

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE UPON ROAD SAFETY

**INQUIRY INTO YOUNG DRIVER SAFETY AND
EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

At Sydney on Tuesday 19 February 2008

The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr G. Corrigan (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. R. L. Brown
The Hon. R. H. Colless
The Hon. I. W. West

Legislative Assembly

Mr D. R. Harris
Ms N. Hay
Dr A. D. McDonald
Mr G. Souris

RAYMOND FRANKLIN SOAMES JOB, Acting Director, New South Wales Centre for Road Safety, Level 7, 260 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Good morning, members and ladies and gentlemen. This is a public hearing of an inquiry into young driver safety education programs. I welcome representatives of the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], and Dr Soames Job, who is the Acting Director of the New South Wales Centre for Road Safety, and I thank them for appearing today to provide evidence on the Staysafe Committee's inquiry into young driver safety and education programs. Unless there are any objections, I propose that the RTA's submission be authorised for publication.

Dr JOB: That is fine.

CHAIR: There being no objection, it is so ordered. Do you have any further documentation you wish to table to form part of your evidence today?

Dr JOB: There are a few other papers which I thought may be useful to the Committee in terms of evidence for some of the empirical claims that we have been making in relation to education, the use of fear, and driver training.

Documents tabled.

CHAIR: I direct that those further materials be attached to the evidence of the witness and form part of the evidence of this inquiry. I am advised also that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and a copy of the Legislative Assembly's standing orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses. Is that correct?

Dr JOB: I am aware of them, yes.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege. You are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Dr JOB: Yes. I thought I would start with just a few comments and clarifications that may be useful in terms of a better understanding of the evidence that we are giving and the approach we take to it. First of all, I think that the area the Committee is reviewing is one of the areas of most interest to the public, but one of the ones where unfortunately we get the most zealotry and faith in what we have before us without evidence. So the approach that we take, as always, is one of an evidence base. We need to have good, clear objective evidence of the claims being made, and we base our policies on that kind of approach.

For further clarification we distinguish carefully between education and training. I know that that is not a distinction which is very typical, so I am sure that these things will be emerging in terms of people's comments on education. But what I mean by this distinction is that we take education to be in the broad sense classroom-type education, that is, education for drivers and road users about the principles, about the attitudes that they should adopt, and about the cautions that they should appreciate. Training, on the other hand, we take to be more about skill, that is, the skill of how to stop a car quickly, how to turn a car and handle a car, for which we would use the term "training" rather than the term "education".

Even within training, in terms of the research there are very important distinctions to be drawn. The research indicates that extensive on-road experience is of value to a learner driver. Research in particular coming from Scandinavia suggests that more on-road driver training is of value in reducing subsequent crash rates. On the other hand, the so-called defensive courses or the various skills-focused courses that, for example, teach people how to stop very quickly, how to swerve to avoid crashes, et cetera, do not produce road safety benefits. The evidence, I think, very strongly indicates that, at best, they will do no harm; at worst, they will often actually increase the crash rate of the people who participate in those courses.

One of the submissions we have made today is a paper summarising that evidence to show what I have just claimed. I think it is very important to appreciate that that is the case because I have no doubt we will receive submissions suggesting that that is the kind of direction we need to take. Other than that, I just say that the Roads and Traffic Authority is excited to see this inquiry. I think it is an excellent area for us to be examining. We have many programs in the area. I think it is sometimes surprising to people how much we actually do in terms of young drivers, attitudes and education, et cetera.

CHAIR: I will just clarify one thing, if I may. We had you down as acting director. Are you now the director?

Dr JOB: I am the acting director. I am still acting. That is not all finalised.

CHAIR: We have all read your submission and I thank you for making it. Dr McDonald has indicated he has a question he would like to lead with.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: On page 16 of your submission you note that, despite relatively low figures for the overall road toll, there was an unexpected 30 per cent increase in fatalities for P1 drivers in 2006. You talk about evidence base. Is that a statistically significant increase?

Dr JOB: We have not actually done a statistical test on that. I would expect it is. Thirty per cent is quite a significant increase—

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Well, you cannot actually say that if you have not done the statistics.

Dr JOB: No, we have not.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Do you have any explanations for this increase?

Dr JOB: I do not, in terms of why it would have increased from 2005 to 2006. Road safety is very much a multi-headed monster. You have to keep cutting the heads off it. It keeps growing more and more and more and more, and every one you do not cut off is going to grow. I think it is inevitable that various aspects, at different times, would increase on us. We do not know why it increased. What we do know is that we have managed to turn it around to around a 35 per cent decrease from 2006 to 2007. I think that that could be attributed to a number of changes we have made which were announced very early in 2007. However, given that we did them all at once, we could not be certain which ones of them have produced which components of that 35 per cent reduction.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Which changes were they?

Dr JOB: I could list them for you. The changes we made were a peer passenger restriction for P1 drivers under the age of 25 so they could carry only one peer-age driver between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.; immediate licence suspension—let me correct that, not immediate, but licence suspension of at least three months for any P1 driver or rider who commits any speeding offence; mandatory clear display of L and P plates on the exterior of the vehicles; creation of a new offence which banned all mobile phone use, including hands-free for learner, P1 drivers and riders; an increase in the mandatory period of supervised driving for learner's from 50 to 120 hours, including at least 20 hours of night-time driving; an increase in the minimum tenure for the period of learner driver's licence under 25 years from six months to 12 months; and the validity of the learner's licence was extended from three years to five years.

The latter does not look like a road safety initiative, but it actually is because the research suggested that a number of people find their learner's licence is running out and they have not done enough to be ready for their P1 test, but they rush in and do it in order to not have to get another learner's licence. So we just gave them more time to avoid them feeling pressured to do the test.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Dr Job, are you suggesting that those changes are the ones that resulted in the statistical change?

Dr JOB: No, I was giving Dr McDonald a more extensive answer. What I am suggesting is that I do not know why from 2005 to 2006 we saw an increase. What I am suggesting is that those changes announced very early in 2007 contributed to the reduction from 2006 to 2007.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Are there any statistics on compliance, now that the year has gone by, on those individual items?

Dr JOB: No. I do not have those. The police would have those.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: It would be pretty vital information.

Dr JOB: Well, in some ways I suggest not in that even if we found we charged 30,000 people with violating these things out of hundreds of thousands of drivers, if the rest did not, we would still see benefits. Of course, if none violated, we would see more benefits. There is a sense in which you are right, Mr Souris, but there is a sense in which we should not withdraw from good public policy because some people do not obey it.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I was not suggesting withdrawing from it.

Dr JOB: Okay.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: What do you think probably will be the period of time that you will need to have under your belt, so to speak, whereby you will get some statistics on whether these measures have actually resulted in a decrease? In other words, say in 12 months time, would you be better placed to say how valid those initiatives were?

Dr JOB: Yes. I think in 12 months time we will be better placed. Given the rates of severe crash involvements, I think we would then have sufficient statistics to identify whether or not there is a significant decrease and whether or not that has been maintained.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Given that, are you expecting that the data that you will be given by the Police Service, which collects data on compliance records against those particular measures, that is, carrying of extra passengers and the external P-plate, will be delivered to you in a fashion to enable you to separate those four or five issues, or, if you do not expect it, would you be in a position to ask for it so that in 12 months time, say, we could perhaps have a look to see which of those initiatives, if any, was more influential than any others?

Dr JOB: I would have a different approach. For me to analyse the value of these initiatives, I would not primarily focus on the data for police regarding infringements. I would primarily focus on the data regarding severe crashes, and in particular fatal crash involvements. Overall, those data say that from 2006-07 we have seen a 35 per cent reduction in the fatal crash involvements of P1 drivers.

The reason I am focusing on P1 drivers is that most of those initiatives impact P1 drivers, so I think that is the legitimate group to focus on as an evaluation. What I would suggest further is that it would then take us several years of data, because we would be cutting it up into smaller and smaller pieces, to answer further the kind of question you are looking to answer. The way I would suggest we would do that is that we would need to look at the type of crash involvement and the changes in it. Again, I would still go to that rather than the infringements.

The reason I would focus on it rather than infringements is as follows. First of all, we do not know what the previous rate was because these laws did not exist, so we do not have a before-to-after comparison for the infringed behaviour. That makes it very difficult to address that issue by other infringement data. We do have before-to-after data for all the detail of the crashes.

For example, if we found that we had fewer passenger-involved deaths from P1 drivers between 11.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m. but not through the rest of the day, that would suggest that it is that particular factor of the new laws that is giving us most of the benefit. If, on the other hand, we find that the biggest change is fewer crashes in general, that may suggest that the more severe consequence

of speeding is giving us the biggest benefit. So I would attempt, with several years of data, to analyse severe crashes in that way, to tease out which of these is giving us the benefits.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I am not arguing with you; you are right. However, it is unfortunate that we have to measure deaths to try to find out whether we are getting anywhere. I know you are a scientist and a statistician, so you probably do not like talking about anecdotal evidence. But do you feel as though those initiatives have worked in some part?

Dr JOB: Yes, I do. I feel that for a couple of reasons. First of all, I said at the time—and I believe it is true—that you often get the benefits of a program starting long before it has formally gone through Parliament and started. The biggest announcement to the public is often when you say, "We are going to do this." We announced that very early in 2007. A lot of people I spoke to said within a week, "So those laws are in now?" The consequence of that is that you often get the benefits from the time of the announcement, rather than from the time you actually start the law.

I think we got some of the benefits then, and some of them probably accrued when we introduced the laws. When we introduced them, we did an education campaign, and we wrote to every current driver affected. If you were currently on your P1, or your L-plates, et cetera, you received a letter signed by me together with a brochure and the details of it. My daughter, who is with us today on work experience, was one of those people. She received many comments from her colleagues, saying, "Damn. I wanted to get through faster." There were all kinds of negatives, as well as the positives for road safety. There certainly was a considerable awareness from it, so I think you could expect it to accrue benefit.

In terms of which ones I would speculate, let me go slowly. Changing from 50 to 120 hours would not yet be giving us those benefits, because those people will not yet be through the system. We may see benefits for that accruing into the future. I do not believe they would have been having impact in 2006 versus 2007. I think the three that have done good for us and are primary here are that, first of all, we know that driver distraction is a significant contributor to crashes. Second, we know that distraction produces more effect for less practised skills. If you have done that skill many, many times, you can kind of keep doing it a fair bit with a distraction. If you have not, like a learner or a P1 driver, you are more likely to be distracted by using a mobile phone. I think there is good logic for that.

