



# ***TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mr SR King MP (Chair)  
Mr TJ Sorensen MP  
Mr CE Boyce MP  
Mr BJ Mellish MP  
Mr DJ Brown MP

**Staff present:**

Ms D Jeffrey (Committee Secretary)  
Ms M Telford (Assistant Committee Secretary)

## **PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO MOTOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020**

**Brisbane**

## MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020

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### **The committee met at 9.29 am.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare open the public hearing for the committee's inquiry into motor recreational activities. Thanks for your interest and your attendance here today. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet today. My name is Shane King, member for Kurwongbah and chair of the committee. The other committee members in attendance with me today are: Mr Ted Sorensen, member for Hervey Bay and deputy chair; Mr Colin Boyce, member for Callide; Mr Don Brown, member for Capalaba; and Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley. Mr Robbie Katter, sadly, cannot join us today. He is in transit, which has become more difficult in recent times.

On 21 October 2019 the Transport and Public Works Committee resolved to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on the contribution of motor recreational activities to Queensland and, in doing so, look at the volume and range of motor recreational activities currently practised by, and available to, the people of Queensland. The committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. The committee will not require evidence to be given under oath, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. You have previously been provided with a copy of instructions to witnesses, so we will take those as read.

The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard, and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript. For the benefit of Hansard and other witnesses, can you please identify yourself the first time you speak, and speak clearly and at a reasonable pace. Media may be present and will be subject to the chair's direction at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff if required. All those in attendance should note that it is possible you might be filmed or photographed during the proceedings. The proceedings are also being broadcast on the parliament's website.

I ask everyone to turn mobile phones off or to silent mode. I also ask that if you take a question on notice today you provide the information to the committee by 4 pm on Monday, 22 June 2020. There may be some extra questions. I hope that is not a problem.

### **CONNELLY, Mr Garry, Chair, Australian Institute for Motor Sport Safety (via videoconference)**

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your submission. Would you like to make a short opening statement, after which we will move to questions from the committee?

**Mr Connelly:** I will mention that we have a board of volunteers, so we are a voluntary organisation. We do have two staff members. We are funded by donations from people who hold licences with Motorsport Australia and we have some funding from the FIA. Our principal role is to carry out research and to advise motorsport bodies in Australia on best practices and safety issues. We work very closely with the FIA, which is the world governing body for four-wheeled motorsport. They have a very large budget for motorsport research and development. Many of the major teams also work with us and with them.

We have given you our submission. The key objective was to stress that our role is to promote safety in motorsport and also sustainability. We believe that the two go hand in hand for the wellbeing of not only the participants in motorsport but also the community at large. I would also like to stress that there is a lot of resounding evidence on the huge economic and social benefit of motorsport. That is what we were trying to portray in our submission to this committee.

The key issue that we identify is that there has been an enormous amount of research and money invested into safety issues for motorsport competition. Not only does that flow on to road-going cars and other parts of the community; its principled intention is to establish a set of standards for world's best practice in motorsport. We all know what happened back in 1955 at Le Mans when there was a horrendous crash and many people were killed; it led to the banning of motorsport in many countries. In fact, even today in Switzerland motorsport is in general prohibited as a result of what happened at Le Mans.

Our goal and objective is to ensure that the world's best practices are applied to circuits in Australia and to competitions in Australia. It surprises us—I guess we have not communicated well enough because there are governments that still do not take advantage of all this research and the standards that are available through the international federation.

Finally, I would like to mention the new proposal for a major centre of excellence involving a motorsport circuit at Toowoomba promoted by the Wagner family. I would urge the government of Queensland to strongly get behind this because there is a dearth of motorsport circuits—permanent circuits—in Queensland and in the country in general. Support for that project would be beneficial not just to motorsport but to society in general.

**CHAIR:** You are preaching to the converted with that one. Thanks very much for that. We will go to questions.

**Mr MELLISH:** At the end of your statement you mentioned the motorsport centre of excellence proposed by the Wagner family near Toowoomba. Can you elaborate on that? I have only heard of it briefly, so I am keen to learn a bit more about it.

**Mr Connelly:** The Wagner family has consulted with us and with Motorsport Australia. They intend to develop an international grade 2 motor racing circuit next to the Wellcamp Airport. If they get to that standard, that will enable them to hold any world championship motorsport event apart from Formula 1. They could hold a world endurance championship and a world touring car championship. The facility as it is proposed—I am probably privy to some information that is not in the public domain yet—would be a world-class facility, and I believe it would be in the best interests of Queensland to promote this. If you look at some of the most famous circuits in the world, they are not in capital cities; they are in regional areas. It does amazing things for the economy of those regions when there is a motor racing circuit in the area, particularly one of the standard that is proposed at Toowoomba.

**Mr MELLISH:** Do they have a ballpark cost estimate or time frame for that at the moment? That sounds interesting.

**Mr Connelly:** I am not aware of those. I understand that they are preparing a submission for the Queensland government. From what I understand the project does have the full support of the President of the FIA, Jean Todt.

