

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

Mrs Bev McArthur

Mr Bernie Finn—Deputy Chair

Mr Tim Quilty

Mr Rodney Barton

Mr Lee Tarlamis

Mr Mark Gepp

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

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Mr David Limbrick

Ms Melina Bath

Mr Andy Meddick

Dr Catherine Cumming

Mr Craig Ondarchie

Mr David Davis

Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

WITNESSES

Assistant Commissioner Elizabeth Murphy, Road Policing Command, Victoria Police; and

Ms Corri McKenzie, Deputy Secretary, Police, Fines and Crime Prevention, Department of Justice and Community Safety.

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 respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

To all witnesses, 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 the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during the 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. My name is Enver Erdogan, and I am Chair of the committee. I would like to also introduce my fellow committee members that are present here today: the Deputy Chair, Mr Bernie Finn; Mr Lee Tarlamis; Mrs Beverley McArthur; Mr Tim Quilty; and Mr Mark Gepp. Could you please begin by stating your name for the benefit of the Hansard team and then start your presentation. Over to you, Corri and Libby.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: My name is Elizabeth Murphy, and I am the Assistant Commissioner of road policing for Victoria Police.

Ms McKENZIE: Corri McKenzie. I am the Deputy Secretary for Police, Fines and Crime Prevention at the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Thank you, and I will start. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. Thank you, honourable Chair and members, for the opportunity to give evidence today. My name is Elizabeth Murphy, and I am the Assistant Commissioner of Victoria Police for Road Policing Command. As you are aware, I am appearing with Ms Corri McKenzie. I share a strong partnership with the Department of Justice and Community Safety and of course with our other road partners who you have heard from today, so Sam Cockfield and Robyn Seymour with their respective departments and the Transport Accident Commission.

Probably for a start from me, I am unsure if you have any information about my professional role and experience. So if the committee sees fit, I will provide a brief overview just so that you know my background in road policing and policing more generally. I commenced with Road Policing Command as the Assistant Commissioner on 2 December 2019, and my career with Victoria Police spans in excess of 30 years and consists of a strong mix of metro and rural policing roles, which have included general duties and investigative roles across the north-west metro region and eastern region. I have had specialist roles in anti-corruption task forces and undertaken extensive policy and project work in the family violence and road policing realm. My experience also extends to critical and emergency management, including leadership during large-scale bushfires, floods and searches. So that is a bit of a background.

From a road policing perspective, as well as my role as the Assistant Commissioner of road policing, I also at a national level hold the position of the chair of the road policing network under the auspices of ANZPAA. This network facilitates policing input into the development of road safety principles for speeding and impaired and distracted driving in collaboration with Austroads as well as national road safety policing issues and responses. I have undertaken various leadership roles across metro and rural areas over the years, with Seymour and surrounds being home to much of my career, and then more recently in southern metro region, where I held the

rank of commander prior to being appointed in my current role. I have held a number of positions as either an acting superintendent or a superintendent, and they cross Family Violence Command, Road Policing Command and in a divisional response as a policing divisional superintendent. I have worked in areas along and around the Hume Freeway, the Northern Highway, Goulburn Valley Freeway, Goulburn Valley Highway and Melba Highway for many years, and it is from these experiences that I have become all too aware of the impact of road trauma on the community at large and the effects on our frontline members.

Sadly, my own personal experience includes attendance at several multiple fatalities and the delivery of numerous death messages to many families in our community who have been impacted by road trauma. Most recently I attended the collisions where our four police members were killed on the Eastern Freeway, and from my perspective to say that this has had a profound and lasting impact on our workforce would be a complete understatement. I am really conscious of the fact that Victoria Police and its members are exposed to road trauma more than any other organisation. We have a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week presence across the Victorian road network, and our members are often the first people on site at such incidents. And just so you know, the major collision investigation unit are within my command, so I am really aware of the impact on them more particularly and the repeated attendance at such incidents.

