

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll

Melbourne—Tuesday, 6 October 2020

(via videoconference)

MEMBERS

Mr Enver Erdogan—Chair

Mr Bernie Finn—Deputy Chair

Mr Rodney Barton

Mr Mark Gepp

Mrs Bev McArthur

Mr Tim Quilty

Mr Lee Tarlamis

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Dr Matthew Bach

Ms Melina Bath

Dr Catherine Cumming

Mr David Davis

Mr David Limbrick

Mr Andy Meddick

Mr Craig Ondarchie

Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

WITNESSES

Ms Robyn Seymour, Deputy Secretary, Network Planning, and Head of Road Safety Victoria, Department of Transport; and

Ms Samantha Cockfield, Lead Director, Road Safety, Transport Accident Commission.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll. I wish to welcome any members of the public that are watching via the live broadcast. I also wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay my respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during this hearing is protected by law. However, any comment repeated outside the hearing may not be protected. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament. All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website.

We welcome your opening comments but ask that they be kept to a maximum of 5 to 10 minutes to ensure we have plenty of time for discussion. Can I please remind members and witnesses to mute their microphones when not speaking to minimise any interference. Before I go any further I also wish to introduce members of the committee and myself. My name is Enver Erdogan; I am Chair of the committee. There is our Deputy Chair, Mr Bernie Finn. I have got Mr Rod Barton, Mr Lee Tarlamis, Mr Mark Gepp, Mr Tim Quilty and Mrs Beverley McArthur all present with us here today. Could you please begin by stating your name for the benefit of the Hansard team and then start the presentation. Thank you.

Ms SEYMOUR: My name is Robyn Seymour, and with me is Samantha Cockfield. I will just share my screen. Can I just check that you can see the screen? Great.

Visual presentation.

Ms SEYMOUR: We are really pleased to be here today. We know that you have spent a number of months and you have spoken to a lot of people, and we are really appreciative of the work that you are doing in this space. I am Robyn Seymour. I am joined by Samantha Cockfield, and you will be hearing from our colleagues from Justice and Police after this session. We have got a brief presentation we just wanted to take you through. Some of this will be familiar, so I will try to race through, but if you want to come back during this session and we can use these slides as prompts, then let us do that.

I guess we wanted to start by saying Victoria has got a proud history in road safety. You will be familiar with this graph and a lot of the measures that have been implemented since 1970, when we mandated seatbelt wearing. This, I think, is a really useful graph for the committee to consider which shows that trauma reduction journey that we have been on since the early 70s. Against that are the registered vehicles we have got on Victoria's roads, which is the black line, which you can see are increasing, and also our population increase. So we have this pressure against driving down the road toll from increasing numbers of vehicles on Victoria's roads and a significantly increasing population, which poses a challenge for all of us in this space.

I guess that is then kind of pertinent when we look at our performance over the last few years. You can see from this slide that we have really plateaued. I think you have heard from other international jurisdictions, and if you look at data nationally you will see that this is a challenge that is being faced by many developed countries at the moment in terms of how we get the next step change in really driving down that trauma. We have had a significant investment in road safety as part of the *Towards Zero* strategy, and we have a fairly plateaued road toll. Working out our next road safety strategy and action plan and how we really work towards getting that step change and drive down trauma is a real challenge for us, so we are looking forward to seeing your recommendations coming out of this inquiry.

I think it is really important as a road safety partnership in Victoria to acknowledge that we are only as effective in driving down that trauma as the strength of our road safety partnership. Road Safety Victoria is the lead road

safety agency in this state, but we work absolutely in partnership with the other road safety agencies, such as the TAC, the Department of Health and Human Services, Justice and Victoria Police. I think how we look to develop our road safety program collectively and ensure that we are working and tackling the challenges that we face in road safety is a fundamental part of the effectiveness now and into the future.

I know one of the things that you are particularly interested in is data and our data intelligence. Traditionally in Victoria we have used a combination of the Victoria Police crash data, our licensing and registration data in DOT, the injury data that TAC have access to and the infringement data from Justice. In recent times we have been really looking to bring in much more of the health data, and we might talk about this during the questions. But through Health we have managed to get a data linkage trial going where we have got a full year of data linking all of these different platforms of data, and we are just in the process of looking at linking that to 10 years worth of data, which obviously will provide us with an enormous amount of insight. And even just from the one year of data, part of what we really learned through that process is that there is an under-reporting in some of our traditional datasets around some of our road user groups, such as our cyclists. So the Health data shows higher levels of trauma to cyclists than the traditional TAC or Victoria Police or Justice data.