**Mr MELLISH:** Your submission mentions different safety factors you have had involvement with in the past, and it talks about crash barriers. Could you elaborate on that? I am interested in developments that have occurred in crash barriers in recent years, the pros and cons of different types and how they are rolled out at current Queensland racetracks.

**Mr Connelly:** That is a very good question. It is interesting that the majority of circuits in the world are quite old. We are lucky in Australia that we do have some reasonably modern circuits that are less than 30 or 40 years old. Motor racing had a boom straight after World War II. In those days, particularly after the Le Mans incident, the barriers were mainly designed to prevent out-of-control cars hitting spectators. We started off with very elementary things like hay bales, which were great until they caught fire. Circuits developed track safety precautions involving, firstly, concrete barriers and then the Armco barriers, which you see on the side of the road. As cars got faster and faster, those barriers certainly prevented injury to spectators, but they also caused horrendous injuries to drivers; as the cars got faster, the impact speeds got higher and the injuries to drivers were horrific.

In the mid 1980s the FIA decided to spend considerable money through its foundation to conduct research on crash barriers. We broke those into two areas. One was the immediate barrier on the side of the track to try to develop one which would absorb energy and at the same time stop the car. As you know, if you hit something that is solid it does horrendous things to the body, whereas if you have something that can absorb the energy over two or three metres it can reduce that energy from 50 gs down to an acceptable level. That was the first thing we did. As a result we came up with a set of standards and there are now barriers being developed worldwide and used that very satisfactorily achieve this objective.

I would think they would have enormous value long term on public roads. We have seen evidence in the newspapers of young people especially driving cars at high speeds and hitting things and killing themselves or, worse still, their passengers or other people. Barriers that can absorb energy have an enormous benefit if we can roll them out to society. Certainly on circuits these are very important. It is a shame that we do not apply those standards.

Each barrier that meets the FIA standards is now issued with a hologram, so a circuit can be checked very easily to see if its barriers are of the correct standard. Those barriers are typically a bit more than a metre high. Vehicles and parts of vehicles can go over those barriers into the crowds, so

the second piece of research we did was on debris fencing, and we now have a standard for that. There are really two lines of barriers: the first line of resistance, which is the energy-absorbing crash barrier, and then the debris fencing which stops pieces of the car or indeed the whole car going into the crowd.

I would urge any government that the best thing they could do if it was going to look at regulating motorsport would be to ensure that the public is adequately protected through the use of barriers of the correct standard.

**Mr MELLISH:** Is that harder to do in terms of street circuits than established standalone racetracks? I imagine it could be hard to fit some of the debris fencing as well as the crash barriers on street circuits.

**Mr Connelly:** Quite the contrary. One of the barriers with the brand name Tecpro is quite portable and is not as heavy as concrete barriers. Those barriers do the job of absorbing the energy and they are easy to move around. Likewise, the catch fencing is quite easily erected and has a chain mesh component which can be rolled up and stored away after a temporary race circuit is demolished.

**CHAIR:** We have heard the term COTA, the chain of tyres. Is that old technology?

**Mr Connelly:** That is old technology. Tyre barriers can be effective provided you have the right number of layers. This is where, interestingly, AIMSS did some research for this new S5000 series, which is coming into Australia. These are cars that have five-litre V8 engines but they are open-wheeled, single-seater racing cars and are quite powerful. We found that on a number of circuits in Australia that have tyre barriers we needed to have extra layers of barriers. Some people have tried to develop their own type of barriers and, unfortunately, they really do not meet the desired standards. Tyre barriers properly installed and properly bound together are an inexpensive way of preventing injury to drivers and also absorbing energy and preventing cars going into crowds—as I said, if they are installed properly. They are very good for club events because they are quite inexpensive and can easily be put together. They are quite good. There are international standards for them, too.

**Mr BROWN:** In the electorate next door to mine in late 2018 there was an incident at the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds where a spectator was injured because of improper barriers. Is it feasible for those barriers you are talking about to be installed at show societies such as the Ekka and showgrounds events to ensure safety?

**Mr Connelly:** It is feasible. I would think it would be good to have a cooperative effort in order to purchase and store these things because they are not cheap. They are very efficient and I understand the financial constraints of a show society. If there are many of them, they are very easily transported and very easily stored. Maybe there is an opportunity here for some sort of cooperative effort.

**Mr BROWN:** At the Ekka there are the cars doing the synchronised driving.

**CHAIR:** The Holden Precision Driving Team—no longer Holden, I guess.

**Mr BROWN:** Yes, with the utes driving around. I know they had the dirt bike jumps as well. Heaven forbid but if something did happen, there is that protection for those crowd members.

**Mr Connelly:** There are other ways of providing that sort of protection. Distance is an amazing preventive measure. In Australia we are very lucky: we have the advantage of having a number of FIA track inspectors. Whilst I am sure that no-one is saying that a show society should have an FIA track licence, I am sure those people who are FIA certified would be available to these show societies to give them advice on where they need to put barriers or where distancing would be a suitable alternative solution.