I would like to stress to the committee that I travel approximately 1500 kilometres per week along a combination of M, A, B and C roads and see firsthand all categories of road users and their interplay relevant to road use. I also reside in a rural area and am all too aware of the experiences of rural communities, which I can speak to much more specifically if needed.

Victoria Police's primary focus in the road policing arena is saving lives and reducing road trauma, and to that end enforcement is a fundamental cornerstone of keeping people safe and reducing the level of harm. It can have a significant deterrent effect on people's behaviour. To explain that quite quickly, Victoria Police's enforcement model is underpinned by both general and specific deterrence, and I think it is important that the committee members understand what the two things are. General deterrence effectively relates to the general population and exposing them to the threat of apprehension and penalty without necessarily punishing them and has a more widespread effect on the community, while specific deterrence deters offenders through the fear of further punishment and deters those who have already been caught from further offending.

Whilst 2019 saw more lives lost on our roads compared to 2018, with visible police presence, continued enforcement and many road safety initiatives, the escalation steadied in the second half of 2019. Notably the quarterly road safety report for TAC for 2019 indicated that the first six months of the calendar year saw a really sharp increase. But compared to the five- and 10-year averages, which are really important in understanding trends, the second half saw a dramatic drop. I think, from memory, it was the second-best year for a six-month period that we have ever had, which is pleasing to see.

Victoria Police employs a range of strategies aimed at reducing road trauma, and it is really important for me to explain that we work in partnership with the road safety partners. We are a collective whole, and we are only as good as the whole of us in influencing road user behaviour. So we are working through improving our drug-driver testing regime, conducting testing for alcohol in motorists, enforcing speed limits across the state by improving the use of technology such as handheld speed measuring equipment, moving mode radar and automatic numberplate recognition, creating targeted operations at both a statewide and local level, focusing on drivers distracted by mobile phones and, more importantly, as I said, engaging with our partners.

From the perspective of the Victorian government's road safety strategy, that has been a real focus for us from 2016 to 2020 and set the strategic direction for achieving road safety outcomes in Victoria, and likewise the Victoria Police road policing strategy also did the same thing. Ours was a 2019–20 strategy that prioritised road safety efforts in areas that aligned to state government strategic approaches. Based on evidence provided to us by MUARC, or Monash University Accident Research Centre, the road policing strategy has assisted us in developing operational priorities which have the greatest impact on road trauma and trauma reduction. We have implemented programs to target repeat offenders, speeding drivers, distracted drivers and unauthorised drivers, which have all shown us that evidence can play a strong part in reducing road trauma significantly if we focus on these. We have also aligned the strategy to the *Community Safety Statement*, working with our government and partners to reduce crime and keep our state safe, and we have managed to work with the state government partners to increase our roadside drug-testing regime from 100 000 to 150 000 tests per year.

I was very lucky in September this year to have worked with my wonderful team at Road Policing Command announcing a new road policing trial in order to remove drug drivers from our roads more quickly with an infringement-at-the-roadside trial. A previous delay in the issuing of infringements had created a significant risk in allowing drivers to continue on our roads, so I am pretty proud about that and our roadside breath-testing regime—which has always set the benchmark for removing motorists from our roads since it was introduced—again speed enforcement, targeted operations and the focus on mobile phone use. I cannot underestimate how proud I am of our workforce in reducing trauma and high-risk behaviour on our roads and improving community safety. We will continue to work with government. We will adapt to the changing needs of the community, to be informed by evidence and data and intelligence, and we will continue to refine and enhance our operations as we continue to travel towards road trauma targets. I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to present at this hearing, and I welcome any questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms McKenzie, do you want to give a presentation as well?