We thought it might be useful just to take you through work we have been doing looking at the five-year average proportion of fatalities and what that looks like. So in terms of who and what are involved in this, you will see from this slide that we are seeing older vehicles as being a really significant part of our trauma, representing about 58 per cent of our total fatalities for vehicles that are 10 years old or older, and light commercial vehicles becoming a larger proportion of our trauma data as well.

In terms of what has contributed, speed continues to be a real challenge for us, but we are also seeing increased levels of drugs involved in our trauma data. Alcohol has been dropping—the contribution rate of alcohol has been dropping from 20, 21, 22 per cent down to 16 per cent—and fatigue and distraction continue to be a problem for us. In terms of where the trauma is occurring, a significant proportion of our trauma, as you are aware, is occurring on our high-speed rural roads, but in addition to that the other problem areas are intersections and our urban arterials.

In terms of our infrastructure priorities, you will have seen—and I know there has been a lot of discussion around what our priorities are—a big issue for us in regional Victoria has been the proportion of run-off-road and head-on crashes that we have seen, which is really why a huge focus of our program has been addressing those specific crashes through our flexible barriers, our rumble strips, our wide centre lines and our shoulder widening and sealing. We have got some evidence, and some of it is just fresh, to talk to you about today. TAC has some new data which is showing that for the eight sites that are now completed in the rollout of the barriers the hospital days have reduced on those stretches of road in 12 months from 261 days to four days in the first year post completion. So that might be something that you might want to discuss as part of this session. Also our early evaluation is showing a 65 per cent reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes between January 2016 and December 2019 along those routes.

In addition to that we have been focusing on making intersections safer. We have completed work on 50 intersection upgrades and we have got another 51 with work in progress, and that is because we know that that is a significant part of the trauma that we see in Victoria. Our vulnerable road users are also a key focus in terms of our infrastructure program and looking at how we can address some of that trauma through raised crossings, community gateways and traffic-calming measures.

An area that is always an important part of the work we do is our licensing system. You may be familiar with this graph, but just to kind of take you through it, before we implemented the new graduated licensing system—I am not sure if you can see my arrow—this is what our trauma picture looked like for our young people who first got their licence. We had this massive spike on getting their Ps. Since the graduated licensing system was implemented we have seen a massive reduction in terms of those young people in their first year—particularly our youngest drivers, our 18- to 20-year-olds in that first year of getting their probationary licence. So having a strong regulatory system and a good licensing system is really important in terms of keeping our road users safe.

Supporting that is a range of driver education and training programs that we have that are particularly focused on those young people who are approaching the driving age. So this might be something also that you might be

interested in talking about through our question time. We would be really happy to talk to you about these programs that we have and the value that they are providing to the community.

In addition to that, I think one of the opportunities we have long term in terms of our trauma reductions is vehicle technology and the technology that we are starting to see coming through in vehicles, particularly things like our auto emergency braking and our lane keep assist. But looking at the future of the vehicle technology and how we bring this technology through into the Victorian fleet as quickly as we can so that the community can get the value of that technology is really important. I will hand over now to Sam to talk about the cost of trauma.

Ms COCKFIELD: Hi. As you know, the TAC is at the pointy end in terms of road trauma. We look after the people that are injured on the roads. You have probably heard this figure before, but the cost of trauma generally to the Victorian community is about \$6 billion a year, but underlying this what is actually happening is we see one person every 18 days suffering from a serious spinal injury, eight people hospitalised every day, two people suffering brain injuries every week. These are life-altering injuries, not only for the people but for their families, their friends, and we see this coming through not only in numbers but of course in the cost.

The TAC provides \$1.6 billion every year approximately in terms of compensation and services to our clients. That is 58 000 people approximately that we need to get their lives back on track because of road and other transport injuries. We get around 21 000 new claims in every year. Many of those people have to leave work because of their injuries, but we are really proud that more recently we have been able to start getting a lot of those back to work. Last year that was just over 4000 clients, and we were able to also get some of our most seriously injured clients—so those with those spinal injuries and severe brain injuries, 133 of them—back to work.

Really what we are seeing though is the cost of trauma is continuing to move upwards. So the \$1.6 billion we paid out last year was slightly higher than the \$1.49 billion that we paid out the year before, and those numbers of the people that we are looking after are also increasing.