We also know that young drivers are very distracted and often egged on to more risky behaviour by having many peers with them. So I think the peer passenger restriction at night is a good one. I know that some people will argue that we have put a limit on the designated driver in terms of avoiding drink-driving, because from the 11.00 p.m. until 5.00 a.m. you could not go out and have a designated driver and carry your mates home if you were in this age group and a P1 driver. I believe that that is not a problem. The reason I believe that is not a problem is that the evidence seems to indicate that a sober young driver with four drunk mates in the car is going to drive as though he is drunk. That is because the mates are revving him up, pushing him along, and distracting him, et cetera. All of us who have seen that happen can probably appreciate it is going to have that kind of impact. So I think that the curfew is giving us a benefit.

If I had to speculate, in the absence of data, the largest benefit would be coming from the more severe approach to speeding by young drivers. We know that speeding is involved in around 40 per cent of fatal crashes in New South Wales; that is the official figure. I personally believe that is an underestimate, because many speeding crashes will not appear to be speeding when you go out and have a look afterwards. We also know that if you can remove speeding with, for example, intelligent speed adaptations and various other programs that have been tested, you seem to remove more than 40 per cent of the crashes. That says to me that more than 40 per cent had speed in them. So I think it is at least 40 per cent of our fatal crashes.

We also know that the involvement of speed in fatal crashes is higher for young drivers than older drivers, so it is even higher than those percentages overall. Anything we do that says, "Whoa, I am going to lose my licence. If I don't speed, I won't lose my licence"—less speeding is really going to give us significant benefits against the single largest behavioural contributor to fatal crashes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Do you think the display of the P-plates is part of that equation?

Dr JOB: I think the display of the P-plates does not, without anything else, do much. But it contributes to the enforcement of all the others. If the police have a view that they can effectively enforce this, if the public have a view that the police can effectively enforce it, rather than having the P-plates kind of half hidden but a little bit on the parcel rack at the back but you cannot quite see it but think "I think I might get away with it", then you may have a feeling you do not need to worry about the passenger restriction, that you do not have to be concerned with these other things because you are not going to be detected as a P1 driver. I think it is part of the whole package, but I could not single it out and suggest that by itself it is doing something, because it is only contributing to the enforcement of the others.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Going further with the 120 hours of training, you were saying that they acquire the skills they need during those 120 hours. If the 120 hours is supervised driving, and the supervisor does not actively give that learner driver training in the skills he might need to avoid a crash, or to get out of a skid, how will the simple number of hours improve his skills?

Dr JOB: The most obvious answer to your question is: To a certain extent, it will not. Having said that, however, let me go back to some principles. First of all, the key behavioural problems contributing to serious crashes are not skills problems; they are motivation problems. I would not focus on skill as the primary driver of the benefit here.

Let me go a step further with some research to support that. Let me state the obvious. Our biggest behavioural contributors to fatal crashes are speeding, at 40 per cent, drink-driving, in the low 20s, and fatigue driving, at 15 to 18 per cent or so. Between those three you have the majority of fatal crashes. They are not skills problems. No-one can pass a test who does not have the skill required to drive at any speed under 60 kilometres per hour in a 60 kilometres per hour zone. Driving at 70 in a 60 kilometres per hour zone is not a skill problem; it is a motivation problem.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Can I interrupt you there. There are plenty of instances of children driving on country roads, and in particular, if it is raining and the roads are wet and greasy. In those conditions 60 kilometres an hour is way too fast, and it will create an accident unless they have the skills to handle those conditions.

Dr JOB: I do agree with you. The point I am making is that in terms of gaining a benefit for road safety, we need to gain the benefit where we will get the biggest bang for our buck. We need to spend the public's money and set our public policy in a manner that maximises the benefit we are going to get. Given we know that motivation is a larger contributor to serious crashes than skill, spending our resources on motivation makes sense. That is not to say you can drive with no skill. What it is to say is that once you get past a certain basic level of skill, adding a lot more skill is actually dangerous in a way.

Let me outline what the research suggests. First of all, the research suggests that those high-skill types of training courses generally increase subsequent crash rates. That is the absolute evidence. I think it is interesting to speculate why. I do not have definitive evidence to prove that this is the cause in each case. But what we do know is that the more skill you give someone, the more confident they become of their driving. I do not believe it is actually the case that the skill is irrelevant. If you could magically train the skill without increasing the confidence, without increasing the optimism bias, I think you would get—

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Is that not the motivation component you talk about, though? I am convinced that the two need to be done in tandem, that you cannot have one without the other.

Dr JOB: I am convinced that it would take brain surgery to achieve that.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: They do it in the aircraft industry. That is how they train airline pilots and so on.

Dr JOB: They do, because airline pilots are then regulated extremely. There is no benefit to speeding as an airline pilot; you will get into trouble.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Even a light aircraft pilot, with a private pilot's licence, has to do skills training before they can be passed.

Dr JOB: That is right. I think part of the problem is that people perceive that to already be inherently dangerous. So you do not need to convince them in terms of motivation. They can see if they crash they are likely to die. They can see it is an inherently dangerous activity. Most of us, I think, regardless of our flowery words to the opposite, do not actually believe that driving is a really inherently dangerous activity.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Maybe that is the message we need to get across to the younger generation. If you have two cars travelling at 100 kilometres an hour going in opposite directions half a metre apart, it is inherently dangerous, surely?

Dr JOB: I totally agree with you. I do believe there is a value in attempting to get that message across. I think it would take considerable elegance and care to achieve it. The reason I believe that is most of us do not actually assess our personal risk from data. We assess it from personal experience. Personal experience on the road is that you drive very regularly and you sit as a passenger all your life as a child without being killed. That personal experience is thousands and thousands of hours that say, "Tell me anything you like. My experience is that it is not dangerous. If you do convince me that it is inherently dangerous, that tells me one of two things: Either your data are false because my experience says you are wrong or your data are true and I am really special, I am really invulnerable, I am really superior. You are right, this is dangerous stuff, yet I have managed to do it so successfully without killing myself. I must be a magnificently good driver." In fact, if you do surveys of New South Wales drivers, only 2.1 per cent of the population believe they are worse than average drivers. Most of us believe we are better than average drivers. That is what experience does to us.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: There is a considerable amount of concern particularly with disadvantaged groups, low-income earners, indigenous groups and so on that they do not have the resources to do the 120 hours. Are you aware of that as an issue within the community? How can we get around that?

Dr JOB: Certainly I am aware of that as an issue in the community. When we introduced this we did so with considerable community consultation. That was one of the factors we had to consider. We weighed up that difficulty against the deaths and serious injuries being occasioned by young drivers and the belief that the research suggests that this would give us benefits. We came down on the side that those benefits outweighed the social difficulties that would occur. We are attempting to do more to help people through this process. We have a program—I believe it runs in Lismore—to help indigenous people get their licence. We are considering that program further. We run what are called parent workshops where we give parents a workshop in how to conduct the process and how to train their children to become better drivers. That is to encourage people to do it themselves, which is obviously much less expensive. It also comes back to one of your early issues, that is, to address the concern that if you are just sitting there and not getting any guidance, the supervisor is not doing much good. So we are trying to train the supervisor so that they do more good.

To round that out, to complete that, the other reason we believe the 120 hours with the supervisor will help is that it just imbues in-principle safe practice. Even without very direct control—do A instead of B—if you sit doing 120 hours of driving instead of 50 hours at the speed limit, you ingrain the habit of driving at the speed limit. You will get a benefit just from that.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Have you had any reports of logbooks being falsified in order to make the 120 hours? If so, what checks or measures have you put in place to make sure that does not happen?

Dr JOB: I do not know of any since we introduced the 120 hours because many people still going through started their L before the 120 hours applied to them. So there are still people going through who will sit for their solo drivers licence P1 having had 50-plus. What we do know, however,

is that your concern is founded in that even prior to introducing the 120 hours we did have instances of people falsifying logbooks for the 50 hours. However, we also know that while those things did occur sometimes, and we were able to identify them, it was rare. In fact, the majority of people turning up did considerably more than 50 hours. So once they started the process and looked through the logbook they said, "Okay, you should now have that skill, you should now have that skill", and people ended up doing more. As I recall, the average, when we surveyed it, was around 59 hours rather than just the required 50. To me that says, in general, while there will always be people who flout laws and regulations and falsify things, the community seems to have a fairly positive approach to the logbook in particular. I think the logbook is also helping not simply because you have to write down your hours and add them up to some number over 50 but because the logbook sets out the skills we believe someone should have at each stage. So that even if you do not do the workshop as a supervising driver—and I have done this with my teenage son—you get a logbook that sets out once they have done that, can they now do this skill, can they now do this? Are you prepared to tick a box stating that they can do this and this? Now you can move on to this. So it forces you to consider what that learner can and cannot do and analyse each skill that you may not otherwise have thought to analyse. I think that is the reason people are actually doing more hours. They say, "You may have 50 hours but I am not convinced you can do that one. I want to do more."

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: That is not helping the people falsifying along the logbook.

Dr JOB: No, it is not.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: They will just tick the boxes.

Dr JOB: We are trying to introduce more detail into the logbook to address that—more detail in terms of the kilometre reading on the car, which we know can be checked against registration records and so on. So it is much harder to falsify the logbook if you had to go back and get all the data to look sensible against your vehicle. So there are more things we can do. I do not think we can guarantee that even with all of that we can avoid anyone who really wants to put a lot of effort in not doing the full 120 hours. I believe overall we will get a considerable benefit from it because most people will do it.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Dr Job, in light of your comments about motivational issues being so vital in regard to speed, drinking, fatigue and the like, I was interested in comments in your submission at pages 20 to 24 about the curriculum-based driver education materials that are being or have been developed in schools and TAFE, such as the work that is being done by Youthsafe. I would like your comments as to what you think about those programs, where they are at and evaluations and—although I do not have anything against Youthsafe—why Youthsafe has been chosen and not others?

Dr JOB: These programs are a valuable adjunct to education. They are an exciting set of programs. It is part of the core curriculum for every school in New South Wales from kindergarten right through to year 10 until recently and with a very recently introduced program right through to year 12. So that road safety is part of the curriculum for every school in every year, starting from how to cross a road through to attitudes to driving, drink-driving and so on. New South Wales is one of the few jurisdictions where we have that compulsory component of the curriculum right through school. We have done that by virtue of it being part of the PDHPE program up to year 10 and we have just recently introduced a program that looks at road safety for years 11 and 12. It is part of the English syllabus because English is the only compulsory subject for years 11 and 12. I think they are very nice programs in that what they do is allow consideration of road safety, yet within an appropriate base of knowledge for the curriculum in which it sits. For example, the program we are introducing which is part of the English curriculum looks at some of our mass media messages on road safety and considers them in terms of how the road safety message is being put across from the point of view of communication in English. So you are getting partly some skills in English, partly some awareness and knowledge in road safety. I think it is a nice way to get it into what is admittedly a very packed curriculum with a lot of people wanting something in it.

