



TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr SR King MP (Chair)
Mr TJ Sorensen MP
Mr CE Boyce MP
Mr RI Katter MP
Mr BJ Mellish MP
Mr SJ Stewart

Staff present:

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

PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO MOTOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2020

Brisbane

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The committee met at 9.37 am.

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare open the public hearing for the committee's inquiry into motor recreational activities. Thank you for your interest and your attendance here today. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet today. My name is Shane King. I am the member for Kurwongbah and chair of the committee. The other committee members with me here today are: Mr Ted Sorensen, member for Hervey Bay and deputy chair; Mr Colin Boyce, member for Callide; Mr Robbie Katter, member for Traeger; Mr Scott Stewart, member for Townsville, who is filling in at the moment; and Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley.

On Monday, 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. 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 you that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. You have been previously provided with a copy of instructions to witnesses so we will take those as being read. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript. To assist with clarity, can you please identify yourself the first time you speak and speak clearly and at a reasonable pace.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with this inquiry. Media may be present and will be subject to my direction at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff if required. All those present today should note that it is possible you might be filmed or photographed during the proceedings. I ask everyone present to turn their mobile phones off or to silent mode. I also ask that if you take a question on notice you provide the information to the committee by 4 pm on Monday, 23 March 2020. This hearing is the third hearing the committee has held for the inquiry. Information about upcoming hearings and the inquiry is available on the committee's web page.

BONE, Mr Ian, Owner, Queensland Motorsport Museum

CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief opening statement and then we will go to questions?

Mr Bone: Good morning. I am Ian Bone. I am the owner and founder of the Queensland Motorsport Museum, currently closed and homeless. Thank you for this opportunity. Let me begin by stating the obvious. Motor recreational activity is complex by nature and extensive by definition. It transcends gender and age as a true platform for community engagement. The submission by the Queensland Motorsport Museum is reflective of this diversity and includes all elements as a central repository, a proven attraction, a community employer and a window to Australia's motoring heritage and stimulus to participation. The core of the submission has been presented on a number of occasions to both state and local government over the past 15 years.

I mentioned that other states of Australia had government investment not through grants but direct funding. For example, South Australia has led the way with the National Motor Museum in Birdwood which attracts around 65,000 visitors a year and runs the nationally acclaimed Bay to Birdwood car run annually, attracting a thousand vehicles and thousands of visitors to the Adelaide Hills as a one-day event. Tasmania has invested in a new building to house the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania, with rave reviews for its content. The Western Australian government has invested some \$2.5 million into the Motor Museum of Western Australia. Bathurst council invests heavily in owning and running the National Motorsport Museum in Bathurst. All are nationally and internationally recognised motor museums. Queensland has not recognised the importance of such a facility.

In terms of proven international visitation, our visitors book, kept since 2015, shows visitors from New Zealand, England, Scotland, China, Philippines, Netherlands, Finland, Estonia, Japan, New Caledonia, USA and Germany. There are plenty of others who come who do not actually fill out the book, and some of it is in Japanese and you cannot read it anyway! The comments that we have received have always been 100 per cent positive and include: from England, 'Simply fabulous'; from Turku in Finland, 'Very good'; from a well-known speedway personality, 'Great concept'; from Darwin, Brisbane

Northern Territory, 'Bloody awesome'; from AusCare, 'Our guys had a great day'—and I will talk a bit more about how that is effected; from the old QMSC—I cannot remember what that acronym stands for—and MGCC member, 'Totally unexpected treasures'. They are people who are engaged but do not realise what is around. From Moggill, 'Brilliant and informative'; and from Toowoomba, 'Wow, thanks so much. Much more than I thought would be there.' Other comments that we get all the time are things like, 'Awesome', 'Remarkable', 'Preserve motorsport', 'Great place to lose yourself', 'An asset to Ipswich'—which I thought was a pretty incredible sort of comment—and 'Amazing, thanks for the experience.' Other visitors include people from a rural discussion group in Bundaberg that transported 22 people down just to look at the museum, and from all states in Australia, Ipswich and surrounds.

People like John French, Brian Michelmore, Gus McClure and Rusty French are motorsport identities and are big supporters of this facility. We had two television segments on Fox with Greg Rust and Chas Mostert; 'The Great South-East' with Sophie Formica; and ABC Radio interviewed us as we had in the museum the vehicle in which Peter Brock died. They are the sorts of things in which we have been engaged. The Fox segment resulted in a UK gentleman, seeing Supercars in London, diverting his homeward flight to specifically call into Ipswich. That was a pretty big plus.

In terms of opportunity, Australia does not have a transport museum. Queensland is positioned perfectly in Ipswich to have a trains, planes and automobiles museum at the Queensland Railway Workshops, where several buildings have remained dormant for nearly 20 years. Rumour has it that the workshops have been identified for operational reinstatement by the Queensland government, but no confirmation or timeline has been published to date—not that I am aware of.

Queensland's motorsport museum has previously been linked to a potential inclusion on this site but, in my opinion, has never been seriously considered, with weak or ill-considered decision-making when stacked up against other more traditional budgetary inclusions. Estimates have identified in excess of 150,000 visitations, the injection of millions of dollars into the economy, and employment benefits for Queensland and Ipswich. It would also result, in my opinion, in better utilisation of the space on this site. The location, being close to both Brisbane Airport and Wellcamp, places it squarely within easy reach of the tourism dollar.

Establishment would require an investment of some \$2 million, which is less than 10 per cent of what is invested in the one-day Gold Coast Supercars event, and would provide 365 days of continuous revenue, employment and an international tourist destination. In terms of employment and community engagement, the museum is positioned to be the oracle of all things motoring—trains, planes and automobiles. It can be the playground for motoring activity and/or a cornerstone to other activities. Our motor museum is a honey pot that can attract not only motor enthusiasts but also non-enthusiasts alike. Everybody has a family story around motoring and is genuinely engaged in museum content. It is part of the Australian way of life.

Cars and coffee events have boomed in recent years, where hundreds of enthusiasts meet in a common bond. Privately run and created by inertia, they are generating greater interest from the general public and their motoring passion and are a place for enthusiasts to enjoy their pride and joy. The USA has Route 66 and Queensland has the potential to invoke such an attraction within the south-east corner of the state, with a number of private collections willing to participate in such a plan. I have already been discussing this for some time, but it has never really bubbled to the surface. At last count there were over 300 car clubs in South-East Queensland, with around 15,000 to 20,000 members. One Ipswich club has over 500 members alone and there are numerous other motor based clubs that infuse millions of dollars into the Queensland economy through their motor activities.

There are many ways the government can foster the ongoing economic benefits from this level of engagement. All have a place and include subsidised and manageable registration for the use of collector cars; sympathetic and effective support for the preservation of our motoring heritage by making decisions based on a majority of what and how rather than why not and ill-informed pressure from minority groups; public investment in the retention, preservation and presentation of historical motor artefacts; and cooperative investment between all tiers of government into motoring activity that promotes education, road safety, employment, entertainment and community engagement.

In conclusion, I am sure the committee through this process will gain an informed position on how motor recreational activity can best serve the community, the state and local business through investment in people and infrastructure. I am most thankful for the opportunity to be part of the face of a very passionate group of motor enthusiasts and offer my experience as an executive member of the Australasian Motor Museums Association, founding and active member of many car clubs over the years, a well-respected member of the motoring enthusiasts community with a genuine passion for all things motoring, and first and foremost as owner of the Queensland Motorsport Museum. I commend your efforts and once again thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. I want to clarify something you said—that is, a \$2 million investment is one-tenth of the Gold Coast Supercars.

Mr Bone: My understanding is that they invest over \$20 million into the Gold Coast event.

CHAIR: I do not want to cause trouble and say we could cancel Townsville. The member for Townsville—

Mr Bone: I raised that as a point of reference rather than a pointed thing as such. It is a generic thing that says that we—

CHAIR: We would never consider that.

Mr STEWART: I think there is a term—over my dead body—that comes into this conversation.

CHAIR: You also said that you had been talking to people, and obviously if it is commercial-in-confidence do not answer. I know of collections as a motoring enthusiast—most of the Bowden collection and some other ones—that would be very exciting to see for a lot of people. There is a lot of motorsport history in Australia, and you mentioned people from overseas as well.

Mr Bone: Yes. Without patting myself on the top of the head too much, I am very well connected across all of those areas. I classify the Bowdens as good friends. Peter Champion had an extensive array of Brock vehicles, and he and his brother have an extensive array of trucks. There is the omnibus restorers association that is busting its boiler to find somewhere to have stuff on display and to be able to attend events et cetera. There are a lot of personal guys who have big collections. One guy in particular rang me and said, 'Look, I've got a couple of cars that I'd like to put into the museum. Maybe we could do five or six, but unfortunately I've only got Nissans and Datsuns.' I said to him, 'If you've got five or six, we're talking about possibly going into a larger venue.' He said, 'We could probably put another 10 or 12 in there.' I said, 'Just out of curiosity, how many vehicles do you have?' and he said 65. He has a collection of 65 Nissans and Datsuns alone. If I was to rattle off all of those people that I touch base with on a regular basis, I am looking at 300 to 400 vehicles that I can rotate on one occasion through the museum. I cannot get a venue. I have thrown \$100,000 out of my back pocket into this to try to get it going over the last four to five years. I have closed it, specifically saying, 'My wife is going to kill me if I put any more money into this.'