Ms SEYMOUR: That is our final slide and introduction. I will stop sharing, but I am really happy to go back over any of those slides and share them again if anyone would like to specifically speak to any of those.

The CHAIR: Not a problem. I might actually go for the first question myself, if I may indulge. Given the amount of money and effort that goes into Victoria's road safety strategy, why haven't we seen another big step in the reduction of fatalities on the road? Because we saw the trend. It is downward, but then there has been a bit of flattening of that curve. How can you explain that with all the money that is going into this area?

Ms SEYMOUR: That is a really important question and is work that collectively as a partnership we have been looking at closely, because obviously it is really important in thinking about our next strategy and action plan. With a lot of the things we see in relation to road trauma, we know that when there is a really strong economy we tend to have higher rates of trauma because people are out on the road more. They have more money to put fuel in their cars and go on holidays and generally capacity to be out and about on the roads.

Obviously with the highest growth in population of anywhere in the country that puts huge amounts of pressure on our capacity to reduce trauma just from sheer numbers—from the population basis. Also, in addition to that, we have an ageing population. So older people's capacity to survive even a very minor crash is really challenging because of their frailty, so I am not really talking necessarily about them being at fault and doing something wrong; I am really talking about their capacity to survive an incident, whether it is falling in the street or whether it is being involved in a crash in a car. So those sorts of pressures, upward pressures, on trauma really need to be balanced against the design of the responses that we have to drive down trauma and the estimates that if the current investment had not been made in terms of our trauma numbers now there would be a significant number of additional people who would have been killed or seriously injured on Victoria's roads.

The CHAIR: Thank you for that answer, Robyn, and I can say that in my previous career I was a personal injury lawyer. That fact about the correlation between economic activity and workplace accidents, or road accidents for that matter, is I think something that is worth studying, but also the other two factors you raised about population growth and an ageing population being vulnerable. I appreciate that answer, for the record. Who would like to go next? I might pass over to our Deputy Chair, Mr Finn.

Mr FINN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I just wanted to raise the role of the TAC now and going back over the years. Thirty years ago—25 years ago—the TAC was a groundbreaking organisation. We well remember the Drink. Drive. Bloody Idiot campaign that changed the culture of Victoria and I think probably changed the culture of Australia to a very large degree—and also changed the attitudes, I think, to speeding in a lot of ways. We have not seen that now for a while—for quite some time in fact. I am just wondering: why has the role of the TAC changed in that regard and how has that come about?

Ms COCKFIELD: You are speaking specifically about our role in educating the community? So the campaign—

Mr FINN: Well, education but, you know, just being up-front. The TAC 30 years ago, 25 years ago, was a powerhouse—up-front everywhere. I know it sponsored my football team, and I loved it for it. But it has almost disappeared from the public view.

Ms COCKFIELD: Well, look, I do not agree that we have disappeared. We certainly continue to invest. Our investment in road safety, I suppose, has not only grown but has been invested through a range of areas. We have significant investment in road infrastructure, into vehicle safety, as well as continuing a very large investment in people and people's behaviours. So we invest around \$55 million a year in behavioural-related programs directly to the promotion of road safety. We still are, I suppose, on air in terms of advertising and public education programs almost every day of the year. Certainly from sitting in market research last week for some new campaigns we are about to see—hopefully over Christmas, depending on where COVID takes us—we are very much in the community's mind. They are very aware of us. They are very aware of what we do and our role in road safety. So I do not think that is quite true.

The one thing I will say, though, is that we use an evidence-based approach, and we take us where that evidence leads us. So in terms of the approach we took 30 years ago, that was evidence-based then, and the evidence base now seeks a slightly different approach sometimes to how we talk to the community. So a lot more does happen at a community level, a local level, so you go into local communities, and some of the football clubs we are now supporting are actually at a local level—so, for example, AFL Victoria is really very much based in country Victoria and suburban Victoria rather than necessarily the big AFL leagues that you would have seen in the past.

Mr FINN: Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: I might go to Mr Gepp, then Mrs McArthur.