In terms of is it doing good and evaluation, in principle what we know is that the attitudes and motivations, as you identified, Mr West, are critical here. That is what we are trying to address. In terms of the real bottom line here, can we prove that these programs are changing the rate of crashes

for young people once they go out and start driving and can we prove they are making improvements to how younger children cross the road? In terms of the latter there is a lot of research to suggest that this kind of educational program does improve the way children cross the road. In terms of the former it is pretty much impossible to give you an evaluation because to do that evaluation of a change to a course which existed for, say, five years and impacted children between years 7 and 10, we would have to wait until those people reached 20, that is seven or eight years later, and hope that in that intervening seven or eight years nothing else has changed for us to give you an evaluation. That is not going to happen in the real world. I do not think we can give you an evaluation. So I cannot provide you with any evidence that will show that each of these programs affect people and how they drive when they are in their 20s. We just hope that with some sound logic these attitudinal changes will create value.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Why was Youthsafe chosen as the main community organisation to receive Roads and Traffic Authority funding for young driver education?

Dr JOB: Youthsafe were chosen because they have a sound, long-term record of existence and because they could give us reliable uniform outcomes. They could give us a consistency of approach. Many of the other options we have do not give us as much consistency. For example, we have programs that are different from council to council. Those ones cannot be evaluated as soundly. We cannot maintain a consistency of quality in those, whereas a centralised process offered by Youthsafe means that what is being put out around the State is the same. It has the same quality and can be known to have the same quality by virtue of the central process.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Would it be unfair of me to say it is being put out because it is consistent as opposed to its value in terms of addressing those motivational issues of speed, fatigue and drink-driving?

Dr JOB: I think you are pulling me up. Perhaps I did not give you a full answer. Many organisations could potentially give us materials and an approach that would address those issues, Youthsafe being one of them. What singled Youthsafe out was that potential for consistent quality, not just quality in one location with it being watered down and changed in 10 other locations. So the consistency is what singled them out. There would have been a number of organisations who could have given us various features we would want. Youthsafe were able to give us many of them rather than some of them. That is not to say that Youthsafe is the only one we fund. We fund a number of organisations who help with this work, starting with the Early Childhood Development Centre at Macquarie University. That is where we start our educational programs right from the very beginning. So there are a number of organisations who are contributing to this through the process. Youthsafe is the one that is our biggest external contributor in terms of the specific youth age group.

CHAIR: Following on from Mr West's questions, many organisations are doing good work and we have written to local councils, Rotary and so on to make submissions to this inquiry. A lot of those good works are localised and doing great stuff. How can the Roads and Traffic Authority take advantage of all these wonderful programs going on around New South Wales?

Dr JOB: I would suggest two things. First of all, as you identify, we do support them and I believe that to maximise our benefit we need to do a few things. We need to ensure that our choices, as far as possible, are based on evidence for whether or not the program is delivering the benefits it is claiming it can deliver. I think as we fund things we need to be demanding that we get evaluations and data from them, if we can, and we consider our future funding in terms of those evaluations.

I believe that there are core principles we can identify for education that we should apply. You will probably notice that while we have various programs we do not fund lots of programs to go into schools and teach children. I think there is a sound principle behind that. As you can see, we do have a very extensive program of road safety sitting as part of the curriculum in schools. That means that that quality material and training to teachers, available to every school, is of a standard quality and we can maintain that consistency across the state. So we know that the programs and materials are the same in Broken Hill as they are in Marrickville and that is important. It also means that we have the best principles, in terms of delivery of education, being delivered by the teachers who know the learning level and the understanding of their students. Not by strangers who come in very well meaning but not necessarily understanding what it is that a Year 9 student can comprehend, how

quickly to talk to them and what terms to use. It is a very important principle for education that the education is done by the expert educators who understand the children. I think our choice, in terms of funding of various other external activities, is we do not tend to fund a volume of work going into the schools but we fund the schools to do it. I think that is an important principle that we need to stick with.

Are the evaluations, the principles, addressing a relevant problem? Are they addressing appropriate attitudes? Are the materials being given appropriate to addressing those attitudes? For example, two of the papers we have given you in evidence today refer to the use of graphic fear in terms of changing people's behaviour. They outline the research to suggest that while the graphic fear message looks really compelling to us it actually does not work so well, partly because it comes back to people's defensive optimism. If you show people graphic horror of what has happened to other people, and it has not happened to them, the psychological internal response tends to be, "That won't happen to me. It has not happened to me yet. It is happening to other people. That proves I am superior. That proves I am a better driver. That proves I am better at it. I am invincible." That is the problem with those kinds of fear approaches. There is actually very good research on that which indicates two odd things. First of all, if you ask people when you show them, "Which of these will work best?" people will say, "Heck, the high fear one. That will work best." If you then look at their behaviour you find the low fear one actually changed more behaviour. So people's subjective impression of what works is actually opposite to what actually changes their behaviour. So we need to be careful of that.

CHAIR: I do not think we would have any smokers if some of the ads worked. You would not have seen Blacktown City Council's submission yet, because it has not been received into evidence, but I would appreciate at some stage a Roads and Traffic Authority response to some of the issues raised in that submission. Blacktown City Council will be here at 2 p.m. They have made some, for want of a better word, controversial comments on crash assessment data in relation to what they call condition response and road design. They argue that speed and the other factors are significant but they also contend that condition response and road design are issues that should be considered when analysing crash data. I know you cannot comment on that now, but I would appreciate it if the Roads and Traffic Authority could have a good look at the comments when the Blacktown City Council's submission is made.

Dr JOB: We would be pleased to take that on notice and get back to you with comment.

CHAIR: About two or three years ago when Minister Scully was conducting workshops—at that time it was being considered whether we would go from 50 hours to 90 hours, not to 120 hours—he met with local school captains. I was with him at southwest Sydney and it proved to me that we all operate from our own values and our middle-class, in my case, attitudes. Every high school captain bar one, which I will talk about, was in favour of going to 90 hours as it would be better for their driving. But one school captain said, "Well, I do not know how I am even going to do 50 hours because I live with dad, he has not got a car, and my mum lives elsewhere." She was living in the Ambervale Department of Housing estate. She had no idea how she was ever going to get 50 hours up, let alone 90 hours. Fortunately for her some of the other captains took her on board and took her for driving lessons. The issues that have been raised about rural and regional areas apply not necessarily just there, but to Blacktown and a lot of the low-income sectors where it is difficult to get 120 hours.

Dr JOB: Yes, I agree. I think it is an issue for us. As I said, in one way we have weighed up there the social costs against the human trauma and human costs of the crashes.

CHAIR: Another example, I met with the New South Wales Youth Advisory Council late last year and the chairperson was doing his 50 hours but he was paying for every hour as a driving lesson. He had no one to take him for driving lessons. He was a wonderful young man and all the part-time work he was doing was going towards driving lessons. I do not know how he could possibly do 120 hours. I have a further question in relation to a submission made the City of Sydney Council and I would be interested in your response to this. The City of Sydney Council indicated that the Driving Instructors Act 1992 prohibits anyone other than a licensed driving instructor from providing instruction for higher reward. This prevents employees of organisations from volunteering to supervise learner drivers on the basis that they are being paid by their employer, even though the learner driver does not pay directly. Should this be remedied?

Dr JOB: I am not a lawyer. Could I take that on notice? I would be happy to get back to you. I will get some formal advice on that regulation.

The Hon. IAN WEST: You mentioned earlier about the innovative indigenous Torres Strait Islander licence issues. Can I incorporate that into the question about disadvantage and the issue of remoteness? Would you comment on what is happening in that area?

Dr JOB: I would be happy to add that as another issue on notice.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: My question before related to the testing of data and responding to it. The data appears to be on how many fatal crashes etcetera we have. When the Government or the Roads and Traffic Authority rolls out an advertising program or a schools program if I read it right—the issue of talking to school captains, as the Chairman mentioned, is the sort of thing I am hinting at—do you have non-fatal methods of testing the efficacy of some of those programs? In other words, do you conduct, for want of a better word, peer group reviews or talk to school children or community groups about how they see the impact of the initiatives? For example, it would be very interesting to know what sort of motivational reaction young male testosterone drivers have had to the pinkie ad?

You talk about educating kids from Years 7 and 8 trying to develop some sort of a moral framework, to go along with all the other moral frameworks they are given at school, in relation to the danger of driving and the fact that it is not just something you do, everybody does it and only a few people get killed. My question is, does the Roads and Traffic Authority conduct what I would call market research to test some of these issues—and I am not being a smart Alec here—or do you just simply wait for the data to come in to try and see whether it has been effective? Unfortunately the data is dead bodies!

Dr JOB: We certainly do exactly what you are suggesting. Let me flesh that out. In terms of our behavioural programs, we do exactly what you are suggesting. In terms of some of our road safety engineering type programs we base that more, in every sense of the word, on rigid research as to what happens when a vehicle hits a wire-rope barrier versus a concrete barrier etcetera.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I was referring to the motivational aspects?

Dr JOB: With those ones it is that kind of research. For the motivational type ones, the behaviour change type ones, we absolutely do that kind of development. Perhaps if I use pinkie—the one you chose as an example. We started with a concept that came to us from market research from an advertising company. We do development of the precise concept, talking to various groups of the target audience we want to reach. We develop it to a storyboard level. We say, "We are going to show this and this with these words". We show that to people and get their responses to it. We make subtle changes because they say, "I like that word. That word really means this me, not this." We then go to peer groups. In the case of pinkie, as I recall, we had peer groups who looked at pinkie and gave us feedback, we made fine changes to it in Sydney and I think in two country centres including Wagga, and after all of that research it went out. All of that begins with research going backwards based on the crashes. We say the crashes indicate young drivers, speeding etcetera and this is what we want to get to. So we need to target a group that looks like 20 to 30 year olds, 17 to 30 year olds or whatever our target is.