Ms McKENZIE: Thank you, Chair. I am mindful of the committee's time. I might hold my presentation. I am sure that you have seen the data, and you obviously have a copy of the submission from the road safety partners.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Ms McKENZIE: Chair, if I may just say, my name is, as I said, Corri McKenzie. I am Deputy Secretary for Police, Fines and Crime Prevention at the Department of Justice and Community Safety. We form one part of the road safety partnership. We have responsibility particularly for the operation of the road safety camera system and the end-to-end infringements system—road safety cameras, obviously, both in fixed and in mobile settings. But you are all very aware of that. I think probably the one thing that I just want to add to the Assistant Commissioner's comments is that we are very conscious across the enforcement efforts that exist as part of the road safety partnership of those key statistics that Robyn Seymour shared with you earlier around what we see as the significant drivers of fatalities and of serious trauma on our roads. Those are speed, increasingly drugs, still the presence of alcohol, still fatigue, and increasingly mobile phones and other forms of distraction as well. Those are indicators that really drive our effort and activity across the partnership and particularly in supporting police in the enforcement areas of those as well. But I am mindful of time. I will pass over to you, Chair. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I might actually ask the first question myself, and then I will pass to our Deputy. I have a question actually in regard to the submission that was made. There was a point discussed about the demerit point system being an important lever of enforcement. Can you talk about the broader rationale for that and the rationale for the demerit point system just a little bit.

Ms McKENZIE: I am happy to jump in, and then I can pass to Libby for anything else that you want to add, Libby. Absolutely, I think the demerit point system is a really critical component of our enforcement. Libby spoke before about and I know the committee is really well aware of the dual intentions of both general deterrence—so deterrence of undertaking risky behaviour or dangerous behaviours on the roads—and then specific deterrence, so something very specific in relation to the individual to encourage their positive action. I think there is very good evidence that supports a penalty in the form of an infringement or indeed in a more serious incident of a court case, and that can include things like impoundment and a range of other things. But demerit points are also a really critical component of that. I think the Road Safety Camera Commissioner gave evidence previously about the specific deterrent effect of a fine, and that equally applies to demerit points. I think the other really significant thing is that once a fine is paid, the fine is acquitted, whereas demerit points obviously are cumulative as well, so that indicates a really important pattern of behaviour in terms of road user behaviour or driver behaviour that is really critical for the whole system to be mindful of. I think it adds another layer of specific deterrence, which is really important. Libby, I am not sure if you wanted to add to that.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: No, I think you have articulated that very well, Corri. Just probably that swiftness of sanction and the penalty are really important pieces that underpin deterrence, and the penalty does not necessarily have to be a fiscal amount.

The CHAIR: Thank you for that. Deputy Chair.

Mr FINN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Now, I have a question. I am not exactly sure who I should direct it to, so I am just going to throw it in and we will see who comes up with the right answer. Now, as both of you, I am sure, are acutely aware, in recent times we have had somewhat of a debacle with Fines Victoria. I am just wondering if either of you could answer either of two questions for me. Firstly, that debacle, as I described it, did that have any impact on driving habits? Did it have any impact on road safety and people's attitude to road safety actually on the roads? I mean, the fact that they thought they could not get fined, did that allow them to think they could get away with just about anything on the roads?

Ms McKENZIE: Mr Finn, I will take that. The department of justice operates Fines Victoria, so I am very happy to take that question. To your first question, which is obviously a really important one: no, there is absolutely no evidence that the problems that have been experienced with Fines Victoria's technology system have had an impact certainly on road user behaviour. The probably more significant thing to flag in that is that infringements have continued to be issued and infringements have continued to be paid. In fact since the commencement of the legislation we have actually seen an uptick—an increase—in the number of people who pay their fines before the first due date. That was obviously an intention of the legislation as well—that it would encourage early engagement with your fine and payment of that, and that has been the case. We have seen that carry through.

I am sorry, I have just forgotten the second part of your question.

Mr FINN: Just the general attitudes to road safety for people actually in their cars, on the roads: are they going like all stink? Were they? What were they actually doing in terms of their driving practices?

