



REPORT

OF THE

Travelsafe Committee

INTO

Road Safety Education AND Traffic Law Enforcement

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and Ordered to be Printed

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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 second major report to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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.

Travelsafe decided to add to this, an additional matter which was put forward during early discussions and evidence. This was:

- (d) the need for effective road safety education to educate all road users in the safe use of roads. This includes effectively informing the public of changes in traffic rules, adopting safe driving habits and respecting the rights and responsibilities of all road users.

EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The second strand of the Travelsafe Committee's enquiries was a formal investigation into road safety education and traffic law enforcement. It was undertaken to establish what action can be taken to reduce road fatalities, injuries and property damage and began with public hearings in Roma, Charleville and Longreach.

Overloaded vehicles were cited as a cause of road accidents and of road damage. Road trains were said to be close to a safe limit when empty. New methods of detection are being considered.

Members of the Committee were involved in extensive travel to discover the facts of this strand of the investigation. Such travel also enabled comparisons to be made.

The **Gympie** Driver Instruction Centre and the Mt Cotton Heavy Vehicle Driver Training School were visited. Members of the Committee experienced some of the training procedures.

The **Gympie** Centre is a community based project, with part-time instructors, full-time staff, and a school teacher provided by the Education Department to instruct school students.

They write their own curriculum and have a clientele including district school students, local private drivers, and ambulance officers. The course for drivers involves a locally developed practical experience sector.

The school claims considerable success in reducing the accident rate amongst graduates compared to the state and national average.

The facility at Mt Cotton is a Transport Department and Police Service project. In addition to training police, it operates on a commercial basis to provide training for drivers of heavy vehicles. Its client companies and industries are obviously convinced of its effectiveness.

Committee members visited Toowoomba where discussions took place with the City Council, Transport Department officials, and members of school communities.

Education of pedal cyclists was considered and inspections made of schools, including one with a system of speed restrictions only operating during school crossing hours.

Other individual inspections were made of speed limits and enforcement as far afield as North Queensland and South Australia. The whole Committee visited Sydney and Melbourne, hosted by relevant State authorities involved in education and enforcement.

The Victorian Social Development Committee was visited in Melbourne and the New South Wales **Staysafe** Committee had a working lunch with Travelsafe in Brisbane.

A previous visit to Canberra elicited information on student road safety training programs in the ACT.

Public Hearings over three days were held in Brisbane with evidence given by witnesses from the RACQ, Transport Department, **Bulla Shire** (Victoria) Safe Driving Programme, Queensland Police, Motor Trades Association of Queensland, Motor Cycle Riders Association of Queensland, Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Robert Magan and Associates (Advertising), Department of Social and Preventative Medicine at the Medical School, **Gympie** Driver Education Centre, and Duchesne College Alumnae Association Road Safety Project.

Prior preliminary discussions were held with the Federal Office of Road Safety, the Department of Transport and other authorities in Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. Discussions at Mt Isa with experienced public officers and officials of Mt Isa Mines, one of Queensland's largest employers were also conducted.

Evidence was given that many accidents are caused by drivers, uneducated and inexperienced in Western conditions, suddenly facing difficulties in overtaking or being overtaken or meeting large vehicles, such as road trains, on narrow roads. Damaged road edges on narrow bitumen strips were also claimed as contributing factors.

Fatigue and boredom were put forward as possible causes of many unexplained accidents.

Faulty tyres and tyres unsuitable for western conditions were also cited as a cause of many accidents and this was supported by written and verbal submissions. Unawareness by drivers of the demands on tyres, and their vehicles in general, was brought out by witnesses and in discussions.

It was said that drivers should be educated in these and other matters including the particular problems of towing caravans and similar vehicles.

It was made clear that very few drivers in Western areas observe the 100 kph speed limit and it was believed that a 100 kph speed limit could lead to accidents from induced lethargy and boredom.

Police witnesses supported the contention that 100 kph is generally disregarded and spoke of their inability to police speed limits, although periodic attempts are made, particularly in the Mt Isa division.

A majority of the Committee believes the speed limit should be increased from 100 kph to 110 kph in some circumstances; however, there was dissent within the Committee.

It was recommended that drivers be asked formal questions in writing when licences are reissued.

The advantages and effectiveness of the defensive driving course were put to us by the coordinator of a South-West Queensland community committee. This committee conducts the course under the auspices of the State Transport Department.

The Travelsafe Committee also had discussions with road hauliers at **Blackall** and problems with car drivers, uneducated in the conditions of the West, were brought forward.

The poor attitude of car drivers towards students joining or alighting from school buses, was mentioned, as was irresponsible behaviour outside schools.

