



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### TACKLING THE HIDDEN ROAD TOLL OF SERIOUS INJURY

The Victorian Parliament's Road Safety Committee today tabled its report for the *Inquiry into Serious Injury*.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Murray Thompson MP said, "Victoria has experienced significant success in reducing the road toll. However, the focus on fatalities has masked the hidden road toll of serious injury. It is time for road safety policy to place a greater emphasis on serious injuries."

As part of the Committee's investigations, it examined the importance of accurate, useable and accessible serious injury data, the different methods for deriving road crash costs and improving the use of evaluations to determine the efficacy of countermeasures implemented to address road trauma.

A key recommendation of the report is the introduction of a tiered trauma definition structure, with a serious injury defined as a 'major trauma', mirroring the definition used in the Victorian State Trauma System.

Mr Thompson said, "Future decisions about road safety must be based on robust foundations. This begins with best practice injury definitions and data collection processes that enhance the capacity of the Victorian Government to understand and monitor the size, nature and impact of crash related serious injuries."

"Without these robust foundations, we simply will not achieve meaningful reductions in road crashes, irrespective of how much money we spend, and how many laws we introduce."

The Committee also investigated ways to achieve best practice in the development and evaluation of future road safety countermeasures, and in the overall management of long-term serious injury reductions.

"Achieving significant reductions in serious injuries also requires tackling the issue comprehensively, with innovative thinking, community support, and collaboration between road safety and other government policy areas."

"For the Victorian Government to achieve its 30% reduction road trauma targets, it requires quantum steps. The recommendations in this report will help meet those targets", Mr Thompson said.

During the course of the Inquiry, the Committee received 37 written submissions and convened public hearings with 63 witnesses. The report contains 43 recommendations.

For a copy of the report, visit <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rsc/inquiries/inquiry/355>

**MEDIA CONTACT:** For comment, contact the Committee Chair, Mr Murray Thompson MP on (03) 9598 2688.  
**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA | ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE**

## INQUIRY INTO SERIOUS INJURY RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Recommendation 1:** That the Victorian Government adopt a tiered trauma definition structure comprising the following categories, in ascending order of seriousness:

- (a) Fatalities;
- (b) Major trauma patients;
- (c) Disability-Adjusted Life Years;
- (d) Admitted to hospital;
- (e) Attended an emergency room; and
- (f) Not injured.

**Recommendation 2:** That the current 'serious injury' definition used in Victoria be renamed 'admitted to hospital'.

**Recommendation 3:** That the classification guidelines used by the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group to code road crashes be amended so that they align with the definition of a 'road' and 'road related area' as set out in the Road Safety Act 1986.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group and the Victorian State Trauma Committee be given responsibility for the monitoring of changes to Disability-Adjusted Life Years and Years of Life Lost values and their updating as needed.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group (VSTORM) undertake a 12 month trial using Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) to measure the burden of injury in road trauma patients who have met the 'major trauma' definition as used in the Victorian State Trauma Registry. The trial should involve patients from all road user categories (pedestrian, bicyclist, motorcyclist, passenger and freight vehicles), with trial outcomes submitted to the Minister for Roads once completed. An assessment by VSTORM of DALYs for use in road safety should also be conducted, with input from road safety agencies.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Victorian Government establish a Road Safety Trauma Definitions Committee chaired by the responsible Minister, with secretariat support provided by the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group steering committee. The Committee should comprise representatives from road safety agencies, the Department of Health, the commissioners for privacy and health records, and other relevant stakeholders. Its role will be to identify, assess, and make recommendations on the most suitable serious injury definition based on a threat to life measure and a burden of injury measure. This Committee should assess the ability of each of the recommended measures to be mapped or compared against other threat to life measures; its utility in countermeasure development; and its capacity to monitor trends, over time. This Committee is to provide its findings and recommendations to the Ministerial Council for Road Safety within 12 months of this report being tabled.

**Recommendation 7:** That Victoria, through the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure, raise the harmonisation of injury definitions, using the Victorian approach as a possible national model.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Department of Health collect and collate the following quarterly and yearly trauma statistics for those injured in a road crash:

- (a) The number of emergency room presentations; and
- (b) The number of patients admitted to hospital.

