



TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2001/2002

REPORT NO. 37

PREFACE

The Travelsafe Committee of the 50th Parliament is a select committee responsible for monitoring, investigating and reporting on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland.

The committee's constitution, responsibilities and inquiry powers are established by the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (Qld)¹, and by a resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 2 May 2001.

This report presents a summary of the committee's activities during the 2001/2002 financial year. During the year, the committee worked on inquiries and other work concerning:

- Rural Road Safety in Queensland;
- The effectiveness and efficiency of public transport in South East Queensland; and
- Work-related road safety and fleet risk management practices.

Members of the committee also attended a road safety summit in Rockhampton on 23 and 24 August 2001, convened by Queensland Transport, and the 2001 Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference in Melbourne from 18-20 November 2001.

Copies of reports, papers, hearing transcripts and other material published by the committee is available from the secretariat and online at: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm

RURAL ROAD SAFETY

The committee completed an inquiry into rural road safety. The inquiry examined:

- the implementation of the 1996 Rural Road Safety Action Plan in Queensland; and
- what, if any, additional measures should be taken to improve rural road safety in Queensland.

The committee released interim findings for the inquiry in August 2001 and tabled a final report, Report No. 36: *Rural Road Safety in Queensland* in May 2002. In total, the inquiry received 71 written submissions.

Crashes on rural roads are a growing problem throughout the world. In Australia, half (50.7 per cent) of all road fatalities occur on rural roads. In Queensland, it is 55 per cent. While the level of road trauma in Australia has declined in recent years, smaller reductions have been achieved in rural areas compared to urban areas. The committee concludes that the Rural Road Safety Action Plan was an important national initiative to address rural road safety.

However, it would have been more effective if the necessary funding had been attached.

The report makes 19 recommendations for the Government to implement to address road safety in rural Queensland. These include the establishment of a Queensland action plan to drive future rural road safety planning and improvements. The report also recommends the evaluation of rural road safety initiatives by government agencies, continued emphasis on road safety auditing by the Department of Main Roads, a transport benefits study of general freight train services, a review of driver licensing administration in remote areas and education about the dangers of driving while fatigued.

Ministers are yet to table their final responses to the committee's recommendations.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN SEQ

The committee released interim findings from its inquiry into public transport in South East Queensland. The inquiry is examining:

- the importance of public transport to the south east Queensland (SEQ) region;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the region's existing public transport system;
- problems with the existing system; and
- measures for the system's improvement.

Issues Paper No.6: *Public Transport in South East Queensland – Interim Findings* tabled on 12 November 2001 outlined the committee's interim findings and other matters for further consultation and submissions. In total, the inquiry has received 108 written submissions.

The interim findings discuss the important contribution of the region's public transport system to economic efficiency, environmental, social justice and road safety outcomes. The findings also identify a range of management, funding, taxation and service problems that impede the system. Options to address these problems canvassed in the interim findings include making agencies more accountable for their performance and making decision-making processes more transparent and inclusive of the public.

In relation to funding and taxation challenges, the committee noted the adverse effects of the Commonwealth's taxation arrangements that encourage private vehicle travel and disadvantage users of public transport. In particular, the committee notes the damaging effects of the Federal Government's decision to levy full-rate GST on public transport fares whilst providing generous FBT concessions for company cars.

The committee will deliver its final report in 2002/2003.

FLEET SAFETY

¹ The *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* commenced on 6 June 2002 and replaced the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1995* (Qld) which was repealed on the same day.

On 10 August 2001, the committee co-hosted the Symposium on Work-Related Road Trauma and Fleet Risk Management in Australia. The committee hosted the event with support and sponsorship from the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland at the Queensland University of Technology, Queensland Transport, the Department of Industrial Relations (Qld) and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The symposium examined the extent of work-related road crashes and injuries in Australia, the occupational health and safety and road safety implications. The symposium also examined the appropriate responses by governments, employers and employees.

Work-related road trauma is emerging as a strategically important issue to target in Queensland to improve both road safety and workplace safety outcomes. Road crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths, injuries and absence from work in Australia. Business travel accounts for around a third of all travel, and over half if commuting is included. On average, one in four fleet vehicles nationally are involved in crashes each year. Annual repair costs to fleet owners are estimated at \$1 billion. In Queensland liability for workers compensation claims arising from road crashes is growing. 47 percent of all claims for workplace fatalities in Queensland during the five years from 1996/1997 – 2000/2001 were for fatal vehicle accidents. Over the same period, for every claim for every work-related vehicle fatality, there were a further 8 claims involving severe/permanent injuries and 64 claims for minor/temporary injuries.

The committee made three recommendations in its report to Parliament from the symposium, Report No. 34: *Symposium on Work -Related Road Trauma and Fleet Risk Management in Australia*, tabled on 18 April 2002. To provide a better understanding of the extent and characteristics of work-related crashes, the committee recommended an examination by Queensland Police of the feasibility of police officers collecting purpose of journey data for people involved in crashes.

To give greater priority to this emerging road safety and occupational safety problem, the committee recommended the inclusion of specific measures to address work-related road trauma in the Queensland Road safety Action Plan, and the commitment by Queensland Transport and the Department of Industrial Relations (Qld) to joint initiatives such as targeted safety campaigns, promotion of risk management strategies and codes of practice.

Ministers are yet to table their final responses to these recommendations.

WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTION ACT 1994

There were no disclosures made to the committee in accordance with the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994* during the year.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Date	Pearce	Lester	Lee Long	Male	Reilly	Roberts	Scott
31 July 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3 August 2001	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
7 August 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11 September 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 October 2001	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
30 October 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 November 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 November 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4 December 2001	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
11 December 2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19 February 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 March 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22 March 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9 April 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 April 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
9 May 2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14 May 2002	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 June 2002	✓			✓	✓	✓	

COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE 2001/2002

Description	\$
Employee-related expenses	189,707.03
Travel	12,302.10
Telephones	1,737.05
Printing	7,219.00
References and subscriptions	1,236.50
Hospitality	988.72
Miscellaneous expenses	387.24
Total	\$ 213,577.64

Committee expenditure was \$213,577.64. This was \$42,511.37 or 16 percent below budget.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr J Pearce MP (Chair)	Member for Fitzroy
Hon V Lester MP (Deputy Chair)	Member for Keppel
Ms R Lee Long MP	Member for Tablelands
Ms C Male MP	Member for Glass House
Mrs D Reilly MP	Member for Mudgeeraba
Miss E Roberts MP	Member for Gympie
Mrs C Scott MP	Member for Charters Towers

Jim Pearce MP
Chairman
 October 2002