



**CIVIL CONTRACTORS  
FEDERATION**

REF: RM 2021 / 08

18 January 2021

Mr Tim Mills  
Road Safety Inquiry Secretary  
Parliament House, Hobart, 7000

By email to: [rst@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:rst@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Mr Mills,

On behalf of the Civil Contractors Federation, our members, their employees and everyone who helps build and maintain Tasmania's roads I would like to thank the Legislative Council for establishing this Inquiry.

The Civil Contractors Federation represents over 100 businesses in the civil construction sector. Combined, these businesses employ hundreds of people and are responsible for the delivery of hundreds of millions of dollars of infrastructure projects each year.

I note in the initial media release from the Chair of this Inquiry, the Honourable Ms Armitage, that she raised concerning statistics regarding fatalities and serious injuries as a result of incidents on our roads. Of course, Ms Armitage is entirely right and I fully support her mentioning the very concerning increase in deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

The Civil Contractors Federation believes that any discussion about road safety is not complete though, unless it includes a discussion on the safety of the many Tasmanians that work on our roads every day.

A Tasmanian road workers' daily work life involves being exposed to high risk environments, where they are subjected to extremely vulnerable situations working with live traffic. These workers, while doing their jobs are at times subject to abuse, aggressive behaviour and unfortunately violent behaviour on our roads. The impact on workers can be devastating. Some workers are so traumatised and affected by conditions such as PTSD that they are unable to return to work.

I have heard some alarming first-hand accounts of the behaviour on our roads, which ranges from abusive language to drivers deliberately veering towards road workers and accelerating. Without a cultural change, sadly we will see road workers being seriously injured or worse still, killed on the job.

I am sure you would agree that is thoroughly unacceptable.

Road workers are just trying to do their job and build new and improved roads for the benefit of the entire community.

Unfortunately, I can only think of two professions in Tasmania where sadly people are expected to just put up with abuse, namely road workers and politicians. We know how you, as politicians feel, and we are hoping you will recommend that the Government does more to address this appalling behaviour on our roads.

We believe that the State Government, in conjunction with the Police, need to consider ramping up detection and enforcement activities around roadworks and we believe that the Government should consider increasing the penalties for people who abuse or attack road workers.

The Civil Contractors Federation also considers that road maintenance is vital to improving road safety. Each year, the State Government allocates between \$60 million and \$70 million to road maintenance. However, we believe that amount should be increased to at least \$100 million.

There is no point investing in building new roads if there isn't a matching commitment to maintain them to an acceptable level. CCF members do as much maintenance as possible with the amount allocated. We believe that with an increase in the maintenance budget, we could make our roads much safer.

There are a range of issues that increased maintenance spending could address. It's not just potholes, it's issues ranging from line markings, road shoulders, road surfaces, signs and even the tensioning of the wires in the road safety barriers.

Finally, we believe that it is vital for road safety that every major road in Tasmania has a clear, well-articulated ten-year plan. Not only do these plans help our industry prepare for the future, they also help emphasise and prioritise those projects that will actually make our roads safer.

Road safety is an issue that we are passionate about. The Civil Contractors Federation would very much welcome the opportunity to expand upon this submission in person when the Inquiry takes evidence from witnesses, because we have witnessed more than most when it comes to unsafe behaviours on our roads.

Yours sincerely,



Rachael Matheson  
CEO