

# PUBLIC

## THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON MONDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2021

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### INQUIRY INTO ROAD SAFETY IN TASMANIA

**CHAIR** (Ms Armitage) - First of all, we will introduce the members at the table at the moment. We have Jo Palmer, member for Rosevears; Tania Rattray, member for McIntyre; and myself, Rosemary Armitage, member for Launceston. We also have as part of the committee Josh Willie, member for Elwick, who is running a few minutes late but will certainly catch up with us; and Bastian Seidel, who is having a COVID-19 test. He's got a bit of a nasty cough so he's having a test.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We didn't want him here.

**CHAIR** - As soon as he gets back home he will come on view so he will watch on video and join in when he can. We also have, Tim, our committee secretary; Ali, our assistant; and Lynne on *Hansard*. We will get started. As we are taking sworn evidence, if we could ask that you make the statutory declaration in front of you, please.

All evidence taken at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege, but I do need to remind you that any comments that you may make outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. There's also a copy of information available if you haven't read it or if you are not aware of the process. The evidence presented is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee web site when it becomes available. The procedure that we intend to follow, once you've done that, we will give you the opportunity to give an overview and then we'll ask you some questions. Thank you, if you'd just like to both make the statutory declaration.

### Mr MARK MUGNAIONI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, Mr GARRY BAILEY, CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER, RACT WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED

**CHAIR** - If you would like to start with some comments about your submission. We appreciate the fact that you've sent it in and we all have copies.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Thank you, Chair. We really wanted to start by thanking the inquiry for the opportunity to speak today. This is clearly an incredibly important subject that the RACT has been very focused on for a long time. We feel that this is particularly timely given last financial year's road trauma statistics that show that we continue to be the worst performing state in the country.

I would like to make clear that RACT is an entirely non-politically aligned, non-partisan organisation and I wouldn't want any of my comments today to be taken as a criticism of any particular parties. From our perspective all three levels of government - federal, state, local - have been trying diligently and studiously for many years to address this issue, as have other bodies such as ourselves. The fundamental challenge, as you will see from the cover page of our submission, is that we have been pursuing the same sort of strategies and the same thinking for a very long period of time, without the results we wanted to achieve. That is not a criticism; that's simply a statement of fact.

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What we would really like to see is for all parties concerned to be able to come to the table and think differently about not only what are we doing but how can we do it; learning from other jurisdictions elsewhere, not only in Australia but around the world, and going from there. We know, and we have seen through COVID-19, that when we come together as a community for a challenge that is common to all of us, we can overcome significant obstacles that are very difficult, and require a concerted effort across different levels of government departments, community and government acting together. We can do that very successfully, and that's exactly the sort of response we feel is required if we are genuinely going to make a difference to our road trauma statistics in Tasmania.

We have 38 recommendations in our submission. From our perspective, there is no one silver bullet. There is no one thing that we can do to turn the numbers around. Probably the most serious risk, the most significant challenge that faces us is not necessarily drawn out in our submission but is, in fact, complacency and acceptance. As soon as we get to a position in the community where we accept that the road trauma stats are the road trauma stats, and we can't change them, that is the point that we collectively fail. We know that we can do better. Our road trauma statistics are about twice as bad as the best performing Australian state - Victoria - and almost three times worse than the best national performance of our friends in Sweden and Norway in the Scandinavian countries, so we know that things can be done.

As I said, it is not a single silver bullet. There is a three part answer to changing our road trauma statistics. We need safer drivers, in safer cars, on safer roads, and that is not something that can be changed by any one single initiative or any one party. It is a collective effort. What we do think we need is not only long-term planning, which we absolutely need when we're talking about infrastructure. We think we need a ten-year plan for all our major roads in Tasmania, to make sure they are brought up to a minimum three-star safety rating.

We also need to be thinking about what we can do in the immediate term. It is not good enough to say, well, we have a plan for a road and it's getting better, for the people who are driving on it now. That's why we need to consider not only infrastructure, we need to consider speed, we need to consider the Tasmanian fleet, which is the oldest of any fleet in the country. There's a whole variety of things we need to consider and we need to do them jointly and in concert.

From the RACT perspective, this inquiry and a genuine, fresh look at what we're doing and how we're doing it, is an exceptionally good start to genuinely give us all an opportunity to challenge our thinking and to be open to new ideas.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Before we start, I will introduce the member for Elwick, Josh Willie. We're still in overview.

**Mr BAILEY** - I have nothing to add to the introductory remarks. We're ready for questions.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you very much, Mark and Garry, for coming along. This is a really important issue. Before the hearing commenced, we were having a brief discussion about roads around the state. I am interested to know what sort of input RACT has into State Growth. You talked about bringing Tasmanian roads up to the three-star rating, the ANCAP rating. Can we have some sort of discussion about that? I see the terrible state of some of our

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roads in Tasmania, even some newly developed roads are really not in that good shape. It would be quite easy to get into one of those craters and never get out of it. Thank you.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - The RACT absolutely agrees with that proposition. To be clear, it's not just state-owned and managed roads. Most of the road infrastructure in Tasmania is owned and managed by local government as well. We think it's critical that a holistic and consistent approach to all of our roads, irrespective of who owns them, is taken, in terms of quality in approach to tendering, prioritisation of where resources need to be spent, and the speeds that are set for all of our roads.

We are obviously not unreasonably expecting all roads to be fixed immediately. It is a long-term issue we need to solve. Where we can't fix a road immediately, what we can do immediately is change the speed so that the speed is set safely for the conditions of the road, and recognise that our roads are in different conditions.

**Ms RATTRAY** - To butt in there, is that really a cop-out for government and local government, both state and, perhaps, federal to some extent as well, to say that if you can't fix the roads and bring them up to an appropriate standard, you can just drop the speed limit, that'll be fine? Isn't that giving them an easy way out?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - It could be seen that way. We certainly don't think that it is a permanent solution to road and infrastructure challenges, but we do think it is important that we don't take an aspirational speed limit on a road that can't bear it. If I think about the Lyell Highway, for example, it's 100 kilometres per hour almost the entire way and we know that the road infrastructure that is in place at the moment doesn't bear that speed limit. We're not proposing a reduction of speed limits in lieu of fixing the infrastructure; we're simply requesting that speed limits be set appropriate to the road conditions at the time with an aspiration that we work towards a considered plan of fixing the infrastructure.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Again, don't you consider that just having the speed-reduced sign saying this stretch of road needs an 80 kilometres per hour approach and driver education is, again, a better solution than blanket 90 kilometres per hour for that road? I heard on the radio this morning that the piece on the east coast, they've reduced that from 100 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour, permanently. Again, we have a situation on a state road, saying, we're not going to upgrade it to make it fit for purpose, we'll just reduce the speed limit.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Yes, I think there are a couple of different issues at play there. We recognise that there are only a finite number of resources to go around and we have a large road infrastructure network that we need to invest in. We are well off having the standard and quality of infrastructure that we need. We need every major road in Tasmania to be a minimum of three stars, recognising that this takes time. The standard that is required to achieve three-star changes over time, as technology and infrastructure standards change nationally and globally.

We certainly do not advocate for permanent reduction to road speeds in lieu of improving infrastructure. However, we do recognise that it is far better to have appropriate speed where a road is not currently up to three stars, rather than to have a speed that is appropriate for a much better road where we haven't actually done the work.

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We would also say that the setting of speeds is quite a technical and science-based exercise. We would be loath to see a non-scientific approach being taken to the setting of speeds.

Equally, one of the things we would call out in our submission is we think there needs to be a much more consistent approach between state and local roads as to how speeds are set, and the frequency with which they are set, and the procedural and facts-based approach to how they are set. At the moment, particularly for some local roads, we think it is more reactive rather than proactive, and it needs to be a much more considered approach.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My understanding, and somebody correct me if I am wrong, is that any road that has a speed reduction - whether it be a state road or one under the management of local government - that all gets put through State Growth.

**Mr BAILEY** - It does. The Transport Commissioner, as the deputy secretary within the Department of State Growth, has the final responsible statutory duty to set speed limits. For state roads it is a reasonably simple proposition. For example, they use a risk rating tool that is approved by Austroads, which is the national peak body that sets these standards, and Tasmania is a signatory to that. They can rate the risk on state roads.

The problem is that with local government, you are relying on a council to take the initiative to perhaps ask their local constituents, is this road safe at a certain speed or not? Do you want it reduced? They then have to evaluate it, and they don't often have the tools to do so. Then they ask the Transport Commissioner, who makes the final decision.

Interestingly, there have been some excellent examples of local government reacting to local concerns about the safety of roads. The most recent is Glenora Road, which is controlled by the Derwent Valley Council. They asked local residents what they thought about a reduction in the speed limit from 100 to 80 kilometres per hour and they got strong majority support. Without hesitation they asked the Transport Commissioner, can we have the speed limit dropped, and he did, and the sky didn't fall.

There is a really inconsistent approach to speed setting in Tasmania. This was pointed out by the previous upper House inquiry into road safety 11 years ago, and nothing has really been done since.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Fresh eyes.

**Mr BAILEY** - Fresh eyes! We really hope so, it is really important.

Back to your earlier remark about an easy way out. I can say, with all my dealings with people with considerable expertise and a real commitment to make our roads safer, that no-one is looking for an easy way out. The setting of speed limits is, in many ways, the only instrument you have to make some of our roads safer, because you simply cannot bring all our roads up to standard in the time lines we have.

There is an additional problem now across Australia, and this was mentioned by Infrastructure Australia only last the weekend. We simply don't have the skills and the capacity to deliver our projects on time. We have had a couple of outliers where this has happened. The

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Perth bypass was an excellent example that was delivered on time. But I know that several major road tenders haven't attracted bids because there is simply not the capacity to do it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or a one only.

**Mr BAILEY** - I know there is a deep and abiding commitment within State Roads. They want to build the safest and best roads possible.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - The inquiry will see that we do have a very strong focus on speed in our submissions. We know that if we take all of the crash data on fatalities and serious injuries in Tasmania, more than half come down to two factors: speed and distraction.

If we are able to make significant inroads on both of those, we know this will have a fundamental impact on saving lives of Tasmanians.

**Ms PALMER** - In your opening comments you spoke about safer drivers, safer cars and safer roads.

I can tick safer cars and safer roads, because you can see how decision-making or a huge increase in funding, whatever it might be.

How do you get safer drivers? You cannot legislate for people to not be complacent. You cannot legislate human behaviour.

I have four children. Two of them I have taught to drive. They are now on their full licences. I could teach them the road rules and what have you. I am interested in your comments on that, because you cannot force people to not be selfish. You cannot legislate for people to take their time and obey the rules and be courteous to others. To not drive when they are tired. To not drive when they are drunk.

So many strategies have gone into this. I am interested in how you see making safer drivers, because it is not just kids and P-plates who cause accidents on our roads. It is 40-60-year-olds as well. Sometimes I think the younger ones get quite a harsh rap when there are a lot of middle-aged idiots on our roads.

In your capacity as the RACT, how do you mandate against that?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - It's a really significant challenge. As you say, it is not something you can resolve simply by budget allocation, or infrastructure projects.

It is also not something that you can necessarily correct immediately. It does take time.

That said, I think we have proven that we can have a social impact on these things. Think about drink driving. That has had decades of focus, and we have seen the statistics in respect to driving under the influence improve over time - albeit some of that has now been overtaken by driving under other substances, which is absolutely a challenge.

We think, as with most of the challenges in here, a multipronged attack is what we need. There are things that we can do to enforce, and penalise. We are obviously very strong

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supporters of automated enforcement cameras, which can now do much more than just monitor speed. They can also detect distraction, mobile phone use, which we know is a growing issue.

We are also supporters of continuing to improve the way we teach people to drive from the outset, and we think the changes in the graduated licence program were really positive.

There is more we can continue to do to ensure that improved education is built into our schools, as grade 11s and 12s are taking those first steps into motoring. We can make sure that irrespective of their own individual circumstances, and what they may be able to afford in their own families, the circumstances they come from, that they have an appropriate driver education foundation. We think there are opportunities there.

That is one of the reasons the RACT runs one of Tasmania's largest driver training schools. It's not for financial return, and not for commercial gain. It actually runs at a loss. We do it because we know that if you start a driver with the right level of training and the right safety awareness, it can make a difference for the whole of their lives.

There have also been - I don't think as a formal recommendation - potential retesting for people over time, and potential diversionary programs for repeat offenders for breaking enforcement requirements.

I think a variety of things can be done. It needs to be an effort across the board, but most fundamentally it starts with a will to actually change those statistics. We know if we keep doing our training and enforcement in the same way we are doing now, we will get the same results as we have previously.

**Ms PALMER** - I think there is a will among the community in general. We are all horrified and get quite teary, and think about our own families when we hear about these accidents; and yet still the statistics show otherwise. It's all most confusing.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I think there's also a range of driver behaviour that a lot of drivers would think is entirely acceptable, but frankly is not. Recent research that we undertook of our members, we had a survey with more than 5000 members responding. A significant number of them said that they felt that it was okay to speed whilst overtaking, for example. It's these sorts of creeping behaviours, if you like, that I am sure people would have learnt are not appropriate when they got their licence; but that can be some considerable time ago. People start to lose that over time, so I think there are a variety of things we need to do to address that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In defence of those people that have to speed to overtake sometimes, you start to overtake and then the person beside you decides to speed up. Then you are caught on the other side of the road, and you don't want to stay there any longer than you possibly need to. I think there is a bit of a defence for that one. Once again, it's driver education and I don't necessarily need you to give me an answer for it, Mark, but it's a fact.

**CHAIR** - It certainly is a fact and I saw it this morning myself.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - And I think it is a good example of why these are complicated problems to solve, because that's an infrastructure question. We need to make sure that we have the right number of overtaking lanes so that overtaking can be done safely. It's a driver behaviour question, so that if someone is trying to overtake you, you don't speed up and you

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let them pass. There are multiple strands to those challenges and we are not going to solve them by any one thing. Even if we had dual carriageway everywhere, it's not necessarily going to solve that problem. We need to address multiple layers.

**Mr WILLIE** - I have heard that scenario that has been described as inattention; the person realises they are going slow because they have been inattentive and they subsequently speed up to keep up with the traffic.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a question?

**Mr WILLIE** - We have talked a little bit about it; but in your submission, I found it particularly alarming that nationally, failing to improve our current situation will result in 12 000 people killed, 360 000 admitted to hospital at a cost of over \$300 billion over the next decade alone. Why is this issue failing to get traction across the country? If that was a disease, governments would be throwing the kitchen sink at preventing that.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I think this comes back to the point I made in my opening statement; this is about a community preparedness not to accept the status quo. I think when you consider road trauma there's always a reason. You can always find something. It was raining, someone was tired, someone was running late. Fundamentally, when you step back from individual circumstances and you look at it as a system of activity, we know that there are things that can be done. One of the fundamental challenges that we did call out in our submission is that this is not something that any single department of government is responsible for. All three layers of government are responsible, but equally across different government departments. Not only is it state growth but it's health, it's education, it's justice. It's something that sits across the board and certainly from our perspective, will only be solved by whole-of-government approach in exactly the same way as we have with a problem like COVID-19, where it has required cooperation between different levels of government and different parts of government with a single will to address a problem.

**Mr WILLIE** - You talked in your submission too a bit about implementation failure because it is across government; is that one of the causes, people are working in silos, they're not pulling in the same direction?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Absolutely. Even if we look at something as simple as trauma statistics -every state defines those differently. When we get to a federal level and we are talking about where federal funding for infrastructure improvement goes, we are talking different numbers in every different state. That's a relatively simple example of where we are working in silos that is not helping us come to a consistent and holistic solution.

**Mr WILLIE** - Just on that, that might be useful for the committee; you'd like to see a more nationally consistent approach with some of those things?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - We do, absolutely. All of the Australian auto clubs are part of the Australian Automobile Association which we use as our voice in Canberra. We have been calling for that at a federal level for at least the duration of the last 10-year plan, where it be mandated that road funding comes with the requirement to report on road safety in a nationally consistent way, so we can see and compare the benefits we're getting from funding for different roads.

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**Ms PALMER** - On that question, how are different states recording it differently?

**Mr MUGAIONI** - It's a very good question. Even if I take something as simple as a fatality, which you would think would be a fairly binary data point, whether a person dies immediately at the scene from their injuries, or they die from a secondary issue that arises as a result of road trauma injuries, different jurisdictions will count that in different ways. It's some technical differences which, superficially, might not seem that important but, actually, when you're talking about the sort of numbers we're talking about nationally, they are quite significant.

**Ms PALMER** - One state may be inclusive of any reason that someone died as a result, however far down the track, and another state may say no, that's different, that's not part of it.

**Mr MUGAIONI** - Exactly. This is part of the federal Office of Road Safety, which has now been commenced but has not fully executed on the original intention. It is an area we think there needs to be a focus so that we've got a coordinating point for each of the states.

**CHAIR** - With regard to the inquiry 11 years ago, there were 69 findings and 52 recommendations. How many of those recommendations can you recall were implemented?

**Mr BAILEY** - I am not sure how many were implemented, but there's been no improvement. There certainly were issues raised 11 years ago about enforcement and education and they really haven't been dealt with. Let's take education, for example. Road safety education is not in every school. We have two programs funded by the Department of State Growth and the Motor Accident Insurance Board. We respond to school requests for road safety information, and that's how it operates. We reach about 1800, maybe 2000 students all up, which is way short of getting it in every school. We say that it should be in every school in some way. It will require some resourcing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about the road safety levy, doesn't that extend to education?

**Mr BAILEY** - It does, and part of the levy does fund - or maybe not. I should know this because I was a former chair of the Road Safety Advisory Council.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's why I asked the question, I thought you would know, Garry.

**Mr BAILEY** - Yes, 75 per cent of that levy goes to infrastructure improvements and the rest goes to education but as part of our advertising campaigns, like the Real Mates, for example; so it's not part of schools. The grant we get is a separate matter within State Growth, as is MAIB. MAIB does fund some of our road safety campaigns - up to about \$6 million a year.

**Mr MUGAIONI** - There's also a lot we can look to in other jurisdictions as to how they're going about their education campaigns, to draw lessons from what's working and what's not and bring them back down to Tasmania. A great example that I've had the opportunity to work on previously in Queensland, is the Queensland Automobile Club. They spent a lot of time and money working with state government up there on a program called Docudrama, which goes into grades 11 and 12. They re-enact a real road trauma scene. One of the significant challenges we find talking to that cohort, particularly boys in that cohort -

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Six foot tall and bulletproof.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Exactly. You can spend as much time talking to them in a classroom setting as you like, without it sinking in. That program actually takes them outside, and they do a mock crash. A coroner arrives, and ambulance and police; they work with all of those departments to put this presentation on. It is confronting, but it works. They've been running that for, I think, almost 10 years now, and they have the stats to look at the injury data from the people they've been able to engage with and it demonstrably works.

These are the sorts of things that don't take a huge amount of money to do but they do take a will, and there are opportunities we would like to be looking at to try to do things differently to have a different outcome.

