

**Submission
No 3**

**INQUIRY INTO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
(MINISTERIAL REFERENCE)**

Organisation: Private Citizen
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission to the NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe)
- Enquiry into Pedestrian Safety

Introduction:

I have been a driver for many years and a pedestrian road user for longer.

I am also a medical practitioner and specialist. I have in addition to my specialty training spent considerable time in the past in Emergency Departments where I have been witness to the extraordinary and often permanent damage, physical as well as psychological trauma, that occurs to soft bodied human beings when impacted by fast moving metal objects.

The effects of this damage and the long term ramifications on individuals, families and Australian society is incalculable. I regularly see people/patients/carers who for many years thereafter carry the burden of their injuries and trauma. It is clear to me that attempts to quantify through statistical analysis belie the true cost to us all.

Observations:

For some years when I have been witness to stupidity and recklessness on the roads, dangerous drivers, dangerously and illegally parked vehicles, dangerous loads etc, I have taken it upon myself, as a concerned citizen if nothing else, to report the details of these incidents to the police. I have done so usually through the Police Assistance Line (131 444) or on a number of occasions reported these directly to a local police station.

I have a long history of reporting these incidents, some quite extraordinary in terms of the crass stupidity, negligence and lack of care of those involved. I don't believe that attempting to list them here is of use to the Committee and your deliberations.

A few examples however include: reporting a P plate driver running a red light and almost colliding with people, mothers with prams and young children, and myself; a recent episode where a driver, speaking on a mobile phone, signaled to make a turn into a side street allowing me to proceed to cross the road with my children on a crossing, but then, without any consideration or care continuing straight ahead in front and across of us on the crossing, waving to us as he went.

Only brief moments of these type of behaviours on the roads can lead to long lasting tragedy and suffering.

Yet there is little, and my experience indicates no, recourse for pedestrians to report these incidents, have action taken or receive follow-up or feedback in this regard.

Of greatest concern in my view is the fact that any opportunity to deal with, punish or more importantly educate the perpetrators of such behaviour is lost.

Experience in Reporting to Date:

My experience over a long period reporting these incidents is that the police involved, or the responder at the Police Information Line are ill equipped and unsupported through their operating structures and procedures to do anything other than, as has frequently been indicated to me, 'see if they can contact the perpetrator through the information I have provided' and 'warn' them. I have yet, after years of reporting these incidents, on each occasion leaving my contact details (I am usually asked to do so), to be contacted or receive feedback.

On almost every occasion I have been told, sometimes seemingly lectured, of their inability to do anything other than see if the perpetrator can be contacted and warned, and that no action can be taken unless a police officer 'witnesses' the incident. I am very conscious of the waste of time even

Suggestion:

It is patently not feasible to have a police officer witnessing every incident and this would clearly require an officer on every street corner.

A system could, and in my view needs, to be developed, perhaps in a slightly similar manner to 'neighbourhood watch' to assist the police in monitoring for and reporting these incidents.

Community awareness, driver responsibility and accountability, and road safety for pedestrians would be increased. The system would need to be developed in a comprehensive manner with the appointment and training of paid or volunteer 'wardens' or 'monitors' or whatever name is chosen, with a legislated responsibility and capacity to report such incidents to or on behalf of the police with an expectation that action, follow-up and feedback will ensue. Action might take the form of fines, education or interview and this might not necessarily involve the police depending on the nature and seriousness of the incident.

Yours sincerely

Dr Tuly Rosenfeld