We start there and go through all of that behavioural research program and when we put the program out we keep researching it. We do what is called in market research "tracking". We track each week what people believe. We survey a couple of hundred people to find out who now believe this. We find, for example, 60 per cent of the audience have now seen this. Let me cite you just a little bit of the evidence of the tracking on pinkie. The evidence essentially said that the majority of young males—that is our key target audience—said three things: they had seen it; the take home message for over 70 per cent was this is about speeding, so they got the plain message; and the majority said—and it is pretty hard to get a majority to say this—it actually is an ad that makes me think about my own driving and it is an ad that makes me consider talking to my peers about their driving. The tracking there very nicely supported exactly the kind of commentary coming back from the community we would have expected if we had a success on our hands and I think we did have a success on our hands.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Leading on from what Mr Brown has been talking about and what you said at the beginning, when new restrictions or rules are put into place there is a high level of public awareness. As you said, when the announcement was made people immediately thought the new rules had come into play. Usually what we see after that is a plateau effect, where after time the initial message fades into the background and people return to normality, if you know what I mean?

Dr JOB: Yes.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: What steps are being put in place to ensure that all new drivers are totally aware of the restrictions and rules in place? I know it is in the rulebook and they are supposed to read it, but I come from an education background so I know how much people actually read that sort of documentation. Is there any other advertising or project involved where young drivers are taken through those rules in detail so it is locked into their mind right from the beginning?

Dr JOB: I also come from an education background so I appreciate your point. You can only go so far and I think we, as a public enterprise, are obliged to have that information available and promote it. The way we promote is not that it just exists as literature, it is also spelt out in the handbook as you say. Much of it is spelt out in the handbook and the logbook you have to fill out, in terms of what you need to know. In addition, that will now become part of the knowledge test for the licensing process. These are now legitimate components that should be tested in various ways. So we have all of that. What we tend to do at this point, as you say, is be concerned with the possibility that people will say it is not knew anymore and it fades away. Certainly there are many instances in road safety where you run that risk and you have to watch it, track it and come back and address it again. I recall very clearly when I just started in road safety I was pushing very hard that we introduce—in fact to the Staysafe Committee—that we introduce random breath testing, which the Staysafe Committee did introduce and for which we should all be very grateful.

There was a very strong view around that the effect of RBT would last about six months. I was of the view that we could get it to last. I believe we did not get it to last by just leaving it sit; we got it to last by saying, okay, we need to keep tracking this, the rates going up or down, people's attitudes are changing this way, we need a new advertising campaign. So, for example, about a year after we introduced RBT there was a very strong view in our surveys of drivers that they could avoid RBT by using back streets. So, we introduced a back-street program. We took it out of the buses and said, "Every highway patrol vehicle is now potentially an RBT. You can just pop the boot of the car with an RBT sign in it and you can get out and do RBT on the back streets." We fixed the back street perception. That is what you have to do; you have to keep watching it. We do not right now have a program that says our next ad program on this or our next letter out to learner drivers is going to be this, but we will be watching the way it changes—if it changes, if it stays the same—then we will be looking for what attitudes are producing that and then specifically addressing those as we go, based on the research.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: How would you measure the impact of mass media campaigns in relation to effectiveness compared to local on-the-ground education programs?

Dr JOB: We can certainly measure the former; how we compare it with the latter is difficult. We can measure the former in the ways I have outlined in terms of tracking it: what does the community say, does the community see a message from it, is it the message that we want them to see, do they perceive this is an attitude relevant to them, are they changing their behaviour in response to it. For example, I should have added this in answer to the earlier question, not only do we track those attitudes, every year we do speed surveys at various set locations. In every speed zone we survey speeds in New South Wales. What we found last year was, for the first time in a few years, they actually dropped. So, the average speed has dropped a few kilometres, which is a very significant drop in terms of reducing the road toll. Even a drop of 1 per cent in mean travel speed will give you a drop of several per cent in fatalities. So, those small drops are very important.

We also track the behaviours. For example, we might track what is the catch rate at RBT if we focus on drink driving; to what extent is drink-driving contributing to serious crashes; what are people's attitudes to drink driving now, if it has changed; is it because they believe they will not get caught; is it because they believe a judge will let them off. We find out what those are and see what

we can do about them. That is how we will approach this one: we will be tracking and watching and if we are perceiving things that are changing that we do not like, we will be attempting to address those specific things rather than the whole thing without knowing where the problem might lay.

Those things give us an evaluation of ads because often an ad targets a very specific behaviour as well. So then tracking the crash rate for that particular behavioural involvement tells you more about what your ad is doing. In terms of education, because a long-term education program has to have long-term effects, it is much harder to evaluate; but if you are talking about a local education program, we do very localised media as well as statewide campaigns. So, every time we do an enhanced enforcement program with the police, which we do in collaboration where they might be targeting drink-driving in Wyong or speeding in Orange or whatever it is, we go out with mass media. We promote it to the local media via the council or promotion through regional offices and we actually pay for the media addressing that issue. So, we can actually get those two to go together.

If it is very local you often do not have enough data to say, "I can evaluate that," but when they have been large scale we do have enough data. For example, when we first introduced Westsafe, which was a western Sydney local regional program, we got a dramatic reduction in serious crashes when we introduced enhanced enforcement and education combined. When we introduced it in the RTA's western region of New South Wales, which basically goes from about Lithgow to Broken Hill, we nearly halved the road toll in that region for the year with that program. Having said that, what I cannot definitively tell you is the extent to which that was contributed to by the enhanced enforcement and the police alone versus the education alone because we know that they actually synergise. You get more benefit out of combining them than out of each alone. So we always deliberately combine them. So I can only tell you the result of the combination.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Why was 120 hours chosen from 50 hours?

Dr JOB: It was chosen based on research from Scandinavia to suggest that a number of the behaviours of young drivers changed at around that number of hours and their research, which suggests that 120 hours was reducing the immediate subsequent crash rate of learners when they became solo drivers. To give you an example, one of the behaviours that changes gradually without a supervisor deliberately noting it is where people look. When people start driving they look way too close to the front of the car and into the most visually changing environment, which is the road close to the car because it appears to be moving past you faster. As you get more and more experienced your eyes gradually lift up and up closer to the horizon and you are scanning the environment at greater distance. It is those kinds of behaviours that take quite a few hours to change. I believe that you could actually change them more quickly with more awareness by the supervisor saying, "No, hang on, look where your eyes are; there's no use looking down there. You've got to look up higher." You probably could get it to go faster, but their research said that 120 hours is where those things are changing to give you that outcome.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You were very critical of the efficacy of defensive driving courses. I put to you that drivers who enter defensive driving courses are already a high-risk group because they are the ones who perceive that they will need this skill. Has anybody done a study on a random subset of those P1 drivers who choose to do the courses?

Dr JOB: Dr McDonald, it is nice to be talking to a researcher. I agree with your concern; it is, of course, the case that if you just get volunteers, those volunteers may be unusual people to begin with. I can only cite you a couple of examples. First of all, some studies have done it by looking at pre to post rather than just assuming they are all the same when they start. You are still actually getting an increase in the people who do the defensive driving courses. Quite a few years ago I did what I believe is the first randomly assigned case study—an actual evaluation of this—and I did it in the most extreme group. It was actually motorcycle riders because there was a view that motorcycle riders would benefit far more from a skill course than would drivers because there was so much skill required. It was actually quite a while ago.

To give you an idea of how long ago, Australia Post came to me because they had so many telegram delivery riders who had serious crashes. There was a course that it wanted to evaluate. We assigned half of each of the areas to do the course and half not to do the course. What we found was the half that did the course had a slight increase in their crash rate; the half that did not just went

through at the same rate. There are also studies from the United States of America where they have deliberately put the whole course into counties of a State and compared the crash rates of the students who went through those skills who received the course with those who did not. Perhaps the classic is called the DeKalb County study from the United States of America. It showed not just a failure of benefit but actually an increased crash rate from the course.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I want to ask some questions about drug testing, but before I do that can I just return you to the world of anecdotes and unscientific reason. Just on the media questions asked a moment ago, can you give us some kind of feedback on how the advertisement featuring the little finger is going? My personal view is that it is an awful ad and I think it creates a bad behaviour, or worse behaviour, in the so-called target group—but I might be wrong; I might be wrong unscientifically.

Dr JOB: I can. We are always in these choices faced with weighing up the benefit we might receive from road safety versus other concerns people might have inherently with the behaviour and its suggestions. What I have been pleased to see in the commentary from a number of people is that people do not see it as being very explicitly about an anatomical feature so much as a general notion that "you're a bit of a Wally". I think that signal kind of takes on the notion that you are a bit of Wally and I like that as a broader approach.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: When somebody who is not a good driver, not a good person, but in all those ways receives that signal, what kind of reaction do you reckon you are going to get on the road?

Dr JOB: I do not know the answer to that question specifically but I do know that all of our research says that is a winner. It says it in terms of the research we did before we put it out, which is the reason we put the ad out; it says so in terms of our tracking of the ad that says that people are more concerned with their speeding behaviour or more concerned to address the speeding behaviour of their peers, especially amongst young males—that is a very strong outcome; it says so in terms of the reduction in the road toll, which we achieved last year, which included a reduction in speeding; and it says so in terms of our objective data that shows that mean speeds have gone down. So, at every level—attitudes, direct measure of the behaviour, outcome in terms of serious crashes—I believe we have a winner.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Well, the science defeats my one anecdotal experience. I was in the traffic when one of those cars that are obvious when a person sitting very low and back, listening to those throbbing sounds, got the signal and I tell you what, there was smoke from that person's vehicle when the lights changed green. Anyway, we will leave that. I want to ask about roadside drug testing, which I do not believe has been mentioned in this session so far yet I am sure is a big area of improvement. I know that VicRoads has claimed a level of success in its program, which has gone longer than ours; ours seems to be only in its infancy and I think we have only two units in New South Wales, is that right?

Dr JOB: For all of 2007 where I could give you some data on how it is going, we had one unit. Two more units have just been bought, so the police now have three units. For the one unit we had last year, we did quite a few thousand tests, which were targeted essentially in two ways. They were targeted at heavy vehicle drivers because we know that from many people in the industry who will tell you about it, there is considerable drug use in the industry. I can tell you from my point of view one of the things that convinced me to do it was that I had someone from the heavy vehicle industry come to see me and say—I was stunned—"Look, I have a number of friends who drive on cocaine and you really need to leave them alone because they're very good at it. They just lick their little finger and stick it in their pocketful of cocaine and rub it around their mouth and it's just the right dose to keep them going. So you need to leave it alone." Now to me that was a great argument for introducing drug testing.