**Mr WILLIE** - We've talked about education, speed limits, distraction and infrastructure. What about law enforcement? You talked in your submission about the deterioration of the speed camera network. Just recently, in the last couple of years, we have seen police diverted to COVID-19-related duties. What impact is law enforcement having over this plateau?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I think the role of law enforcement in ensuring that we get improved numbers can't be overstated. I think it is incredibly important. But equally, from our perspective, is making sure that we are judicious with the resources we have got. Our speed cameras, for example, we think are a fantastic tool to be able to combat not only speeding but distraction. They have been proven to work in New South Wales. We have got the data, that is a proven position. We don't necessarily consider that they need to be managed and operated by police. We think police might have a better role to play elsewhere. But we are very supportive of elevated numbers of, particularly, highway patrols being visible on our roads. We know that has an impact on driver behaviour as well. We recognise that police will always have a range of conflicting objectives that they need to achieve but we would certainly not want to see road safety de-prioritised for other priorities.

**Mr WILLIE** - In terms of value for money, law enforcement in that bigger piece of the puzzle, is it quite expensive compared to, say, lowering a speed limit on a rural road?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - It certainly is more expensive. But this is where, again, needing to think differently, by using automated cameras, for example, you can achieve similar results that, before that technology was available, you would have needed a much larger number of police on the roads to be able to achieve. So, we are certainly not advocating for cameras instead of police. We think we need the right balance between the two and we need to manage both in a way that's optimal for the resources that we have got.

**Mr BAILEY** - Might I add to that too. In our own surveys for the RACT, we asked the question about new-generation speed cameras for our members - 210 000 members. More than 5000 responses, which is pretty robust, I would suggest. And 83 per cent supported cameras; 95 per cent supported the revenue going back into the speed camera network and other road safety issues.

That absolutely mirrors the situation in New South Wales when they did a pilot program with the new cameras. They detected 100 000 drivers using a mobile phone when they shouldn't. That program, and they surveyed the community three times, ended up with

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80 per cent support. So, the days when people criticised that technology as mere revenue-raising is an absolute nonsense. Tasmanians want it because they want to feel safe.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Some people want it that badly they steal them. Just outside Launceston that time, they stole the camera.

**Mr BAILEY** - You need some security around them, obviously.

**Mr WILLIE** - If the revenue is going into road safety education and those sorts of things, the revenue will end up declining if it works.

**Mr BAILEY** - In every other state, that is the practice. That is how the camera network is funded. That is still a matter for some argument. We put the argument that revenue should go back into the network during the state election campaign. That was one of our two asks. The other one was 10-year plans for our highways, and we got that.

The interesting thing, just on enforcement, is the ultimate attitude of every police officer, and I know this from a lot of discussions with them over many years, is they want Tasmanians to get home safely. Safety is their prime consideration. It is about deterrence and education as well as enforcement.

The interesting thing, when you look at the police data, is they issue far more warnings than tickets because they want to educate people. They want to pull someone up and say 'you are breaking the law, if you do it again you will be fined and you'll lose points, but I am just giving you a warning this time'. You could argue whether that should be tightened up a bit but it really indicates the prime focus of our police force is to educate people and save lives.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I think in our submission we note that we have received assurances from the Government that it will be rolling out 16 speed cameras in the not-too-distant future and we think that is a fantastic start and we absolutely applaud that. We don't necessarily think it needs to stop there, though. These effectively pay for themselves and it's a voluntary tax from people who are not doing the right thing and putting everyone else in danger. We know that, again, in a lot of Scandinavian countries the proportion of cameras they have on the roads compared to ours is substantially greater and it has had an impact on behavioural change.

Now, interestingly, particularly if I take Sweden as an example, they don't have all of their cameras on all of the time because they don't want them to be seen as a purely revenue-raising activity; they want them to be seen as a data-gathering activity and a behaviour-change tool. There's absolutely no reason we couldn't be doing that here in Tasmania - learning those lessons and bringing them back for our own benefit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am mindful that we do have somebody here witnessing this particular hearing, but I'm interested in whether the RACT has any program for advocating for families who have perhaps lost loved ones through a road fatality or a serious injury - a support network type of thing. Is that something that RACT has considered or does in some way?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - It's not something that we do at the present time but RACT has a member in about 70 per cent of Tasmanian homes so almost invariably when someone is touched by road trauma they are part of our membership and part of the RACT family. It is

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not a service that we offer at the moment but we would absolutely be open to considering that because I think it is certainly an incredibly important area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Unfortunately, when you look at the statistics, those statistics would touch a lot of families, whether it be directly or indirectly, in our state, so it may be something that you might put your mind to in the future.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I'm very happy to do that. I think, as a broader theme, as I said before, these are problems that no one party can solve. Certainly, from the RACT's perspective, we see a critical role for ourselves working with government, working with our members.

Particularly, there are a range of advantages and tools that the RACT might have available to us in trying to drive behaviour change that state government may not have. We have a different relationship with members. We have a different position in the community. We have a different brand. We absolutely stand ready to work in partnership with all levels of government to change these statistics. We just think we need to think differently about how we go about doing that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - I have a question with regard to the recent legislation, or fairly recent, with regard to slowing a vehicle from 110 kilometres per hour on a highway down to 40 kilometres per hour. It has been raised with me that in other states, if you're doing 80 kilometres per hour, you slow down to 40 kilometres per hour but if you're doing over 80 kilometres per hour, you slow down to a speed that's reasonable to do so.

What has been raised with me is it was felt that driving along at 110 kilometres per hour and all of a sudden you come around a corner and you come across an accident or flashing lights - whatever type it might be - can actually be quite dangerous trying to slow down, particularly with vehicles behind you, to 40 kilometres per hour. Does the RACT have a comment on whether that should be, perhaps, lifted as in line with the other states to something that's probably safe to do or whether it's reasonable?

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - I believe the minutes of RSAC are now public for that conversation, so that has absolutely been discussed at the Road Safety Advisory Council and there was a strong recommendation that exactly the position you describe be adopted. I understand that that is going to be adopted moving forward, that there will be a difference in approach in terms of what you need to slow down to depending on the speed that you're travelling at the time.

As you identified, Chair, if you're travelling at 110 kilometres per hour, a B-double, there is absolutely no physical chance that you can actually slow down to 40 kilometres per hour even if you wanted to and, if you attempt to do so, that could actually be quite dangerous. My understanding is that State Growth intend to update the legislation to reflect that fact.

Equally, we're very pleased to note that, for the first time in Tasmania, RACT's patrols and other roadside emergency workers will be included in that legislation as well.

**CHAIR** - Good. Thank you. Any more questions?

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**Ms PALMER** - I want to ask about the comments you made in your submission around wire-rope barriers on parts of our highway. Two parts to that: do you think that should be aligned with certain speed limits, or should that be aligned with certain types of roads? Also, do you think that is the best barrier, being the actual wire ropes? We have had submissions that we will be looking at, and people we'll be talking to, who feel it is quite dangerous to have those there, so what is the organisation's point of view on that?

**Mr BAILEY** - Yes, I can answer that. We support the wire rope barrier, because all the evidence before us is that they substantially reduce the risk of death and serious injury. They have been installed on a substantial part of the Midlands Highway, and on quite a few occasions, if it wasn't for those barriers stopping a car when it has deviated, there could have well been a head-on, or running off the other side of the road.

They are the two most common forms of crashes - and we don't say accidents, we say crashes - that cause death and serious injury.

Sweden introduced them. I remember when these barriers were first raised as a potential lifesaver in Tasmania; I think it was when Jim Cox was the minister.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I think he went to Sweden and had a look at them.

**Mr BAILEY** - He went to Sweden and brought it back. As a media person, I was certainly excited enough about it to publish the world's most boring photo on the front page, of an empty road with a wire rope barrier, but it certainly got a reaction.

Sweden has recently won a global award for these. There are concerns by the motorcycle community, and I have had discussions with the Motorcycle Riders Association. There is far more that unites us than divides us in that area. They have a different view about it. They say they have the evidence. I would leave it to the committee to make a decision.

**Mr WILLIE** - I think they agree on the barrier, it's just the material that is used.

**CHAIR** - They tell me it's the posts.

**Mr BAILEY** - The wire rope barrier differs from the concrete barrier or the Armco in that the wire rope barrier significantly reduces the kinetic energy. It's slowing the vehicle up in what appears to be a straight line. I am not an expert on this, but I have been told by the experts that you can slide along a concrete barrier, but your speed is not reduced, and so there is still the capacity to hit something else at quite some speed, or you can bounce off into the path of another car.

Once the wire rope barrier has you in its grip, that's where you stay. It is very rare to go through the barrier, or be wrenched off it and back into the path of another car. You will see it on our 2+1 Highway - which again is a Swedish innovation, and they regard as a very successful measure - notwithstanding the debate that the Midlands Highway should have been four lanes all the way.

Nonetheless, I believe there's a growing data within the Department of State Growth on the number of impacts on the wire rope barriers. You have to read into that what would've

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been the possible consequences from all those impacts if there had been a car coming the other way, for example - so, preventions of head-on.

I don't have any data on the number of impacts on wire rope barriers by motorcyclists in Tasmania, but I am sure the Department of State Growth would.

**Ms PALMER** - Where should we see those wire rope barriers? I feel quite good when I am travelling the Bass Highway doing 100, 110 kilometres per hour and I see them, but there are other roads in all of our electorates that are off those highways where you think, I wish there was one here, it's very easy to go across. What are your thoughts on where they should be?

**Mr BAILEY** - Our view - which we share with the road builders here - is that on high-volume, high-speed roads, it takes a long time to roll these out. They're not complete on the Midlands Highway. They're not complete on the Bass Highway, and sadly a couple of the fatal crashes that have occurred have been where there hasn't been a barrier. What would be the outcome if there was a wire rope barrier there? There may well be speculation. We simply don't know.

On local roads, you won't see them in the short term. That's why you need to deal with those roads in other ways. For example, sealing verges, improving some road alignments, signage and speed management all play a part.

As Mark said at the outset, there is no one silver bullet, and that applies to individual roads. There is not one thing that is going to save lives. For example, 14 000 kilometres of our roads are controlled by local government, and half of our roads are gravel. At least we did lower the speed limit on gravel from 100 to 80 kilometres per hour.

**CHAIR** - Do you consider that there is adequate maintenance on the wire ropes? Obviously, they have to be tensioned, they have to be checked, and the more we have, the more budget needs to go into them. Do you have any advice or any evidence?

**Mr BAILEY** - We do not have any direct evidence, but inadequate maintenance has been raised by the Motorcycle Riders Association. We simply don't know. They do require regular inspection. When it is hit by a vehicle, it is repaired as quickly as possible, otherwise it creates a new danger.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - We do need to ensure, where we have road network that is not up to speed, that we have an aspiration to improve its standing, to allocate more of our budget to new infrastructure rather than to maintenance.

**CHAIR** - I would assume there would be an age limit to them. Obviously, it is tensile strength.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - As with all road infrastructure. We do think it is important that we don't lose sight of an appropriate balance between new infrastructure and maintenance. New infrastructure is great, but if we are not maintaining the infrastructure that we put in, that is not to anyone's advantage.

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**Mr BAILEY** - We said during the state election campaign that the state should increase the maintenance budget, which is around \$70 million, to about \$100 million. That is in line with the Civil Contractors Federation. I know they are not the same.

Maintenance at the moment is not well enough funded. That will certainly be part of our budget submission, as I am sure it will be for other organisations. You can see from the recent problems on the Bass Highway that we have a problem there. It is not just funding; it is the skills and capacity component again to actually get the work done.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - We also see that as one of the significant advantages of having 10-year plans for our major highways. It is not just about a plan for the infrastructure. It needs to be about a plan for the capacity to build that infrastructure when you get to it. These plans need to be quite holistic, to make sure they are not delayed by getting to the point of tender and not having enough people tender to actually get the work done.

**Mr WILLIE** - I have some questions on Tasmania's vehicle fleet. Our average is 12.8 years, compared to the national average of 9.8 years. About 20 per cent of Tasmania's fleet, which is about 82 000 vehicles, are more than 18 years old.

You talked a bit about the state government offering incentives through registration schemes. Is there anything else state government can do to try and improve that? Obviously, that is going to become an even bigger problem when we have driverless cars and more improvements in technology.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Unfortunately, like all of these challenges, probably a range of things needs to happen. In addition to potential incentives through the registration scheme, we also think the Government can lead by example in terms of how it manages its own fleet.

We know that the Government fleet, once it is sold on, goes into the second-hand market, and has a positive impact on improving the age of vehicles.

One of the recommendations we have suggested is considering regular inspections of vehicles to ensure they are roadworthy. A lot of those aged vehicles, in addition to not being sacked because they do not have the technology improvements that newer vehicles do, may not be roadworthy. That could be something we consider in trying to encourage improvement in the age of the fleet.

There are different options, but fundamentally it is a critical contributor to road safety. We know that across the board, vehicle safety - of those three, safer drivers, safer cars and safer roads - is probably the area where we've had the best advances over the last decade, but if we're not seeing those vehicles filter down to Tasmania we're not getting the advantage of those. This is also an area where federal jurisdiction comes into play, particularly around fuel standards. At the moment, our fuel standards in Australia mean that we are not getting the best of the new European technology, particularly, that are built for high standards. Again, it's just building in a systemic delay to being able to access that new technology in our jurisdiction.

**Mr WILLIE** - Is there a way of managing these things so as not to penalise people with lower incomes, maybe there could be an incentive to upgrade an 18-year-old car to a five-year-old car? I can see that it would be disproportionate in subsidies to people who maybe don't need them.

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**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Agreed. That's certainly not the intention. It really is just about making sure that older vehicles we know are not safe are removed from roads. However, I recognise there is a social risk there and that it would penalise different parts of society more than others with an unintended adverse consequence.

**Mr WILLIE** - Is there any localised analysis of the road crash data here on the age of the vehicles involved, and would you or State Growth have that?

**Mr BAILEY** - We don't have that, but that is part of the crash data they have. They do have a lot of data, which we don't necessarily always see. They're not hiding it, it's just that it's a big job gathering that. There will be a lot of useful stories that would come out of that data, the age of the car and the condition of it.

**Mr WILLIE** - Do you know about any of their trends, whether most of them are older vehicles?

**Mr BAILEY** - No.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It was interesting that the government fleet, when I first arrived here and we were first allocated vehicles about 16 years ago, was 40 000 kilometres for a turnover of your vehicle. Now, it's 60 000 or three years. The government has certainly pushed that out.

**Mr BAILEY** - If you're talking 60 000 kilometres, it's a five-star vehicle. It's a hell of a lot safer.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's right. That puts it into the secondhand market. We were turning over vehicles, particularly members who travel and live quite long distances away from parliament and have big electorates.

**CHAIR** - You're talking more about departmental fleets, aren't you?

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's the policy, though.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Indeed.

**Mr BAILEY** - They've pegged it to five-star for all their vehicles, which is good. The other thing about vehicle safety, generally, and this will take a long time to flow through to the secondhand market, but the mandated technology that's going into cars in Europe by 2023 will monitor the speed limit on the highway on which you're travelling and, if you exceed it, it will automatically reduce your speed to the legal limit, which is a fantastic advance.

**Mr WILLIE** - Hopefully you're in the correct lane and not trying to overtake someone.

**Mr BAILEY** - It reads that, too, because you've got lane assist now, as well. There's a lot of new technology. You've got doors that won't open if the car detects a cyclist or pedestrian or another vehicle coming past. You've got cameras and sensors in the cabins of cars that detect fatigue and distraction and will let you know. In the heavy vehicle fleet, of course, all that is

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well and truly entrenched with the big operators. They have a huge focus on safety because safety is part of efficiency and is simply a good business practice.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Equally, the corporate sector has a significant role to play here as well. Certainly, from our perspective, there is absolutely no excuse for an employer to be putting an employee in anything less than a five-star, ANCAP-rated vehicle. Having that sort of approach will also assist the second hand market in Tasmania.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I wanted to go back to driver education. I have a motorcycle licence. I no longer have a bike, so it is, perhaps, of little use; but I recall doing that Stay Upright course at the time. I think it's DECA now, I think Stay Upright's a thing of the past. I remember clearly after doing that course that I felt more aware of what was happening around me on the road as a vehicle driver as well. Not everyone wants a motorcycle licence, but having that type of course available to all new and existing licence holders, is that something that has been discussed?

**Mr BAILEY** - I can answer as far as motorcyclists go. MAIB funded a program, a refresher course for older motorcyclists or people who hadn't been on a motorcycle for some time -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was thinking more of general drivers.

**Mr BAILEY** - We put the case that if you are going to start that, you would do it through a diversionary system through the justice area. Could you mandate it for all drivers? That's a big call. Not something we have thought about.

**CHAIR** - That's going to be a big cost.

**Mr BAILEY** - At a big cost, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You wouldn't need the full course; but just sitting in the instruction area and looking at the videos and talking through different scenarios I just have a better awareness since doing that course of what's happening around me on the road.

**Mr BAILEY** - There is a pathway for that, and it goes to one of our submissions, which is embedding road safety within all workplace health and safety regimes. As part of that, every public or private corporation could then say, as part of your induction, you go through a remedial course for driving. That would be one way of doing it. There would obviously be a cost to everything, but not a direct cost to the licence holder in that case, so it might be a possibility.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - This is one of the other reasons why we think it is so important to have a whole-of-government approach to this because if we think about an initiative like that, there will be a cost. Any of the initiatives that we have spoken about this morning, there would be a cost too. What's not often taken into account is the cost of not doing it - to the health system, to the social welfare system. We need to think about these costs.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You just read out those costs earlier.

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Exactly.

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**Mr WILLIE** - We have got the Police Association coming and the impact to workers comp and all those other costs -

**Mr MUGNAIONI** - Scratching the surface. When we are thinking about these investments we need to think about them as investments, not as costs, because they do have a return. It might be a return that is not immediate or difficult to quantify or sits in a different department from where the investment is being made; but we do need to take that holistic view because otherwise it's very easy to find reasons not to make the investment.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. So do we have any pressing questions from anyone?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It was a very good submission.

**CHAIR** - It was an excellent submission and we really appreciate you taking the time to come in today as well. Thank you very much. We will stop the broadcast for a moment.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW**

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**Ms RACHAEL MATHESON**, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, **Mr PETER DIXON**, CCF MEMBER AND CHAIR OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TAS) WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming in. Today, all evidence taken at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. I remind you that any comments you make outside the hearings may not be afforded such privilege. There is a copy of the information for witnesses available if you haven't read it or if you're not aware of the process. The evidence you present is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee page of the website when it becomes available. We will ask you to give an overview to your submission and then we'll ask questions.

**Ms MATHESON** - The reason why we made a submission to this inquiry, specifically, is that the civil construction sector has over 2000 workers on roads in all regions across Tasmania daily. We've found it vital that we participate in this for the protection of those workers on our roads, given the amount of work that is in the infrastructure pipeline. Today, we're going to provide a bit of evidence around what some of their experiences are like on a daily basis and ways that we can work together to improve the safety of our workers on the roads. Did you want to add something, Peter, to that statement?

**Mr DIXON** - No.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard from the previous witnesses about a suggested increase from the \$70 million allocated for road maintenance to around \$100 million. You've supported that in your submission. Can you give me some idea of where you see that extra \$30 million should be put? Is it general maintenance or is it road-widening verges? Is there some sort of conversation that you've had with State Growth and government and the industry around where that extra maintenance should be put?

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes. As an industry we would like to see it upgrading our roads, especially the road shoulders, the barriers in parts of the state where it's really necessary, especially the west coast of Tasmania. There are some pretty detrimental corners that road users are subjected to. Improving those roads is better for all Tasmanians.