**CHAIR:** I have a question about something that came up during the course of these hearings from the go-karting world. Someone from go-karting suggested that under the safety standards they are still classed as an amusement ride; they come under the standard of an amusement ride. Some karts obviously are quite high performance. Do you know anything about that? Could you elaborate on that for us?

**Mr Connelly:** It is almost as if you have been reading my mail. I was asked to give expert evidence in a proceeding in which a person was involved in a recreational go-kart crash. It was quite obvious that if they had applied basic motorsport safety requirements the injury would not have occurred. I accept that karting is a wonderful amusement or recreational activity—and I totally support it—and I would be opposed to applying high-level championship status standards to it. However, I do think some basic standards could be applied which would prevent accidents and injuries in the future.

**CHAIR:** The karting people who came before our inquiry were quite keen to be held under those standards. One of them said they were looking for rubber bumpers on the go-karts like you would have on dodgem cars in a show. Obviously they do not have them; they are high-performance machines. That is something that we will be deliberating on.

**Mr Connelly:** That is a very interesting point, because it is possible for someone who has never driven in a competition vehicle to go to a recreational karting track and, with no on-track training and very minimal video training of safety procedures, get in some of those karts—and I have been in them—and because they are high performance you can have a very big crash in them. Anything that absorbs energy is a very good thing. I am not an expert; I am not an engineer, especially on go-kart crashing, but if that is what the go-kart people say then I would suggest there is merit in that. What I think is more important is that people understand when they go to one of these recreational karting tracks that it is not just like playing a video game. This is serious stuff. Also, as we say in motorsport, the red mist tends to come down when they go out on the track and they try to go a little bit faster than the next person.

**CHAIR:** Having participated in a V8 race experience at several tracks, I understand exactly what you are saying. Once again, with very minimal experience, you can do the same on a racetrack. I did Bathurst last year in a V8 race experience. You can get yourself in quite serious trouble, but they do provide good briefings beforehand and someone in the car with you, whereas with a kart you do not have anyone with you.

**Mr Connelly:** Correct, and also in a kart you are not attached to the kart; there is no seatbelt. We have been working at the FIA for years on some chest armour because the most common injury is when the car hits something, the driver goes into the steering wheel and there are some massive injuries. These are often young kids. It is quite terrible. I think there is a need for that. I totally encourage recreational karting. We just need to make it a little bit safer.

**Mr SORENSEN:** Can you please elaborate on the AIMSS 10 golden rules for safety in motorsports and the outcome of the campaign?

**Mr Connelly:** This is the FIA president's baby, the 10 golden rules. The idea was to have a very simple message that could be rolled out to all countries—and I stress 'all countries' here because you may be aware of this, but every day 3½ thousand lives are lost on the roads globally. It is quite horrific. These are very simple things such as wear your seatbelt; if you are on a motorbike, wear your helmet; do not distract people when they are driving; do not text and drive. These are very simple rules. I am happy to provide the committee with a copy of these golden rules. We would think that in a country as educated as we hope we are, Australia, everyone would know these—they are obvious—but unfortunately, as we see every day on the roads, they are not so obvious to everyone.

**Mr BOYCE:** I have raised this issue before and you just mentioned it, which brought it to my attention. There are rules out there and people continually disregard them, so much so that we are now seeing the Australian government coming to disagreement with motorcycle suppliers around the world with regard to four-wheel motorbikes and rollover protection structures. In the foreseeable future this can lead to a gap in the supply of a motorcycle vehicle that is widely used in the agricultural industry and many other industries. Would you care to comment on that?

**Mr Connelly:** We have not done any research. It is a very good question and a very vexing issue. You are talking in particular about quad bikes, I would assume?

**Mr BOYCE:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr Connelly:** My personal view is that, like any vehicle, quad bikes can be extremely safe if used sensibly. I guess there is always the unforeseen circumstance—and, as I said, we have not done any research. Even though we look after four-wheel motorsport, these tend to come under our sister organisation, the FIM, Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme. We have not done any research on rollover protection or whether neck braces and things like that would help. My view is that if I was responsible for anyone riding a quad bike I would make sure they had a good helmet at least.

**Mr BOYCE:** Given the fact that people continually disregard these basic safety requirements and now governments are put in the position of legislating against these sorts of things, how far are we going to go in terms of safety and legislation to protect people from their own stupidity?

**Mr Connelly:** This is a question that we are asked regularly in motorsport: how far do we go? People can sign a document that says they accept that motorsport is dangerous. In the FIA and in the Australian Institute for Motor Sport Safety—and I know Motorsport Australia, Motorcycling Australia and Karting Australia all adopt the same view—because we are a sport that people either

can come and play in or not, we can set standards that, as long as they are affordable, can give the competitor the greatest protection possible. It is a different thing for a government when they are legislating, we understand, because you have to have the public behind you in these things. Education can go a long way.

