



REPORT

OF THE

Travelsafe Committee

INTO

The need for some form of compulsory periodic inspections of passenger vehicles as an effective means of reducing road crashes and the severity of associated injuries,

AND

The need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety.

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and Ordered to be Printed

Report No. 2, November 1990

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Chairman's Foreword

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of the Travelsafe Committee of the Forty-sixth Parliament, I have much pleasure in presenting the Committee's first major report to the Legislative Assembly.

The Travelsafe Committee was established by resolution of the House on 10 May 1990, as an all-party Committee to "report and make recommendations in relation to all aspects of road safety in Queensland", at the instigation of the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development, Hon. David Hamill, MLA for Ipswich.

The Committee's terms of reference included the following:

To monitor, investigate and report on the causes of road crashes in Queensland, and issues of road safety, and to review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road crashes or inappropriate road user behaviour.

The Committee was instructed to give urgent consideration to three matters:

- (a) the need for some form of compulsory periodic inspections of passenger vehicles as an effective means of reducing road crashes and the severity of associated injuries;
- (b) the need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety; and
- (c) current traffic law enforcement methods and penalties, and their effectiveness.

The road toll in Queensland during 1989 resulted in 428 deaths, 4,075 serious injuries and innumerable minor injuries and property damage at a total cost estimated at 1.137 billion dollars. For the past decade, on average 1.28 persons have been killed and 13 seriously injured per day in crashes, many of which resulted in permanent injuries and further personal tragedy and economic loss.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that road deaths are declining but are still at a very unsatisfactory level. Queensland is in the middle level as a ratio of fatalities to population and to cars registered.

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official figures show:

<u>KILLED PER ANNUM</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>% OF VEHICLES REGISTERED</u>
1.51 per 10,000 pop.	QLD	0.0253%
1.67 " " "	NSW	0.0313%
1.79 " " "	VIC	0.0306%
1.77 " " "	TAS	0.0287%
3.91 " " "	NT	0.0839%
<hr/>		
1.67 per 10,000 pop.	TOTAL AUST.	0.03
<hr/>		

Approximately 33% of those fatalities are in the age group 17-25 which contains 13% of the population. Although only 15% of the population are aged 60 and over, 18% of the fatalities are in this age group. In the elderly group, 31.5% of fatalities ate pedestrians.

Statistics also indicate that only 2% of serious accidents are attributable solely to vehicles, 6% to human and vehicle factors, 1% to environment (road) and vehicle factors and 3% to all three, in which vehicle standards could have contributed. 71.1% of crashes were attributed to private passenger vehicles which are the subject of the Committee's investigation.

The Committee worked together as a team to establish all available facts relating to road safety involving travelling to Sydney and Canberra and to Western Queensland. In addition, the Chairman and other Members travelled to **South** Australia and North Queensland to observe highways and other roads, vehicle performance and driver behaviour. The Deputy Chairman inspected roads in Victoria, Western New South Wales and Western Queensland including rest areas and road signs pertaining to road safety. These issues will be discussed in the Committee's next report.

In particular the Committee inspected facilities and conducted discussions with officers of the following organisations:

- .. Federal Office of Road Safety, Canberra.
- .. Australian Capital Territory Motor Vehicle Registry **Office**, including observance of vehicles being inspected at the **Braddon** Inspection Centre.
- .. New South Wales Road Traffic Authority Botany Vehicle Inspection Centre and Rosebery Crash Testing Laboratory.
- .. Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council, Sydney.
- .. Mr Rodney Vaughan, Private Consultant formerly of the New South Wales Road Traffic Authority.

New South Wales has a very effective testing laboratory at Rosebery which is being expanded.

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It does not appear likely that Queensland could duplicate the laboratory because of financial considerations. The Committee considers that the prospect of all States making some practical contribution to the Laboratory as an Australian-wide asset should be discussed.

Further, the possibility of providing a Queensland Department of Transport officer on rotation for a period of one year, to assist in research has merit.

The Laboratory has plans approved for a crash barrier test facility to be constructed on site at a considerable cost for full size vehicle testing.

The Committee observed a simulated crash at 46 kph to test seat belt restraints. The violent movement of the testing dummy reinforced the need for compulsory seat belt wearing.

The Committee shares the laboratory Director's sentiments of the need for a co-operative approach to improving vehicle standards by discussion with car manufacturers.

During the Committee's inspections in Sydney contact was also made with the New South Wales Parliament's Road Safety Committee 'Staysafe'. In discussions with the Committee's Chairman Mrs Anne Cohen MP and Technical Advisor Mr Brian Vasey considerable information on road safety initiatives in New South Wales was obtained. The Committee intends to maintain a close liaison with **Staysafe** and other Parliamentary Committees involved in road safety issues.

The Committee decided to investigate the matters established as priorities (a), (b) and (c) together with a fourth priority which was at an early stage, drawn to the attention of the Committee, "do drivers need to improve their knowledge and understanding of road rules and personal responsibilities to other road users?"

It was decided to investigate these matters in two strands: (1) relating to vehicles, (2) relating to enforcement and education. Advertisements relating to these matters were placed in newspapers throughout Queensland and also nationally, calling for written submissions.

The response was considerable, with in-depth information from official bodies, research organisations, the motor trade, the RACQ and the general public. Many letters from the general public simply opposed annual roadworthy inspections from the point of view that it would be an unnecessary and costly procedure.

Public Hearings were held in Brisbane to take evidence on vehicle standards under priority (a) the need for some form of compulsory periodic inspections of passenger vehicles as an effective means of reducing road crashes and the severity of associated injuries, and (b) the need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety.

Public Hearings were also held in Roma, Charleville, and Longreach to take evidence on all four aspects, as outlined above.

(x)

Discussions were held with the general public in these towns and also with road hauliers in Blackall. The Ambulance, Police, Local Government, Motor Vehicle Repair Industry, Transport officials and the Country Women's Association gave evidence at these hearings.