So we have targeted heavy vehicles by setting up at heavy vehicle checking stations and we have targeted very specifically, by virtue of time and location, light vehicle drivers who tend to be party rave goers and clubbers at night—so Friday and Saturday nights targeting areas where you are likely to be leaving those kinds of locations. In both of those we have a quite significant positive rate.

I think the average is that it is around 1 in 40, 1 in 45, drivers across the spectrum of all of our testing is turning up positive for one of our three drugs, that is, marijuana, ecstasy and speed.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: None of those are the truck driver ones?

Dr JOB: Yes, they are.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Speed.

Dr JOB: Surprisingly, truck drivers use speed to keep themselves going. Then, surprisingly to us as well, though not surprising if you listen to the industry, we also get a number of truck drivers positive to cannabis because they then use cannabis to calm down to sleep because they have too much speed in them. So, it is actually an upper, then a downer, an upper and then a downer as a method of driving. This is not ubiquitous to the industry, but for a significant number of drivers, that is the manner. So we do get cannabis as well in the truck drivers.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: You will recall from the previous Parliament to which you gave some evidence, as did trucking companies, the two biggest companies in the trucking industry subsequently have introduced their own drug testing. I think it is still only random drug testing but, nonetheless, it is a good step in that direction. Having said that, I still want to go back to the average member of the public driving their car. Are we going to really expand this program? Are we going to see more units? What is so special about the unit that makes it a special unit as opposed to every highway patrol being a drug-testing unit? It is where I would like to see us go, if possible.

Dr JOB: I think in an ideal world, with a very simple, incredibly stable test that works in any environment, I would agree with you. The concerns with it are that it is not so easy to use. You need a little bit of precise training and you need a very clean environment in which you are not going to get problems with your testing. For example, you need to hold it at precisely the right angle to get the test to work properly; otherwise you risk false positives. That is the reason for the specialist buses. The buses also have sufficient facilities that you can work in them for hours and hours. What we found with the heavy vehicle industry is, as with all forms of enforcement in the heavy vehicle industry, the radio network means that people know once you set up. It is not a bus you can move every 10 minutes and there is not a new location every five kilometres down the road where you can conveniently set up.

So, you need somewhere where the police can be there for quite a few hours. When you set up, if someone pulls up down the road they will still have to deliver it eventually. So, when you set up you might set up deliberately for quite a few hours, so they have a problem. They cannot just sit there and say they will wait for half an hour and they will be gone and then they can drive on. If you do that for half an hour, everyone can just wait for half an hour and be okay. So, in order to get an effective catch you need something where there is sufficient facility for people to operate it continuously for hours and hours.

Let me give you one lovely anecdote. Sometimes I like anecdotes too, Mr Souris. I believe it was on the Hume Highway we set up the drug testing at the heavy vehicle checking station, and lots of heavy vehicles piled up waiting on the other side, fearful of going through. We then got a bomb scare called in. We had to close down and search for a bomb. As soon as we closed down, they all went past. That says to me there is a lot of pressure on the industry.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Dr Job, I was interested in the distinctions between the motivational issues and environmental issues—those motivational issues of drink and speed and fatigue and the like that you physically impose upon yourself and those issues you talked about earlier where you have the monkey-like imitation of somebody who drives drunk when they are sober because their four mates are drunk. In the evaluation and teaching programs that are being developed, is there a distinction between the two and is their training in terms of the maturity, the emotional development, the frontal lobe development of the driver, and those environmental issues impacting on that maturity issue, as opposed to the motivational issues? Are they being looked at in any way?

Dr JOB: Could I take that on notice? I could not give you letter and verse of every bit of the curriculum for all six years of high school to be able to outline to you in year 7 we do this and in year

9 we do this. I am happy to take it on notice and get back to you with the detail. What we always hope for—for example, in the course we are introducing into English, some of the ads that will be analysed for content are drink-driving ads and a skilled teacher would bring out exactly the kind of thing you are talking about. It would be a lovely thing for them to bring out as part of the message and part of the concern that comes from the ads and from the discussion of the messaging from an English point of view.

CHAIR: Thank you for coming this morning. We have a series of questions we will give you on notice. Some of them you have already answered and for the others you will have to read the evidence put to us by other people. We would appreciate it if you would take those questions on notice that the secretariat will provide to you tomorrow after the hearings have finished. We would appreciate some response to those questions.

Dr JOB: I would be happy to do that, and thank you for your time. We have here a box of materials that are used in the schools, brochures, and the materials we give to the schools to use in the schools, DVDs and teaching aids, et cetera. So if we could submit those into evidence so you get understanding of the extent of the materials available to the schools for these educational programs.

CHAIR: Thank you. We will accept that into evidence.

(The witness withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

ROBERT WILLIAM RANDALL, Director, Curriculum, Department of Education and Training, 3A Smalls Road Ryde, and

ALLAN GRAHAM BOOTH, Manager, Road Safety Education Program, Department of Education and Training, 3A Smalls Road, Ryde, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: The Committee has received your submission. Unless there are any objections, it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication.

Mr RANDALL: That is all right.

CHAIR: Do you have any further documentation you wish to table to form part of your evidence today?

Mr RANDALL: Not at this stage, no.

CHAIR: I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and also a copy of the Legislative Assembly's standing orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses, is that correct?

Mr RANDALL: Yes.

CHAIR: I draw to your attention the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr RANDALL: Yes. I am just going to highlight some of the points that we have submitted, but I think that would be useful. Firstly, stating the obvious, the Department of Education and Training's brief, K to 12, covers a great range of students' learning, from literacy and numeracy through to creative arts. It also includes, within the personal development, health and physical education curriculum area, a focus on road safety education. It is clear, and Dr Job spoke previously about this, that schools are a very powerful and key environment in which we can develop in young people safe attitudes about a whole range of behaviours, and one of them clearly is road safety. We work in partnership with the Roads and Traffic Authority as the lead agency for road safety in New South Wales. Our role is to deliver education programs based upon the expert advice within our context but also from the RTA. There are some key ways and some key opportunities for us to pick up road safety education and some key ways for us to support them. We have talked about the curriculum K to 10, and that is mandatory. All children attending schools in K to 6 and then 7 to 10 will study personal development, health and physical education. Included in that are some significant road safety issues, which Dr Job talked about, from crossing the street safely all the way through to getting into driver education in years 7 to 10.

The opportunity we have got with teachers working with these young people is that they know these young people and they are able to deal with these messages in a way that is relevant and deal with the immediacy of those things with young people in schools. When it comes to years 11 and 12 the department also has a course called Crossroads, which is a personal development and health course for stage six students. It is mandatory that students do the course and it provides an opportunity for them to pick up on further driver education. That will depend a little on the local interests and needs. We draw a distinction—you will hear it in my language—between driver training and driver education. Our brief and our commitment certainly is to focus on attitude-based driver education programs, with a key role of helping young people assess their attitude and behaviour and engage in those things so that when they become drivers they have developed some of those basic attitudes.

Behind-the-wheel driver training programs that focus on vehicle handling skills are certainly not mandated in schools. They are not a requirement, although some of our schools do offer them. I understand that four—it is a small number—offer that as part of years 11 and 12 programs. We may want to expand on this point in a moment and it is building on what Dr Job talked about, but as part of

the 7 to 10 PDHPE program—where we are getting into driver education matters that are beyond broader road safety issues—we are focusing on issues such as responsible driver and passenger behaviour, factors influencing road use behaviour, major causal factors in road- and traffic-related injuries, the consequences of unsafe road use, and skills and attitudes that support safe road behaviour.

I think Dr Job tabled a range of documents, and it is worth reinforcing from our point of view that we have had a key partnership with the RTA in developing a number of those resources for use in our schools. We might want to talk about this a bit more. It is an opportunity. There was a lot of discussion previously about evidence. What we have done to develop these resources is trial them with teachers in schools and get that feedback from the experts there to make sure that they are as well developed as possible for use in our schools. I think that covers some of the key points in our submission. That may provide a basis for some questions or further discussion.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: This is an excellent curriculum and I am very impressed. However, as we all know, certain high-risk groups are overrepresented in morbidity, and one group is well known to the school community as they often exhibit other high-risk behaviours. What specifics has the DET used to target this high-risk group?

Mr RANDALL: We may want to talk clearly about the specifics of the high-risk group.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Young males with learning difficulties are at the most risk.

Mr RANDALL: I will make some general comments and Allan may want to add some specifics. I will start with a point about the opportunities we have to target them. We would be targeting those young males in behavioural and attitudinal programs. In terms of broader behaviour, schools will have behaviour programs and engagement programs to engage them. We are focusing on driver safety here but those will also apply in other ways. So across our schools there will be a whole range of those, where we are focusing through gender programs and through behaviour programs and others on dealing with some of the underlying attitudes and behaviours that are there. I am not aware—I am happy to take the question on notice—of specific driver programs targeted at that group. Again, the premise we have is to provide the more general education programs, and I can think of numerous examples of those. But I am not aware, in the way that you phrased the question, of targeted driver education behaviour. Our belief would be that is a particular example of a more general thing and, as I said, that is focusing on programs for boys—boys education, engaging them and the sort of risk-taking behaviours that they exhibit. There are clearly those in schools. Driver education may become a context, but I could not list them at this point.

Mr BOOTH: I guess within the PDHPE syllabus gender comes up as an issue. The work we do in our program is mainly supporting teachers in terms of teaching that syllabus. We have tried to highlight, and we obviously show, the statistics to make it quite clear that there is a difference there and encourage schools to take up programs that analyse those questions around: Why are boys more at risk, what are the sorts of contributors to those behaviours, and what strategies can we use to try to address those behaviours? That is across the broad health area, not just in road safety education. But certainly in the training we provide to teachers we highlight that so they can look at their local circumstances and try to pick up those issues.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: One issue for me is whether there is real coordination between the Department of Education and Training, the RTA, New South Wales police, the Department of Health—and perhaps there are some that I have missed. Mr Randall mentioned the RTA several times in his opening remarks. Do I take it that you are working hand in glove? What about the other agencies? Is it really a coordinated effort?

Mr RANDALL: The short answer is yes. I am a member—I am trying to remember the acronym—of an RTA committee that looks at a whole range of issues. It is quite a large table in terms of the number of government and non-government agencies that provide input into a broader road safety campaign. We, the Education department, work in the way that I have described: closely with the RTA and with the other government sectors. I am here today talking about the Department of Education and Training, but the Catholic education system and the independent schools are part of that discussion as well. So the answer is yes. There are numbers of ways we can do that. The RTA is

currently undergoing some organisational change and it has the New South Wales Centre for Road Safety Education—I think that is its title.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Is that the lead organisation that other agencies are part of?

