
May 2000
Introduction

On 23 September 1997, the Minister for Roads and Ports requested the Road Safety Committee of the Parliament of Victoria to undertake an inquiry into pedestrian safety with the following terms of reference:

Terms of Reference

To inquire into, consider and make recommendations on the incidence and prevention of pedestrian accidents, reporting on:

1. The characteristics of pedestrian accidents in urban and rural areas.
2. The over-representation of specific groups, particularly young children (4 -14 years), older people (60 and over) and intoxicated persons, in pedestrian accidents.
3. Countermeasures used in Victoria, Australia and other comparable overseas jurisdictions to reduce the number and severity of pedestrian accidents with reference to road environment treatments, land use planning, behavioural change programs and vehicle modifications, including where appropriate, a benefit cost assessment of each action.
4. The scope for new initiatives to reduce pedestrian accidents.
5. The need for changes to legislation or statutory requirements as a result of the Inquiry. In conducting the Inquiry, the Committee was requested to seek views and information from the full range of road user groups, relevant organisations and Government authorities.

In June 1999 the Road Safety Committee presented in Parliament its report, entitled "Walking Safely - Inquiry into the Incidence and Prevention of Pedestrian Accidents".

VicRoads coordinated the Government Response to the twenty-one recommendations made in the Road Safety Committee's report. Each of the following government agencies was invited by VicRoads to comment on recommendations relevant to their responsibilities and interests, and unless otherwise indicated, all agencies agreed with the recommendations of the Committee:

- Department of Education Employment and Training
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Infrastructure
- Liquor Licensing Victoria
- Transport Accident Commission
- Victoria Police
- Department of Justice
- Victorian Taxi Directorate
Response to Recommendations

Recommendation: 1.

That driver training should place more emphasis on teaching young people the appropriate skills to drive safely, to be aware of the surrounding environment and other road users.

Response

This recommendation is supported. Driver training programs and driving instruction is influenced through the content set in licence tests, and in related educational materials. The proposed Novice Driver Kit is under development by VicRoads to replace the Victorian Traffic Handbook. Whilst continuing to emphasise road law and road safety issues, it will also provide information and strategies for safe driving skills and developing awareness of other road users, including a section on sharing the road with pedestrians. VicRoads current redevelopment of the hazard perception test and knowledge test components of licence testing will provide for more questions and video scenarios related to pedestrians than at present. Driving instructors will be made aware of this and it is anticipated that they will modify their driver training programs accordingly. VicRoads is considering the provision of additional training resources including licence test practice questions on the Internet and on CD-ROM which would also have an influence on the way driving instructors train learner drivers.

Driving instructors are now required to successfully complete the TAFE delivered Certificate Course in order to gain accreditation as a driving instructor. VicRoads and the Victorian Taxi Directorate (within the Department of Infrastructure) will work together to ensure the currency of the course in relation to driver training strategies and road safety content and will investigate ways to continually improve standards. In consultation with the Professional Driver Trainers Association of Victoria and the Victorian Taxi Directorate, VicRoads will develop a communication strategy to ensure instructors are better informed in relation to the importance of (and strategies for) developing the hazard perception skills of learner drivers.

The Government also supports the need for learner drivers to gain extensive driving practice (whilst accompanied by a fully licensed driver) under a wide variety of conditions prior to gaining their drivers licence. The VicRoads "Keys Please" program and the TAC "Help" program encourage learner drivers to obtain more supervised driving practice prior to licensing. This will be reinforced with the release of the Novice Driver Kit, which will include a driving experience logbook for the learner driver. The new TAC 'Drive Smart' CD-ROM training product for learner drivers, due for release in May, is designed to accelerate the learning of cognitive skills such as hazard perception.
Recommendation: 2.

That the general urban speed limit on local roads be 50 km/h but councils should have the option to apply to retain 60 km/h where justified.

Response

This recommendation is supported. The Government is strongly committed to achieving 50 km/h speed limits in urban residential streets as part of developing effective traffic safety measures. The Government has been considering advice and noting community input on how best to implement the commitment. Arrangements are also proposed to provide for retention of a 60 km/h limit where justified.