Complaints were received about the lack of police enforcement and also about the lack of control over oversized loads; in particular, house-movings.

A number of references were made by witnesses to the need for intensive investigation into means of achieving behavioural change in drivers. This is the subject of research and report recently commissioned by the Committee.

Written submissions have been received from the public, with many making the points:

- that action must be taken to remove drink-driving offenders from the road;
- that most drivers are not educated nor properly informed on road rules, and what is required of them. This also applies to cyclists;
- that police need to be better trained, both in enforcement methods and investigation of accident causes;
- that police should be more involved in community policing and education of drivers; and
- that speed limits are inappropriate and need urgent reappraisal to obviate public disrespect for current limits.

Many written submissions were generally critical of authorities, with some reflecting a standard of ignorance and misunderstanding of the situation. Others were relevant and assisted the Committee.

The RACQ witnesses **criticised** the general standard of information provided, particularly by State authorities. However, they conceded that improvements have occurred. They also challenged the accuracy of statistics and the ability of police to assess accident causes.

They refused to support a 40 kph general speed limit, stating that speed limits need adjustment to suit road and weather conditions and location. Provision must be made for free traffic flow.

Our attention was drawn to the problem of unlicensed and therefore uninsured drivers inappropriate enforcement of speed limits, the need for incentives for fault-free driving and the low proportion of accidents investigated.

The general lack of understanding by drivers of road rules and devices such as roundabouts, was brought to our attention. Lack of advice to drivers of rule changes was cited as the cause.

Departmental witnesses admitted that present education methods are inadequate but gave details of action being taken to try to improve this. Initiatives are being taken to obtain the support of the media, particularly radio.

A video on road safety initiatives was viewed by the committee.

Advanced driving courses were supported and mention made of the need to obtain the support of employers to implement these courses throughout the workplace.

It was pointed out that considerable training of primary and secondary teachers will be required before any upgrading of road safety education can be introduced into schools.

Problems of drivers without an understanding of English and also those with learning disabilities were addressed.

It was stated that 30% of accidents occur in residential streets, and support for consideration of the need to change speed limits was expressed.

In answer to questions, it was revealed that there is considerable discrepancy in the level of penalties imposed by different magistrates, particularly in relation to drink-driving offences.

The police witness was also questioned on this matter and agreed that penalties lack consistency. He stated that tens of thousands of police hours are involved in 18,000 court appearances per annum, following a six minute procedure involved in testing. New testing equipment being introduced will clear up any doubts about the accuracy of road-side **drink**-driving tests. Furthermore, a system of on-the-spot tickets with loss of licence and a **fine** on a set scale, would reduce the considerable time and staff involvement, and provide consistency in penalties imposed.

He was questioned about the lack of police attention to the failure of drivers to keep left, thus blocking the overtaking right-hand lane of dual carriageways.

He stated the police belief that accident statistics are a better indication of success in a region than the level of bookings for violations.

The police witness also called for more consultation between traffic authorities and police. This already occurs in some areas but could be considerably expanded.

He spoke further of unroadworthy bicycles and the bad habits of many riders despite efforts to educate. Much more work is needed to educate, counsel and enforce.

The need for better training of motor cyclists was addressed by the MTA-Q and the Queensland Motor Cycle Riders Association.

A scheme was put forward for a series of accredited courses to be introduced with certificates issued. These would entitle the holder to staged **licences**, without further testing. Exemptions were suggested for people in isolated areas who would still be subject to tests and longer progression to an open licence.

The lack of knowledge of the effects of alcohol, particularly among young people, was addressed by medical research witnesses and the need for education of young drivers was discussed.

The behaviour patterns of drivers was addressed and it was stated that bad habits learned as cyclists can carry over into vehicle driving.

The danger to the elderly and to children arising from inappropriate speeds in residential streets, was addressed.

Evidence was given regarding repeat offenders, the need for more investigation into behavioural aspects of road users, the need to limit restricted **licences** to first offenders, and the need to prevent repeat offenders from driving.

The Committee acknowledges the assistance given to it by the general public and various interest groups. It thanks the Motor Trades Groups and their various members around Queensland, the RACQ, Local and State Government Authorities, including Police Services and Transport Departments, and private and public service researchers for their contributions.

Special mention must be made of the sterling work of the Hansard Reporters who attended hearings in Brisbane and Western Queensland. They accurately reported the evidence in difficult conditions, and in one case, under very adverse circumstances.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to the Committee's founding Committee Clerk, Mr Don Bletchly, for his invaluable contribution to the working of the Committee. His dedication, beyond the call of duty, is very much appreciated.

We also acknowledge the valuable work of the Acting Clerk-Assistant (Committees), Mr Rex Klein and Research Director, Mr Rob Downey who have stepped into the breach.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Len Ardill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

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.