How far should government go? Countries like Sweden have Vision Zero: they want zero road deaths. They will go a lot further than perhaps any government in Australia would go. It is really up to governments to determine that and see how far the public can go behind them. My view is that there always has to be a balance between affordability, usability and ultimate safety.

**Mr BOYCE:** At the end of the day, people who put themselves in these positions must bear some of the responsibility for what might happen. Would you concur with that?

**Mr Connelly:** Yes, I do, but then there are ramifications. We all know that if a breadwinner is taken out of the picture that has an effect on the family and on the community. What worries us more is that it might not be the owner of the device who is riding it and is ultimately injured. It could be a child or a neighbour or a friend who was ignorant of the risks. It is a delicate balance. That is why I am glad I am involved not in politics but in motorsport.

**CHAIR:** Good call! In your submission you talk about improvements to the internal combustion engine and the 100 per cent electric Formula E. We have all seen that the technology that comes from motorsport ends up in our vehicles; it is pioneered in motorsport. Can you elaborate on that?

**Mr Connelly:** Certainly. This is a topic that is very dear to my heart. In fact, the FIA has commissioned an independent international organisation by the name of Futerra to do a report, which will be out in the next month, highlighting all the benefits that flow to society and the community through motorsport. In particular, if we go back 30 years, the internal combustion engine had roughly—and do not hold me to this; as I said, I am not an engineer—a 25 per cent efficiency ratio, so it was wasting a lot of energy. Nowadays in Formula 1 we are way over 50 per cent.

When we look at that, whilst it is wonderful to talk about electric cars and even hybrid cars, developing countries like China and India will not be looking at electric cars or hydrogen cars for many decades to come. Therefore, it is very important for the world that we accept that internal combustion engines will remain an essential part of society going forward until energy grids and affordability enable the rest of the world to have electric or hydrogen cars. If we can double the efficiency of the internal combustion engine, ipso facto you get a reduction to 50 per cent of the emissions from those vehicles. This has come about directly as a result of motorsport.

In relation to electric racing, the most significant benefit to society from that has been the enormous progress in the development of batteries and the storage capacity compared to their weight. Whilst large vehicle manufacturers were looking at this, we all know that in motorsport the competitive edge and the need to win will always get a good allocation of dollars for research. We have seen enormous research go into the batteries for Formula E and other electric categories. For instance, one season ago in Formula E they had to have two cars to enter a race. You would run the first half of the race. Then you would jump out of that car because the battery was flat and jump into a second car.

This year for the first time we have a car with a battery that can do the same distance on one battery. That is a major breakthrough. I think that will have a huge flow-on effect not just in automobiles but for solar farms and people who have solar systems on the roof of their house. At the moment they cannot use the energy of a night that they did not use during the day because there is not sufficient battery capacity. Some of these batteries that are being developed now have the potential to store that energy during the day and then use it at night. You have an amazing ability to reduce the emissions from fossil fuel through the direct development from motorsport.

**CHAIR:** Someone told me they got a Tesla and a Tesla power wall. The car can be your battery during the night if you want to—the battery in the car. It is amazing technology.

**Mr Connelly:** They are also looking now at circuits where the charging units will be in the roadway system, so actually driving over it is going to recharge the car.

**CHAIR:** And technology like KERS that can generate when you are braking. There being no further questions, we will now take a short break.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.00 am to 10.09 am.**

**ELLIS, Mr Nigel, Executive Director, Legislation Standards and Accreditation, Department of Transport and Main Roads (via videoconference)**

**MAHON, Mr Andrew, General Manager, Land Transport Safety and Regulation, Department of Transport and Main Roads (via videoconference)**

**STAPLETON, Mr Mike, Deputy Director-General, Customer Services, Safety and Regulation, Department of Transport and Main Roads (via videoconference)**

**CHAIR:** I now welcome representatives from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Thank you for your assistance and your attendance today. For the benefit Hansard and other witnesses, can you please identify yourself the first time you speak and speak clearly and at a reasonable pace. Would anyone like to make a short opening statement?

**Mr Stapleton:** Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Transport and Public Works Committee to provide further information on the contribution of motor recreational activities to Queensland. As you know, the Department of Transport and Main Roads coordinated a whole-of-government submission to the committee. All of the representatives before you today are from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. While my colleagues and I are happy to answer any questions the committee may have, if a matter falls outside the responsibilities of our department we may need to seek leave to take a question on notice in order to obtain advice from other agencies and provide an answer to the committee at a later date.

The Queensland government recognises that there is a wide scale and variety of motor recreational activities practised in the state. These range from professional and semi-professional events to activities practised by genuine community based clubs and volunteer groups. As we have stated in our written submission, the variety of vehicle types and the range of activities means that it is particularly challenging to comprehensively identify the economic and tourism contribution to Queensland of the entire industry. The Queensland government does recognise, however, that motor recreational activities provide not only economic benefits to the state but also positive social and health outcomes for individuals and local communities.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads supports a range of motor recreational activities throughout the state through its specific legislative policy agenda. These programs include the department's Special Interest Vehicle Concession Scheme, which is available to people registering a classic or vintage car. Special interest vehicles registered through this scheme have the benefit of reduced registration fees, including compulsory third-party insurance premiums, provided usage is restricted as per the conditions of the scheme. I note some submissions received by the committee called for the introduction of a travel logbook under the Special Interest Vehicle Concession Scheme. The committee also received several submissions expressing satisfaction or support for the current Queensland scheme make-up.