Recommendation: 3.

That the Minister for Roads and Ports recommends to the Federal Office of Road Safety that a review of speed tolerances in Australian Design Rule 18.5.1.1.2 relating to speedometers is required as a matter of urgency.

Response

This recommendation is supported in principle. It is believed that most modern speedometers are already more accurate than that required in ADR 18 (+/- 10% of the indicated speed). However, the Commonwealth Government has adopted a policy of aligning the Australian Design Rules (ADR) with the International United Nations (UN) ECE Regulations. The Department of Transport and Regional Services is evaluating a proposal to adopt the UN ECE Regulation on speedometer accuracy. The ECE Regulation offers a number of advantages over the current ADR that would help ensure that, in future, speedometers would not indicate less than the vehicle's actual speed. A draft new ADR adopting the ECE Regulation will be circulated to Australian transport agencies for comment in May 2000. VicRoads will support and promote the adoption of the new ADR on speedometer accuracy. This process will take some time and will only affect vehicles manufactured after the introduction of the new ADR.

Recommendation: 4.

That school zones of 40 km/h in urban areas and 60 km/h in rural 100 km/h speed zones be implemented.

Response

This recommendation is supported using alternative implementation methods. The Government supports 40 km/h and 60 km/h speed limits as appropriate in school zones. In specific circumstances the use of full-time lower speed limits (ie, permanently displayed and applicable 24 hours a day) at appropriate locations in urban and rural areas is supported. Typically, permanent lower speed limit zones are effective where supported by the needs of the abutting land uses and/or engineering measures to reduce vehicle speed, eg where there are children's play grounds or sporting venues in proximity to a school. Permanent lower speed limits are however often not required outside the times of access to and from schools each school day. Research shows that use of inappropriate speed limit signage diminishes the value of the signage if it is not applicable to the circumstances.
Fixed signs that display lower speed limits applicable only for a specified period of time each school day are low in cost but by themselves are not effective in reducing risk to child pedestrians. Evaluations have found that fixed signs indicating a lower speed for specified periods of time each school day, do not result in any discernible change in driver behaviour. The manual or automated variable (folding) signs used in Victoria, display lower speed limits for specified periods of time each school day. Although more costly, these types of signs have been proven to achieve significant speed reductions. VicRoads is currently trialing automatic variable speed limit signs.

VicRoads is revising its guidelines for vehicle speed management near schools. Treatments covered will include school children signs, school zone signs, variable speed limit signs (manual and automatic) and additional time specific conspicuity devices and permanent lower speed limits. The guidelines will take into account land use, pedestrian needs and the traffic environment of individual schools in assessing risk to child pedestrians. In determining the appropriate speed management approach, the school zone speed limit, engineering treatments and other initiatives will be considered to develop the best possible treatment for each individual school.

For declared roads, VicRoads currently provides funding for variable lower speed zones on a 50/50 cost basis shared with schools or councils on the basis of highest risk. Joint funding approaches have enabled more variable speed zones and other treatments to be installed than otherwise would be possible due to the competing demands on available funds. In the case of local roads, the local community meets the full cost of speed management treatments.

Under the Statewide Blackspot Program, schools will be able to apply for consideration for full funding of speed management treatments on declared or local roads as 'potential Blackspot' treatments. The applications will compete with other 'potential Blackspot' projects and will be prioritised on the basis of risk.

**Recommendation: 5.**

That the Department of Infrastructure develop urban design guidelines using the philosophies found in the Queensland Integrated Regional Transport Plan, the Dutch and Swedish sustainable road safety principles.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. The Department of Infrastructure (Dol) is working in partnership with all stakeholders to improve the urban design guidelines related to residential areas through the 'Residential Code 2000' project which includes the review of VicCode 1 and the Good Design Guide. Specific design guidelines about road safety principles are likely to be developed as urban design planning notes as part of a series on safety (including pedestrian safety) and environmental design supporting the new code.

