

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF QUEENSLAND

TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

Annual Report 1991 - 1992

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Report No. 8, August 1992

TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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(Member for Salisbury)

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(Member for Peak Downs)

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Research Director - Mr R Downey

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<i>1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992</i>	

**TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The Travelsafe Committee of the Forty-Sixth Parliament has much pleasure in presenting its third annual report, for the period 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992, in accordance with item 14 of the resolution of the House of 10 May 1990 appointing the Committee.

Len Ardill, Chairman
On behalf of the Committee
Parliament House, Brisbane, August 1992

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

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:

- 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.

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. *REVIEW ACTIVITIES*

The year was particularly busy for the Committee with 4 investigative reports presented to Parliament. These reports were on Road Safety Education and Traffic Law Enforcement, Bicycle Safety, Road User Behaviour Modification, and the Road Environment and Traffic Engineering. A full list of all Travelsafe Committee reports is shown in Appendix A.

The Committee met 13 times in the period under review. Pursuant to Standing Order 198 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the members' meeting attendance record is given in Appendix B.

During the period under review, the Committee conducted public hearings in Brisbane, Townsville, and Mackay. Inspections of local facilities were conducted during the regional visits. A consultancy on road user behaviour modification, commissioned in May 1991, was finalised with the tabling of the consultant's report on 18 March 1992. Public submissions were invited on Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety on 30/31 May 1992 (major state and national newspapers) and 5/6/7 June 1992 (main regional Queensland newspapers).

3. OVERVIEW OF REPORTS PRESENTED

Despite an emphasis on investigations concerning motor vehicle accidents and associated trauma, reports presented by the Committee during the period under review made recommendations which impact on various categories of road users. All recommendations are born out of a strong desire of Committee members to further reduce the Queensland road toll. Furthermore, the recommendations attempt to combine feasible suggestions, put forward in submissions and by witnesses at public hearings, with established countermeasures and standards.

3.1 Report No. 3 - Road Safety Education and Traffic Law Enforcement

This report, tabled on 4 September 1991, focused on:

- road safety education in schools;
- incentives for drivers to undergo and complete advanced driver training courses;
- greater community consultation;
- a reinforcement of an earlier Travelsafe report recommending random roadside checks for defective vehicles;
- a review and reassessment of speed limits on all roads;
- increased safety for school children around schools; and
- on-the-spot fines for first offence drink drivers.

Much of the evidence heard by the Committee in public hearings, and documented in written submissions, called for school children of all ages being taught road safety principles from an early age. Similarly, a call was made for drivers to increase their skill levels through advanced driver training courses.

Since the report was tabled, the Committee has noted an increase in the number of Community Consultative Committees being established in regional communities. These committees give the public an avenue through which community concerns, including road safety matters, can be conveyed to the decision makers in that community.

A review of speed limits was recommended on the basis that individual roads, or sections of road, be assessed for the appropriate speed limit which should apply. It is the Committee's contention that many roads exist where the current speed limits, applied in an arbitrary manner, are inappropriate for the design, condition, and environment of the road.

The safety of school children around schools is a matter of serious concern to the Committee. In this report, the Committee considered better ways of protecting children whilst crossing the road to and from school. These same methods also serve as better ways of forewarning motorists that children will be crossing the road.

In recommending on-the-spot fines for first offence drink drivers, the Committee primarily set out to achieve uniformity of penalties handed out to offenders, and a faster method of dealing with drink drivers so as to free up valuable Police manpower. The Committee also felt that the certainty of a fine and loss of licence which would face motorists as a result of the initiative, would act as a strong deterrent to would-be drink-drivers.

3.2 Report No. 5 - Bicycle Safety

This report, tabled on 28 November 1991 had three clear messages:

- the need for bicycle education for children, particularly in a safe environment;
- the need for parents to adopt greater responsibility in the road safety education of their children, particularly with regard to bicycle safety; and
- the need for clear, consistent, and safe messages to be conveyed by all forms of media.

This report was prepared because of the overwhelming amount of evidence heard by the Committee on this subject. This was despite the fact that a specific investigation into bicycle safety had not been commenced up to that point in time.

Nonetheless, it was obvious that many witnesses, and people writing submissions, felt compelled to inform the Committee of their strong concerns. Observation of cyclist behaviour also adds weight to the concerns expressed to the Committee.

The Committee commenced an investigation into Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety in May 1992. It is ongoing at the time of presenting this report.

3.3 Report No. 6 - Achieving High Levels of Compliance with Road Safety Laws

Elliott and Shanhan Research were engaged as consultants to the Committee to investigate ways of achieving a high level of compliance with road safety laws through behaviour modification. The final report represented the culmination of several months literature research, an intense workshop with road safety experts from all over Australia, and considerable follow-up discussion.

Some of the 18 recommendations of the report considered:

- a better managed implementation and use of existing proven countermeasures;
- the use of pilot programs to evaluate the effectiveness of recommended countermeasures;
- the need to take the road user's viewpoint when developing, designing and implementing road safety countermeasures;
- funding of road safety initiatives being spread to non-government, commercial organisations who benefit from a reduction in the road toll;
- making Random Breath Testing (RBT) more effective by ensuring that every driver/rider who is pulled over and stopped, irrespective of the reason, is breath-tested, *and* effectively communicating this to the motoring public; and
- the effective use of new and developing technology to enforce road safety laws.

The report is considered by the Committee to be an important information resource, not only for the Committee, but for road safety authorities throughout Australia. It has consolidated much of the literature on road, user behaviour modification and raises many worthy suggestions which bear strong consideration.