Mr RANDALL: Yes.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Do you see curriculum development as a subset of being involved in that main agency?

Mr RANDALL: I will differentiate in terms of curriculum for a moment. The curriculum in our schools is established in syllabuses, which are developed by the Board of Studies—a separate statutory authority. So the requirements of teaching—the specifics about teaching—road safety for driver education in the way that I have outlined are given to us in the syllabuses. So when the Board of Studies develops those syllabuses—and they have been revised in the last three or four years—they will undertake consultation with all the education groups and others, and the RTA will have been involved in that. So there is a quite specific requirement in that syllabus about road safety education. That is where we are saying, "Here is what we want children to learn." Then when we develop materials that teachers can choose to use to help them teach, to enrich the lessons and the like, that is where the department has a key role to play and that is where the partnership with the RTA and other agencies comes to the fore. So the resources that Dr Job talked about—examples of teaching materials and ideas; he talked about the stage six English one—have been developed to help teachers teach what is required of them in the syllabuses.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I do not know whether I am using the correct word, but does your department adjust its approach almost on a half-year by half-year basis depending on the current emphasis, for example, from the RTA if it is targeting a particular area in order to re-emphasise its work?

Mr RANDALL: The requirement in the syllabus to teach is an enduring requirement. The board revises syllabuses and evaluates them probably on a cycle of about five or six years. But, as Allan outlined, a good method of teaching is to engage young people in current issues. We want young people to understand—let us take one that I mentioned earlier—major causal factors in road- and traffic-related injuries. We are requiring young people to learn about that in years 7, 8, 9 and 10, but the examples you use and the materials you use to engage in that need to be current or contemporary. They are the sorts of things that can change.

Just a consideration of a local issue: if I was teaching in a particular part of the State I may well use some recent discussion in the newspaper to stimulate that, or I might use some statistics that one of the government agencies has published or that the Roads and Traffic Authority has made available to do it so that we make sure it is as relevant to the young people as possible. It is better. I can give examples of working with our own children about it. My children go to a school in Sydney, so what is immediately relevant to them will be some of the Sydney things, whereas if I was teaching in Broken Hill, I would probably want to use some local data and some of the local situations to do that. That material can change on a regular basis.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Gentlemen, I have a question regarding road safety education and driver education and where the two overlap. When really does driver education start? Does it start with road safety education? In Sydney at Alexandria I have a unit that is opposite the pushbike training course on Mitchell Road. What is the link between that sort of very early training that children get in road safety? How do they progress from there into driver education in later years?

Mr RANDALL: One way we could probably answer that is to undertake to give you a continuum. We could take out the syllabuses I have talked about and just map out for you what we are requiring children to learn from kindergarten all the way through. I draw the distinction probably a bit more dramatically, and I am overdrawing it a little bit. Bicycle safety and even just walking to school and crossing roads are things on which we are going to focus in the primary years of schooling. When we start in the secondary areas, in years 7 to 10 and in personal development, health and physical education [PDHPE] and also in 11 and 12, there is a move to driver education and there is that change.

My answer is that driver education is a subset, if you like, of road safety, but we have started it earlier on.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: So on the pushbike training courses that you have around the city children actually learn the basic road rules at that stage, and that must be a good precursor into their driver education.

Mr RANDALL: I was looking at that because I do not know the specifics of that. But they would have the opportunities to learn that earlier on, so they are going to learn some of the basic road rules when they are looking to cross as a pedestrian, some understanding of that. In terms of bicycle education, yes, that will follow through.

Mr BOOTH: I guess our focus in primary school is more about passenger behaviour and pedestrian behaviour. The cycle education tends to focus on a couple of key messages around wearing helmets and around preferring not to ride on the road. We get that information based on what the Roads and Traffic Authority recommends around cycling, so we do not do a lot. We do not really encourage the road rules as being a key element of the syllabus, but certainly the Community and Road Education Scheme [CARES] Program, which is run by the NSW Police, has schools going there on excursions. They pick up some of those. A number of schools pick up those sorts of issues with the little cycle tracks.

I guess as we move through it is not that we deal with issues as a driver until around about the years 7 and 8 when we look at them as pre-drivers or potential drivers and start thinking about some of the issues. Then in 9 and 10 we look specifically at issues such as drivers and passengers, and attitudinal aspects of that.

Mr RANDALL: As I said, we could, if you wanted to, provide that documentation. We could give you a number of documents, but if we do that, that would give you a clear sense of what we are expecting in schools and the foundation that Dr Job talked about.

Mr BOOTH: We have key messages. The key messages in primary school tend to be around individual behaviour and then we move up more toward the driver behaviour and within that context as they get older.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Is there any chance of educating the parents through the kids on how to behave around schools and not to be parking four-wheel-drives?

Mr BOOTH: Interestingly enough, that is one of our great challenges. Within our program we do certainly support schools in parent education, and certainly use some of the resources that the Roads and Traffic Authority provides with which schools can run parent meetings and get support, with varying levels of success. But we certainly support parent messages throughout schools, and although it would be nice to change them, I do not think there are too many schools where that is not an issue, unfortunately.

CHAIR: I wish to ask a question that follows up something that Dr Job raised. Your submission states that the department does not endorse programs delivered by outside providers, such as Rotary, the NRMA and the Fire Brigades, because the department claims that these programs vary greatly in quality and cost and because the decision to access external programs is made by individual school communities. Does the use of external providers reflect in any way on the availability or adequacy of curriculum-based courses referred to earlier in your submission?

Mr RANDALL: I think the key point is the differentiation between driver education and driver training. I am just trying to find a reference in the submission. Let me back up also: one of the things that the department does more generally now in road safety is that there is a whole range of external providers who want to, if you like, get into our schools to offer programs. To the extent that we look at and provide feedback on those, it is general advice to the principals about relevance to the curriculum and what we want them to teach children and the like. Part of the response there is a general position but I think, as I recall the submission, in there was a reference to some of the providers of driver training. I am just trying to see where you were quoting from.

CHAIR: I do not have the page number but it is on the second-last page. Basically, you have covered the inquiry.

Mr RANDALL: It is driver training versus driver education. We draw that distinction between what we are looking to provide in schools about driver education and driver training is a beyond-school program.

CHAIR: Just getting back to some nuts and bolts stuff, how many hours, including in personal development, health and physical education, of road safety education are taught at various stages in the education program?

Mr RANDALL: There are 300 hours of 7 to 10 for personal development, health and physical education within which driver education is taught. Allan is probably doing the sums in his head now to answer that more specifically, but I will preface it by saying that what we would also argue is that it is not a matter of all of a sudden saying, "Now today is driver education." There is some key knowledge there. Driver education is set in a larger context of risk, safety and a whole bunch of others. So, in answering that question, it depends on if it was counting up to learn about this, this, and this, representing the sort of things I have listed. You would get one answer, but part of our answer is that the reason we do it as part of personal development, health and physical education is that it is in a larger context. There will be many times when the teacher is saying, "Remember last week we talked about roads issues. Now we are talking about these." But the same things about assessing risks and taking care of yourself are there.

Mr BOOTH: It is very difficult to actually put a sum time on it because each school develops their program around the needs of their students. It will often be done within a context so it might be around a whole context of safe celebrating, which picks up a range of our lesson on health issues. Driving and travelling to and from are just part of that. To put an actual hour on it is very difficult. In terms of specific content of the syllabus, there are specific issues that schools need to pick up in their program.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Just leading on from that, when was the last review of the effectiveness of road safety programs done? How was that evaluation undertaken?

Mr RANDALL: Dr Job talked about the issue of evaluation programs, so I am not going to repeat some of that, but I agree with what he has done. I want to answer the question by referring to the syllabus in terms of the evaluation of the syllabuses, and then I am also going to talk about some work we are doing in relation to Crossroads now. The Board of Studies in terms of regularly looking at what is in the syllabus and getting the balance right about the content and all those others—my recollection is that the 7 to 10 personal development, health and physical education syllabus was probably developed three or four years ago now, and that is subject to consultation and everything like that. We are getting into that feedback and, I guess, qualitative evaluation—feedback from teachers and community members about the relevance and importance of those things.

At that time some of you may have observed that when there is syllabus change going on, there is a lot of community discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of things, and that is a good, robust discussion. So the personal development, health and physical education syllabus is three or four years old and the board as a statutory authority continues to look at that, taking account of current issues. The department has the course that I referred to earlier on in terms of Crossroads which is for mainly year 11. It is a year 11 and 12 course, but in practice it is largely done in year 11. Within that, schools have an opportunity to pick up more driver education.

We are currently doing a review of that and that will include feedback from teachers and others in schools about the up-to-date and contemporary nature of it. That would give us an opportunity to do that. In terms of that evaluation, there are two key vehicles for us in delivering driver education. It is largely qualitative because the cause-effect issue is quite a distinct one. To be able to say that this leads directly to this is a very challenging exercise and you have to actually set it up, noting the discussion earlier on about scientific methods. It is certainly not a thing you can do readily.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The reason I ask—and this is only asking for an opinion; you do not have to give one—is that I want to know, if part of the driver education program leads into driver training, would students have to demonstrate competency at the school level in the road safety program to be allowed to then move into driver training? At the moment it is something that they engage with or do not engage with. As Dr McDonald said, that 10 per cent of students whom we know are hard to engage are not becoming involved. If there is a requirement for them to reach a level of competency before they can actually go into their driver training processes, do you think that would better link the curriculum with driving skills down the track?

Mr RANDALL: Competence in knowledge, skill and attitude—we would want to just maybe talk about those for a moment, if we are going to pursue this. It does seem to me that there is a threshold for driver training—and that is the test to be able to get one's L-plates. Noticing my own two daughters studying for it recently, I can say that it did engage them. There are a number of ways, even as I saw the behaviour, of engaging them in that preparation for it. In terms of your question, I guess I want to say, "Haven't we already got that? What would be different?"

If we are trying to strengthen something about a threshold, maybe it is at that point because that is the point at which they are engaging with the driver training as opposed to something back a few years ago. That is the point at which we want to be assured—and that is why it is there, I assume—that they have some knowledge, skill and understanding that gives them the grounding in order to move to the next stage which you have described as driver training.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Did I hear you say that there had been a review, or there had not been a review?