The committee would be interested to know that in 2013-14 the Department of Transport and Main Roads undertook a comprehensive review of the Special Interest Vehicle Concession Scheme. The outcome of consultation with stakeholders was that there was overwhelming support for the retention of the current Queensland scheme. This was due to adverse issues identified with alternative models, a desire not to reduce the flexibility of the Queensland scheme and a wish to not increase the administrative duties for car clubs or registration costs for members.

In 2019 the department did, however, introduce additional and quite flexible options for special interest scheme vehicles to be used in impromptu events. An impromptu event is an event that can be initiated by an individual club member rather than the club and involves one or more vehicles where there is an invitation to wider club members to attend the event and the event is endorsed in advance of the event by either the relevant car club or the Australian Street Rod Federation committee.

To maintain strong links with the various motoring clubs the department meets every six months with a broad cross-section of car, caravan, motorcycle and four-wheel drive club representatives through the Motoring Organisations and Car Club Forum. These members represent over 113 clubs and 13,000 members, which is a large portion of the Queensland club membership. The forum was established to discuss and consult on changes to the Special Interest Vehicle Concession Scheme and to provide a forum for wider matters relating to historic, classical and recreational vehicle use, including caravanning.

The Queensland government, as is the case in other states and territories, has regulatory responsibility for light vehicle standards and light vehicle modifications of on-road vehicles after the vehicle is first registered for road use. A light vehicle is a vehicle with a gross vehicle mass of under

4.5 tonnes. The Department of Transport and Main Roads publishes material and provides advice to members of the public who wish to modify their vehicles to ensure that modifications meet Australian Design Rules, ADRs, and vehicle standards. Common modifications include four-wheel drive mass increases for owners looking to carry additional weight or lifting the height of their vehicle to increase clearance, particularly for off-road activities.

Some submissions to the committee noted that issues may arise where jurisdictions have vehicle standards and modification requirements that are specific to the needs in their state, resulting in the occasional inconsistency between states. As committee members would likely know, the ADRs regulated by the Commonwealth government provide local and international manufacturers with a consistent set of rules for supplying new vehicles to market. Quite apart from the role of ADRs, where modifications of used or in-service vehicles significantly alter the original manufacturer's design needs—and fall outside of the ADRs—additional oversight is needed by the states and territories to ensure the safety of the vehicle is not impacted. While this oversight of in-service vehicles is generally in accordance with the National Code of Practice for Vehicle Modifications, at times there is a need for additional regulation to reflect such things as current gaps in the code or to make allowance for regional and local differences. The Department of Transport and Main Roads supports the national alignment of vehicle modifications. I am pleased to advise the committee that the department is continuing discussions about how best to progressively align vehicle modification requirements with all parties in the interests of road safety and compliance.

The department has adopted the Safe System approach in an effort to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries on our roads to zero. The department recognises that key participants in the motor recreational activities industry, such as clubs and community bodies, are also in a position where they can actively influence road safety. For example, under an agreement and in cooperation with Motorsport Australia, known previously as the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport, the department provides vehicles used exclusively for rally competitions and related activities with an authority to operate, provided the vehicle complies with the department's requirements. This flexible approach, with specific safety requirements to be managed by Motorsport Australia, means vehicles that do not comply with a small number of ADRs can still be used for motor recreational activities. Clubs and associations such as Motorsport Australia can impact road safety outcomes by ensuring the education and information they deliver, particularly to younger participants, reinforces the Queensland government's broader road safety message.

The Queensland government recognises there is an increased demand for places and spaces for motor recreational activities across the state. However, the government also recognises that the challenge for motorsport is its classification at times as a noisy and hard to locate activity because it requires large areas of land away from residential areas and because it requires environmental considerations to minimise dust and noise pollution and environmental damage.

Finally, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is excited by the possibilities to foster and take advantage of new and emerging forms of motorised vehicles that make up motor recreational activities. These include drones, autonomous vehicles and personalised mobility devices such as e-scooters or rideables. These have numerous exciting applications, from recreational and competitive use to preventing the loss of life or undertaking dangerous work, or as a transport mode that forms part of Mobility as a Service. Thank you again for providing this opportunity to talk to you today. We welcome any questions the committee may have.

**Mr MELLISH:** You touched a little on Australian Design Rules, which are applied by different states slightly differently. Our committee is fairly well across the national heavy vehicle laws and how the reform process has gone there. It is good to see you all again, not talking about heavy vehicles for a change. What are the next steps if we want to move towards something like what we have done there but for all passenger vehicles? Could you elaborate a little on the benefits in terms of reducing the road toll because we have consistency across states, on the ease of movement between states and that sort of thing?