CHAIR: It is funny you should say that. I hope my wife sees this transcript. She complains about my six cars.

Mr Bone: I get asked all of the time by my wife, 'How many cars do you have?' and I say things like—this is on the public record—'The ones that she knows about.'

CHAIR: You also mentioned an Ipswich club with 500 members.

Mr Bone: Yes, the Ipswich Classic & Muscle Car Club.

CHAIR: I will declare that I am a member of that club.

Mr Bone: To be brutally honest, they probably have over 600 members and out of that I would suggest that probably 90 per cent of them are not active; they do it for concessional registration.

CHAIR: Which is another topic that has come up during this.

Mr KATTER: Thanks, Ian. That was very interesting. I think of the truck museum in Winton that they have there. You are saying that you are bursting at the seams and need places to put things. Notwithstanding you want to capture the best market you can, if people come from overseas or interstate they are not always going to travel. However, we are all in this together and there is regional Queensland as well. I just wonder if anyone ever deliberately considered putting one of these out in a regional area. I know you do not get the same exposure to people, but Winton embraces it and the whole town gets behind something then if they have one thing to focus on.

Mr Bone: Robbie, you have hit the nail on the head. In fact, even though I talk about the Queensland Motorsport Museum in the south-east corner, the reality is that my vision back in 2000 was to have satellite museums that can then interchange and provide that regional capability, so the Route 66 thing is something that could then be extended over a much larger geographical region.

Mr KATTER: Col wants the Datsun one in his electorate.

Mr STEWART: Bring back the 120Y.

Mr BOYCE: Thank you, Mr Bone. You did say that you were closed and homeless. Could you explain the circumstances as to how that has come about?

Mr Bone: Yes. As a very brief background, I had this concept of a motor museum for many years and the opportunity came up in 2015—I think that was the correct year—where Ipswich City Council had an activation program for the CBD. I was offered a 100-square-metre ex-Telstra shop which I put two cars in and memorabilia on the walls on the concept of being a tour adviser. The idea

was that I would then have a footprint in Ipswich where I could then tap all of the various politicians and say, 'Hey, boys, we can move this further forward.' Ross Strudwick and his brother had a sports store across the aisle which was 300-odd square metres. They moved out and I moved in, so I got reasonable rental—it was still four grand a month—to take up this 300 square metres. Then the fitness centre left downstairs and we got 1,600 square metres for the same price and I moved something like between 60 and 70 motorcycles and cars of all sorts of value into that area.

The CBD was then under redevelopment, and because of what I was told by the council—this is before everybody committed suicide in politics out there—we decided that at that particular point in time we had to move out because they were about to cut a big hole in the top above the cars and all of that sort of stuff, so we moved. I moved it to Sumner Park and put it into another much smaller area of around 280 square metres. We were still able to squeeze something like 10 vehicles and motorcycles and so on into that area. The visitations did not drop off. The people kept coming. We still had aged-care facilities bringing people. I was still employing some disabled people in the museum which was giving them the opportunity to gain confidence in themselves.

We moved into that arena. I was still forking out between \$4,000 and \$5,000 a month out of my pocket and I just went, 'Whoa, enough's enough.' I had had a lot of conversations with a couple of state members. I have had conversations with council. I have had conversations with Queensland Rail, all of which has fallen over because it is all too hard or they want us to cough up more money. The opportunity in terms of grants has always been on the basis that if you put \$100,000 in we will give you \$100,000. I do not have \$100,000 to put into that. When you look around and you see all of the buildings that are empty that are anywhere between 2,000 and 10,000 square metres around South-East Queensland, it is just ridiculous that I cannot get my hands on a building.

We can establish a museum in somewhere between six and eight weeks and have it open, because our requirements are not to have bright, pearly, shiny bits and pieces; we like it rough because that is what vehicles are. With regard to the Queensland railway workshops area, we went there and had a visitation pretending to be council employees so that we could have a look and see whether it was compatible with what we want. We could have walked in there—this was two years ago, nearly three years ago—and had a fully functioning museum with 250 vehicles capitalising the facilities that sit there out at the railway workshops where they have a cafeteria, entry desks and all the rest of it. We could facilitate that with no problem whatsoever, but it has still sat dormant for that period of time. That is the frustration. The thing is that a museum is really that focal point. It is really that central core point for enthusiasts so they can be drawn in, they can have a place where they can come and visit, they can talk and they can do all of those sorts of things.

CHAIR: That is the value.

Mr Bone: Yes, and it fosters that. The idea is that you have something like that so it is a legacy for future generations, and that is the goal.

Mr SORENSEN: My wife is a New Zealander and I go back to New Zealand quite often. Lake Wanaka is one of the best museums. Have you been there?

Mr Bone: I have, yes.

Mr SORENSEN: It is a massive one. When you first walk in, it is all toys and cars and the whole works and then down at Invercargill they have the truck museum and also the motorbike museum, which is really interesting.

Mr Bone: And a fabulous hardware store.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, so you would be looking for just a big shed like those ones in Lake Wanaka?

Mr Bone: Yes.

Mr SORENSEN: The ones in Invercargill are a little bit different. They have the motorcycle one now in the middle of town and they get good patronage there, but that is what you are looking for?

Mr Bone: Yes. In terms of the Richardsons and the one at Invercargill, that was a truck museum to start with and then they bought the whole motorcycle museum and then built a special-purpose building to be able to put that into.

Mr SORENSEN: Both of those people in New Zealand hire their cars out to the movie industry. Is there any connection with the movie industry and the Gold Coast?

Mr Bone: Yes, there is. There is a guy, whom I know very well, who provides vehicles to the studios. He has some very nice cars that are unique and we have access to all of that.

Mr SORENSEN: I was talking to the guy in Invercargill and they had an old Studebaker there. The movie industry wanted that one and they paid for it to be put into a condition where they could drive it around.

Mr MELLISH: You were talking about the railway workshop. Would you just be requiring a space there or is the \$2 million investment you are after to fix it up and do a bit of other stuff?

Mr Bone: There is one shed there that was refurbished back in the mid-2000s—2006, 2007—and it was utilised for the mayoral ball. That building was the one that we looked at and it is perfectly established for us to be able to go in. The investment will be far less than \$2 million. It requires some panes of glass to be replaced. It needs a bit of guttering. As long as you do not touch the asbestos then it is not an issue. You could facilitate putting the museum into there in a very short of period with a minimal amount of investment. All the infrastructure is there. You do not have to put in gates.

From a museum perspective, we do not want any money out of it. All we want is the building. All the moneys that come through the gate allow you to go into the railway workshops. I have been talking with Michael Thiess. They need a place to put all their stuff as well. You would have this massive area that could then also facilitate stuff out of the heritage museum out at the air force base. They are struggling to get people onto the base to be able to see that. We have already talked to some of them about it. It just makes a lot of sense.

CHAIR: Time has beaten us, but thank you very much for your time. That was very informative.

Mr Bone: I have a copy of what I have read out if you want it.

CHAIR: Thank you.

KELLY, Mr John, Promoter, Archerfield Speedway

KELLY, Mrs Kathy, Co-promoter, Archerfield Speedway

SAVELL, Mr Tim, General Manager, Speedway Australia

CHAIR: I invite you to make a brief opening statement.

Mr Savell: Thank you and good morning. Thank you for holding this inquiry and for the opportunity for stakeholders to have input into the proceedings. As a sport that has been active in Queensland for over 90 years we are pleased to be able to assist parliament with its investigations. It seems the questions that the committee are asking will lead to informed decision-making which can only be beneficial to the community and participants in the motor recreational activities industry. We are pleased to be able to demonstrate to you the size and scope of the speedway industry throughout the state which is just one of the many types of motor recreation and shows how important the industry is and the inquiry.

The economic and social benefits of investment in this industry provide a multiplier effect that far outweighs the number of participants due to the sheer dollar value of the activities undertaken. We have made a detailed submission that addresses the main points of the inquiry but are happy to provide additional assistance and information at any time and also look forward to your questions today.

Mr Kelly: Thank you for the opportunity to attend today. On behalf of both Kathy and myself, we are both second-generation sprint car competitors, having competed for approximately eight and 15 years respectively before becoming the promoters of Archerfield Speedway for the past 20 years. Both our children now also compete in the speedway. We are both involved in numerous volunteer positions. Kathy is the president of the Sprintcar Control Council of Australia—that is the national body for sprint car racing—and secretary of Sprintcars Queensland, which is the state body, as well as treasurer of Speedway Promoters Association. I am one of the board of directors of Speedway Australia and the president of Sprintcars Queensland. I am also chief steward and scrutineer for most of the racing divisions that attend Archerfield Speedway. On average, we host 35 speedway events at Archerfield per season plus practice sessions. We average crowds from around 1,500 on minor nights to 7,500 people at a major event, with competitor numbers averaging between 90 and 150 people on any given night.

