

Submission to the Victorian Government Inquiry into the Victorian Road Toll.

Ian Whalley

My name is Ian Whalley. I am presently retired but did spend 30 years as a Uniform Member of Victoria Police. 12 of those years (1999 to 2011) were spent in being responsible for research and statistics into fatal collisions in the state (Official Road Toll figures).

I was the first Victoria Police member to have direct access to Coroners Court Records and provided information to VicRoads and the TAC and Police Command. There has been a significant drop in the number of people killed on our roads and despite everyone taking credit for this the truth is that the reduction is due, at least in part, to the safety technology in modern vehicles.

More can be done and should be. Zero deaths is an admirable goal but is it achievable? The key lies in identifying those at risk of being involved in a fatal collision and working to reduce this risk.

Criminal Profiling is a valuable tool and was initially developed by interviewing criminals in jail. The difference is that most road users involved in fatal collisions don't set out to be involved in a fatal collision or to kill someone else. It should be possible by interviewing those involved in fatalities to build a profile of at risk road users and target these road users. Assistance from Psychiatrists and Psychologists would be required and would certainly require a large amount of data and interviews at considerable cost. A report published by the Australian National University in 2017 gives the estimated cost of each road fatality at \$7.8 million. So, the saving of even one life on the road would assist in the cost of the research. It is recommended that Profiling be adapted and applied to the field of road safety and used as a tool to identify those at greatest risk of death and injury on our roads.

Each road user group (Drivers, passengers, motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians etc) has its own unique dangers and contributing factors to injury and death. As an example, consider motor vehicle drivers. It sounds simple to say that if a driver travels at the speed limit (or a speed appropriate to road conditions), wears a properly adjusted seat belt, does not drive when affected by alcohol or drugs (Quite simply if you have been drinking or taking drugs then don't drive), is not distracted (mobile phone, passengers, radio etc), and any other risk factors, then the road toll would be significantly reduced tomorrow.

The same applies to pedestrians. A significant number of deceased pedestrians were found to be significantly drug or alcohol affected (alcohol readings in excess of 0.15%). It is suggested that there be a designated driver who is not drinking. The same concept could apply to pedestrians. If pedestrians crossed the road at

crossings and were either not alcohol affected or had the assistance of someone not alcohol/drug affected, then pedestrian fatalities would be reduced.

The same consideration can be applied to each road user. This document is a short narrative on reducing fatalities on the road but can be significantly expanded if required.

At present we are issued with a driver's licence after a short eyesight test and an exam on road law and a driving test. If we stay out of trouble, then we automatically renew our licence. There is no further testing. There are bad drivers on our roads. We all see them every day. Perhaps when renewing our licence, we should be required to complete a medical and eyesight test, a road law test and a driving test. I would suggest this would have a significant effect on road deaths and injuries.

There is a Road Safety Fatality Review Panel which meets and considers each fatality for inclusion (or not) on the official road toll figures. Perhaps the information I have provided could be considered by them. Presently Victoria Police, VicRoads, the TAC and other bodies work independently. There should be a single governing body to coordinate road safety efforts.

The late Peter Brock did significant road safety work and his racing number (05) had road safety significance. The average driver or road user does not relate to the Police or VicRoads or the TAC. If motoring racing drivers (e.g. Sir Jackie Stewart, Mark Webber, Dan Ricciardo, Allan Moffat, Craig Lowndes, and others) and other celebrities from the sporting, music and other fields were used to further the road safety message then that may also have significant impact on road deaths and injuries.

These are a number of suggestions to reduce fatalities and injuries on our roads. They are worthy (in my opinion) of further consideration.

Forwarded for your information and consideration.

Ian Whalley