Our road workers are on the roads looking at those projects daily, so they can see where the maintenance is required. In our submission we have highlighted a few of those key points of where that money could additionally be spent to improve road maintenance.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I've been a strong advocate for many years for lay-bys, slow-moving vehicle turnouts, whatever you like to call them. They've also been called pull-off bays. I don't mind what terminology is used, I just wish there were some more, particularly in the areas that I represent.

Is that something that you get feedback from the people that work on the roads, that there are a lot of informal places on the sides of roads that people tend to pull over and let a faster moving vehicle go? Particularly people who are pulling caravans and that type of thing. They're so informal that you almost don't know they're there until you're on them, and then it can cause a bit of a safety hazard, trying to get around somebody that's pulled over. Is there any feedback from your organisations around that type of road maintenance, or infrastructure upgrade?

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**Ms MATHESON** - I've had one member recently speak to me about that, where they came across a road worker very quickly coming around a corner, so those slip lanes are dangerous to maintain. For a road user, it is really important to have those lanes to break off onto to let other cars come through. It comes down to the design and where they locate them through planning.

Some of these roads in our state, as we know, are on quite mountainous edges and so forth so there are limited spaces you can build roads, so they have to deal with what they've got at the best of times. We're predominantly advocating for when our guys are on those roads and maintaining those bays, specifically the protection of them when they're out putting their signs out. It's about teaching the road users how to look out for people on our roads that are working, and identifying the signs correctly and reading those signs correctly, so it's about education as well.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - My question is with regard to wire rope and the budget for wire rope. I notice that you mentioned allocation of between \$60-\$70 million for road maintenance, but you believe it should be increased to at least \$100 million. It has been raised with me that perhaps there's not enough money to make the wire ropes safe, and for the testing that needs to be done on an ongoing basis. Your contractors would do wire rope maintenance?

**Ms MATHESON** - They do maintenance and there have been some issues of late around the design of some of those and coming through and implementing them. That issue is with State Growth at the moment and we're having discussions around the actual design of those, to make sure that when they are implemented on the roads...

**CHAIR** - The design of the wire rope or the design -

**Ms MATHESON** - The implementation. There's a few issues around those at the moment, but we're tabling that directly with State Growth who is responsible for it if it does fail or there are faults with it.

**CHAIR** - With the maintenance budget that you have at the moment, you would do most of the wire rope maintenance?

**Ms MATHESON** - They would be sent out to do all maintenance, including that. They will have specific contractors that they would then need to bring in that would deal with wire rope maintenance.

**CHAIR** - How often would certain sections be done; would it be yearly? We were discussing earlier that there is an age for the tensile of the ...

**Ms MATHESON** - It would be all written into the contract when they have done the work, how long the life span of certain things are on projects in particular areas. I am not across the life span of that, I probably should be; but I am not in the weeds of the technicality of that. We can investigate that.

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**CHAIR** - I just wondered if you felt there was enough in the maintenance budget for the wire rope, or does that come as part of the shortfall? You have mentioned that it should be probably \$100 million as opposed to what it is now. I am wondering the areas that are actually missing out?

**Ms MATHESON** - It is more just the day-to-day maintenance of the pot holes and the road shoulders overall. The wire rope one would be a specific one and would probably fall back under the contract and the maintenance and the life span of it.

**Mr WILLIE** - You talked about your members experiencing abusive situations, being swerved at, violence - which points to a broader cultural problem with road users, does it not? Can you talk a bit about that?

**Ms MATHESON** - It does. We will ask Peter to speak on this. Peter works for Spectran, who is a member of the CCF, and is also the president of the Traffic Management Association of Australia (TMAA) where a lot of these complaints are filtered through to. He has had firsthand experience with his employees, so I will get him to speak to that directly.

**Mr DIXON** - Abuse received for traffic controllers is far from a rare occurrence. A lot of that is an unfortunate truth of the industry as it is. No one really goes to work to cop a mouth full at the side of the road, but unfortunately it does happen. Speaking to my employees, it happens a lot more than is reported properly, basically due to how frequent it is. I have an example of an incident that happened, part of three different ones from the same day. I will go over the others as they are relevant.

The crux of it was, in the middle of a site which was set up correctly and to the approved traffic management plan, there was a rear-end collision where a car only slightly nudged the car in front and really only damaged his own vehicle by hitting the toe ball of the car in front, lost his temper, pulled out, sped around the car, even though everything was stopped, and swore at the traffic controller for causing the crash - even though he was well within the advanced signage - and sped off. The traffic controller relayed that information through the radio, alerted the site and they shut down operations as they were not safe. That is something that happens very frequently. There is a bit of gap in what motorists expect when they get to roadworks. Some people are just impatient and don't want to know it. Some people are not aware they have past three signs saying prepare to stop and they go, Oh, that actually means I have to stop. Some people assume that signs have been left out, that they are there every day and they have never had to stop before. It is definitely something that happens all the time. Getting a bit of education out to the motorists would be very beneficial towards getting a safer environment for everyone, for daily bullying like that, and also your cyber side of it with social media. There are plenty of opportunities for people to raise their voice on social media and say "I had to wait for 10 minutes over here just because somebody hit someone in front of me and it is all the roadworks' fault".

**CHAIR** - Do they take registration numbers if they get abused?

**Ms MATHESON** - When it is possible. If it is particularly bad, if someone gets hurt or something is damaged then yes, it is all recorded. Usually when it is happening the vehicle in question is moving too quickly, the controller is more focused on getting themselves safe and where is he going to go, and getting the records of the vehicles is not as easy as it sounds.

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**CHAIR** - Are there cameras there because it is a bit like -

**Ms PALMER** - Smile, you're on camera. You see that in lots of shops, don't you?

**CHAIR** - A bit like parking attendants, they have body cameras. I know it is a bit difficult for everyone, so you wouldn't have a foreman or one person there with a body camera? Would something like that be worthwhile?

**Mr DIXON** - We've investigated that in the past. I believe there are privacy concerns in operating body cams on our traffic controllers. There are CCTV solutions employed on some sites but due to the remote nature of them, they're not as common as would be beneficial. The technology is there. It's not fully adopted everywhere yet.

**Mr WILLIE** - When somebody is hurt, how is that recorded and how many instances are we seeing of that occurring on our roads each year?

**Mr DIXON** - Injuries and personal loss; every company has a slightly different method for recording their own incidents. This is an example of a near miss form. It's recorded, date, time, location. In instances where people are hurt there is obviously a very thorough investigation on every site, whether or not WorkSafe needs to be notified, there are clear guidelines down as to when things need to be escalated to relevant authorities. Internal with Spectran that I work with, we do follow up on any personal injury for insurance purposes and to ensure that every possible control can be put into place to prevent a recurrence.

**Mr WILLIE** - Do you know roughly how many people have been hurt on our roads through their job being a traffic controller?

**Mr DIXON** - To my knowledge it is fairly rare for traffic controllers to become injured in the course of their duty. We do put a lot of controls in place to make sure that happens and there is a lot of luck and trust in the public to keep people safe at the same time. There are a lot of holes in the training regimes and other things that we do work around and we have a thorough plan of how everything is set out. So to keep everyone safe a lot of work goes into it.

I have been in the industry for about 10 years and to my knowledge in our business, we have had three injuries in that period. One can be linked directly to an impatient motorist not stopping and literally running over the foot of one of my controllers. The other was poor training where a controller got struck by a vehicle because instead of letting it go and reporting it downstream, he actually stepped in front, which was very unfortunate. That's just when they started so I don't know the details on that too well, and the third was -

**Ms RATTRAY** - We have had a death.

**Mr DIXON** - Yes, there was a death in 2014 up in Launceston, the details of that were released from the coroner. That was a case where pretty much every step of the process that could have been taken was slightly mismanaged by everyone. The driver behaviour and the nature of the works and everything. Nothing really worked on that site and it is a good case study of what not to do. I believe everyone in the industry has taken that and gone, 'Right, we need, as a whole, to get a bit better'. That was just after I started so I am aware of what happened but the way things were before I am not too clear to say.

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**Mr WILLIE** - And I guess my last question is would you like to see more road safety education about roadworks and what motorists should do in that situation.

**Ms MATHESON** - We definitely would and I brought this with me today which is the Toward Zero Action Plan the Government put out and there is nothing about workers on the road. There is a little bit about education in there but it's for people on the road to identify road conditions and so forth but there's no referencing of the Your Speed is Our Safety campaign in here at all or the 2000 workers that we have on our roads daily, which we think is a really big oversight. We would like to see that adjusted and our industry incorporated in this Zero plan because I think people working on our roads is equally as crucial for this Toward Zero Action Plan for government. We would like to see more education - not just for our industry itself but for people who are in grades 9 and 10, who are about to get their driver's licence - having them exposed to what it means to approach a driving site, what the signs mean. Just because there are no workers on the road and there's a sign out that says, go 40 kilometres per hour or 60 kilometres per hour, it doesn't mean they can go back to the normal speed limit. Those signs are there for a reason. It's identifying the sign that allows you to drive at the speed for the road condition as it is. There might still be loose gravel on the road, et cetera.

That's when we find that there are accidents, there are people abusing road workers because they don't understand the sign, so how do we educate people at a younger age as to what the signs mean for those sites? We educate them as to what it means to slow down if you see a kangaroo or a wombat through our signage and our books but there's nothing about the signage for road users. I think that could be something really important to our industry.

**Mr WILLIE** - How important is it for people to plan their trip and know they're going to come across roadworks? I would imagine some of the frustration is because they are not prepared.

**Ms MATHESON** - Thank you for saying that. As you know, one of Peter Gutwein's election commitments this year was to build a hi-vis army and part of that hi-vis army, one of the line items was for CCF to manage the Your Speed is Our Safety campaign for the next four years, with State Growth, the Traffic Management Association of Australia (TMAA) and the Road Safety Council of Tasmania, which will be linking in with them.

We've started to run some commercials but we're going to line the commercials up with the roadworks roundup that comes out every week and we're going to target commercials on the radio at peak periods, which tells you that there are works on the Bass Highway, specifically calling out the sites in those commercials on radio, so it becomes more in the ear. You'll be driving along and you'll know there are roadworks ahead and you can start preparing if you're listening to it on the radio.

That's one of the channels we're trying to really change, not just have a generic ad about Your Speed is Our Safety but actually tapping into the communities as to where the works are happening in all regions. You won't be in the car in Hobart hearing about a job up on the Bass Highway, you'll only hear it in that region as you're approaching it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about social media for prior warning?

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes, we're looking at different platforms.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Josh made a good point, knowing that it's going to be an extra 20 minutes the day before, not that morning or whatever.

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes, we're going to start using some of the different ways like TikTok and different platforms where advertising is becoming more and more, for those young kids before they get in the car. They've seen and know there are going to be some roadworks. We're trying to get into their heads a little bit more. We also think that by educating younger people who haven't even got their licence, if they're in the car with their parents they can identify signage to their parents and try to educate them if they're not aware or are getting frustrated.

**CHAIR** - My understanding from our last people giving evidence is that road workers will be included with emergency vehicles, the slow down. State Growth are now looking at the fact that, at the moment, it's slow down to 40 kilometres per hour from 110 kilometres per hour, which is obviously questionable that they'll be changing that and that road workers will be included as well as emergency workers, when people have to slow down when they see them. I think that's a good move in that direction that you've been talking about.

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes, that is great to know that is happening. We're starting to see more police presence as well on some of our government sites. They come and sit there and it's a bit of a deterrent for people approaching zones. I would like to see more of that as well, where possible.

**Ms PALMER** - My question was the same as Josh's question about what you want to see happen. After reading through your submission, I did have a note from a marketing perspective. The ad had a little girl saying, please keep my dad safe, but then the same wording was seen at actual road sites, so the emotional connection you had sitting at home seeing that ad on TV, you felt that again when that was reiterated. I thought that was a fantastic campaign. Sometimes you hear and you feel that way when you might see a beautifully done commercial but to have that reiterated when you're sitting there, I thought that was a really clever way of marketing.

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes, and more and more of our sites are starting to use those visual boards to put messaging up, which is great to see also. Education is probably the key issue around what it means to be a road worker and that is their office, this is their day to day job and they need to be safe. As a road user you need to look out for them and do the right thing.

**Ms PALMER** - And thank them as you drive past.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Peter, you did touch on this, people taking more care and obeying the signs that say 40 kilometres, even though there is nobody working on the site. I have experienced some criticism and experienced myself, where there are sections of road that have obviously been under maintenance and repair. It appears they have finished and I do not have the facts around that, but the signs stay up for weeks and weeks and that does build a level of frustration from drivers. Is there any way of your industry working with whoever is undertaking the works to have a timelier conclusion if that is possible so there is not that frustration?

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**Mr DIXON** - What we are looking at and the main reason is there is a bit of a gap between the understanding of what speed limits are appropriate for the sites, why they are in place and if they are supposed to stay in place. A lot of people like to set their signs up and leave them there for the duration. It is not really appropriate in this day and age, you need to have someone daily checking those signs, making sure they are still relevant to the road environment you are going through. One of the major issues we have overall, is people who leave signs out overnight which are no longer relevant.

For instance, the workman symbol, the red man with the shovel that everyone is familiar with, is only supposed to be onsite if you have a worker on the road. If you have ever driven past a site with a 40 sign and a workman symbol is out after the end of the day when there is no one there, it is very likely someone has just left that sign out, because this means roadworks. The education of those people conducting roadworks and the education of a lot of the drivers who go past is being skewed, whether they knew it meant workmen on site or it reinforces the wrong interpretation of that sign. It gets to a point where people drive past so many signs which are no longer relevant when they do drive past one that is relevant and that speed limit is there to keep the person safe, they go, 'I pass these every day on the way home and it just does not register anymore'.

**CHAIR** - You can get booked too.

**Mr DIXON** - You can. As soon as you pass that 40 sign there is a regulatory speed sign and the speed limit is changed for that stretch until you reach the next speed sign, which is another issue. People putting end of roadwork signs up do not always put the end up. There are a lot of sites which are set up incompletely or inappropriately, especially overnight which does lead to frustration where you end up driving for two or three kilometres asking when am I going back up to 50, 60 or 80 kilometres per hour? You either end up not or two kilometres later you speed up again, because you assume you have not passed anything and someone must have left the sign out.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How do we address that then?

**Ms MATHESON** - Currently, we are finding there is a significant lack of good quality trainers for traffic in the state. It is really hard at the moment especially, when there is a change to the new Austroads guide as there are a lot of issues where the training modules are not available, but the guide is out. People are being asked to implement the guide without the training, which should have been the other way around. It has caused a lot of frustration for the state.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Where does the responsibility lie there? Who is responsible for organising the training that goes with the new guide?

**Mr DIXON** - Yes, it is a national harmonised rule book -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I always have a bit of a problem with that national harmonisation.

**Mr DIXON** - Which was formally adopted by the Department of State Growth on 1 January this year. Word from State Growth is it is down to the individual companies to adopt it. The documents are freely available for people to receive and interpret and implement.

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**Ms MATHESON** - Which is over 700 pages and it is taking literally months for organisations to interpret, implement it and then there is no training available.

**Mr DIXON** - And without training, it being a harmonising document, the result is far from it as we are noticing the same discrepancies between sites the old Australian standard has had, which was far from perfect. Yes, lack of suitable training available and another thing we in the team are able to identify is the lack of enforcement. It is hard to enforce when people are not formally trained to do it correctly.

Use of incorrect signs, leaving the wrong signs up, putting wrong speed limits in - without enforcement. Under the old standard it was not frequently enforced and if something went wrong, you got the 'please explain' when you were in front of a magistrate of why weren't you following the standard. Whereas, the whole reason for adopting the Austroads guide was to enable proactive enforcement of compliance and not waiting for someone to die or be seriously injured before corrections start being made.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You just were not expecting a 700-page document without any training attached.

**Mr DIXON** - Yes, we were not expecting the lack of training which is outlined in the document itself.

**Ms MATHESON** - Currently RTOs are delivering training in a day which I and the industry does not think is sufficient enough to train someone to go and stand on a road and undertake a position in a high-risk environment. Some of that comes down to, obviously, there are a lot of people who want training. We get calls literally weekly from all organisations, not just our members wanting training.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Local government?

**Ms MATHESON** - Local government, private businesses for their on-site traffic requirements. We refer them to some of our members, but some of them want to do it internally. The new Austroads guide is deterring private companies from doing it, to having their own people on site with a traffic ticket and steering them more towards a traffic company.

There are issues with our contractors wanting to maintain that internally. Some of them have 75 staff that actually have tickets in traffic will, under the new guidelines and the new trainings rolled out, will not be able to do that; they will have to comply with the new Austroads guide. There are a lot of technical aspects which you will not go into, but what we see we need from the sector is better facilities to train and educate our people that want jobs in traffic.

At the moment, putting them straight out to a live site without any training is of no benefit to them. We need to be on a simulated site, having an area where we can go and train - whether that is housed within something like the TasTAFE facility where you can actually go and learn how to be on a controlled site before you are thrown out into a site.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But also if you make it so onerous that it puts people off, then you are not going to have enough people to actually be monitoring the sites.

**Ms MATHESON** - Exactly.

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**Mr DIXON** - At the moment anyone in this room, if you went to the right training provider and paid \$170 -

**Ms RATTRAY** - You could get it in a day.

**Mr DIXON** - - four hours later you could walk out with your traffic management ticket and go to work right on the Tasman Highway.

**Ms PALMER** - There's no level of, "All right, you can work at this standard of site' -

**Ms MATHESON** - Under the new Austroads -

**Mr DIXON** - Under Austroads those structures are in place, along with experience requirements. The framework for the -

**Ms MATHESON** - Which the training is not available for yet.

**Mr DIXON** - The training does not exist. The competencies have not been published, the qualifications systems are still a work in progress. The problem it was trying to solve is exactly the one I outlined where you can have someone with no physical experience working in construction, out in an extremely dangerous environment with four hours of training with no practical component. In some places - I think in Tasmania you have an 18 years old minimum but some places you can be 16, don't even have a driver's licence and up on the road and going to the cheapest training provider. It is an issue that has got a solution that is in a bit of a limbo where we have been waiting almost two years for this to get published and we are still waiting.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And Tasmania has signed up and should have had this process implemented in January 2021?

**Ms MATHESON** - It has been implemented but the training that supports it isn't.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But they have signed up to say that they were going to be compliant with the Austroads' Guide to Road Safety but there's no training in place?

**CHAIR** - There's obviously a cost to the training as well, a substantial cost?

**Ms MATHESON** - Yes, that's what Peter and I were discussing earlier that people are still undertaking the other course. They could be doing a course today and in three months' time once the new training is in place, they will have to retrain so it has become a cost to businesses especially because their tickets expire every three years.

**Mr DIXON** - Under normal operations there's a requirement to refresh your implement traffic management plan ticket every three years, just so that if there are any changes to legislation you can be up to date with that. Interpretations of things change so there is normally that requirement. It has been put on hold for the time being mainly because the refresher training is to the old competency so it wouldn't be relevant anyway.

**CHAIR** - You would still have to do the new one.

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**Mr DIXON** - You definitely have to do the new one and with the amount of stuff that is in there. I know most larger traffic-focused companies, the larger civil contractors as well have developed their own in-house training which bridges the gap somewhat. However, it does introduce an unregulated education across all the different companies with slightly different interpretations of what's required.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is there any recognised prior learning for those people who have already been in that role and have some level of understanding of what's required under the new Austroads' Guide?

