

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY MET
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, DIPLOMAT HOTEL, MANUKA, ACT. ON
WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2009**

DISCUSSIONS WITH Mr LAUCHLAN McINTOSH, AM, PRESIDENT, Ms LIZ de ROME, Mr EDDIE WHEELER AND Ms LINDA COOKE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF ROAD SAFETY, DIPLOMAT HOTEL, CANBERRA AVE, MANUKA, ACT

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - We appreciate you giving up your time and are very conscious of the sacrifice that Lauchlan has made from being on holidays so we are grateful to you all for coming thank you very much and welcome to our committee.

Mr McINTOSH - I am the President of the Australasian College of Road Safety.

Ms de ROME - I am on the executive of the national body for the Australasian College of Road Safety and I am a research scholar at the George Institute for International Health which is associated with Sydney University.

Mr HARRISS - We have heard a lot about the George Institute.

Mr WHEELER - I am secretary-manager of the NRMA ACT Road Safety Trust, a corporate member of the Australasian College of Road Safety and I represent the trust in any ACT chapter executive.

Ms COOKE - I am the executive officer of the Australasian College of Road Safety.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Lauchlan, would you like to begin by making a presentation?

Mr McINTOSH - I came into safety through the mining industry many years ago, having worked in that area for a long period of time around Australia and more recently I was executive director of the Australian Automobile Association where I had a wide range of national and international positions. I encouraged an organisation we then called Safer Roads, which was a consortium of half a dozen major groups such as the Local Government Association, the Australian Trucking Association and others and with a whole lot of partnership groups, basically to draw attention to the national tragedy of five people dying every day and 85 people being seriously injured on the roads across Australia.

Many of those people who are injured are permanently injured and are an enormous social drain on the community. Many countries, including Australia, which have considered targets to get to zero deaths and zero injuries at least have those targets and I will come back to that later.

I am currently still chairman of the Australasian New Car Assessment Program which crash tests cars and compares them with others with the aim of improving the relative safety of new cars. It was recently concluded by the Victorian parliamentary inquiry that

that organisation had been far more effective in lifting design standards in Australia than anything else.

I am a director of the international Road Assessment Programme, which is based on a similar program in Australia, of star-rating the roads to demonstrate the relative difference in safety of the infrastructure itself. The Australian Government has recently committed \$1 million to the World Bank's Global Road Safety Facility to expand that iRAP work around the world and I think it is a very important activity.

The Australasian College of Road Safety, on the other hand, is a unique organisation in the world. I don't think there are any other similar organisations. It was established in 1988 as an association for individuals and organisations working or interested in supporting road safety. It's multidisciplinary in its membership and values experience as much as academic qualifications in its members. Members come from a wide range of disciplines: engineers, epidemiologists, road trauma specialists, researchers, driver trainers, enforcement agencies, doctors, policy makers, industry representatives, motoring associations, insurance companies and many others who have a stake in road safety. It is a small organisation but it has 350 members -

Ms COOKE - Up to 400 members.

Mr McINTOSH - Up to 400 members and, as I say, it is a unique organisation. It publishes a journal on a quarterly basis. Its strength to a certain extent lies in the chapter organisations that are often associated with the major road safety research organisations in their States and it provides a great forum for interchange of information between the specialists in Australia. I think it is reasonable to say that those specialists in Australia are well recognised in the world as Australia has a very high reputation for the myriad road safety programs that we have in place. That is not to say that those programs are sufficient. There were 1 463 road deaths in 2008 in Australia, to the end of December. This was an 8.7 per cent decrease on the previous 12 months but it is still considerably above the national target. Major-General Michael Jeffery, the previous Governor-General, said that if a similar number of Australians were killed every day in battle this would be considered a national tragedy and I think I have to agree with him.

We have an enormous amount of work to do. We know that we can do; I think it is fair to say we have a lot of knowledge. One of the major questions is in implementing that knowledge. The Federal Government has announced a new road safety council to be set up, a range of other initiatives and we are awaiting the detail of those initiatives. I think that there is a national road safety strategy, which has been signed off by all the States and Territories. This strategy has been revised and it encompasses what is known as the safe system approach. That safe system approach requires, I think, all of us to reconsider how we think about the management of safety on the roads. Too often, as we did in industry, we spend a lot of time blaming the worker. Too often in the road environment we spend a lot of time blaming the driver.

There is no doubt that crashes occur because drivers make mistakes, they break the law or they are incompetent. However, many of the vehicles they drive are equally unsafe, the roads they drive on are unsafe or the systems in which we allow them to operate - and speed is a part of that system - are not necessarily safe for the conditions.

There is a lot of work being done in Australia and I draw your attention to the major inquiry by the House of Representatives committee some years ago called 'Eyes on the road ahead'. That report had a raft of recommendations, many of which have not been put in place. There was a major Victorian inquiry last year into vehicle safety and the Victorian Government is in the process of considering adopting some of those recommendations. There was a major inquiry last year into driver training in New South Wales. Again, I think that we are seeing many inquiries, many recommendations but it is the practical implementation of many of the many recommendations that is very slow to occur.

I think that is perhaps a fault of our own system of which we are part, but I think there is an opportunity to make a much better process of action to implement some recommendations.

Ms FORREST - Is it lack of political will you are talking about particularly?

Mr McINTOSH - Lack of political will to make the changes. In the safe system approach I think there has to be a recognition that all of us have to do something. I think that too often we focus on the fact that someone else should do something; that the driver should do something, the driver should behave better. That is true; we know that and the driver should behave better. But equally we have to provide the driver with an environment that is encouraging, if you like, and safer so that people recognise the speed simply by the nature of the road itself and they are encouraged to buy the vehicles that have the highest safety standards. There needs to be a recognition that the reaction to driver behaviour is not always to be punitive, that you can encourage them to make it easier. Driver training has to change so that we are all involved in the process. I think that shift to a safe system approach has been strongly recommended by an OECD report published last year called 'Towards Zero'. I would recommend that report from the OECD to the committee.

I think that is probably all I need to say as an opening statement other than emphasising that the college members are very committed individuals and groups keen to assist where they can in making change. We recognise that we can do much better in Australia. As an example, last year in Sweden there was a decision at a national level to have no child die on the road. When you think about that it is a fairly massive undertaking.

CHAIR - A bit like no child living in poverty by 2000.

Mr McINTOSH - I was at an international road safety conference in Bangkok in October with some of the Swedish people who put that forward and they had managed until the first week in October to have no child die on the road. They unfortunately did have a death -

Ms FORREST - In a calendar year?

Mr McINTOSH - Yes, nine months they achieved. When you think that you can take these things in pieces and achieve those results there is a time. I think this year was interesting when, over the Christmas break, people in Australia tend to focus on what they call the road toll and I would call road trauma. We put out a statement saying it was time we

took a long-term view in Australia and suggested that we should be moving towards zero perhaps in 10 years and suggested having a zero fatality period over Christmas.

CHAIR - This is for all people, not just children?

Mr McINTOSH - Yes, for all people. I think it was interesting that from reports over the time, for instance, Tasmania and the ACT did record a period of no fatalities. The press spoke about zero achievement in Tasmania and in the ACT. At least we have started the conversation so I think that is the sort of view that we really need to look at. We do so in industry today, the major trucking firm, Lindsay Fox's company, has taken a zero position, saying zero crashes, zero injuries. It means you design things in a totally different way.

Ms FORREST - On that point, some suggest this is an ambitious target. Unless we are ambitious we are never going to achieve it; if you put the bar half way, you'll get less than half way to the target. People say we're not going to stop road deaths, people will die even if it's restricted to an old person suffering a heart attack on the road. This does not become a road death statistic if it can be proved that they had the heart attack before the crash. To those who say we'll never get to zero deaths, I say that is a defeatist attitude; if we don't aim high, how are we going to get there. Is it unrealistic and do people think that as it can't be achieved it is a nonsense?

Mr McINTOSH - I don't think it's at all unrealistic. In industry, if you ask the chief executive of BHP, he would tell you that they have a zero target.

Ms FORREST - We've recently looked at safety in the mining industry and that is exactly what they were saying.

Mr McINTOSH - I worked in the mining industry from the time I left school where I was involved in a wide range of safety initiatives for 30 years or more. Our performance changed dramatically. When I look back at the mining industry compared with when I left it, it is so much better than I thought was possible. I realised that I had to change how I think about these things and I think we all have to rethink this.

We have grown up with road safety, with the feeling that everyone has the right to drive, but they have an obligation to behave well. In Sweden, no-one is telling the children what to do - not that I've studied this in detail but, according to the discussion we had in Bangkok, there is no campaign to teach them about road safety. The onus was clearly on drivers not to run over children.

It is an interesting way to look at the whole thing and we have to think about how we rethink our approach to road safety and that is the big challenge. We have had lots of inquiries and recommendations. The zero vision approach has been around in Australia for more than 10 years. I gave a speech about it in Tasmania about 10 years ago. I don't know why we should be quibbling over whether it should be a target of 50 or zero. All we have to ask is for those who want to die on the roads to put up their hands. No-one puts up their hand, so we have a zero target.