Mr GEPP: Thank you. Thank you, Samantha, and thank you, Robyn, for being with us today. I am particularly interested—and members of the committee will probably be sick of me banging on about this—that we constantly put our most inexperienced drivers in the oldest vehicles. And I am not surprised about some of the statistics that you have offered in your submission—that 64 per cent of vehicles involved in fatal crashes and 74 per cent of people killed in fatal crashes were in vehicles 10 years old or older. Now, I would suggest that if there was any other indicator presented to us, or any other dataset, which had those sorts of numbers, we would be talking about it endlessly. And it seems to me to be a significant issue. I do not have the answers about how we address it, but surely, above everything else that we have talked about—driver behaviour, driver education, road safety, road maintenance and all those sorts of things—this statistic just leaps off the page at me. We have talked to some international guests through the course of this inquiry, and this is a phenomenon that is not just particular to Victoria or Australia but worldwide. Do you have any rabbits that you can pull out of your hat that can steer us in a particular direction—that can really home in on this problem and some of the initiatives that we might be able to adopt to improve that statistic? Because it seems particularly extraordinary to me.

Ms SEYMOUR: So what our data shows is—you are absolutely right—it is a real challenge for us, and worse than that is that we see a larger proportion of older vehicles in regional Victoria versus metro Melbourne where obviously the roads are higher speeds, so for any crashes, the consequences of those crashes can be much more significant. So it is a really important issue: to look to see how we can get particularly our older and our younger drivers who are the most vulnerable, albeit for different reasons, into safer, newer cars with the safety technology that will help protect them should something go wrong and also help them manage any unexpected things that happen on the roads. So it is a really important issue.

There are a range of things that we are currently doing in that space. One of them which may be of interest to you is that we have started through our L2P learner driver mentor program a very small scale pilot to see how we might be able to get a small number of our L2P learners, when they get their Ps, into safer vehicles, to see how that might support them. I know that this morning you met with a company who does telematics, and these vehicles have actually got telematics in them, so it is a good little pilot for us to actually test the potential of supporting young people, particularly our most vulnerable young people, in getting into our safer vehicles. So it is something that we are absolutely committed to looking at to see what we can do.

The other sort of thing that I think is really important in this space is looking to see how we can get into the second-hand car market as quickly as possible vehicles with the sorts of technology that we know will provide people with that level of protection and safety—the lane keep assist, the AEB, all of the airbags that they need and all of that safety technology. So one of the things that we have been doing under the current strategy and action plan is working through VicFleet and looking to ensure that the Victorian government fleet purchasers prioritise that sort of vehicle safety equipment that will mean that those vehicles will quite quickly then get into the second-hand car market and give us the best chance of getting that technology into the fleet as much as possible. Working with large private fleet companies is also a good opportunity in that space for the same reason. So maybe you want to talk about the work that you do around How Safe is Your First Car?

Ms COCKFIELD: Obviously we would like everybody to be in the safest car possible, and we know the potential of that in terms of reducing serious injury and fatalities. In relation to young drivers specifically, we do have How Safe is Your First Car?—part of the How Safe is Your Car? site—so that is a searchable website in terms of looking at what your next car purchase is likely to be and the level of safety that that vehicle can offer. That part of How Safe is Your First Car? not only provides young people and their parents or supervisors with that opportunity to look for a safe car but does also filter out any vehicles that they are not actually entitled to be driving—so any restrictions on them. We promote that How Safe is Your First Car? part of the site primarily to parents because we know from research that they are the people that have the most influence on young people.

Mr GEPP: They are paying for it probably in most instances.

Ms COCKFIELD: Yes. We find them either paying for or at least partially paying for a contribution. The other area we do quite a bit of work in this is our Road to Zero education complex at the Melbourne Museum. It has quite a large component in relation to vehicle safety, not only about how to pick your next car or your first car but also about why and how vehicle safety technologies work, so really providing an education as to why you might want them. While it is targeting young people at the senior secondary school level, it is actually available to the entire community to visit. That program not only sits at the Melbourne Museum but we have an outreach program which goes into regional and rural areas with the same sort of content.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We might go to Mrs McArthur, and then we will go to Mr Barton, Mr Quilty and then Mr Tarlamis.

Mrs McARTHUR: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Robyn and Samantha. Now, I have numerous questions. I just want to take issue with you in the first instance that roads in regional Victoria are not necessarily higher speed roads. In fact the roads are increasingly so bad that what we find with Regional Roads Victoria is speed reduction signs everywhere because you cannot fix the roads so we all have to drive slower. We are burdened by poor roads in rural Victoria in many areas, and especially in the south-west of Victoria where I am.

I have got one question to start with. Do you think roads should be safe places or should they be wildlife corridors and conservation zones?

