

The Chair
Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

26 February 2020

Submission: Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into the increase in Victoria's Road Toll

We all know that fixing or lowering the road toll is not going to be an overnight thing and as a B-Double driver, I see carnage on our roads every day.

To start with, fatigue is one of the big things I see on the road almost every weekend and holidays when most people work all week then they load up their cars and caravans (of which most have no idea how to tow) and hit the road. Back in 2007 and 2008 with my wife Mandy, I ran the border Pit Stop. This was a one of a kind "driver reviver" aimed at truckies but all road users where welcome we did it every Thursday for 14 months. It was a great initiative.

Another problem is that it is too easy for people on 457 visas to get a job driving a truck. There needs to be more training as I have seen firsthand that some drivers cannot read road signs and they can't reverse trucks. I have also seen them traveling on the Monash Freeway driving at 80 kmph in a 100 kmph zone.

I also think there needs to be more education with young drivers. We should be starting it in our high schools then again when they are on their L's then move on to their P's. We should also show them how to behave around trucks and other road users. A good start for them is get them up in a truck and show them and tell them all about the blind spots and the amount of road it takes to stop a 68-tonne truck. This would show them why you never cut in on a truck then hit the brakes and why not to tailgate - and this goes for truckies, as well.

As far as drink driving goes, as a truck driver by law I have to be 0.00 all the time and that is fine with me. I would love to see more booze buses as a deterrent.

As far a speeding goes, I'm limited to 100 kmph but a P-plater can get in a car that can do well over 200 kmph - why that is, I don't know. I think there needs to be more training for younger drivers on our country roads as that is where more people are getting hurt or killed. On my Victorian driver's licence, I have got the letters MC that lets me drive B-Doubles and road trains - that means that I have done the training to do it. The thing I can't understand is, that people on a car licence can tow a trailer and or a big caravan that can weigh up to 2 or 3-tonnes with very little or no idea how to load it and tow it. There seems to be a lot of double standards.

One of the biggest issues I see is, as a professional truck driver by law I only need to have a 7-hour break between shifts. That let's me do 17 hours in a 24-hour period and in that time do 14 hours driving and other work. I must have 3 hours of breaks in that time and that is where the FATIGUE kicks in. I think it should be at least a 10 hour break between shifts.

I have been driving trucks most of my working life and every time before I start a shift I always give my wife a kiss good bye and tell her I love her cause over the year I have lost some bloody good mates out on the road and you never know when St. Peter is going to call.

Tim and Mandy Leary