Mr RANDALL: I said there had been a revision of the years 7 to 10 syllabus three or four years ago by the Board of Studies, and we are reviewing the Crossroads course. We are currently doing that. I would just draw that distinction. The Board of Studies sets the syllabuses but the Crossroads course is one that the department has developed for use in the schools. I draw that distinction there. We are reviewing that at the moment. Through our processes we will come out with a revision of that. I will be interested to see, in terms of feedback we get, to what extent the presence and the focus around road safety will be there. It will be interesting to see that almost geographically, from which parts of the State, and there is the point that Dr McDonald made, even with particular student groups in mind. Some of that is coming in. I do not have that in a complete form yet.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I ask because a lot of people in the community are saying that schools should play a greater role in the education process.

Mr RANDALL: Yes.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As they do: They push everything onto schools.

Mr RANDALL: They do.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Schools are the answer, the panacea to all problems! That is why I asked the question. You answered very well by saying that the test is actually part of that process rather than something that may have to happen in schools.

Mr RANDALL: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I would like to go back to something that Dr McDonald raised with his first question. That was a question about whether programs are delivered generically right across the board. Your answer was yes because they are part of a syllabus. Therefore the same problems occur in uptake of information or attitude development among the group or class of students who are what one might call difficult students, for want of a better word. When Dr Job was giving his talk he bemoaned the fact that of course you cannot test against a group in year 7 and then wait another 10 years to find out how many of them are still alive. It is too difficult. We are talking about young lives, not just about whether someone attains educational standard and social standards to carry on throughout their lives.

I guarantee you, anecdotally, as George likes to say, that I could find out in probably 10 minutes from a class of students who are the potential temporary Australians in there. First of all I would tell the girls to go outside and I would not worry about them. I might make a few mistakes there but it would be a case of, "Out of the room, young ladies." I would probably ask the young boys this question, "What's your favourite car?" Probably at year 7 they would all say something possibly like a GT-HO or one of the racing Falcons. If you ask the same question when they get to year 10 or year 11, they would be a bit more specific.

I would postulate that the kids who are difficult to teach in terms of getting them to adjust their attitudes towards a whole range of things—social attitudes, attitudes towards women, alcohol, and anger management—are exactly the same kids who are going to grow into the problem tranche when they get behind the wheel of a car. Bearing in mind that the only reason for doing road safety education and driver education in schools is to try to save lives, would it be worthwhile trying to make the program more specific? I know that no-one likes the idea of profiling, and you say some kids are going to do this and some kids are going to do that, but that is a fact of life. For example, could you perhaps try to get the kids who you thought might be difficult to educate and bring in other types of influences? Perhaps for a 10-year old who has his mind set on drag racing with his mates as soon as he turns 16, you could bring in the gentleman in blue sitting behind you. Can the program be made more specific?

Mr BOOTH: My answer to Dr McDonald was one to clarify the particular groups. I think there is a range of groups. If I could build upon yours and talk about a range of groups, yours was a more general group than Dr McDonald's. Part of my answer was that I have no question in my mind that schools work with those groups of students in terms of values, attitudes, and the like. What I did say was that I am not sure, and I could not list specific road safety ones. The question behind that is to say: Is it just road safety education? As you said, you might postulate that there is a range of other issues.

There is no question in my mind about schools working with those groups, whether it is on gender issues or a whole range of other issues, and dealing with what I said earlier were the underlying ones. The question of bringing in a program specifically about road safety education is an open question; I cannot say aye or nay to it. From our point of view, our focus on driver education, put in the larger context I have talked about, and then with behaviour and other programs that schools bring to bear, focusing on those groups of students to say we can attend to their needs and issues. We need to be careful here about over-generalisation. I have a young boy; I am trying to think about how he will grow up. However, I repeat what I said earlier: I do not believe we have any that are specifically in the context of road safety or driver education.

Mr BOOTH: I think the notion of everyone doing the same stuff is not quite correct, in that the syllabus is a framework that schools use. What is designed for students out at Bourke will look very different from what is designed for students in south-western Sydney. Teachers know their students and know the people they are working with, and they frame their programs around that. We certainly would strongly encourage, in the training we provide, to look at things differently.

Certainly when we travel around the State, when we first released shifting gears, which is the stage 10 resource, we found lots of very strong ideas because the syllabus was also fairly new. What was being done in Bourke did look very different because it was tailored very much to the needs of the students there. I think built into that there is that opportunity.

That very difficult end of the scale is obviously fairly difficult to deal with. It depends where they sit in the school and how they are organised in the school. Certainly the age skills we have as part of the juvenile justice system would do it very differently when they pick up PDHDE; they would have a slightly different approach from what would happen in a school in northern Sydney.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: In English they are now looking at driver safety education. In other subjects, such as mathematics and science, they calculate the philosophy of cars and that sort of thing. How much of that is already being done?

Mr RANDALL: The English syllabus set by the Board of Studies requires things. What we have developed, in conjunction with what the RTA has developed, is a resource for use. I need to

draw the distinction there. If you asked your son or daughter whether they did road safety in English, it is not a requirement. But it is a great medium and an opportunity, as I said earlier. That flows on to my other question.

The syllabus requirements will not require certain things to be done but, in the way that Allan described, I am quite confident you would find examples where people are saying—with some of the students you described, some of the good teaching would be for a group of boys who want to do vehicles. A whole bunch of education flows from that, in terms of maths, science and so on. They will be the sorts of programs that are working really well with those kids because it is immediate, relevant and engaging. I am quite sure it happens. It is that variation that I spoke about. It is the statewide syllabus, but there is a lot of variation in how it is taught, because that is good teaching.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Is the RTA "L" test supported in the schools? Is it available at any school library? For example, many students do not have access to computers in order to study for it.

Mr RANDALL: I cannot say. I could check that from the cataloguing. But certainly in terms of the department's roll-out and increased use of computers available in schools, that would be an interesting check for us: are schools going to the RTA website to do it? We could probably find an answer to that. I would bet that a lot of students who do not have access to a computer out of school would be using a school one to do it.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You do not teach it?

Mr BOOTH: It is picked up to a certain degree in road rules. We do not specifically teach them in terms of an "L" test, but certainly the general sense around road rules would be picked up in year 10. In some schools it is a little more detailed.

CHAIR: We have two questions on notice for you. If you could reply to them, we would appreciate it. Thank you for your submission and for your attendance today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

DAVID JOHN EVANS, Commander Traffic Operations Group, New South Wales Police, Level 1/130 George Street, Parramatta, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: Thank you for appearing today to provide evidence on the Staysafe Committee's inquiry into young driver safety and education programs. The Committee has received your submission, and unless there are any objections it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication. Do you have any objections?

Mr EVANS: No.

CHAIR: There being no objections, it is so ordered. Do you have further documentation you wish to table to form part of your evidence here today?

Mr EVANS: No.

CHAIR: I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and also a copy of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses. Is that correct?

Mr EVANS: That is correct.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr EVANS: No.

CHAIR: The Committee has received two submissions, one from the Minister for Police and the other from the Traffic Coordinator of the Southwest Metropolitan Region. The Minister's submission describes the Police Force involvement in education programs and traffic enforcement, and the regional submission describes the operation of the driver education awareness program. What is the nature of your coordination arrangement with the Department of Education and Training in relation to the delivery of road safety awareness programs to primary school children, is this a component of the education department's PDHDE, and does the content of your part of the program have any input from the RTA?

Mr EVANS: The only formal program that New South Wales Police delivers to primary school children is the CARES Program. This is a joint initiative of the New South Wales Police Force, the RTA and local government which was first commenced in 1990. The program is a combination of classroom lecture and practical activities which provides students with a greater degree of road safety knowledge and an opportunity to develop their practical skills in a safe and friendly environment.

There are no particular coordination arrangements with Department of Education and Training beyond scheduling attendance of schoolchildren to the various CARES facilities. Ad hoc activities may take place at the local level, but they are not known to this branch.

CHAIR: We heard in relation to drug testing that there are currently three units in New South Wales. Is there a plan to roll them out further throughout the State?

Mr EVANS: Yes, there are three drug buses at present within the New South Wales Police Force. I believe it is the commander's view that two of the buses should be placed at various locations throughout the whole of the State and that access from all the police regions should be readily given to those buses to be shared amongst the regions. However, up until the time that the two extra buses came online, the original bus had an operational calendar drawn up whereby it worked at least two weeks out of every month in the country parts of New South Wales and the other two weeks it was spread through various locations, which have been identified by intelligence in the metropolitan areas.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Visible policing, as you know, is the greatest road safety measure one can take. Can you provide information about the level of resources committed to highways and police operations targeting traffic enforcement?

Mr EVANS: There are in excess of 1,000 highway patrol officers distributed throughout the State. At key times we run statewide operations. We run two large-scale drink-drive operations. One leads us into the Christmas-New Year period, which is Drink-Drive 2, and Drink-Drive 1 will be running within the next fortnight, which runs into the Easter period.

The highway patrol police within New South Wales are LAC-based at this point in time, and their rostering and deployment is done by the local area commands and it is predicated on intelligence, so that if all goes according to plan the police should be at the times and locations which intelligence has indicated are a problem. Having said that, all uniformed police at some stage or another are encouraged, and indeed tasked by the local area commands, to perform varying types of high-visibility policing activities. It may very well be random breath testing, which they can carry out without highway patrol assistance, or it may very well be that they will be utilised at a speed reduction location whereby they will assist highway patrol with regard to stopping offenders and issuing traffic infringement notices.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: How do you respond to some of the submissions about a perceived lack of presence and enforcement of traffic rules on New South Wales roads?

Mr EVANS: I can only respond that we do the best with what we have got. Unfortunately we cannot be everywhere all the time. But certainly the use of intelligence allows us to target our finite resources to the areas of most concern.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: New South Wales Police claims that there is now a greater cooperation between government agencies to develop a more comprehensive database on road safety information. One of the previous witnesses, Dr Soames Job from the RTA, mentioned that there were certain data sets that they did not have. Do you have comprehensive statistics on traffic offences and negligent driving not involving crashes and fatalities by driver licence categories such as P1 and P2?

