

From: [REDACTED]
To: [RST](#)
Subject: Inquiry- Road safety improvement in Tasmania
Date: Wednesday, 4 August 2021 2:24:13 PM

Mr Tim Mills
Inquiry Secretary

Dear Honourable Members,

I wish to make the following representation with regard the Inquiry into improving road safety in Tasmania.

My name is Simon Lincoln i am currently employed as a School Crossing Patrol Officer (scpo) within the road safety section of the Department of State Growth. I am submitting this as an individual and i am not representing the public service in any capacity at all.

I am currently employed to supervise the Snug Primary School, prior to this since December 2013 i was a casual who supervised 17 out of approximately 28 crossings in the south of the state.

ROLE OF AN SCPO

Briefly the role of the scpo is to manage and supervise all children at the crossing and enable them to safely cross the road at peak times during the day. The other component of this role is to stop traffic when required to enable this to happen. The traffic act allows the scpo to do this under a warrant from the relevant commissioner.

The mechanics of how the traffic is stopped roughly is as follows:

Scpo chooses a gap in traffic ensuring heavy vehicles have passed, multiple following cars are not tailgating or speeding and the car looks roadworthy enough to be stopped.

Scpo extends their stop sign at an angle into the roadway showing the stop faces toward traffic.

Scpo looks at driver or car to ensure they have been seen and the car is slowing down.

Scpo makes decision either when car has stopped fully or slowed right down to step onto the roadway.

Scpo when both sides of traffic have fully stopped or safely slowed positions into middle of roadway at a 45 degree angle with stop sign faces shown to both sides of traffic. This standing angle is so that at no point is the back of the scpo turned toward any side of the traffic.

Scpo then calls to children to walk across , head checks traffic and stragglers, when all children have exited roadway scpo exits roadway.

EXTERNAL FACTORS EFFECTING WORK ENVIRONMENT

Speeding

Mobile Phone Usage (Texting)

Failure to stop when directed

Driving off before scpo has exited

Parent/guardian inadequate supervision of under 5yo

Abusive drivers

HOW EXTERNAL FACTORS DIRECTLY AFFECT SCPO

The speed limit during school crossing times is 40 kilometres per hour

Speeding is a common and daily occurrence. Although the scpo will not actively stop a speeding driver that driver at times may not be noticed if they are not the lead vehicle and therefore their speed can have an impact upon cars in front.

I have personally witnessed tail to tail accidents(minor) that would in my opinion have involved speeding behaviour.

It is common to witness the same drivers day in day out speeding through the crossing.

It is common to decide to not stop traffic as the approaching car is clearly in excess of limit and would not be able to pull up in time

I have personally been in a situation whereby the roadway was clear, i was in the middle of the roadway and called across children. I glanced backwards to see a car speeding toward me. I would estimate the car was travelling in excess of 70 kilometres per hour. I quickly closed the crossing by pushing the child back toward the footpath. I and the child managed to exit roadway. The car pulled up 5 metres past the stop line and ended up where i was standing upon the broken lines that the children walk between

Mobile phone usage is a daily problem. 5 years ago it was people talking on the phone. The problem now is drivers that text. The phone is usually held in one hand, at the bottom of the steering wheel/lap. The drivers head is oriented downward away from roadway.

I have witnessed a driver texting while driving on the centre line at the Snug school crossing.

Drivers that have stopped have texted and then maintained a stationary position while Traffic has started moving again.

Texting drivers that are simply not aware of me, pedestrians and other vehicles.

Failure to stop when directed is a common theme. I have estimated previously that on average there would be 8 failing to stops per week. That is, when i have thrust the stop sign high into the air and outward toward the roadway the car fails to slow down, amazingly some drivers will speed up, and not stop.

This particularly manifests when the vehicle to the right of the scpo has stopped then the scpo will step onto roadway as it is deemed safe. The car travelling from the left will proceed through without stopping. I can only assume that the drivers thought process is this; as the scpo is entering from the opposite side of roadway they have not reached the centre of the road so they can proceed through. This is inherently dangerous to me and to a child who may be waiting from that non stopped side. I have called out to children to step back as they have started to enter roadway, without instruction, as that car travelled through putting people at risk. This happens a lot.