In consultation with local government and Dol, VicRoads will develop guidelines on good road safety practice covering the principles and processes required to ensure road safety outcomes to agreed standards from land use plans and development proposals. Appropriate regulation will be considered requiring developers to obtain a satisfactory
independent Road Safety Audit certifying general compliance with the road safety guidelines, as a pre-requisite for development approval.

**Recommendation: 6.**

That the Minister for Planning and Local Government ensure that all municipalities develop a road safety plan that meets the needs of all road users.

**Response**

**This recommendation is supported in principle.** The Government supports the principle that all municipalities develop a road safety plan. This can best be achieved in conjunction with other relevant plans, such as Corporate Plans and Municipal Public Health Plans. To date, forty three municipalities have received Government funding to assist with the development of road safety strategies and action plans under the *Saferoads* Local Government Road Safety Initiative, which is being implemented through a partnership involving VicRoads, TAC, VicPol, RACV, MAV and LGPro. Councils are being encouraged to embrace their important role in addressing road safety. *Saferoads* provides further support to councils to build on their existing road safety and injury prevention initiatives.

**Recommendation: 7.**

That Road Safety Audits be required on all significant planning applications and traffic engineering proposals and systematically used to review the entire road network over a period of time.

**Response**

**This recommendation is supported in part.** The Government supports the intention of promoting the widespread use of Road Safety Audits. The Government will examine the best mechanisms for requiring the auditing of significant planning proposals including development proposals by government, such as those relating to schools. All road projects, on declared roads with a cost exceeding $5 million, will continue to be audited at four key stages (namely, feasibility, draft design, detailed design and pre-opening) and at least 20% of other projects will be audited at a minimum of one stage. Local Government will be encouraged to do the same with local road projects. It is proposed those blackspot projects funded under the new Statewide Blackspot Program and costing more than $150,000 will require an audit of at least one design stage.

A program to systematically audit the entire road network over a period of time is however, not supported, as this would be neither practical nor cost-effective. The Government's approach is to identify and treat locations with a high crash history as part of the Blackspot Program and to identify and treat locations which are high risk and likely to result in crashes. In addition the Government supports road safety auditing, as described above for new projects, in conjunction with development of arterial road corridor strategies, and as an integral part of routine maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment work based on prioritisation of risk and available funds. Local Government will be encouraged to do the same.
**Recommendation: 8.**

That the role and effectiveness of Community Road Safety Councils be reviewed.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. An evaluation of community road safety programs is currently being conducted by the Australasian Association of Road Authorities (Austroads), “to assess the benefits of community road safety programs, identify best practice in community road safety and develop a method for ranking projects”. The evaluation report will provide valuable input to the development of effective campaigns through the Community Road Safety Council (CRSC) network in Victoria. VicRoads has examined the role of CRSCs and will review their effectiveness in the light of the Austroads report. Linkages between CRSCs and local government have been developed and actively strengthened as a result of the requirement for CRSC campaigns to be consistent with the priorities and objectives in the Victorian Government Road Safety Strategy and to flow directly from municipal road safety strategies. VicRoads will evaluate this strategy to determine its effectiveness in achieving implementation of high quality CRSC campaigns that raise community awareness of road safety issues.

**Recommendation: 9.**

That a road safety course encompassing engineering and social sciences be developed and delivered through a Victorian tertiary institution to broaden the academic background of people involved in road safety.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. Monash University Institute of Transport Studies is developing an industry education program in Transport and Traffic to increase the knowledge and skills of road safety practitioners which will be introduced progressively in the 2001 academic year. Upon completion of the course participants will be awarded a `certificate of completion`. As the course has no academic entry requirements for participants, it will be widely accessible to those working in the road safety field and is particularly relevant to Community Road Safety Council road safety officers and local government officers involved in the development of road safety strategies. Successful completion of the industry program provides an articulation path to the graduate program at three levels consisting of a Graduate Certificate, Post Graduate Diploma and a Masters in Transport and Traffic.