**Mr DIXON** - Yes, so there is a set framework in Austroads as far as taking prior experience goes, moving forwards whether you are working on small roads, mid-sized roads or high-volume roads. State Growth has set a transitional period in there for people who do complete the current course so if you do the refresh to the old competency this year, when the new training is out there is going to be a longer grace period, for lack of a better term, before you have to retrain. You are still going to be looking at a lot of people lined up waiting when it does come out.

**Ms MATHESON** - And that's what it comes down to. We need to ensure that we have trainers in place to deliver good quality training, proper facilities that can deliver the training in non-live sites.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Because you can't train on the Tasman Highway, can you?

**Ms MATHESON** - We prefer not to, especially if you are a first timer and at the moment I think you just go out into the car park and practice or in a yard. It would be great if we had that as part of our biggest registered training organisations (RTOs) in the state, TasTAFE, to have a proper facility for delivery and training considering infrastructure. It is one of our biggest priorities.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Has the industry contacted TasTAFE?

**Ms MATHESON** - We are working with them at the moment. We are working with a few RTOs on what the future looks like for training in Tasmania. Traffic is just one of many of the key competencies that we need to improve on. Plant is another one so we have a lot of training requirements and needs where we don't have facilities in this state to undertake training.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And so has the lack of access to training through TasTAFE been an issue to date?

**Ms MATHESON** - I think it's more the lack of trainers. The training courses can be put on as is through many RTOs. It is about the trainers and the ones that are decent out there are fully booked and months of waiting and when we have people wanting people on board to deliver projects there is a huge delay.

**CHAIR** - We need more skilled trainers.

**Ms MATHESON** - Definitely and that's across the sector.

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**Mr WILLIE** - Are there any more in the private sector doing traffic control rather than teaching?

**Ms MATHESON** - That would be relevant. I think that goes with a lot of our skill sets of trainers. They wouldn't cross over to train because of the salary that would come with that. So how do we entice people who have those great skills to come across and be trainers and deliver the next generation? That is something we are working on under our high-vis army project. We also need to have a focus on compliance on traffic management on sites as well, more audits happening across projects specifically on traffic management to collect data and show how we can improve.

**CHAIR** - Under the new guidelines does it look at teaching the workers how to deal with difficult drivers? Does it have that psychological component in it to actually assist when some of them do have these problems with certain drivers who give them grief?

**Mr DIXON** - There is guidance in there to that effect. There are a lot of fitness to work components to it as well. Unfortunately, it's something that's not going to go away no matter how close we get. We make sure that the people we send out to any particular site have the fortitude to deal with the kind of traffic that they will have. If you are working on a site that interrupts peak hour, which we try to avoid at all costs but some sites do, then you are going to end up with more aggressive people who want to get to work. That's when you send someone who is more accustomed to that. The guide itself doesn't specify any kind of psychological testing.

**CHAIR** - I thought it might have actually had some component that assisted, that taught people skills to deal with that.

**Mr DIXON** - The guide itself is in 10 parts; parts 6 and 7 are relevant to field staff and people conducting stop/slow and there are components in there that would assist in providing guidance to traffic controllers and people working on the road to deal with that sort of thing.

**CHAIR** - Do you have both genders? Do you have females because I know in many industries they that the females are much more able to deal with difficult male drivers, that they don't necessarily attack the female as they would the male?

**Ms MATHESON** - I don't know what the percentage is but we do have females. Probably out of all the civil occupations, the traffic component would have a bigger uptake of females employed in that. Of course we'd like to see more women in those roles but we have had some examples and one a couple of years ago at New Norfolk I think it was, she was part of our Your Speed is Our Safety campaign launch two years ago and she stood there and spoke of her story. It was a near miss, the car came at her and it was quite frightening for her. She is still in the industry and she hasn't walked away from it but anyone who is confronted by that would walk away.

**CHAIR** - Very frightening.

**Ms MATHESON** - Very frightening so yes, females because it is a lot of shift work, they can work around their families. It could see more women taking up roles in this industry but again it comes down to the person wanting to put themselves in an environment like that, especially if they have a family to go home to at night.

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**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do we have any more questions? No, if we don't. We really appreciate you putting in a submission and also coming to speak to us today. It is very worthwhile to hear from you, different areas, get questions apart from submissions so thank you very much for coming in, and at that we will stop the broadcast.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Mr DION LESTER**, CEO AND ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER, AND **Mr MICHAEL EDRICH**, SENIOR POLICY OFFICER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome. Thank you very much for coming along today and for your submission. It is a public hearing and all evidence at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege while you are within these rooms. Anything you say outside the rooms may not have the same parliamentary privilege. A copy of information for witnesses is available if you're not familiar or if you'd like to have a look at it. The evidence you present is being recorded and will be taken by *Hansard* and published on the committee website when it becomes available. We will ask you to speak to your submission and members will ask questions.

**Ms LESTER** - Thank you for hearing me. I am Dion Lester, CEO of the Local Government Association and I have Michael Edrich, who is our Senior Policy Officer, who deals with all matters infrastructure and road-related.

You will have heard submissions to this effect earlier on today and through the written submissions, there's no doubt that we've had really strong improvements in road safety and road safety outcomes over the past decades. I think we have all noticed that the data now indicates that we've seen some of those improvements really start to tail off in recent years.

I don't think that's through any lack of effort from various levels of government but we are really at a point now with this policy challenge is that it's getting more complex to deal with it. It's kind of like a law of diminishing returns to this point. We need to be more sophisticated in how we deal with the complexity associated with continuing the necessary improvements in road safety.

As far as we're concerned, and the local government sector is concerned, there are a couple of key aspects to that. One of those is the nature and type of funding. That goes across a couple of spheres, both how our sector is funded - and we go to the detail of that in our submission and I won't repeat it now - and the funding sources, what funding sources we have access to and also what funding sources are available to expand on or look at matters such as hypothecation of speeding fine revenue and those sorts of things. It's both the nature of existing funding sources but also then future funding sources.

The other really critical one, given that our sector is responsible for in excess of 80 per cent of the road network is really looking at how we collaborate across levels of government. We've got a broad range of stakeholders and road managers but it is fair to say that it is difficult for us to source and keep expertise in road safety. It is how those two levels of government, both ourselves and state, work together around this policy challenge.

I will probably leave it there, unless Michael has anything to add, or take any questions.

**Mr EDRICH** - I think that is good.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can we start with heavy vehicle motor tax? The revenue from that is less than half of what it was in 1996, even though heavy vehicle road access has increased dramatically over this time. It is important, because the heavy vehicle industry feel like they well and truly pay their way.

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**Mr LESTER** - Certainly. We're not suggesting in our submission that there be any change to the taxation collected, but it's probably about the distribution. It is probably better described as a user charge, because that is effectively what motor vehicle registrations and taxes are, is they are a user charge. We have a situation where the local government component of that has been fixed. It is collected on a road usage basis, but it is not distributed, because the revenue from that tax has increased in the order of double, in fact, since the mid-90s. Therefore, the road usage has doubled. As I indicated earlier, that road usage does include a significant portion of local government roads.

There is this concept called the first and last mile. So, all heavy vehicles generally have to start and finish on a local government road. Yes, they use the Bass and the Midlands and these other highways, but they have to start somewhere and that is generally a road maintained by local government. And they have got to finish somewhere - generally a road maintained by local government, almost exclusively in fact.

But we have a situation where the local government component of that usage charge has been fixed at \$1.5 million, despite that fact that the usage is increased. Our sector believes with increased use, therefore increased impact on our road network, then we should see a fixed component of that revenue as it goes up and the local government component should go up.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How is that arrangement arrived at? Do you know any history?

**Mr EDRICH** - We don't have the history. It was over 25 years ago.

**Mr LESTER** - What we can say is that \$1.5 million is distributed on the basis of a usage as well. The State Grants Commission distributes that \$1.5 million across councils and they use the freight survey to distribute that. As far as how it is distributed amongst our sector, it is based on heavy vehicle road usage.

**Mr EDRICH** - It's still described to this day as compensation for the loss of local road tolls. Local councils used to be able to charge tolls for heavy vehicles on local roads. That power was removed to replace it with other road user charges including this, and \$1.5 million was agreed to at that time but never indexed and never changed.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They set the rate 25 years ago at \$1.5 million. That was a good deal for government.

**Mr LESTER** - Depends which government you're talking about.

**Ms RATTRAY** - For the government of the day.

**Mr LESTER** - Not local government.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No. For state government, it was a good deal.

**Mr LESTER** - What you find that situation unfortunately creates, is that the councils either have to subsidise those road works from their existing revenue sources, so it is spread across their existing ratepayers, or they have to de-prioritise those works.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Or get some input from the federal or state government, which they do as well, in all fairness.

**Mr LESTER** - From a variety of other funding sources that are derived from different road users.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or do a swap? They have done that as well, haven't they? A local government will be part of the upgrade, and then there will be a transfer of ownership and responsibility after that.

**Mr LESTER** - It happens. What we are talking about here with this segment of the road network is those that connect to the existing state road network. It is relatively rare for this, because this is when the heavy vehicles are picking up a load of sheep, for example - they are generally very localised areas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They did that with the Waterhouse Road - did the upgrade and then they transferred it back to local government. That connects to the George Town Road, Bell Bay Road. What is a fair figure? Has somebody done the numbers?

**Mr EDRICH** - We would argue for the methodology that the State Grants Commission uses. They look into the Tasmanian Freight Survey, which tracks freight movements across Tasmania and is an indication of the heavy vehicle usage on the road network. That is the methodology the State Grants Commission uses to distribute that \$1.5 million amongst 29 councils and their road management functions. Including the state government collections in that would distribute roughly 7.5 to 8 per cent of that to local councils. We'd have to look into the figures. We think the figures are around \$80 million for the heavy vehicle motor tax, so 8 per cent of that is around \$7- to \$7.5 million.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Have there been any discussions about this particular matter? This wouldn't be the first time it's been raised.

**Mr EDRICH** - We certainly raised it with the government and, currently, there isn't an appetite to change the methodology.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I wonder why.

**CHAIR** - I have a question regarding black spot funding and councils working together. Page 3 of your submission says that we need a better understanding of crash causes and how to treat them, and that councils report that the availability and usefulness of relevant crash data has diminished over recent years. I am assuming they use the crash data to apply for the black spot funding. How are they going about it now, with the black spot funding?

I know that has often been an issue. I've been a member of the Launceston Council and I can recall having many discussions that, sometimes, I think the data was skewed and sometimes the crash data wasn't looked into thoroughly as to whether it was a crash. On occasion, it might have been seen as a death but it might have been someone who had a medical incident and crashed their car and those reasons behind it.

Can you advise me with regard to the black spot funding, and the vulnerable road user and the safer roads, those that we get the funding from the Commonwealth and the Tasmanian

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government for? How are the councils looking at it now, if they're not getting the relevant crash data?

**Mr LESTER** - There are a couple of issues with that. The challenge with those funding sources is they're normally very site-specific. Our sector supports the safe systems approach; you need to look at the road as a system from length to length and corridors. Arguably, we've exhausted the opportunity associated with spot funding rounds. The other challenge with those funding sources is they normally come with a short time frame for applying and a short time frame for then delivering on the funds. I'm sure you heard earlier today about the challenges in the construction industry as far as work force and capacity and it is no different with our -

**CHAIR** - And training, as well.

**Mr LESTER** - Exactly. It's no different in our sector. We have challenges associated with understanding where we need, now, where the further of application of funding can occur. That's at a council level. We've got a short time frame to apply for the grants and we have to build them in what is mostly unreasonably short time frame.

**CHAIR** - So, the people simply aren't there to tender. The capacity is not there to do it in that time frame. Is that an issue as well?

**Mr LESTER** - Absolutely. What we're seeing, particularly with Commonwealth funding rounds, is they still have the same expectations around delivery of projects as they did four or five years ago. The construction environment at the moment is drastically different to what it was in that period of time. It is routine for councils to be seeking extensions.

**CHAIR** - Do they readily extend? Is there a problem with that? Will they extend once or twice?

**Mr LESTER** - It's often at the whim of the particular funding organisation or those in charge of it and why they're trying to get the money out the door. You'll often see money funnelled into black spot programs and vulnerable user programs from a Commonwealth government, in part around road safety and in part around economic stimulus. Certainly, when it's got an economic stimulus component to it, higher levels of government are reticent to extend that because they want to see the money applied.

**CHAIR** - They want it spent in that time frame.

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, notwithstanding the fact that it is really hard to spend money on construction projects in this state at the moment. The capacity is not there in the design realm. Starting right back at the design phase, the engineering consultant and those specialist firms are generally very busy and struggling to get professional staff. If you have the design result, actually trying to get construction tenders and sometimes the scale of these projects as such, they are quite small. Most firms in Tasmania have got plenty of work on big jobs.

**CHAIR** - Why do you think there is a shortage of the staff? I know we have got building in housing, but when you are looking at roads and infrastructure, is it because a lot of workers come down from the mainland and they cannot with COVID-19?

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**Mr LESTER** - There is significant infrastructure spend nationally. Where, historically, Tasmania could have drawn on mainland resources, there is enough work on the mainland with those firms.

**CHAIR** - They do not need to come?

**Mr LESTER** - Exactly right. Those firms that do not have an existing footprint down here are unlikely to come down here again. A construction firm would prefer to work on three \$40 million jobs rather than \$121 million jobs, to use the two extremes. Tasmania does suffer from that a little bit. State Government is spending significantly on infrastructure works, so when you go to a level of councils and the scale they need to undertake their work on, it is a lot harder. One of the important things with road safety is we need to look at the system, at the entire length of road and at a strategic investment in that system of that road which is quite a different change from looking at you will apply for a Black Spot Program and your council will and rather than looking at a whole of road length system.

**Mr EDRICH** - That is right. These small projects complete with the bigger projects and the bigger projects win.

**CHAIR** - They go for longer and employ more people. It is ongoing rather than short term.

**Mr EDRICH** - That is right. Our members would like to see the funding moved from project by project to starting to look at road network safety plans. How do we implement and achieve those road safety goals across the whole network, rather than each funding around?

**CHAIR** - A council and councils being a little adhoc.

**Mr EDRICH** - The state working together with councils as a network of road safety road managers to develop their road safety plans, to share their expertise and learnings and to invest at that planning phase so they can get a multiyear look to move things from the tactical to the strategic view.

**CHAIR** - Would there be any councils that have road workers now of their own doing infrastructure?

**Mr LESTER** - There are, I could not tell you how many.

**CHAIR** - They all seem to have downsized their workforce on roadwork.

**Mr LESTER** - Certainly more on the road maintenance rather than capital upgrade is where the councils retain staff, but there are some councils have crews that do the maintenance, but also the smaller jobs. It is a mixture, I could not say offhand how many.

**CHAIR** - That is fine, but some still do?

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, they do. One of the key things to consider with this is you often see with these grant funding rounds that are project by project, that it is competitive. That is fine if we are talking about road upgrades for other means other than road safety, but really road safety should be based on need. Therefore, we need to understand where the greatest need is

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for road safety and we need to apply the funding in that targeted and strategic sense rather than this council competing against that council for the same funding.

**CHAIR** - For the same funding. With black spot funding there is certain amount of money per year for all councils to apply or is it on need so if you have that many deaths, serious injuries or many crashes then you actually can get it regardless or is there one pool of money the councils all have, basically who gets it first, others miss out. How does the black spot funding work?

**Mr LESTER** - My understanding is it is the latter. It is a fixed funding pool based on a competitive application process. Arguably, the assessment process should base that on need, but that assumes those councils in those areas that need it have got the internal capacity and the resources to apply in the first place. Often what you find is rural regional councils can be disadvantaged by the fact they cannot attract and retain the staff to do the work to compete against a more sophisticated urban council. This is an issue where Tasmania is competing nationally and so, it is quite challenging.

**CHAIR** - Tasmania is competing with other states, but the poorly is nationwide as opposed to so much for Tasmania.

**Mr EDRICH** - There is a limited amount for Tasmania from year to year, and each council has to compete with other councils for that money.

They do have to demonstrate need and each one is assessed on a very rigorous methodology, which is great. The problem is it is not a network approach. It is really a project by project approach and they are compared and competed against.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The Grants Commission are very difficult as you have to go and sell your argument.

**Mr EDRICH** - With black spots, it does not go through the State Grants Commission. It is administered by the Department of State Growth. There are panel members including a federal minister who sits on that and LGAT also sits on that panel, in looking at those.

The panel has little really to add, other than to review the methodology. The methodology is so robust that no changes are generally made. It is really just affirming what the projects are and why and which project is also missed out.

**CHAIR** - And the timeframe.

**Mr EDRICH** - That is right.

**CHAIR** - The Grants Commission only do the big lump of funding that councils are provided.

**Mr LESTER** - The \$1.5 million from the heavy vehicles is distributed based on the methodology for the State Grants Commission. There is no competitive grant or competitive application process for that. It is distributed the same as what financial assistance grants and others are. The same process in that the State Grant determines the methodology for how it is distributed.

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**Mr WILLIE** - We have talked a lot about infrastructure upgrades and some of the submissions talk about the economics of upgrading rural roads that might not have a lot of traffic.

Have you got a view on setting speed limits and how does that work with local government and the state government, in setting speed limits for some of the roads managed by a local government?

**Mr LESTER** - Certainly, we know speed and speed limits are a critical road safety tool. It is something that, at the moment, it is a mixture between who sets it. The Transport Commissioner ultimately decides on speed limit changes, but it is a state government function.

**Mr WILLIE** - Do the local councils have input into those decisions on the roads they manage?

**Mr EDRICH** - My understanding is, they can propose changes. They can bring them to the transport commissioner. I think community members can make representations or submissions and proposals. But local councils do not control speed.

Certainly, from talking to road managers are generally agnostic about speed limits, other than the technical information is pretty clear that reducing speeds have road safety benefit without a doubt.

It is where you strategically apply those on your road network and how you do that to deliver transport efficiently and achieve your road safety goals. Our goal is for zero.

**Mr WILLIE** - We heard from the RACT this morning and I do not want to verbal them, because I cannot remember absolutely correctly, but their view was speed limits was not a replacement for infrastructure upgrades, but the conditions of roads may warrant changes in speeds. I am interested how the council makes representation to the state government that the condition of the road may warrant a speed change and potentially, that road might be upgraded in three or four-years' time.

**Mr LESTER** - This question goes to one of capacity and the ability for councils, or the difficulty and challenge for councils in having that skills and experience in assessing their road network, to look at that. Speed is one of a number of tools and the RACT are right in the sense, to get all roads in Tasmania to a sufficient safe standard would cost literally billions of dollars. You need to look at what other tools you have available.

In some instances that might be a speed reduction. The problem is that, as a sector we have difficulty in undertaking that assessment to be able to determine. That is where the collaborative aspect of our argument, if you like, or submission comes into it, is to how we can work as a level of government with the state around looking at our network and what is appropriate in different spots.

In some cases, it will be infrastructure upgrades, and in some cases, it will be speed reduction and some cases it will be a combination of both.

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At the moment, in many cases, we do not know what we do not know. We do not have the skills in the sector broadly to undertake that assessment.

**CHAIR** - You can't measure what you don't know.

**Mr WILLIE** - Something else I picked up in your submission, which is quite alarming, is the diminishing data available. You're managing over 80 per cent of the road network and you don't have information on causes of crashes and those sorts of things unless you specifically request it. You've got an open data policy, I imagine; why has that diminished and what reason is the state government giving for not producing that data on a readily available, needs basis?

