

Mr Tim Mills,
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I would like to make a submission to the inquiry. Having driven on the roads of mostly Tasmania, but also in the U.K. and South Africa and across much of Australia and having been doing so for about 67 years, I hold an H.C.licence which has never been given a demerit point and have only ever had one insurance claim for a minor accident which the insurance company deemed to be the fault of the other driver! Up until my retirement about four years ago I had owned and driven farm trucks since 1967 and had about 10 years as a part-time country fuel agent so I had a big “DANGEROUS GOODS” sign on the front bumper of the truck. I never saw a car driver give any sign of recognition that such signs were of any significance!

A few observations:

1. Most young drivers are quite competent to operate a motor vehicle when they get their licence.
2. Most problems with young drivers stem from a belief that they are invincible and nothing can happen to them – it will always be someone else. They are bullet proof!
3. I find it stupid in the extreme to have signs on major truck routes asking drivers to turn off exhaust brakes (i.e. a major safety feature on their machine) and at the same time you can stand on any street or highway in town and hear noisy modified exhaust systems on cars and utes, not to mention noisy motor bikes all of which are far noisier than the “burble” of a truck exhaust brake and serve no useful purpose whatsoever (unless ego massage counts as useful).
4. Road rules in Tasmania are very poorly policed. I recall driving down from Canberra to Melbourne some years ago and before I left Canberra I was warned by a few people “don’t speed on the Hume because they police it pretty well” and I found that when you saw a car in the distance in your rear view an hour later it was still there. In Tasmania, if you see a car in your mirror and you are on Cruise Control at the speed limit it is usually only a

matter of minutes before it is tailgating you and then passing at well over the limit – and that will happen repeatedly! A night drive will see lots of cars using fog lights illegally (why – they don't show any better light unless there is fog?) Sit by any intersection with traffic lights and you'll see a multitude of cars accelerating if they can see an amber come on and race across when it is turning red.

5. Motor vehicles are lethal weapons – they are used by terrorists to kill many people. They are used as murder weapons for a variety of reasons, and they are increasingly used as suicide weapons – bad enough for first responders (and families) when they pick an immovable object such as a tree but so often they pick an innocent truck driver to help achieve their objective. Licences should be treated like gun licences and serious or repeat offenders should have lifetime disqualifications and cars seized and crushed.
6. The police, correctly, highlight the principal reasons for accidents so I won't go into them, but other distractions in vehicles made in recent times include large “infotainment” touch screens in the centre of the dashboard. It only takes a second or two of distraction to cross into oncoming traffic
7. Car drivers take extraordinary risks to pass a truck on the road – even if the truck is doing the speed limit there seems to be something in the psyche of a lot of drivers that there must be a compelling reason to get in front of it.
8. Tailgating is a form of bullying, extremely dangerous but almost never prosecuted. It is a form of dangerous driving!
9. The weather bureau puts out a road weather alert – does anybody modify their driving behaviour? I doubt I've seen one in 67 years driving! Most drivers grossly overestimate their driving capabilities – most are what truckies refer to as steerers, not drivers.
10. Certainly, we do need good roads, but bad roads never cause accidents, only poor driving (not driving to the conditions). Until I retired and moved to town 4-5 years ago, I have always had only gravel roads to access my home, for the last 50 odd around, 8 or 9 kms of it, also frequented by lots of log trucks, gravel trucks and heavy equipment movers. They're the good drivers and you get them during the week. Weekends are a different story with wood hookers, dirt bikers, “gardeners”, anglers etc which too often are driving too fast for the road, come around blind corners on the wrong side (there's not

much traffic so you don't need to worry that someone might be coming the other way!) And generally have little consideration for other road users.

11. Impatience and the modern expectation that everything should be instantaneous causes a lot of angst on the road and younger drivers seem more prone to it than older ones. The access to instant communication coupled with little or no discipline at schools I believe has led to very poor self-discipline in the younger drivers. If you have to depend on someone letting you in to a stream of traffic to exit a side street or laneway the ones who do let you in will nearly always be an over 40 but I have never seen a "P" plater stop and invite you to proceed!
12. Mainland drivers I think often grossly underestimate the time it takes in Tasmania to get from A-B. Used to long straight flat roads when they find windy hilly roads that can take nearly twice as long for the same distance when they find they are running late they tend to take risks which can end in disaster. Some tourist education could pay dividends.
13. Some observations from other places: In the U.K. and N.S.W. speed limit changes are painted on the road in big white letters – very visible in all light conditions. In South Africa speed limits outside built-up areas are reduced by 50% in fog. In the U.K. we saw roundabouts which were only a circle painted on the road, in some cases only about 1metre in diameter, but the rules of the roundabout applied and they seemed to work. Much cheaper to instal then structures of block and concrete and negotiable by large rigs that couldn't navigate around a substantial structure in the space available.
14. Should the Committee decide it would be of benefit I would be happy talk with them either in person or "on the screen".

Yours Faithfully

D. Neville Calvert