VicRoads is actively participating in, as well as funding, the development of the subject ‘Introduction to Road Safety’ which constitutes a core subject of the industry program but which will also be offered as a ‘stand alone’ subject. Other subjects in the course include ‘Transport and Traffic Engineering, ‘Transport Planning’ and ‘Highway Engineering’. The course will be delivered through distance education, with each subject being the equivalent of 13 weeks work. The course is to be supplemented by additional seminars on a range of road safety issues.

The University of New England also offers a Road Safety Studies program by distance education consisting of both a Graduate Certificate and a Graduate Diploma in Road Safety. Road Safety practitioners are already availing themselves of this educational opportunity.
**Recommendation: 10.**

That compulsory testing for the presence of alcohol and other drugs be introduced for pedestrians involved in a road crash who present to hospital.

**Response**

The objectives underlying this recommendation are supported in principle. Analysis of blood samples is supported for the purposes of research and countermeasure development. The collection of a comprehensive set of blood samples from fatally and seriously injured pedestrians is a pre-requisite for any reliable evaluation of the prevalence and relevance of alcohol and drug misuse in pedestrian trauma and is critical to the development of effective countermeasures. As sufficient powers already exist to allow collection of blood samples from pedestrians for specific research projects to be conducted, it is unlikely that compulsory testing would be required.

The practicalities of collection, analysis and storage of blood samples are complex and will require careful consideration. These include the cost, concerns and workload implications for hospital emergency room staff and the consequent need to negotiate and consult with affected hospitals, the Australian College of Emergency Medicine and any other relevant medical groups. Ethical and civil liberties issues and legal liability issues for medical staff taking blood samples must also be carefully considered.

A research project involving the Alfred Hospital and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine is being considered. This study would attempt to obtain data on the use of the drugs alcohol, benzodiazepines, amphetamines, opiates and the active component of cannabis in people who present to the Emergency Department after traffic crashes, including crashes involving pedestrians. The results of this research project would provide useful information on an appropriate methodology including an appropriate pedestrian sample size and assist in identifying any additional implementation issues.

The Government does not support compulsory testing in relation to ‘apportioning blame’ for crashes involving pedestrians. The Government considers the objective of preventing high levels of intoxication and drugs misuse is better served through educating the community by targeting identified ‘at risk’ groups. The issue of compulsory testing may need to be reviewed when the research outcomes are known.

**Recommendation: 11.**

That the Responsible Serving of Alcohol program be reviewed to determine its effectiveness in preventing patrons reaching unacceptable levels of intoxication.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. Liquor Licensing Victoria is responsible for the delivery of the Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) course and is satisfied that for the current course, there has been sufficient formal evaluation and on-going user feedback such that a further review of the effectiveness of the RSA workshop is not necessary at this time. However, Liquor Licensing Victoria has advised that if other stakeholders are of the view that further evaluation of the effectiveness of the RSA course in "preventing
patrons reaching unacceptable levels of intoxication" is warranted, it would fully cooperate. All other Government agencies consulted support this recommendation.

An evaluation as recommended will determine the effectiveness of RSA in preventing patrons reaching unacceptable levels of intoxication. VicRoads and Liquor Licensing Victoria will jointly evaluate the RSA course in 2001/2002.

**Recommendation: 12.**

That a legal definition of intoxication be established.

**Response**

This recommendation is not supported to the extent that it envisages a definition based on blood alcohol (BAC) level. Establishing a legal definition of intoxication based on a BAC level is fraught with difficulty. Intoxication is considered to be a condition in which a person is temporarily deprived of their normal mental or physical faculties. It is shown by impaired behaviour rather than a particular BAC level. In addition, there is no simple relationship between BAC and intoxication. The establishment of a legal definition of intoxication based on a BAC would create significant practical difficulties for both licensees and police as well as having legislative implications in relation to creating the power for licensees to require patrons to undertake a breath test.

However, VicRoads will investigate the literature, research and practices from around the world in relation to identifying intoxication, to determine the feasibility of achieving a more specific set of criteria by which to define a state at which a consumer is considered to be intoxicated. Such measures, which could be included in a revised Responsible Service of Alcohol course, may serve to provide licensees with a greater measure of confidence in relation to responsible service of alcohol and the detection of intoxication among patrons.

