

Stephen Coombs
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26th August 2021

Dear Sir

Please accept this letter and attachment as my submission to the Road Safety in Tasmania, Legislative Council Select Committee. I have served as a police officer in London's Metropolitan Police and Tasmania Police, I was also a senior investigator with Victoria's Transport Accident Commission. Over this time, and since, I have had a keen interest in road safety and in that vein, I make this submission.

The first 'A' Report we had to learn by heart on my first day at the Hendon police academy were the Metropolitan Police Primary Objects:

"The primary object of an efficient police is the prevention of crime: the next that of detection and punishment of offenders if crime is committed. To these ends all the efforts of police must be directed. The protection of life and property, the preservation of public tranquility, and the absence of crime, will alone prove whether those efforts have been successful and whether the objects for which the police were appointed have been attained". Sir Richard Mayne, 1829.

Whilst Sir Richard talks about crime, there was not a lot of traffic at the time, with prevention being the primary object of any police rather before detection and punishment. Currently in London's Metropolitan Police, out of 32,766 police officers there are 1,610 full-time equivalent officers assigned to Roads and Transport Policing Command (4.9%). The Command's budget for 2019-20 was £140m of which £93.5m was funded by Transport for London and the remaining £46.5m funded by the Metropolitan Police Service. In 2020 this delivered a fatality per 100,000 population rate on London roads of 1.07.

As of June 2021, Victoria Police had 16,442 police FTE's of which 230 are assigned to the Road Policing Command (1.4%), this resulted in a fatality per 100,000 population rate in 2020 of 3.76. For the same period Tasmania experienced a fatality per 100,000 population rate of 6.10. I don't believe Tasmania Police has a permanent fully resourced Traffic Branch, with traffic enforcement being undertaken by all officers in addition to their other duties.

Michael Ferguson, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, tells us that Road safety is everyone's responsibility, he states that the Tasmanian Government is committed to keeping Tasmanians safe and is continuing work to change attitudes around speeding, the use of mobile phones when driving, and drink and drug driving. How are they doing this when, according to Tasmania Police annual reports from 2008-09 to 2019-20, Random Breath Tests conducted have reduced by 59%, Infringement Notices issued have reduced by 67% and Cautions given reduced by 12%?

Perhaps Jacquie Petrusma, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management could explain why the number of Infringement Notices issued and Cautions given is not reported in the 2019-20 Annual Report whereas the number of Random Breath Tests conducted is? The latter, at 281,175, is down from 678,140 in 2008-09, it is noted in this report that, understandably, these activities have been affected by the impacts of COVID-19, but this doesn't explain the significant reductions which are evident prior to March 2020.

Based on historical trends, I have estimated that in 2019-20, about 18,000 Infringement Notices should have been issued and 36,000 Cautions given, I suspect that there were a lot less. Infringement Notices issued and Cautions given is an indication of the interaction and visibility of Tasmania Police to Tasmanian road users.

Tasmania Police state that they aim to improve road safety, reduce the incidence of inattentive driving, and diminish the use of alcohol or drugs whilst driving by the provision of high visibility patrols on highways and arterial roads, targeting high-risk driver behaviour. I have driven the Midland and Bass highways at all times of the day and not seen any police vehicles at all. There seems to be more publicised and visible Operations at Christmas, New Year and Easter etc. rather than ongoing everyday high visibility traffic policing.

Tasmania Police do the best they can with their annual recurrent budget, averaging \$201 million, which has remained relatively flat, rising only slightly since 2016-17. Since 2008-09 the MAIB's average annual dividend to Government has been \$50 million, with a "one-off" Special Dividend of \$100 million to the Government in 2014-15 and another \$50 million Special Dividend paid during 2019-20. Where did this money go?

Melbourne's Monash University Accident Research Centre, one of the world's most comprehensive injury prevention research institutions, suggests that increased enforcement will further reduce road trauma.

