

From: [REDACTED]
To: [RST](#)
Subject: Submission for inquiry into road safety in Tasmania
Date: Thursday, 28 October 2021 8:17:15 AM

Dear Members of the Select Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to consider the points provided in this submission into ways in which to improve road safety in Tasmania. I have given much consideration to this issue over many years and noted examples of best practice when travelling interstate and overseas which may be useful in improving road safety here in Tasmania.

My suggestions to improve road safety in Tasmania include:

1. Extending jaywalking laws to incorporate non-use of mobile phones when crossing roads
2. A focus on people walking against red "Don't Walk" signals – this causes traffic holdups and risk of injury. This isn't policed at all as the paltry fine is not worth the police pursuing.
3. Over length/width loads from hardware stores, tip shops, etc. Surely there is a duty of care for retailers to ensure that customers leave with their loads legally secure and safe. Some businesses such as Nubco and ARC take this issue very seriously and will not allow customers to take goods without appropriate legal transport of the items. However, I've spoken with Bunnings at Glenorchy on a couple of occasions, and they do not show any interest at all. I have forward regulations regarding this from Transport Tasmania at least 2 years ago and nothing has changed.
4. Overloading of 4WD's, etc with firewood. All loads should be netted over the top with mesh sides to prevent goods falling off causing high risk to other road users.
5. There are no numberplates on motorbikes at the front. Therefore, they do not register on speed cameras. They should be redesigned to be both visible and non-fatal upon impact
6. Personalised number plates are often not reflective and/or easy to read – eg: black backgrounds
7. Electric cars need some audio awareness for pedestrians as they are too quiet
8. Vehicle lights:
 - a. Numerous domestic vehicles are not compliant (eg: no lights on rear of vehicle, broken lights, etc.)
 - b. There are increasing number of vehicles with different coloured lights (eg: blue, green, yellow) These are under vehicles at the front and are very off putting
9. Trucks over 6 tonne on dual lane highways should not be allowed to overtake – this is the case in a number of European countries and it is much safer
10. I believe there are only approximately 7 transport inspectors in the state, as such they are instructed to only police heavy vehicle. Therefore, domestic vehicles under 4.5 tonne are seldom/if at all checked
11. Many car trailers are noticeably in very poor condition without certified safety chains and shackles, some with wooden draw bars, no mudflaps, etc. As with boats over 30 years of age, trailers should also be brought up to current compliance standards, photographed and checked by inspectors
12. Road worthy tests are required to sell a vehicle in some other states. This should be the case in Tasmania. Any vehicle to be sold should have a road worthy certificate unless it is to be wrecked/non repairable write off
13. Narrow street parking – e.g. Charles Street, Moonah. In some European countries there are line markings on the footpath compelling vehicles to park on that portion of the footpath parallel with the curb, allowing for safer passage on the road. Generally,

footpaths are sufficiently wide enough to allow for this and wheelchairs/ prams/ mobility scooters, etc as well.

14. Dark tinted windows. I notice on some vehicles, windows are so dark that it is impossible to tell how many people are in the vehicle
15. Chevrons on the highways to assist drivers in maintaining safe distance from vehicles in front. Very effective and cheap
16. There are numerous vehicles which speed through intersections which are yellow turning red. The introduction of "zones" a marker in the centre of the lane a certain distance before the lights would ensure that anyone approaching behind the marker must stop. Those past the marker would be permitted to proceed. Marker placement would be based on maximum speed allowable for vehicles.
17. Numerous number plates are inconspicuous (up under trays or tail fins) or partly obscured 4x4s and vehicles carrying bikes.
18. There are numerous 4x4's covered in mud so that number plates, mirrors, indicators, etc are not visible
19. Modified vehicles:
 - a. Rear brake disablers are used for doing burnouts
 - b. Some vehicles have lowered body kits which are far too low and don't meet the 100mm minimum
 - c. Electronically operated muffler diverters – straight out exhaust
 - d. Bonnet modifications restricting driver view/visibility
 - e. General muffler/excessive noise

How long / many years since a prosecution or conviction for excessive noise in this state?
This also applies to trucks using engine brakes through straight out exhaust.

20. Standard times for headlights being turned on and off. E.g. in Eastern States, all cars should be required to turn their lights on say at 6pm during daylight savings (Eastern Summer Time) and they can be turned off after 6am. Similarly, all cars should turn their headlights on say at 4pm and off after 8am during Eastern Standard time. This uniformity would assist in alleviating some of the common practices of cars driving without lights during twilight hours and after dark.
21. Following from the above, is there an Australian Standard regarding when headlights should be on during foggy or wet conditions?
22. I had a terrifying experience on the Tasman Bridge a while ago when an ambulance right beside me turned on its siren. Whilst these need to be audible, they can be alarming and potentially cause accidents for unsuspecting drivers being overtaken, A gradual increase in volume would be much safer
23. Light and heavy trucks should have horizontal rails between the front and rear wheels as they do in Europe to help stop pedestrians and cyclists from getting trapped under wheels.
24. In regards to Left Hand Drive vehicles in Australia, do they have their head lights converted to suit driving on the left hand side of the road? Without conversion, headlights are directed at oncoming drivers which is dangerous.
25. Doctors and medical professionals (eg: optometrists) should be required to take more responsibility to inform the Transport Department of suspected unfit drivers. Whether it is prescription drugs, eyesight, reflexes, general health to be competent to operate a motor vehicle. I know of cases where people are unable to find their vehicle after medical appointments who require the receptionist to find their car as they don't even know the colour of their vehicle. Simulator tests should be used for testing reaction times in the case of people on prescription drugs or with physical disabilities.