Ms SEYMOUR: I guess there are a couple of things that I would like to say about that. First, just for the record, we have a very large volume of high-speed roads in regional Victoria, and in terms of the investment in those roads and ensuring that they are safe for the community to travel on, since 2016 there has been a really significant uplift in investment in the maintenance of Victorian roads. There has been a particularly high increase in investment in the south-west region where, because of both the geological environment in the south-west plus the high rainfalls, it is particularly challenging to keep the roads maintained given the volume of traffic and the large number of trucks and other forms of traffic that are using those roads. So maintenance is an ongoing task and an ongoing challenge, but we have seen a really significant increase in the maintenance

budget and maintenance work happening on our roads and we are seeing improvements in the quality of those roads in regional Victoria, which is really fantastic to see.

In relation to the second part of your question in relation to wildlife corridors versus mobility corridors—

Mrs McARTHUR: No, safe places.

Ms SEYMOUR: Safe places. We definitely are committed to ensuring that whether it is a place or a movement corridor we are creating safe environments for all of our road users. That is a fundamental basis of the work we do in developing our programs and looking at how we address those contexts and try and make them as safe as possible.

Our roadsides and those corridors are also amazing opportunities for supporting biodiversity, so the roadsides have amazing biodiversity. In terms of wildlife corridors, our preference would be that there are probably safer and other places that are more appropriate as wildlife corridors, but in terms of supporting that biodiversity, that is a great opportunity for us as a road manager to ensure that we can continue to have that biodiversity in this state. I think there is a role for us to play from an environmental perspective in terms of the work that we do. But that has to be balanced against the safety of those using the road.

Mrs McARTHUR: Well, it is clearly not, because we have got vegetation growing right to the edge of major highways—in fact Highway 1, the Princes Highway. But can I secondly ask: what work are you doing to ensure that we have safer drivers who are hiring cars as they come off international flights and especially travelling down the Great Ocean Road, where we have 20 per cent of the accidents that involve calling an ambulance incurred by international drivers? And that does not account—because we do not collect the data—for the accidents where police are called or near misses. What program have you put in place to better protect local and Victorian drivers?

Ms SEYMOUR: So the Great Ocean Road is one of the most beautiful places in the whole of Victoria and attracts over 6 million visitors, both national tourists and international tourists, each year. So it is an incredibly large number of people who travel the Great Ocean Road. What would be really interesting to understand is what proportion of those 6 million versus the total number of people who travel that road are actually international tourists, because as far as the data that I have seen, I have not seen that they are over-represented in terms of the sorts of crashes that they are involved in. But it is a very popular corridor for international tourists, and we need to be looking to see what we can do to support them to traverse that very safely. So the sorts of things that we have been doing in that space is Tourism Victoria have a program to really ensure that those international visitors arriving here and hiring cars, in working with the hire car companies and also online and through accommodation venues, are provided with the sorts of information that might help keep them safe.

So what we know in terms of the sorts of crashes international travellers have is it is not so much that they are doing high-risk activities like drink driving or speeding or not obeying road rules; it is more around things like fatigue issues, because we have such a vast country compared to lots of other countries in the world, or getting confused about which side of the road they should be driving on, which is part of why we have got—as I am sure you are aware—the reminders all the way along the Great Ocean Road around driving on the left, plus we have the variable message signs in Mandarin providing key safety messages to Chinese tourists travelling along the Great Ocean Road. So we are always looking to see how we can actually support our international visitors who are coming and seeing the great sights that we have in Victoria to do that comfortably and safely, both for their safety and for the community's.

Mrs McARTHUR: Can I finally just ask: how many deaths in Victoria are suicides as opposed to road accidents caused through bad driving or poor conditions or whatever?

Ms SEYMOUR: I do not know the number. It might be something that you might like to ask the deputy commissioner of road policing. The road suicides are removed from the road toll, so they do not figure in the number of deaths on our roads. Libby may be able to give you that number or if she cannot I am sure we can take that question on notice and get back to you.

The CHAIR: I might pass on to Mr Barton to ask a question.