Today we find ourselves in uncharted waters as we head into an indefinite period of enforced shutdown, like many thousands of other businesses affected by COVID-19. This is already having a huge impact on our speedway community, from our speedway supply companies, who import tyres and race parts, to caterers, sponsors, competitors, security companies, staff and down to our trophy supplier, not to mention our landowners. Unfortunately, we cannot all go about our business as usual. If ever there was a time we can see the impact the motorsport community has, it is now. To date we can only compare it to the devastation of the period of the 2011 floods. We not only flooded out at the speedway but also lost 17 events that season due to the rain. Tim Savell is the Speedway Australia manager and he will give you more information. Thank you.

Mr STEWART: When I was a young fellow growing up in Brisbane, we used to go to the exhibition grounds and speedway was absolutely huge, as you are all probably well aware. There were thousands upon thousands of people who attended. It was a great family event. My mum and dad used to take all three of us kids. Those numbers have obviously dropped off. We heard you talk about the numbers that you are attracting, but how do you see the best opportunities for developing speedway in Queensland and how can government assist in that?

Mr Kelly: It is about the facilities. Obviously the exhibition grounds or the showgrounds, no matter where you were—whether it was Townsville or whether it was in Brisbane or Rockhampton—were central and then motor racing and speedway in general had noise issues and they started to move everybody out of town. Once you move out of town, your numbers will dwindle anyway a little bit but speedway is still very strong. There are a lot of competitors Australia-wide and the big events attract more people and international and overseas drivers. That still happens. In Brisbane our track is owned by Ron Wanless and Pat Gay. They are a private enterprise. One of them is 77 and the other one is 84 and they are looking at one day retiring or passing away—I hope they do not get the virus. They have looked out at Ipswich and Willowbank and things like that to build a speedway there. We also tried to build one in Yatala, just trying to get all the permits and everything in place, because motor racing obviously has a problem with noise. We need venues or somewhere to go that is not too far out of the city, because if you move too far out of the city then your crowd numbers dwindle and you cannot afford to operate.

Mrs Kelly: We also have been cut back for the time frames that we can run at Archerfield. Approximately five years ago, when council was trying to shut us down, we reached an agreement that we can only operate every second Tuesday night, Thursday nights and Saturdays and then from the period from Boxing Day through to the end of January we can only operate on 11 nights. It ruled out doing anything on a Friday night or something like that to get interstate people in, apart from that Christmas period. We used to run burnouts as well, because police were wanting to get people off the streets and have a venue to do that. Unfortunately, when we did try to do that the police, a different division, the street beat police—because where we are in Archerfield there are only two exits—actually blocked the exits with everybody leaving and pulled everybody over and got them for everything under the sun on their trailers, their cars and everything. Yes, we want it to be safe, legal and all of that but it was entrapment. It just put an end to the burnouts straightaway.

CHAIR: I reiterate the Brisbane Ekka comments. I recall quite a while after it closed there was a one-off event that was amazing. I have a brother who lives just out of Cairns, and I think it was at Edmonton I went to see the speedway and the monster trucks were there for all the kids. You mentioned burnout competitions and things like that. I am wondering if that would help the industry.

Mrs Kelly: We run typically two to three monster truck events, fireworks, novelty events. What we have found is having an impact on that is that the showgrounds are being able to run these events as well. I do not know if you recall two years ago what happened at Mount Gravatt Showgrounds. We actually banned those cars from the speedway because they were dangerous with their tubing and that sort of thing. They are quite solid cars. By them being able to go to these places that are not safe—they do not have the concrete barriers in place like we have—it is kind of making a joke of our actual speedways.

We have so many things in place with Speedway Australia, with rules and regulations. When we first started running Archerfield you could get a flannelette shirt and a pair of sneakers and jump in a car. Now you have to have everything. You have to have a harness device and helmets and everything like that. Legislating for outside of our speedway events is also what we need to focus on to make sure that the community is safe and we are doing the sport in these registered venues.

CHAIR: One of the things that has been highlighted during the course of this inquiry is just how motor recreational activities have led to safety in other vehicles. I know it is not a question. For a while I lived in Paraburdoo, a small mining town in Western Australia, and we always wanted to get the speedway back up and running but there was no will for the safety requirements to be upgraded to have a speedway. We had this empty track that people used to go crazy on on dirt bikes but it was not a speedway anymore. I can see what you mean. When you have all those facilities, it is a shame that you are not able to use them. Noise restrictions are another thing. I have Lakeside Raceway in my electorate that is severely impacted by noise and it is currently being worked on to see what solutions they can come up with there.

Mr KATTER: Is the main impact urban encroachment and noise?

Mrs Kelly: The deal that we did with the council, where we have been left alone for the time being, for the last four years, is that we have to do four noise tests per season to make sure that we comply. We are 95 decibels at 30 metres. In doing that we still do get some complaints, but it is not as bad. I guess it is more the restriction on our time that we can run and how we can utilise the facility.

Mr KATTER: That relates to noise, does it?

Mrs Kelly: Yes, it was like a deal we had to do because we have the aged-care facility just behind us. The thing that does not help is that people are allowed to build estates and new buildings, especially aged care, out towards Acacia Ridge and that sort of area, and they do not have to put up any sound barriers or anything like that. They are just allowing them to be built and not telling people that we are a speedway, that we are there. People go look at the property on a weekday and then Saturday night they are on the phone to us saying, 'What is going on? Where is the noise coming from? How are you allowed to do that?' I guess it is about publication that we are there, too.

CHAIR: We work with councils, obviously, but those venues need to be in the South-East Queensland Plan as protected venues. You have been there for a long time. It is tricky. You have built something and then people move in. I remember the valley precinct nightclubs.

Mr MELLISH: You were talking about the monster trucks. I know speedways have strict safety procedures. I used to go to Charlton Raceway a fair bit and have been to Archerfield a few times. You have to operate under whatever your own rules are, but then the showgrounds can hire a monster truck show and it is a case of 'just turn up and see how it goes'?

Mrs Kelly: Yes.

Mr Kelly: In speedway we have concrete fences that have to be a metre high. On top of that we have wire catch fences which are about four metres high at Archerfield. Then we have strands of cabling that go through them that pulls the fence together so that if a truck does go through it gets caught in the wire ropes. The ropes are half an inch thick and there has to be five layers of that about a metre apart to make sure that any of the debris does not go over the fence. If you go into the showgrounds, primarily the Brisbane exhibition ground now, there is the fence that has been there forever—it is probably 800 high—that has maybe two cables and that is it, and there is no other wire fence or anything like that on a normal show when they are running these things so it is quite dangerous.

Mr MELLISH: In general, do you fall under the CAMS system?

Mr Savell: We are self-governed as a sport. Speedway Australia sets the regulations for Archerfield to operate under in terms of the fencing et cetera. We self-govern. The only state with regulation around what you were talking about is New South Wales. They have specific fence rules and legislation that applies dating back to the 1950s.

CHAIR: You talked about the lack of regulation and that the public liability insurance is what acts as the incentive for you to be able to operate. Is there anything you would like to add to that?

Mr Savell: It comes down to cost. As a sport, if you end up injuring people or worse then you end up paying more for insurance. In the 1990s, there was a really big spike in those kinds of occurrences. Then the public liability insurance went up and it became unaffordable. Venues closed or had to make changes. That is how Speedway Australia was formed in terms of trying to keep the sport operating, by getting insurance to continue. That has been successful. These guys in the other 15 venues in Queensland operate under the fence rules because it is the best way to stay open over a long period of time.

CHAIR: Is there anything that you think the government should be looking at? We do not want to overregulate any sport. If you overregulate it everyone says, 'You have cruelled the sport.' That is not the intention of this inquiry. Is there anything that you think we could do to enhance the sport in general and safety overall?

Mr Savell: Take the Mount Gravatt venue as a classic example. There are 16 venues around the state that are built to hold those kinds of vehicles, to keep the public well back and so on. Then you have other forms of motorsport that are unregulated, like lawnmower racing and those kind of things. If you look at YouTube and have a look at some of the crashes, for example, you might think twice about it. There are plenty of opportunities to protect people from themselves, to some extent. That is where you as parliamentarians, in your duty of care to the state, can look at this kind of thing and decide whether that is acceptable or whether there needs to be some sort of barriers or boundaries for people to fall in between when they are trying to do these things.

Mr SORENSEN: What is the cost of keeping your track up to standard?

Mrs Kelly: We have really struggled. At Archerfield, due to the age of the owners, we are only ever there on a one- to two-year basis each time. At this stage we are set to close at the end of next season. Our worry is that if speedway is taken away from Brisbane it will impact on all the country tracks, because generally the city track will help boost numbers to get to those country tracks.

As far as the cost is concerned, they need to maintain a cost to cover the land tax, the rental factor and that sort of thing. It is based on the land value at the time the owners bought it, which was some 40 years ago. We are lucky that they have a passion for speedway. Ron Wanless goes back a long way with it. Our concern is that once they have gone nobody will buy it to keep it as a speedway. You may have seen recently that in Sydney they are looking to build a \$40 million facility to replace Sydney Speedway. It will be shut down in June next year. It is a central hub to all our speedways.