The Tasmania Government has a Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy, its 2020-2024 Action Plan is:

- Improving safety in our towns and cities (Over \$31 million)
- Making our rural roads safer (Over \$20 million)
- Saving young lives (Over \$12 million)
- Encouraging safer road use (Over \$4 million)
- Improving safety through vehicles and technology (Over \$3 million)
- Making visitors safer (Over \$2 million)

Enforcement is only mentioned in the lesser funded Encouraging Safer Road Use plan to 'Investigate and implement enforcement strategies to reduce speeding, inattention, distraction and other high-risk driving behaviours' How is Tasmania Police expected to fully implement this with their current funding and resourcing?

On average there are 32 fatalities and 267 serious injuries annually, these numbers have sadly been relatively steady for the last twelve years. We have Minister Ferguson saying such figures are profoundly impacting Tasmanian families and communities across our State

and that road safety is everyone's responsibility. The Australian Transport Assessment and Planning organisation, ATAP, calculate the average cost of a fatality in Tasmania at \$2,568,291 and serious injuries at \$579,621. These are calculated at 2013 figures and include all Human Capital values, including ambulance, police, hospital, insurance, loss of earnings, vehicle damage etc. costs.

Apart from the tragic impact upon families and friends on this basis, and the average number of fatalities and serious injuries experienced, the cost to Tasmanian's is some \$237 million per annum. Just imagine the savings in health costs alone if the road toll could be reduced to be in line with that experienced in Victoria.

The Government has a responsibility to better invest in a permanent fully resourced, and highly visible Tasmania Police Traffic Branch which could better enforce Tasmania's Road Rules.

If Tasmania wants to achieve similar results to those above, instead of the average annual MAIB dividend of \$46 million being paid to the Government, perhaps some of this could be 'invested' to specifically fund a Tasmania Police Traffic Branch of a minimum of 19 officers (calculated on Victoria's traffic officers per 100,000 population). Based on the average cost per officer over the period, this would cost a mere \$3 million or a mere 2% of the average Tasmania Police budget. This would be money very well spent and a significant return on investment.