Travelsafe decided to add to this, an additional matter which was put forward during early discussions and evidence. This was:

- (d) the need for effective road safety education to educate all road users in the safe use of roads. This includes effectively informing the public of changes in traffic rules, adopting safe driving habits and respecting the rights and responsibilities of all road users.

2. BACKGROUND

On 26 February 1991, the Committee agreed to **call** submissions on item (c). It was further agreed that item (d) be included and an advertisement was placed in major newspapers on 9 and 10 March 1991 (see Appendix A). The closing date for submissions was 5 April 1991; however, late submissions were accepted and considered. The Committee received 53 submissions. The names of organisations and individuals who forwarded submissions are listed in Appendix B.

In researching these items, Committee members visited the **Gympie** Driver Education Centre and the Mt Cotton Heavy Vehicle Driver Training School to experience some of the training procedures. Committee members also travelled to Toowoomba to discuss road safety education and enforcement issues with the Toowoomba City Council, Queensland Department of Transport officials, and members of school communities. Several Toowoomba State Schools were inspected and some innovative road safety initiatives were noted.

Speed limits and enforcement methods in North Queensland and South Australia were inspected by some Committee members. The whole Committee held discussions and conducted inspections with the State Transport authorities in Sydney and Melbourne. While in Melbourne, the Victorian Social Development Committee was visited. The travelsafe Committee's counterpart in New South Wales; the **Staysafe** Committee, visited Brisbane for discussions with Committee members.

Public hearings were held in Roma on 15 October 1990; in Charleville on 16 October 1990; in Long-reach on 17 October 1990; and in Brisbane on 8, 9 and 10 May 1991. Witnesses who appeared before the Committee are listed in Appendix C.

3. ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

Road safety education has become an important element of everyday life. In its submission to the Travelsafe Committee, the Queensland Department of Transport says road safety education "usually refers to programs which aim to bring about a change in community attitudes to the driving task".

The submission goes on to say that "road safety education is designed to develop safe road user behaviour; to engender public support for legislative and traffic control measures and to provide helpful road user information to the community".

One way of educating people to develop safe road user behaviours is to develop programs for use in schools.

3.1 ***School-Based Education***

Marsh and Hyde (1990, p.237) recommend that education systems "examine the extent to which road safety concepts and activities are included in current official curricula/syllabi and where necessary, they should take steps to incorporate them in future official documents". This concept is widely supported among road safety educators.

The Queensland Department of Transport believe the contemporary approach to road safety education is to view it "as an integral part of the school curriculum and as a constant theme underlying other subject areas". This can be achieved by incorporating road safety principles into the curriculum of other subjects.

This approach is a long-term strategy relying on regular exposure to road safety ideals. In evidence given at public hearings on 9 May 1991, Superintendent Pearson of the Queensland Police Central Traffic Support Group endorsed school-based road safety education.

In order to implement school-based road safety education, teachers will require training during initial tertiary studies and on-going in-service training. Road safety education programs will need to provide teachers with the necessary resources and materials.

The Queensland Department of Transport currently provides resources for use by teachers and community groups. These resources **are** developed in association with specialist curriculum **staff from** the Queensland Department of Education. Road safety education programs currently offered, or being developed by the Queensland Department of Transport are listed in Appendix D.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that driver education and road safety be taught as a formal subject in both primary and secondary school curricula. Road Safety should also be integrated into the curriculum of all other related subjects.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that driver education be a compulsory subject in high schools.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that teachers be encouraged to undertake additional basic training to equip them for the present primary school course and a more intensive high school subject of driver education.

3.2 *Learner-Driver Education and Licence Renewal*

Learner-drivers need to establish a philosophy of driving based on a sound knowledge and understanding of road rules. Road safety subjects in high schools will go a long way towards achieving this goal.

People who do not complete a road safety subject in high school should undergo a separate training course. A certificate would be issued upon successful completion.

Mr Bargenquest of the Queensland Department of Transport in Maryborough, suggested that "every person attempting to obtain or renew a Queensland Driver's Licence . . . attend either the Defensive Driving Course or the Motorcycle Training Program whichever would be applicable to their vehicle".

Mr Goebel, Director of the Road Safety Division, Queensland Department of Transport stated in evidence that a scheme under consideration is to reduce the length of time a provisional licence is held if a driver completed a defensive driving course. This would provide an incentive for people to complete the course and enable them to learn more about driving conditions, variables, and their vehicles. **Mr** Griffin of the Queensland Driver Education Centre in **Gympie** believes this type of incentive to be appropriate.