We need something long term, working with the government to make sure that speedway stays alive and continues. I do not think any private promoter would be able to afford the cost if you had to rebuild it or anything like that. We do not get any government funding to keep going the way we are going. We get a bit back from Speedway Australia through insurance grants. Apart from that, it is all private money that we have to come up with to fund it. We run on very bare, minimal costs. It is only John and me doing everything during the week. We then have staff and volunteers for event days. We have to keep costs right down. We cannot afford to spend a lot of money because we do not have the guarantee of continuity.

CHAIR: That is why this inquiry was launched. There were some people from the various motor recreational groups who wanted to come and present at parliament. We thought the best way to do it was to hold an inquiry and present a report that is there forever, rather than hold one-off events. The Brisbane

people who approached us wished to highlight that a lot of sports—football sports and other sports—are subsidised through government investment and then they receive a return on that investment; it is multiplied. We are trying to highlight that motor recreational activities also bring tourism. Those are the points that you are making—that people travel from all over, particularly from the country tracks. I know that this is a statement and not a question, but I could not believe the amount of people who were at the Edmonton event to see the monster trucks and speedway. It was like a several-town event; it was massive. These things happen. Can you highlight your position? I am not trying to put words in your mouth because you have given your submission, but that is the sort of thing we are looking at.

Mr Savell: The key aspect is that a speedway venue is self-funded. Venues such as Lang Park or the Gabba are provided by the government. We do not have that in our sport. On top of that, we have to fund the safety side of things. These guys charge \$70 for a family to attend, whereas you can go to a Big Bash cricket game as a family for \$40. That difference is effectively subsidised by the government through what they do for cricket or footy. With the speedway, the venue is not up to speed either for the fans, compared to those other venues, because we have to self-fund as a sport.

We can see the multiplier effect. We can see the benefits. When a child gets involved in speedway and the family spends \$16,000 on their vehicle, that is a massive contribution to the economy, versus one kid getting involved in footy who buys a \$50 pair of boots and pays a club membership. Multiply that by 100 kids spending \$16,000 and it just goes on and on and on. We would love to have the venues to be able to do that kind of thing, but as a sport at the moment we have to self-fund. We have been happy to do that, but if you guys can see the benefits to society from getting involved then everybody is going to win.

CHAIR: The other aspect that was raised earlier was taking hooning off the streets. It has been highlighted to us quite a few times that if people have a controlled environment in which to do those things they are less likely to do it on the street.

Mrs Kelly: One of our patrons who grew up coming to speedway and who now has a child coming to speedway told us all about the number of people, particularly teens, who are working on cars for crews. Not only are they in a safe environment on Saturday night; during the week they are working and learning about cars. Rather than getting a formal trade, they are learning skills for free because these teams are all volunteer people. We do have some professional teams in the high end, but there are many children and families getting involved as well to maintain a safe Saturday night.

Mr STEWART: Do you know if there is any appetite from pay TV, Fox or anything like that right across Australia to broadcast the events? Have you had any conversations at all?

Mr Savell: We have gone down that path before, but as a sport you have to contribute financially towards it. It very quickly becomes unviable. As a sport, we are now mainly into the streaming side of things because you can control your income if you are going to go down that path—how many people are watching and those kinds of things. In the past there has been coverage, but on a cost per eyeball it becomes prohibitive for a sport like ours.

Mr SORENSEN: If you got sponsorship, you wanted to build another raceway track somewhere else and you went to council, they might say, 'That is rural land. No, you cannot build there.' I had the same problem in my area: they held a monster truck show on an open-paddock property. The crowd that turned up that night was so big that it took me three hours to get out, there being only one road out. The cost of roadworks to upgrade the place in order to take the traffic would be huge. They stopped that monster truck show because it was not in the correct designated zone. However, it could not be put in any other zone because there would never be enough car-parking spaces available. Councils have to consider where to put a speedway in the future.

Mrs Kelly: Previous to five years ago, when we were trying to work out with council where we would go, we had a meeting with the minister for tourism. She spoke about an area that was opposite the airport, in some marshlands or something similar, that was quite a way from somewhere. Are you talking about an alternative location to Brisbane or are you talking about if you cannot have a location in a country town?

Mr SORENSEN: Anywhere. We have a site out towards Maryborough in the forestry area where they are trying to set up a speedway track.

Mrs Kelly: There is already a speedway in Maryborough.

Mr SORENSEN: That is the little one, yes, but this is a bigger motorsport facility. There is a small one out Tinana way and there is the motorbike speedway as well. They want to build a bigger one to cater for a greater capacity and to be able to teach kids how to drive. Earlier you were talking about burnouts and so on. A bigger venue would get the kids off the streets so they would not be doing burnouts up and down the road at night.

Mr Kelly: There was an area that we were looking at. There was a consortium putting a deal together about five years ago down at Yatala. They were also talking about moving the trots from here at Albion Park down there. Seymour was going to move it. He had bought land down there, off Stapylton Road. That facility was going to be built privately with investor backing. It was to include a drift track and a mini drag strip which was only for street cars. It was more or less to get all the people off the street; it was not for full-on drag cars, Top Fuel cars or things like that. It included a speedway track that could be utilised for other sporting events as well as car shows, caravan shows et cetera. In the end, we could not get approval from the council in that area. It had nothing to do with the roads because it is 1.5 kilometres of straight road leading into that area. It was off the freeway behind the drive-in. Yes, there were private people who were willing to do that. The whole thing is all about having motor facilities and utilising them for other things—as I mentioned, the drift tracks and the drag track, just to get all your hoons off—

Mrs Kelly: Or a museum.

Mr Kelly: Yes.

CHAIR: And protected from future encroachment for dissimilar activities. The whole idea is to have that longevity. You are in there and you know that you will not be encroached upon because it is an industrial precinct or it is, as you said, an airport. There is plenty of noise from planes there.

Mr Kelly: That is what happens at Archerfield now. We are on the border. The fence line is the airport property. Our speedway in Brisbane is the quietest speedway in Australia, without a doubt. We use the muffler rules from California which are the strictest in the United States. There is no track in Australia that will be quieter than Archerfield, yet we still have the noise problems.

CHAIR: Thank you all very much for your time. We really appreciate your input and your coming along today. The member for Greenslopes has joined us. We thank the member for Townsville for his time.

BOX, Mr John, President and Secretary, Kingaroy Aero Modellers Society (via videoconference)

DAWES, Mr Ken, Secretary, Roma and District Aeromodelling Club (via videoconference)

HOBSON, Mr Michael, President, Model Aeronautical Association of Queensland Inc.

PETHERICK, Mr Greg, Secretary, Model Aeronautical Association of Queensland Inc.

PRELLER, Dr Dawid, Member, Model Aeronautical Association of Queensland Inc.

CHAIR: Welcome. I invite you to make opening statements. We will start with the Model Aeronautical Association.

Mr Hobson: The Model Aeronautical Association of Queensland is a state based association. We are part of a national association called the Model Aeronautical Association of Australia. Our members consist of around 66 clubs throughout Queensland. Two of our clubs include Roma and Kingaroy, who are in attendance via videoconference.

Across those clubs there are probably around 2,000-plus participants with an interest in aeromodelling. When I say aeromodelling, I am talking about model aircraft of all sizes, shapes and varieties including radio control—that is, controlled with a transmitter—a control line which is essentially on the end of a piece of string, free flight, indoor et cetera. It is a diverse group with diverse membership from probably five or six years of age up to people in their 90s. It is spread throughout the state.

We see quite a number of benefits through aeromodelling in terms of the social aspects. We have clubs in Queensland with 250 members. There would be a group who are there every Wednesday morning—a group of retirees—and it is a real social group. It is almost like a men's shed with model aeroplanes. That is the best example. If you go there on a Saturday morning there will be a different group. There will be fathers and sons enjoying aeromodelling. It is a hobby that has something for everyone. My own passion is large-scale aerobatics, but other guys love the detail of scale building and things like that.

We have a number of threats. Those threats can be identified as threats to our flying facilities. We need not a huge amount of land but a certain amount of space to fly in, with overfly areas. We are quite strict on safety. We have a very strict manual of operating procedures very much focused on safety. As I said, the main threat to us is infrastructure and facilities. That is what I think this committee can highlight for us across the broader government. I am happy to speak to the benefits.

In addition to the social aspect, there is the economic activity that it generates with international events. This weekend Dawid was in Tin Can Bay. Next weekend there are events in Dalby and Toowoomba. We have had quite large events that are supported by local councils in regional areas. A lot of our events, given the nature of the activity, are in regional areas. I think there are good economic benefits. Then the other aspect is getting kids involved in aviation at a young age in terms of the technical aspects, whether it is dealing with small internal combustion motors or electronics. There is a good story there for us to tell. I am happy to work through that during the course of today's presentation.

CHAIR: Do those of you via the videoconference have anything to add? We will go to Kingaroy Aero Modellers Society first.

Mr Box: I do not have a lot to add. Michael has pretty well covered it. We are a fairly small group in Kingaroy. We have been operating for 37 years. We provide quite a bit of operational support to people involved and keen in aeromodelling. In addition to my original submission, to get youth involved we have just constructed a control line circuit. As Michael said, that is flying a plane on a bit of string, basically. That is to encourage the younger group who do not have the finances to be able to get into radio control and that type of thing.