The outcome is that you design things differently and spend accordingly. You have a plan to make some changes, but the plan cannot be based on it being acceptable to die on

the roads; it is not acceptable at all. It is true that there are some times when people will die on the roads. We understand that. People will make mistakes; they will be stupid. There will be criminals who will drive badly and people who will go to great lengths to kill themselves on the road. We know that, too.

Ms FORREST - They are the hard ones to pick because they do it well.

Mr McINTOSH - Sure, but that doesn't mean to say that we should sit back and say it's okay that 500 people die. It is not okay. Again, we can save a lot of those simply by design. Wire rope barriers will make a change as will giving people less opportunity to do those things. There is a raft of things that can be done, that are not expensive. That is the other thing, there is a view that some things are expensive. In the workplace, no-one says it's going to be too expensive to have a zero vision. No-one suggests that a worker, an airline passenger or a train passenger shouldn't have a safe system to work, fly or ride in. No-one gets on an aircraft and expects to die, or thinks it's okay to crash. We have a vision there and on our rail networks, but we don't have a similar vision yet on the roads. It will take us some time but it's possible.

I was a bit passionate, I'm sorry, but that's how I feel about the whole issue. I think there is a groundswell happening. State governments and the Australian Transport Council have taken some steps in that direction. There is the experience from overseas and that OECD report clearly makes it obvious that leadership is really important, and national leadership is important within that.

Ms FORREST - When you look at the mining industry and the changes that they have made, you see that most of it has been brought about by the duty of care framework that they now operate under where safety is everybody's responsibility. It is not the bosses' responsibility to make a safe workplace any more than it is the workers' responsibility to ensure that the workplace remains safe and they act in a safe manner. So that engages the work force right from the most poorly educated person on the site, who is probably the cleaner and who may not have any tertiary education, right through to your mine managers who have extensive qualifications. They are all responsible for the safety of everybody else. To do that with drivers on the road is more difficult because they are not in one place; they are all over the place. So how do you engage all those road users - the pedestrians, the cyclists, all the drivers and particularly the young drivers - to be a part of that process?

Mr WHEELER - Yes, that certainly is a challenge. From the perspective of the road safety trust with which I work that is one of the things that has been front of mind with the trust for quite a while. Here in the ACT we have a learner driver program called Road Ready that the trust bankrolled back in the early 1990s. It was recognised at the time that it was introduced in 2000 in the ACT as leading edge young driver training within Australia. It became a blueprint for other jurisdictions to use and they have used that template very successfully in other jurisdictions now. Clearly getting to the young people with educational programs is a key thing. With the Road Ready program it is available in schools here in year 10, so it is available for year 10 students to undertake. All schools in the ACT have adopted it.

Ms FORREST - Was it voluntary adoption?

Mr WHEELER - It is a voluntary adoption, so yes, you do not have to do it, but clearly if you want to get your licence you do it. It is at no charge to the student. Externally it is available as well. For people who come into the ACT who are not in the school system it is provided by an outside provider and I think it is \$75. So it is available externally as well. One of the components is the Road Ready Plus component, which is available for P-plate drivers with six months or longer experience on the road. It is a voluntary component of the Road Ready program and it is about a five-hour course. We have something like 6 000 P-plate drivers every year in the ACT. Because it is voluntary we are only attracting about one-quarter of the eligible P-plate drivers to it. The program is actually administered by the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, which is the road authority here in the ACT. Whilst the trust bankrolled the program initially we are no longer involved in its administration or implementation. It is an interesting one because one of the advantages of the Road Ready program is that it is not just about learning the road rules; it is looking at risk-taking behaviour by young drivers. So it is targeting our young drivers' behaviour. The Road Ready Plus program has been evaluated and found to be beneficial in terms of improving young driver behaviour.

Ms FORREST - Have you got some evidence to show that? Have you an evaluation of the program?

Mr WHEELER - I can send you a copy of the evaluation. It was done a couple of years ago independently by the AARP group in Melbourne.

Ms FORREST - Can you just tell us a bit about what you do in the course. The reason I ask is that there has been a lot of differing views about driver training, particularly of novice drivers. Some say it makes them overconfident, some say it is a great thing. It does not appear that all the courses and some focus more on the education of drivers rather than the practical skills. Could you tell us what this actually covers?

Mr WHEELER - I do not have all the details of that and maybe I can pass some information on to you. We are not involved in the delivery of the program, but I am aware it is about a five-hour program. The students or the drivers have some discussions and workshops amongst themselves where they analyse their own driving behaviour. I think they choose an exercise that they undertake.

Ms FORREST - In the vehicle?

Mr WHEELER - No, I think it is something they do individually, like they are asked to do something on road safety or maybe develop a little road safety campaign because it forces them to focus on their driving behaviour. I could give you the details of the people who deliver the Road Ready Plus program. It is an organisation called Freebott who also provide the Road Ready program externally.

Ms de ROME - It is all classroom-based; it is not an on-road course.

CHAIR - I would be interested in getting some more information about that because I believe that is a very important part of road safety. We have found that most people in the public service in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales think that young people learning to drive feel they know everything in their later teenage years and it is not a

valuable way to deal with road safety. I have always disagreed with that so this is very good news.

Mr McINTOSH - I think there is a large academic debate on a range of driver training programs. There is evidence that suggests that some driver training programs do increase the confidence and as a result make drivers less road ready than they should be. I understand you have had a discussion with Doug Ling in this process. The NRMA Road Safety Trust, which has been operating for 15 years, is probably the largest separate foundation for road safety research funding in Australia and was until recently in the world - until the FIA Foundation was established. It has done a huge amount of work and the work that has been sponsored is really valuable. That goes back to what I said initially. There is a lot of work in Australia on a range of road safety solutions and it is difficult to get a concise summary of exactly where we are and also to get the right data. The Australian Transport Commission has noticed this. In some ways you cannot even get the same statistics from the different States. You would think this would be something you could easily achieve but it does not happen.

The NRMA Road Safety Trust is something you should look at, and at the work that they have done over time, just as you should look at the research work of a range of institutions: the George Institute, Sydney University, the CARRS-Q in Queensland and so on. There are some excellent research institutions. The question of getting one simple face to find them is difficult. The college is hoping to fill that space in the next couple of years. At the moment we are seriously under-resourced but with some volunteers we are keen to come to that position.

Ms de ROME - The George Institute does Cochran evaluations of research. We look at all the research that has been done in a particular area and we evaluate the quality of the research. You can read a research study and at the end the researchers say, 'Therefore we proved that black is white and red is green'. Everybody just reads the abstract and the results and thinks that is the case. With a Cochran review, we look at the merit of the study itself and if the study is not sound we discount the findings. With this area of novice driver training we are putting up on our web site a section about young driver training. It is intended to be a general service to the community giving what is known and verifiable about what does or does not work in driver training.

CHAIR - That would interest us very much.

Ms de ROME - I think it should be a very useful reference.

CHAIR - When is that likely to be presented?

Ms de ROME - I do not know if it has gone live yet. I do not think it is live but it will be shortly. It looks at the different elements of the greater rated licensing schemes; some things are popular but probably do not have the merit that people expect and other things that are undervalued. We are trying to put up what does have evidence to support its usage.

CHAIR - Is that the Cochran report?

Ms de ROME - No, we do Cochran evaluations of all sorts of studies; we take that approach to them so the web site will be presented in a user-friendly way.

CHAIR - How could we know when that would be available?

Ms de ROME - I could notify you.

CHAIR - That would be much appreciated.

Ms FORREST - We have heard that it is due out any out any time.

Ms de ROME - I am not working on it, so I do not actually know but it is the intention that it will clarify all that information to say what can be relied on as being worth doing.

Mr McINTOSH - The George Institute is doing some work in China on driver training at the moment.

Mr WHEELER - Of the potential market of, I would say 5 000 people outside Canberra, I think about 1 000 to 1 200 do this optional course. In terms of my saying it is successful, clearly we do not have the capacity, due to privacy issues et cetera, to look at those who have done the Road Ready Plus program and say they have had no crashes in the last 12 months. In terms of evaluating how successful it has been and knowing who has done the course and who has had crashes, we have not gone that far. It is self-reporting with drivers at the end of the course saying they are slowing down or driving safer or whatever.

One of the things about the Road Ready Plus course is that, when completed, P-plate drivers have access to four additional demerit points. As a P-plate driver you only have four demerit points but if you do the Road Ready Plus course you then have access to an additional four demerit points. That is a bit of an incentive for young drivers but even with that incentive, we are not really getting to the whole potential pool of about 5 000 P-plate drivers a year. The debate by the Government as to whether they will make it compulsory for all P-plate drivers to do the course is a political decision for the Government to make.

Ms FORREST - On that point about offering an incentive for the P-plate drivers, I had a discussion about it this morning for not just P-plate drivers but drivers who had good driving records. I had a view that giving people an extra demerit point before they lost their licence was a negative thing in that it can encourage them to think they do not need to worry so much about speeding because if they get caught they have still have those points. Wouldn't a financial incentive be better as the hip-pocket seems to be fairly effective in most things? Would perhaps a reduction in the renewal fee for their licence or their car registration or something else be a better incentive? I have a fear that giving more demerit points to give a buffer may be counterproductive.

