

The Chair The Honourable Rosemary Armitage MLC,

Thank you for your opening for public submissions on the matter of Tasmania's statically alarming position with Road Safety performance. My input arises from two relevant qualifications.

At the age of 19, I was awarded the title of Tasmania's Safest under 25-year-old Driver following a state-wide practical assessment. Subsequently Road safety related to the young driver issues has been an abiding active interest. As a respected motor industry leader over many decades, I have constantly witnessed the design and purpose of "safety features" as have been introduced initially by European standards and now the majority of such are pretty well standard in the passenger vehicles imported to Australia.

Significant ones and their date of introduction were - seat belts 1966 with compulsory wearing 1971 - drivers airbags 1996 passenger and side airbags 1998 - ABS anti-skid and traction control 1997. So as to "ageing car park" as related to safety design we are not too badly off.

I have seven provisions plus additional recommendations that your Select Committee might consider.

(1) Deaths deemed as "Medical Incident". I think it would be say 3, being (12%) of the now sadly 24 deaths but may be should not be included as "Road Crashes".

(2) Suicide, although sensitively handled at the time, should perhaps also not be included within the statistic of concern. It has been reported in the Victorian Press that the Victorian Coroner deems such, not to be "Road Crashes". I can't relate to actual annual figures, but I do recall on our icy "Black Thursday" some few years ago with 9 dying that day, 2 were killed accidentally due Black Ice and the 7 further deaths were all from suicide related actions.

No amount of speed camera and other supervision of motorists can help with these significant impacts on the Road Toll.

(3) Black Ice is an invisible killer and would be well managed by (a) BOM alerting the public on the evening and early morning weather bulletins of the immediate likelihood of Black Ice, these alerts should only issued specifically when there is a likelihood!

Temperatures of 4 degrees or below is the trigger and most cars post 2000 have external temperature indicators in their instrument panels for that reason.

(b) Whether the driver understands that is a matter for the RSC. It could well prepare an alert "illustrated video" / radio message to be promulgated and broadcast close to expected conditions. (as per bushfires alerts but much more focused).

(4) With 4 Motor cyclist deaths (16%) the Motorcycle spokesperson puts the majority of crashes down to SMIDSY – Sorry Mate I Didn't See You "Increased awareness" is their recommendation. In spite of riding with headlights on, in closely following traffic their helmet is the only visible indication of their presence. Being predominantly flat black it could be that "day glow" coloured or white helmets be recommended, or a less costly remediation would be the mandatory application of a "Skunk stripe" or brightly airbrushing existing dark coloured helmets.

(5) The P Plate driver and their future attitude to driving needs to be focused. After 120 hours of parental instruction and appropriate checks through "L s" to "Red P s" they are seemingly quite responsible. After 12 months (now 18), when confidence overtakes perceptions and before the progression to "Green P s" is where it may be of value to undertake a driving attitude on road tested assessment.

THIS is the time for a more intensive indoctrination and proof of a mature responsibility for their actions and the potential effects. IF the testing officer believes the graduate is not up to it then they stay on Red Ps - an incentive to attend and pass to "Green Ps. "The P Plates should come with extended number plate frames with an extension to hold the P. The current practice of virtually hiding them behind tinted rear glass and obscuring part of windscreen is defeating their purpose. The plate frames could well be endorsed "Driving Safer Tasmania "

It is often suggested that a visit to an orthopaedic ward might have a sobering effect but dramatic examples of what caused and the aftermath of Road Crashes including long term effect on the injured can be factually shown in mandatory lecture attendance.

Research, preparation, development and production of many such scenarios for video enhanced lectures should be funded by MAIB. RSC produced an example based on a young Mum turning around to check on the baby and inconsequence ran off the road and rolled -8 seconds and it's all over!

The under 25s percentage in Road Crash statistics was recognised (e.g., when I was 19) but today with all the matters I have outlined they are still dominant. It is the opportunity for MAIB to fund the whole endeavour, they are after all the long-term winners and should bare the costs of administration, lecturers, assessing officers, possibly even using Police who are on light duties but who present experience and authority. Given the opportunity for such Police to feel they are making a difference- good Cop. Their uniform relates to more credibility with the compulsory target - less of them and us.

(6) The Stolen Car statistic (?%) appears in too many crash reports some fatal. The owners need to play a part in foiling the opportunistic joy rider. Road Safety levy to fund motorists' education. Every time I hand over the keys to a new Car, I expound the need and reason to secure the keys. All cars produced from 1997 have an electronic immobiliser of some capacity. Those and very latest of hi-tech capacity are all totally negated if keys are left on the front hall table, kitchen bench or bedside drawer.

(7) In light of the shared carriageway head on collisions it would be wise to clearly mark the dividing centreline in say bright yellow, I note this is the practice in New Zealand.

A general point to be considered:

It has been proved mathematically that you can't overtake a B Double within a one kilometre over taking lane, having only a 10 Kph difference in respective legal speed limits. This may account for the dangerous action of cutting in front of the truck as the overtaking car limited to 110kph has run out of the dual lane.

A recommendation of paths worth Considering

* Mine State Growth's Crash Management Data Base for the following causes:

Inattention - P Platers -non-Licensed- Stolen vehicles - excessive Speed - Drink - Drugs (including prescribed)- Non wearing Seatbelts Belts (note Rural incidents).
Medical Intervention- Mental Health (Suicide).

Beyond the above who or what is

*Analysing of the Coroners Reports enabling use of such data.

*Analysing MAIB Data

*Asking are the Police currently making an effective use of their resources?

* Asking are the current approaches getting the best outcomes?

*Focusing on Education better than on Penalty!

*These * points are all needing an over Arching Review by say a retired Magistrate.

The Pooling of Information may lead to a Strategy of who will do what to effectively achieve an improvement in Road Safety.

Thank you, Ms Armitage, for taking up this matter which you can appreciate it is equally of a long-term concern of mine,

Regards

Chris Merridew

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