I have also had a recent approach from an NDIS service provider wanting to have a client trained in flying model aeroplanes. Their flying will be financed under the NDIS. We will provide any training and support we can. Our vice-president is wheelchair bound as a result of a motorbike accident some years ago. We cater for his needs in the group as well. He has flown in high-level competition around the state over the years. We do cover a diverse range of people. We hold an annual fly-in. Ken from Roma comes over. People from all around the state come and camp on site, and that is pretty good for the local economy as well.

CHAIR: Is there anything to add from Roma?

Mr Dawes: Yes, I have just a little bit more. I back what Michael and John have said. One of the other aspects that is fairly important is the new technology in drones—the self-autonomous type drones. We recently got a new member from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service who operates a drone for his work and he needs a place away from the airport where he can practise. The field that we have lends itself to practice search-and-rescue activities as well. That is another aspect that we are looking at. He has flown out there since he has joined. There is bushland behind our area that can be well used for that. There are those state benefits as well that need to be taken on board. It is not just old blokes playing with toy aeroplanes; it is a whole new industry that is developing at the moment.

CHAIR: What you are doing to encourage the youth is impressive. We have a couple of model airfields—Bray Road is not in my electorate but in the Moreton Bay area. There was a model airfield there that I used to go to. I do not know whether that is still operational.

Mr Hobson: Greg is the president of that club.

CHAIR: I used to really enjoy going there. There was also Brighton for handheld ones. My dad used to pull up and make me watch them as a kid and then he would have to drag me away. It is entertaining. That is just from my perspective. I absolutely love watching them. This is not to do with planes—and they could not be included because this inquiry is about motor recreational activities—but I watched radio control sail boats on a lake. They do not have motors. You are right: there are a lot of youth getting involved. Thanks for highlighting that.

Mr KATTER: John, you were making us feel like we were up in a plane with you before. You were bouncing around on the screen like we were in turbulence.

Mr Box: Sorry about that. I was just trying to get my best side for you.

Mr KATTER: I am fairly unfamiliar with it all. What surface do you need? What sort of infrastructure do you need and what is the typical length that you would require on a runway?

Mr Hobson: One hundred and fifty metres is about what we are looking at. You want a safe overfly area. With the MAAA and the MWAQ, we work quite closely with CASA. Most of our fields are now with area approvals—that is, registered with CASA. That will give us various height limitations. With the drones rolling out, the federal government, with CASA, put in a regulation to limit height to 400 feet in all areas. To fly above that you need a specific area approval. Most of our clubs have area approvals.

The infrastructure varies from, essentially, a flat piece of land with a mown grass strip to places like Tingalpa or Logan where we have sheds, workshops, pit areas covering solar panels and all of those sorts of things. Essentially, our members can operate off a grass paddock, depending on the size of the model. Dawid and I fly large models, but even then it is not a massive area that we require.

Mr KATTER: What about tarmac? Do you ever use bitumen?

Mr Hobson: We do. We occasionally have events at full-size airstrips. Two weeks ago we had a miniature jet turbine event at the Casino airport. We have previously had turbine events at Goondiwindi airport. I have attended events in Western Australia similarly flying off tarmac, so that is not a problem.

Mr Petherick: The reason we do not fly a lot off tarmac is that there are not a lot around. Where we get access to it, as Michael just mentioned, at Goondiwindi—the Queensland Turbine Federation is effectively a small interest group within our state based system. We go to Goondiwindi every year. That is our major event in Queensland. I go to that occasionally. The reason we went to Casino is that there was not one in Queensland available at the time. We are trying to promote the sport between states. New South Wales also supported that event. It is basically a Queensland initiative run by a Queensland group, but we had to go to New South Wales for it.

Mr KATTER: In Mount Isa the model flying club wanted to tie in with the application for the multipurpose sports complex in Mount Isa that is still trying to get off the ground. Are they complementary? Can you do those sorts of things together?

Mr Hobson: Absolutely. I would see that as our best opportunity to secure facilities, where there is another activity which is complementary where noise is the issue. I think the speedway guys mentioned 95 decibels at 30 metres. We are measuring similar decibel levels but at three metres. That is what we impose upon ourselves. Even with houses a thousand metres away, we will still get the occasional complaint. Normally that is somebody who is particularly sensitive. Some of these complaints are, 'I can see a model aeroplane. Therefore, I'm not happy.' That is the sort of thing we are dealing with.

We do have some really great facilities in the south-east corner. For example, Logan is a club that has been there for 40-plus years. At the moment we are struggling to get a lease renewal with council because of a few complaints. First of all, they complained about noise. Third-party external noise testing basically said the planes were not detectable above ambient noise level of the motorway and boats on the Logan River. The next series of complaints from this person were about height and the planes flying too high. Once again, that was referred to CASA. CASA said, 'No. That is not the case.' We are still struggling with the council because of their need to address what they regard as community concerns irrespective of the legitimacy of the complaints, so to speak.

We have facilities there that we would like to protect. Likewise, we recognise with urban encroachment that we do need to identify other facilities. There are events in the US and Europe that I have been to where you have 25,000 people attending a model air show over the course of a weekend. Joe Nall, an event in the US, is similar. You have 15,000 or 16,000 people camping on site attending this model air show. It would be great to have things like that if we had facilities in Australia.

I ran an event last year in Dalby. It was an Asia-Pacific aerobatic model championships. We had absolutely fantastic support from the Western Downs Regional Council. I could not be more complimentary of what they did to assist us. They will have us back any time. We probably had a hundred people there for a week—eating out, booking out hotel rooms. We probably had 600 or 700 people from the town come out each day and watch the event. There are other benefits. As my compatriot said, it is not just old guys playing with toy aeroplanes.

Mr BOYCE: This committee has done some work where we have briefly discussed drones, which raised the issue of the ownership of airspace. This morning we heard from the raceway people about urban encroachment on their raceway, which is bringing up problems for them. Can you comment on the ownership of airspace in regard to drones, urban encroachment and future technology as it relates to your model aero club?

Mr Hobson: When I say 'aero modelling', primarily I am talking about the traditional aero modelling where, in order for me to fly the model aeroplane, I have to maintain a visual line of sight and contact. I am controlling it based on what I see and the inputs of my transmitter, which has probably 70 years of history of very safe operation. As I said, we have a great working relationship with CASA and that all works fantastically well.

The issues that have arisen lately are probably not with your traditional aero modellers. They are people going into JB HI-FI and buying a drone, but not understanding the regulations around it, the risks associated with that drone taking off in a suburban area and flying it in potential conflict with full-sized aircraft. That is something that is impacting upon our operations, in so far as having to comply with government regulations aimed at the broader community, but which is limiting what we can do, where we can fly, et cetera.

Mr BOYCE: Do you have to register the airspace where your clubs and facilities are?

Mr Hobson: We do get area approvals and register our operating areas with CASA in order to operate above 400 feet. The civil aviation safety regulations are that you can fly a model aircraft or a drone in a non-populous area under 400 feet without an area approval, provided that it is within visual line of sight. That is the bit where a lot of recreational drone users, who have bought their drone but have not engaged with a model aero club to educate themselves on the regulations, fall foul. They are literally flying it kilometres away. Where I see an opportunity there is if we can bring those people within the aero modelling community to be educated and have an awareness of the law and the safety protocols. That would benefit everyone. Say somebody has bought a drone thinking that they can fly it in their backyard. If they have to drive 50 or 60 kilometres to get to an aero modelling club, they are not going to do that.

CHAIR: The member was referring to another committee inquiry that we are doing into transport technology. We talked to CASA about drones. It was quite a concern that, as you said, you can buy one from JB HI-FI. I am led to believe that the government is looking at what is allowable and what is not.

Mr Hobson: We work very closely with CASA. There is a section in the civil aviation safety regulations specifically addressing model aircraft. We have a very good working relationship there. In fact, if you do not mind, I might defer to Dawid on this point because Dawid is a long-term aero modeller—I am sorry if I am explaining what you do—who has basically turned it into a career and is very active in the commercial drone space.

Dr Preller: I started flying when I was probably six years old, with my family. It is a great family opportunity. That naturally progressed into me going to university and doing a Bachelor of Engineering, mechanical and aeronautical, and then carrying on to a PhD in hypersonic

aerodynamics. From that I naturally transitioned and formed an SME with a partner. We employ six or seven people. We specialise in offering drone and robotic services for the mining industry and for civil works. We apply everything that I have learned from the model aeronautical field into what we do today. It gives people more practical hands-on experience to complement what they learn at uni and in schools.

Mr Dawes: One of the other things that probably the committee was leading to is the evolving technology in pizza deliveries, parcel deliveries, et cetera, where there are autonomous drones with no control. I see that as the conflicting airspace unless the technology improves. We have aeroplanes that computers cannot even work properly, so if you have a little drone I see that there are going to be some conflicts in that space, with the pizza deliveries, parcel deliveries, et cetera. That is probably going to conflict more than our models do.

CHAIR: That is what the other inquiry is highlighting. We understand there is a Mexican place in Logan somewhere—Guzman y Gomez or something like that—that delivers food like that. From what we understand of the way technology is going, maybe the services are exceeding the technology, but we have been assured that it is all safe. That inquiry is still going, as well. Thanks for that input.