The issue of defining intoxication may be further informed by the outcomes of the forthcoming Inquiry into Public Drunkenness to be conducted by the joint all-party Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee and may result in the Government wishing to give further consideration to this recommendation.

**Recommendation: 13.**

That breathalyser units be available at all licensed premises and their use encouraged.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported in principle. Availability of breath alcohol analysers in licensed premises would enable patrons to monitor their alcohol consumption for the purpose of making safe and responsible drinking and transport choices. Breath alcohol analysers in licensed premises have been found to be effective when licensees support their installation and encourage their use, as with other Responsible Serving of Alcohol practices. Education of licensees, their staff and patrons about the value of breath alcohol analysers and responsible service and consumption of alcohol will be an essential component of this strategy. VicRoads is investigating appropriate incentives to encourage licensees of larger venues including hotels and clubs to install breath alcohol analysers and support their use, in consultation with the liquor industry peak bodies.
**Recommendation: 14.**

That Victoria Police and the Liquor Licensing Commission conduct routine inspections of licensed premises.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. The Liquor Licensing Commission was abolished in February 1999. Liquor Licensing Victoria has no enforcement role and focuses on harm minimisation through education, training and advisory services. Complaints about licensed premises are referred to and investigated by the Victoria Police. The Government will consider how the continuation of this function can be most efficiently and effectively conducted including use of the Police Licensed Premises Information System (LIPIS) database, and investigation of the New Zealand, `Last Drink Survey' concept. LIPIS provides data on locations where drink driving offenders had consumed alcohol prior to detection by the police. The `Last Drink Survey' concept would provide real time data on alcohol and drugs involvement in all activity investigated by police, providing specific capability to identify locations (including licensed premises) where alcohol has been consumed. These combined data could provide valuable information to assist police to formulate strategies to identify and target `problem' licensed premises where alcohol serving practices may be contributing to high levels of patron intoxication.

**Recommendation: 15.**

That promotional material highlighting the danger of becoming an intoxicated pedestrian be developed.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. Promotional campaigns or activities targeting intoxicated pedestrians would best be conducted at the local level, for instance, within local government multi-action pedestrian programs such as WalkSafe and local government/Community Road Safety Council programs and campaigns. The local context maximises opportunities to access local networks and facilities for the purpose of conveying messages to target groups within the community. Publicity research and promotional approaches targeting intoxicated pedestrians utilised in other Australian jurisdictions, as well as overseas, will be investigated. This research will determine the most appropriate methods for delivering messages about the risks of intoxication to pedestrians which gives consideration to the need to influence the behaviour of the particular target audience and sub-groups within that audience eg young people compared with older adults. Information acquired through this process will be used by VicRoads to develop guidelines for CRSCs and local government to produce well targeted promotional material as part of their local campaigns.
Recommendation: 16.
That government ensures that the Australian Road Rules being introduced in Victoria do not diminish the current road safety standards in Victoria.

Response
This recommendation is supported. The development of Australian Road Rules will be monitored to ensure they will not diminish current road safety standards in Victoria. Any changes to improve safety will be proposed for national adoption.

Recommendation: 17.
That Traffic Infringement Notice penalties under Road Safety (Traffic) Regulations 1988 for pedestrian misdemeanours be raised to $50.00.

Response
This recommendation is supported. All Traffic Infringement Notices will be reviewed during 2000, in conjunction with a review of infringement systems being undertaken throughout Victoria by the Department of Justice. The Infringement Notice Penalty needs to be high enough to be taken seriously by potential offenders. Before regulations can be amended, this recommendation requires the preparation of a Regulatory Impact Statement to assess whether an increase is fair and can be justified.

Recommendation: 18.
That pedestrians be alerted to the dangers of illegal road crossing behaviour and offences through education campaigns.

