

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll

Ms Gerardine Eales

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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My name is Gerardine Eales. My son Jackson was lost on the roads in 2016. My family know first hand the trauma around road death .

I thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion in this inquiry .

My submission : 'For Jack'

A number of issues I feel need to be addressed :

In no particular order. All are of Merit

Recognising that the Road Toll is a Crisis Situation:

If the number of lives lost in Vic. were by accidental or deliberate gun usage or by domestic or other violence there would be outrage and serious reform sort.

Why does the general population accept lives lost on the roads as simply collateral damage of owning a motor vehicle? It is time for serious changes.

Road Trauma is horrendous to all those involved . However at present it seems to go somewhat unrecognised. Have the general public simply chosen to deny it if they are not affected, or has it become desensitised by recognising statistics but not the human face of loss.

Statistics are counted but very rarely is the human element felt.

It is heartbreaking that a MVA death is reported after a football match or even the weather . Such is the pecking order of reporting . Unless, like my sons case a particularly horrendous accident scene can be filmed for ratings, the death seems barely newsworthy. This is a absolute slight on our society.

Awareness: I suggest that within a practical time, in prime time, media, with the families consent, should show a picture of the life lost. Eg. This is ... who last week lost their life on ... road. They were married etc . This picture would tell story of a loved one, not just a statistic. This would also put out the message that ' it could actually happen to me'

Prevention: Aggressive Media Advertising

I feel we should be heading down a few avenues with the media .

Firstly, I recently observed a TAC advertisement that has been repeated from thirty yrs ago in regard to wearing seat

belts . These type of advertisements have strong powerful messages that cannot be ignored. The old campaigns hard hitting vision of vehicles colliding is distressing, but this is the reality of the road toll. A advertisement of a young person on the side of the road after killing his mate will hit home. A woman who just killed her child after a long lunch. Texting then driving into the back of a truck . A sentence being handed down. Again reality .
Spotlighting actual cases in the Media : Families willing to discuss the trauma of losing their loved one . This has been done before and I believe was extremely effective in raising awareness.

I am sure other families, like mine, would be willing to tell their story in the hope of reducing the road toll. This is a nightmare we live daily and would do anything to stop this waste of life.

Mateship: Sorry your not driving tonight , to a friend over the limit .You took some pills .. I'm not getting in the car with you . Dad, your not up to driving anymore, let's talk about it ... You would hate it if you hurt someone

First Responders: These workers attend terrible scenes. Maybe insight into their perspective would be of value.

The gentle approach in the media is simply not working , nor is there enough Media Advertising to make a impact. Tac Ads should be on multiple channels nightly.

Complacency: The general public are complacent about their responsibilities as drivers. Driving is a privilege and not a right.

Young drivers are taught Road rules and how to pass a driving test. This does not prepare them for actual driving situations. After passing their licence with their Instructor, they should go onto to complete a hazardous driving course as mandatory, to better equip them in a solo driving situation. All Learner Drivers, whatever age , should be involved in a program explaining the responsibilities of driving and the impact of the Road toll, whether it be from serious injury, job loss, or loss of life.

Mature Driver Evaluation. After eg 70 yrs of age, drivers need a medical clearance and also sit a driver reevaluation and information session. This could be seen as a positive, not a negative. Reskilling if necessary to better them on the roads.

Harsher Penalties:

It is sickening to see the appalling inconsistency of sentences handed down to Culpable and Dangerous Drivers. A serious overhaul is needed .

There is no deterrent in the sentencing, and no justice for the victim or families. A driver who knowingly drives when he shouldn't, or abuses road rules and speeds, is no less guilty of murder than a man that hits his wife, or hits a innocent bystander, or pulls the trigger on a rifle. The victim is no less dead simply because they died on the roads. The impact of their loss no less .

Culpable and dangerous driving should have harsh consistent Penalties of mandatory imprisonment with very little room for deviation.

In the area of mobile phones , monetary penalties do not seem a deterrent. If the Hoon law approach could be taken to Mobile phone users, the numbers would drop. That is, say after the third offence, vehicles were impounded it would be a harsh reality check.

Alcohol/Drug use. It is extremely frustrating to see the repeat offenders go before the court time and time again . Imprisonment should be the only answer if driver education and interlock devices have proved ineffective.

Monetary fines can be paid off over a number of years, and seem to have little effect. Hoon laws to apply.

Speeding Drivers: As above to Mobile Phone Users

International drivers: whilst we want our international visitors to enjoy our country it has been become apparent that a lot are not fully equipped to drive on our roads. At test should be passed at Vic roads , before a car can be hired .

Medical Transparency and Harsher Penalties for non Compliance:

This is another area where very harsh penalties should be in place.

All Drivers have a legal responsibility to make known any medical condition they have, and under medical supervision can still hold a licence. This is responsible driving. However if a driver lies deliberately on a medical form in order to hold a licence this is deceptive. Harsh penalties for not being transparent should be in place. Immediate loss of licence until deemed fit to drive, and large monetary loss.

Responsibility should also fall on a employer if driving is job requirement to ensure their employer has access to medicals.

In the area of a heavy vehicle driver who lies, suspension of licence for a minimum 2 yr period, monetary loss and also a employer fine should be in place as a deterrent. A heavy vehicle, such as a fuel tanker, is at the hands of a unfit driver, a lethal weapon.

Heavy vehicle drivers have known added responsibility. They are also answerable not just to Vic roads, Vic laws, but Aus standards as well.

Aus roads guidelines 2016 for example.. .. The third edition states ...

The criteria for a unconditional licence are not met if a person is subject to angina pectoris. . A person who lies on his medical that he has this condition repeatedly should be classed as unfit and also meeting the descriptor of a a Culpable driver . The definition being.. Fails to take good care to avoid the death or greivous bodily harm of another. Regardless of any mitagating factors they should be classed unfit to drive and deemed Culpable as they knowingly drove a heavy vehicle when unfit.

Black spots: Victoria has a number of recognised Black spots and known dangerous roads that have had fatalities occur on. These should be given immediate attention. Funding should be a priority .

Thank you for this opportunity. I hope that the number of submissions given in the Inquiry can help bring a safer Victoria forward.

Thank you for your consideration

Gerardine Eales

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File1:

File2:

File3: