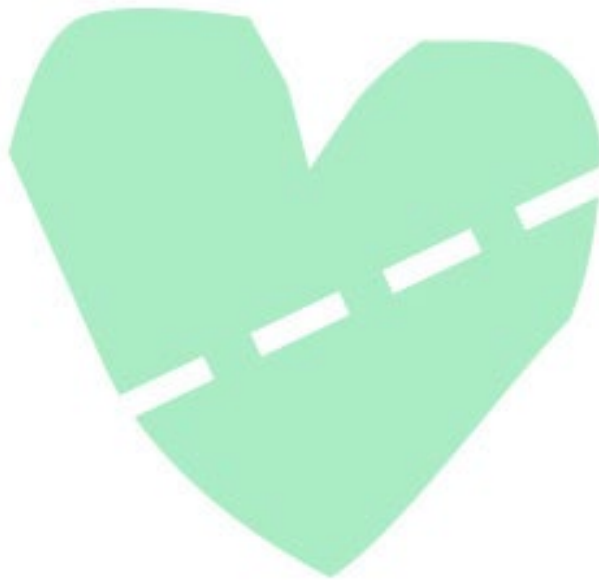


**Submission  
No 32**

**INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA IN REGIONAL NSW CAUSED  
BY SPEEDING, FATIGUE, DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING**

**Name:** Ms Tracy Blake

**Date Received:** 25 July 2025



**Road Trauma  
Support Group  
NSW**

**Member submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry  
into Interventions to Reduce Road Trauma in Regional NSW**

*Focus: Speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving*

Tracy Blake

[REDACTED]

A member of the Road Trauma Support Group NSW

**Submission to:**

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Interventions to Reduce Road Trauma in Regional NSW

25 July 2025

I am a member of the Road Trauma Support Group NSW. I lost my only daughter Mackenzie, to a fatal crash in Blaxland on 1 November 2021.

This was not an accident but the result of preventable behaviours on our roads.

I want to see real change so other families do not have to experience this lifelong grief and trauma.

Imagine finishing work for the day and walking out of your office toward the car park to head home to your daughter only, to pull your phone out to call her as you walked to your car but instead there are a number of missed calls from a number you don't recognise. I think it must be important so I call the number and it is answered by a Senior Constable from your local police station.

My immediate thought is "I have been here all day, my car is here, has something happened to one of my sons?" Never could I imagine what I was about to hear. I hear the gentle voice say there's been a crash and I think maybe the bus my daughter was on has crashed and she has been hurt, I ask him "Is my daughter alright?" He responds "I'm sorry to have to tell you, there's been a crash and Mackenzie has been killed. We have the truck driver in custody." I hang up on him, he calls straight back.

I'm told to return to my office, they are coming to me. As I stumble through the car park a friend finds me, takes my phone and is told by the police officer what has happened. All the while I'm thinking how do I tell my sons their little sister has been killed, they must have wrong it can't be Mackenzie. While waiting for the police to arrive my friend calls my brother to tell him what's happened, he is now on his way. I call my sister and tell her Mackenzie has been killed and she needs to go and tell our mum, this is the second time in 20 months she has had to tell her a member of our family has died in tragic circumstances.

When the police arrive, I'm sitting in the corridor as I just can't be in my office – the police officer runs towards me and crouches down, he hands me Mackenzie's licence and then I know it's real. He tells me the driver has been arrested and taken to Blue Mountains Hospital for mandatory testing and afterwards to Katoomba Police Station to be charged. You see not only is he a known a drug addict (tests later confirming his impairment), he was also a disqualified driver.

In the coming weeks we would learn his licence was cancelled in 2004, he had never been certified to drive a truck, he had been caught driving numerous times in last 17 years whilst

disqualified and under the influence of drugs. He had even served 9 months in jail for continuing to drive whilst disqualified and he still had 6 years of disqualification to serve.

I'm not sure if the police officer that told me "We were lucky he didn't kill someone in 2004 when he first lost his licence," thought that would make me feel better, if anything it made me angrier. How is somebody like this able to keep registering vehicles in his name, buy a truck, continue to get caught and let go enabling him to keep putting lives in danger until he finally takes an innocent life – MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE????

Stupidly, I thought Mackenzie would be safe because she was not in a car but a pedestrian, on the footpath innocently walking to Blaxland railway station to come home after finishing work. She should have been safe, she didn't do anything wrong and yet she was mowed down by a criminal that chose to continuously ignore the law.

This is just part of the trauma I now live with every day, it's a movie that plays in my head continuously and that of the following weeks as we had to plan a Farewell that should never have been needed.

### **Fatigue and Rest Areas**

Fatigue is a major killer on regional roads, yet safe places to stop are too few. Signage encouraging fatigued drivers to stop and take a Power Nap.

**Recommendation:** Invest in more Driver Reviver stops and safe, well-lit rest areas on long rural routes.

Regional roads should have signs dotted along high traffic routes highlighting the positive effect of fatigued drivers taking a power nap, just as they have on Victorian regional roads.

Advertising raising awareness of driver fatigue and the consequences of not taking a break particularly around busy holiday times. We need to stop pussyfooting around and let communities know the harsh reality and deadly outcomes that are a result of driver fatigue.

### **Police Resourcing and Crash Investigations**

Families deserve thorough, consistent investigations. My own experience showed a somewhat lack of concern for the questions my son and I raised ie: speeding and their acceptance of his excuse for leaving the roadway.

The section of road my daughter was mowed down on, is notorious for speeding drivers and although one witness said they were doing approximately the same speed "No, officer we weren't speeding." I ask you do you really believe they would own up to speeding? We questioned if a driver is falling asleep and this person obviously was as a result of the drugs in his system, surely more pressure would be being applied to the accelerator? We were told there was a way to verify this as there was CCTV footage of what had occurred – it was not done.

Secondly, he claimed to be looking at fuel prices at service station on the other side of the road, the fact is the fuel prices are hidden from drivers travelling east on this section of road, he was never questioned on. Once again, we felt ignored with our question of this claim.

**Recommendation:** Fund better regional crash investigation resources and training. Establish standard protocols and independent review options.

Although we are very appreciative of the empathy and kindness displayed to my sons and I by the investigating officer, we do think the concerns and questions raised by victims and their families should be addressed. If the investigating team feel these concerns are not a factor, the families and victims need to be advised of this and how they have come to that conclusion.

### **Unsafe Roads and Infrastructure**

Our roads have dangerous potholes, poor lighting, and high-speed limits on substandard surfaces and pedestrian safety must be a priority.

**Recommendation:** Prioritise maintenance of regional roads and review unsafe speed limits. There needs to be transparency as to which level of government and the department responsible for the maintenance of our roads. I witness confusion frequently in my community as to who they think is responsible for our local roads.

There needs to be accountability when roads are not repaired in a timely matter, no more buck passing – it's not council's responsibility it's state government, not us it's....

Pedestrian safety must also be a priority. The section of highway where my daughter was killed did not have a safety barrier because when the highway was upgraded (before she was even born) NSW Roads said it wouldn't look aesthetic, even though the community called for a barrier.

It took the loss of my daughter for pedestrian safety to become a priority here, thankfully with the support of my local member Trish Doyle, we were successful in getting a barrier erected. I will say the price I paid was too high.

### **Coronial Recommendations and Accountability**

All too often coroners identify unsafe roads and unsafe behaviours of drivers behind the wheel and yet no changes are implemented.

**Recommendation:** Require government agencies to formally respond to coronial findings and conduct mandatory safety reviews.

If TfNSW and continual governments are serious about reducing the ever-growing road toll and reaching the goal of Towards Zero, it's time for the politicians and lawmakers to make the tough decisions. Take onboard the recommendations of numerous coronial inquests, be brave and implement actual changes that start working on reducing the number of fatalities on our roads.

It's an insult to those that have been impacted by road trauma and road crime when coronial recommendations in relation to road deaths go ignored but how quickly the government will act on other crimes.

When seatbelts and drink driving laws were introduced, they weren't popular and yet the laws were implemented and had a positive result in reducing road deaths. It's time to stop worrying

about the loud minority and act on behalf of the majority that want to see changes that will save lives.

### **Speed Limits and Political Will**

Speed limit reductions are avoided for political reasons, even when they could save lives.

**Recommendation:** Prioritise evidence-based speed management and fund campaigns explaining why safer speeds matter. Far too many lives are impacted by speed related crashes, it's not just those left with life altering injuries or killed as a result of excessive speed, it's the first responders (police, ambos, paramedics, fire and rescue, witnesses and the greater community) that also suffer lifelong trauma.

In the Blue Mountains where I live, there are daily stories of speeding drivers and in particular medium to large trucks speeding through the townships, tailgating and driving erratically causing panic, frustration and worst of all rage.

Point to point cameras, greater police presence and reducing the speed limit on unsafe roads will all help to reduce the number of crashes on our roads which in turn will see a reduction in the number of trauma cases, life altering injuries and those affected by lifelong trauma having witnessed the crash, stopped to render assistance or being a first responder. It will also help reduce the number of insurance and CTP claims and payouts that could potentially reduce insurance costs.

### **Drink Driving and Alcohol Interlocks**

Repeat drink drivers keep killing people. Courts treat interlocks as unfair to offenders rather than essential for safety.

**Recommendation:** Mandate alcohol interlocks for all mid to high-range drink driving offences with no exemptions. Interlocks are not unfair, they are a necessity for those that have previously been caught drink driving putting every other person on the roads or footpaths at risk. Is it not unfair for the innocent to think they are safe when, in fact there is someone on the road with no respect or care for the law and the safety of others.

A driver should nominate the car they are to use and if they have more than one vehicle an interlock must be installed in all vehicles they will drive. All too often we hear of a driver using a different car to the one installed with the interlock.

### **Drug Driving and Enforcement**

Drug-driving is a real risk in our area, given the Great Western Highway is the gateway to west of the Great Dividing Range and the large number of trucks on a deadline using this road daily, drug driving is of a great concern.

**Recommendation:** Fund more regional police enforcement and ensure strong, consistent penalties. There needs to be real consequences for those that flout the law when and choose to drive under the influence of drugs. As a society we need to stop accepting bad behaviour and choices and take a stand against drugs and the willingness to put innocent lives at risk of death or serious injury.

When a driver is convicted of driving under the influence of drugs, there should be mandatory incarceration and a non-optional drug rehabilitation program.

The person that mowed my daughter down was caught multiple times in a two-year period, driving whilst disqualified, under the influence of drugs, he was sentenced to nine months jail and assistance of drug rehabilitation which he refused. When he was released, he got straight back behind the wheel (still disqualified) and under the influence of drugs. This was how Mackenzie's life was stolen and the lives of so many of us destroyed.

Even the judge that sentenced him for murdering (yes, murdering) Mackenzie, expressed her doubts as to whether he will change his ways.

### **Learner Driver Education**

Learners often rely on family with bad habits. Logbooks are forged.

**Recommendation:** Make professional lessons mandatory and fund low-cost defensive driving courses in regional areas. Before a person begins driving, they along with their parents (person instructing them) should have to participate in an information session with first responders and victims and families of road crashes, to learn of the impact of bad, dangerous and even aggressive behaviours behind the wheel.

I say parents because I believe too many parents do not speak of the dangers of driving with their teenage drivers and they have become complacent about the risk factors. They also need to be reminded that quite often bad behaviours are taught, they don't just happen.

Accountability for forging Logbooks also needs to be addressed, anyone that forges Logbooks is sending the message it is okay to be dishonest and that individual doesn't need to abide with the law. This kind of behaviour sends the wrong message to the future driver and it needs to be stopped.

### **Sentencing Reform**

Sentences for fatal crashes are too lenient, not reflecting the loss of life.

**Recommendation:** Consider stronger sentencing outcomes, especially for aggravated factors like intoxication or repeat offending. Review outdated guidelines and remove inappropriate community orders.

Each case should be addressed on a stand-alone basis and not compared to a previous case or sentencing. When a life is taken because of a Road Crime a value needs to be placed on the life that has been stolen, not on the criminal and their rights. There needs to be a mandatory minimum sentence for the crime they have committed.

The person that ruined my life will be free in just over two years, how is that appropriate when he had been breaking the law for 17 years? He robbed Mackenzie of at least 65 years of her life, me of witnessing her achieve her goals and chasing her dreams and me walking her down the aisle and everything else she had to offer the world.

### **Community Attitudes and Public Education**

Current campaigns are too soft. People don't take road risks seriously.

**Recommendation:** Fund confronting, evidence-based campaigns showing the real cost of fatal crashes. Evidence has shown hard hitting truths help change peoples mindset, and this is a vital change that must be addressed. The message “DRIVING IS A PRIVILEGE – NOT A RIGHT” needs to be reinforced for all road users.

Regional communities deserve the same safety and investment as urban areas. These deaths are not inevitable—they are preventable.

I call on the NSW Parliament to take real action and act on key points that came from the Road Safety Forum they held in February 2024, to save lives and reduce trauma.

Thank you for considering my submission.