**Mr EDRICH** - Yes, good question. I'm not exactly sure why it has diminished but certainly other states do have an open data policy around road safety data and it's very helpful. You can go and see problematic crash sites; in some areas you can click on particular crashes and understand that crash without any sensitive data being shared.

We think an open data approach like that would help road managers access that and be able to bring their arguments around road funding better, so we would love to see improved data accessibility. Beyond that, it's not merely the data but also how it's analysed. We would like to see better collaboration between road managers, between local and state road managers and between Tasmanian police, as to the reasons for a crash or the reasons for a cluster of crashes and what might be done about it.

**Mr WILLIE** - When you say it has been diminished, what specifically has been diminished?

**Mr EDRICH** - I would have to speak to our road managers, but my understanding is it was a lot easier to access that data but now it's through specific requests, which just add time to an already stretched work load. It's just a larger barrier along the way. It's just not a lean way of getting that information to the road managers when they need it.

**Mr WILLIE** - You would like to see the state government being more open with that data?

**Mr EDRICH** - Yes.

**Mr WILLIE** - For all Tasmanians, not just local road managers. If you're going to address the problem, you have to be transparent about it. It's like crime statistics or anything like that, that has been discussed lately.

**Mr LESTER** - The critical aspect to the pivot, if you like, from a single project, more tactical funding - step one, let's sit in a room and look at the data sets; step two, let's work out a plan for the relevant corridors or road lengths collaboratively; and step three, apply the funding.

That collaboration around the data, but also understanding it, interpreting it, what it means for the local areas and then planning what can be done about those statistics, can then inform a future more strategic and targeted funding approach.

## PUBLIC

**Ms PALMER** - My question was around the diminishing data as well, so that's fine. That has been answered. Thank you.

**Mr EDRICH** - I will add, we do understand the privacy concerns and, with low numbers of crashes, being able to attribute some data to a particular crash may not be in the interests of privacy concerns. Wherever those issues can be resolved, other data should be able to be made open and shared; but we understand that there's some work behind that.

**CHAIR** - Bastian, did you have a question?

**Dr SEIDEL** - No.

**CHAIR** - Ms Rattray.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'm interested in exploring growing specialist skills. You touched on it, about not having enough resources, particularly the smaller and medium councils and local government areas. As a peak body, what discussions do you have?

I know councils share resources; is that another area that might benefit from resource sharing; if somebody has a particular skill in a larger council that they can share out to others, such as that skilled engineering and civil design staff and then the road management and safety professionals?

**Mr LESTER** - We've done work over the last couple of years around a couple of critical workforce shortages for our sector, particularly environmental health officers. We've just completed some work around those involved in health and wellbeing and community development -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, building surveyors.

**Mr LESTER** - Yes. Planners and building surveyors and engineering staff, alongside environmental health officers, is a critical shortage for our sector in Tasmania but also nationally. The issues we're facing around this work force in Tasmania are no different elsewhere.

Resource sharing can work if that resource has the capacity to be shared, and that's one of the challenges we have at the moment. If we take engineering staff, development engineers in councils, it's impossible for the City of Hobart to share one or a number of their development engineers because they are working at capacity, in fact, beyond capacity for the City of Hobart.

There's no doubt it's a significant challenge for our sector. I don't have any off-the-shelf solutions at this point in time. Certainly, where we can collaborate with our friends in state government around these matters, it does help. With road safety matters, we're talking about, in some cases, quite technical or bespoke skills. An individual council couldn't sustain the workload to have a professional in road safety but someone who sits within the state government who can work with councils at various times, and groups of councils, is a more useful solution in this case, for the resource challenges of our sector.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are those discussions bearing any fruit, or is it just an idea and it hasn't had any traction as yet, about having that person in State Growth who would liaise?

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**Mr LESTER** - At this point, we haven't explored it fully with the state government.

**Mr EDRICH** - Our submission shows that opportunity.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You want the committee to start the discussions. Please don't wait for the committee. The committee may well recommend that's a good idea, but it might not happen overnight. I'd like to explore the experienced road management and safety professionals. Who are they? What role do they perform?

**Mr LESTER** - We're talking one and the same thing. In councils, you see people who are road managers and that's a generic or broad-based skill set. When we're talking about interpreting the sort of data associated with infrastructure upgrades alongside any changes to the speed environment -

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's your director of infrastructure, that type of role.

**Mr LESTER** - Exactly - that deals with the entire portfolio of infrastructure, all matters of roads; as opposed to some of the specific skills which, as I touched on recently, is something that might be needed by councils on an occasional rather than daily basis. Generalist versus specialist, really, is the key.

**CHAIR** - Back to the skill shortage; are we training less people through university courses and TAFE courses? Why the shortage? Is it that normally, without COVID-19, we're getting overseas workers coming in? You said that it was a nationwide shortage. Generally, do we get people coming European countries? Is that where our shortage is or are we training less in our universities and TAFE? Should we have more courses, if that's the case?

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, it's nuanced to the skills shortage in the professional area. For example, environmental health officers in Tasmania - we haven't trained enough of them. We haven't attracted enough people to the work force. With engineering, it's difficult for councils -

**CHAIR** - Does it pay enough?

**Mr LESTER** - With engineering, it's difficult because with significant infrastructure development occurring internationally, nationally and locally, it's difficult for government in general to attract engineers to the work force because they can't pay the same level of salary. The work force challenges are across different professions; what's causing them is different.

With planners, it's actually a bit from both. It's a bit from column 'a' and a bit from column 'b', as far as we're not putting enough people through the courses, but they're also getting poached by industries. Take planners, for example. Graduates go into local government, they do five years of great work for local government and then they get offered \$50 000 more to work for a consulting firm. That's really challenging for our sector.

**CHAIR** - Happens all the time, doesn't it?

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, and it happens with state government as well unfortunately. So it is quite nuanced depending on the profession as to what the issue is.

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**CHAIR** - Shortage of teachers as well because we are looking, and I know we have TAFE legislation coming up, I have been talking to a lot of tradies who say, 'why would you teach for this much when I can earn this much as a tradie'? When it comes to the courses are we having trouble finding people to teach these courses?

**Mr LESTER** -I don't know.

**Mr EDRICH** - You would have to speak to the training organisations but that sounds like it would fit.

**CHAIR** - It all would go together.

**Mr EDRICH** - Yes. There is a supply side but I think it is very much the demand for engineers nationwide and, as you say, internationally. With record infrastructure spends it's just very difficult -

**CHAIR** - To attract them.

**Mr EDRICH** - That's it and to compete and to retain.

**Ms PALMER** - I wouldn't mind hearing a bit more about your thoughts on driver behaviour. It's something that we have talked to pretty much everyone about because you can't legislate for people to be good and kind and unselfish on the roads. I notice that you have information in here about working perhaps more in schools and at secondary schools and years 11 and 12. Do you think that needs to be the main focus? What are your thoughts on how we can change that cultural behaviour on our roads?

**Mr LESTER** -Driver behaviour is important and the activities of the Government and Road Safety Advisory Council are already targeting at-risk groups, working with local football clubs about educating and those sorts of things, so that work is very good. What we have to be careful of is not making driver behaviour the sole focus because people make mistakes. They're called accidents for a reason. That's where having a safe system can forgive both lack of attention but it can also forgive bad behaviour. Where you have driver behaviour as an issue, if the system is safe then they should be less likely to do damage to themselves or someone else. It is a combination of that education, the punitive side of things and ensuring you are still investing in that but also ensuring that you are investing in the safe system. It is more forgiving of that behaviour and things such as the upcoming investment in speed cameras and mobile phone technology are really excellent activities to try to address some of the poor driver behaviour.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is interesting that the RACT refers to anything that happens on the road as a crash. They don't call it an accident. There's no such thing as an accident anymore. I am not terribly in support of their terminology but somebody else has decided that. I am interested in your last leadership and networks of road management and you say:

To achieve sustained improvements in road safety requires a Tasmanian government to provide effective leadership and foster collaboration between state and local government across the entire Tasmanian network.

## PUBLIC

This report that the committee will produce will go to the Government so where do we put our focus there? Where do they start?

**Mr LESTER** - This goes to the challenge room. Wouldn't it be great if we could have the appropriate number of road managers and road safety experts, and we had hundreds of millions of dollars to spend? We don't but we have resources within state and local government that we believe could be used more effectively to address this challenge. It does require the state government to reach out to to engage with our council, the relevant people within local government in addressing the challenges both at a local level and a regional level.

I understand that there are resource challenges also within the state government. We have a workforce within local government who can, and would be willing to, work with the state government about investigating where the challenges are and how the existing or hopefully increasing resources - particularly we are talking about hypothecation of speeding fine revenue and the heavy vehicle motor tax - could be most effectively applied. It goes to that data and collaboration first, planning together and then strategic investment.

**Ms RATTRAY** - By that, the first point of contact for local government could be that one person in a role that is the conduit, if you like, between the Government and LGAT. That could be a starting point.

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, and we've seen this model applied effectively in other policy areas within the state. It's a really strong collaboration between our sector and the state government, each recognising the limitations with each level of government but, effectively accepting that this is what we have from a resource perspective, these are the challenges so how can we most effectively work together? Rather than it being a case of, not tribalism, but certainly not a case of, 'this is our responsibility, that's a state road, that's ours, that's yours'.

If our road network has two levels of government we need to work together to do it. It's difficult for that leadership to come from our sector up towards the state government because the state government has the leaders and they have the funding sources, ultimately. That's effectively what we're getting at with that.

**Mr EDRICH** - The heart of that part is that we have seen that successful model with the heavy vehicle access team in the Department of State Growth, where they've effectively implemented a nation-leading program of heavy vehicle access. If you have the heavy vehicle industry as one of your interviewees, that would be a great one to bring up because the Department of State Growth has engaged local government closely and effectively implemented what is a single road network to the heavy vehicle industry. That's how it presents, at least.

So, instead of having boundaries where, yes, you've got access to this state road but not this council road, the Department of State Growth has been able to work together collaboratively to present to the end user as a single road network. When you think about it, when we go out and drive, we don't pay attention to whether we're on a state road or a local road. It doesn't really matter to us. It is a single road network to us. An increasingly sophisticated approach to road management is bringing road managers together to start thinking about how we develop that experience for the end user. I think that can be applied to road safety.

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**CHAIR** - While we're talking about fostering collaboration, how do you go about getting councils, particularly joining councils, to work together? I am aware of some councils that may have approved a subdivision of several hundred houses but the vehicles from that subdivision are then going down onto the adjoining council's roads, often contributing to creating a black spot.

How do you, as LGAT, get them to work together so that they don't work in silos? That they appreciate the fact that, okay, you're going to get all the rates from those hundreds of houses but, if we're looking at 10 movements per day from each of those properties, they are crossing your boundary and then they're going onto this other council's roads? They're not getting any of the money from those houses, yet they're getting all the damage from the cars and infrastructure, which makes it more dangerous and creates black spots. How do you get them to work together?

**Mr LESTER** - One of the challenges associated with that, particularly in a planning environment, is the boundary within which a council can approve or not approve a development. Traffic impact assessments, which is normally how you would understand that, therefore any conditions associated with that can only be within the sphere of the planning scheme. It comes down to the boundary of the planning scheme. That is one of the challenges associated with those developments that are on a boundary.

**CHAIR** - I've come across quite a few where I have discovered issues which have been raised. One council doesn't work with the other council, they just get their subdivision up. From your perspective, is there some way you're trying to get them to work together?

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, the legislative environment makes it difficult. If there are specific matters between two adjoining councils then, as the peak body, we try to stay agnostic on those matters for obvious reasons, because all councils are our members. In many cases, I think, where that situation is -

**CHAIR** - The collaboration would be good in these cases.

**Mr LESTER** - Absolutely. As I indicated, one of the limitations to collaboration is what you can do in a purely legislative sense. All our statutes, and particularly planning schemes, work on the boundary of the municipality so it becomes then difficult, and when not difficult impossible, to impact on what happens around adjacent -

**CHAIR** - I guess it's all more evidence for fewer councils and for amalgamation.

**Mr LESTER** - I'm not sure that's the case but more evidence around a closer look at our planning system rather than -

**Mr ELDRICH** - If I could add to that, my experience with local government professionals is overwhelmingly that they are very keen to engage and collaborate across the sector and to share their knowledge. They certainly are very willing to collaborate but it's normally structural and governance and legislative issues that stand in the way of that. The planning system, I think, is the best example of that, where really the planning scheme defines the boundary and that is where they're restricted to making their decisions under. So, really if they step beyond that, they can be appealed for whatever reason and -

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**CHAIR** - Avenues for funding, I guess, are very difficult whereby you have a devolvement in one council and then the traffic created probably needs a roundabout or something similar and the funding for that. Is there an avenue for that?

**Mr LESTER** - Yes, the funding is different in the sense that if you're applying for funding, you will base it on the demand or the impact -

**CHAIR** - Irrespective of where it comes from?

**Mr LESTER** - Exactly right. So, your assessment will say, 'This roundabout has this demand or impact or needs this upgrade.' And the funding source typically wouldn't take into account or bother itself with whether they were coming from adjacent municipalities or otherwise.

**CHAIR** - Sometimes a development can cause the need in another council, obviously, and then the other council has to try to find the funding to make the roads safer but they're not getting the rates from those 100 or more properties. I wondered how you worked with that.

Do we have any other questions? Do you have anything you'd like to add or anything that you think we haven't asked that you'd like to mention?

**Mr EDRICH** - I could just add to that last statement: a good system of infrastructure contributions can help with those impacts beyond a development site and so, implementing a better contribution system can help do that. If well designed it could potentially resolve some of those issues where it goes beyond a council boundary as well.

**CHAIR** - That's good because otherwise they can become black spots and then all of a sudden, the funding's needed because more and more traffic is coming on. That's just something that's going to happen with the builds that we have and the infrastructure, if it's ongoing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - One solution is amalgamation.

**CHAIR** - We did mention that earlier but that's all right. That's a discussion for other people.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I wasn't expecting you to, Dion. You represent all 29 councils.

**CHAIR** - Absolutely. Thank you very much for coming in and thank you very much as well for putting in a submission. It's all very helpful when we're looking to put our recommendations and our findings together. As Ms Rattray said, they will go to the Government and we would hope that they will take up some of our recommendations because the aim obviously is to try and make our roads safer and have less serious accidents and deaths on our roads. Thank you very much.

**Mr LESTER** - Good luck with your deliberations.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW**

**PUBLIC**

**The committee suspended from 1.49 p.m. to 2.01 p.m.**

## PUBLIC

**Mr COLIN RILEY**, PRESIDENT, POLICE ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome. Thank you very much for your submission and joining us today, it is very much appreciated. All evidence at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. I remind you that any comments you make outside the hearing may not receive such privilege. A copy of the information for witnesses is available if you haven't read it or would like to. The evidence you present will be recorded and the *Hansard* version will be printed on the committee web page when it becomes available. If you would like to speak to your submission, members with then ask their questions. We have allowed an hour.

**Mr RILEY** - Thank you. What I'd like to do is gradually make my way through the submission by providing historical background, where we're currently at and, potentially, a pathway forward. From our members' perspective, we're very concerned about the numbers of deaths on roadways, particularly the serious injury crashes. Obviously, it's quite damaging for our members to attend those scenes.

The stress and trauma are repetitive in nature because not only do they attend the scene and deal with the trauma at the scene, they then deal with the next of kin, which can be quite an emotionally charged situation. It's then the file preparation and the investigation around the crash, then it's core processes, so, it's giving evidence. Some of these things aren't just deal with on the day, they're actually repeated over many, many months.

When we start looking at member wellbeing, we've got 9.1 per cent of our members currently on open workers' compensation claims. We've currently got a significant amount of strain across taskings and trying to make ends meet across a whole portfolio of things that have to be delivered on.

When we look towards a zero strategy, there are four foundation pieces, the safe roads and roadsides, and from our perspective there's good direction in that space and things are progressing. Safe vehicles, that's pretty much a national piece and that's progressing. Safe speeds, that has a lot of political baggage with that and it is what it is. The final piece is the safe road users, and I suppose the purpose for me being here is that there could be better connectivity between enforcement and education in relation to that.

A typical example, if we had a campaign about the importance of wearing seatbelts, what is critical is that we back that campaign up with enforcement activities that target seatbelt-type initiatives. With safe road users, which we need connectivity between enforcement and education, police are a key player in that and we need to own our piece of that.

Police have a role to apprehend people who aren't complying with the road rules but, secondly, to increase the perception that you will be caught if you breach the road rules. If we get that right, then people obey the road rules.

**CHAIR** - They will be caught, eventually, maybe not the first time.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes. When we look back over, say, the last 50 years, our members and police have done a reasonably good job in assisting with the reduction of road fatalities. If we go back to the 60s, there was approximately 100 deaths a year in relation to road crashes. Over the years, there have been a significant number of IT improvements and practices, including

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putting limits on the amount of alcohol you can have in your system at any one time, seatbelts, speed cameras and so on. Police have played a significant part in the enforcement of each of those strategies. It's not the strategy itself, it's actually enforcement that has brought around a positive point.

We got to the point about a decade ago, where there are approximately 30 fatalities a year, on average, which is still far too high, and we've effectively plateaued for 10 years. We're at the point of asking now, how do we work out how we walk away from that 10-year plateau of 30 fatalities a year to bring it down even lower than that?

I note that when you do a comparison between the states, when you look at annual fatalities, per 100 000 population, we are unfortunately, one of the worst performing states.

**CHAIR** - Twice as bad as Victoria.

**Mr RILEY** - We have been consistent with that for an extended period of time. There are a whole series of tactical initiatives outside policing. One of the key ones may be remedial driver training or a diversionary process, where we do the same thing in the drug area, where rather than just imposing a fine, we divert people through refresher training and so on. That is a side issue.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is an important issue though. Are you going to talk some more about that?

**Mr RILEY** - I will come back to that. What we directly have an influence on is detection and deterrence. Our members are out on the street doing that.

I want to give just a brief history of where we have come to in the traffic enforcement within Tasmania Police. If we went back into the early 1990s, we actually had a dedicated branch of Tasmania Police, which was a district. It was a traffic district of people that purely focused on traffic enforcement around the state. It was centrally controlled and a stand-alone district by itself. It was relatively proactive and self-contained.

Then we moved to a point where we decentralised that model and we gave each of the three geographic districts around the state, the responsibility for traffic enforcement. They had their own traffic work areas in each part of the state and with that in the mid-1990s came the MAIB funding, which employed additional police officers to focus specifically on traffic enforcement. There were about 16 funded.

In 2007, Tasmania Police gained some extra funding for additional police. At that time we had significant public order issues around entertainment precincts. As a result of that the extra police, in 2007, led to the development of other Public Order Response Team or what we call the PORT. PORT dealt with entertainment precincts and bringing back into control public order issues.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is spilling out of nightclubs and that type of thing?

**Mr RILEY** - Yes

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or an event, a music festival?

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**Mr RILEY** - Exactly, all those big events. We have the traffic and we have a PORT. Then we had the global financial crisis, which is approximately 2007 to 2009 and the organisation took a 10 per cent reduction in police officer numbers. We brought traffic and the PORT together and merged the two bodies, taskings, functions and the priorities. We came up with what is called the Road Public Order Services. That body was then responsible for public order as well as traffic policing and was decentralised with each of the three districts having what was called a RPOS work area.