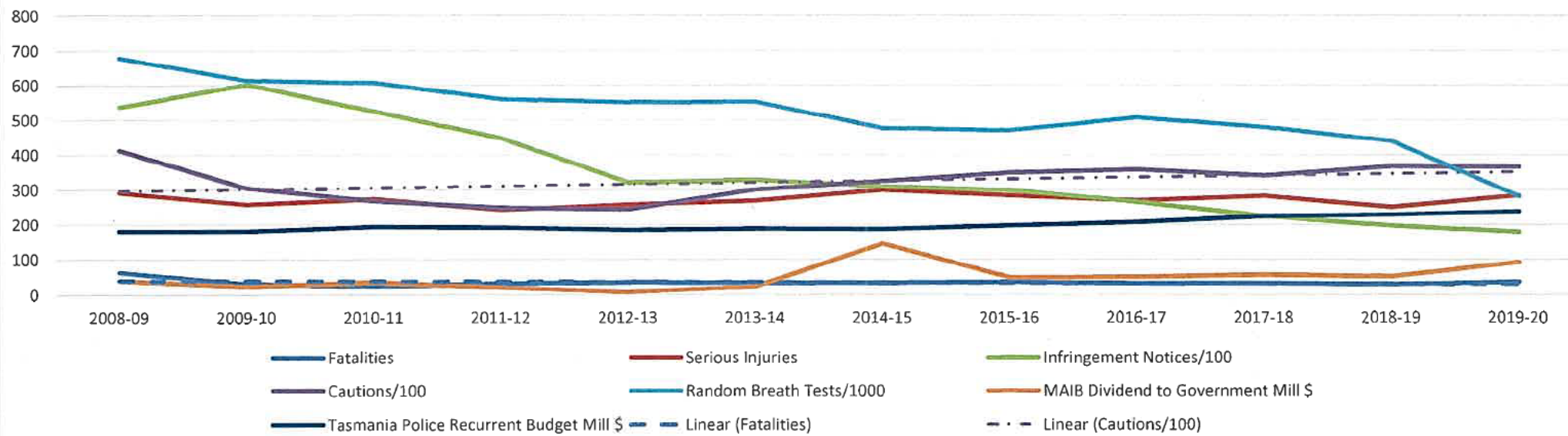
Yours sincerely

Stephen Coombs

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	Average	Cost	Total Cost
Fatalities	63	30	24	31	35	33	33	36	32	32	29	36		32	\$2,568,291	\$81,951,831
Serious Injuries	290	257	272	241	256	267	298	282	268	281	249	283		269	\$579,621	\$155,654,585
Infringement																
Notices/100	537	602	524	448	320	328	308	297	265	224	196	179				\$237,606,416
Cautions/100	412	303	267	247	243	300	324	348	357	340	365	364				
Random Breath																
Tests/1000	678	614	607	560	550	551	476	470	505	478	438	281				
MAIB Dividend to																
Government Mill \$	39.6	23.1	34.5	20.2	6.1	23.2	144.5	47.7	49.7	56.3	51.4	91.9		50		
Tasmania Police																
Recurrent Budget Mill \$	180.6	180.5	193.1	191	184	187.4	186.3	196.6	206.9	223.3	228	237		201		
Tasmanian Police																
Officers	1,260	1,260	1,260	1,226	1,145	1,191	1,210	1,252	1,206	1,304	1,286	1,276		1,238	\$162,610	Cost per officer
Actuals																
Infringement Notices	53,710	60,249	52,435	44,759	31,998	32,754	30,831	29,742	26,454	22,351	19,624	17,900	-66.67%	33,554		
Cautions	41,179	30,333	26,674	24,741	24,255	29,951	32,382	34,780	35,659	33,951	36,530	36,400	-11.61%	31,423		
Random Breath Tests	678,140	613,945	606,991	559,854	550,354	551,444	475,510	469,610	505,445	478,219	438,322	281,175	-58.54%	502,806		
Trends																
Fatalities		-52.4%	-20.0%	29.2%	12.9%	-5.7%	0.0%	9.1%	-11.1%	0.0%	-9.4%	24.1%		-42.9%		
Serious Injuries		-11.4%	5.8%	-11.4%	6.2%	4.3%	11.6%	-5.4%	-5.0%	4.9%	-11.4%	13.7%		-2.4%		
Infringement																
Notices/100		12.2%	-13.0%	-14.6%	-28.5%	2.4%	-5.9%	-3.5%	-11.1%	-15.5%	-12.2%	-8.8%		-66.7%		
Cautions		-26.3%	-12.1%	-7.2%	-2.0%	23.5%	8.1%	7.4%	2.5%	-4.8%	7.6%	-0.4%		-11.6%		
Random Breath																
Tests/1000		-9.5%	-1.1%	-7.8%	-1.7%	0.2%	-13.8%	-1.2%	7.6%	-5.4%	-8.3%	-35.9%		-58.5%		
MAIB Dividend to																
Government Million \$		-41.7%	49.4%	-41.4%	-69.8%	280.3%	522.8%	-67.0%	4.2%	13.3%	-8.7%	78.8%		132.1%		
Tasmana Police																
Recurrent Budget		-0.1%	7.0%	-1.1%	-3.7%	1.8%	-0.6%	5.5%	5.2%	7.9%	2.1%	3.9%		31.2%		
Tasmania Police Annual Reports																
Fatalities & Serious																
Injuries	367	309	302	254	288	300	311	324	311	295	314	314		301		
Difference	-14	-22	-6	18	3	0	20	-6	-11	18	-36	5				

Predicted figures

Fatalities & Serious Injuries



	Fatalities	Population	Ratio per 100,000		Traffic Officers	Ratio per 100,000
London	96	9,002,488	1.07		1610	17.88
Victoria	251	6,681,000	3.76		230	3.44
Tasmania	36	541,071	6.65	Estimate	19	Based on VICPOL ratio

Cost based of average cost per officer

\$3,028,924

Percentage of Tasmania Police Budget

2%