Mr WHEELER - You are right and that was part of the debate before that was actually introduced. I think it is part of the continuing debate; do you really want to be giving young drivers, who are most at risk, an additional four demerit points, so they can still drive recklessly, lose points and still have more.

Ms FORREST - Can your P-platers drive with any alcohol?

Mr WHEELER - No, I think it is either 0.02 or practically zero.

Ms FORREST - How long are they on their Ps for?

Mr WHEELER - I think it is two years. I think it is the same as New South Wales.

Ms de ROME - We have one year on red and two on green.

Ms FORREST - We have one year displaying and two years with no display. In Tasmania you can only do 80 kph in your first year and then you can do the posted limit after that.

Ms de ROME - I don't like the speed limits for P-platers.

Ms FORREST - What are your views on that?

Ms de ROME - I think it is dangerous being restricted to 80 kph when they are driving on a road where everybody else is doing 100 kph or 110 kph. It subjects them to harassment and all sorts of abuse.

Ms FORREST - And they don't learn to pass a vehicle, it has been claimed.

Ms de ROME - I don't think it is a good idea. It is one of those things that sounds like a good idea at the time but there isn't any evidence that it is a good idea and we suspect it mightn't be.

CHAIR - I have an empathy with your views.

Ms de ROME - There is no evidence that it isn't good, but we haven't done the research in that area. There is no evidence that it is good either; there is no evidence to support it or to discount it. I think it is dangerous to put something like that in until we know definitely that it is a good idea, because of those conditions. If we put it in, we should restrict them from driving on those sorts of roads, but how can you do that? You can't.

Ms FORREST - You can't in Tasmania, otherwise you wouldn't be able to go anywhere. Is there a plan to do any research that you are aware of?

Ms de ROME - Not that I am aware of.

Mr McINTOSH - There is the major Federal Government study on P-plate drivers that is under way - the driver study.

Ms FORREST - That has been going on for a long time with not much work, hasn't it?

Mr McINTOSH - Yes. I think you have to recognise that we should those sorts of studies being undertaken, long longitudinal studies. You would have to argue that there is a fairly poor level of total research into a lot of these issues. But, again, it should be done in conjunction with the other issues that go with it. Liz makes the point that there is debate about how you get young people to drive at 110 kph if you can only drive at

80 kph. It may well be that those speeds are too fast for them but under what supervision? How will we train the people who are supervising them? There are much bigger questions to be asked in many cases and we tend to focus on one and run down that route and then end up with, 'This is our small position over here', when really we should be talking to people about all conditions, the safe system. I think in Tasmania you have signs that say 'The speed limit is a limit not a target'. It is mindset that requires to be changed in the whole of the country. That is why national leadership is important.

Ms FORREST - I have to keep reminding my first son that because it says 60 kph it doesn't mean you have to go at 60 kph, and where it says 100 kph you don't have to go at 100 kph.

Mr McINTOSH - That is a community behavioural thing. That is what happens in the workplace today, people don't go to work and say they have to do everything. They will stop to make the change because the system is recognised. Again, you have them in enclosed environment. Everybody is in an enclosed environment talking about the economy today; everybody wants to know what the interest rates are. We have a view about that and a massive discussion. We need to have these massive discussions on these other things, not in a punitive way but an exploratory way and one where we recognise the value of the research, and the research has to be done.

CHAIR - The 80 kph limit in some cases in Tasmania encourages young people not to display the P-plate signs at all so they can travel up to 110 kph. They are not running a great risk of being detected unless they go over the maximum limit or there is a random breath test or something like that.

Ms de ROME - When you put in a sanction you have to think through the wide range of issues. What tends to happen is people say, 'Stop them doing that and then they won't do it any more'. That is not the case, they will just take their P-plates off. With all the P-plate restrictions that is a limitation, that kids aren't allowed to have peers in the car after a certain time of time. They just take the P-plate off.

Ms FORREST - What is your view on that?

Ms de ROME - For the 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. cut-off the stats in terms of the crash rates are really compelling. I tend to support the peer restriction at that time of night, provided you have enough mechanisms. It is the mandating that makes it difficult. In New South Wales we have huge areas with no public transport. Kids used to have a designated driver; one kid didn't drink and the rest of them did and the designated driver drove them all home. That meant the young driver who was sober had a lot of drunks in the car, which is a really bad idea. On the other hand, are we going to have five kids in five cars?

Ms FORREST - Potentially all drunk.

Ms de ROME - Yes. So it's just not simple to work those things through. To me, the thing that we've done wrong, which is so difficult to correct, is that once the car became generally available to every family, we started doing our land use development without public transport. So we have huge areas far away from working and shopping centres as residential areas now, particularly in Sydney, without any public transport put in because we just assume people will drive their cars.

Ms FORREST - Tasmania is very much like that, too; we don't have a lot of public transport.

We need to start road safety and transport planning together, recognising that we can limit exposure if we provide alternatives. But if you don't provide alternatives, if we take people's drivers licences away from them, does that mean they also lose their job, potentially lose their house? What are the consequences of each sanction that we put in? That's why I like the systems approach where you just have to look at the whole thing.

Mr McINTOSH - It requires a shift in our thinking. The reality is you are not going to have public transport from Burnie to Launceston at 10 o'clock at night, as there are not enough people.

Ms FORREST - Even Wynyard to Burnie.

Mr McINTOSH - That's right. I was at Wentworth on the Australia Day weekend. There are lots of places where we won't have it, and there are a lot of differences where we are going to find it difficult to provide the 100 hours' training for people before they drive, and in large numbers of indigenous communities it is going to be extremely difficult. So we have to find solutions that we have to talk about and have a reasonable conversation about, but we don't.

We tend to get ourselves caught in this is the situation for here and this is that there, and this young person has to do that. If we had a community view that said it's important to be part of this safe system, as you are when you go to work, then we would have a different responsibility. Drivers would drive differently, the builders would build the roads differently and the car manufacturers would build different cars, and the public transport people would look at what the impediments to public transport are.

The impediments to public transport are quite often institutionalised in the way we manage that public transport either by contract or by taxis or by regulation which disallows something like the taxi system that operates in the UK. We can't have minicabs that would pick people up and take them places simply because we have a rigorous institutional barrier that stops this so-called public transport. We are encouraging -

Ms de ROME - Community buses.

Mr McINTOSH - people to drive, but we don't have a mechanism that does that. Lots of hotels in country areas put on buses that take people home. Is that encouraged; what are the disincentives to that? No-one ever looks through the complete system that goes with that, and I think that's why the systems approach is so important. It's not just the three things you see, but it's the long tail of all these other things that come in. If we do that internationally and nationally then maybe Australia has to take more leadership, and so we're going to make the change. Maybe the new Road Safety Council will do that, but it certainly needs to get on with the job.

Ms FORREST - I think any extra public transport and community bus or anything is going to have its challenges because not everyone wants to go home at the same time. But then

if it became an accepted part of the community that the bus is there, and if you want to drink, the bus is leaving at a set time, so it would certainly reduce your risk, and that sort of thing.

Ms de ROME - In the last few years for quite a long time in New South Wales we have had a local government road safety program that is based on councils. Each council was encouraged to develop a road safety strategic plan for that local government area. So you would do the crash stats - I have brought a book for you that I wrote, I will give it to you - on that area and identify what types of crashes happen in this environment. You talk to the police and all the stakeholders in that community, and I've done this for communities, and they come up and say, 'These are the things that we need for our community'.

So that community agrees and the council funds, for example, maybe a bus at certain times of the year, and the hotels all put in some money, or maybe you charge everybody \$5 or the equivalent of a taxi fare, and you need to negotiate it with the local taxi industry as well. But it works -

Ms FORREST - There are buses out there, though. There is the community bus to take the oldies out for their shopping, and stuff, and they don't use them in the night.

Ms de ROME - And they're parked at night. Or you have the school buses that take the kids in and out -

Ms FORREST - And they sit in the yard for the rest of the time.

Ms de ROME - In New South Wales many local councils are making much better use of those facilities. That can happen, and that is working locally.

CHAIR - Good.

Ms FORREST - So is each community assessing their own need at a local government level?

Ms de ROME - Yes. It was written for the IPWEA - the Institute of Public Works Engineering - and local councils basically and that is a guide of how to put those plans together.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for that; we will take it into evidence.

Mr McINTOSH - Various State agencies have varying relationships with their local government to do that. VicRoads has a big program, the Queensland Government has a big program, Western Australia has just implemented a big new program so there is a lot of work going on. I do not think that we would ever want to underestimate the amount of work that is out there. The difficulty is often getting the best pieces of work and building on those.

CHAIR - Do they vary very much from State to State?