Mr BARTON: Thank you, Chair. I understand that less than 5 per cent of all accidents where there has been a death or a serious injury are related to a vehicle which is not roadworthy which has contributed to that accident—less than 5 per cent, but nevertheless 5 per cent. If it is in that sort of range, it is still an issue. Coming from the industry that I have come from, we are fully aware of how badly these cars fall apart, and I am a little surprised that here in Victoria we do not do what they do in New South Wales, for instance: after the cars become four years old, they have to have a compulsory roadworthy inspection every 12 months after they have turned four years. Going back to Mr Gepp's position, we know that with vehicles over 10 years old if you have a serious accident you are more likely to be killed or have a serious injury with those. We look at taxis doing a million kilometres by the time they get to 10 years old, and we have recently seen that they have had some changes to their regulations, where they can have a RedBook inspection as opposed to a roadworthy inspection, and the difference is between \$58 and a couple of hundred dollars—and that is reflected in the level of inspection it gets. Why do we not take this a bit more seriously?

Ms SEYMOUR: The research and evidence in this space does not support the cost impost on the community around having annual roadworthies. The evidence, given that there is such a small proportion of vehicles that are actually unroadworthy on our road, does not support that impost on every single Victorian then having to get annual roadworthies. Which is why we have a separate system where cars are checked for their roadworthiness if police pull them up on the side of the road, or often there are blitzes in car parks or others to try and identify those vehicles that are clearly unroadworthy. That is the method that we have managed in Victoria to date. I guess in thinking about how we continue to look at the evidence, understand the problem and what that might mean in terms of any future adjustments to policy, we will continue to look at what the data is showing us, trying to identify where the problems are and what is the right solution to those problems. But to date we do not see that a change in policy would give us the benefit that we really need.

Mr BARTON: So the other states that do all this—you take a different view to the other states?

Ms SEYMOUR: Yes, we do. We do. Because in terms of the cost to the community versus the benefits of that very small number of cars that are actually unroadworthy, we have not seen the benefits. And through the systems that we have, through police when they pull cars over to the side of the road or do inspections, that has been the method that we have used in Victoria to identify and remove those vehicles that are unsafe on the roads.

Mr BARTON: Interesting. The other area that I am concerned about is driver fatigue, particularly in the commercial passenger vehicle sector. We certainly heard through the previous inquiry of 2017 into the reforms of taxis and hire cars of a taxidriver driving 12 hours a day—doing a 12-hour shift on a Friday—then jumping out of his car, jumping straight into his rideshare vehicle and driving through the night. He may not have an accident that day or that evening, but he may jump into his own private car, fall asleep at the wheel and drive into the back of a truck or something like that. That is not related. Are we doing any work about driver fatigue? I know New South Wales is doing a bit of work around this for the commercial passenger vehicle sector. I am just wondering what is being done here in Victoria.

Ms SEYMOUR: There is a range of things that we are doing in Victoria. Perhaps I can start and then, Sam, you might want to also contribute to this. One of the things that we are doing is we are looking to see whether or not we can develop a test that actually we can use at the roadside to determine if someone is impaired as a result of fatigue, and that would be the first time anywhere in the world that a test like that would have been used. So there is some really good work happening in that space, and at this point that work is coming along quite well, and we are quietly confident around how that is progressing in terms of an impairment test. In addition to that, one of the things that we have not had good data on is actually work-related injuries where driving is a key part of your work. Some of the work that we have been doing is looking at WorkSafe and TAC forms and other data collection methodologies to start collecting this data so we actually can understand what is the scale of the problem. Is it a big or small problem, and therefore what does it look like and what kind of things would we need to do to address it? Sam, did you want to talk about that work?

Ms COCKFIELD: Yes. Look, this work is actually really in its infancy, rather than well developed, but in fact we had a big meeting about this yesterday, particularly in relation to the gig economy, so in terms of share cars and delivery et cetera—that particular issue. What we are looking to do is very much, I suppose, start measuring in the first instance to see what we can do about it. But I think some of the remedies are here already. If I can just speak a little bit about that, I think one of the TAC's roles is to educate the community, and I think

we have been doing quite a bit about that—about in fact what fatigue is. It is really drowsy driving, and it relates to lack of sleep. We have really been, probably for about the last three or four years, doing a lot of work educating the community about that—that it is actually a lack of sleep that leads to this issue.

The other element I think we have already touched on that holds some hope is the fatigue impairment test that Robyn was alluding to—probably our number one investment at the moment. The other area is vehicle safety. Certainly there are ocular video opportunities in terms of being able to ensure people's alertness. The actual vehicle safety technologies, such as your lane keep assists, are also quite useful in this area.

We recognise that humans, no matter what, are not perfect, so we are working on a range of fronts to say: how can we make sure that in the future fatigue does not continue to be the issue that it is? So I think, along with Robyn, our workplace and vehicle technologies are going to be the areas we will be working in.