The Committee held discussions in Mt Isa with a similar range of individuals and also with Mt Isa Mines Ltd., which, in addition to being a very large generator of public traffic in the City, has a huge area of private land subject to heavy traffic and heavy haul conditions over a distance of 20 km.

Some additional written reports were received including one from an engineer recommending a "visibility rating" for cars depending on **colour**.

Evidence was given by a number of witnesses that the "second" car in the family is often poorly maintained and not given the same attention as the "first" vehicle.

Unsuitable and unsatisfactory tyres and wrongly inflated tyres were mentioned by a number of **witnesses** as a cause of accidents, particularly in Western areas. Lack of close police attention to this important aspect of road safety was brought to the Committee's attention.

The Committee proposes to hold Public Hearings in Brisbane in the New Year on the subjects of enforcement of traffic regulations, and education of drivers.

From consideration of all the evidence and advice received by the Committee, it is evident that annual compulsory vehicle inspections could have an impact on the incidence of road crashes to the extent of reducing the number of accidents which could be as low as 2% or could be in the range between 2% and 12%. Only a proportion of these accidents would be affected as annual inspections are now imposed on heavy transport vehicles, which are involved in 12% of accidents. Biennial inspections are required on primary producer vehicles, and more frequent checks on passenger transport vehicles such as taxis.

Annual inspection does not guarantee that vehicle defects are eliminated as vehicles can develop faults in a short space of time and many owners fail to take action until the next inspection is due.

Very little random checking of private vehicles is carried out in Queensland and Department of Transport officers are precluded **from** carrying out such checks unless a police officer is present.

Evidence has been given that random checks have an effect on drivers' attitudes, but are ineffective and unsatisfactory unless the proper equipment is available. The New South Wales Road Traffic Authority uses a mobile testing platform known as the "**Truckalyser**". **The Truckalyser** is the quickest and most efficient method of carrying out consistent quality roadside checks. Although each unit costs \$100,000, it is essential to give accurate results and would reduce public anger at the delay otherwise involved.

Much greater attention should be given to the standard of tyres used in Queensland conditions and also to checking of tyres on vehicles by police, as tyres are a factor in road accidents because of the incidence of "blowouts" and the loss of braking power if tread condition is unsatisfactory.

Evidence was given that some drivers are unaware of faults in their vehicles and a method of drawing attention to faults, is needed.

Evidence was given that there is an unsatisfactory situation existing in the roadworthy certificate scheme. Some certificates are written without due care in the inspection process and the system of having the repair industry also writing certificates is alleged to entail some over-prescription.

The **RACQ** which provided considerable assistance to the Committee, suggested that the title “Roadworthy Certificate” is a misnomer, causing confusion. The RACQ recommends that it be retitled to indicate that it is a safety check and does not indicate that the motor and transmission and such are in good condition.

The **RACQ** strongly opposes the introduction of annual compulsory safety inspections but supports random checks and more cam being given to safety features such as tyres, steering and brakes, by the police.

The majority of official witnesses and those from the motor trades supported annual checking except on new vehicles.

Many of the motor trades witnesses obviously had a great pride in their own professionalism, however, even **they** admitted that unscrupulous dealers exist in the trade. Some witnesses proffered the NSW Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council as an example to follow.

Clear evidence has been given of unsatisfactory repairs being carried out which has resulted in unsafe vehicles being driven on the road.

The present “roadworthy” system, when a vehicle is sold to a new owner, is not working in many cases, because the correct procedure before issuing the certificate is being wilfully or accidentally ignored.

Stringent regulation of the system is essential.

Motor cycles are not inspected when changing ownership and it is recommended that this matter be changed to conform with other vehicles.

The Committee acknowledges its appreciation of the assistance given to it and thanks the Motor Trades Groups, the RACQ, Local Government and State Authorities, including the Police and Transport Departments, Ambulance Officers, and the general public.

The Committee also acknowledges **the** assistance of our seconded technical officer, Mr George Vidas, and the organising expertise, hard work and good **humour** of the Committee Clerk, Mr Don Bletchly,.



Len Ardill, MLA
Chairman

1. INTRODUCTION

The Travelsafe Committee of the Forty-sixth Parliament was appointed by the Legislative Assembly on 10 May 1990 to inquire into, report and make recommendations in relation to all aspects of road safety in Queensland.

In appointing the Committee the Legislative Assembly determined the Committee's Terms of Reference to be:

- (a) to monitor, investigate and report on the causes of road crashes in Queensland, and issues of road safety; and
- (b) to review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road crashes or inappropriate road user behaviour.

Furthermore, it was requested that the Committee give urgent consideration to the following matters:

- (a) the need for some form of compulsory periodic inspections of passenger vehicles as an effective means of reducing road crashes and the severity of associated injuries;
- (b) the need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety; and
- (c) current traffic law enforcement methods and penalties, and their effectiveness.

On 4 June 1990 the Committee considered this request for urgent consideration and resolved to call for public submissions on items (a) and (b) with advertisements being placed in newspapers throughout the State, commencing on 16 June 1990. The closing date for submissions was 23 July 1990, however late submissions were accepted and considered. As at the date of reporting the Committee had received in excess of 100 submissions of which ten were from motor trades related bodies, 19 from automobile and like clubs and the remainder from private individuals and community and other organisations.

The Committee also reviewed on 4 June 1990 the request for urgent consideration of the "current traffic law enforcement methods and penalties" and determined to call for submissions on this topic separately and to include an assessment of whether drivers needed to improve their knowledge and understanding of road rules and personal responsibilities to other road users and what needs to be done to improve road safety initiatives in these areas.