The transition from a provisional to open licence is an important step. Drivers are expected to have a clear understanding of road rules and of their responsibilities as road users. Furthermore, they may have experienced different weather conditions, different road conditions, and perhaps been in situations which have affected vehicle behaviour.

Mr Kenny **from** the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (**RACQ**) suggested drivers successfully undergo a test at the end of their provisional licence before being issued with an open licence. This test could be of a higher standard than that conducted for a provisional licence as drivers would be expected to be more proficient drivers.

At present, once drivers receive their open licence, they are not required to undergo any more testing for licence renewals within that class. However, road rules and traffic regulations are constantly reviewed and modified. It is critical that drivers familiarise themselves with new road rules and new road engineering developments which impact on their ability to drive safely. Moreover, they should be periodically tested to ensure an acceptable level of understanding exists.

The Motor Trades Association of Queensland (MTA-Q) and the Queensland Motorcycle Riders Association believe that motor cycle riders require additional training. **Mr** Beaumont, Chairman of the Motorcycle Division of the MTA-Q proposed incentives, such as reduced provisional licence terms, to encourage people to undertake specialist road safety tuition.

The focus would then be on safety rather than on learning the requirements of obtaining a licence.

Incentives for drivers to complete various level driving courses would encourage more road users to undertake such courses. These incentives could be in the form of longer licence periods or merit points for fault-free driving. **Mr** Kenny from the RACQ suggested a merit points system which rewards good behaviour, would be a strong motivation for licence applicants and licence holders. Merit points could be offset against demerit points obtained from minor offences.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that all applicants for a learner's permit, before being granted the permit, undergo a training course leading to a certificate in road safety unless they have qualified in the subject at high school.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that a certificate, verifying a learner-driver has successfully completed an accredited driving course for the designated vehicle, entitle the applicant to a shorter term provisional licence. Such shorter term should be sufficiently short enough to encourage learner-drivers to undertake tuition additional to standard driving lessons.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that a written or verbal examination be undertaken at the end of the provisional licence period to establish that drivers have an understanding of road rules and vehicle handling before an open licence is issued to successful applicants.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that all applicants for renewal of a drivers licence be required to select correct answers from a multiple choice questionnaire, one month before the due date. Failure to answer correctly should result in a further test, with the old licence being endorsed until successful.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that further tuition of applicants for a motor cycle licence be carried out in line with the following proposals of the Queensland Motorcycle Industry Division of the Motor Trades Association of Queensland:

- Applicants for learners permit successfully complete an accredited motor cycle course. A certificate would be issued for presentation to the Queensland Department of Transport who would issue a six month learner's permit.
- Once issued with a learners permit, the rider would successfully complete an accredited Provisional **Licence** course. A certificate would be issued and presented to the Queensland Department of Transport who would also conduct a test. Successful completion of the test together with the certificate, would entitle the applicant to a twelve month provisional licence.
- Before graduating to an open licence, provisional licence holders would successfully complete an accredited higher level course. A certificate would be issued and presented to the Queensland Department of Transport who would issue an open licence to the applicant motor cycle rider.

The above process would be non-compulsory with the alternative being a three (3) year provisional licence.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that proficiency in an advanced driving course increase the period for which an open driver's licence is issued.

3.3 *Mopeds*

The Queensland Motorcycle Industry Division of the MTA-Q conducted a survey into the use of mopeds and **licencing** of moped riders. The survey indicated that the hire market represents about 11% of total moped usage. However, the Committee has noted considerable criticism of the hiring and control of these vehicles.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that people who provide mopeds for hire be licensed for that purpose. They should be responsible for ensuring that people who hire mopeds from them pass a written multiple choice test. This test shall be provided by the Queensland Department of Transport who shall also conduct random checks of moped operators so as to ensure compliance. People who hire mopeds shall be the holder of a driver's licence. In addition, the Committee recommends the Queensland Department of Transport undertake a review of the regulations and procedures governing the hiring of mopeds.

3.4 *Regional Driver Instruction Centres*

The Queensland Driver Education Centre in **Gympie** conducts courses in road safety education for road users of all ages. The centre has widespread involvement with community and industry groups, local, state, and federal government organisations and educational institutions.

Courses across a variety of vehicles and road user activities are offered. Mr Kilpatrick, Manager of the Centre, stated in evidence that the Centre believes "human error is the major cause of road trauma and that attitude is the key factor in facilitating a change of behaviours in road users. Since its formulation in 1979 by the combined Rotary Clubs of **Gympie**, the centre has become a community project of the **Gympie** area and surrounding districts.