Mr BARTON: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Mr Quilty.

Mr QUILTY: Thank you. Now, in your submission you referred to the Department of Transport having speed management policies, including a maximum of 110 k's an hour on high-standard roads. I am not sure where this 110 figure comes from; it is not a Safe Systems figure. We have heard from overseas that we can drive faster on safe roads that are divided—like, for example, the Hume Highway. So I would like to have you comment more about why we think 110 is the fastest we can go on our safe roads.

Ms SEYMOUR: The way the roads in Victoria have been designed is that they have been designed to a specific speed level. Where we have 110 zones, they are 110 because that is the speed that those roads have been designed at and that is the safe speed for those roads. If we were to have a higher speed road than that, we would have to change the design of our roads, and that includes things like the corners—how the corners are designed and how steep the corners are. It is the broader kind of way that the road is designed around the road edges and the barriers and all of the various components of the road and how it is designed. In Victoria our roads are designed predominantly—our high-speed roads—for 100 k's an hour. We have a small number that are designed for 110.

Mr QUILTY: There is a significant difference between most of our 100-k roads and our 110-k roads. I am led to believe that most of the Hume Highway has been designed for significantly faster than 110.

Ms SEYMOUR: No, that is not correct. That is not the advice I have from the road engineers.

Mr QUILTY: I see. All right, nothing more.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Tarlamis.

Mr TARLAMIS: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Robyn and Samantha, for your submission and presentation today. Earlier this afternoon we spoke with the Road Safety Camera Commissioner, and he was talking about how there is still the perception around the revenue from fines that it is collected purely as a revenue-raising measure and where that money goes—there is still that perception that it is purely driven by revenue. I think he cited a survey that said 54 per cent were of that view. Even though the majority—and I forget the exact figure—of that 54 per cent said the fact that they had got the fine had actually changed their behaviour, there is still that perception there. So the question is: are there other ways in which we can try and change that perception? I know that the money is used for road projects, but in terms of educating the community about how that money is used in those projects, whether it is through signage on major roadworks and stuff like that, to say, you know, 'This freeway was funded through the revenue that was collected from ...' or something like that, has there been any thought in that space about those initiatives or something along those lines?

Ms SEYMOUR: It is a really challenging point in terms of community perception around speed enforcement and whether that is for road safety purposes or revenue-raising purposes, and I think this comes back in a sense to the culture around speed and the challenges that we have around community perceptions around speed and what is appropriate and what is safe. So I think that is part of the work that we need to do. TAC in the early 2000s did a whole campaign around 'wipe off five', which was really around encouraging

people who are low-level speeders to drop back to actually the speed limit because the speed limit is there as a maximum speed limit, not as an advisory kind, and it is set for very specific purposes around what is actually safe.

In relation to the actual speed camera program, we know that with cameras and increased police enforcement—and I am sure justice and VicPol would be really pleased to talk to you about this when you catch up with them next—we see a direct correlation with reductions in trauma. So the speed enforcement is a really important measure, whether it is through police or cameras, in driving down trauma and it is part of why there is a 75 per cent increase in camera hours that is currently being implemented by justice, so Corri, I am sure, will be really pleased to speak to you about that. But as you quite rightly say, the money generated from people who are doing the wrong thing and exceeding the speed limit does go back into roads, and it goes into regional roads and goes into our outer suburban roads. Whether we could sign that more explicitly so that people know it comes from revenue gained is an interesting point, and it is worth considering.

Ms COCKFIELD: I just might add to that. I agree with you that there is still a perception around revenue raising, but the TAC's own surveying—and I know the camera commissioner has very recently done some surveying—does indicate two things. One is people are supportive of the camera program and also do understand that speeding is an issue, so when they do get, as you noted, the infringements, they are quite happy to change their behaviour in most cases. It is probably not as big an issue as it once was back in the early 2000s.

Mr TARLAMIS: The other area of questioning I just wanted to raise was with the graduated licensing system. I know it is in one of the slides. You touched on the importance of when that was introduced and how it reduced that significant issue that was happening. I was just wondering if you could talk to us a little bit more about that but also about the other training and education programs that support that graduated licensing program as well.