In researching the topics the Committee conducted inspections and discussions in Canberra and Sydney. Public Hearings were held in Brisbane on 10, 11 and 12 September, Roma on 15 October, Charleville on 16 October and Longreach on 17 October 1990. A list of witnesses who have appeared before the Committee to date is contained in Appendix II.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE QUEENSLAND ROAD TOLL (1989)

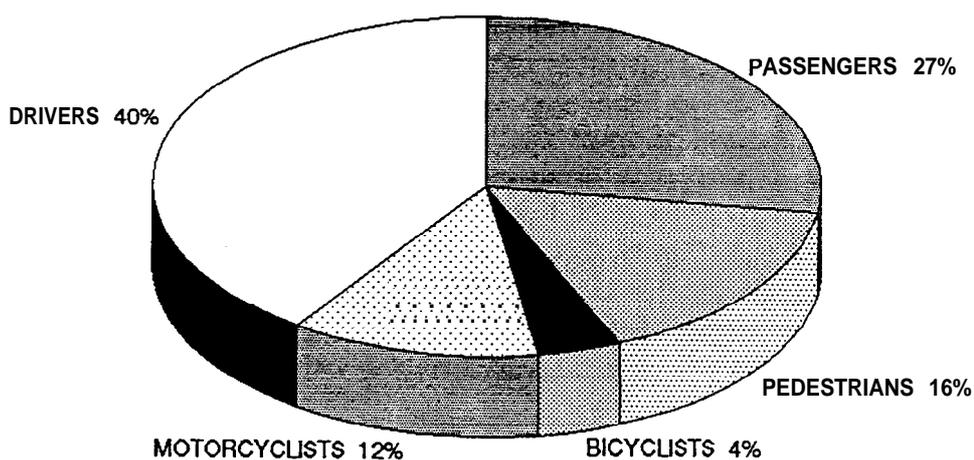
The Road Safety Division of the Department of Transport provided the Committee with a comprehensive examination of the Queensland road toll.

The salient points **from** the Department's report entitled "Road Traffic Crashes in Queensland - A report on the 1989 Road Toll"¹ were as follows.

- .. Queensland's road toll for 1989 was 428 fatalities.
- .. Road crashes incur substantial costs both to the victims of crashes and to the community. Based on detailed **costings** prepared for the Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics (Steadman and Bryan, 1988) the average cost of a fatality in Australia in 1989 was approximately \$513,000. On this basis, the cost of road deaths in 1989 to the Queensland community was approximately \$220 million.
- .. In addition to these fatalities, many more people were injured on Queensland roads in 1989. The estimated cost of these injuries range from \$6,400 for a minor injury to \$456,000 for a critical injury. An estimated 4,075 injuries requiring **hospitalisation** occurred in 1989 at a cost of approximately \$257 million to the community.
- .. Crashes resulting in minor injuries and property damage only also account for a large proportion of community costs. These crashes are estimated to have cost the community a further \$660 million in 1989.
- .. The total cost of fatalities, injuries and property damage crashes to the Queensland community in 1989 was therefore approximately \$1.1 billion. **On** this basis, crashes on Queensland **roads in** 1989 cost about \$400 for every man, woman and child in Queensland²

A breakdown of the 428 fatalities is given below:

ROAD TOLL BY ROAD USER : QUEENSLAND 1989



Distribution
by percentage

As at 30 June 1989 1,693,400 motor vehicles were on register in Queensland. ³

The 1,542,000 car and car derivatives (station wagons, utilities and panel vans) comprised approximately 91% of the register. Trucks (rigid and articulated) comprised about 4%, whilst motor cycles accounted for approximately 3.9%.

Heavy vehicles, buses and trucks greater than 4 tonne GVM are subject to periodic inspections as are taxis, private hire cars, tow trucks and driving instruction school vehicles.

Cars, car derivatives and light commercial vehicles are subject to "roadworthy inspections" at the time of change of ownership.

Motor cycles are not subject to any form of inspection after initial registration.

The majority of fatal crashes in 1989 occurred in the more populated urban centres and surrounding country areas of the eastern coast of Queensland. The location of fatal crashes in 1989 is indicated in the following table.

LOCATION OF FATAL CRASHES : QUEENSLAND 1987-1989

	1987	1988	1989	1989 %	Cumulative % 1989
Brisbane (metropolitan)	57	64	52	13.8	13.8
Other Brisbane Stat. Division	42	66	53	14.1	27.9
Provincial City	61	65	62	16.5	44.4
Country Town	33	44	44	11.7	56.1
Open Road (non-urban)	160	173	126	33.5	89.6
Bruce/Pacific Highway	48	74	39	10.4	100.0
TOTAL	401	486	376	100.0	

An examination of the vehicles involved in fatal crashes which were classified by the police as “Unit 1” (which is the classification given to the vehicle considered to be “most at fault”), indicates the relative crash involvement of individual vehicle types.

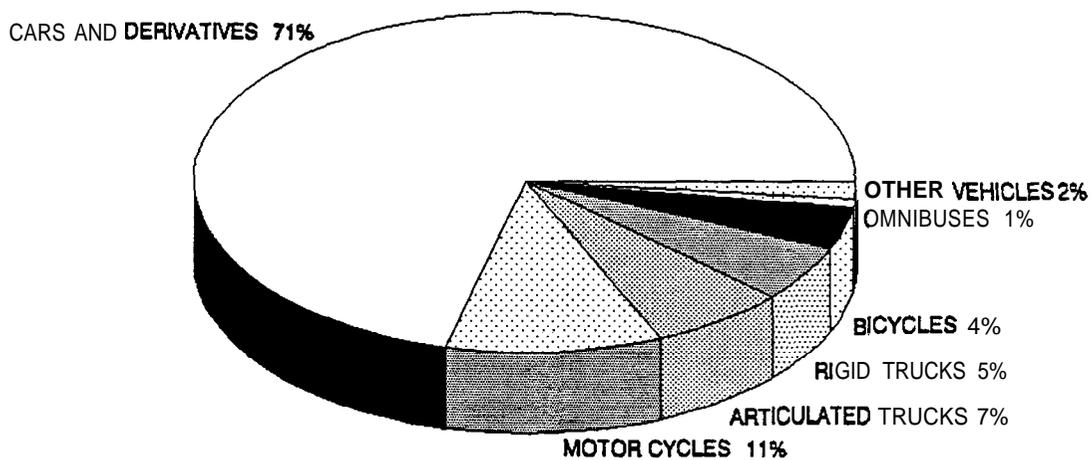
In 47 of these fatal crashes, a pedestrian was considered to be “most at fault” in the collision and these cases have been excluded from this analysis.