Mr MELLISH: Many years ago, I remember heading up to a world aero modelling championship in Bundaberg. Is that something that we still attract to Queensland?

Mr Hobson: Absolutely. Last year we had world championships at Maryborough for pylon racing. The figures I was given from the organiser were that the council believes that was a contribution of something like \$500,000 to the local economy over the course of that event. In November last year, as I said, we had 100-plus people attending and competing at an event in Dalby. Probably 30 international visitors were at that event. At that event, the discipline and the nature of the models were such that it was very difficult to transport, but we still got good international attendance. Next weekend in Adelaide there was to be a world cup aerobatics event, once again with large international attendance. At the moment we are putting forward a proposal, and I believe it is very likely to be granted, to host world championships at that Casino airport site that we were talking about in 2022. Certainly we are attracting people.

The MAAA does look to host these events. The Model Aeroplane Association of Australia is a member of ASAC, the Air Sport Australia Confederation, and through that the sports aviation conference and through that is a member of the FAI, the international body, that has in the past run things such as Red Bull air racing and all international air sports. There is quite a structure there. Maintaining that grassroots club membership is really the critical thing.

Mr MELLISH: You are probably all over this anyway, but it could be worth talking to Tourism Events Queensland in due course. I am not sure what their thresholds would be and your events might not be a big enough size.

Mr Hobson: From a state level, we have been battling for a while for recognition as a sport. There are competitive aspects of aero modelling that I think qualify it for a sport. There are other aspects that are recreational and hobby based, and I accept that. From my perspective, I would like to urge the committee to consider where things such as funding are available. For example, our club in Townsville is on the Ross River Dam. They had a metre and a half of water through their clubhouse. As I understand it, they were told they were not eligible for any assistance for recovery because they were not a sporting club. It is things like that. It is recognising that not all kids are going to play football and not all kids are going to play a traditional sport, so these activities are worthy of assistance and support.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. That is exactly what we are trying to highlight. That is why we used the term 'motor recreational activities' rather than 'motorsport', because the range of things that people enjoy and that do bring money and tourism and all of the things that we are seeking to identify is so diverse.

Mr KELLY: Thank you for your submissions and your presentation this morning. Have the drones that are being sold in JB HI-FI, et cetera, potentially created more membership for your associations?

Mr Hobson: Not necessarily. A lot of people probably do not see being in a radio controlled model aircraft club as what they want to do with their drone. They want to take it down to South Bank, fly it over the river and take photographs. Those people are not attracted to the traditional aero modelling, flying a plane, doing aerobatics with it. There is a certain skill involved in what we do, generally speaking. A model aircraft does not just hold itself there. It has created opportunities

perhaps to bring those people into the tent with things such as FPV racing, which is part of the traditional air modelling group. Likewise, it has also brought about regulation. We are working with CASA on how they can regulate it, without necessarily shutting down what our members have done for 70 years in a very safe manner.

Mr KELLY: I am interested in this because in my electorate we tend to get a few complaints from people about drone users, in particular around the invasion of privacy and those sorts of things, but also safety issues.

Mr Hobson: I agree entirely. The moment you take something with propellers on it into a public area and an uncontrolled environment, you have those issues. That is why I would urge everyone to come to an aero modelling club.

Mr KELLY: My daughter bought a drone off a 16-year-old kid at an electronics store. Is there more that we could be and should be doing to at least make people aware that there are aeronautical clubs available?

Mr Hobson: Absolutely. We would love programs to roll out and promote that, whether that be via schools and things like that. We have probably identified that our core potential member is not a 12-year-old kid. It is probably the 35-year-old guy who had a passion in his childhood and wants to reengage and bring his children into the hobby. The MAAA is working with CASA to try to direct people who are buying drones to at least have an understanding of the regulations. The MAAA is recognised essentially as a self-regulating body to a large extent and has a deed of arrangement with CASA to essentially regulate our membership, but there are a lot of people outside of our membership who are playing with these devices. It is an obvious concern.

Mr KELLY: Finally, I imagine there is some degree of walking and activity involved in a sport like this?

Mr Hobson: As I said, there are free-flight models where you literally throw it, chase it and follow it. There are all those aspects. It is like any outdoor activity: you find your niche and what appeals to you. If you want to turn it into a physical activity, there are plenty of aspects to it that can certainly be a physical activity.

Dr Preller: At the last event at Tin Can Bay on Saturday, I had my phone in my pocket. I achieved my 10,000 steps about midday. There is walking involved.

Mr KELLY: There is a fellow who flies, I think, a proper model aeroplane in the park at the end of my street. I see him walking from one end of the park to the other probably 15 times when I am down there having a run or walking the dog.

Mr Dawes: Just to follow through a bit more on youth, I am an old member of the Thunderbirds from 1971 and a continuous member of the MAAQ and MAAA, so I have seen it all change. What has pleased me in the local Roma area, from having the club from 1984 when we formed it, is the young people who have gone to full-sized aeronautics. I can probably think of at least five or six who have become either pilots or aircraft engineers. That sort of thing makes me feel proud. That is the sort of thing that Michael was saying we foster, as well. It is not just that they go on to fly more models; it is getting into full-sized aviation. I had one chap who said, 'You've cost me a lot of money.' I said, 'Why is that?' He said, 'Well, my son did not want to go to university. He became a commercial pilot instead.' He was proud of that. That is the sort of thing that we need to foster as well.

Mr Hobson: We have a schools program with the MAAA. We have a discounted insurance arrangement, so that we can get school kids into programs that teach them about models. There are schools around. Aviation High is a perfect example. Mueller College has a program that teaches kids to fly radio controlled models and things like that as a learning exercise in technology, aeronautics and all those sorts of things.

CHAIR: That is what has always scared me. I remember being with my father buying balsa-wood models with the wind-up long rubber bands. Because of the budget, that was all that we had. I also had the little models you could buy with the control. I was always too scared to go that next step because of the cost. Training for adults would be good, as well. I will have a chat to Greg, later.

Mr Petherick: That is one of the reasons we are becoming self-imposed in the next few years as a sport, because at the moment we exceed the CASA regulations in terms of the training we give our members. We have a fixed airfield that we fly within GPS coordinates. We have a system where you cannot fly by yourself you have to have a spotter. You always have to have someone with you. Irrespective of whether it is a jet helicopter or a drone, you are fixed to fly within that area.

Training is key for us. The problem is that people go down to the shop, spend \$200 and buy a drone but they do not want to spend another \$200 to join a club because they do not see the value in it. That does not teach you the discipline to fly. If you bring your drone to our club we will teach you how to fly properly. We will teach you how to observe the rules. We will teach you how to grow because if you are not trying something new, you are probably not learning more skills. We are all about that. Each person, including us at the table, has a sickness: we just keep buying more stuff because we love to fly. We are ever-evolving. We try to plant the seed as a teenager. The reality is they get into cars, girls and study but by the time they are 35 or 40 they come back. I have members who come back and say, 'I now have half a day so on my half day I'll rejoin the club.' We tend to get people who come back and we build as much as we can.

CHAIR: That is where the member for Traeger has an advantage over us. Because he flies, he would be able to fly a model because he understands the concept.

Mr KATTER: I do not know.

Mr Petherick: That is actually not the case, to be honest. We have plenty of pilots and former pilots who cannot fly very well. Because you are not in it, it is different.

Mr KATTER: I am not that good in a standard plane.

Mr Petherick: I have my PPL but it is different because they are different skills. That is why we think it is a sport. It is a sport because it is that whole coordination thing. It is not only the movement but you are exercising your brain incredibly. Plus, if you are putting a \$30,000 aircraft in the sky I can assure you that you are concentrating on it.

CHAIR: I can imagine you would be. Time has beaten us, but thank you all very much. We appreciate you coming along. We value your input.

BRENNAN, Mr Miles, Vehicle Modifications Representative, Four Wheel Drive Queensland

LOCH, Mr Charles, President, Central West Queensland 4x4 Club (via videoconference)

ROSE, Mr Shane, President, Four Wheel Drive Queensland

CHAIR: Welcome. We appreciate your time today. I would ask you to make a brief opening statement.

Mr Rose: I am the president of Four Wheel Drive Queensland, and I have been for six-odd years now. I was also the president of Four Wheel Drive Australia for a period of time, and I am the president of the Australian Recreational Motorists Association, ARMA. I run a financial services business. I have my own AFSL. I also have a business that does dyno tuning and a business that does four-wheel drive modifications, so I cover a fair few areas in this space. I have been four-wheel driving since I was 18, so just a couple of years. I originally started in New South Wales. I was quite active down there. After not too long I became the chairman of the Hunter Regional Council. We were fighting against the Wilderness Act and the closing of wilderness areas in New South Wales. Luckily, we have not had that sort of thing up here in Queensland, because in wilderness areas you have no access at all. Nobody gets in there—just walkers. They have had a lot of problems recently. Those are the areas that have been really badly devastated by fire because there is no way in there. There are no tracks in there anymore. It is all blocked up. From Four Wheel Drive Queensland's point of view, I suppose I can bring a lot of knowledge from other areas.