Ms SEYMOUR: Sure. In Victoria there was a huge amount of work done over a large period of time to really encourage parents to ensure that their kids got lots and lots of practice. When the graduated licensing system was implemented in 2010, kids in Victoria were on average getting about 96 hours of driving practice when we mandated the 120 hours—and that is our youngest drivers, those who get their learners at about 16, which gives them two years to get that practice. As part of that there was a huge amount of work that was done to develop a very rigorous system which is world renowned, which is our licensing system. The drive test, for example, is one of the only drive tests in the world that can differentiate between those young people who have gained the 120 hours and those who have not, which is why those young people who get their 120 hours have a very high pass rate. Last time I looked it was 80 per cent or above, and actually what you really want to look for in a drive test is a pass rate that is lower than that. But what we see with those young people who are not required to get the 120 hours is that they have about a 50 per cent pass rate, and that is because the test helps differentiate between those who have the higher order kind of decision-making, to make decisions in complex environments, versus those who have not had enough practice to be able to do that.

In addition to that, one of our other measures that has really made a big difference is our passenger restriction. So for those youngest drivers who go straight onto their red Ps who have a one peer passenger requirement, we have seen almost a 70 per cent—69 per cent—reduction in our multiple-passenger crashes for those young drivers in their first year. When you think that over 10 years ago we saw those carloads of young people who were being killed in those crashes, which were so devastating to everyone in the community, it is really fantastic to see that we have had such a marked change in that piece of data.

In addition to that, I think you will have noticed that in our submission we talk about actually the fact that we have seen 42.5 per cent fewer drivers aged 18 to 23 found to be involved in fatal and serious injury crashes, compared to a reduction of 29 per cent in more experienced drivers. So what that means is that while we have seen a reduction in trauma generally, the GLS has had an impact over and above what the rest of the population has seen, and the area where we have made the biggest difference is the ones who are the most vulnerable, the youngest ones—the 18- to 20-year-olds.

In relation to the broader kind of education programs we have got, as part of implementing that change we implemented the L2P learner driver mentoring program, which is the largest youth mentoring program in the state and arguably in the country, which I would have to say I am a bit biased about because I was responsible for delivering it. It is an amazing program that puts volunteers and young people together in supporting those

young people who otherwise would not have been able to get their 120 hours and get the benefit of the safety from that to get access to their licence and ensure that they go on to get employment. It also has supported them in kind of education pathways as well. But it is more than that. Because it is a mentoring program, it provides a fantastic environment for some of our most vulnerable young people to be spending a lot of time with an older person. When you speak to those young people they talk about the value that that has provided them in thinking about their future, their career, their education and more broadly how they manage their lives, which is great.

We also have our Road Smart program, which is our year 10 program, which is a classroom and an in-car program that really is supporting those young people as they are getting their learners or thinking about getting their learners and talking to them about how they then manage the time while they are on their learners to get the most value from that.

We have our year 11 program, which is Fit2Drive, which is really focused on peer pressure, alcohol and drugs, and other kinds of issues around cars. Then TAC has the road safety education centre, which also kind of wraps around and is quite strategic and deliberate about how we kind of manage our collective young driver programs. Sam, did you want to talk about the work that you have—

Ms COCKFIELD: Yes, I am happy to mention the Road to Zero education complex. It was designed or developed to complement all of the other programs that Robyn has spoken about and really takes young people through the Safe System approach to road safety and the key areas that they really need to know about. I have already mentioned vehicle safety and purchasing their first vehicle as one of them. But whether it is motorcycle safety, whether it is the development of a safe roads system, safe speeds, it really takes them right through what it is that we need to do in Victoria if we are to develop a system that will eventually see us having nobody killed or injured on our roads. As I said before, it is based at Melbourne Museum, but there is an outreach program and it is available to every school and every secondary student in Victoria. Unfortunately COVID has limited what we can do at the moment, but we would be really happy to host the committee at the Road to Zero—it literally is a hop, skip and a jump from Parliament—because it is quite unique in the world, and we are getting quite a lot of international interest in replicating it.

Mr TARLAMIS: Fantastic. Thanks.

The CHAIR: Thank you. On that note, I notice that we have our next witnesses waiting. So on behalf of the whole committee, to the Department of Transport and the Transport Accident Commission, to both of you—Ms Seymour and Ms Cockfield—I would just like to say that it was a pleasure to have you both. A number of our committee members, including me, have a number of questions. Is it okay with you if we just email those questions through in due course? I will put them on notice, and if we could get a response in a timely fashion, that would be much appreciated.

Ms SEYMOUR: No problems. Thank you very much. We look forward to your report.

The CHAIR: Thank you. The committee will now have a very short break before our next witnesses.

Witnesses withdrew.