The data indicate that:

- .. cars and car derivatives were classified as “most at fault” in 71 per cent of **the** fatal crashes in 1989.
- .. trucks (both articulated and rigid) were classified as “most at fault” in about 12 per cent of fatal crashes in 1989.

The types of vehicles involved in fatal crashes in 1989 are indicated below.

VEHICLES INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES : QUEENSLAND 1989



**Distribution
by percentage**

The statistics indicate that fatalities are not concentrated in a particular area or region of the State and that the cars (and derivatives) and motor cycles were involved in 81.7% of fatal crashes in 1989.

From the above, it is obvious that action is necessary to reduce the road toll and some necessary actions may not be popular.

3. ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PERIODIC INSPECTIONS OF PASSENGER VEHICLES

Submissions received by the Committee canvassed arguments both for and against **the** introduction of periodic inspections of passenger vehicles.

In reviewing these submissions the Committee also considered reports available from interstate and overseas on periodic motor vehicle inspections (**PMVI**).

3.1 Current Inspection Arrangements in Australia

Currently, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and **the** Northern Territory require compulsory inspection annually on renewal of registration. In Victoria and Queensland an inspection and roadworthiness certificate are required on change of ownership. South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania do not require inspection after first registration as a new vehicle.

In addition to the above most jurisdictions require inspection on registration after a vehicle has been purchased or transferred from elsewhere.

In New South Wales inspections for renewal of registration are undertaken by **authorised** private service stations, although initial registration either as a new vehicle or re-registration from interstate must be carried out by Government inspection stations. In the ACT all inspections **are** carried out by Government inspection stations; the Northern Territory uses both government and private service stations.⁴

In all jurisdictions police may inspect vehicles at the roadside and require defects to be rectified.

In Queensland police officers are empowered under the Traffic Act to intercept vehicles which are defective or suspected as being defective.

Department of Transport Inspectors are able to intercept heavy vehicles only, for inspection purposes under the Motor Vehicles Safety Act.

3.2 Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ)

In evidence presented by representatives of the RACQ on 10 September it was stated -

Mr Mathieson: We have looked at this problem continuously over a number of years. It is an emotive problem in many respects. No-one could dispute that there are unsafe vehicles on the roads, but I think it is debatable as to how much they are responsible for death or injury on the roads or, in fact, how much they **are** responsible for accident causation...

Although there are unsafe vehicles out on the road, we believe that they are not contributing significantly to accident causation. Our feeling is that the reason why we have unsafe vehicles on Queensland roads is that there is a feeling of impunity among a certain segment of the population who are not responsible people. They feel that they can drive an unroadworthy vehicle virtually with impunity because no-one picks them up...

We feel that - as happens in other States - police should accept some responsibility to use their authority to let people know that they can't with impunity drive unsafe vehicles. We believe this is very necessary. We believe it can be done, it can be done cost effectively, and must be done if that feeling of impunity which irresponsible people use as an excuse for their actions - if we are to do something about that, action must be taken, but we do recommend that action taken be responsible, practical, cost-effective action.

In its written submission to the Committee the RACQ stated that:

When a person knows that he or she is required to have his or her vehicle inspected at a specific time on an annual basis as would be the case with a system of periodic inspection, that person could be tempted to leave care and maintenance of the vehicle until that time.

If so, the vehicle would get major service and maintenance work only once a year.

Such diminution of regular care and maintenance would result in overall lowering of the standards of the vehicle population in relation to its on-road safety.

Hard, documented evidence of that effect of periodic inspections is not readily available; but circumstantial evidence from locations where periodic inspections apply indicates that this is a by-product of periodic inspection systems.

This point was also made to the Committee by officers of the Australian Capital Territory Motor Vehicle Registry Office where it was indicated that 53% of vehicles inspected have defects.

3.3 **Motor Trades Association of Queensland (MTA-Q)**

The MTA-Q put to the Committee in its written submission that the primary objective of a vehicle inspection program:

is not just to improve the mechanical condition of the vehicles using Queensland roads in order to reduce the contribution of mechanical defects to road crashes. It is more importantly to make the motor public more safety aware, i.e. conscious of the need and their responsibility to maintain their vehicles in safe condition.

The Association recommended that:

All kinds of vehicles subject to annual Main Roads Registration and over three years old be made the subject of an annual inspection and that a copy of the certificate be presented with each renewal of registration payment, with the following exceptions:-

- (a) Vintage and Veteran cars;
- (b) Vehicles covered by Manufacturers New Car Warranty; and
- (c) Vehicles domiciled more than 250 kms from a licensed vehicle testing station. These vehicles would require testing biennially.

Failure to present a certificate with renewal of registration payment would cause automatic cancellation of registration until proven roadworthy.

(and)

The system introduced must be enforceable and seen to be so. In addition it must place emphasis on the owner's responsibility to ensure they keep their vehicles in a safe condition.

In support of its argument the MTA-Q cited the ageing population of vehicles, advancements in fuel efficiency of new vehicles, vehicle emissions and a reduction in household funds spent on vehicle maintenance as contributing factors to the need for the introduction of PMVI.

In evidence given before the Committee on 10 September 1990 the Executive Director Mr J Webster stated that -

...**This** association refuses to accept the premise that vehicle condition is not a major factor in road accidents, and therefore periodic inspection must be considered useful and effective. Visual evidence as one drives around and sees some of the more dilapidated vehicles on our Queensland roads operating without stop or turn indicators, unfocused headlights, **unauthorised** and unsafe modifications to the vehicles and tyres, damaged body panels which would seriously lacerate passengers, pedestrians or cyclists, bald tyres, mismatched tyres, damaged bumper bars, cracked tail lenses and broken headlights and an endless list of other problems would indicate otherwise.

