

I have previously submitted an email on the road toll as it relates to Random Breath Testing but feel it incomplete. On that basis I have submitted a new submission for consideration.

Author - I was, at the time of my retirement in the year 2000, the Chief Inspector of then Traffic Alcohol Section, Victoria Police. I introduced the revamped RBT Campaign in 1990, oversaw its implementation and developed it until retirement. Throughout that period, Victoria saw a huge reduction in its road toll. Reduced levels in alcohol affected driving played a major role in that reduction. The Victorian Programme won worldwide acclaim. I was asked to deliver papers on the Programme to International Road Safety Conferences around the world. I introduced the Programme into New Zealand and my deputy into South Africa.

Victorian RBT Programme - the revamped Victorian Programme was developed strictly in accordance with the findings of Professor Ross Homel, School of Behavioural Sciences at Griffiths University. Homel, after reviewing the Programme in New South Wales, concluded the Programme was Prevention in effect and relied on four essential factors, they being:-

- (i) Highly Visible
- (ii) Credible in Operation
- (iii) Sustained in application
- (iv) Well Publicised.

The revamped Victorian RBT Programme addressed those factors in the following manner:-

High Visibility - we designed and built 12 "Booze Buses" - they resembled mobile billboards - the side of the Bus had 05 painted thereon and was immediately recognisable for what it was - it carried six testing members and a driver/operator - it contained two separate offices for the processing of offenders on-site

Random Breath Testing was conducted in Metropolitan Melbourne using 6 Buses and 6 Buses went to Regional Headquarters. Car RBT continued by operational police in both Metropolitan and Rural areas.

Credible in Operation - the testing members were drawn from the Police Academy newly graduated and retained for a maximum of 6 weeks before replacement. Their enthusiasm invigorated the Programme.

Sustained in Operation - the Programme operated five days a weeks, 52 weeks a year.

Well Publicised - The Transport Accident Commission were charged with the task of Publicising the Campaign. This they did with considerable expertise with the assistance of the Monash University Accident Research Centre who gathered all data on the Programme and identified areas of concern with the road toll.

I came to the conclusion that the goal of the Victorian RBT Programme was "change the belief of driver's, prone to drinking alcohol and driving, that if they continued to offend their interception was inevitable". The belief then being that they would of their own accord stop their offending. Actual Detection, although important, was secondary to Prevention. As such it was critical that the Programme remained as highly visible to all passing traffic as possible. That visibility not only highlighted our presence, it lent credibility to the advertising and underpinned the threat of the Campaign.

Cost of the Campaign - the Transport Accident Commission underwrote all financing. Research by MUARC found that for each dollar invested by them there was a return of \$14 in direct savings and a community saving of 40:1 All financial transactions were contractual and understood by all concerned.

History will tell you and confirmed by MUARC that the campaign was highly successful.

When I retired in 2000 I left two managers to continue and oversight the Campaign. Both of those managers have now retired.

From my position in retirement I make the following observations of the current RBT Programme:-

High Visibility - I am led to believe the most recent Booze Buses have been altered in design to allow more convenient use in back streets. This was a fundamental mistake. As related earlier, it is critical the Programme be seen by all drivers to retain credibility

Credibility - the break down of the current Bus fleet and its associated publicity must have reduced the threat of detection. The associated investigation of false testing must have exacerbated that reduced threat. It took years to develop that situation and will take a huge effort to regain it.

Sustained - as an ordinary driver these days, I get the impression in the press that policing has returned to holiday periods and not 52 weeks a year

Well Publicised - I am of the opinion the advertising is nowhere as effective as it used to be - I wonder if the co-ordination of the various agencies is what it was.

Threat to the Programme - the greatest threat to the Programme is the mistaken belief by most operational police, including the highest ranking, that this Programme is about detecting drinking drivers. The moment you accept that premise the inclination is to lower the profile which works directly counter to its high visibility requirement. Operational police lose confidence in its effectiveness and you get a response of false testing. Unless you supervise the Programme with qualified staff it is bound to failure on this point.

Proposal to redress the Programme - If it was possible to introduce this Programme, it is possible to re-introduce it. I believe we can learn from the earlier Programme and improve it even though it was highly successful. I think that improvement is necessary to make up for the recent set-backs. I propose that all Booze Buses be returned to the Traffic Alcohol Section. That the whole fleet work the Metropolitan area on Wednesday and Thursdays and half of the fleet test in the Rural areas on Friday/Sat/Sun. Research tells us that the rural drink driving problem is exclusive to the weekend. The current recruiting programme would provide sufficient staffing and police operations should supply additional requirements. I would withdraw all compulsion RBT enforcement by Operational Police. I would encourage the TAC to re-introduce a saturation publicity campaign highlighting the increased testing in the State and why it was necessary.

Conclusion - If we are to return to lowering the road toll to levels we have achieved previously and furtheron, it will need bold initiatives. This I believe should be one of them.

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