it.

If they ring up and say there are two old people who have been in a head-on collision, they are still sitting in the car and they look awful, it has painted a fairly good work picture for us already. With those things we have to make a judgment as to whether the helicopter will make any physical difference in terms of getting them to the hospital in time because there is no point in spending a lot of money on a helicopter unless it is

going to be of value. If we are sending a helicopter from here to Ulverstone, that is stupid because they could have them out of the car and into the nearest hospital in that time.

So I think it is generally under 100 kilometres, isn't it, Andrew, that is regarded as the best marker.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - But don't forget the compounding factor, if the patient is trapped we may be able to get the helicopter onto the ground next to them before they are even out of the car. So then you have bought the time that you are after because that is all we ever want to use the helicopter for, to buy time. If we can get some time back we will do it.

**Mr MORGAN** - But on the other hand, if somebody has been thrown out of the motor car at Melton Mowbray, by the time you go through the whole process you are better to put them in an ambulance and go and you will get them into hospital far quicker than you will with the helicopter.

**Ms FORREST** - It could be used down the west coast if the roads were closed, as long as you can get a helicopter in.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - As long as the weather is fine or clear enough for them to get in. But, for argument's sake, if we have a motor vehicle crash at somewhere like Derwent Bridge or beyond Derwent Bridge, it is almost certain that the helicopter will be responded.

**CHAIR** - Yes, otherwise it is difficult with the contour of the road too.

**Mr O'BRIEN** - It is a long, slow drive.

**CHAIR** - Yes, and uncomfortable around the corners.

**Mr MORGAN** - We do not have intensive care paramedics anywhere near the place so the quickest way to get them in is with the helicopter.

**CHAIR** - Good. Thank you very much. Gentlemen, thank you, you have been very interesting and helpful. We appreciate your evidence.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**