Response
This recommendation is supported. Any change to pedestrian penalties will be supported by community education campaigns alerting the public to these changes and the dangers of illegal crossing behaviour. VicRoads and the Transport Accident Commission will investigate the suitability of broader mass media approaches in order to determine the most appropriate communication methods for the purpose.

Pedestrian campaigns conducted by Community Road Safety Councils and more recently by local government, with the targeted support of Police, provide an important local focus for the delivery of pedestrian safety messages. As well as specific publicity campaigns, on-going education of groups within the community is necessary in relation to the dangers of illegal crossing behaviour. Programs implemented through local government such as the WalkSafe multi-action pedestrian program, Walk with Care (pedestrian safety for older people) and Safe Routes to Schools, which targets school age children and their parents, will continue to be implemented. The promotion of safe pedestrian behaviours for children is also facilitated through the curriculum of Victoria's primary, and secondary schools and through early childhood educational and health networks. Publicity and education opportunities will involve partnerships and coordinated activity involving VicRoads, Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), TAC, the Department of Infrastructure, (Public Transport Education Programs), local government, Community Road Safety Councils and Police.
**Recommendation: 19.**

That VicRoads encourages research conducted by the Federal Office of Road Safety (now the Australian Transport Safety Bureau) and the National Road Transport Commission to develop Australian Design Rules and design standards that will help to reduce injury severity to pedestrians.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. The Commonwealth Government has adopted a policy of aligning the Australian Design Rules (ADR) with the International United Nations (UN) ECE Regulations. A draft European pedestrian safety standard for passenger cars is under consideration and is expected to result in a suitable International standard becoming available for adoption. The draft European standard includes a test procedure that simulates head and leg impacts with the front of the subject vehicle. The likelihood of head and leg injuries to a human pedestrian can be deduced from these tests. Vehicle designers can use the tests to develop designs that minimise the risk of injury. The Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), a joint national program sponsored by various state government and road user organisations, is trialing the draft European standard. Professor Jack McLean of Adelaide University is testing vehicles using the European Draft standard test procedure. The results indicate the relative risk of pedestrian injury for the various model vehicles tested. VicRoads is closely monitoring the outcomes of this work. VicRoads, through the Department of Transport and Regional Services and the National Road Transport Commission will actively promote the test findings to the vehicle industry and, subject to a satisfactory Regulatory Impact Statement, press for early adoption of the European standard.

**Recommendation: 20.**

That research be conducted on bull bars to ascertain their level of involvement in pedestrian crashes.

**Response**

This recommendation is supported. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau is undertaking a study to determine the degree to which bull bars are involved in pedestrian crashes and will also investigate the risks and benefits associated with the use of bull bars. The review will incorporate single vehicle, multiple vehicle and pedestrian crashes. The methodology includes a literature review of material on the subject published in Australia and overseas and examination of coroners' reports on a national basis in relation to the involvement of bull bars in crashes, including those involving pedestrians. The study will quantify the risk which bull bars present to pedestrians and attempt to quantify the reduction in injury to vehicle occupants attributable to bull bars in the case of collisions with animals. The results of this study and any recommendations for further investigation/action will be completed around mid 2000.
**Recommendation: 21.**

That children, carers and bus drivers be educated in safer behaviour around school buses.

**Response**

*This recommendation is supported.* VicRoads provides bus safety workshops and bus safety transition programs targeting schools, children, carers, bus owners/operators and drivers. VicRoads and the Departments of Infrastructure (Dol) and Education, Employment and Training (DEET) will continue to develop high quality, bus safety education resources. DEET and Dol are currently developing a Bus Safety Professional development television program for primary and secondary teachers for broadcasting to all schools on the satellite TV network (SOFNet) during 2000. A School Bus Safety Reference Group has also been established by Dol to identify, monitor and recommend strategies to address school bus safety.

In addition, Austroads is currently undertaking a national school bus safety project to review current practice and research in relation to school bus safety for the purpose of developing a set of recommendations that may be incorporated into a National School Bus Safety Strategy. It is envisaged that the Strategy will underpin the development of countermeasures (including education) in each jurisdiction to maximise safety on and around school buses.