The Committee believes centres like the **Gympie** complex can play a significant role in increasing awareness of road safety issues in regional communities. Additionally, they could support road safety studies within schools and provide locals with **specialised** courses catering to local conditions.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that regional communities be encouraged to establish Regional Driver Instruction Centres, to give expert tuition in particular vehicles, to supplement limited facilities in high schools and to monitor standards.

3.5 Pedal Cyclists

Education of pedal cyclists to encourage safe road behaviour is considered by the Committee to be of particular importance. A number of initiatives, such as **bikeways** and shared footways, are aimed at reducing the dangers to pedal cyclists by isolating them from other road traffic. The Queensland Department of Transport has developed a bicycle safety program, Bike Ed (see Appendix **D**) "in recognition of the large number of children who ride bicycles and of their particular vulnerability".

In his evidence, Superintendent Pearson told the Committee of a pilot scheme in Townsville which issues bicycle **offence** notices to minors who violate traffic regulations. Parents are notified and both children and parents are invited to road safety lectures if several **offences** are issued to the one child.

Recommendation 12

That a system of on-the-spot tickets be introduced for breaches of road rules by cyclists (minors only) and for riding a bicycle minus required safety features. Mandatory advice to parents or guardians should follow more than one breach by a minor with a penalty payable by the parent/guardian for subsequent infringements.

3.6 Increasing Road Safety Awareness

The Road Safety Division of the Queensland Department of Transport have entered into a contract with Brisbane radio station B105 FM to "broadcast road safety messages during the station's "Home Free" session each weekday between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm". Messages are communicated to a high risk group "by a source with high credibility to the listeners". Various topics are covered and significant upcoming events or holiday periods are specifically catered for.

The Committee believes this to be a worthwhile and effective method of communicating with road users.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the advertising by the Queensland Department of Transport on radio stations which have a youth audience, be expanded to reach the elderly and upper middle-aged through stations catering to these groups.

3.7 Merit Points System

In his evidence, Mr Mathieson of the RACQ, stated his belief that a large percentage of people who lose their **licence** through accumulation of demerit points, continue to drive. Mr Kenny believes that the demerit system needs thorough evaluation and that rewards or incentives for fault-free driving may motivate drivers to behave responsibly. This would be particularly so if merit points could be offset against demerit points which are obtained for minor offences.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that a system of incentives be introduced giving credit points for fault free driving which could be used to compensate for points lost from minor breaches under the demerit system.

4. TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Committee was asked to give urgent consideration to current traffic law enforcement methods and penalties. Furthermore, the effectiveness of such methods and penalties was investigated.

Many of the present laws and practices cause ill-feeling between drivers and police, This situation benefits nobody and potentially impacts on the effectiveness of road safety education programs.

4.1 Speed Limits

There is a widespread philosophical belief amongst traffic engineers that 85% of drivers are basically reasonable and yet there is clear evidence that some rules are universally ignored. Many adjustments to facilities and to speed limits are based on these beliefs.

Yet, our basic speed limits of 100 kph and 60 kph which are not decided by traffic engineers, but by politicians, are ignored by the vast majority of drivers.

This in turn appears to strike at the overall validity and credibility of traffic laws, and those charged with the task of policing them.

Much of the criticism of police is based on alleged unfair policing of speed limits. An example is using radar on stretches of road which have inappropriate speed limits.

There appears to be a case for a much more scientific approach to speed limits, with due regard being given to the cost and effectiveness of the final decision.

The speed limit on freeways and the open highways in the vast regions of Queensland does NOT reflect the speed operating on those freeways and highways and considered appropriate by the said 85% of drivers.

On the other hand, the majority of prudent, experienced drivers do not travel up to the maximum of 60 kph in narrow residential streets. The standard residential speed throughout Western Europe and the USA is 50 kph, which is nearer to the optimum speed. At the same time, a large proportion of drivers travel in excess of 60 kph on major roads in urban areas and traffic authorities have bowed to the inevitable in many cases by signing these roads for greater speeds, while others remain a source of revenue, and a source of motorist's anger.

The traffic blockages which are caused by artificial impediments in major roads are a well known cause of "rat-running" in residential streets leading to calls for action to close those streets to through traffic.

Recommendation 15

- 15.1 The Committee recommends that speed limits for small passenger vehicles (cars etc.) on declared State and National Highways (except in "built-up" areas or where otherwise signed) and on Freeways, be increased from 100 to 110 kph,**
- 15.2 The Committee recommends that the speed limit in "built-up" areas be reduced from 60 kph to 50 kph except where otherwise signed.**
- 15.3 The Committee recommends that all traffic authorities examine speed limits scientifically and individually on major roads to establish an optimum safe speed and to sign the particular section accordingly.**
- 15.4 The Committee recommends that Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) schemes, under the auspices of the appropriate authorities, continue to investigate and evaluate appropriate speed limits for non-major roads.**
- 15.5 The Committee recommends that speed limiters be compulsory on heavy vehicles and that Queensland conform to speed limits for heavy vehicles as they apply in other States.**

In addition, speed limits outside schools need to be reduced during those times when children travel to and from school. Enforcement of reduced limits outside of these peak hours is inappropriate.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the method devised by Queensland Department of Transport officers in Toowoomba to reduce the speed limit around schools during the hours immediately before and after school, be developed and expanded for wider use.