**Recommendation 9:** That the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group (VSTORM) be responsible for collecting and collating the following quarterly and yearly trauma statistics for those injured in a road crash:

- (a) The number of major trauma patients as per the VSTORM definition of a major trauma; and
- (b) The number of Disability-Adjusted Life Years and Years of Life Lost.

In order to be made responsible, the Department of Health is to direct the VSTORM to undertake this new reporting role.

**Recommendation 10:** That the quarterly and yearly statistics compiled by the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group (VSTORM) and the Department of Health (DoH) are provided to the following entities for the purposes of developing road safety policy, monitoring the burden of road crashes, undertaking research, and for public education purposes:

- (a) The Ministers for health, roads, justice and the responsible Minister for the Transport Accident Commission (TAC);
- (b) Road safety agencies comprising the TAC, VicRoads and Victoria Police; and
- (c) In the case of the VSTORM collected data, the DoH.

The statistics collected by the VSTORM and the DoH should include analyses of gender, age and road user group.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Department of Health publish the total number of road crash patients who attend an emergency room, and those who are admitted, on a quarterly and annual basis.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Victorian Government direct VicRoads and the Transport Accident Commission to publish the trauma statistics produced by the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group and the Department of Health on their websites and in a yearly publication.

**Recommendation 13:** That the Victorian Government amend the work program of the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group (VSTORM) to include the monitoring and reporting of road crash trauma as described in Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10, and provide any additional resources to VSTORM to complete these tasks.

**Recommendation 14:** That Victoria Police reintroduce the collection of non-injury crash statistics.

**Recommendation 15:** That road safety agencies, in cooperation with the Victorian State Trauma Outcomes and Registry Monitoring Group (VSTORM), undertake a pilot data linkage project. Upon the project's completion, the VSTORM should report the project's findings, including any issues with the process, the governance arrangements and any other relevant information, to the Ministerial Council for Road Safety.

**Recommendation 16:** That road safety agencies ensure that all road safety linkage project applications meet the ethical requirements set out by the Victorian State Trauma Committee, the privacy and patient record

legislation that applies in Victoria, and the release of data requirements set by data custodians and the legislation that applies to them.

**Recommendation 17:** That a working group be established to investigate the implementation of an independent data linking entity, and be comprised of:

- The Transport Accident Commission (TAC), VicRoads and Victoria Police;
- The Department of Health;
- The Victorian State Trauma Outcomes Registry and Monitoring Group and the Victorian State Trauma Committee; and
- The Victorian Health Records and Privacy Commissioners.

The working group should be chaired by an independent expert, and report on issues, options and solutions for the implementation of an independent data linking entity within 18 months of the tabling of this report. The working group should investigate New South Wales' Centre for Health Record Linkage (CHeReL) and other entities, including the Western Australian Enhanced Road Safety Information System, as part of its assessment. The report produced by the working group should be provided to the Ministerial Council for Road Safety, and ministers responsible for health, justice, roads and the TAC.

**Recommendation 18:** That the Victorian Government does not adopt the New South Wales Willingness-To-Pay values for serious injuries and fatalities for use in road safety projects and investment proposals.

**Recommendation 19:** That regulatory tools such as Regulatory Impact Statements, policy documents and communication materials need to ensure that any references to Willingness-To-Pay values, if such values are used, are referred to as prices for risk reduction, not the actual value of an injury or fatality.

**Recommendation 20:** That the Victorian Government continues to use the Hybrid-Human Capital approach for valuing the cost of serious injury.

**Recommendation 21:** That the Victorian Government does not adopt the Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) approach, including in WTP studies undertaken nationally, to calculate road safety costs.

**Recommendation 22:** That the Victorian Government, through its position on the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure, raise the issues and concerns identified by this Committee with Willingness-To-Pay (WTP), and recommend the national WTP study be re-appraised with reference to these issues.

**Recommendation 23:** That the Victorian Government ensure that the current costs methodology be updated by using the new tiered trauma definition structure recommended by the Committee in Chapter Four, if that recommendation is adopted by the Victorian Government.

