Submission to the Parliament of Victoria Regarding Vic Roads Maintenance of Country Roads

14th January 2018

Introduction and background
Having obtained my driver’s licence in Shepparton at the age of 18 in 1965, I believe I have the knowledge and skills relating to driving on Victorian roads to make a contribution to this enquiry.

As a Chartered Generalist OHS Professional and Fellow of the Safety Institute of Australia I have extensive experience in the field of safety, another reason for my submission.

Submission
I have noticed a significant deterioration in the quality of our country and city roads over the last 10 years. In the past Victoria had some of the best country and city roads in Australia – but this is no longer the case. When driving along the South Gippsland Highway a week ago I noticed some sections with the signage “Uneven Road Surface 80 Km”. This is similar to stretches of the Hamilton Highway where there are also rough sections signposted on the highway.

Expecting motorists to drop back from 100 Km to 80 Km on a section of a country road is wishful thinking. I was passed by many motorists whilst driving at the sign posted speed!

Vic Roads should, I believe, go back to first principles and relearn the Risk Management strategies that safety professionals and even the regulator teach regarding hazard management and the hierarchy of controls. The HIGHEST form of control in the hierarchy is ELIMINATION (of the hazard) and the LOWEST form of control is ADMINISTRATIVE which relies on human behaviour.

Therefore I believe Vic Roads have failed in their basic duty of care to motorists by not removing the hazard and fixing the road. They are relying on driver behaviour by using signs (administrative control) and we are very aware that a large percentage of drivers will not and do heed road signs.

Therefore, I urge Vic Roads to immediately allocate sufficient funding to Victorian country roads to permanently repair the many uneven / rough sections and not rely on placing signs telling motorists that the road surface is rough – just fix the problem. And the quality of the repair must be checked as I have noticed that many of the repairs particularly on the shoulders of the road fail again in a reasonably short time.

Motorists pay high registration fees and petrol prices therefore sufficient money must be allocated and spent on the upkeep of the roads. Modern cars are becoming safer all the time but this does not help when the surface of the road has, and continues to deteriorate.

Yours sincerely

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