Mr McINTOSH - Yes, they do vary because the needs are different. The sort of work that is being done in, say, Western Australia and in the remote areas of Western Australia is going to be quite different to what is needed in Victoria where there are more major towns and communities out there, and sometimes the local government networks are different in different States. There are different needs in different States.

Ms de ROME - Political funding is different. The New South Wales State Government funds a road safety officer position, 50 per cent funding, for every council. It places these people into local government councils on a 50-50 basis where there is an identified road safety need. So if you have a council area where the crash rate is above a certain level then the State Government will offer that council a road safety officer.

CHAIR - Are there any of these schemes in the other States that would be of particular relevance to Tasmania or that you think are better than the others? Any that we should try to look at?

Mr McINTOSH - I honestly do not think that I am competent to tell you. You would have to look at each State scheme yourself. The college at its last conference had some discussion of this and we are actually engaged with the Australia Local Government Association to see if there was some way that we could draw this together. You should talk to the Australian Local Government Association as well about their views on this. Andy Hrast is their transport person, and ALGA runs an annual national local roads congress, which often has a large road safety component. Their national conference this year is something to be involved in with road safety, and we are.

Ms de ROME - They showcase these sorts of projects.

Mr McINTOSH - Each State behaves differently but I am certainly not in a position to make any comment on the rating of those. We do not have the authority.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms FORREST - It sounds like a very good idea but I just want to flag a couple of potential problems with you to see what your views are. As I said, broad overarching legislation, the same with the workplace health and safety and then each individual mine site or workplace has their specific needs that they identify. They look at their risks; they look at how they are going to mitigate the risk and so on. In a situation like this you have the local government areas often under the broad framework of the rules of 0.05, the speed limits -

Ms de ROME - State priorities.

Ms FORREST - Yes, that is right, so your State-based legislation. Do we run the risk with something like that of the council saying in our municipality we are going to lower all our speed limits to 60 or whatever -

Ms de ROME - They cannot do that.

Ms FORREST - They cannot do that? I just think that it will make a hotchpotch of speed limits.

Ms de ROME - In New South Wales there are regulations about how you rate the speed limit on a road and we have had the City of Sydney, the City of North Sydney and also Manly Council, an urban council, have gone head-to-head with the RTA where they have wanted to reduce their CBD limit to 40; it is 50, and they have wanted to lower it to 40. It is an ongoing battle because they just want the whole area to be 40 and the RTA, of course, is concerned with through traffic and has other issues.

Ms FORREST - That is my point; whether you can drive through municipalities.

Ms de ROME - Yes, that sort of stuff will happen but that will happen whether you have this sort of program running or not.

I have about 40 councils that I have done these sorts of programs for. One of the things that comes up quite often is that the local council in regional areas will want to run programs, say, on how to use roundabouts but the RTA says, no, we won't do it because roundabout usage isn't an issue. It is a matter of different perspectives. If you are doing your statistics on a State basis you see the priorities coming out of that amalgamation of data, but if you look at your data on your own region you see the areas your local drivers are concerned with and you do come up with a different set of priorities. I think it is valid to at least have a discussion about that. The RTA is always involved in the development of these strategic plans so there is always a representative on the group.

Ms FORREST - So is it more an option for the councils to say they have identified this section of this particular road needs some wire rope barriers or some sort of protection -

Ms de ROME - Yes.

Ms FORREST - because there are heritage-listed trees over there and we are not going to cut them down. Is that the role they play?

Ms de ROME - We look at safer roads, which is the road environment; safer people - road user behaviour; land use and transport planning - what sort of community planning do we have for community buses and things like that; and land use and development. When we put in a new development do we require a road safety audit of that development before we give it development approval? They don't do that. There is a whole range of things. Are they going to put in a development that is going to cause road safety problems in the future? So you are trying to get ownership and awareness of the road safety issues at that local level. I think it really does work very well.

I have done evaluations comparing similar council areas with and without strategic plans to look at the road crash data over a period of five years. It looks much better in places that have been systematic about their management, so I do think there are benefits.

Ms FORREST - Someone can come up with these good ideas and then the first thing they are going to do is shoot them down so it is good to have a think about what might be a challenge.

Ms de ROME - We have about 10 years of practice in this.

Mr WHEELER - One of the things that the trust does is fund research. We have an annual grant program and we get applications from the community and other research organisations. We are now advertising in the *Weekend Australian* each year so we are now attracting applications from the Monash University Accident Research Centre and Queensland University of Technology et cetera.

On the issue of driver training, we are funding a couple of interesting and ground-breaking initiatives. One Monash are doing for us at the moment is looking at the applicability to young driver training of some techniques that are used in the aviation and military industries, the military sector, particularly the aviation one. It is a technique or a practice called 'crew resource management'. It is basically the communication and teamwork operating in the cockpit. Monash, with some funding from us, are looking at the application of that technique in the cockpit of the car, if you like. It is aimed at young drivers and as we know young drivers are particularly at risk when they are carrying young passengers of the same age. Monash are doing some trials on this at the moment, training young drivers in this technique, improving their communication so that the car cockpit works cooperatively to make the car safer and that they drive safer. They are looking at techniques such as the passenger asking the driver, 'Do you know how fast you are going?', or 'I saw a speed sign back there and it is 80 along here'. In a sense it may be empowering the passenger more to maybe speak up and to make positive suggestions to the driver.

Some of the research again that the trust funded and that Monash did for us was this whole area of driver/passenger interaction. One of the things they found was that often the young driver, if he has young peers in his car, even though no-one has said a word the driver will sometimes think, 'They want me to go fast, so I'll go fast' or 'I'll engage in risk-taking behaviour' even though there has been no overt suggestion by the passengers to do that.

CHAIR - Or to just show off.

Mr WHEELER - Or to just show off. Naturally enough, the research suggests too that, depending on the age of the passengers, young drivers will behave differently. If they are driving their mother or grandmother or older people they will drive more carefully and if they have their young mates in the back they will drive more recklessly. Some of that, I guess, is instinctive.

CHAIR - And if they have a male mate they will drive faster and if it is a girl they will drive slower.

Mr WHEELER - Often with a female they will drive slower. I have the draft report from Monash at the moment and I am looking at it. They came to Canberra as part of their research and spoke to the people who were delivering the Road Ready Plus program. Depending on where that report ends up, they may introduce some of those techniques into the Road Ready Plus program in the ACT. That will be a decision for the Government.

It might be educational for you to know that of the reports that we fund, when we get them we have no power to recommend that governments introduce any of the findings.

We pass them on to the appropriate government authority here and we send them off to

appropriate research organisations, depending on the report and who ought to be seeing it. We distribute them far and wide and they are available on our web sites as well. If we find something that suggests that green-eyed people have more crashes than blue-eyed people, we would pass that off to probably the Federal Government, the ACT Government and the George Institute.

By way of how we operate, there is a \$2 road safety levy that the ACT makes us pay when we renew our registration each year. That is matched by \$2 from NRMA Insurance, so we get \$4 for every vehicle registered here in the ACT. We get about \$800 000 a year to put into road safety initiatives. We have five honorary trustees so we're not beholden to the ACT Government or the NRMA. The trust meets and decides who it wants to fund and I push the paperwork around. We don't have to ask permission from anybody. Clearly we take note of what is going on; we don't get in and fund things that the ACT Government ought to be funding. Having said that, we work very closely with them on the initiatives we fund.

CHAIR - How often are driver licences renewed in the ACT?

Mr WHEELER - I think it is either five or 10 years.

CHAIR - Ours is up to five. It can be annually, but up to five.

Ms FORREST - Do they pay \$2 per year or is it \$2 per renewal?

Mr WHEELER - It is \$2 on the renewal of registration, not the licence. It's on the vehicle.

Mr McINTOSH - It is tied into the third-party insurance. Initially in the ACT, when the third-party insurance was privatised, there was a surplus of funds and that surplus was then put into the NRMA Road Safety Trust. The trust had significant initial funds of about \$10 million. That was then used on a range of things and the deal was that, as the review came up, this road safety levy would be placed on motorists.

CHAIR - So that is annually on renewal of registration?

Mr WHEELER - Yes, every time you register your car, and NRMA Insurance matches it.

Mr McINTOSH - It relates to the third party insurance arrangements in the Territory so you have to think about how that might work somewhere else. There are many differences in that. The TAC is a major funder of infrastructure in Victoria and a whole raft of road safety things on the basis of performance. The MACs in the other States have a different role and a different responsibility so it is not easy to make a direct comparison all the time.

Ms FORREST - Is the revenue raised from traffic infringement, like speed cameras and the like hypothecated to road safety or just to general revenue?

Mr WHEELER - It just goes into general revenue here in the ACT.

Mr McINTOSH - That worked well in Western Australia until everybody started obeying the speed signs and there was no money for road safety.

Laughter.

Mr McINTOSH - There are other things you need to do.

Ms FORREST - But you still have to maintain your roads, otherwise you end up with a problem so it becomes an unfortunate cycle.