**Mr Stapleton:** Firstly, the Australian Design Rules are nationally consistent rules. The thing that comes up in terms of variations between the states is primarily around modifications and the slight differences in how the states might approach those. Andrew has actually worked extensively in relation to this issue with some of the motoring bodies in Queensland and can explain how it operates across the jurisdictions.

**Mr Mahon:** I will explain in the simplest possible way how the rules work nationally, as well as the state based rules for in-service vehicles. The Australian Design Rules apply to all new vehicles. Any vehicle coming into the country manufactured by Toyota, Ford or any other company needs to meet the Australian Design Rules. Within those rules are all the requirements for a vehicle to be able



to legally be registered on the road. Once my vehicle is registered on the road, for example, I might decide that I want to modify that vehicle in some way, shape or form. Each state and jurisdiction applies a set of rules around how you modify that vehicle. Those modifications are set out under the National Code of Practice for Vehicle Modifications, which all states and jurisdictions tend to generally follow. As Mike pointed out in the opening statement, there might be examples where a state might have a variation or a deviation from that national code of practice. That national code of practice does not cover every piece of detail around modifications that might occur to a vehicle. There may be gaps we need to fill.

In really simple terms, any new vehicle coming into the country has to meet the Australian Design Rules and must meet those rules consistently, regardless of which state they are registered in. Once they are registered, there are rules that then apply to how that vehicle might be modified or used as an in-service vehicle. Once it becomes a registered vehicle, it is an in-service vehicle. There might be different rules in different jurisdictions around how that applies. Generally speaking, most states and territories are fairly consistent, but there are some deviations here and there about how that applies.

As Mike mentioned in his opening statement, Queensland is pushing and leading the way with our colleagues, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, to try to build that national consistency in in-service vehicles where we can. We have led the way in setting up some national groups to discuss and work through where those changes and deviations are and where we might be able to align better in the future. Some of our external associations, clubs and so forth have called for some better consistency. We are working hard to try to meet that as best we can, but, of course, as I mentioned, each state and territory has the right to implement their own set of rules around in-service vehicles.

**Mr MELLISH:** Thanks for that very fulsome answer. Turning away from the safety side of things and more to the convenience side of things, I know it is pretty hard to get national consistency on car registration, roadworthy certificates and that sort of thing. Is there anything that we can do into the future? It is good to hear that Queensland is leading the way on ADR national consistency. For example, if you buy a second-hand car in New South Wales and you move back to Queensland, you would have to pay for another roadworthy and get it reregistered in Queensland if you wanted to register it in Queensland, even though it might have had a roadworthy certificate issued two weeks before or something like that. This is a pretty broad question but, on car registration and things like that, is there anything more we can do in terms of national consistency in the longer term?

**Mr Mahon:** It is certainly a point of discussion that occurs on a regular basis between jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction applies slightly different rules around how safety certificates are applied. As you would rightly know, in Queensland a safety certificate is required when a vehicle transfers ownership within the state or for a vehicle coming in from interstate. For example, New South Wales, straight over the border, requires annual safety certificates for vehicles five years or older. There are positives and negatives for different schemes and different applications. We believe our scheme meets a sensible and fair requirement to ensure that vehicles are roadworthy. Of course, transport inspectors in Queensland are released to do their task on the roadside around checking for vehicle safety and making sure vehicles comply with the rules on the roadside and on the network as well. With the different rules that apply for safety certificates, it is quite varied state by state, as I mentioned. In some jurisdictions, for example—and it is the same with heavy vehicles—safety certificates or inspections are not required at all, like in Victoria for example. Trying to get national consistency can be a difficult task in relation to that specific issue.

For Queenslanders, if a vehicle changes hands or if a vehicle comes in from interstate, it does require a safety certificate. Each state also applies slightly different rules about how safety certificates are issued. That can generate a little bit of inconsistency as well. We do not see a huge number of vehicles moving in from interstate. Most safety certificates are from people selling a second-hand vehicle to another person. Generally speaking, we have a very comprehensive and full system across Queensland with our improved inspection stations.

**Mr MELLISH:** Thanks for that answer. I would add that I probably prefer the Queensland system to the New South Wales system. I prefer they copy us rather than the other way around. I will leave it at that.

**CHAIR:** As I am sure you are aware, we have had a particularly passionate submission to this inquiry from the four-wheel drive fraternity. I am glad you said that we are trying to work out something national there. They ask that four-wheel drive ride heights and things like that become a national issue. You are working around that with the states, trying to get some uniformity. His concern was around the border with New South Wales, when it is opened, because people from around the Tweed Brisbane

area are falling afoul of the law either side of the border because of the differences there. I know the member for Capalaba was quite passionate about that. We had an issue about that a couple of years ago. That is being worked out, so we can have some comfort in that.