26. P-platers should only be able to drive unmodified vehicles for at least two years. A number of P-plate signs are purposely obscured or hidden by modifications such as tail fins and dark tinted rear windows.
27. Similarly, in regards to P-platers, perhaps all occupants in the vehicle (driver and passengers) should face the fine for any offences undertaken, e.g. speeding, drink driving, etc. This peer responsibility will assist in decreasing instances of illegal activity and ultimately increase safety and hopefully prevent loss of life. There is less chance of young people being passengers with irresponsible drivers.
28. Do road rules apply to private property in relation to seat belts, road worthiness of vehicles, alcohol in system, licenses for motor vehicles and quad bikes? If they do not apply, should they?
29. Hi visibility safety vests should be in all vehicles for use during breakdowns, etc when on highways. This is the system in some European countries and it assists with visibility and safety. No one is allowed out of the car without wearing a hi-vis vest.
30. Similarly, triangles for alerting “hazard ahead” should be in all vehicles for use in the event of a breakdown or accident.
31. It is noticeable that quite a few younger cyclists do not wear safety helmets. All cyclists should wear reflective high visibility vests at night. In the interests of safety, cyclists should be wearing Australian Standard reflective vests at all times.
32. Should texting and/or using a hand-held mobile phone while driving be a criminal offence under the Traffic Act along the lines of same severity as drink driving. They are known causes for many accidents and fatalities.
33. Annual inspections should be undertaken on all vehicles to ensure roadworthiness as per mainland states. This will assist in addressing illegal modifications as well.
34. Inspections of indicator lights – some faded lenses are very deceiving on sunny days making it hard to get a clear understanding of what the driver intends to do, especially at roundabouts.
35. An alternative and potentially fairer system regarding penalty fines, would be that fines for vehicle traffic offences could be related to the value of the vehicle as per the Red Book Dealer’s Guide. For example, the driver of a \$1 million Ferrari would be charged 5% the value of the car for offences, whilst the driver of a \$2000 Commodore could be fined 5% of their vehicle value for the same offence. This would be a much more equitable system and more likely to be a deterrent to those who have higher incomes and for whom the fines are a pittance.
36. Warden system
 - a. There are many good drivers and citizens who could be called upon to assist the authorities in detecting non-compliance. Through the use of a Warden system, non-compliances could be entered into an online database by the wardens.
 - b. Should a particular registration number be detected numerous times, this could alert authorities that there may be a problem with this vehicle. This removes the onus from the driver/s as being at fault – they may not be aware of their ongoing broken taillights, inability to adhere to speed limits, noise, running of red lights, etc.
 - c. Courtesy contact could be made by authorities asking for the issue/s to be corrected upon first communication. If problems persist the vehicle should be inspected at a government approved facility at cost to the owner. If all is compliant, that is great. If there are ongoing problems with the vehicle, one could only assume the vehicle is faulty beyond repair and as such is deregistered.
37. Dash Cam Dobbbers – Video evidence of dangerous driving practices should be sufficient

to enable prosecution without the video owner being inconvenience by court appearances. Most people are unwilling to lose a day's pay to attend court. People are also unlikely to submit footage of dangerous driving if there is no assurance that it will be viewed and actioned by police. However, it is the average citizen who will most often have clear evidence of illegal activity (eg: overtaking on double white lines).

38. Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) send out newsletters at least once a year to all boat licence holders informing them of any changes to laws and regulations, advising of safety updates and requirements, hazards and general boating information. They are able to do this based on a small licence fee (less than \$80). Surely a similar newsletter could be considered to ensure that all licenced drivers are annually updated on all relevant topics. Whilst the RACT do this for their members, not all licenced drivers are privy to this type of information. Maybe a cost sharing venture with RACT to all licenced drivers could be explored. A summary of penalties and prosecutions could also be included in the newsletter as a general awareness campaign. Successes measured through lowering statistics could be included and a summary of causes of fatalities.

One can only assume that much of the problem relating to the above is due to the insignificant fines associated with traffic offences, and those employed to police these offences have either chosen to turn a blind eye or are grossly understaffed and overworked. A lot of these problems have been for many years let get completely out of hand because they are never policed. As a citizen I see and hear blatant offences on a continuous daily basis. I would suggest nothing is being policed as it is not worth the police pursuing offenders for fines of \$130- \$200. The Dorset Council charges \$600 fines for not having your dog licenced!

Please accept any criticism as constructive and not negative. It's difficult for me to put my thoughts into writing and am available should you wish to discuss any of the above. Again, I thank you for taking the time to read this submission and hope that some of the points raised are considered in view of improving road safety in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely

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