Cars that drive off/ through while the scpo is standing in middle of roadway or has not fully exited is very dangerous to the scpo.

This comes in two forms. First the driver will be attentive toward the children, observe the children until they have safely exited to footpath, then the driver will without instruction drive by the stationary scpo in the middle of the roadway.

Second the driver will impatiently drive forward before the scpo has safely exited the roadway. The stop sign is held high until the scpo has safely exited and the driver must obey this state until the sign has been lowered or in a common sense fashion ensure all pedestrians have exited the roadway.

Examples of this are to numerous. Drivers will creep their cars over the stop line. They will rev their cars impatiently. I have experienced drivers who have driven around me and instances possibly 3 who have pulled out of a line of stationary cars driven on the wrong side of the road to pass through the stopped traffic at the school crossing

There is possibly a lost community culture to hold the hands of younger children in and around roadways and crossings.

I have observed guardians with under 5yo enter roadways outside of my school crossing who have crossed with the child trailing behind, reach the middle of the road then turn 180 degrees run back to the footpath while the parent proceeded to the opposite side of the road.

An unsupervised 2 yo bolted through 15 other children near me. I jumped onto the roadway collected the child from oncoming traffic, then falling backwards into the gutter. The cars were actively using the road.

Another child bolted onto the roadway i picked up child before they went to far. These and others were all as a consequence of the child not having their hand held.

Amazingly, abusive drivers are an at times feature at the school crossing. This can be explained by myriad reasons such as frustration, anger, unwillingness to stop, congested traffic conditions and scpo error.

I have had a driver wind their window down and state that “ next time i come through i will f.....g run you over”

“Get over yourself”

A driver double “middle fingered” me while driving through without having any part of their hand on the steering wheel

A driver chased another driver. Turned their car around. Exited their car walked up to me abused me then walked off.

Another driver did same telling me how to do my job.

Drivers gesticulate, speed off or stop their cars in the roadway.

WHAT MEASURES CAN BE ADOPTED TO IMPROVE UPON THIS

I will start with the simplest.

When any child starts school the parents are given a simple fridge magnet in the shape of a hand emphasising the importance of hand holding for under 10. Extras need to be put in for grandparent too.

The roadway at Channel highway snug has a posted speed limit of 60 outside of school crossing hours. This could be reduced to 50 which would bring it in line with the majority of other crossings, other than east derwent highway, that have a posted limit of 50. This would help to some extent in slowing the traffic naturally as the step down from 50-40 is less than 60-40.

An absolute luxury would be to have the Police visit the crossing once per week for 30 minutes at least to speed check motorist. The police could also ask the scpo about local conditions times to attend the crossing re times of particular concern

A simple red light attached to top of crossing poles controlled by the scpo to indicate to motorists to stop.

A short boom gate in similar area to form a barrier to motorists

A short targeted marketing program via text message that alerts any driver who has passed near a school crossing to be aware, respect scpo, no text and no speeding.

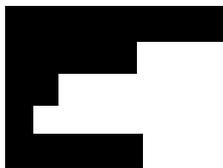
The last is a big change. I propose that the scpo has a warrant like power to issue warnings or fines toward motorist that do not obey stop or exiting instructions or who use their mobile phones. This would involve extra training and specific powers to be granted to the scpo. An administrative process would need to be built to facilitate the reporting and issuing with letters. Importantly, what the scpo sees is what is acted upon not going to another body.

This would not be done in real time. The licence number would be taken and dealt with after shift.

I feel that combined with an education program stating the new ability the scpo has then this would go a long way toward changing motorist behaviour. At present motorists are not adhering to road safety principles because they know that by and large they will not be caught. I live this reality every day.

I thank the committee

Simon Lincoln
School Crossing Patrol Officer



Sent from my iPad