Dear Committee

I write to submit my expertise and knowledge as a road user of 42 years, both as a private citizen and a professional interstate truck driver. I covered in excess of 2 million kilometres as a professional driver and a further 2 million privately. Most private mileage is by motorcycle.

During the course of the last 30 years, I have been involved in road safety work as a lobbyist, through the Motorcycle Riders' Association of Australia, and more recently, the Independent Riders Group Victoria.

Professionally speaking,

As an interstate semi driver, I travelled most of the main routes throughout Australia. Much of my work was driving mainline roads in both Victoria and interstate. Of the "B" grade roads are in better condition overall than most of Victoria's "A" roads. In particular the A8, Western Highway from Hamilton, the main route to Adelaide. The road surface is rough and undulating for most of the way and Semi and B-Double drivers are thrown about in the driver's seat. There is also the safety issue of loads moving on the trailers, and the added costs to operators with premature suspension wear and tear.

As for the roll out of Wire Rope Barriers (WRB) being so close to the "Fog" line, there seems little point to them is a driver needs to stop as a result of a blown tyre, or adjust load restraints when freight moves. In almost all cases, WRB does not stop a semi, single trailer, or a B-Double combination. Most trucks just cut through these barriers and the trucks are definitely not rebounded back to the road surface. The side mounted fuel tanks are prone to be torn open spilling fuel and creating a fire hazard for emergency service personnel, and an environment hazard. Trucks are more likely to cross over to the on coming lanes as has been demonstrated in most cross over truck crashes.

Vicroads WRB budget would be better spent on properly repairing the road surface, rather than creating a hazard for some road users, but more on this issue in the next section.

Privately speaking

As a private road user I drive a car and sometimes a small truck but mostly I ride a motorcycle. In all of my 42 years on the road, I have not seen the roads in such a bad way, yet there is Wire Rope Barriers WRB in places that defy logic and safety.

A lot of the problem is that it appears that Vicroads does not adequately supervise the work done by their own local government contractors doing poor work and the public safety is put at risk for the sake of cost cutting and all this seems to be profit driven.

Recently, Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer spoke of the rise in country road casualty and fatal crashes. It doesn't take blind Freddy to see why given the poor state of our country roads. The
connection between the poor road surface and loosing control and impacting a WRB is constant
and real. It sums up all of the submissions and letters to this inquiry from every day people who
care about our country roads and their safety.

As an almost full time motorcyclist I am disappointed in the state of our roads when it comes to our
interstate and overseas visitors. Many local communities and their Members of Parliament have
voiced their disgust in their local media and called for action in Parliament when billions are being
spent on metropolitan roads that may not have the desired result but instead they roll out billions of
dollars of WRB in places that are inappropriate in case of a break down or to change a flat tyre, or
possibly damaging their vehicles by hitting a pot holed road surface and ignoring their own safety
guidelines for a 4 meter set back from the road surface.

Wire Rope Barriers

BAN IT. Rip it out. It has only been tested on large blunt vehicles such as cars and buses with
none or little considerations for motorcyclists. The motorcycle community in Australia fear the
worst if we impact a WRB. More recently, we feel that the poor state of our country roads and
loosing control and impacting a WRB is a matter of time and the poor state of our country roads
are a threat to our safety. Recently a member of a Christian motorcycle club was killed when he
swerved to avoid a kangaroo and impacted a WRB. Sadly the Police reports will not show that the
WRB was the contributor to the fatality. It doesn’t stop heavy trucks.

Crash data collection

It doesn’t exist. The 2012 Parliamentary Inquiry into motorcycle safety called for an independent
office for road crash data. All to often people are unfairly treated in regards to crash information.
Police reports are inadequate and lack scientific detail and often WRB is ignored as a contributor to
the severity of the crash. A recent case point is the Pyalong crash where 4 young men were killed
when their car struck an outdated and obsolete WRB leading end and the car flipped striking a tree
several meters from the ground. There was only scant mention of the inclusion of WRB at the
Coroners investigation. The families were largely ignored and received no closure for their loss.
Advisors to the coroner were serving Police officers who had not, themselves investigated the
case.

Thank you

John Nelson