Ms McKENZIE: Is it changing behaviour? That is a really great question, and I will pass to Libby because she will also have a really strong view on this. I think what the evidence shows us is really clearly that infringements and enforcement do have an impact on driver behaviour, both generally and specifically. We have got some very good data around the impact, for example, that red light or fixed cameras have at intersections, and the very fact of the presence of a camera at an intersection can change behaviour. So we do know that it does have a significant impact. I think the Road Safety Camera Commissioner also talked about the very specific personal impact that it has on people—and so, yes, it does. I think we are continuing to see obviously fines go out, which unfortunately is a reflection of the fact that people are continuing to do the wrong thing on Victoria's roads and at those intersections. The evidence that we have and the research that has been done around that suggest that there continues to be a depressing effect on poor road user behaviour—particularly in cameras it relates to speed predominantly, also red lights but predominantly speeding, including through red lights—and that it does have a positive impact. So for example, we are currently in the process of expanding the number of mobile camera hours that are delivered across the state as part of an investment in the budget last year. That investment, that uptick alone, is estimated to reduce the road toll by 30 lives lost per year. Now obviously that is modelling, but it does give us an indication that it is a component of the continued try to depress the rate of fatalities and serious injuries on the road.

Mr FINN: Thank you. Could I just ask also: people looked at what was happening in Fines Victoria—we heard about it on the radio every day, read about it in the newspapers and watched it on TV—and they saw it just sort of going from one disaster to another, and this went for some months; did this lead to the undermining of confidence in the road safety efforts of both the police and the justice department?

Ms McKENZIE: I think it is a really important question, Mr Finn. We have not seen any evidence of that. As I say, I think in fact the behaviour of people who have been issued fines has gone in the other direction, which is that people continue to pay their fines, and in fact more people are continuing to pay their fines earlier in the infringement life cycle. We consider that to be a really important measure because what it shows is that people are taking responsibility for their fine debt but also for their behaviour on the roads, and that is actually a really important component of specific deterrence—something that we consider to be really critical for road safety in the state.

Mr FINN: Assistant Commissioner, would you care to comment on that from your perspective?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Thank you, sir. I would probably reiterate Corri's position, but I would also like to say that there is an intrinsic value in interaction and high visibility with police; it does not necessarily have to relate to a specific deterrent. We come from a great evidence basis that shows there is general deterrence in just

seeing police on the roads or seeing cameras on the roadside. So the fine does not necessarily have to equate with the behaviour, and certainly we know that general deterrence, through research, actually is much—not much more effective but is a great effect. Police use the statement ‘anywhere at any time’, and that is absolutely true.

Mr FINN: Can I just say finally that I think you are absolutely right, Assistant Commissioner. There is nothing quite like a police car to slow down the traffic in both directions—it works either way. So the more cars you have on the road the better.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Well, I am glad you support them.

Mr FINN: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will pass over to Mr Quilty, then Mr Tarlamis and then Mrs McArthur.

Mr QUILTY: Thanks. We have heard from the previous witnesses some criticism about the quality of data collection from accidents. We have heard that in some places they have specialist experts who go out to every crash and examine at the site the scene. I would just like to hear comments about what you think about the level of training we have for police recording accident data and whether we could improve that.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: I might take that one seeing it is about police training, Corri. I did probably, sir, expect this question in relation to police training, so I do have some answers ready about what police training is actually undertaken. Our recruits get a session specifically in relation to collision management risks as well as scene basics, so that is actually about managing scenes in terms of an emergency response or a response rather than just an investigative perspective. They also have a component called ‘Taking charge’ and have further sessions in relation to scene management and investigation. The other threads in their training relate to crime scene management, evidence collection, witness statements and interviewing, avenues of inquiry to take away from those scenes—so looking for witnesses and are there CCTV cameras there that they can turn to for evidence. They measure scenes—what does that indicate? We have experts within MCIU and collision reconstructionists for our more serious collisions. Suspect and offender management is also part of that, so how we actually deal with suspects: are there forensic procedures that we can actually undertake with suspects in relation to have they been involved in a collision?