We have just under 60 active clubs in Queensland as part of our group. We represent over 5,000 people in those groups, and that is adults. When you add the children it is even more. We run a couple of big events throughout the year. We run the largest beach clean-up in the world with Fraser Island Clean Up. We have in excess of 1,000 people and we generally take off around seven tonnes of rubbish every year. That is in May, and it is well supported by the community. We have a bit of support from council—a little bit, not a lot. We have a few challenges with parks. We have a collaborative agreement around that, which is interesting. It is changing all the time. With Indigenous people now being involved that is a big change. We have to assess what is happening with that. We also run corroborees which are generally held in regional areas. Usually about 800 people attend. Our aim is to get out there and support local communities. We also have get-togethers as groups, where probably 30 to 50 clubs attend, anywhere up to 800 people. We also do a drought run every year out to areas that have been affected by drought. A lot of the clubs have been involved in helping with things like the hay bale run, so we actually do a lot of community support work.

We also have our own registered training organisation. It is one of the oldest in Queensland. We provide registered national training to our members in the areas of four-wheel driving and chainsaw safety—the things that we do. We are lucky in that we are part of the largest growing automotive industry in Australia. Four-wheel driving and the four-wheel driving industry is the largest growing area, which also means that we are part of the largest recreational group in Australia because nearly everybody has a four-wheel drive. They may not necessarily be going out four-wheel driving as such, but they are using their four-wheel drives for all of their activities. Whether it be horse riding or caravanning they are all using four-wheel drives, with their ability to tow, to get into remote areas. Bushwalkers and hikers generally use a four-wheel drive to get to these places. We are quite unique in that our needs cover a wide range of people in the community, and obviously the income that brings to us here in Queensland is massive, especially in tourism.

CHAIR: We will now go to the teleconference. Mr Loch, is there anything you wish to add?

Mr Loch: Basically, we are coming from a similar position. I am the president of the Central West Queensland 4x4 Club. I manage a workshop and accessories store in Emerald. We are at the other end of the spectrum from these guys. We are part of that association and we are the guys on the ground up here who do the running around. Yesterday 30 of us in 14 cars went to one of the local national parks. There would have been that many people there again who were not part of our club. It is a big thing. There are a lot of people out here doing it. There are a lot of people visiting small national parks. Four or five times a year our club goes to small communities and we spend money. We will spend \$2,000 or \$3,000 a weekend in Alpha, for example. The council there has let us put a track in, so we go out to Alpha for the weekend, spend a couple of thousand dollars and come home. We will go for dinner at the golf club while we are there and we will buy food and fuel. We go to Clermont, Capella—basically, we go anywhere around the region we can get to within half a day's drive three or four times a year. It is a massive thing.

As Shane said, there are so many people who have four-wheel drives and they use them for everything. They come up here for go-carting, for example. There is a go-cart track that just held a national tournament last year, and so many people came to town for that event. Motorised sport is a massive part of our region, it does not matter what type it is. We have a dam out here that is almost the largest dam in Queensland. It is three times the size of Sydney harbour. They hold power boat events there and they all come up for that. Our aim is to push the regional view. We do not go down to Fraser Island very often, but we spend a lot of time in national parks up here. We spend a lot of time in small towns up here. We want to get our opinion across. There are a lot of people in Central and North Queensland who spend a lot of time driving vehicles around to all sorts of events. It would be really good to get some positive government support for a change. It would be nice to have recognition that we are doing our bit for the community, if you like.

CHAIR: We have some regional members who no doubt will be all over that. I have a question probably more for the people who are here in the room. When you said that so many people have four-wheel drives, I agree. No-one could dispute that. If you take fishing clubs, for example, there would not be a member of a fishing club who does not drive a four-wheel drive. Are there any affiliations between the two groups?

Mr Brennan: Our new association is the Australian Recreational Motoring Association, which we only just launched 2 March. We incorporated late last year. We are looking at hunters, shooters, fishers, four-wheel drivers, street rods and street machines. We are aiming to put that association at a higher level than our national association and encompass all of the motoring groups around Australia and anyone who has anything to do with recreational. We do have that intent for that organisation, yes.

Mr Rose: That is one of the challenges we have with Four Wheel Drive Queensland because the name is limiting. I would have liked to have changed that name, but some people are not that keen on change. I thought we could change it to Four Wheel Drive Camping and something else, but there are some people who have been in the association for a long time and they are loath to change names and adjust things. I think it needs to be broader, and ARMA is aiming to do that. It is going to become broader, and Four Wheel Drive Queensland will aim to be part of that moving forward because it will be part of a bigger voice.

One of the biggest challenges we have is the fact that we have collaborative agreements with parks and we have a very loose association with transport. The transport association came about from Operation Lift. The media did a great job at sensationalising that, but it actually stopped people from coming here. I was taking heaps of calls and emails daily from people from other associations in New South Wales asking, 'Can we come to Queensland? Are we going to get defected coming through the border?'

We have to be very careful about how all of this works together if we are going to have changes to the law. Even though they said it was not changed, it was a change because they were enforcing things they never used to enforce before. We pushed hard and we got them to adjust those laws, so now you can have a two-inch or 50-millimetre spring lift and a two-inch lift in tyre size, which is only actually 25 millimetres because it is half the diameter. We pushed and got that through because if we had not, then it meant that every Land Cruiser driving around was illegal. Most people straightaway put on an aftermarket suspension, and when you go to buy the standard tyre, because it comes out of Japan you cannot buy one, so you go to the next size up and you are illegal immediately. We pushed hard and had that adjusted. We have a lot of dramas now around the fact that they have all these regulations in place but there are no testing facilities. They say that to do a higher lift you have to do this, but there is nowhere to test in Queensland to do that, so how can you actually achieve it? There are a lot of things we need to look at around four-wheel drives generally and what people are using them for. If you look at the average four-wheel drive, most of them are not standard.

The other thing is we have put in a request to get information from a lot of people, including the police department. The police department was not so forthcoming with their information, but what was proven from some of the other information is that there is no data that we can find from anybody to say that a modified and lifted four-wheel drive has any more chance of falling over. In actual fact, a lot of insurance companies are saying the opposite. Because a four-wheel drive has been modified it has new equipment on it that has been tested by those people, those suppliers, so therefore they are finding it is actually less. Insurers are saying you are getting fewer accidents from modified four-wheel drives than not, which conflicts with what the police are saying. The police are saying that lifted four-wheel drives are a problem. The other part of this is that we have a letter from Transport in New South Wales saying that they are now not going to accept cars with the modifications we have up here going to New South Wales. One of the big areas we have a problem with is that all of these

four-wheel drives are shortly going interstate. This is a letter from Transport in New South Wales saying they are not going to accept our modifications, so are we going to get defected going

Mr Brennan: May I take the time to present this evidence?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Brennan: I have four documents here as evidence. The first document is what Shane alluded to. One of the issues was that we were getting a lot of people who were being defected. We put a freedom of information request into Transport and Main Roads regard a few things. One of the points we specifically asked about was to identify where these modifications that they speak about were causing road accidents. We asked for a seven-year breakdown—I think it was six or five years they gave us. Nowhere in the statistics does it say that a high-lift vehicle has any impact or has been involved in an accident. There have been things like tyres, but they do not say that that was a modified tyre. It could have been a worn out tyre. They do not say that any vehicle modification contributed to any statistical road component. There is nothing in those statistics that says that modified vehicles are unsafe and are becoming a problem for road users.

We wanted to do the same exercise with the police. We have concerns around some of the ways the police are detecting and measuring and defecting people. We had a guy drive up from New South Wales and get booked on Teewah Beach. They said that his tyres were too big. We put a freedom of information request into the police and they responded saying that we were requesting too much information. They said that they were going to reject the request unless we resubmitted it. We adjusted it. We wanted to understand how many vehicles were defected or ticketed inside those modification zones. If they had wheels that were too high or suspension that was too high we wanted to know what those breakdowns were. They do not have any breakdowns. They just say 'defective vehicle'. There is no breakdown of police statistics.

We also wanted to understand the way they measure vehicles on the side of the road and undertake those roadside infringements. We wanted to understand the SOPs that they train their roadside police on. We know, for example, that the tyre placard posted on the inside of the driver's door is not the authoritative document to identify what size tyres are fitted to a vehicle. They have a database in the federal department of transport. That database is the authoritative source for tyre and vehicle measurements. They are referring to the tyre placard when they are defecting people, but the regulations and the legislation and even the guidance from main roads says that that is incorrect. We know that is happening.

CHAIR: Is that state or federal law that you are referring to?

Mr Brennan: The state law. We put these requests in because we wanted to make sure that if they are defecting a vehicle every single officer is following the exact same process. They said that there were 3,980 documents. They said that they could not provide that information to us. We do not want that information. We just want to know how they measure and defect so that we can identify some issues and resolve them. I thought that was quite simple.

They said that 'disclosing the information would be prejudice to the effectiveness of the method or procedure of the conduct of tests, examination or audits by the agency or prejudice achieving the objects of a test, examination or audit conducted by an agency'. We know that they are doing some incorrect tests. We just want to fix the issue so that people are not getting defected for the wrong things. That fell over. We were disappointed that the police did not do anything about it or were not forthcoming in giving us some details about how they undertake those measurements and issue infringements.