This method is as follows:

- **Speed signs have two (2) speed limits which can be displayed at appropriate times. The sign is changed by “Lollipop Ladies” operating a switch on the sign.**
- **Flashing lights signifying the changed speed limit are fitted above the speed sign.**
- **Normal speed limits return once peak school travel periods have passed.**

4.2 Community Involvement

In his evidence, Superintendent Pearson stated an eagerness within the Queensland Police hierarchy to implement community-based policing. This would involve the community in all phases of policing, including traffic law enforcement.

A number of regional community policing schemes already exist and Superintendent Pearson cited Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast and northern police regions as examples.

The Queensland Department of Transport have developed a number of special courses which encourage and rely upon community involvement. They are shown in Appendix D.

A submission from the Shire of **Bulla** in Victoria gave details of its “Safe Living” program which is sponsored jointly by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and VICROADS. This program bases its success on community responsibility, ownership, and participation. It involves a wide variety of community groups.

The Committee considers community involvement through greater consultation between police, traffic and planning authorities, public authorities, and community groups to be important for the widespread adoption of safe road behaviours.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that Traffic authorities be encouraged to set up community consultative committees, including local police, to consider matters falling within their jurisdiction. Planning and traffic officers throughout the state should have a regular consultative procedure with police and the community.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that recent tentative action to involve police in a process of community policing be expanded. Police should receive positive training for this role and for their role in assisting in road safety education of adults and children.

4.3 *Random Vehicle Checks and Unlicensed Drivers*

An earlier report of the Travelsafe Committee recommended random tests of motor vehicles to assess their roadworthiness.

The Committee believes random vehicle checks would also catch many unlicensed drivers. In particular, it would be a strong deterrent for unlicensed drivers if random vehicle checks were more widespread

Mr Mathieson of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) stated in evidence, a belief that unlicensed drivers are only picked up at present if they are stopped for random breath testing or for committing a breach.

Superintendent Pearson agreed that police officers still have a role in identifying defective vehicles. They would normally do this as a matter of course when pulling drivers over for any reason. He conceded that this technique may need reinforcing throughout police service training.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that random roadside checks of vehicles be more general, as they will help remove faulty vehicles, unregistered and uninsured vehicles, and unlicensed drivers.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the attention of police be drawn to the need to look for obvious defects on vehicles and to always check the driver's licence of any driver addressed.

4.4 *Accident Assessment and Police Behaviour*

The Committee is concerned about the qualifications of many police to accurately assess accident causes. Expert assessors would provide police with **specialised** assistance, particularly in cases where vehicle defects and personal injury are involved.

However, the Committee also **recognises** that training experienced police in accurate accident assessment would help alleviate this concern.

The Committee received a number of submissions which were critical of police behaviour. Superintendent Pearson recognised that apparently inappropriate behaviour does occur; however, it is difficult to determine if the officer was acting irresponsibly or responding to a community need. Police officers who are detected violating traffic regulations are investigated and counselled by senior officers. Breaches do occur at times when police officers recognised situations requiring their attention.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that Queensland Department of Transport mechanical assessors be called to assist junior police in assessing causes of accidents, particularly those involving injury. Experienced police investigators should be encouraged to undertake training for this role.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that police officers be clearly instructed in what is appropriate behaviour by police drivers.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that police be instructed to be constantly vigilant to caution or apprehend drivers who offend in serious breaches other than speeding, and particularly those who fail to keep to the left, fail to signal intent to change lanes or direction, and fail to move to the correct section of the road before and after turning.

4.5 *Drink-Driving Offences*

The Committee **recognises** that alcohol is a major factor in the cause of road trauma. Random Breath Testing (RBT) has been very effective in reducing the incidence of drink-driving. Superintendent Pearson agreed that RBT “has achieved what it is supposed to achieve”; however, he believes more advertising, similar to that run when RBT was first introduced, is required.

Also of concern is the wide variation in penalties imposed upon drink-driving offenders. It was generally agreed that two (2) people who have the same blood alcohol content (BAC) reading could receive different penalties.