RPOS, obviously, had a multitude of taskings that sat outside traffic enforcements. They did all these other things also, including entertainment precincts, major public events, all those types of things. They also became tasked with a reserve capability or a capability used in emergency situations. They were picked up holus-bolus and reallocated tasks outside public order and outside traffic.

When you look at the current COVID-19 response, the RPOS members do a large amount of work -

**CHAIR** - They are doing everything.

**Mr RILEY** - They are doing the airports arrivals, airport transportation to the hotels, even helping with the hotels, the quarantine and all that. I am hesitant to use the term 'dogbody' but effectively the RPOS became the generic go-to for anything extra you needed to do. What it has meant is that we have come from a highly-centralised body of police officers who were very passionate and educated about traffic enforcement and come now to a position where we are a decentralised, generic dogbody tasking for multiple things.

Through that journey, it would be remiss of me if I did not mention the fact the Liberal Government has increased police numbers significantly, 113 to replace the initial cuts with 10 per cent plus another 125, plus another 50 and plus another 20. The police service has actually grown over that time.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Why haven't those really useful areas been re-established then? Like the traffic division.

**Mr RILEY** - The scope of what police officers do just seem to keep growing and growing but the budget chapter clearly outlines four key outputs: emergency management, which we should be just doing as our bread and butter. There is public order and then there is criminal investigations - and we have complete work areas that focus on criminal investigations - and then we have traffic. The traffic now doesn't have a clear work area that is just responsible for traffic. Every time we take on an additional tasks we spread the police even thinner. At the moment traffic is one of the four key outputs but it doesn't have a dedicated centralised person in Tasmania Police who is responsible for delivering on it. A lot of that workforce gets used for other tasks as they come in the door.

At the moment when we look at what we call RPOS, in southern Tasmania there are approximately 50 who are in that RPOS area - Road Public Order Services. There are about 29 in the north of the state, and there are 21 in the west of the state. Those numbers have responsibility for traffic enforcement as well as public order and, as I said before, they get used for anything else that needs to be done. At the moment we are looking at COVID-19.

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I note that some of the RPOS get used for other tasks. For example, in the south of the state there is a whole team in that RPOS of 50 who are used for crime reduction. Its target is to focus on recidivist offenders. You have a whole team that is focused purely on crime reduction in the state.

We have gone from a skilled, centrally-controlled, statewide capability to a decentralised, I would say, deskilled, devalued traffic enforcement police. Even more recently, we have had a proposal to take some of those numbers and allocate them to 24-hour police stations. We recently had the introduction of what is called safe staffing levels at 7/24-hour stations so that means 44 police on duty anywhere in the state. There is difficulty achieving 44 on duty out of 39 to 59 police officers. One of the strategies is even taking some of those RPOS out and permanently putting them onto the 7/24-hour police stations, which would unfortunately deteriorate the traffic enforcement police even further.

Some of the argument could be that once you bolster the 24-hour stations - the seven of them - and you have 44 on duty at any one time, they could also do traffic enforcement. That is very problematic because they are the first responders: family violence, assaults, domestics, public order issues. They are the ones responding and then trying to ask them to do a proactive task on top of that, speed reduction, et cetera, it is just not going to happen.

That is where we have got to now. If I look a little bit inside the organisation and noting that 99.5 per cent of police officers in this state are members of the Police Association, what is lacking internally is a very clear, strategic road enforcement plan, a high-level document. And then tactical plans, objectives and strategies that sit below that based on analysis and have very clear deployment criteria performance indicators. That is lacking.

The reason it is lacking is that when you have competing priorities, the proactive traffic enforcement side of the house gradually gets pushed down the priority list to do other things that get a high priority.

**CHAIR** - Things that are happening now, like your assaults?

**Mr RILEY** - COVID-19, for example, so the traffic gets deprioritised and we focus on COVID-19. The problem is when you look at the four outputs, more people die in the traffic portfolio than they do with the criminal investigations, the public order and emergency management as it stands now. Unfortunately, it seems inverse that you are removing a resource away from a portfolio that has most of the deaths in the state.

**CHAIR** - So RPOS are the ones who would be responsible? You see your unmarked police cars on the highway - they will be the ones driving on the highway in their flash Subaru, that is RPOS?

**Mr RILEY** - RPOS, that's right. We had this whole-of-state district with motorcycles, plain unmarked cars and all that, and we have gone to an RPOS model and they are the ones that are doing the highway patrols. I would like to say that doing directed, task-based intelligence -

**CHAIR** - Are there as many now? The last few times I have driven, I haven't noticed any or any marked police cars, whereas in the past, I had seen quite a few.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I see them regularly.

**CHAIR** - Depending on the time of day you drive.

**Mr WILLIE** - Probably COVID-19-related duties.

**CHAIR** - It is probably is.

**Mr RILEY** - With the planning and with clear tactical strategies that are based on analysis and clear performance target and indicators, performance measures, there is far better bang for buck reinforcing this than there is in infrastructure. Infrastructure costs a lot of money and there is a lot being done in that space; but you get better bang for your buck if you are focused on enforcement and education of the public through police. I will flag that.

The next point I was going to talk to is, what are the solutions? How do we get to a point where we get that 30 on average which has taken over 10 years to a point where we're bringing that down even lower than 30 fatalities a year, not to mention the serious injury crashes? From our perspective, it needs to be a dedicated traffic enforcement area that has statewide coverage and has a central person within the organisation who directs the traffic tasks, has responsibility and is accountable for what is going on in the traffic space. That doesn't exist at the moment.

That resource could be 40 to 50 police officers - I am sensitive to suggesting something like this - and then there has to be a shifting of the deck chairs and you have to find the 40 to 50 police from somewhere else in the organisation and somebody else misses out.

I am now going off on a red herring but we have 1359 policers in the state. There is no clarity around how many police we actually need. My sense is we are moving deck chairs around to fix the most important priority at the moment, and then in a couple of years' time we shift the resource somewhere else. There needs to be clarity around exactly how many police we need.

**Ms RATTRAY** - A strategic plan for that department. It is how many officers you need to effectively undertake the role and functions of policing in this state.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes, a central point of responsibility and accountability who has to deliver on strategies when the strategies are worked out. At the moment we have an Assistant Commissioner Operations, who has state-wide overwatch. That one person is responsible for crime, public order and traffic. It is a big portfolio.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And the radio this morning.

**Mr RILEY** - And the radio this morning, which I am glad you heard. When you go one step down from ACO there is no statewide commander with responsibility for traffic. There is a body, a committee; but the level of accountability from that committee is nowhere near where it should be if you had a person who is centrally responsible and is reducing the traffic fatalities and serious injury crashes.

If you look at the other states, they have dedicated traffic areas. Someone could argue that we are so small here that we don't need one. I would argue when you are having so many

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fatalities and deaths in that portfolio, it probably needs to have the learnings of other jurisdictions and what they have done. They have given it priority, where it has the central person who is responsible for it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do you liaise with the other states? Is your organisation, PAT, having meetings and discussing how they approach these particular matters? You probably don't do face-to-face at the moment.

**Mr RILEY** - It is an interesting point. All the presidents are on the Board of Management of the Police Federation of Australia. There are 65 000 police officers around Australia. We sit around that board of management and we talk about a lot of things.

It's unusual for a Police Association president to be talking at a forum like this about capability and gaps in capability, because that is more of a responsibility of the organisation. Our focus is more about wellbeing, but we're seeing the consequences of the capability issue, which is impacting on the wellbeing of our members. That's why I'm speaking here. In the normal course of events, the president wouldn't be talking about this. When we come to these forums, this is not the type of thing we would actually talk about. The policing jurisdictions talk amongst themselves and they work out what's best practice and what the current technology is and so on.

**Mr WILLIE** - Are there any states that have a similar model to Tasmania?

**Mr RILEY** - To the best of my knowledge, no. I could be wrong, but to the best of my knowledge they've got dedicated traffic enforcement areas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We often model ourselves on, or compare ourselves to, South Australia because they are relatively small compared to the bigger states. Do we not have any synergies there, that you're aware of?

**Mr RILEY** - Not that I'm aware of. We are the smallest, without a doubt. I can't talk to you about what the areas are doing but I do know they meet, I do know they talk about current strategies and what's cutting edge and what's the best thing to do. Regardless of what's happening in other jurisdictions, when I look at this in Tasmania, we have more people dying on our roads than the other three outputs.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The graph says it all.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes. Therefore, there's a problem and we need to find solutions to the problem, try to implement those and have accountability for it. Going forward, we would see a centralised, statewide person within the organisation that has responsibility for traffic. In addition to that, there's still the Road Safety Taskforce, which is funded by the MAIB.

The RPOS (Road and Public Order Services), to a lesser extent, still serves its purpose because it becomes the commander's reserve at the district levels. When you've got a major public event - Falls Festival or something like that - the RPOS are injected into the area to help with those types of activities, because the local police officers don't have sufficient capacity to deal with it. Still retaining those two, but with a dedicated traffic enforcement piece.

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That's pretty much covered all the things I was going to say to you. Tasmania is a very bespoke policing jurisdiction and we're unique in our staffing capability and capacity. We are extraordinarily unique. We have a lot of police officers who have secondary roles in this state. We are the only state whose members are in the Special Operations Group as a secondary job and they have a primary job as a detective, or traffic police officer, for example. We've got many police officers with secondary roles as negotiators, and in bomb response. The other jurisdictions, because of their size, have people who are full-time Special Operations Group. When you look at the structures we have now with RPOS and all that, it is unique. It's not a copy of other states.

**CHAIR** - We'll have specialists, is it 20?

**Mr RILEY** - Yes. Fortunately, the Government has agreed to increase police numbers. In July 2024, there'll be a full-time SOG group of 24, which is good.

**CHAIR** - We'll still need more than that, will we? Will there still be officers who are doing two jobs, or will that be sufficient, to have 24 in the SOG?

**Mr RILEY** - We're going down that rabbit hole there but, in essence, there'll be full-time members in the Special Operations Group and there'll be part-time members. I suggest they will continue as part-time -

**CHAIR** - They could be traffic and other areas.

**Mr RILEY** - They could be in every area. At the moment, all the SOGs, except for four, have a daytime job and then they get called out to do the SOGs, negotiators, bomb response and so on. I just think that traffic is such an important area that it needs to be dedicated commander-control, dedicated leadership and someone who's accountable and delivers statewide the strategies that have been agreed on within the organisation.

**CHAIR** - Currently, we can have traffic guys that are doing the highways, doing all sorts of things and all of a sudden, they're called on, they're taken and then there's really no-one to replace them in that traffic area while they're doing their other jobs, whether it be public response, as RPOS, whatever they've gone to.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes. What's happening today, and this is happening with COVID-19, is that RPOS piece, which is traffic enforcement, has been redirected to do other tasks - quarantine hotels, domestic, international, transporting people. While we're doing that -

**CHAIR** - Traffic is missing out.

**Mr RILEY** - The traffic enforcements -

**CHAIR** - We don't know what that's causing it, because crashes and all sorts of things that happen.

**Mr RILEY** - The four outputs - traffic is a proactive piece. It's the proactive piece of getting out, in detecting, deterring and creating an expectation that you'll be caught. If you take all that away and you take the whole resource away and use it for another purpose, over time,

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the public then loses the thought that they are going to be detected and they start to drift in their behaviour and the way they're driving.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Are you ready for some questions?

**Mr RILEY** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I'm interested in your recommendation around penalties. You said that:

Research shows that the effectiveness of fines indicates the examination of penalties have found that fines alone provide little deterrence.

Yet we heard previously that if you increase the fines then that's a deterrent. I'm interested in why you see it's not a deterrent. Most people don't like to be hit in their back pocket.

**Mr RILEY** - A percentage of the people that police are interacting with aren't financially well off.

**CHAIR** - They're not going to pay anyway.

**Mr RILEY** - They're not going to pay the fine. All I'm suggesting is that rather than focusing on them paying a financial penalty, especially the recidivists, the effort is far better spent on them going into a re-education program or a diversion program to improve their driving behaviour. If they don't participate in the program then certainly impose the financial penalty.

**CHAIR** - Or you don't get your licence back until you've entered that particular program.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - A bit like drugs and alcohol.

**Mr RILEY** - I'm going back many years, but in good country policing, for example, if you pulled somebody up with bald tyres and the fine is \$300, you would tell them, 'Here is your infringement notice. If you replace the tyres in a couple of days and come back to me, I'll then dispose of the infringement notice'. It's not about the money. It's actually about changing the behaviour and the practice.

**CHAIR** - The tyres would cost as much as the fine.

**Mr RILEY** - Correct; it's better to spend the money on the tyres, otherwise you'd have a financial problem and then you've got the problem that the tyres still need to be replaced. There is a large percentage of the population that can't afford to pay in the first place. Whether they pay it or not is another thing all together. Education is the secret; how do we educate. It's about active police in the community and it's about putting those who are showing recidivist behaviour through a program to be re-educated.

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**Ms PALMER** - A supplementary on that, Chair? Do you have any data, or any examples of a successful program like that anywhere in Australia? Someone who is a repeat offender and instead of giving them fines, which they're not going to pay anyway, let's get them to do a course. Will they do the course? Do we have any evidence that it does work, that we can refer to?

**Mr RILEY** - Nothing that I can, but I certainly can go away, do the research and potentially provide you with something.

**Ms PALMER** - It sounds like a brilliant and obvious thing to do. However, I wonder is someone who is a repeat offender on our roads and therefore already has that attitude of a lack of care on our roads, are they going to go to a course and what sort of result are we going to get from that? Is there any evidence behind that initiative.

**Mr RILEY** - I suppose the only piece that I look for with some hope that it would work is in relation to the drug diversion program, where we're diverting people away from penalties into an education process, or a health program to improve outcomes. Could I take that on notice?

**CHAIR** - That would be good.

**Ms PALMER** - If there is anything that would be great.

**CHAIR** - In Sweden and Norway, perhaps; we keep hearing pretty good reports.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Your reference to an approved dash camera fitted, like we do with the mandatory interlock system after drink driving on your third repeat.

**Mr RILEY** - Just on fines, for example, in Sweden the penalty is dependent on the salary. They have a completely different model where they don't go for penalty points, they impose a penalty that's commensurate with the amount of salary that you earn.

**CHAIR** - Which you can afford to pay.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Again, the back pocket.

**CHAIR** - Do you still have police officers going to the schools? We talked earlier about education, with some other people who gave evidence. Do you think it would be beneficial, when you're looking at education, for police officers in uniform to go into year 11 and 12? We heard that they're only -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Grade 7?

**CHAIR** - It could be high school. If you're looking at the resources, you probably need to focus on those who are doing it.

**Mr RILEY** - The education piece is extremely important. In the past, we've had very good programs where we've gone into schools and provided education to people. At one point I think there was even a school subject. I suppose when you look at 2021 and 2022, we're so

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sensitive to the scope of what we're currently doing. It's a good initiative, it's whether we can do it with all the other things that we've got on our scope to do because if you use police -

**CHAIR** - You'd need someone specialised in an area, wouldn't you; rather than coming from the RPOS for example. The RACT mentioned this morning - I think it was in some other jurisdictions - the head year 11 and 12s actually re-enact road trauma scenes. It was quite an awful thing for them to do, but it was for the students. They had a mock crash, they had a presentation, they had the coroner come.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The ambulance, the whole lot.

**Mr RILEY** - This sounds like a fantastic initiative and I'm sure it would leave a lasting impression and save lives.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Costly, of course.

**Mr RILEY** - There are probably other bodies or organisations that could deliver on that rather than police.

**CHAIR** - No, I'm not thinking police, but I'm just saying do you think that something like that would be worthwhile?

**Mr RILEY** - Definitely. Yes. I'm very hesitant to pursue things and then we become the owners of it.

**CHAIR** - No, I appreciate that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And they've got to find the resources for them and you've only got 1359 bodies to do it.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I recall that sometimes officers used to go into schools and I know some officers were attached to colleges, particularly. I wasn't sure whether they were still attached to colleges and if they were, could they perhaps give some education? We heard that a lot of schools don't have any driver education or any road safety education.

**Mr RILEY** - I can't give you a categorical answer, but I think the tentacles into the schools have been withdrawn because of other things that we have to do.

**CHAIR** - Right. Because they had more jobs they have to do.

**Mr RILEY** - There's higher priority things that need to be done.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Mr Willie had questions.

**Mr WILLIE** - It's to do with the reference in your recommendation to the University of Adelaide report for the MAIB, about their annual funding that they provide to Tasmania Police and State Growth. Does that propose a major shakeup?

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**Mr RILEY** - I'm not sure if the committee has seen the report?

**Mr WILLIE** - No, it's not a public document.

**Mr RILEY** - It's not a public document. It was done specifically for MAIB. It parallels what you're looking at here. There is information in that document that would be relevant to this committee.

**Mr WILLIE** - You're recommending we write to MAIB and request that document?

**Mr RILEY** - I would think so. In my opinion, MAIB wanted to get an assessment of how their money was being expended, and that was the purpose of that report.

**Mr WILLIE** - How's it being expended now? They obviously fund Police and State Growth.

**Mr RILEY** - They provide funding and they fund a specific number of police officers in Tasmania Police. From memory I think it's 16 police officers and then those police officers do road safety taskforce duties. That's been going on since about 1996. Those 16 police officers should be in addition to the Government's allocation. The Government funds so much money and we have so many police officers; and then MAIB funding should be in addition to that and not moving the deck chairs sideways and potentially using that money for another purpose.

**Mr WILLIE** - We'll try to get the report. Reading between the lines, if traffic management's being downgraded and then being reassigned, perhaps MAIB is not happy providing the funding for those 16 officers for a different purpose.

**Mr RILEY** - The report may contain things like greater accountability, performance indicators and things like that to provide some feedback as to how the money is being spent.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I note on page 5, Colin, where you talk about the need to establish clear leadership in this important endeavour and consideration into establishing a state road's authority independent of the Department of State Growth. Is not the Road Safety Advisory Council an independent body that would provide leadership? I am interested in your thoughts and do not want to cast any aspersions on the work of the Road Safety Advisory Council but do you not see that body offering leadership?

**Mr RILEY** - When I wrote that report I was very much focused in my mind on COVID-19. When you look at the way the Government has responded to COVID-19 and the strong leadership of the Premier, we have changed people's behaviour in relation to the way they interact and the way they go about cleanliness which is a significant thing. If we could somehow take that leadership and put it in the traffic area, we could have a similar significant impact and reduction of fatalities and serious injury crashes.

When you look at a cost benefit analysis, and now we have reflected on it, that is probably not a good suggestion. When I looked at the four foundations toward zero strategy, which I have looked at since I have submitted that report, the safe road users are probably the piece exposed the most and that is enforcement and education. Now I have reflected on this, that senior leadership figure needs to actually start within the policing scope. We need a state-wide

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leader who has responsibility and accountability for enforcement. Once that piece is delivered on then we can reflect on whether it needs to be bigger than that.

The Road Safety Advisory Council does a lot of good work, a lot of good direction, but there is no accountability of those things that are delivered on. They will come up with a raft of things and then agencies can either deliver on it or not. If they are not delivered on there is no accountability back to the Road Safety Advisory Council. At the moment it is not empowered. Does that make sense?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, it does make sense.

**Mr RILEY** - I notice that Mr Tilyard is the chair of that now and he comes with a lot of knowledge.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is why I was casting no aspersions on the good work of the council.