Mr McINTOSH - People often forget the huge amount of money that has gone into infrastructure in Victoria from the TAC - hundreds of millions of dollars. Far more money has been spent in Victoria on black spots and road link improvements than has been spent nationally by the national program and that has made a massive difference. It is now happening in other States. Other States are now starting to realise the importance of those infrastructure changes. People will have crashes but they do not have to die when they crash.

Ms FORREST - Do you think we should be focusing on targeted revenue, like a levy on registration because that is renewed every year, regardless? Is that a way to boost the funding for these sort of necessary works?

Ms de ROME - I think so.

Mr McINTOSH - It depends. You have to have work to do.

Ms FORREST - There is always work to do.

Mr McINTOSH - Sure, that is right. I do not know if the college would have a specific view that said that levies or funding from the GST or wherever would be the thing. We would have a view that funds are necessary to do the work. How the Government will do that is a matter for the Government, I think, and third party insurers or a range of groups.

Ms FORREST - Do you find the levy that has been introduced - such as the \$2 levy here - there was much opposition from the people, generally? For instance, in Tasmania two or three years ago, they tried to introduce a \$15 a year motorcycle levy that only motorcyclists had to pay for road safety initiatives related to motorcyclists. Our House actually voted against that proposal on the basis that motorcycles are not the only road users. We felt it would be better to increase the base and reduce the rate so that everyone pays - except it would be hard to charge pedestrians - but people who are registering a vehicle, not just motorcyclists. The motorcycle groups went out in force, as you can imagine, because \$15 a year is quite a significant amount - it is much more than \$2 - and it was targeting a particular group. Was there much resistance to those initiatives that you know of?

Mr WHEELER - As I understand it, there was none at all. I sit within the ACT department of Territory and Municipal Services, which is our version of the New South Wales Road and Traffic Authority. I am unaware of any controversy about the \$2 at all. I think occasionally a minister will come in and the people from the department will come and say to me, 'Have you got some words we can use', in a response to that and what the trust does. As I understand it, only maybe one or two people a year might inquire as to what it

is about. I think it is posted on the ACT Government web site as to what the road levy is for.

Ms FORREST - People would hardly notice a levy of \$2.

CHAIR - No, that is right, and it is not discriminatory either.

Mr WHEELER - That is right, yes.

Mr McINTOSH - One could argue the pedestrians and cyclists do not pay.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr McINTOSH - Again, if this is a normal government activity, why does there need to be a levy if the economic costs of road crashes are horrendous and they are a cost to the nation? Who should pay? Should the community pay? Transport is part so I think it is very difficult to say that if one levy works in some place or one insurance arrangement works, it can be transferred to another.

CHAIR - It depends on the amount charged and if it applies to all motorised use so that is fairly non-discriminatory. I wouldn't expect any adverse reaction to a levy of \$2 for all motor vehicles.

Ms FORREST - How many vehicles are there in ACT?

Mr WHEELER - More than 200 000 - 210 000 or something.

Mr McINTOSH - There's a tax on it. I don't think the college is in the business of suggesting that every motorised person in Australia should be paying a \$2 levy. It's a nice idea, but I don't think that's our view.

Ms de ROME - The other way of putting it is you could take \$2 from what people already pay; it's how you assign money or whether you impose an additional levy. What we are saying is that money should be assigned -

Mr McINTOSH - Just as every motorised user pays 38 cents a litre in petrol excise, of which a component is for covering the cost of the road trauma, so should that money be allocated to research for road trauma? It's a taxation argument, but I don't think it's a policy argument for road safety. We know more work needs to be done, more longitudinal studies need to be done, and we need to integrate those studies with the driver in the car and the vehicles, motorcycles as well. Also the people; we need to do more work on pedestrians.

In the work I do in the Australasian New Car Assessment Program, probably a quarter of involves encouraging manufacturers to make more pedestrian-safe cars. There is a huge difference between a pedestrian-safe car and a non-pedestrian-safe car - there is an absolutely massive difference. If all cars were at world best practice and were not funny looking cars it would make a huge difference. The new Subaru, for instance, is a five-star car. If you were hit by a \$25 000 Subaru Impreza at low speed you would survive, whereas you would die if hit by another car at a similar speed. They are the issues we

don't even have out in the public arena yet, so there's a whole raft of new thinking and technologies. There are technology developments for vehicles that have yet to be considered.

The majority of light commercial utilities don't even have ABS brakes, let alone ESC, so there is a huge lag in a lot of things. We need a bigger, broader public debate to get those things up in the community.

Ms FORREST - Do you think the big employers particularly, for instance Lindsay Fox, should take a greater lead in this because for those with vehicle fleets on the road, the vehicle is the workplace, so the road is the workplace? How would you approach that?

Mr McINTOSH - I have been in discussion with the Australasian Fleet Managers Association. They have a very detailed vehicle fleet policy. They are actively working to encourage the implementation of that with all their members. Many government agencies are now specifying at least four-star cars - it's a pity they are not specifying five-star cars. Many big companies are making that decision. I will be talking to a mining industry conference in Western Australia in March this year on this. There is an increasing interest, and it's very pleasing to see a major firm like Lindsay Fox take on this Vision Zero approach.

Lots of little fires make a big blaze and we need lots of people to be talking about this. Hopefully then we'll get a big national approach. The Australian Transport Council, the Minister for Transport and the ATC have said they are going to have a bigger national approach and we are waiting to see what happens and where it goes.

Ms FORREST - My husband has a business, and to claim the fringe benefits tax on a work vehicle, there are only certain vehicles you can have. A lot of them are the vans with not much front protection, so you are pushed into buying vehicles that are practical for use in your business but really don't provide the safety features that I would expect to have, as well as wanting for people who were working for me.

Ms de ROME - Is this a tax claim requirement?

Ms FORREST - I am not entirely sure; he understands all the tax implications and that was one of the comments he made. We were commenting on our competitor who had station wagons, and his workers were taking those vehicles home where they shouldn't be unless he was claiming the fringe benefits tax, but I am not exactly sure how it worked. That raised in my mind concern that we should be encouraging business operators to buy vehicles that are safe for their workers, that provide for their needs, without having to have a big hit with a fringe benefits tax or some other tax because of the nature of the vehicle.

Mr McINTOSH - There was something similar to the case put by the AAA to the Federal Government last year on the changes to the fringe benefits tax, that there would have been a reduction in safety in the take-up because many of the more expensive cars do have better safety features. That is not necessarily the case across the board. There are a lot of low-cost cars that are now achieving five-star rating. The van example is interesting. We are in the process of testing some vans at ANCAP and we will be looking to see if we can do that. I will actually have a look at the issue because I think

they are some of the unintended consequences of regulatory and taxation rules. I do not think anybody sets out to do that but they do become unintended and they penalise. We tend, as a community, not to look at the opportunities for incentives. We are having a huge spend on the green car fund, with more than \$1.3 billion to be spent on a green car, but there is no suggestion in that green car fund that I can find that the green car should be a safe car. That is absolutely ridiculous and yet there could be both. We are not suggesting there should not be a green car but certainly the question is why wouldn't we have a \$1 billion safe car fund or a safe vehicle fund. Trucks, vans, motorcycles - there is a whole raft of vehicles for which we know we can make a difference and we should be out there leading the world.

Ms FORREST - A lot of time is spent on the road in these vehicles. That is the whole purpose of them, the mobile workplace.

Mr McINTOSH - That is right and there is a huge issue of rollover. In fact there is a huge discussion, particularly in rural and remote communities, where rollover is a problem. People are being carried in the back of vehicles that roll over. There is a big issue for SUVs - sports utility vehicles - which are less stable. One of the pushes is to ensure that ESC is on those vehicles to make them less likely to roll over but then there is an issue then about their strength. There is a very rigorous debate going on amongst practitioners and academics. There was a conference in Sydney held on rollover last year. There is not a simple answer yet but we should be in the debate. We should be having the debate and doing the research. Whether Australia is to do that or encouraging someone else to do it, at the moment it is at the bottom end of our radar. The ex-president of the college, if he were here, would have spent the whole morning talking to you about rollover because that is what he is doing and it is very important.

CHAIR - Including heavy vehicles?

Mr McINTOSH - Not so much.

CHAIR - The ARRB is doing a lot of good work on that.

Mr McINTOSH - There was a proposal to put in a truck testing facility in Victoria but I do not think there was sufficient funding to go ahead. There is always more work and now the question is how we link internationally with that. I think that is one of the terms of reference; what are the international links with the college? Most of the professionals are well hooked into international programs. The Australian aid agency, AusAID, is now taking on road safety as part of its disability strategy for promotion and we certainly commend them for that. The reality is that 1.2 million people die every year on roads in the world. It is now the largest cause of premature death in young men and by about 2020 it will be the third or fourth largest premature killer. There is a huge task to do internationally, absolutely massive, but there are some good messages about what can be done. Last year I attended a bipartisan meeting in the Houses of Parliament in London where they have a campaign for safer roads. I must admit I was surprised to see the bipartisan approach from both sides of the House in trying to come to grips with their safer roads campaign.

CHAIR - What is your view about their success rate because the UK is one of the countries that have been very effective in road safety.