Mr **Woodbury** from the Queensland Department of Transport told the Committee of a study commissioned by the Department in 1987. This study reviewed about 12,000 drink-driving **offences** and found, "... there was an enormous variation in the monetary penalties that were applied to people and also, to a lesser extent, in disqualifications and cancellations. It varied enormously, depending on what your BAC was, how old you were, and in one case, whether you had legal representation".

Superintendent Pearson supported the introduction of traffic **offence** notices for drink-driving offenders. Such notices would provide uniform penalties depending on the BAC level. With some 26,000 drink driving offenders each year, this system would save many thousands of hours of police work and court time.

The imposition of a total driving ban can effect people in isolated areas or people who drive as part of their employment. It is not the intention of the Committee to disadvantage these people; however, motorists should not be allowed to repeatedly offend on the basis that a limited or restricted licence can be obtained in certain circumstances. Such a system could significantly lessen the impact of drink-driving penalties.

It is for this reason that Superintendent Pearson does not support a limited or restricted licence being granted to drink-driving offenders.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation stated in its submission that "we would like to see measures introduced to ensure that persons who commit a second or subsequent **offence** are exposed to appropriate (educational) programs". Such programs would be at the motorists expense.

The Committee also heard interesting and valuable evidence from **Dr Mary** Sheehan and Mr Jeremy Davey from the University of Queensland Medical School. Both are involved in **drink-driving** programs; Dr Sheehan with the Plan A Safe Strategy (PASS) education program and Mr Davey with the Safe Drinking project.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that offending drivers detected driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) above the legal limit, be issued with a traffic offence notice after testing, and that court appearances not be required unless the alleged offender so decides or is a repeat offender. This will free up some thousands of hours of police involvement and remove the present unfair inconsistency in penalties. The penalty should continue to include loss of licence and a fine. Such penalties should be commensurate with the level of BAC and be contained in a set schedule.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that drivers wishing to apply for a restricted driving permit on the grounds of hardship involving isolation or employment which requires the offender to drive, have access to a magistrate to apply for such a permit. However, this shall only apply for the first drink driving offence and where the BAC was below a prescribed level.

4.6 *Other Matters*

The Committee **recognises** that traffic authorities have a significant role to play in generally improving road facilities. Technology can be extensively utilised to assist, maintain and increase the extent of current improvement and upgrading programs. Greater use of appropriate signs would assist traffic calming and control initiatives.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that all Queensland traffic authorities carry out an investigation of roads under their control, to improve facilities for drivers and pedestrians.

Available technology can improve the traffic flow on major roads, reduce cycle times, thereby reducing the delays for drivers on side roads, and improve access for pedestrians.

British pedestrian lights reduce traffic delays and should be considered on major roads.

The Red Light Camera system should be extended, particularly to local authorities, and greater use made of signs warning of Red Light Cameras.

5. CONCLUSION

The Committee endorses the use of road safety education programs in schools as an effective means of communicating road safety ideals to children of all ages.

Current drivers also need education and reinforcement of the importance of safe road behaviour. Appropriate courses and community involvement can help achieve this.

A number of initiatives in traffic control and traffic law enforcement will benefit road users of all types. In addition, traffic law enforcement can be more efficient, particularly with regard to drink-driving offenders.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee recommends that driver education and road safety be taught as a formal subject in both primary and secondary school curricula. Road Safety should also be integrated into the curriculum of all other related subjects.
2. The Committee recommends that driver education be a compulsory subject in high schools.
3. The Committee recommends that teachers be encouraged to undertake additional basic training to equip them for the present primary school course and a more intensive high school subject of driver education.
4. The Committee recommends that all applicants for a learner's permit, before being granted the permit, undergo a training course leading to a certificate in road safety unless they have qualified in the subject at high school.
5. The Committee recommends that a certificate, verifying a learner-driver has successfully completed an accredited driving course for the designated vehicle, entitle the applicant to a shorter term provisional licence. Such shorter term should be sufficiently short enough to encourage learner-drivers to undertake tuition additional to standard driving lessons.
6. The Committee recommends that a written or verbal examination be undertaken at the end of the provisional licence period to establish that drivers have an understanding of road rules and vehicle handling before an open licence is issued to successful applicants.
7. The Committee recommends that all applicants for renewal of a drivers licence be required to select correct answers from a multiple choice questionnaire, one month before the due date. Failure to answer correctly should result in a further test, with the old licence being endorsed until successful.
8. The Committee recommends that further tuition of applicants for a motor cycle licence be carried out in line with the following proposals of the Queensland Motorcycle Industry Division of the Motor Trades Association of Queensland:
 - Applicants for learners permit successfully complete an accredited motor cycle course. A certificate would be issued for presentation to the Queensland Department of Transport who would issue a six month learner's permit.
 - Once issued with a learners permit, the rider would successfully complete an accredited Provisional **Licence** course. A certificate would be issued and presented to the Queensland Department of Transport who would also conduct a test. Successful completion of the test together with the certificate, would entitle the applicant to a twelve month provisional licence.