As part of the third week of DTW, which is a designated workplace training placement, they have a week of vehicle patrol where it would be expected that they then have to undertake investigations. They also have a component of on-the-job tasks that they have to fulfil to show that they have met these requirements and they then, post grad, attend vehicle collisions. For our road policing investigations, I can talk through that. MCIU members undertake training at a detective training school. They undertake a mandatory qualification at the road policing investigators course. They have a gold-class driving authority that shows the skill level of driving required. They undertake preliminary oral fluid test and oral fluid test training, breathalyser training, speed detector training, moving motor radar training and drug impairment assessments. We have obviously a solo unit which sits within my command that also has specific training in relation to public escort training.

I would probably say, along with the SOCITs—the sexual offences and child investigation teams—and family violence investigators, our MCIU are the most trained. We have a criteria for where the MCIU attend collisions, but our local members who are highway patrol members all undertake the road policing investigators course and they will undertake the investigations of injuries within their remit or within the area in which they operate. We have cluster investigations in rural locations. So absolutely I am confident that our members are well trained.

Probably the other thing, and I think it did come up in the inquiry, is I believe that someone made a submission saying that members would be more supported through recording and videoing things. Our members have body-worn cameras. Everyone is fitted out with body-worn cameras—not specifically detectives but first responders, so our uniform on vans—and we certainly have sufficient technology with the rollout of our IRIS devices. They are effectively iPads for uptake of collision investigations and scenes to make sure we are contemporary in what we see.

Mr QUILTY: But you do not believe that this can be improved at all, or you think we are going as well as we could?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Well, I think there is always room for improvement in investigations. I would never actually sit here and say that there would be no improvement to offer. But I am confident in the training that our members undertake and the equipment that they have to undertake investigations.

Mr QUILTY: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Quilty. Mr Tarlamis, then Mrs McArthur.

Mr TARLAMIS: Thank you, Chair. I was just wondering what factors you consider when looking at new sites for intersection and highway camera locations.

Ms McKENZIE: Thanks, Mr Tarlamis. We have a committee that does the site selection process, and that is made up of representatives from Victoria Police, from the department of justice and from the Department of Transport as well. That group takes into account a whole range of data available to us, and I think Robyn spoke earlier, in her earlier presentation, about the fact that we are continuing to do work to inform and improve the analysis that goes into that. That data really relates to a whole range of things that you would expect, so crash data, incidents of speed, police experience in relation to intersections et cetera, and then that is also informed by a framework for modelling that has been undertaken by Monash University and then the Australian road research centre as well.

So there are a range of factors that go into the consideration of those that really relate certainly to the risk associated with the intersection or the particular stretch of road in itself but I think also the kind of pattern of road user behaviour in and around that intersection, and so that is obviously particularly relevant with the location, for example, of fixed camera systems on the sides of the road as well. You want to catch people before they are going into high-risk intersections, rather than always at the intersection itself. So it is really data based. I think where we would really love to see the work around site selection for both fixed and mobile expand and grow and evolve over time is really the use of greater data technology to make sure that we are better predicting road user behaviour and so that we are able to intervene as early as possible to exercise that deterrent so that the dangerous behaviour does not occur in the first instance.

Mr TARLAMIS: Is that reviewed? So if you have got an intersection and the data shows there are no incidents there or that incidents were occurring there but behaviour has improved, do you then look at relocating them to other sites based on where there might be more instances or something along those sorts of lines, or once they are there, they are there?

Ms McKENZIE: It is not normal practice to take away a system once it is in place, and really the rationale for that is that we understand—and this goes to Mr Finn's question earlier as well I think, which is an important one—the fact that the camera in itself has a depressing effect on that behaviour. So we would obviously be reluctant to change the location, to remove a camera and therefore potentially create that risk again, but obviously we do want to continue to evolve the system and the network so that we are best, as I say, predicting the behaviour and getting in as early as possible.

So the site selection work continues, and then we are also looking to really adapt the technology available to the state to help in that effort. Obviously Victoria Police have lead responsibility for the location of mobile cameras, and that is a really important component of our camera network as well, and then that is complemented by locations for highway patrol and a whole range of other measures. So it tries to work together to best target where we see risk on the roads.