Mr McINTOSH - Absolutely, though you have to look at how you measure that and what the differences are. If you look at Australia, the ACT results are world class, but in the Northern Territory our results are very poor. We had some big successes in some States last year. That is how we should be doing. We should be making those. There is good work going on in the United States in a range of areas. There are 50 states and 300 million people. We can learn a lot from a lot of other people. This organisation I am working for is promoting 'vaccines' for roads. If we treat road deaths as a health issue then fixing it up is like making a vaccine. When you think about the numbers of people who die and the people who are seriously long-term and permanently injured, we really have to have a vaccine to make the change. It is about trying to think differently. Irrespective of whether we have done a great job to date, we always should take the opportunity to think differently and about how we make some significant changes. So what should you do in Tasmania is a tough call because there is a raft of things to choose from but there are some good practices that you should be able to draw on.

CHAIR - Do you have any particular suggestions about what we can be doing that we are not doing?

Mr McINTOSH - I think it would be presumptuous of me to make that call. My colleagues may have some views. I do not think I could give you that sort of advice.

CHAIR - Could I ask what your views are on drink-driving? Should the limit be zero, should it be less than 0.05? In the ACT it is 0.05; is there any discussion about changing it?

Mr WHEELER - I have not heard of any discussion, though in the last few months the chief police officer and even the magistrates are almost wringing their hands with the level of drink-driving in the ACT. There has been clearly some significant drink-driving going on. Police are pulling people over with some very high readings. I have not come across any debate about decreasing the level but certainly there is a lot of concern about the level of drink-driving going on at the moment.

Ms de ROME - I mainly work with motorcycle safety. In motorcycle crashes and also in general crashes the proportion of people with an illegal alcohol level is disproportionate to the number who are unlicensed at the time of the crash. For example, in New South Wales some 8 per cent of riders in crashes were unlicensed at the time of the crash but they comprise 38 per cent of the riders who were affected by alcohol when they crashed. It is huge. It is just extraordinary.

Ms FORREST - I think the question here, and as Don was saying, is whether 0.05 is an appropriate level. What I am hearing is that the people that have been pulled over are well over the limit and obviously quite significantly impaired, so by lowering the limit to say 0.02 or to zero are we penalising that group down the bottom there who have been out to have one drink? Do we leave it at that and then ping harder the ones that are well over, as a disincentive? How do we deal with that because it is the people that are well over the limit that are the problem it seems? It is not those that are 0.055.

Ms de ROME - That's my point. The Federal Office of Road Safety some years ago did a study of all the drivers involved in crashes. They worked out that if you remove the group of people who are really badly behaved and don't have licences, they are the ones

who are severely over the limit with alcohol, they are much more likely to be speeding and breaking the law in all sorts of areas. You have a relatively small group of people who behave very badly and then you have the rest of the community who are more or less law-abiding and might break laws every now and then. You don't need to drop the level beyond 0.05 because that is a level that law-abiding people can live with and stay safe. What we have to do is focus on the people who are above that and behave really badly. I think we need to look at general sanctions across the whole community. In New York many years ago - that is where zero tolerance comes from - when they started enforcing minor misdemeanours such as not paying the subway fare, they found that when they caught someone and prosecuted them for that they had a whole raft of other offences in the line they hadn't been caught for. New York became a safer city because they found there was a small group of people who were causing all the trouble and if you could find ways of policing them you wouldn't need to be enforcing across the whole community. You can just identify and work on them. Some people whom I have heard discussing this suggest that what we need to do on the road is enforce using seatbelts, blinkers, staying within your lane - all the little things. You assume you will be enforced on the big ones: speeding, alcohol, seatbelts, red lights.

CHAIR - So they are relaxed with the other ones and think they're not going to be detected and it affects their attitude.

Ms de ROME - Yes, it is an attitude thing. I think that is something we have let go on because we have been focusing on the big five.

Ms FORREST - So if you enforced more broadly then but increased the penalty for the ones who are really doing the wrong thing -

Ms de ROME - Have a look at whether increasing penalties is the way to go.

Ms FORREST - That's what I am asking you.

Ms de ROME - I don't know. When we say 'increasing penalties', I have grave reservations about licence sanctions. Once they have lost their licence, 60 per cent of people who have had their licence removed continue to drive. They then have nothing to lose and when we pick them up they are behaving badly in all sorts of ways. So they have let go of the amount of restraint they may have had. Psychologically I think we have some very problematic people out there.

Ms FORREST - A trip to jail perhaps?

Ms de ROME - I don't know about jail. We haven't evaluated the alternatives. I am about, I hope, to start a study looking at the social implications of licence sanctions on young people: what happens to them, do they lose their job, do we push them beyond the fringes of society, do we create a problem by this punishment? We don't know. We could start by looking at this and evaluating other ways. Although we haven't evaluated them very well, I like traffic offender programs. It is not a matter of ping! and we'll do this to you, but try to make people come into a program where they have ongoing behavioural intervention of some kind.

Ms FORREST - So you're suggesting that rather than taking their licence from them it is compulsory for them to attend some driver education program that drills down into those issues?

Ms de ROME - Yes. Certainly alcohol interlocks, and behaviour management and modification rather than the non-directed punitive approach such as we'll take this away and lock you up. Those sanctions don't give them a way of changing.

Ms FORREST - The interlock won't either unless you provide an education program to go with it.

Ms de ROME - The thing is we don't spend much money. Once we have locked them up or taken away their licence, we just ignore them until it's over.

Ms FORREST - Then they'll come back with a period of inexperience if they haven't driven.

Ms de ROME - Yes, and possibly more angry. We do not know what they are like when they come back either, but we are not looking.

Ms FORREST - For anyone who loses their licence, and maybe they have gone through the programs or the education and still cannot manage to do the right thing, so they have lost their licence and they come back, so what should be the process of getting their licence back?

Ms de ROME - Rather than taking away their licence I think we should say that if they complete a three-month program they can keep their licence, but that this three-month program requires them to attend certain things.

Ms FORREST - Like a probation sort of thing?

Ms de ROME - Yes, we would use some sort of program.

CHAIR - That is good for rehabilitation but it would be less of a deterrent I would think for -

Ms de ROME - Deterrents do not work.

CHAIR - Well, the greatest deterrent is the increased certainty of being discovered and -

Ms FORREST - Caught.

Ms de ROME - But we are not sure of that. There were studies by St Vincent's in Victoria that were published and there was also one by one of the courts in Victoria. In both cases they looked at people who had lost their licences and talked to them about it. They said that they did not think that it was very likely that they would have got caught, but they did in fact get caught. And then they drove unlicensed and they still believed they would not get caught.

CHAIR - But the increased risk of detection surely is a deterrent. If people realise that if they offend they are likely to be caught so they are less likely to offend.

Ms de ROME - Yes, if people have a perception.

CHAIR - If they feel that there are no police or speed cameras around they I will be right and so they offend.

Ms de ROME - Or will take the P-plate off.

CHAIR - Yes. I am just wondering what your views are about the adequacy of the visible presence of police on the roads here in the ACT and generally. Are there enough? I think in Tasmania we do not have anywhere near sufficient visible presence of police.

Ms de ROME - I am pretty keen on high visibility. I have seen studies where they had empty police cars parked on the side of the road, and that had an effect. There was no-one in the cars.

Ms FORREST - Does that only have an effect at that point on the road, where they think they got past that one and so they speed up up the road?

Ms de ROME - No I do not think so, the police are around. Or you just see the police.

Ms FORREST - When the police are on the Midland Highway, when they are out there, I drive from Hobart to Burnie and I will see probably eight of them or none. I will see speed cameras as well.

CHAIR - And probably, usually, none.

Ms FORREST - More often there are none but every now and then there are some and they are pulling people up. But when they are there they are there in numbers.

Ms de ROME - There are lots of them?

Ms FORREST - Yes. There is no rhyme or reason to it, which is fine, but when they are not there the speed cameras are on the side of the road. I know where they are.

Mr WHEELER- It is certainly an ongoing debate here in the ACT and I think the ACT police are currently embarking on a campaign of being more visible. A lot of the debate is around the fact that there are speed cameras here and the debate that surrounds that and whether it is better to be pulled up by the police and booked and whether you are more chastened and more likely to reoffend than if you get the slip in the mail and think, 'God, I did 80 last week and where the hell was that?'

Ms FORREST - And was it me driving?

CHAIR - You are paying a debt rather than a fine.

Mr WHEELER - So the deterrent effect is part of the debate. Certainly in the ACT in recent months the ACT police are embarking on a campaign. They are out there and they are booking people but it is also being heavily reported in the newspaper as well. I guess the ACT being a smaller jurisdiction, the *Canberra Times* regularly reports on what police are doing so I think that is part of their campaign - firstly, to be seen and, secondly, for it

to be reported. In many ways I think that is part of the whole road safety issue, that you can educate people about the dangers of speeding et cetera but unless that is followed up by, say, enforcement and the publicity around that, like using mobiles, again the chances of being picked up are fairly small and most people will take the punt that they are not going to get pinged.