**Mr Mahon:** One point I would make in that regard—and you just touched on it there—relates to having a vehicle registered interstate. For example, you are a New South Wales resident and you have a modified vehicle that meets the New South Wales requirements but for some reason that is slightly different to the Queensland requirements. There is nothing stopping you and no offence for you to drive into Queensland for a holiday, for example. There has been the odd example, from time to time, where perhaps an enforcement officer has not understood the rules correctly, but it is a very rare circumstance and it is usually resolved if there is an offence issue. The rules are very clear that Queensland, as in other states, does recognise the other states' rules and requirements. On that basis, there is no issue or should be no concern for someone coming up from New South Wales, for example, which has slightly different requirements, travelling into Queensland for a holiday. The only difference there is: if that person moved to Queensland and wanted to transfer the registration of that vehicle to Queensland, they would need to meet the Queensland requirements.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I go back to logbooks for vintage cars and so on. What is the obstacle there? I have a neighbour who has five or six vehicles. He cannot drive five or six vehicles at one time. Why do we not go to the logbook system rather than having every car registered? He is the only person who ever drives them. Why do we not have a logbook system rather than the one we have?

**CHAIR:** Or register the owner rather than the vehicle?

**Mr SORENSEN:** Yes, register the owner. A lot of collectors have numerous cars and they cannot drive them all at once. That is the argument.

**Mr Mahon:** I will try to answer that question in two parts, if I can. The first part is the actual logbook history, if I can start with that. Some states, such as Victoria, do have a logbook requirement, but that still requires every vehicle to be registered.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I can understand that.

**Mr Mahon:** We have obviously looked at that scheme before. As Mike mentioned in the opening statement, we did a review in 2013-14 with car clubs around what their preference would be around our current law versus that type of model. There are different models in different jurisdictions. That would not solve the problem that you just mentioned because obviously all the vehicles would need to be registered.

In relation to registration and how it applies, it really comes down to enforcement. Each vehicle needs its own unique identifier for enforcement purposes, and registering it as a person would not allow enforcement to as easily identify a vehicle or understand which vehicle was being driven by a particular individual. Whilst I appreciate that someone who has multiple vehicles might see an opportunity to reduce costs and I agree that they might not drive all vehicles at any given time, of course, that would also apply to a business or a family that might have multiple vehicles, for example, but may not drive all vehicles at any given time. It is one of those things where you just have to find the right balance and make sure. That is why special interest vehicle registration is significantly cheaper than your standard registration. For example, a lot of vintage vehicles are V8s, and V8s in that category are about one-fifth of the price. Theoretically, you could have five of those vehicles for the same cost as one that is not on the SIV scheme.

**Mr Stapleton:** I might just add to that because Andrew has made a good point. Our entire system is based on two premises. One is that each person has one licence and therefore a single identity in relation to licensing. The same applies to vehicles. I am also involved in the shipping side of things, and I can assure you that in shipping we do not have a national identity system for boats. That causes quite a number of issues nationally for us. It is something they are working towards trying to achieve for vehicles in the boating space. I probably do not need to tell you the issues for police that come out of having multiple vessels on a single identity. It can happen, unfortunately. I would just say that our entire system really is based around an identifier for each vehicle, a VIN number with a registration plate. That is pretty much key. Being able to transfer that opens up numerous opportunities for people you do not want having those opportunities.

**CHAIR:** In relation to special interest vehicles in regional areas, a submitter said that there are a certain amount of kilometres you can travel from your home to test the vehicle. I am sure that the member for Callide would agree that with some of them you would not even get off your property. They say it seems a bit unfair because it might be a 50-kilometre drive to the service station and they cannot even go and fill it up—although that would count as getting mechanical work done, I suppose.

They did highlight that issue and they felt there was an inconsistency. Has there been any way to look at what may alleviate that for them? Regional people on the SIV scheme cannot participate in a club run. They might live 200 kilometres from the nearest town and they do not get to participate. They cannot drive the vehicle around just to test and tune it. The distance they can travel under the SIV scheme is not enough. They were wondering if there were any relaxations or any thoughts on that. I cannot remember the exact club that brought it to our attention, but it is in the transcripts.

**Mr Ellis:** I think I read that submission. It was in a written submission as well. One of the reforms—and Mike alluded to this in his opening statement—we did early last year in combination with the Motoring Organisation and Car Club (MOCC) group—in fact, a couple of clubs brought this idea forward—looked at something that is offered in Western Australia, which was impromptu events. It is ideal for a person who is isolated, who cannot get to club events and therefore cannot make use of the full benefits of the scheme. There is the ability to work with a club to set up an event quite easily for them to undertake a local drive, but it has to be within the club, sanctioned by the club, because we do not want it turning into some sort of general registration situation.

**CHAIR:** Of course. When Mike said that earlier it rang a bell. Thank you for clarifying that.

**Mr BOYCE:** In relation to the Australian Design Rules, recently the federal government has required four-wheeler motorbikes to be fitted with rollover protection structures. The international motorcycle industry has refused to do this. It is my understanding that as at 20 November 2021 four-wheeler motorbikes will no longer be available in Australia. These vehicles are used widely in the agricultural industry, the fruit industry, the grazing industry and for recreational purposes. Would you care to comment on the design rule requirements relating to that and how this issue might be resolved?