With this superficial evidence I simply do not believe that owners of these vehicles maintain their braking systems meticulously, rectify power steering and oil leaks, maintain the emission control fitted to all modern vehicles at a very high cost, maintain parking brakes, steering geometry, effective windscreen wiper blades and reliable transmissions, have clear, unscratched windscreens and seat belts that are properly maintained...

A few people in the community actually do maintain their vehicles because they believe it is the right and sensible thing to do, but they are very much in the minority. This is more so evident now that the majority of service stations are self-service. The motoring public can no longer rely upon trained driveway attendants spotting safety functions or missed problems for them. Do those who oppose a system of inspections seriously believe that owners will maintain their vehicles in a safe roadworthy condition unless they are compelled to do so?

3.4 **Federal Office of Road Safety (FORS)**

The Federal **Office** of Road Safety of the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Communications presented a submission to the Committee which covered a wide range of areas associated with road safety.

Although not making a definitive recommendation, when commenting on the effectiveness of periodic motor vehicle inspection schemes it was stated that:

Available evidence, including the known level of contribution of vehicle defects to crashes, does not suggest that compulsory inspection schemes are very effective in reducing defect-related crashes.

An additional problem is that regular inspections are usually arranged on a time basis which ignores the great difference in intensity of vehicle use. Some low mileage vehicles (bearing in mind that the average annual distance travelled by cars and station wagons in Australia is less than 16,000 km) would be inspected more than necessary; others much less.

Such defects as tyre under-inflation are not eliminated by periodic inspection schemes. Wear-related items such as tyres or brake pads/linings, blown lights or wiper blades may also not be adequately covered.

Regular inspection programs may be more effective for older vehicles (eg. eight years or more), but as a rule older vehicles are used less than newer vehicles...

It is possible that a program of police random, roadside inspection of vehicles may be as effective as compulsory periodic inspection. Such arrangements would also be effective in identifying rust or illegal modifications, which can also be identified in inspection schemes.

With respect to the cost of PMVI, FORS commented:

Vehicle inspection schemes incur costs in capital items of land, buildings and equipment, salaries and wages of staff. These may be recouped in part through inspection fees levied on vehicle owners. There are also private costs to vehicle owners: lost time in business hours, for example to take vehicles to the inspection station (in the case of Government stations) and, if rejected, to arrange repairs.

The use of licensed garages in New South Wales has given rise to complaints of inconsistent standards and possible self interest in rejecting vehicles to gain workshop trade. Periodic audits by the State have led to service stations losing their licences for laxity. In addition there have been consumer complaints about the standard of work carried out by garages and the high cost of the work.

Given the high cost of this road safety measure, there would need to be strong evidence that it would have a beneficial effect on road safety before new programs are instituted.

3.5 Role of Vehicle Defects in Road Crashes

It is generally acknowledged that there has been little detailed research in the role of vehicle defects in road crashes in Australia.

In the Adelaide in-Depth Accident Study conducted in 1976-77 by McLean et al in which some 386 vehicles were examined 11 were found to have defects regarded as significant causal factors.⁵ Although 166 cars had at least one defect there were only three (3) cars in which the defect was **definitely** the major factor in the causation of the accident. Tyres were the most common defects detected.

The study conducted for the Health Commission of Victoria in 1975⁷⁶ found that in the representative sample, mechanical and other defects were found to occur frequently in cars, but only infrequently (about 1%) were they a definite causal factor in crashes.⁶

In discussions with FORS it was clearly recommended that more expert investigations of road crashes by State and Territory authorities be undertaken, to establish all of the components of each traffic accident.

It is suspected that vehicle faults **are** a greater component than has been, to date, established and that expert examination and investigation is not generally carried out.

In the Brisbane Region, the Traffic Accident Investigation Squad attends fatal accidents and the Committee heard evidence from an **officer** of the Squad, that officers are qualified mechanics, however in other areas of the State no such expertise is generally available.⁷

Dr G A Ryan, Deputy Director of the National Health and Medical Research Unit of the University of Adelaide appeared before the Committee as an expert witness and provided the following evidence in response to a question put forward by **Mr Springborg**.

Mr Springborg: In view of what has been said in regard to the impact of vehicle defects - which ranges from 1 per cent to 20 per cent, depending on which survey you look at - and their contribution to road crashes, are periodic inspections an effective countermeasure?

Dr Ryan: The evidence suggests that they are not. Quite a number of reviews of the published reports of motor vehicle inspection programs have come to the conclusion that there is no evidence that they are effective in reducing crashes. Shall we say some say they do and some say they do not. But in most cases, when you look closely at the methods used for the assessment, the science in it is not good enough to stand up to real scrutiny. So we are left with the feeling that they do not really contribute.

3.6 Conclusions

The Committee acknowledges that defective vehicles are driven on Queensland roads and that adequate measures need to be introduced to deal with this issue.

However the Committee is not convinced that mechanical defects are a significant causal factor in road crashes to warrant the introduction of PMVI.

Recommendation I

It is therefore recommended that compulsory periodic inspections of private passenger vehicles be NOT introduced, as it would be an inappropriate diversion of community resources, which could be better applied to more cost - benefit - effective areas at this point in time.

To introduce a system of PMVI would cost the owners of cars and car derivatives approximately \$40m (based on the current fee of \$25.00 for a roadworthy certificate).⁸

The Committee is of the opinion that a more cost effective method of detecting vehicle defects and ensuring that owners maintained vehicles in a safe condition would be to implement a system of random road side inspections similar to the Random Breath Testing program.

The Committee has observed random testing equipment used by the New South Wales Road Traffic Authority and believes that similar equipment should be used in Queensland. This equipment is capable of testing both heavy vehicles and passenger cars.

To reinforce the need to maintain vehicles in a safe condition, motorists' attention should be drawn to this fact through media publicity and mention on registration renewal forms.

