



31 January 2020

The Secretary  
Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
**EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Inquiry into the increase in the Victorian road toll in 2019**

Transurban is pleased to provide a submission in response to the Inquiry established by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Transurban's road safety strategic framework is based on the Safe System Approach and includes targets and action plans with an ambition to operate a transport network that is free from fatalities and life-changing injuries. We measure and report on our road safety performance and engage experts to analyse our data, assess our network and evaluate our activities to support our continued road safety efforts.

Transurban responded to the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020, co-chaired by Assoc Professor Jeremy Woolley and Dr John Crozier. We provided an overview of our road safety strategic framework, examples of our work to support the national strategy and those of our state partners, and priorities for consideration in the next strategy and action plans. Our submission can be found [here](#).

Travel on Transurban's network of toll roads has increased by 40 per cent over the past five years as a result of our expanded network and increased rates of traffic. Our serious injury crash rate has plateaued over this time, averaging 4.9 serious injury crashes per 100 million VKT. In the first half of the current financial year (FY20), Transurban's serious injury crash rate is 3.90. Although we are still analysing this significant reduction, our investment in new and upgraded roads, including technology, maintenance systems and excellence in incident response, along with a focus on safety through the Safe System Approach, are certainly relevant factors.

Transurban has a role in contributing to the safety and performance of the whole Victorian network, particularly in Melbourne, where we manage and operate CityLink and provide incident response for interfacing sections of the West Gate and Tullamarine freeways. Our network will be expanded when the West Gate Tunnel becomes operational.

In responding to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the current Inquiry, we draw on our experience and activities to provide relevant and real-world examples and insights.

**1) *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***

Victoria has a proud history in leading road safety innovation that has saved thousands of lives, including mandating seat belts, roadside alcohol and drug testing, targeted speed management, mandating of electronic stability control program in passenger vehicles and implementation of an exemplary graduated licensing system.

Transurban understands that the current strategy and targets were developed following significant analysis of Victoria's road safety performance. The analysis identified new learnings, particularly for run off road crashes that are prevalent on regional and rural roads, which contributed significantly to the number of lives lost in 2019.

The targets of a 20 per cent reduction in fatalities and less than 200 lives lost by 2020 are challenging aims, particularly given the high risk nature of country roads and the average age of the passenger vehicle fleet, which is reported at just over 10 years.

Ensuring continuation of evidence-based measures such as flexible roadside barriers, safe intersection design and implementation of new enforcement technologies will assist the road safety partners and their stakeholders work towards zero.

**2) *Adequacy and scope of the current driver drug and alcohol testing regime***

Transurban does not have a view on this ToR.

**3) *Adequacy of current speed enforcement measures and speed management policies***

There is significant research on the contribution of speed to trauma outcomes. The road safety camera program has been highly effective in supporting motorists to adhere to speed limits. However, there continues to be scepticism in some sectors of the community about the value of the program and an ingrained belief that it is primarily to raise revenue for government.

Transurban believes speed management policy could be strengthened through a consistent speed management hierarchy system that would be intuitive to motorists. For example, four and five-star motorways having the highest speed limit and three-star highways and arterials lower speed limits. Areas of high pedestrian, aged, child and cyclist activity should have the lowest speed limits.

Transurban has a strong history of investigating and trialling new and innovative measures for road safety and network performance, including connected and autonomous vehicle technology, approaches to harmonise speed and improve work zone safety. We support trialling new speed management and enforcement technologies with the aim of improving safety on the broader network, reducing crashes and eventually eliminating serious injuries and fatalities.

A [presentation](#) at the Australasian Road Safety Conference in 2013 by the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety at the Queensland University of Technology (CARRS-Q) reported on improved practices for point-to-point speed enforcement. The presentation covered positive outcomes of point-to-point cameras and their contribution to reductions in serious injury and fatal crashes. This is consistent with the Monash University Accident Research Centre's [evaluation](#) of the Queensland Speed Camera Program.

The CARRS-Q presentation also highlighted that point-to-point cameras are seen as being more 'fair' for speed enforcement as they don't just penalise drivers for being slightly over the speed limit in a specific location. This is consistent with Safe System thinking where it is acknowledged that road users make mistakes.

Average speed cameras are of particular interest to Transurban as automated enforcement on motorways would be an effective tool to support speed compliance.

**4) *Adequacy of current response to smart phone use, including the use of technology to reduce the impact of smart phone use on driver distraction***

More than 60 per cent of crashes on CityLink are rear-end crashes. Distraction, including mobile phone use, is a contributing factor to this type of crash.

The New South Wales Government's trial on mobile phone detection cameras, both fixed and mobile, has demonstrated effectiveness. Transurban supports the implementation of this technology on Victoria's roads.

Transurban contributed to the National Transport Commission's work in developing a technology-neutral road rule, participated in the National Summit on Driver Distraction in Brisbane and we continue to work with our state partners to promote key road safety messages.

**5) *Measures to improve the affordability of newer vehicles incorporating driver assist technologies***

The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP Safety) has demonstrated the benefits of crash avoidance and occupant protection features and technologies.

Given the average passenger vehicle age in Victoria is around 10 years, it is important that investment be made in getting the most vulnerable into safer cars with new technologies.

Working with large fleets on programs to make newer vehicles with autonomous emergency braking, lane keep assist and adaptive cruise control more cost effective, and removing unsafe vehicles could be given greater focus, particularly with the emergence of connected and autonomous vehicles and as other modes of transport become more integrated through mobility services.

**6) *Adequacy of current road standards and the road asset maintenance regime***

With a move to electric vehicles and more efficient petrol vehicles, revenue from fuel excise continues to decline. A national approach to a more sustainable model of road funding is needed to ensure funding is available to maintain and continually improve the safety of our roads. In 2016, Transurban conducted a study into various road user pricing models as an alternative to the current funding model. The report can be accessed [here](#).

The state's transport network, upgrades and new roads should meet Safe System principles. Standards should be updated to align with this approach and assist in the capability development of people tasked with designing, building, operating and maintaining a safe transport system.

**7) *Adequacy of driver training programs and related funding structures such as the L2P program***

Transurban does not have a view on this ToR.

**8) Adequacy and accuracy of road collision data collection**

As outlined in the introduction to this submission, Transurban measures its road safety performance by dividing the number of serious injury crashes on our roads by 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled. Transurban also commissions Monash University's Accident Research Centre to analyse our crashes and compare the rates to 'like roads'.

As an operator in Australia and North America, Transurban would recommend an internationally recognised approach for data to ensure a consistent coding protocol for injury and crash attributes. Ideally, data would be updated on a timely basis and be made available, within privacy requirements, to the research sector, industry and stakeholders to inform road safety actions and focus efforts on key issues.

The National Inquiry's findings are pertinent to the Victorian context. Transurban fully supports the recommendations to address road trauma in Australia and encourages the Committee to consider them in its deliberations.

Yours faithfully

Elizabeth Waller  