**Recommendation 24:** That the Victorian Government reformulate the existing Macro Estimates for Target Setting (METS) to incorporate the major trauma, admitted to hospital, attended an emergency room and Disability-Adjusted Life Years measures.

**Recommendation 25:** That the Victorian Government, where possible, translate result findings from previous evaluations of road safety countermeasures from the existing serious injury measure to the major trauma, admitted to hospital and Disability-Adjusted Life Years measures.

**Recommendation 26:** That the Victorian Government and road safety agencies publicly release existing and future evaluations of road safety countermeasures.

**Recommendation 27:** That when evaluating road safety countermeasures, Victorian road safety agencies should examine the impact of countermeasures based on separate categories of trauma, as identified in Recommendation One, in addition to the impact of countermeasures on different road user groups.

**Recommendation 28:** That the Victorian Government and road safety agencies ensure that evaluation frameworks for individual road safety countermeasures be developed and evaluation funding be secured prior to the implementation of countermeasures.

**Recommendation 29:** That when designing evaluation frameworks for individual road safety countermeasures, the Victorian Government and road safety agencies consider the issues and concerns identified by the Committee in findings 34 to 38. Evaluation designs should reflect high validity and be effective in removing or minimising study biases.

**Recommendation 30:** That the Victorian Government and road safety agencies build measures of cost-effectiveness into post-completion evaluation studies of road safety countermeasures.

**Recommendation 31:** That the Victorian Government recommend to the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure that an online, searchable road safety handbook be developed which reports on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of countermeasures that address road related road trauma through meta-analysis of Australian and international studies.

**Recommendation 32:** That the Victorian Government publish a bulletin, accompanied by a media release, on a quarterly basis outlining the latest fatality, major trauma and admitted to hospital road tolls.

**Recommendation 33:** That the Victorian Government incorporate the major trauma and admitted to hospital measures into Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2013-2022 and accompanying action plans through the establishment of major trauma and admitted to hospital targets, and that such targets be broken down into road user groups.

**Recommendation 34:** That the Victorian Government recommend to the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure that a national benchmarking study be conducted into the road safety performance of all Australian jurisdictions, against agreed key performance indicators.

**Recommendation 35:** That the Victorian Government identify the Victorian State Trauma System as a countermeasure in the Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2013-2022 and include it in accompanying, future, action plans. This is in recognition of its role in addressing road related trauma.

**Recommendation 36:** That the Victorian Government work with the Victorian State Trauma Committee to undertake an audit of the Victorian State Trauma System with the aim of devising a schedule and funding plan to upgrade its equipment.

**Recommendation 37:** That the Victorian Government develop terms of reference for an inquiry into bicycling, its challenges and opportunities, to be conducted by the Victorian Parliamentary Road Safety Committee.

**Recommendation 38:** That the Victorian Government continue its policy decision to require all new light passenger government fleet vehicles to be five star rated, and encourage the purchase of five star rated vehicles among the community, and vehicles equipped with proven technologies not yet mandated.

**Recommendation 39:** That the Victorian Government take a leading role in convening a regular forum for government agencies (including Federal), industry, academics and other key stakeholders to facilitate discussion around existing and emerging Intelligent Transport System technologies and vehicle safety. The forum should be convened within 12 months of this report being tabled and meet on a bi-annual basis thereafter.

**Recommendation 40:** That Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2013-2022 and accompanying action plans should acknowledge the objectives of Cycling into the future 2013-2023 and the Principal Pedestrian Network to create pedestrian and cycling friendly infrastructure. In this context, the Victorian Government should explore ways to contribute to reduced safety risks on the roads.

**Recommendation 41:** That the Victorian Government develop an online e-book for local government that investigates the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of various infrastructure-based measures that provide greater separation between bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. The handbook should identify best practice examples within Victorian local municipalities, other jurisdictions and overseas.

**Recommendation 42:** That VicRoads increase SmartRoads' focus on road safety objectives in order to increase the integration and consideration of road safety in planning and transportation policies.

**Recommendation 43:** That the Victorian Government integrate road safety objectives into the assessment of Victorian Government major transport and infrastructure projects, as well as land use and urban planning projects.