

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL in TASMANIA - INQUIRY into ROAD SAFETY

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As commonly reported statistically, per 100,000 per population, Tasmania has been consistently near worst in the nation, for road trauma, for the last two decades.

Unrestrained/unharnessed dogs in cars, are an inconvenient road safety hazard truth.

The Government needs to “call out” bad road safety behaviours and attitudes which allow corporation marketing campaigns to advertise and promote dangerous practices as “normal”.

Specifically, unrestrained/unharnessed dogs are often included in television marketing campaigns, which normalises and sanitises the dangers of dogs causing distraction and being potential lethal projectiles on crash impact and sudden braking.

No duty of care shown by various Corporations, which are driven by profit over road safety!

The Road Safety Council (RSAC) of Tasmania and the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT) have both ignored the basic laws of physics, in respect to loose unrestrained dogs/animals inside moving motor vehicles, on crash impact and sudden braking.

A small unrestrained dog becomes a lethal projectile, 30 times its weight, at 40 kilometres crash impact or sudden braking, endangering the safety of the driver and passengers.

Sir Isaac Newton’s laws of motion cannot be ignored any longer in respect to car crashes.

The laws of physics apply to dogs as well as humans, on collision.

- The Minister for Police and the State Attorney-General have both confirmed there are no specific laws requiring motorists to restrain/harness dogs, to reduce driver distraction and prevent them becoming lethal projectiles on crash impact.
- Section 16(3) of the Dog Control Act 2000, provides for RESTRICTING a dog so that it is unable to leave a vehicle or attack any person outside a vehicle, (ie close door and window) not RESTRAIN to prevent lethal projectile injury and death to drivers and passengers, on crash impact or sudden braking.
- **The United Kingdom and Germany have overcome denial in respect to this road safety hazard and introduced strict laws requiring the restraint/harness of dogs in cars, for the safety of drivers and passengers.**

Australia has approximately 5 million dogs and Tasmania has the highest per capita dog ownership in Australia. Dog ownership is growing exponentially.

RSAC crash statistics 5-year reporting period (2013-2017) states 32,000 crashes, with no fatality or serious injury due to an animal or dog, and only a few dogs were present in the total crash vehicles, reported.

Improbable RSAC crash statistics imply that if you drive with unrestrained dogs, you will not have a crash. This data does not pass scrutiny, analysis or interrogation for integrity.

“There are lies, damn lies and statistics.” Relevant quote by Mark Twain.

- The National Roads and Motorists’ Association (NRMA) Insurance Research Centre has conducted credible crash tests which confirm the death and injury dangers of unrestrained animals and the obvious dangers of driver distraction they can cause.
- NRMA research and the basic laws of motion physics on crash impact and sudden braking can no longer be ignored “with a head in the sand” and the “blind eye” approach, to road safety.

Motorists need to be educated on the dangers and hazards of transporting unrestrained dogs/animals/objects, by changing current dangerous driver attitudes and behaviours.

Awareness programs would cost little to incorporate into current road safety education.

At no cost, Police could educate and caution motorists when detecting unrestrained dogs at the time of intervening and issuing traffic infringement notices, alcohol and drug random roadside testing.

I exercised my “duty of care” by advising the Australian Advertising Standards (24/9/2020), that it should not condone motor vehicle marketing campaigns that depict unrestrained dogs in cars, as being a safe motoring behaviour and attitude. This miseducates the community.

The State and Federal Governments need to exercise leadership and do the same.

The Dog Control Act 2000 needs to be amended, to include adequate **restraining** provisions or the need for dogs/animals to be transported behind cargo barriers.

Travelling in a car with children and unrestrained dogs may be potential child abuse?

Thank you for the opportunity to bring the above continuing and burgeoning road safety hazards and dangers, to your attention.

