



Submission To the Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll

December 2019

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Introduction

The Victorian Parliament requires the Economy and Infrastructure Committee to inquire into, consider and report, on the increase in the Victorian road toll in 2019, including but not limited to, an examination of the —

- current Victorian Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020 and progress towards its aim of a 20 per cent reduction in fatalities with 200 or less lives lost annually by 2020;
- adequacy and scope of the current driver drug and alcohol testing regime;
- adequacy of current speed enforcement measures and speed management policies;
- adequacy of current response to smart phone use, including the use of technology to reduce the impact of smart phone use on driver distraction;
- measures to improve the affordability of newer vehicles incorporating driver assist technologies;
- adequacy of current road standards and the road asset maintenance regime;
- adequacy of driver training programs and related funding structures such as the L2P program; and
- adequacy and accuracy of road collision data collection — put and agreed to.

RoadSafe Westgate Community Road Safety Council (CRSC) is an independent incorporated non-profit organisation incorporated under Associations Incorporation Act 1981. The council is run by volunteers with no directly paid personnel.

RoadSafe Westgate CRSC has been in active operation for over 30 years and has a very strong local Government representation from the municipalities of the Cities of Hobsons Bay, Melton, Maribyrnong and Wyndham. There is also a high commitment from local police officers including Highway Patrol Officers.

The community is well represented by representation including community members, Industry members and local government members

Members donate their time and skills to create and implement road safety programs throughout the region of the west of Melbourne.

One of RoadSafe Westgate CRSC's objectives is:

- To Advocate on behalf of the local community at all government levels to improve the road safety of all road users.

The members of RoadSafe Westgate CRSC are very committed to improving road safety along with identifying challenges and advocating for change, this also includes legislative changes that impact on the community at large as well as on road users to make our roads safer.

Therefore RoadSafe Westgate Community Road Safety Council is making a submission to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee of the Parliament of Victoria on their inquiry in to the increase in the Victorian road toll in 2019.

The following points are raised by members of RoadSafe Westgate as concerns and suggestions in to the increase in the Victorian road toll in 2019.

Road Safety Funding Decreasing to Community Groups

Over the last couple of years the amount of funding allocated to community based road safety groups has decreased to undertake the basic grass root programs in road safety. Community road safety groups are in the community and know how to communicate to our residents and road users on road safety issues.

Community groups like RoadSafe Westgate are volunteer based members with no direct paid employees. However, funding authorities treat these community groups the same as an organisation with highly paid employees whose sole function is to attract funding. This has been borne out by the number of unsuccessful applications awarded to groups like RoadSafe Westgate. If this trend continues the reducing number of community groups involved with road safety will get much smaller.

Young Road Users Program Promotion & Training

In Victoria there are a number of VicRoads approved and TAC endorsed road safety programs specially designed for potential young drivers and young road users.

RoadSafe Westgate supports & promotes the following road safety programs designed for our young road users namely:

- **Fit2Drive (F2D) sessions undertaken by F2D Foundation.**
 The F2D Year 11 Workshop is a half-day session conducted in schools with all students in the year level. The workshop experience supports them to make good decisions when faced with risky driving situations, both as passengers, and in terms of their future driving safety. F2D is about changing attitudes and behaviours - not their driving skills.
 The workshop helps young people by using active learning methods that draw upon their own experiences, to develop a respect and pride for safe road use. The road to empowerment is fostered through the small group facilitation undertaken by specially trained tertiary undergraduates.
 The overall purpose of the F2D Year 11 Workshop is to reduce youth road trauma. The program is approved by VicRoads & endorsed by the TAC
- **Looking After Our Mate (LAOM)**
 Looking After Our Mates is an interactive one-hour free education session for year 12 students delivered in schools throughout Victoria. The program is also available to sporting clubs and groups. The session focuses on responsible consumption of alcohol and strategies to avoid drink driving. It is suitable for Year 12 students, but can be tailored to suit any business, organisation, sports club or youth group. It is delivered by a fully trained and accredited facilitator. The session explores a range of drink and drug driving road safety issues that are relevant to young people. The program is approved by VicRoads & endorsed by the TAC

Unfortunately the support for both of these excellent road safety programs is reducing at an alarming rate with less secondary schools taking up either or both these programs.

Under the current Community Road Safety Grants provided by VicRoads now the Department of Transport no funding is provided to promote either of these road safety programs specifically designed for young road users.

The pressure on schools to achieve with competing demands leaves no or little space available during the school curriculum for road safety sessions of any nature.

There needs to be a change by both the Education Department and Department of Transport in ensuring these road safety programs are promoted and made available in all secondary schools throughout Victoria. Currently only a small proportion of secondary schools are taking up the option of having both or one of these road safety programs as part of their school curriculum.

Grass roots funding to road safety community groups like RoadSafe Westgate should be reinstated to provided funding to promote and inform their local community of the these road safety programs for young users.

Speed & Reporting Speeding Drivers

RoadSafe Westgate’s Speeding Programs are designed to increase the communities’ awareness of the consequences of speeding and high risk speeding activities. Included in all our promotional activities are the reporting speeding drivers to CrimeStoppers.

Unfortunately VicRoads Community Road Safety Grants no longer supports or funds these promotional activities by Community Road Group Safety. There was a grant called Safer Speeds however this has been withdrawn with no replacement core program on speeding drivers available.

It has been demonstrated time after time that speed is a contributing factor in most road crashes. Therefore stay within the speed limit and drive to suit the conditions you are facing. Increased speed means not only an increased risk of crashes happening but also increased the severity of injuries sustained when a crash does happen.

There are three types of speeding and they are all dangerous:

- low level – here a driver travels just over the speed limit – usually by 5km/hr. This is the most common form of speeding.
- excessive – deliberate and well over the speed limit
- inappropriate – travelling a speed too fast for the conditions, such as when the road is wet or slippery.

If you speed the following conditions apply

- you have less time to avoid crashes
- you have less control over the vehicle
- it lengthens your stopping distance
- it increases the likelihood of crashing and
- increases the severity of the crash

Young drivers are overrepresented in car crash statistics.

Another feature of our Speeding program in conjunction with our road safety partners are identified targeted speeding locations were the use of municipal speed advisory trailers are deployed to these high risk locations and then followed up by police enforcement at these locations. There is a current road safety grant available for this activity called Speed Advisory/Variable Message Sign however there is very little grant approved to groups.

The main two themes of “Driving is Not a Game” & “Speed Kills Don’t Make a Grave Mistake” are linked to all our speeding campaigns to promote the consequences of high risk speeding activities. Both of these themes are utilized on our mobile & fixed billboards deployed to various locations that are seen by more than a million road users per month. Together with speed enforcement campaigns targeting the small minority of drivers who put other road users at risk, the group actively supports police enforcement operations, supports TAC campaigns as well as provides an effective means of promoting greater compliance with speed limits

Mobile Phone Use

The use of mobile phones while driving is at least a hazard, how can drivers maintain their concentration on driving as well as the environment around them. There has been ample research undertaken to prove that just by talking on a phone restricts the mental capacity to monitor the driver's environment, assess any situation and take any evasive action if required.

The flexibility and easy use of mobile phones should not occur while the motor vehicle is in motion.

Advertising Signs near Roads

In recent years there has been a major increase in the proliferation of advertising signs, posters, billboards along or near roads that distract a driver's concentration.

The placement of advertising on or near roads including on road overpasses and bridges is, clearly designed to attract the driver's attention away from the road to the advertising.

This is a direct conflict between the principals of road safety effecting driver's concentration caused by these distractions.