**Mr Stapleton:** You are talking about rollover protection for quad bikes?

**Mr BOYCE:** Correct.

**Mr Stapleton:** There has been ongoing debate on this issue. I can remember it originally coming up around about 2013, maybe 2012. I went to the inquiry back then into the issue, from memory. I do not know what you do when a group of manufacturers decides they do not want to comply with something that we have determined is needed nationally and then decides to leave the market. This is a difficult situation, and I doubt it is something that an individual state can deal with. It really requires the states and national government to work together to find a way to make this happen. At the moment I am probably not across the detail of what is occurring.

**Mr Mahon:** As you rightly point out, it is an Australian Design Rule so it is a federal government requirement for quad bikes. As you would appreciate, quad bike deaths over the last two decades, and particularly a significant spike back in around 2012 and 2013, prompted a look at the requirements for quad bikes and the safety of quad bikes. One point I would make, however, is that what we have seen anecdotally is that the market and manufacturers have changed their approach quite significantly to the types of vehicles used for recreation or farming purposes.

You would probably be aware that most of the manufacturers now provide products that are known as side-by-side vehicles. They are the type of off-road vehicles that are used that already come equipped with things like proper seating, seatbelts, rollover protection and so forth. In many cases they have ute backs on them for agricultural purposes. Sales of those types of licence over the last five years or so have increased significantly. The anecdotal feedback we tend to get from industry is that they are the preferred approach for most people—not only for agriculture in some cases but also recreation, because the devices are now used in rally competitions and so forth as well in the extreme versions of them. What we have seen is quite a dramatic change in the industry over five or 10 years anyway, which in some respects I think has reduced the attraction of males to quad bikes as a device to be used. Ultimately, the Australian Design Rules are federally implemented and are put in place. Those manufacturers, as I understand it, will need to comply or remove those devices from the market if that is what they see fit to do.

**Mr BOYCE:** I take on board what you have said. There is a significant price difference from what we would know as a quad bike to these small four-wheeler motor vehicles, side-by-side things. They are something in the vicinity of three times the price. The issue I have is that many motorcycle shops in rural and regional Queensland have a significant amount of their motorcycle sales—60 to 70 per cent—directly related to quad bikes, and if these vehicles are not available these businesses will close.

**CHAIR:** That is more a statement than a question. Time is going to beat us, but the member for Capalaba has a question before we finish.

**Mr BROWN:** Yes. I am sorry I had to leave for a short time. You may have touched on this already. It is good to see you again. Obviously, my line of questioning deals with getting a consistent approach around after-market modifications. There are discussions at the moment. Who is driving it?

**Mr Mahon:** Yes, that is correct, member for Capalaba. One of the things we have been driving out of Queensland, in fact, was linked together with our larger state colleagues in New South Wales and Victoria. We have been discussing with them and the federal government ways in which we can broaden and codify the national code of practice to get jurisdictions to come into better alignment and get better consistency across those jurisdictions. As you would appreciate, it is a fairly detailed and tedious task to go through all of the elements of in-service safety and service modifications, but we are certainly pushing. My team here in Queensland is working with our colleagues in those other jurisdictions and the federal government to try to get a consistent approach and some discussion going in that regard. We have been doing that since late last year.

**Mr BROWN:** Is Queensland the predominant driver of this? Is the federal government playing a participation role? Do they have any appetite for consistency across jurisdictions?

**Mr Mahon:** They certainly have played a role and have been willing to come to the table, but ultimately in-service vehicle modifications and safety is the responsibility of the jurisdictions and not the federal government, so it is something that the jurisdictions need to lead and ensure that we are doing that consistency as best we can.

**Mr BROWN:** Is there any time frame that you have on trying to get this work completed by?

**Mr Ellis:** We are just looking at the major differences and trying to progress them through.

**Mr Mahon:** At this stage we are still working through what those major differences are and doing that comparison and getting relevant jurisdictions to come to the table. We do not have a definitive time frame at this stage, but we are certainly working towards getting a good outcome as quickly as we can.

**Mr BROWN:** Do you have any sort of interim report about those differences you could supply to the committee once that body of work is done?

**Mr Mahon:** We could certainly provide details to the committee about where we see the differences.

**Mr BROWN:** Thanks for your help.

**CHAIR:** I remember we spoke earlier about the fact that particular stakeholders have very strong feelings about that. They were asking us to hand our decision over so we have national standards. As you have clearly said, each state has jurisdiction and getting consistency is the answer. We do have more questions on this topic. Is it possible for us to send them to you in writing? We would appreciate a reply to those—obviously we will work on a time—by Monday, 22 June. We will aim towards that date, but we have to get them to you first.

**Mr Stapleton:** Yes, I am happy to take questions on notice.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for that. Thank you again for your time. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare the hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 10.43 am.**