Regulation 68 of the Traffic Regulations 1962 casts a clear obligation on the owner of a motor vehicle to ensure that the vehicle, when it is driven on the road, is in a "good and thoroughly serviceable condition". The obvious problem, however, is in the enforcement of that provision, which appears to depend more on chance than systematic detection of defective vehicles.

Although some may argue that random testing could result in unnecessary delays whilst **travelling** to destinations, the same could be said for random breath tests, road works and road crashes. Although **cognisant** of potential delays occurring the Committee does not accept this as an argument against the introduction of random testing.

Conversely it is seen as a preferred option to lengthy delays which could occur at a compulsory inspection centre.

Recommendation II

It is therefore recommended that random tests of motor vehicles and motor cycles be carried out throughout Queensland on a systematic basis using modern machinery to expedite the procedure and to provide an accurate and consistent assessment.

Recommendation III

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Transport insert on Registration renewal notification forms a notification of the owner's responsibilities under Regulation 68 of the Traffic Regulations 1962 to maintain his/her vehicle in a good and thoroughly serviceable condition.

As an additional measure the Committee considers that police **officers** should play a more active role in the interception of defective vehicles. This is in no way advocating, or endorsing **victimisation** of motorists for minor faults such as blown tail light bulbs but seen as a process to reinforce the need to maintain vehicles in a safe condition.

Recommendation IV

It is therefore recommended that police be required to pay close attention to obvious safety defects such as worn and faulty tyres, steering, brakes and inoperative mechanical parts.

Officers of the Police Service have indicated to members of the Committee that training in the detection of vehicular defects could be improved. The Committee agrees with these sentiments.

Recommendation V

It is therefore recommended that trainee police receive specific training enabling them to attain skills to assist them in the roadside inspection of motorised vehicles.

A bi-product of increased surveillance activities by police officers and the conducting of random testing **will** be the detection of unregistered and consequently uninsured vehicles. In the event of an accident these vehicles without compulsory third party insurance pose in practice as great a hazard as a defective vehicle. The Committee believes that penalties for driving an unregistered vehicle should be increased.

Recommendation VI

It is therefore recommended that unregistered and uninsured vehicles be removed from the road by the process of random checks, increased police surveillance and increased penalties for the offence.

The overall effectiveness of the measures prescribed above are to a large extent dependent upon the deterrent value of penalties imposed. Whilst the Committee does not see its role as to prescribe specific penalties it acknowledges that fines and penalties should be reviewed in conjunction with the introduction of the aforementioned measures.

Recommendation VII

It is therefore recommended that increased penalties (financial and or demerit points) be imposed using a sliding scale for multiple defects.

4. CURRENT ROADWORTHY INSPECTION SCHEME

Part V of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990 prescribes the requirements for the issue of a certificate of roadworthiness upon the disposal of a second-hand motor vehicle.

Various points of view have been put to the Committee regarding the effectiveness of the current system, unscrupulous examiners and proprietors and insufficient auditing of operators.

The Committee considers this situation totally unacceptable.

There have been numerous media reports since the scheme was introduced concerning dubious certificates and 'people who can provide a certificate at the right price' and second-hand cars sold with 'dodgy' certificates. The Committee is firmly of the opinion that the roadworthy inspection scheme should be reviewed

Recommendation VIII

It is therefore recommended that the roadworthy certificate scheme be reviewed,

The Committee is also of the opinion that difficulties with the scheme have arisen through the proliferation of inspection stations and that the requirements for the granting of an inspection station **licence** should be revised.

However, the Committee is at this point in time not convinced that consideration should be **given** to the gradual phasing out of inspection stations which are also in the business of repairing vehicles to eliminate conflicts of interest which could arise.

Recommendation IX

It is therefore recommended that greater stringency be placed on the standard and number of new approved inspection stations to ensure that a high standard of inspection is achieved and maintained and that the roadworthy inspection scheme is viable.

Recommendation X

It is therefore recommended that dishonest and unscrupulous examiners and proprietors be removed from the system through a continual and enhanced process of audit.

Recommendation XI

It is therefore recommended that used car yards be inspected regularly to monitor the standard of certificates issued.

Furthermore, the Committee considers that the term 'Roadworthy Certificate' misrepresents in the consumer's mind the true meaning of 'roadworthy'. For instance a vehicle which is in a safe mechanical condition may have reduced engine compression, a worn transmission or badly worn or tom upholstery. To overcome any misrepresentation of terminology the word "roadworthy" should be altered to "safety".

Recommendation XII

It is therefore recommended that the Certificate of Roadworthiness be renamed 'Safety Certificate'.

4.1 Motor Cycles

Motor cycles are currently excluded **from** the requirements of Part V of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990. Consequently, a certificate of roadworthiness is not required upon disposal of a second-hand motor cycle.

Motor cycles like passenger vehicles are subject to wear and tear. However, their handling and braking can be more acutely affected by worn components.

Whilst motor cycle riders are generally subject to requirements regarding the engine capacity of motor cycles ridden and the wearing of helmets, the motor cycles **are** excluded by law from even the most elementary of safety checks upon disposal.

The Committee believes that motor cycles should not be excluded from the requirements of Part V of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act **1989-1990**.

Recommendation XIII

It is therefore recommended that motor cycles be subject to the same requirements as passenger vehicles upon initial registration and not excluded from Part V of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990.

4.2 Caravans and Trailers

Caravans and trailers with a weight together with the weight of any equipment or loading thereon exceeding 508.02 kilograms are required under Clause 58 of the Schedule to Part 13 of the Traffic Regulations 1962 to be fitted with an efficient brake. However only certain trailers with a gross vehicle mass higher than 1.02 tonnes or with a tare exceeding one tonne are subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990.

The Committee is aware of a number of instances where caravans and trailers which are required to be fitted with an efficient brake have suffered brake failure, broken axles and damaged draw bars.

It is considered that at the very least caravans and trailers which are required to be fitted with a brake but not subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990 should be subject to a 'safety inspection' at the time of change of ownership.