Mr TARLAMIS: Thanks.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mrs McArthur.

Mrs McARTHUR: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Corri and Libby. Now, look, I am not really a fan of taxation, but if we are going to have it, I would probably prefer discretionary taxation, which I consider to be part of your jurisdiction, Corri and Libby, but I am also not very keen on churning the taxpayer dollar, whether you have got it from fines or income or GST or whatever reason. And given the debacle and shemozzle—and they are the words that describe the Fines Victoria situation in the Parliament—and given some evidence we have heard from New South Wales, wouldn't it be better to have one agency involved in managing this whole area? You know, there is Transport Victoria and there is the justice department and there is the TAC, and

everybody else, and everybody has got a finger in the pie, and I am sure it is creating a lot of jobs for people, but would the money not be better spent on road safety and other measures—we could probably do away with half a billion dollars of wire rope barriers you are churning out—rather than being churned around in a series of departments, so that we got better bang for our dollar, if we are going to embark on discretionary taxation, which I am not saying is not a good idea. I would much rather that than other forms, as I have said. So that is one question. One agency gets a whole lot of fingers out of the pie and somebody is in charge, totally.

Secondly, to the Assistant Commissioner: I am interested also in the number of suicides that occur through road accidents and how you can clearly define that a death was a suicide as opposed to a road accident?

Further to that is the data issue, which has come up with nearly every person that has given us evidence here. As I understand it we do not collect the data where the police are called to an accident but where no ambulance is involved and on near misses that might be reported. Wouldn't that be valuable information so that we could go forward with finding areas that need extra attention in road safety? In particular I am interested—and other committee members may be bored with this—in the incidence of international driver accidents on the Great Ocean Road, which is of significant concern to a large number of my constituents. As a former councillor, we actually had to paint lines on the road to tell people where to go and somehow stop them from stopping in the middle of the road to take a picture of a koala.

Perhaps, Corri, you might like to start on the discretionary taxation churning of the taxpayer dollar issue, and then Libby on the data collection and suicides et cetera.

Ms McKENZIE: Thanks, Mrs McArthur.

Mrs McARTHUR: Pleasure.

Ms McKENZIE: Two points just in relation to your question about discretionary taxation. The first is that all of the revenue derived from infringements as a result of the camera system goes directly to the Better Roads Victoria Trust, which is spent directly on roads in regional and metropolitan Melbourne. So that money does not go—

Mrs McARTHUR: Who pays for their administration?

Ms McKENZIE: That is run by the Department of Transport.

Mrs McARTHUR: Okay.

Ms McKENZIE: The Department of Transport administers that fund, and obviously you have heard from Robyn today that it undertakes the investment in the roads network itself, so it does not go to the partnership in that sense.

In relation to the partnership, my personal experience, if that is at all helpful to the committee, is actually that the partnership works incredibly well. That never means that we cannot improve it and that we do not have huge opportunities to do so. I think one of the areas that I am really keen to continue to do more work in, and again I think the Road Safety Camera Commissioner has spoken about this in some of his reports, is the opportunity to kind of get ahead of roadworks in camera downtime, for example. So there is always room for improvement. But I think what the—

Mrs McARTHUR: I think he was a fan of the one agency.

Ms McKENZIE: He may well be. He gave us very good opportunities for improved governance, and that is very helpful. What I do think the partnership does bring, which is very helpful, is levers and experience across different components and different systems that need to go together in order to have the greatest impact on road safety and in order to make the roads as safe as we possibly can.

I think speed is a really good example of that, and I know it is something you are very familiar with, but we can do good work in terms of having mobile cameras or fixed cameras on the roads, and those form a particular component. We know, for example, that at an intersection we will see a 26 per cent reduction by the fact of a speed camera in place, but that does not mean that it is entirely reduced. Certainly we know that if that is compounded by down the street the presence of Libby's team and the highway patrol in a very visible, flashy

police car that they have, that kind of compounds that behaviour as well. If we know that there are road barriers in place and that those are both reducing speed and reducing the risk of fatality through head-on collision, for example, again it kind of compounds that.