3.4 Report No. 7 - Road Environment and Traffic Engineering

The final report of the Committee for the period under review had its beginnings in evidence heard during public hearings held in Western Queensland in October 1990. It became apparent to the Committee that road conditions, road design, and the immediate environment surrounding the road were important factors in the battle against road accidents.

Important aspects of the report are:

- the need to adhere to established road design and construction standards and to regularly review these standards;
- the importance of using proven designs for safe set-down, pick-up, waiting, and turning areas on roads around schools;
- the need to construct more overtaking lanes on major roads;
- the prohibition of kerb-side power poles in urban areas and the long-term replacement of all existing poles and lines with underground services;
- greater funding for road maintenance programs; and
- the establishment of a pilot program to determine the best lanemarking system for two-lane roundabouts with a view to standardisation across the State and the development of traffic regulations specifically for roundabouts.

The Committee firmly believes that implementation of the recommendations of the report would considerably improve the level of safety experienced on our roads.

4. CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS

In February 1992, some 70 organisations and individuals active in road safety, were asked to nominate the road safety topics which they believed should be next considered by the Committee. The response to this request was good.

At its meeting on 5 May 1992, the Committee resolved to progressively commence investigations into Non-Driver Behaviour, Local Area Traffic Management (LATM), and the Heavy Vehicle Industry. The topic of Non-Driver Behaviour was later amended to Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety, the subject of the Committee's current investigation. Other investigations will commence at a later date.

Consequently, advertisements calling for public submissions on **Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety** were placed in newspapers in late May and early June. Further details on this investigation will be contained in the Committee's report on the matter.

5. *ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS*

In general terms, the activities of the Committee have served to raise the awareness of road safety in the community. The work of a committee such as this often takes many years to have a clearly identifiable impact on the topics of its investigations. This is especially so for Travelsafe, as many of the recommendations have adopted a long-term view.

In the experience and opinion of the Committee, the long-term view is vital to achieving sustainable improvements in the level of road safety. Road safety committees in other State Governments (e.g. Staysafe Committee in New South Wales, Social Development Committee in Victoria) have been established for considerably longer periods and consequently are in a better position to see the fruits of the labours.

Travelsafe has deliberately taken a broad approach to investigations to date so as to establish a sound basis for future inquiries. Such inquiries are likely to focus on specific issues and this is borne out by the commencement of the inquiry into Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety.

Despite the long-term outlook of many Travelsafe recommendations, the achievements and highlights in the period under review were notable.

The most significant recommendation of the Committee to be implemented, was the introduction of on-the-spot fines for first offence drink-drivers. Combined with the introduction of booze buses, this initiative has had the desired effect of freeing valuable Police resources. Perhaps more importantly, it is helping to get the message across to drivers that being caught drink-driving will result in a *certain* fine and *certain* loss of licence.

Another notable achievement of the Committee has been the increase in random checks for defective vehicles. Originally a recommendation of Report No.2 tabled in December 1990, it was reinforced in Report No.3. Whilst the downturn in the economy may be a significant factor in the number of unroadworthy vehicles on the road, motorists who drive unroadworthy vehicles are potentially putting their lives, and the lives of others, at risk.

The most notable highlight of the year was the finalisation of the report from Elliott and Shanahan Research. As previously noted, this report will be a valuable resource for the Committee and road safety authorities around Australia. It challenges the way we think about road safety and what solutions the community will accept and adhere to. Furthermore, it will encourage road safety authorities to extend their horizons and go beyond traditional methods and solutions.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the many people and organisations who provided written submissions and who gave evidence at public hearings. The Committee actively seeks and values the input of these people as it investigates the various issues which ultimately affect us all. Their commitment and concern is much appreciated.

Similarly, the feedback received by the Committee from people and organisations who comment on Travelsafe reports is well received. Whilst more feedback is encouraged, the Committee would not operate as effectively, nor would the issues raised by the investigations receive the debate they deserve, without the valuable comments received so far.

The Committee also acknowledges the services provided by the Secretariat of the Committee Section and the Parliamentary Reporting Staff (Hansard). Without this support, the work of the Committee would have been severely impeded.

Finally, the Committee wishes to acknowledge the services provided by its Research Director, Mr Rob Downey. Rob came to the Committee in July 1991 at a busy time when the Committee was seeking to conclude earlier investigations and undertake new ones. He has performed admirably and his ongoing commitment to the task is very much appreciated.

APPENDIX A - Reports of the Travelsafe Committee

Report No.	Title	Date Presented to Parliament
1.	Annual Report for the period 10 May 1990 to 30 June 1990.	5 September 1990
2.	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,	4 December 1990
	AND	
	The need to improve the standards of motor vehicle repairs as a means of improving vehicle and road safety.	
3.	Road Safety Education AND Traffic Law Enforcement	4 September 1991
4.	Annual Report for the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991.	2 October 1991
5.	Bicycle Safety	28 November 1991
6.	Achieving High Levels of Compliance with Road Safety Laws - a review of road user behaviour modification	18 March 1992
7.	Road Environment and Traffic Engineering	28 April 1992

**APPENDIX B - Travelsafe Committee Meeting Attendance Record
1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992**

Meeting Date	Ardill	Lester	Bird	Dollin	Fenlon	Goss	Springborg
20 August 1991	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3 September 1991	x	x	x	x	x		x
1 October 1991	x		x	x	x	x	x
24 October 1991	x		x	x	x	x	x
12 November 1991	x	x	x	x	x	x	
14 November 1991	x	x	x	x	x		x
9 March 1992	x		x	x	x		x
12 March 1992	x			x	x	x	x
17 March 1992	x	x	x	x	x		x
13 April 1992	x		x	x	x		x
5 May 1992	x	x	x		x	x	x
19 May 1992	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
16 June 1992	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