Recommendation XIV

It is therefore recommended that second-hand caravans and trailers required under the Traffic Regulations 1962 to be fitted with a brake but not subject to the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990 be subject to a 'safety inspection' upon disposal.

4.3 Vehicles Substantially Damaged in Road Crashes

Vehicles which suffer substantial damage in road crashes are not presently subject to safety inspections before returning to the road.

Although the vehicle repairer may carry out what are regarded as appropriate checks, vehicles which have required major chassis realignment, or structural repair are not subject to independent safety inspections.

The Committee considers that for the safety of the drivers and passengers and other road users that these vehicles should be subject to a safety inspection prior to returning to the road.

Recommendation XV

It is therefore recommended that vehicles which suffer substantial damage in road crashes be subject to a 'safety inspection' prior to returning to the road.

5. THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE STANDARDS OF MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIRS

The second reference given to the Committee was the need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety.

A wide range of submissions were received on this topic. However very few addressed the question of whether vehicle repairers should be subject to similar requirements as to those which apply in New South Wales.

The Committee examined closely the operations of the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council established under the Motor Vehicle Repairs Act 1980 of the New South Wales Parliament to police standards and to register motor vehicle repairers, which it appears to do very effectively.

The Council acts as registrar of the trade, examiner of tradesmen and arbitrator of disputes.

It **also** has an on-going educational role.

Its decisions have the force of law and the power to withdraw **licences** which in effect puts unscrupulous operators out of business.

The Council claims to have **practically** eliminated back-yard operators. Its staffing level has been kept to a minimum. It is also self funding through the collection of registration fees which are by comparison with other fees and charges minimal.

In evidence before the Committee on 10 September, Mr Maxwell of the MTA-Q commented with respect to the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council -

I believe that the authority is adequately dealt with in their bounds - they have the ability to fine a repairer; they have the ability to force a repairer to make restitution; they have the ability to close a repairer down.

The Committee was also informed that the Council has an arbitrational role, and that this is a must within the industry, both **from** the consumers' points of view and the repairers' points of view.

Mr Maxwell continued -

In the situation that they have set up, everyone gets a fair chance to put their case when a problem does arise, and it is dealt with, as I said, by a broad cross-section of the community...

The Committee considers that the New South Wales system could provide an example for Queensland to follow.

Recommendation XVI

It is therefore recommended that the New South Wales Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council be used as a model to establish an authority to register and license motor vehicle repairers, monitor standards, carry out on-going education, and arbitrate disputes between repairers and their customers.

To ensure that the authority is able to conduct its affairs as recommended, it should have adequate enforcement powers.

Recommendation XVII

It is therefore recommended that the appropriate penalty provisions be enacted to ensure that the authority is effective.

6. OTHER MATTERS

6.1 Tyres and Retreads

The Committee is concerned that evidence has been presented to suggest that some tyres (new and second hand) and retreads sold in Australia do not either meet Australian Design Rules or are inappropriate for use in rural and western areas particularly north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

The Committee is of the opinion that this matter should be investigated as a matter of urgency.

RECOMMENDATION XVIII

It is there recommended that the Minister request the Australian Transport Advisory Council investigate the standards of all tyres and retreads sold as well as fitted to new vehicles in Australia for suitability under rural and torrid zone conditions as a matter of urgency.

6.2 Visibility of Vehicles

It is the manufacturer's prerogative to select the colours of vehicles offered for sale and the right of the purchaser to stipulate the desired colour of the vehicle purchased.

However, it is the practical experience of the Committee that certain colours have a higher visibility factor particularly on the open road and in wet and dark conditions. A written submission and evidence were put to the Committee that a colour visibility rating chart should be readily available for prospective purchasers of vehicles to compare the visibility of colours.⁹

The Committee believes that this proposal has merit.

RECOMMENDATION XIX

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Transport prepare a colour visibility rating brochure as a safety initiative.

Furthermore, the Committee considers that the Government should lead by example and adopt a policy of purchasing vehicles with high visibility ratings.

RECOMMENDATION XX

It is therefore recommended that the Government adopt a policy of purchasing vehicles with high visibility ratings.

7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the inspection of private passenger vehicles the Committee has recommended:

Recommendation I

That compulsory periodic inspections of private passenger vehicles be NOT introduced, as it would be an inappropriate diversion of community resources, which could be better applied to more cost - benefit - effective areas at this point in time.

Recommendation II

That random tests of motor vehicles and motor cycles be carried out throughout Queensland on a systematic basis using modern machinery to expedite the procedure and to provide an accurate and consistent assessment.

Recommendation III

That the Department of Transport insert on Registration renewal notification forms a notification of the owner's responsibilities under Regulation 68 of the Traffic Regulations 1962 to maintain his/her vehicle in a good and thoroughly serviceable condition.

Recommendation IV

That police be required to pay close attention to obvious safety defects such as worn and faulty tyres, steering, brakes and inoperative mechanical parts.

Recommendation V

That trainee police receive specific training enabling them to attain skills to assist them in the roadside inspection of motorised vehicles.

Recommendation VI

That unregistered and uninsured vehicles be removed from the road by the process of random checks, increased police surveillance and increased penalties for the offence.

Recommendation VII

That increased penalties (financial and or demerit points) be imposed using a sliding scale for multiple defects.

With respect to the roadworthy certificate scheme and the inspection of motor cycles, caravans and trailers and vehicles which suffer substantial damage in road crashes the Committee has recommended:

Recommendation VIII

That the roadworthy certificate scheme be reviewed.

Recommendation IX

That greater stringency be placed on the standard and number of new approved inspection stations to ensure that a high standard of inspection is achieved and maintained and that the roadworthy inspection scheme is viable.

Recommendation X

That dishonest and unscrupulous examiners and proprietors be removed from the system through a continual and enhanced process of audit.

Recommendation XI

That used car yards be inspected regularly to monitor the standard of certificates issued.

Recommendation XII

That the Certificate of Roadworthiness be renamed 'Safety Certificate'.

Recommendation XIII

That motor cycles be subject to the same requirements as passenger vehicles upon initial registration and not excluded from Part V of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990.