So the sort of compounding effect of all of these efforts is what the evidence suggests has the greatest impact on road trauma. I think we have seen that over a long period of time in Victoria, with successive reductions on a trend over a long period of time, and I think the fact that different agencies are each able to bring those key components to work together to have that impact is an important feature of what we try and do through the road safety partnership.

Mrs McARTHUR: Do you think you do better than New South Wales?

Ms McKENZIE: I think we operate in a different jurisdiction and it is a different context and a different setting, but that does not mean that we do not have much to learn from New South Wales. Likewise I think we have much to learn from other jurisdictions around Australia and around the world, and I think we will continue to try and do that.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I have one more question.

Mrs McARTHUR: Libby?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Sorry. I am not sure whether you wanted me to say something. I completely concur with Corri, from my perspective and I think the camera commissioner's—so that was a fines perspective. I think as a partnership—and I said this before—we are a collective, and as a road safety executive group I think we allow ourselves to challenge each other and understand what is an important focus at any given time. I think there is a certain concomitancy in that, and that allows good and proper management.

Mrs McARTHUR: I just wonder, Libby, if you would comment on the question of suicides and data collection where no ambulances are called?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: I am just referring to my notes here. So where no ambulances are called, if something is reported to Victoria Police and it involves an injury, then we absolutely will do a traffic incident system report. That does not mean to say that police are always involved where ambulances are called, but with the data-sharing program—and there is a back capture of 10 years—there is now the ability to try and cross-reference or to cross-reference the data of health and ambulance calls with our traffic incident system and the road crash information system. So I am confident that the data-sharing work that we have done has progressed that significantly. In relation—

Mrs McARTHUR: Libby, what about where there is no injury? So do you use insurance data?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: I would probably have to take that question on notice because I am not sure that it is specifically insurance data, but it is definitely TAC data.

Mrs McARTHUR: So data where there is no injury reported, those accidents are recorded?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: The police may record something in the traffic incident system where there is no injury, where the parties are unknown to each other or where there is an offence such as stating a false name and address. So absolutely we would do that, but it does not mean to say that there are not collisions occurring in Victoria that are not reported to police in any method.

Mrs McARTHUR: There obviously are.

The CHAIR: On that point, I did have a question. That is why I said I had two more questions. One of them was: is there a reluctance by Victoria Police to record incidences where an ambulance is not called? I remember—like I said, my previous career was as a personal injury lawyer—from previous experience it seems as though if an ambulance is called police might turn up and issue a fine in relation to an accident, but otherwise if there is no ambulance called Victoria Police, even if you go to the station and report an incident, very, very difficult were the experiences of a lot of people in the system of getting the police to actually write a report or write anything down, actually; they would just give their card at most, and if you were lucky enough to get the officer back, you would get a return—

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Yes, and I understand what you are suggesting. The law in Victoria, which is obviously what Victoria Police enforce, says that you are required to exchange names and addresses if there is an injury, but there is no requirement for Victoria Police to collect data. So Victoria Police's focus is on identifying where there is criminal culpability in relation to breaches of the law, whether names and addresses have not been exchanged. I cannot 100 per cent hand on heart say there are not people who have gone into a police station, but we certainly will deal with injury collision.

Mrs McARTHUR: And the suicide issue, Libby?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Yes, sure. So for 2019 there were 28 suicides in Victoria. For current to date we have had 17 and the ATSB and the ABS guidelines, from which the jurisdictions in Australia record and have guidelines for recording fatalities or excluding suicides, exist. They are called road crashes involving a deliberate intent, and there are criteria that you have to meet for it to be recorded as a suicide or a deliberate intent. So that is reviewed by—and please forgive me if I am explaining something at a very base level and you already know this—a fatality review panel that meets in Victoria to actually determine what deaths are met according to the ATSB guidelines. So Victoria Police are represented on that through our strategy unit, our MCIU. We have two doctors from VIFM who appear on that. We also have the Department of Transport. What it does is it works through the circumstances and either includes or excludes something that it thinks is suicide, but for deliberate intent or an injury it has to be shown that the intent is verified or that the person has announced their intent in some way. Where there is some doubt in relation to it, it is more likely to be included in the toll or the lives lost than not, if that makes sense.