Mr Rose: What comes off the back of that is that these things now become an anti-hooning issue. You are driving down the street in your four-wheel drive which has a slightly bigger tyre and when you get defected you also get done for anti-hooning, which is ridiculous.

Mr Brennan: I brought this to your attention about 12 months ago up at Petrie.

CHAIR: That was you.

Mr Brennan: That was me. I mentioned that to you. I have also spoken to Nick Dametto from the Katter party. He has also helped us with some of that. I have also spoken to Ted about these issues on the phone previously.

CHAIR: You guys would be pushing for a national response to this so that you do not have an issue when you go over the border, is that right?

Mr Brennan: There are a few things. For example, there are modifications that can be easily done but we are not allowed to do them. There is a federal program called the Second Stage of Manufacture. When you bring a brand-new vehicle to market and before you register it it is catered for under the Australian Design Rules. As soon as you register that vehicle, any modifications must comply with state legislation. That is different across the different states.

I could take a brand-new vehicle, put six inches worth of suspension lift on it and 40-inch tyres on it—something insane—and I could register it legally as a brand-new vehicle because it complies with the ADRs. I cannot take a vehicle that has been purchased and put the same modifications on it—even though they meet the specifications under the federal legislation—because the same set of specifications or guidelines do not apply under the state regulations.

CHAIR: Not even with a modification plate?

Mr Brennan: No. You will get defected and you will get hit with the anti-hooning laws. I was done under the anti-hooning laws because my tyres were slightly big. I am now classified as a type 2 hoon because my tyres were too big. I was driving down the highway doing 110 kilometres per hour. I have spoken to quite a few MPs and they have all acknowledged that the anti-hooning laws were not really designed to take people off the road when you have no problems—

Mr Rose: You are not driving erratically. You just have a vehicle which is slightly different.

Mr Brennan: It is not antisocial behaviour.

CHAIR: I am not trying to shut down your line of thought, but it is all in your submission. We wanted to flesh out some other things because we have all that. That carries the same weight as what you are saying now. If we double up we might miss something. We will move to questions.

Mr KATTER: That is all interesting and very relevant to my area. You mentioned RTOs before. A big thing in my electorate is that Charters Towers has put forward a proposal for a large motorsports facility. They will have a big focus on four-wheel driving. One thing I have been urging them and others to do throughout the region is to provide more training. The competitive advantage we have in those western areas is that we have more space to play with.

I will preface my question with a comment. One of the RTOs trying to get into this space in Mount Isa was saying that when we were younger—whether people like to hear it or not—you would go out and do circle work in the bush and you learnt the feel for the car. Things have tightened up and people do not do that now. The inadvertent effect is that people driving out there now—probably including myself—get scared when something happens. Their wheels go off on a single-lane bitumen road, they get scared and they roll the car. There is a big gap that RTOs could fill in that regard. The explosion in numbers of caravans, camper trailers and RVs means there are a lot of inexperienced drivers on bush roads. I do not see a commensurate level of RTOs or training programs advertised. I am sure some goes on. It is a big space.

Mr Brennan: We wrote to the minister and asked for training. We asked for some community engagement and community education through online means and advertisement. We lose quite a few people each year to four-wheel drive recovery accidents. They hook up the vehicles incorrectly, the snatch strap breaks and they kill themselves. We asked for a TV advertisement or snippets every now and then on certain channels, but we never heard anything back. We asked for other things like showing people how to drive on beaches and things like that. We are only so big. Like the last group, we can only teach our own people so much. We cannot teach the public unless we have that assistance.

Mr Rose: When you look at the Police Service site you see photographs of a police vehicle towing out another vehicle with no dampener and using the tow ball of their vehicle. Here is a police ute that has the strap hooked over the tow bar and onto the car and there is no dampener or anything. Even the service is not trained correctly in how to use the equipment they have, which is really bad.

CHAIR: They should be. The government owned corporation that I used to work for had rigorous training. We had four-wheel drive courses.

Mr BOYCE: I represent a large rural electorate where we have many people driving around in the modern-day four-wheel drive—the SUV—on unsealed roads. One of the big issues is ABS brakes and traction control. As I am sure you are well aware, that becomes dangerous on unsealed roads. Would you care to comment on that?

Mr Rose: I think the modern-day four-wheel drive is getting better. Some of the more recent testing shows that the Toyota Kluger had a big problem. They did a swerve test on gravel and the thing fell over. That was written up in one of the four-wheel drive magazines. I think the calibrations

are definitely a problem. In saying that, I think sometimes they can be of benefit to the inexperienced driver. One of the biggest problems in gravel is if you lock the wheels then you completely lose control. Hopefully by trying to keep the wheels moving you can have some sort of control.

As Robbie Katter said, years ago people used to get their kids doing donuts in the park. They would learn how to drive a four-wheel drive in the old ute or whatever they had in the backyard. That is frowned on now. People are not getting this experience anymore. People are losing the skills they used to have. One of the biggest challenges is the loss of skills. People driving around the city every day on a wet road are not going to experience anything like the conditions you have in the country.

The four-wheel driving we do means that we are out on slippery tracks. You learn because your vehicle goes where you do not want it to go and you have to get it to go back where you want it to go. I think that comes back to driver training. Like you were saying, there needs to be more driver awareness. I believe as part of the process of getting their licences young drivers need to have some sort of training in the control of vehicles that are out of control.

CHAIR: This inquiry is not about motor racing. What you are bringing up is very important. You can be going a slow pace to learn vehicle control. It is very technical. I agree with you.

Mr Loch: Out in Emerald we have a driver training track that was federally funded. It included a professionally built four-wheel drive track which has not been used for several years. We are currently arguing with the council to allow us to reopen it and use it as a driver training track. This is exactly where we are coming from. A ridiculous percentage of people in town drive four-wheel drives. They buy the car and they have no idea how to drive it. They go down to Fraser Island and roll the car on the beach. This is exactly what we want to do and our council is having difficulty because it is too hard. It involves a professionally built track. The other part of the problem is that we need promotion from the state government to assist councils and local areas to take away some of the fear and take away some of the perceived risk.

Mr SORENSEN: Fraser Island is in my electorate. It is important as far as tourism is concerned. Nearly every vehicle that goes to Fraser Island has had some sort of modification because it makes it a lot easier to get around in the sand. In terms of access to national parks, I remember what happened in New South Wales and the protests four-wheel drive people faced. It would be devastating if the same thing happened in Queensland, especially on Fraser Island, would it not?

Mr Rose: Definitely. One of the things I see as a challenge at the moment is the changing landscape which, I believe, nobody has control over. What we are seeing now is a big shift towards Indigenous landowners having control of areas. I do not know whether they are well positioned to be in control of those areas. You are very lucky on Fraser Island. If I wanted to go to Moreton Island or Stradbroke Island I used to go onto the QPWS website, sign up for my vehicle access permit and pay for my camping permit, but now I cannot. I can only buy the vehicle access permit there. You have to go to a completely different site that very is not very well advertised to buy your camping permit. Nobody was told about this until it happened. There was no consultation with us. There was no consultation with anybody. All of a sudden people were told, 'You cannot get your permit to camp here.' The same thing has now happened with Stradbroke Island. I fear it will happen with Fraser Island.

One of the biggest challenges we have with our Fraser Island clean-up—the biggest beach clean-up in the world—is the fact that we are supposed to be dealing with the Indigenous landholders. We cannot get hold of them. They are so difficult to get hold of. When you get them there they do their welcome to country for us. They are unorganised. They are not very well structured. I see that as a threat moving forward.

We have our new collaborative agreement with national parks, but when we go to change that we will have to include them somehow. If we cannot contact them then how can we get approval to do events? How can we do things properly? We want more people to go so we can do more clean-ups. The Aboriginal people seem very keen for that to happen. National parks are saying that they do not want to let any more people go there but the Indigenous people are saying they do. It appears to me that there is definitely a blurred line when it comes to who is in control of these areas. If nobody is in control of these areas then that is when we are going to have a problem. There is a problem looming in this area.

CHAIR: Thank you for highlighting that.

Mr Loch: We also need to have that collaborative agreement in place for all parks. It works at Fraser Island. He were at Blackdown Tableland on the weekend and all the fire trails were overrun. There is timber down everywhere. They have nine rangers for 900,000 square hectares. We are happy to go in there and cut all the timber off and keep the fire trails open, but we are not allowed.

Mr Rose: Our collaborative agreement covers that, but that is not the case for some of the parks. Even though in head office they have given a clear directive, some of the regional parks do not accept that.

CHAIR: Is that particular issue in your submission?

Mr Brennan: I do not believe it is.

CHAIR: I have not read it to that detail.

Mr Brennan: We did not put the MOQ in there because we did not think it was recreational.

CHAIR: As a question on notice could you flesh that out for us?

Mr Rose: Definitely.

CHAIR: Could you also outline the relationship between councils and the state—that is, if we allow something and then councils see a risk? Could you write to us about that?

Mr Rose: Definitely.

CHAIR: I think that would help us with this inquiry. The committee agrees that we ask those two questions on notice. Is it possible to have that by 4 pm on Monday, 23 March?

Mr Rose: Of course.

CHAIR: We really appreciate your time today. The transcript will be available in due course. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 11.32 am.