A lot of people suggest that if you educate people about the dangers of it, and the police go out there and ping you, then as the word gets out that police have booked 400 last week and 300 this week, that may encourage people to desist from that practice.

Ms FORREST - Is there still that attitude that they will not catch me? Is there still that attitude? They might have caught 400 last week but they will not catch me.

Mr WHEELER- I think there is that sort of optimism bias that we are not going to get killed, we are never going to get caught et cetera.

Ms de ROME - There are some that you will never convince.

Mr McINTOSH - There is a suggestion in the ACT of point-to-point monitoring and I think that in the end technology will change the way that we drive generally. Alcohol interlocks are now almost standard in trucks in Sweden. You can't drive a truck or a bus unless you have blown into the alcohol interlock. I think that we should be more active in using those technologies and encourage them. There is a relatively simple intelligence speed adaptation device available which can be used with an in-car mapping device that will show the speed limit of the area. It will beep to alert to the changes. It requires a lot of input from the government agencies which own the speed mapping data. I think there is unfortunately a bit of debate about whether that data should be sold to the public so those agencies can make some money or whether it should be made freely available to the mapping agencies. In my view, and it is my personal view and I am not sure whether it is the college view, the information should be available freely to whoever wishes to put it into an automated device.

Some of those automated devices are now sold for less than \$100; you can have the mapping, you can have the speed alert and it will not be long before that speed alert is standard in most cars. There have been a lot of trials of these different systems; you can override the system by pushing a button, by pushing harder on the accelerator but to speed you will have to make a conscious decision to do something different. I think once we get a community thinking about a safe system that won't be an issue. No-one expects the airline pilot to speed or the train driver to speed because we expect to get there on time.

CHAIR - We need to make speeding socially unacceptable as drink-driving has now become.

Mr McINTOSH - That is right but equally there is a responsibility on the road authorities to make speed limits realistic.

CHAIR - Absolutely.

Mr McINTOSH - Also for people to expect that will change. Why should you have this issue of 'it's a limit not a target'? When there is pouring rain you don't drive at 60 or 100

kph or whatever. You adapt to the driving conditions. We should not have a view that we are allowed to do it. It is not that we are allowed to do it; we are allowed to drive to the conditions on the road at the time. It may be that we have a lot of new construction work that is important and sometimes signs get left there and people get annoyed. We have to find a way to update that information.

We must all take a much broader approach. I think the technologies are going to change, we are going to see those things happen fairly quickly and information is going to be much more readily available, whether then you have an electronic policeman or not. In the United States now you can buy your insurance based on where you have driven and safety is a component of that. In the end you will hand in a chip when you do your registration and if you have been speeding 53 times you will pay the fine.

Ms FORREST - By paying an increased premium?

Mr McINTOSH - You will pay an increased premium or you will pay a fine. If you want to drive fast it is going to cost you. This is not easy; I am not advocating it to happen but it will happen just by the development of the technology. The mobile phone will locate you and tell you how fast you are driving.

Ms FORREST - It will ring you and tell you will it?

Laughter.

Mr McINTOSH - It will ring and tell you and you will be able to answer it. You will be distracted accordingly, but those technologies are happening and we have to find ways to introduce them in a positive way so that people can have an enjoyable driving experience. We are not suggesting that driving or travelling should be a negative process. It is a great idea; people want to travel around and meet each other and do things that they want to do but not die and not be injured so we need to find those ways we can do that.

Ms COOKE - You might be interested in something that is happening in Victoria. I picked this up from a media release yesterday. It is a targeted motorcycle safety campaign that includes increasing by five the police presence and is combined with education. They are talking to the motorcyclists and giving them advice, at the same time it is checking whether they are registered, what speed they are doing -

Ms FORREST - Are you saying they will do road checks?

Ms COOKE - Yes, and they are going to do it five times a year. I pulled that off the media releases yesterday so I didn't have a chance to look at anything more. I persuaded Liz to come here from Sydney because of her expertise in motorcycle safety -

CHAIR - Oh really! You have travelled?

Ms de ROME - I had to come here anyway but, yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, I really appreciate that.

Ms COOKE - We were not sure what your particular interests were in motorcycle safety but Liz is happy to talk about anything you are interested in.

CHAIR - We have had a program for learner riders for some years now. I am not up-to-date with it currently but 15 or 20 years ago it was very successful and I would like to see a similar scheme for learner drivers of motor vehicles. The statistics show that motorcycle road trauma is totally disproportionate. I think motorcyclists are 30 per cent more likely to die on the road than the average driver.

Ms de ROME - The stats are very wobbly for motorcycles. Part of it is because they are based on average kilometres travelled, but the way average kilometres travelled are measured is very rubbery. We do not use these stats at all because they are totally unreliable. I do the crash stats for New South Wales and have written a motorcycle safety strategic plan for New South Wales.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

Ms de ROME - It covers the strategies that we have recommended for New South Wales. We look at the crash rate per 10 000 registered vehicles. In New South Wales the crash rate per registered vehicles for cars is the same as for motorcycles, but the exposure rate is very different; the injury rate is very high and the fatality rate is much higher.

I did look at the Tasmanian stats and your crash rate per 10 000 registered motorcycles peaked in 2003 but it has been coming down since then. The stats for 2007 were the last I saw but your number went up and then it came down again.

CHAIR - How do our stats compare with other States and Territories?

Ms de ROME - Victoria and New South Wales are the lowest and they are the two States that have motorcycle safety strategies. The other States do not have them. You have targeted programs in those States that you do not have in the other States and I do think that is an important factor.

Mr McINTOSH - Is there a program in Queensland?

Ms de ROME - No, there is not a strategic plan. There are some programs but they are not strategically developed so it is not a systems approach, whereas in Victoria and New South Wales we have the systems approach.

Ms FORREST - Throughout this, do you look at off-road motorcycle use or just on-road?

Ms de ROME - I do not but I keep tracking it and the injury rate for off-road is the same as for on-road. Across Australia, we have as many seriously injured motorcyclists from off-road crashes as we do from on-road crashes, which is substantial.

Ms FORREST - We were given an article, I think it was from Monash.

Ms de ROME - The Injury Surveillance Unit.

Ms FORREST - Yes, it might have been. This article said there was a much higher on-road crash number.

Ms de ROME - I think the main issue with the off-rovers is that nobody is responsible for counting them. In some States, such as Queensland, the road crash stats include off-road crashes because under the Australian Road Rules any road that is accessible to the public, so not on private property and gated so the public cannot get onto it, is considered a public road. Therefore you need to be riding a registered vehicle and you need to be licensed. This means that people who ride in national parks or on crown land under the Australian Road Rules should be riding a registered vehicle and should be licensed, but that is not the case in most instances.

Ms FORREST - They tend to report that they were on private land so they do not get prosecuted.

Ms de ROME - In Queensland the road authorities count all crashes that happen on public roads so the Queensland stats I think are more reflective of the truth than, say, those of New South Wales. In New South Wales none of those trail rides or national parks rides, none of those crashes are counted. They are not counted in Victoria, and I am not sure about Tasmania because when I looked at your stats, the stats I was given included ATVs, which suggests to me that the stats they provide do include your off-rovers.

I did note in your terms of reference that you were interested in off-road riding, and the crash rate. When the Australian Road Rules were brought out, it was a requirement they had to be registered and licensed, however when you buy a motorcycle, if you buy a road bike, the dealer registers it and gives it to you registered and you pay all the costs. If you buy an off-road bike, the dealer doesn't register it. If it is registrable, which about half of them are; 50 per cent of the bikes imported into Australia are off-rovers, and about half of them are registrable, that is they have lights and they can be ridden on the road. In terms of people who go trail riding, unless they're riding Enduros, and they really are off-rovers, for the majority of people who have a sort of mixed usage bike it is a registrable bike. The dealer won't register it, and it's up to you to go and register it. That means you've just bought the bike and you've got to go and pay some more money.

Some years ago I did a review for Victoria for VicRoads, and we recommended then that the onus should be that when you buy an off-road bike and it's registrable, the dealer should register it unless you sign a paper saying that you are only going to ride it on private property. So it's just a bit of paper, but it puts the pressure on the dealer and on the purchaser to make sure that the vehicle is registered, if it is registrable, and they can't demonstrate that they are going to ride it on private property. I think that in itself will put a lot of riders into the public domain, if you like, so that we know about them.

The second thing is that we have all these people who do want to go trail riding, but there was a big insurance change, when some years ago the whole insurance industry imploded and public liability insurance changed. There were commercial off-road trail riding places where people could go, and they would pay a fee and go around these organised trails. They can be very well managed. They will have a section of land, it is designed to be interesting with curvy bits and jumps, and stuff like that, and they will make some bits fallow for periods of time so they can recover. They manage their land

well, and the riders go and have a lot of fun. They pay their money, they are insured, and they are fine.

When this insurance thing happened, a lot of those closed down, and now if you have a look at it, there are very few off-road sites where riders can legally ride, so it's uncontrolled. It's not regulated, it's not managed. They are going wherever they can get in. We have done a little bit of work in New South Wales, and I talked to some people who are doing work there. The biggest problem the national parks have there are mountain bikes going through and ripping up the -

Ms FORREST - Mountain push bikes?