Recommendation XIV

That second-hand caravans and trailers required under the Traffic Regulations 1962 to be fitted with a brake but not subject to the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1990 be subject to a 'safety inspection' upon disposal.

Recommendation XV

That vehicles which suffer substantial damage in road crashes be subject to a 'safety inspection' prior to returning to the road.

With respect to the standards of motor vehicle repairs the Committee has recommended:

Recommendation XVI

That the New South Wales Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council be used as a model to establish an authority to register and license motor vehicle repairers, monitor standards, carry out on-going education, and arbitrate disputes between repairers and their customers.

Recommendation XVII

That the appropriate penalty provisions be enacted to ensure that the authority is effective.

The Committee has also examined a number of other matters and has recommended:

Recommendation XVIII

That the Minister request the Australian Transport Advisory Council investigate the standards of all tyres and retreads sold as well as fitted to new vehicles in Australia for suitability under rural and torrid zone conditions as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation XIX

That the Department of Transport prepare a colour visibility rating brochure as a safety initiative.

Recommendation XX

That the Government adopt a policy of purchasing vehicles with high visibility ratings.

NOTES

1. The information used to compile the report was based on statistical data held on a crash database maintained by the Department of Transport, and on additional data supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Queensland Government Chemical Laboratory.
2. These costs take into account loss of productivity and earnings, the costs of emergency and health care, legal and court proceedings, **police** investigations, insurance payments, hospital and medical costs, traffic delays and vehicle damage as well as a measure for the intangible “cost” of pain and suffering.
3. This figure includes motor cycles, cars and station wagons, utilities, panel vans, rigid and articulated trucks, and other non-freight carrying truck type vehicles, but excludes mobile equipment and trailers.
4. Information extracted from Federal Office of Road Safety submission.
5. McLean A J, Aust H S, Brewer N D, Sandow B L (1981), Adelaide In-Depth Accident Study. Part 6: Car Accidents. Road Accident Research Unit, University of Adelaide, Adelaide cited in. Heyworth J S and McLean A J (1986) Vehicle Inspection at Change of Ownership NH & MRC Road Accident Research Unit, University of Adelaide, Adelaide.
6. Consultative Council on Road Accident Mortality(1978), Report of the Road Accident Research Unit. Health Commission of Victoria, Melbourne.
7. Evidence, Sgt G M Ryan, 12 September 1990.
8. As at 30 June 1990 there were **1,599,000** cars, station wagons, utilities and panel vans on register in Queensland. Australian government owned vehicles were not included in this figure. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Qld Office, Motor Vehicle Registrations, Queensland, September 1990.
9. Evidence, Messrs P Evans and G Haigh, 15 October 1990.

APPENDIX I

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT



TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

**DOES QUEENSLAND NEED COMPULSORY PERIODIC
INSPECTIONS OF PASSENGER VEHICLES?
IS THERE A NEED TO IMPROVE THE STANDARDS OF
MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIRS?**

The Travelsafe Committee is a bi-partisan Parliamentary Select Committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly of Queensland with the following terms of reference:

- . to monitor, investigate and report on the causes of road crashes in Queensland, and issues of road safety; and
- . to review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road crashes or inappropriate road user behavior.

The Committee has been asked to give urgent consideration to the following matters-

- (a) the need for some form of compulsory periodic inspections of passenger vehicles as an effective means of reducing road crashes and the severity of associated injuries;
- (b) the need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety.

The Committee is calling for public submissions from members of the public and interested parties to assist in its enquiries into these matters.

Submissions should be forwarded to-

**The Clerk to the Committee
Travelsafe Committee
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000**

Closing Date 23 July 1990.

Enquiries to telephone (07) 226 7669
facsimile (07) 226 7668.

All submissions will be treated as public documents unless otherwise requested.

*Len Ardill, MLA
Chairman*

APPENDIX II

Witnesses who have presented evidence at Public Hearings to date.

Monday, 10 September 1990

Mr V Matheson Royal Automobile Club of Queensland
Mr P J N Weller Royal Automobile Club of Queensland

Dr G A Ryan National Health and Medical Research
Centre Road Accident Research Unit,
University of Adelaide

Mr J Webster Motor Trades Association of Queensland
Mr B **Vickers** Motor Trades Association of Queensland
Mr H Kabel Motor Trades Association of Queensland
Mr J Maxwell Motor Trades Association of Queensland

Mr B Elliott Elliott and Shanahan Researchers

Tuesday, 11 September 1990

Mr K Negus Society of Automotive Engineers of Australia,
Queensland Division

Mr G Baker Metal Trades Industry Association

Mr L J Guise Australian Automotive Industry Training
Council

Mr H J Finn Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers Inc.

Mr G R Goebel Department of Transport
Mr G Mahon Department of Transport

Wednesday, 12 September 1990

Sgt G M Ryan Police Department

Monday 15 October 1990

Mr P M West Department of Transport
Mr G B Haigh Department of Transport
Mr P A Evans Department of Transport
Mr D K Head Department of Transport
Mr D M Wass Department of Transport

Acting Inspector R O'Brien Police Department

Mr J Lewis	School Bus Operator
Superintendent R J Mackney	Roma Ambulance
Mr H A T Dawes	Amor Motors
Mr P Ladbrook	Amor Motors
Mr K Busiko	K N Busiko and Co.
Mr W N Bonthron	United Graziers Association
<u>Tuesday 16 October 1990</u>	
Superintendent I Halliwell	Charleville Ambulance
Acting Inspector W Haupt	Police Department
Mr B Webster	Bert's Body Shop
Mr J Lutvey	Murweh Shire Council
Mrs J Akers	Queensland Country Women's Association (Warrego Division)
<u>Wednesday 17 October 1990</u>	
Mr S Janas	Department of Transport
Mr M Ross	Department of Transport
Snr Sgt J Howell	Police Department
Mr J T Themsen	Longreach Shire Council
Mr G N Hannah	Department of Transport

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