**Mr RILEY** - Hopefully, that will go forward. If that is the model it needs good leadership within Tasmania Police and, the Road Safety Advisory Council, when it divvies up tasks amongst government agencies, there needs to some accountability to deliver on those tasks and if they are not delivered, why not? Why are not agencies responding?

**Ms RATTRAY** - That person or that role is key to the outcomes that will be generated right across the area of road safety.

**Mr RILEY** - The chair is the key person, the leader and immediately in the current construct provides that leadership piece.

**CHAIR** - He does say 'as chair of the Road Safety Advisory Council, I am committed to improving road safety in Tasmania in reducing the harm and devastation that crashes cause'.

**Mr RILEY** - When that council decides on actions, delivers and produces some direction then government agencies should be accountable for whether they deliver on those or they do not and if not, why not?

**Dr SEIDEL** - In your introduction you mentioned 9.1 per cent of your members have a current workers compensation claim. Are those claims related to road safety incidents, or are there other claims?

**Mr RILEY** - Of the current 1359 police officers, 123 are on open worker's compensation claims - these are the August figures - which is 9.1 per cent of the workforce. Of those, 42 are fully incapacitated and cannot be at work; 10 police offices have received payouts in the last three years; and there are another 31 pending payouts and separating.

The Police Association's role is the wellbeing of members, which is one of our key things. We have unpacked why there are so many police officers on workers compensation and one element is the repetitive exposure to the trauma of a scene, the emotionally-charged situation for next-of-kin and then preparing files, giving evidence. If we could even halve the 30 deaths per year and halve the number of serious injury crashes we could decrease the trauma on our members and there are fewer members going into workers compensation.

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The bottom line is the 9.1 per cent is the direct correlation with the scope of police officers' duties increasing and the increased strain on them. The traffic crashes is one piece in that.

**Dr SEIDEL** - Looking at, for example, the rural police force, you would probably imagine they are disproportionately affected by it. Do you have any data on that?

**Mr RILEY** - There is one specific area within the traffic enforcement which is the crash investigation services. They are the ones who do all the analysis and measurements and find out the underpinning causes for serious crashes and fatalities. For example, statewide in the north-west there are two police officers who do that, there are two in the north, and there are two in the south with some additional secondments coming in down south. They experience the brunt of the trauma and that area is not adequately resourced at present. It should have further resourcing but police all round the state, first responders, deal with those traffic crashes and serious fatalities and serious injury crashes so it is all round the state and the Crash Investigation come in to do the analysis. I hope I have answered your question.

**Dr SEIDEL** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - If I could ask you with regard to the mainland and what they do, particularly mainland drivers. We have noticed quite a few mainland drivers have been involved in crashes of late. From your consideration, do you think it is to do with the fact that on the mainland many of their roads are four-lane highways and then all of a sudden, we have two lanes, then go on to one. I am not sure how you are when you are driving, but sometimes you do use that time to talk to people, to do work. You are on the phone even though it is through your car which is a bit of worry because you do get distracted. Do you think sometimes you find that one lane becomes two lanes, you think all of a sudden is this two lanes or one lane? Do you think it is a confusion for many mainland people coming down to Tasmania, the difference to our roads to their roads? Hence the crashes.

**Mr RILEY** - My answer to you is anecdotal. I do not have any data, but can I say though I spend half my time travelling the state visiting police officers in different parts of the state. On some of those major roads there is only 30 centimetres separating vehicles travelling towards each other at 110 kph, which is concerning, and it only takes a microsecond to be distracted and all of a sudden it is head on collision. I do not have the answer.

**CHAIR** - I have noticed on the odd occasion on the road that they have arrows, they are not everywhere. Do you think something like arrows, because you will be driving along and you have two lanes, and I am not sure about other members but you look and you think, I am on two lanes and you see another lane over further but sometimes it is a rural road and it is not a two-lane highway. Some of them have arrows pointing out to you are on a two-lane highway again.

**Mr RILEY** - Clear road markings are a very simple solution. Having travelled most of the roads around the state many times, I sometimes get confused whether it is a two-lane roadway or oncoming. That does happen. So yes, clear road markings, arrows on the road would certainly be beneficial.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - In my view we cannot keep the white lines in the middle of the road up to scratch, so how are we going to do?

**CHAIR** - It cannot, but if it saves lives, particularly for tourists who become confused about whether they are on a two-lane highway because they are probably familiar with two or four-lane highways depending on which state they come from.

**Mr RILEY** - Certainly, the Bass Highway is a classic example where clear road markings in relation to direction is a low financial cost solution which probably would bring exponential positive outcomes, I would suggest.

In New South Wales there is a Traffic Offender Intervention Program and this is where a defendant can request referral to an approved traffic course rather than incurring a financial penalty. There are things in other jurisdictions that are operating at the moment.

**CHAIR** - Which is quite helpful.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is like the DECA course for motorcyclists, which is an excellent course.

**Mr RILEY** - Yes, conducted and run by people who are police officers. That would be fantastic.

**CHAIR** - It would be very good.

**Mr RILEY** - In closing, this is an area that causes significant concern for our members. When they are going for their workers compensation I sit down with those injured members and I read through their experiences. Fatal crashes and serious injury crashes are significant in their history because it is not one-offs. They deal with many of these. From our perspective of looking at the wellbeing of our members if we can reduce the numbers of those, it's going to have an effect on them and it's going to have a great impact on families and the community. The amount of money that must get tied up with relation to rehabilitation from crashes and all that and the trauma - we have stagnated for 10 years now and we need leadership for the next 10 years that gets us from 30 per year down to 15 and less. Otherwise we'll be sitting here and we'll be talking the same numbers in three- or four-years' time.

**CHAIR** - We appreciate your coming in and putting in a submission. It's very helpful to read the comments. You're right, when we talked in the past about workers compensation and the cases that all emergency services must go to, we can't even imagine how difficult it must be, and how terrible it must be for the families on an ongoing basis as well. It just doesn't go away.

**Mr RILEY** - I thank this committee for looking at this topic. It's a bit of a can that's just been kicked down the road and there needs to be a source document that provides momentum in this space.

**CHAIR** - That's right. There's no 'silver bullet' as they say but we can only look and hopefully come up with some recommendations and that some of them are picked up so that we can move forward.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - It's 11 years since someone kicked the can through a report so it's timely.

**Mr RILEY** - Those recommendations are things that we advocate on so it's something that we will run with once the recommendations are out.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for coming. We really appreciate it.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**The committee suspended from 2.48 p.m. to 3pm.**

# PUBLIC

## Mr RAY METCALFE WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED

**CHAIR** - Welcome. Thank you for coming in, and for taking the time to put in a submission. This is the public hearings of our Select Committee into Road Safety. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege but I need to remind you that anything you say outside may not be accorded such privilege.

There is a copy of the information for witnesses on the table if you want to glance at it or if you haven't read it, or are not aware of the process.

The evidence you present is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee website when it becomes available. The committee is taking sworn evidence and we ask that you make the statutory declaration. Before you do that, I will introduce you to the members we have here: Bastian Seidel, member for Huon, via WebEx; Tania Rattray, member for McIntyre; myself, Rosemary Armitage, member for Launceston; Josh Willie, member for Elwick; and we have Tim our committee secretary; Ali, our assistant; and Roey on *Hansard*.

If you would make the statutory declaration, and then the procedure we follow is to ask you if you would like to speak to your submission, and then we will ask you some questions. We have allowed half an hour.

**Mr METCALFE** - Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, members. I would like to begin by thanking members for their commitment to improve road safety in Tasmania. I share your passion for this and hope that Tasmania will achieve zero road trauma by 2050. The current trends of annual fatalities and serious injuries indicate that we will never achieve this target. We need to adopt the Vision Zero approach that could deliver immediate results to improve these trends. This approach requires that road trauma must be treated like any other public health issue and its prevention must override all other infrastructure planning and economic considerations.

In my submission there are several examples of where the state and local governments have failed to act in this way. According to Austroad guidelines the majority of road statements in Tasmania have grossly unsafe posted speed limits. The Transport Services Group has not acted to set its posted speed limits in accordance with these guidelines. The state is knowingly putting lives at risk and must take responsibility for this, rather than allow driver behaviour, speeding, drugs, alcohol, distraction, seatbelts and fatigue to be blamed for road trauma. Poor driver behaviour and mistakes will never be eliminated, and they should not result in trauma. These behaviours are known as the fatal five but the road infrastructure, coupled with unsafe speed limits is the most fatal one for rural roads.

To be fair, the Towards Zero Action Plan does mention setting speed limits according to the infrastructure safety standards, but the Transport Services Group continues to post unsafe speed limits. A head-on collision at a closing speed of over 70 kilometres per hour will probably result in trauma, even if the vehicles are equipped with the latest vehicle safety technology. Therefore, roads with a posted speed limit of over 80 kmh require protection against head-on and run-off collisions.

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The \$20 million allocated in the action plan to improve infrastructure safety will not achieve this. An Austroad spokesperson stated that nationally this would take several centuries to achieve.

In conclusion, my recommendations suggest, firstly, reducing speed limits immediately on the high traffic volume roads where infrastructure cannot prevent trauma in the event of a crash. When the road infrastructure can safely sustain a high speed, the speed limit could then be increased. Secondly, requiring measurable time phased targets reach action in the Towards Zero Action Plan and making stakeholders accountable to achieve them. Lastly, improving the collaboration and communication between stakeholders, including within the infrastructure services group, and establishing a road safety audit policy.

**Dr SEIDEL** - Thank you for your submission, Ray. It is always great to get submissions from individuals rather than just from organisations. There is some value there. You mentioned in your introduction that road safety is a public health issue. Is it clear to you who in Tasmania is responsible for road safety? It is very clear who is responsible for public health. Who is responsible for road safety? Is it clear to members of the public?

**Mr METCALFE** - It should be the Transport Services Group.

**Dr SEIDEL** - Do you think it is clear? There seem to be so many players there, inconsistent recommendations, people pushing responsibilities from one entity to another; but there is no clear structure there that is calling the shots as it is for public health.

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes, that is right. There is a lack of accountability, I believe. There is a lack of coordination between even individual departments within the Transport Services Group to achieve public road safety. That is part of the problem - lack of accountability and lack of coordination.

**Dr SEIDEL** - In your submission, you talked about regional road safety officers. Would you mind elaborating a bit more about what you are trying to achieve by appointing those? Can you give us any examples where it actually works nationally or internationally?

**Mr METCALFE** - Sure. In terms of examples, two years ago, at the end of August 2019, there was a fatality south of Huonville. At that time, shortly afterwards, I mentioned to the council that there was a hazard that should be addressed in addition to lowering speed limits. I asked, at that time, whether a road safety audit had been done post-accident and they took a while to get back to me and eventually said, no. The Austroads guidelines clearly state that if a fatal accident occurs, we must have a road safety audit to determine the cause. We can't assume that it is driver distraction or something like that. In my view, there were a number of hazards at that intersection which weren't addressed.

**Dr SEIDEL** - We'd normally do a root cause analysis, wouldn't we, that's what you are saying?

**Mr METCALFE** - That's right. We need professional people who are trained in road safety audits, independent of government or the executive, to carry out these audits, to make recommendations in terms of improving safety.

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To answer the second part of your question, I haven't got anything with me that can demonstrate the efficacy of road safety audits internationally, apart from the fact that I know from reading the Austroads material that this is what they recommend.

**Dr SEIDEL** - In your submission, you also mentioned that it's important to engage other infrastructure stakeholders, including emergency service stakeholders. I imagine the ambulance service, in particular. Do you see there is a lack of interaction between ambulance services and the police, for example, and transport department when it comes to road safety, particularly when it comes to ambulance response times?

**Mr METCALFE** - I haven't got an example regarding ambulance services but, certainly, I do have a recent example where there was an accident in the Huon Valley. The police were called to attend and a possible cause was the infrastructure at that particular point. It was a rural road, with maintenance the responsibility of the council. The police said that they'd have no obligation to pass this information onto the council. That's just an example of the lack of coordination between, not necessarily health services and emergency services, but I think that's indicative that this doesn't happen as a matter of course.

**Dr SEIDEL** - That's why you think a regional road safety officer would be valuable in that respect, to coordinate, to gather evidence and to make specific recommendations for the area?

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes, I do.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thanks, Ray. Can I have some clarification as to your reference to the transport services group. Is that the State Growth roads? We have a general manager and a roads department, that's what you're referring to there?

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We also have the Road Safety Advisory Council and various other groups. We've heard from RACT this morning, who have a strong involvement in looking for any aspect of safety on our roads.

You said that you believe we should have a reduced speed limit, and that there were only 50 km in total of the Tasman Highway that was sufficient to cater for a 100 kmh maximum speed, suggesting reducing the speed limit. A few years ago, there was an attempt to reduce speed limits around Tasmania. It didn't end well at the time. How do you think you could go in engaging with the community to gain some acceptance for a blanket speed reduction?

**Mr METCALFE** - It needs to be phased in. We can't reduce all speed limits according to the infrastructure risk rating overnight. For example, if we have a policy whereby we reduce speed limits as a result of a road trauma, such as what happened south of Campbell Town on two occasions, we could do that and I think that could gain public support to reduce fatalities and demonstrate that we are achieving those things.

What was the second part of the question?

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**Ms RATTRAY** - I am interested in how you might engage with the community. Without community acceptance, these types of changes often don't achieve the outcomes they were set out for. People pushback, if you like.

**Mr METCALFE** - There are two things that occur to me. One is on Vincennes Saddle - that speed limit -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that somewhere in the Huon?

**Mr METCALFE** - It's on the Huon Highway. On that stretch of highway, there are several kilometres where State Growth asked for community feedback in their preferred speed limit on that section of road. There had been a number of accidents, particularly during winter, snow and so on. They were able to reduce that speed limit to 80 kph on that stretch of highway.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The same thing has happened in the Derwent Valley, I believe, with community support with a stretch of road there.

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes, that is another way. The Western Australian Government - I think I quoted them - had exactly that same problem several years. They were able to introduce a gradual reduction in speed limits. They didn't go from 110 kph to 80 kph overnight but they gradually reduced the speed limit to educate people to start driving slower. That's been quite successful so we could use their model.

**Ms RATTRAY** - As I am a very high-level road user, I get somewhat confused about the stopping and starting of speed limits. You can't quite remember whether you're still in the 80 kph or you're back in the 100 kph, or whether you're in a 90 kph or where you are. Do you see that that causes some confusion amongst drivers as well?

**Mr METCALFE** - It could. One of the things that Austroads has said to me is that the speed limit should be consistent with the infrastructure. If you're travelling down the Midland Highway, for example, and you are, say, south of Tunbridge with run-off barriers and median barriers, the speed is 110 kph and that's fine. Then you come to, say, south of Ross and you have a two-lane highway. We can educate people over time to slow down to a reduced speed limit. According to Austroads, that should be at least 90 kph if not lower. Although it's going to be frustrating for drivers, we have to promote the benefits in terms of road safety and demonstrate with statistics that we are achieving these reductions in trauma.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There's been a significant campaign by the department and those who are focused on road safety about driving to the conditions. Do you not consider that that's been a successful campaign?

**Mr METCALFE** - Not in terms of the main highways in Tasmania. It probably does impact people. I know from my own experience that people do drive slower during wet weather. In terms of infrastructure safety, I don't see that. For example, on the Midland Highway the average speed will be 120 kph for most drivers even though -

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's 112 kph because you can get away with two kilometres over but I wouldn't test it at anything else ever. That's -

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**Mr METCALFE** - It is 110, but a lot of people I see drive at 120 kph. On the Tasman Highway the same thing: the speed limit is generally 100 kph in a rural zone and people drive at 110 kph.

**CHAIR** - Do you mean when they are overtaking?

**Mr METCALFE** - No, just driving normally.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was always brought up you only ever did two kilometres over the speed limit, never any more.

**Mr WILLIE** - The RACT submission where they surveyed their members showed that creep in behaviour in travelling over the speed limit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Two kilometres is over.

**Mr WILLIE** - A lot of my questions have been answered by the previous questions. We have seen the introduction of some speed signs that are adjustable, do you think that would be a way forward?

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes, for example, the adjustable speed signs on the route from Hobart to Sorell is a real benefit particularly when you have high traffic backlog to slow people down before they reach the end of the tail. I do think that is a benefit.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is a crawl out there of an evening.

**Mr METCALFE** - It probably is during rush hour.

**Mr WILLIE** - I am not sure how expensive they are, but you would like to see some of those rolled out on some of the main roads so people could adjust to the conditions and then have a real time signal for that?

**Mr METCALFE** - Where there are particular hazards like queuing traffic on a routine basis then I would certainly recommend those, yes.

**Mr WILLIE** - Where they have reduced speed limits successfully overseas are there any strategies that have not been adopted in Australia? Apart from the ones you have already described regarding working with communities.

**Mr METCALFE** - The main thing is setting the speed limit according to the infrastructure risk rating.

**Mr WILLIE** - There are some countries doing that?

**Mr METCALFE** - Even jurisdictions in Australia are doing that. You may be aware that Tasmania has double the fatality rate or trauma rate compared to the ACT.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Triple Norway.

**Mr METCALFE** - Yes, with Sweden the best.

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**Mr WILLIE** - The ACT is doing this now for all roads?

**Mr METCALFE** - All roads, yes.

**Mr WILLIE** - Interesting.

**CHAIR** - Following on with the speed, with the Midland Highway and areas that do not have a median barrier or the wire rope, if there was a wire rope between them on areas like that then you would not feel the need to reduce the speed?

**Mr METCALFE** - The problem is that trauma will probably occur when you have a closing impact speed of over 70 kph. On every road where you have high traffic volumes and you do not have a median or a run off barrier then we need to reduce the speed limit. If we do, we could maintain 110 kph or even greater because the infrastructure will prevent serious trauma.

**CHAIR** - A question on page 8 of your submission in your examples, the Lyell Highway on the outskirts of Queenstown you are saying has a posted speed limit of 100 kph but the mean speed is probably 30 kph for a distance of four kilometres. What would you propose you would do in an area such as that? Would you propose it would lower to around 80 kph? Josh was saying if you had signs, a lot of those signs tell you 45 kph and they are only advised for corners and things. They are not legislated that people can only do that speed; it is an advised speed as opposed to a legislated speed. What would your thoughts be in an area where you have that problem?

**Mr METCALFE** - I would suggest lowering the speed limit when exiting Queenstown to something like 40 kmh until you get east of Mt Lyell and then raising it to 100 km because for me, seeing a speed limit of 100 kmh going up a hill riding a motorbike is a challenge.

**CHAIR** - Some people think because the sign says 100 km they have to do 100 km.

Can you expand on the Regional Road Safety Officer Program a little? Would it be in schools?

**Mr METCALFE** - What I am referring to there is having a Road Safety Officer who can do a road safety audit post-accident, particularly when trauma occurs.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, I was not sure because other people mentioned there is a lack of education in schools. Some schools have it but a lot do not. At one stage, they used to have road safety officers in schools.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Ray, you are a member of the Australasian College of Road Safety. Could you give the committee some of the examples as a member of that organisation? What do you do? Do you make recommendations to government?

**Mr METCALFE** - I have only been a member this year.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Congratulations.

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**Mr METCALFE** - Anybody can join. I have no particular qualification. We are talking tomorrow about setting up a Tasmanian branch and my hope is the college can actually help up promote road safety in the community, things like on the radio, advertising, events and various promotions.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Social media?

**Mr METCALFE** - Social media, yes, absolutely.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am interested to learn a bit more about that. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. Do you have any comments you would like to make in closing?