- **Before graduating to an open licence, provisional licence holders would successfully complete an accredited higher level course. A certificate would be issued and presented to the Queensland Department of Transport who would issue an open licence to the applicant motor cycle rider.**

The above process would be non-compulsory with the alternative being a three (3) year provisional licence.

9. **The Committee recommends that proficiency in an advanced driving course increase the period for which an open driver's licence is issued.**
10. **The Committee recommends that people who provide mopeds for hire be licensed for that purpose. They should be responsible for ensuring that people who hire mopeds from them pass a written multiple choice test. This test shall be provided by the Queensland Department of Transport who shall also conduct random checks of moped operators so as to ensure compliance. People who hire mopeds shall be the holder of a driver's licence. In addition, the Committee recommends the Queensland Department of Transport undertake a review of the regulations and procedures governing the hiring of mopeds.**
11. **The Committee recommends that regional communities be encouraged to establish Regional Driver Instruction Centres, to give expert tuition in particular vehicles, to supplement limited facilities in high schools and to monitor standards.**
12. **That a system of on-the-spot tickets be introduced for breaches of road rules by cyclists (minors only) and for riding a bicycle minus required safety features. Mandatory advice to parents or guardians should follow more than one breach by a minor with a penalty payable by the parent/guardian for subsequent infringements.**
13. **The Committee recommends that the advertising by the Transport Department on radio stations which have a youth audience, be expanded to reach the elderly and upper middle-aged through stations catering to these groups.**
14. **The Committee recommends that a system of incentives be introduced giving credit points for fault free driving which could be used to compensate for points lost from minor breaches under the demerit system.**
- IS.1 **The Committee recommends that speed limits for small passenger vehicles (cars etc.) on declared State and National Highways (except in "built-up" areas or where otherwise signed) and on Freeways, be increased from 100 to 110 kph.**
- 15.2 **The Committee recommends that the speed limit in "built-up" areas be reduced from 60 kph to 50 kph except where otherwise signed.**
- 15.3 **The Committee recommends that all traffic authorities examine speed limits scientifically and individually on major roads to establish an optimum safe speed and to sign the particular section accordingly.**

- 15.4 The Committee recommends that Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) schemes, under the auspices of the appropriate authorities, continue to investigate and evaluate appropriate speed limits for non-major roads.
- 15.5 The Committee recommends that speed limiters be compulsory on heavy vehicles and that Queensland conform to speed limits for heavy vehicles as they apply in other States.
16. The Committee recommends that the method devised by Queensland Department of Transport **officers** in Toowoomba to reduce the speed limit around schools during the hours immediately before and after school, be developed and expanded for wider use.

This method is as follows:

- Speed signs have two (2) speed limits which can be displayed at appropriate times. The sign is changed by “Lollipop Ladies” operating a switch on the sign.
 - Flashing lights signifying the changed speed limit are fitted above the speed sign.
 - Normal speed limits return once peak school travel periods have passed.
17. The Committee recommends that Traffic authorities be encouraged to set up community consultative committees, including local police, to consider matters falling within their jurisdiction. Planning and **traffic** officers throughout the state should have a regular consultative procedure with police and the community.
 18. The Committee recommends that recent tentative action to involve police in a process of community policing be expanded, Police should receive positive training for this role and for their role in assisting in road safety education of adults and children.
 19. The Committee recommends that random roadside checks of vehicles be more general, as they will help remove faulty vehicles, unregistered and uninsured vehicles, and unlicensed drivers.
 20. The Committee recommends that the attention of police be drawn to the need to look for obvious defects on vehicles and to always check the driver’s **licence** of any driver addressed.
 21. The Committee recommends that Queensland Department of Transport mechanical assessors be called to assist **junior** police in assessing causes of accidents, particularly those involving injury. Experienced police investigators should be encouraged to undertake training for this role.
 22. The Committee recommends that police officers be clearly instructed in what is appropriate behaviour by police drivers.

23. The Committee recommends that Police be instructed to be constantly vigilant to caution or apprehend drivers who offend in serious breaches other than speeding, and particularly those who fail to keep to the left, fail to signal intent to change lanes or direction, and fail to move to the correct section of the road before and after turning.
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REFERENCE

Marsh, C.J. and Hyde Dr N.J. 1990, ***Road Safety Education in Australian Schools: A Study of Dissemination, Implementation and Exemplary Practice***, Vol. 1, CR89