The CHAIR: Thank you for that, Libby. I have got one more question for you, Libby—sorry about that—more about Victoria Police's technology. You have an automatic numberplate recognition system. It is in the cars, I understand, but how frequently is it used?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: On a daily basis. The ANPR technology is in all highway patrol vehicles across the state and the state highway patrol. I do not want to go into too much methodology about how it is effectively used, but there are registrations recorded in that. So it will record things such as unregistered vehicles. It will record hot lists of drivers who we know are higher risk, suspended drivers that are linked through the data that we work with our partners to receive, so predominantly VicRoads and the Department of Transport. And yes, our members on a daily basis will have vehicles passing them and they will more than likely not, if it is a highway patrol vehicle that is passing it, know to intercept that vehicle. So the efficiencies that you get out of that are we are not continually enforcing and pulling over people who are compliant, and road user behaviour. So we still have the deterrence model of visibility on the roads, but we are focusing on high-risk offenders and people who are identified as breaking the law or who we suspect through our ANPR technology are. And I think also the other bit about that is that we have got a project to extend that. We have got 221 vehicles involved, and we are hoping to expand it to other vehicles across the network as part of the project, which ends in June last year. But we have worked very hard with our road safety partners for information sharing in that space and to understand how that relates to traffic cameras and things.

And the other thing, Mrs McArthur, is that I think you had a question about international drivers that I may have missed. I have got it in my notes here, which I was just looking at, so I just want to cover off that I have tried at my very least to answer the questions of the committee.

The CHAIR: Yes, Mrs McArthur is quite passionate about the issue of international drivers. I believe Ms McKenzie already answered that question, but if you want to have a go at it, feel free. Otherwise I will allow other committee members to ask questions.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Thank you.

Mrs McARTHUR: I am wondering if you have got the technology to enforce the fines, because, as I understand it, you often fine drivers using a hire car for offences—traffic infringements, road driving offences—but by the time you get it out into the system you have lost the driver back somewhere in another country. So are you developing a system where you can sort of get the fines paid on the spot or something?

Asst Comm. MURPHY: I can be quite transparent on this. We actually do not have the capability to enforce or follow up fines when people leave the country.

The CHAIR: Interesting.

Ms McKENZIE: Can I just add to that quickly? Mrs McArthur, we do send them, so we do follow up through hire car companies if there is an infringement that is validated and issued as a result of a hire car, whether the driver is international or domestic. And since the introduction of fines reform which came into effect at the end of 2017, fines do not ever expire; they continue in perpetuity. So if an international driver, for example, was to return to Australia, that would still be a valid fine.

Mrs McARTHUR: And I will not even go into hotel quarantine. I will meet with you.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Can I also probably add to that that just because someone is speeding does not necessarily mean it is just an infringement offence. Victoria Police has the ability, if there are high-level speeds and high-risk behaviour, to invoke speed dangerous offences, conduct endangering persons, where we arrest people and we then do have the ability to charge them specifically and have them within our justice system or before the courts, and that could in many ways prevent them leaving the country.

The CHAIR: Do any other committee members have a question, one last question, for Ms McKenzie or for Libby Murphy? Any other questions? Okay, we are actually finishing on time today. First of all, on behalf of the committee to both of you, Libby and Corri, it has been a real pleasure. We all appreciate the work the department of justice and Victoria Police do ensuring the safety of all road users. So again, I just wish to say thank you on behalf of the whole committee, and thank you for having a quite, I felt, informative discussion. I learned a lot from you both. Thank you.

Ms McKENZIE: Thank you to the committee and to you, Chair, for the opportunity to appear. We really appreciate it.

Asst Comm. MURPHY: Yes, thank you very much.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Have a good day.

Committee adjourned.