Ms de ROME - Mountain push bikes, which are very destructive in the environment, and they are trail bikes. Really, what we need to be doing is have a regulated environment for both, to make it fair, so that the mountain bikes and the trail riders both have to comply with a regulated system so that when they do go into these areas they are managed. My suggestion would be, firstly, that you need to provide areas that are set aside for these purposes, and commercially managed so the insurance part of that needs to be controlled. That will take a large number of the people who just go riding anywhere out of the equation. Because they have somewhere they can go legally, they will go there. So that reduces the number who are going off into the bush without any control or management and getting injured in places where they are irretrievable or very difficult to retrieve. If they are riding in controlled areas then they are having the fun they want but it is regulated and managed. Really I think that would do a lot.

CHAIR - What about the motorcycles that are used on private properties where there are serious injuries? It is very difficult to find a solution.

Ms de ROME - There are a couple of issues there. One is that we are basically talking about farmers and there is a huge resistance to farmers wearing helmets. There is sense in that in that you need the sunshade. With mustering you are going to wear your hat to get your sunshade or are you going to wear your helmet to give you head protection. Farmsafe does a lot of work in that area but I do think we need to work through those links. If we can separate these two things out then we try to get the recreational riders into managed, regulated riding environments and work with the national parks and rangers to find how to control both mountain bikes and the trail riders in national parks. It is not necessarily that we would ban them altogether, but we would find ways of managing them. At the moment they are not managed.

CHAIR - Farm properties in Tasmania would generally be smaller than some of the ones in New South Wales and Queensland. However, it is not only the farmers but also their children, particularly their sons, who have a sense of adventure and ride bikes but are not old enough to be licensed. I don't know what the statistics are but I know there is a problem there with injuries.

Ms de ROME - I have seen New South Wales Health put up a map at a conference I was at once. They were plotting the location of off-road motorcycle injuries by age groups. It was really frightening, these huge patches of red all over the State on private property for children under 10. They are frail little children with absolutely no sense of danger or the risks that they are taking in the exhilaration of doing jumps and things like that, just no

imagination about what could go wrong. Honda runs a whole range of wider training for littlies. They go around the country running rider-training courses, motocross courses. I think Honda has a good and responsible approach to what they do, but again for that area you would need to work with the industry. I would like to see regulation. I would like to see enforcement of protective clothing, impact protectors and helmets. The trouble is enforcement but you do not need to have police going onto people's properties. If you make it a regulation then surely parents will enforce it.

CHAIR - So protective clothing, helmets -

Ms de ROME - And impact protectors - body armour that you wear on the bony bits and you would need to use the European standard. Most of our riding gear comes from America, which is unfortunate. Impact protectors are calibrated to reduce the force of an impact to the point where bones will break but not shatter, which is a huge advantage.

CHAIR - What else would you like to see?

Ms de ROME - The motorcycle dealer is required to register all registrable off-road vehicles unless the owner signs a statement saying it will never be used on the public roads. That will just push them. Then management of motorcycles and bikes used in national parks to be controlled. I have talked to Honda about what their perceptions are. They are a commercial business and they are promoting the Enduro motocross-type riding.

Mr McINTOSH - The National Farmers Federation are very active in Farmsafe and I am sure they have a program for it.

Ms de ROME - They do the children side of it too.

CHAIR - They would be dealing with the parents mainly?

Ms de ROME - But they would be aware of the children's side of it.

Ms FORREST - Do they have a big focus on farm workers as well?

Mr McINTOSH - Yes.

Ms FORREST - In Tasmania the on-farm problem is relayed to the ATVs and usually you are just going to get the cows in, so why get all dressed up with all the gear to go and get the cows when you are going to go 5 kph or less the whole way. The problem is that parents see it as not a risk because they are only going very slowly and they are just going to get the cows in or whatever. The kids see their parents doing that, of course, but even an adult can have trouble once the bike starts to roll. We have had grown adults roll over and they hit their head on a rock or the bike rolls on top of them, which is more often the case. A woman down at Circular Head recently ran into the front of a truck; because it was raining she had her head down. She was killed. It was internal injuries that killed her. It is a real problem because people do not see they are unsafe because they are slow in comparison.

Mr McINTOSH - It is much the same as the issue of bicycle helmets. There is no doubt that it is the same for getting kids to wear helmets when they ride their bicycles. There are all

sorts of excuses why you shouldn't do so but the reality is that it is not fit for purpose not to do it, so you do it. You do have to put the gear on, say, when you want to do some welding. You might not get welding splatter if you look away really quickly, but you have to put the welding gear on and you have to put the leather gloves on. That is the reality. No-one climbs on a scaffold any more without a rope and without the protective clothing. So we have to make that shift in the total picture.

Ms FORREST - But do you have to regulate to do it? That is the question.

Mr McINTOSH - No. You can, but the whole community needs to talk about this issue of risk in a much more positive way so that it is socially acceptable to put all your gear on.

Ms FORREST - Do we do it in a voluntary sense without regulation because we are accused, as law makers, of being the nanny State and regulating everything down almost to what time you can go to the toilet. So do we take an approach of education and say, 'This is what you should be wearing - the helmet, the body armour and the like - and this is why you should wear it', and then let the people do it themselves? Will that work?

Ms de ROME - I think you have to look at the risk cost-benefit in such a thing. Australia was the first country to impose random breath testing and we were the first country to require seatbelts. The risk of not wearing a seatbelt or of drink-driving was so high and we could demonstrate the evidence. People were not willing to do those things so we imposed it. The proof has been in the vast reductions in the road toll in relation to those types of crashes, so we can now find the evidence and say, 'Look, it was worth it'.

With the farmer going on the ATV to round up the cows, the crash risk would be much lower than if he was drunk and riding a motorbike down the road, so in that instance I would say you probably cannot justify regulating it and also you can't enforce it, and it is very unwise to regulate something that you can't enforce.

Ms FORREST - That's my whole point about regulating it.

Ms de ROME - It is tricky and so is protective clothing. It is very difficult to regulate even on public roads because what are you going to do? Have the police get them to take their clothes off so they can read the labels? You can't do it. What you can do is the research. I don't think we have done anywhere near enough research in terms of farm safety. In most States it is not on the agenda until we can demonstrate a need and therefore the benefit of the measures we are recommending.

CHAIR - I would like to ask about the increased effort and increased numbers of police on the roads during the main holiday periods - Christmas, New Year, Easter. I am more confused on that subject. It is generally thought there are more motorists on the roads and travelling greater distances during the holiday periods but we have heard some suggestion that there are fewer kilometres travelled during those periods. I would like to know your views about the effectiveness of the increased presence of police enforcement and whether or not doubling the demerit points during those periods is an effective measure or not? Do you have any views on those two subjects?

Mr McINTOSH - Personally I don't but I am not sure whether the college has a view about all this.

Mr WHEELER - It is an interesting debate. Holiday periods, of course, are a time when there is most focus on road safety. A lot of the debate has been that it is good because it makes people aware. There are campaigns and the papers are reporting regularly on how we are going with the Christmas toll and we are up or down on the Christmas toll compared to last year. There are some suggestions, of course, that more people on the road means people are travelling slower. In terms of the exposure and the numbers of people travelling, in many ways it is almost a safer time to be travelling than at other times during the year.

It is interesting to know that the ATSB, the old Federal office of road safety, put out a research report a couple of years ago that spoke about the fact that the road toll over any designated period of time is no different from over Christmas. You could pick any 10-day period that may correspond to the 10-day period of Christmas and New Year and find that in that 10 days just as many people died and were injured, so it ought to be a national annual focus on road safety rather than just picking out Christmas, Easter and everything else. There is just as much chance of dying over any 10-day period as over Christmas and New Year. So it is an interesting debate. Often road safety on the one hand benefits from the four or five times a year when there is a key focus on road safety but the other times of the year it is off the agenda. The fact that just as many people died over a 10-day period in July or whenever hardly rates a mention because it is not a focus for the newspapers and media at the time.

CHAIR - Does it show that there should be the same element of enforcement all through the year if the numbers of police were there?

Mr WHEELER - Ipso facto it would suggest that you really need to have that presence. I have a recollection that a year or two ago it was suggested that double demerits do work. The benefit of double demerits is that people know they are occurring over Christmas but then when the period is over they forget. If you have double demerits all the time it is no longer front of mind.

Ms FORREST - It would be equivalent to having half the demerit points you have to accumulate now. Rather than having 12 you would have six.

CHAIR - We have heard different views. Some people say it is ineffective and inappropriate to have double-demerit points during those periods.

Ms de ROME - I don't think it has been evaluated. People who like them then promote them, but people who don't do not.

Mr McINTOSH - I think you would need to ask people who are closer to it than we are.

Ms de ROME - I think it has to be evaluated and I don't think it has been.

CHAIR - Thank you all very much for giving us your time and the value of your expertise and experience.

THE DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.