**Mr METCALFE** - I do not think so.

**CHAIR** - We appreciate you taking the time to put a submission in. It has been very informative and very interesting. Thank you for coming in and speaking with us today.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**The committee suspended from 3.23 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.**

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**Mr MARK TEMBY AND Mrs CATHERINE TEMBY WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** - Welcome to our public hearing. All evidence taken at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege, but anything you say outside of this room may not be afforded such privilege. There is a copy of information for witnesses on the table in front of you, if you are not aware of the process. The evidence you present is being recorded and the *Hansard* version will be published on the committee web page when it becomes available. The way we proceed is that we will ask you to speak to your submission and members will ask you some questions.

**Mrs TEMBY** - My husband, Mark, and I have firsthand experience driving, cycling and walking on our roads over many years. We have also conducted research and provided reports with the aim of improving road safety in Tasmania. What we have found is a lack of leadership, undue influence by some and insufficient consideration of others, and a need for cultural change. Politicians, public service and the community, we need to admit the problem and take action. We need to move from a resistance to change to all stakeholders working together collaboratively.

There is a need for methodical data collection and trend analysis, evaluation of legislation, penalties and enforcement. Targeted marketing using target-appropriate media and motivations to convey the safety message. More strategic use of resources including technology. Provision of a formal, easier avenue for community feedback.

We have witnessed and received many reports of ongoing antisocial behaviour including abusive, aggressive and dangerous driving; people driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol; driving unregistered, unroadworthy vehicles; driving without a licence. The high death toll in Tasmania is set among the near misses and unreported accidents. If people are not held to account, illegal behaviour escalates. It sets a bad example to others and exposes us all to unnecessary risks on our roads.

**Mr TEMBY** - In addition to what Cathy has been saying around the need for a cultural shift in attitude I will quickly summarise what is in the submission so it will make sense.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is fine.

**Mr TEMBY** - From my perspective, Tasmania needs to aim for national consistency using an evidence-based approach towards national standards and looking to best practice across other states.

The first two aspects dovetail. One is to focus on actual road conditions and how the road is now, rather than how the road may be sometime in the future. In keeping with this there needs to be a road safety audit of maximum speed ratings applied to those road conditions and also population and other environmental risks. That could be agricultural or depending on where that location happens to be.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Like a stock crossing, Mark?

**Mr TEMBY** - Yes, and it could schools and everything else, that sort of population risk.

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The next two also dovetail. One is to review the police and court-imposed fines. If you look at the combination of administrative penalties and statutory penalties, they should be working together, be it from the courts or from the police. With that there needs to be a reduced pressure on the court time and can be achieved through some penalties being shifted from the court system into the police system such as things like driving under the influence or dangerous driving offences. There are precedents in New South Wales, et cetera, where that direction has been trialled and is in effect now.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Don't we already do that to some extent?

**Mr TEMBY** - I do not know.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I heard on the radio only this week that somebody from Smithton had been tested for drink-driving and went three times over the limit and immediately had their licence suspended. That is an immediate reaction by police.

**Mr TEMBY** - That is immediate but not quite what I am saying.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I misunderstood.

**Mr TEMBY** - That does happen, like a car being confiscated or an immediate loss of licence.

What I am talking about here is where you get low-level driving under the influence (DUI), say it might be below 0.1 and that is handled entirely from go to whoa by the police. First offence with less than 0.1 and you will wear a \$600 fine, have your licence suspended for three months, full stop, it is done.

With the high-level offences that might be a second or third offence above 0.15, they will go to court. You will see in the submission later on or where you have read it there was a review of the court system going back a couple of years and it went down a similar sort of path. If you take a look at the way the police do their referrals between a Magistrates Court and a Supreme Court, there is no consistency in that referral to those specific courts. Looking at that from a Tasmanian police perspective with the way they are trying to communicate with the general public as far as education is concerned, what are the messages they are trying to send? The Magistrates Court would be mid-range. The Supreme Court might be where injuries occurred or dangerous driving has been involved, or where there needs to be consideration of many aggravating factors. In my opinion that sort of delineation between the police, Magistrates Courts, Supreme Court could be better utilised.

Finally, safer vehicles on the road through road worthiness checks. The road worthiness checks might be annual interstate, here they might be every couple of years, but that is for the consultation process to determine.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Bastian, do you have any questions?

**Dr SEIDEL** - Thank you very much, Cathy and Mark. My question is specifically to point number 4 in your submission. You are referring to the National Road Safety Standards there. Under point 2 you talk about the consistency of speed zones over certain distances and you give quite a specific example on the Huon under 4.13 where there are six changes over a

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distance of nine kilometres, which is crazy, isn't it? It is really difficult to follow if you have nine kilometres of road and six speed changes.

Do you have any further examples from other areas in the state or even within the Huon Valley?

**Mr TEMBY** - I will just go to the Huon Valley. Going back to 2015, we did a road speed limit audit of the Channel Highway. We recorded the odometer readings and the speed limit changes as we went. Some of these things have been corrected over time. For example, it used to be 90 kilometres per hour going down to Nichols Rivulet/Oyster Cove from the crossroad there. That has now been dropped to 70 km per hour. That was one of our recommendations at the time. There are a number of recommendations we made through that Road Safety Audit Report that have been accommodated.

The Channel Highway is a very good example of how you get these variations occurring, because there is a separation between local council and the Department of State Growth. If you try to get consistency or a lower speed limit, for example, in a rural/residential area, the decision gets thrown between council and DSG as to who is responsible. For example, the Old Huon Road everyone knows from South Hobart through to Longley. It will change on the Hobart Council end where it has speed limits of 50 and 60 broadly, 50 down at the urban end, 60 more broadly. There is a 70 zone where it goes through bush just before it gets to Fern Tree, but when you get to the Kingborough Council boundary, it goes from 50, 60, 70 to 90 and that is a steep descent, mossy roads, winding down through to Longley and it continues up the other side up to Lower Longley and that is all 90 kilometres per hour. That is because Kingborough Council has a maximum speed limit of 90 kph. The Huon has a maximum speed limit of 100 kph. You get variation occurring on that Nichols Rivulet Road I was talking about and it is very confusing.

When we did that audit of the whole Channel Highway, there were areas there where for 200 metres it went down to 60 kph and you were thinking why has it gone to 60 because there was nothing there. There was not a petrol station or anything, but it just went down to 60 for 200 metres and then went back up again. There is that inconsistency. I am sure other electorates could think of similar things.

**Dr SEIDEL** - You did the audit as a private citizen?

**Mr TEMBY** - Yes. What we were trying to do at the time was trying to see if there was a possibility of doing a bike touring group that went along the Huon Trail. That gets into one of the other aspects here of a tourist route. There is some work being done with tourist routes up through Penguin and such, it is not limited to the Huon. There are a lot of people thinking along similar lines. When we tried to align it with the Huon Trail that was the initiative for doing this sort of road speed limit, to see what was going on. When we started doing the road speeds, for example, you go off the Channel Highway and this is where you get some of the Targa routes, Wattle Grove Road for example where there were two deaths during Targa recently. That is a 100 kph zone. You can do 100 kph up and over the hill, but if you go on the Channel Highway it is 80 kph. The highway actually has a lower speed limit than the back roads. Another one was Lymington Road, on the other side of Cygnet, going around the Cygnet Coast Road was 100 kph and the dirt length had no speed limit whatsoever.

**Ms RATTRAY** - All gravel, all unsealed, are 80 kph.

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**Mr TEMBY** - It defaulted you see, but that was also a cycling route. It was in Where's My Ride Tasmania, and there was a cycling route we promote as a state and it is the wrong word, but it was an unlimited speed limit. It defaults to the 80, or the 100 -

**Ms RATTRAY** - But if it is not signed and you are not a Tasmanian you may not know it.

**Mr TEMBY** - That is right. We made representations to council over that and they spoke to Department of State Growth, it is now all speed limited and a good result.

**CHAIR** - I would like to ask you a question on this Tasmania Police Officer Allocation Model?

**Mrs TEMBY** - My concerns with regards to the actual enforcement, that there have been times when there has been insufficient coverage of police resources. I have done a fair bit of talking and emailing with regards to finding out about the allocation of police resources. I have been informed by Inspector Jason Elmer, among others and I have also emailed the honourable Mark Shelton, who was the minister at the time. They were assuring me there is a methodology to allocating police resources.

This was raised by a number of people in the community, for example in Geeveston, in Dover and beyond. A lot of the business community have raised concerns about people speeding and driving recklessly and have said they have reported incidences and not being sufficient response time, if at all. That is why I was questioning about the level of resources.

**CHAIR** - I am wondering though how the Police Officer Allocation Model actually works. Have they told you how it works? We heard today from the Police Association of Tasmania that RPOS, which is a road public order series, takes all the officers together and some go to roads. It is just a pool as opposed to specific traffic as there used to be in other specific areas. I am not sure other members heard, but I certainly am not too sure. I must ask some further questions about the Police Officer Allocation Model.

**Mrs TEMBY** - Yes, that was the explanation given to me when I questioned about the resources. Our question, with regards to resources, is while there are some great results from very specific road operations done, they are not done with sufficient flexibility in order to achieve the deterrents required. What I am trying to say is, there are areas, for example, the Arve Road, where people can drive recklessly and feel fairly certain they are not going to be caught. What we have been trying to say is, if you take a more strategic approach you could be ad hoc, half an hour here, half an hour there at different times of the day and different days of the week, so that people won't know whether or not they might be caught. That is a better use of police resources. You don't need to have more police. You need to use them more wisely.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. It will be interesting to find out a bit more about whether it is still operational or not. I am not sure about other members but it is not anything I have heard about.

**Mr WILLIE** - The submission concerns a lot of the Huon and Kingborough area. Does your interest take you elsewhere? Have you looked at other areas of the state?

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**Ms TEMBY** - We are community people and we like cycling. We also love the Huon Valley and we felt that a cycling route would be a good tourist operation from our perspective but it would be good for tourism and good for economic development. The route we were suggesting would take several days. People could stay overnight in various locations and it was already a Department of State Growth designated cycleway. However, when we looked at it and were starting to put it together we found all of these inconsistent speed limits and speed limits which were not consistent with the condition of the road.

**Mr TEMBY** - To expand on that a little, as far as other areas of the state are concerned, it would be in the submission here somewhere, I have talked about tourist routes. With tourist routes, they are applicable where we are in the Huon, the Huon Trail, Bruny Island, but they are also applicable, for example, up around Hagley and Deloraine. That has a heritage trail that tourists can follow but again the speed limits are generally 50 through the town and 100 between towns. The argument that I have had is if you want to do 100 go to the Bass Highway and then you can go from Devonport to Burnie and have a good old time.

The local business associations, the statewide tourism association can talk about wine routes, heritage routes, scenic routes, et cetera. It is not unique. For example, if you look north of Sydney, from Hornsby up through to Newcastle, they have the old Pacific Highway and motorbikes use it and Winnebagos use it and bicycles use it. It is speed limited to either 60 or 70 km per hour for the whole length. It is going to take you hours to get from Sydney to Newcastle going that way but if you want to get there in a hurry you go on the freeway.

This is relevant to the tourism industry. We conducted two surveys of businesses, including a survey of businesses along the Channel Highway and Grandvewe Cheese, and they said it was okay to talk about them publicly.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is fine.

**Mr TEMBY** - Grandvewe Cheese said that the 90 km speed limit outside their business, they had numerous complaints from tourists that they were finding it difficult to get off the highway and back on to the highway. If you take a look at the Channel Highway, to me it is not a highway, it is a country road and it is very narrow and very windy. There is business support. Even though it was a limited survey, we had two-thirds businesses support for a consistent speed limit along the Channel Highway at a lower level.

Similarly, with the old Huon Road. We asked for a recommended speed limit from the residents we surveyed and the common speed limit was 60 to 70 km per hour, where it is now 90 km and we had 86 per cent support from the residents who we interviewed along that road.

**Ms TEMBY** - That is the old Huon Road, not the Huon Highway. The Department of State Growth will say that the speed limit is not a target; that people should drive to conditions. However, the residents told us that when they drive to conditions, which is often slippery, icy, et cetera, they feel that there are people often behind them beeping the horn, saying it is a -

**Mrs TEMBY** - They feel that there's people often behind them beeping the horn saying it's a so-and-so kilometre per hour. They get harassed, so they don't feel that it's possible to drive to conditions because of this unrealistic expectation of the speed limit.

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**CHAIR** - When they're driving at what they consider a safe speed, other drivers want to go faster and harass them?

**Mrs TEMBY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Because they say it says 100, so you should be doing 100 - or 90, or whatever it's set at.

**Mrs TEMBY** - I also wanted to point out with regard to tourism that these are vulnerable road users because they're not familiar with the camber of the road, with the road conditions, with the changing weather conditions. Other vulnerable road users are the ones who are utilising active transport, such as the walkers, and the cyclists. From a walking perspective, you will notice in my submission that I raised pedestrian safety because there is not a safe lateral distance that is required, as there is with a cyclist, and that needs to be addressed because our roads don't have a footpath. They often don't have a verge on which to walk. We are told to exercise for our health. We are told to reduce emissions; to walk or cycle; so, we need to look at our vulnerable road users and their voices need to be heard.

**CHAIR** - That was an interesting point, that there's not that distance that there is when passing a bicycle as opposed to passing a pedestrian.

**Mrs TEMBY** - It's an oversight.

**Mr TEMBY** - If you lived around our way there are all sorts of recreational road users. You get horse riders, the same as Kingborough and elsewhere in the state; but there are young mums pushing prams, people walking their dogs. It's not just cyclists and the odd pedestrian; there are people doing their morning and evening walks.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In your submission, at 4.1 you've given some background. You believe that undue weight is afforded to groups such as industry and motorcycle and car enthusiasts, commuter and freight associations, and that shifts the focus away from road safety to a focus on speed and relative time. Do you have any evidence to support that?

**Mr TEMBY** - Probably not direct evidence, as in 'we were sitting in a meeting where they said such and such'. I will focus again on the old Huon Road and the Channel Highway. Both those roads, for people who live in Hobart, are very active on weekends for driving clubs and that is fine. I have nothing against that sort of thing. But then you take a look at, for example, trying to get that consistency of speed limit. We did a presentation similar to this for Kingborough Council, for the Huon Council, for the Department of State Growth and we spoke to Shane Gregory. Shane Gregory looked at our road safety audit and said that it was very good and it was the sort of thing that he wanted his staff to be doing; so, it wasn't some sort of amateur-hour document.

**Mrs TEMBY** - With regard to the Grove straight where you have Willie Smith's with a high friction - lots of people going in and out - and then you have the Grove Store with a bus stop and an intersection, and it's 100 kilometres an hour. That is a direct consequence of lobbying by the transport industry because we were told that trucks can't get up that hill if they have to slow down. That's not true. Trucks have sufficient motors to get up hills. That's one example of lobbying. I could go into more detail of the business community. There's only a handful of people in the Huon Valley. I know I am talking about the Huon Valley but that is

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what I know and that is a definite example where it should be a safer speed, but it's the business community that's lobbied hard - Huon Aquaculture, Lindsay Doyle and a few others who lobbied hard. They think that it is going to save them money, but it is only a couple of seconds in difference. When you think of the difference in time, this handful, if it is handful, of the business community think that it is going to cost them money because it takes their drivers a longer time, or it is difficult for their trucks to get up the hill. It is minuscule. There will be much wringing of hands if there is an accident there. I really don't think it is worth, for the sake of this undue influence, to not have it as a safe condition.

This bit about road safety and speed limits has been going on for years. Robert Armstrong brought it up. If you look back on a similar kind of thing as this inquiry -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I think he got a bridge. Well done, Rob.

**Mrs TEMBY** - With regard to speed limits, and it is quoted in *Hansard*, I believe, that 'I'll cop it'. He felt that he was going to be adversely affected by a certain few in the community if he was to reduce the speed limits. I can't remember the words, but I remember reading it in a previous inquiry.

**Mr TEMBY** - If I could just quickly expand on that Grove Straight aspect too. You go up above Grove Straight, you have the Sandfly Bends. Down in the Huon it is nicknamed 'spare parts corner'. DSG got the speed limit there brought down to 80 kph, because it had one of the highest accident, if not the highest, accident rate in the state. Not death or injury, but accident rate, because people crash. That was brought down to an 80 kph zone. The quote from Frances Bender from down the Huon was that 'time is money'. One of the things I asked - and I was talking with Dr Seidel some time back - which trucks are doing 100 around those bends? It is a nonsense argument. They couldn't possibly do 100 kilometres per hour around those bends, so how was time money? What they are actually referring to is their own private travel. They are being held up from their own private travel. It is not the truck drivers.

**Mrs TEMBY** - I know we're nearly out of time, but one more quick thing going back to penalties and deterrents. We lost a member of our community. This is why we are passionate. His name was Craig Saunders.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I've read about Craig.

**Mrs TEMBY** - Fine, upstanding contributor. We weren't particularly close friends; however, he was cycling, he had high vis, he was going single file, and he was a father of four. The excuse from the driver who killed him was that he 'had the sun in his eyes'. The judge dismissed it, but the consequences of that - Mark, you know what the details are.

**Mr TEMBY** - The driver is currently under suspension from driving. He had four previous DUIs. I think his vehicle is unregistered, but I am not too sure about that one. I am not too sure if that case was actually heard by the Magistrates Court. It should have been Supreme Court.

**Mrs TEMBY** - It went to the coroner and he had an 18-month suspended sentence, or something or other. When you consider that as a deterrent, when he was already driving unlicensed, unregistered, and had previous driving under the influence offences, we need to provide a greater deterrence through our penalties and enforcement.

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**CHAIR** - I don't think he was driving under the influence at the time.

**Mrs TEMBY** - No, he had previous driving under the influence offences. Mark has a conclusion if you have time. It is only very quick.

**Mr TEMBY** - In conclusion, we ask that when you do come up with your final recommendations, you consider an improved process for taking future change on board. We have talked about that delineation between DSG, Tasmania Police and local councils. In my opinion there is a need for a ministerial steering committee. It would be going across various ministries - Justice and Police, for example. That steering committee would incorporate departments like Tasmania Police, Courts, DSG, Transport Commissioner, and Towards Zero. I would keep it at that level. That needs to be the decision-making body.

The second layer to whole thing, which is a consultation level, is where you get your road user associations, the media, tourism association, local council association; because they are not really decision makers. They might have good opinions, but they are not decision makers.

That is about it. The processes in the past haven't worked, and we have been tossed to and fro like flotsam.

**Mrs TEMBY** - You've spoken legislation, penalties. The final thing being enforcement. Councillor Christine Campbell witnessed, or reported an accident near her house. As it turned out, the driver was unlicensed. She spoke to the local police, and the local police said they know of unlicensed drivers who regularly drive in the area.

I have taken a burnt-up piece of tyre that I have picked up off the road. As we collect litter, we collect alcohol containers - which are increasing. This tyre, just a fragment of rubber and wire. I have taken that into the police and they say they know of these people. They don't care. Nothing we can do. I have spoken to businesses that say that the police just move them down the road.

As I say, the legislation, the penalties, and the enforcements need to be evaluated, reviewed and improved.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. Bastian, do you have any more questions.

**Dr SEIDEL** - No.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for your submission, and for coming in. I really appreciate you coming up and speaking with the committee. It is very important to hear your thoughts.

**Mrs TEMBY** - We do appreciate the opportunity.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**