Mr EVANS: New South Wales Police has extensive data holdings relating to road trauma and traffic law enforcement, which provide a wide range of useful data to assist with the identification of problems or trends in the guide to the tasking of police resources. Current systems do not, however, allow us to directly link licence categories with offences. Given the obvious value of accurate statistical data, we are continuing our efforts to obtain other data sources and to improve our ability to interrogate it. So much so that we have a submission presently before the State Debt Recovery Office which will allow us, the New South Wales Police Force, to directly input into their electronically stored traffic infringement notices which may with the right massaging answer the question raised in regards to negligent driving for P1 and P2 drivers. The development of that program is obviously some way off.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: The fact is that a P1 or P2 licence has an effect on the offences, does it not? In other words, am I right in saying if a P1 or P2 driver is involved, the level of the offence or demerits that are given may vary?

Mr EVANS: That is correct. The information that we have on our traffic infringement notices, particularly where demerit points or loss of licence may occur, is shared direct with the Roads and Traffic Authority from the State Debt Recovery Office and obviously they take the action that is required in regards to demerit points or licence cancellation or suspension.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Other than the State Debt Recovery Office, are you aware of any other agencies that keep information about road traffic infringements? If so, is this data shared with you, for example? Do you get back data from the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Mr EVANS: We do get back data from the Roads and Traffic Authority. I do not think there is another organisation that would have that type of information available on traffic infringement notices because obviously there are issues regarding confidentiality. Being that the New South Wales Police Force issues the most infringement notices in New South Wales, other than the local councils

which are mainly restricted to parking type offences, I cannot think of any other organisations that would have the data that we do.

CHAIR: I would like to ask a question that may be a little bit off the beaten track. It has been proven that some of the offences of younger drivers are speed and alcohol related. Do you think the Alcohol Linking Program has been effective?

Mr EVANS: I think it has but I am mindful of the questions that you put to the two witnesses beforehand. I think getting the message through to every individual takes different strokes for different folks, if I might be able to coin a colloquialism. That linking program obviously is effective with the people who can grasp that type of program and absorb what it certainly puts forward in regards to its principles. Others it has less effect on. Unfortunately, I am mindful of the question that the doctor raised before that, indeed, you do need different types of modification strategies and intervention strategies for different people.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: How do you reckon the safety zones around schools are going?

Mr EVANS: I think that the initiatives in regards to safety zones around schools are effective. We certainly put a lot of our resourcing into policing that type of activity, as do local councils. It is unfortunate, however, when you realise that a large majority of particularly the parking infringements that occur around schools are committed by parents who seem oblivious to the fact that what they are doing does place their own children and other children's lives at risk, unfortunately. I know of a number of schools where newsletters go home to try to highlight the problem with parents and carers or people who pick the kids up or drop them off. But, again, sometimes the message gets through and sometimes it does not. I think certainly the steps that are being taken in regards to highlighting school zones, such as flashing lights, greater publication of the times that the zones are in operation, are all certainly adding strength to the program because it takes away that component where we stop drivers who say, "I just did not realise." It is very difficult to drive through a big set of flashing orange lights and not know where you are and the speed limits.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Does the Police Force have an involvement as to the priority of where the next set of flashing lights is to be installed?

Mr EVANS: Certainly at a number of levels within the organisation, both with Chief Superintendent Hartley and Dr Soames Job, there is discussion in regards to where there may be a critical location that has sprung up for whatever reason and a set of lights needs to go in. In general, that level of rollout is done at a lower level in both organisations and involves heavily the community in regards to where the lights should go or not go. Yes, we are involved in consultation, but at times it is ad hoc and it varies through both organisations as well as the local council.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Do the Police say to the Roads and Traffic Authority, "We are always sending valuable resources to this particular school on this particular highway. Could you please install lights because although it is good revenue raising we are not solving the problem."

Mr EVANS: Yes, we do that at times, Mr Souris. Unfortunately, though, even once the lights go in the incidence of speeding still continue—obviously not at the same level but there are incidents of it. So because warning lights go in do not mean the police will not have to go back to those types of locations. We all know that our road safety program is predicated on saving lives and not revenue-raising.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Inspector, you mentioned the Community and Road Education Scheme [CARES] program. How many CARES facilities are there in the State?

Mr EVANS: You have got me stumped on that one. I know that there is a large-scale one in Wollongong. There is also a large-scale one at Mount Ku-ring-gai and there is one in the Blacktown area.

CHAIR: Would you like to take that on notice?

Mr EVANS: I will take that on notice and certainly come back with the information.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The CARES program is principally a road safety awareness type program that includes activities such as bicycle training. Would you say they get training in road rules and road safety at that early age?

Mr EVANS: They do. I had carriage of the CARES facility down at Illawarra whilst I was stationed down there. It is quite invigorating to see how the kids come in and their perception of road safety when they come through the gate and after they have been with the program, the lecturers and the physical handlers and they get to practice the theoretical skills that they have learned on the road environment. Some of them you can see the actual click and it falls into place.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Are you talking about an understanding of stop signs, how traffic light works and that sort of thing?

Mr EVANS: Yes. It was interesting, I had occasion to run a drug enforcement operation in the Wollongong area some years ago now. I stopped a car for going through a red light. A child was in the back securely fastened with a seat belt and all the rest of it. The little girl piped up and said, "I remember you. You are the policeman at the CARES program. I told my dad not to go through the red light." Consequently, I did not have a plea of not guilty for that and I did not have to go to court.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: What sort of relationship is there between what kids learn through CARES and as they get older? Are you aware of whether that sort of education continues?

Mr EVANS: I am aware of the programs that the Roads and Traffic Authority runs within the schools. The CARES program is a great initiation into the road environment. Obviously being children, it makes it difficult to control what the driver in a motor vehicle does when they are passengers. Certainly they are in control of their own destiny when they are on the road environment either as pedestrians or riding bicycles, that type of thing. So it is good to get that grounding. As they go through, I think that the other programs that are delivered by the Roads and Traffic Authority certainly link in. Again, it is a matter of as they develop and their cognitive processes kick in whether they are able to use that additional type of training or information to come out the other end of the process a better road user.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you think there is any merit in children who are too young to have a learner's permit, and I am talking principally about 12 to 16-year-olds, having an understanding of the road rules prior to being allowed to ride pushbikes on the road?

Mr EVANS: I think there is. I think that is partially what the CARES program has been aimed at. Unfortunately, we cannot scoop all of the children up into the CARES program because of the limited number throughout the State. Certainly the local police, both within the metropolitan areas and in the country, on an ad hoc basis go to the local schools, maybe for a bicycle inspection, and provide that type of information that CARES provides or at that level you are talking about, which is obviously preceding the L plates issuing. I do not think you can give anyone too much knowledge.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I am unsure how we can ever enforce that to make sure it happens, given that we see children on bicycles do some very silly things at times. It does not happen so much in the city areas because children do not tend to ride their bikes much in the heavy traffic parts of the city, but certainly in country towns you see kids on bikes doing terribly dangerous things.

Mr EVANS: I think you are right. There are some dangerous practices on the roads. It is not only children either. Obviously by targeting the CARES program at schools, it is an attempt to try to capture as many in the audience or the group as you can. Obviously part of the learning process needs to be carried on by parents and carers and those types of people. At times it would appear that does not occur. I really do not have an answer to the question how you would get the message through to the ones who do not go to the CARES program or choose to ignore what they are told.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Inspector Evans, the Committee understands that most Traffic Offenders Programs [TOP], which are attached to the Attorney General's portfolio, are conducted through Parents and Citizens Youth Clubs [PCYCs]. Could you advise us as to the degree of formal involvement of New South Wales Police in these programs? Could you give us some flavour as to

whether or not you support the aims and objectives of the program and whether or not from a budgetary point of view it is a preventative program that you are able to put your energies into?

Mr EVANS: The PCYC has received funding to expand its work to focus on young traffic offenders intervention programs through the proposed road realities program. Police programs will continue the role they have at PCYC in providing the face of the program to the participants and the community. Program development and commencement are awaiting a decision by the Government on whether to mandate participation by P platers charged with a driving offence and on the extent of interdepartmental involvement. This program would not be limited to PCYC-existing sites and would expand through recruitment facilitators as needed by demand by referrals. New South Wales Police is not otherwise involved in centralised community-based road safety programs that are conducted, but Police do support the driver-reviver initiative conducted by local community groups and participate in local ad hoc activities. In regard to the success or benefit of the Traffic Offender Program, I think that any sort of program that is provided to target particularly young drivers and particularly ones who have made a mistake or come under the notice of the police has to be supported and indeed needs to flourish and grow. At this point in time clearly there is no evidence to suggest that there would be any type of budgetary issue raised in regards to the program or expansion of programs.

CHAIR: The Committee understands that some community-based driver awareness programs are also being run in prisons in New South Wales. Are you familiar with the driver awareness road safety programs being conducted in prisons in New South Wales and is this something you support particularly for young first-time offenders?

Mr EVANS: Our branch has no knowledge of any prison-based driver awareness programs that are currently being conducted and, as a general rule, the New South Wales police is supportive of any measures that may improve road users behaviour and reduce road trauma. It is impossible, however, to speak authoritatively with respect to this particular program. Any type of program that runs which would have a decrease in road trauma and save one of my people going round and knocking on the door and telling the parents, or whoever is inside that house, that someone has been either killed or seriously injured, is certainly a benefit to the community and to my brother and sister officers because it is a very unpleasant task.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for attending today and answering the questions so frankly. I have one further question in relation to Senior Sergeant Kane's submission but I will put that to you in writing, to give you an opportunity to look at it and respond. Please pass on my regards to Senior Sergeant Kane as well.

(The witness withdrew)

PETER JAMES MUIR, Deputy Director General Operations, New South Wales Department of Juvenile Justice, Level 24, 477 Pitt Street, Sydney, and

PETER BRUCE HARVEY, Manager Operations Unit, New South Wales Department of Juvenile Justice, Level 24, 477 Pitt Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: Thank you both for appearing before the Committee today to provide evidence in the inquiry into young driver safety and education programs. The Committee has received your submission and, unless there are any objections, it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication. Are there any objections?

Mr MUIR: No objection.

CHAIR: There being no objection, it so ordered. Do you have any other documentation that you wish to table to form part of your evidence here today?

Mr MUIR: No.

CHAIR: I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and a copy of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Orders 291, 292 and 293 that relate to the examination of witnesses. Is that correct?

Mr MUIR: Correct.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under Parliamentary Privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr MUIR: I am conscious of the time so I will make a brief statement. Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence on behalf of the department today. The Department of Juvenile Justice works only with children and young people between the ages of 10 years and 18 years who have allegedly or been found guilty of committing a criminal offence. The department aims to reduce the re-offending of young people and to assist them in addressing the underlying issues and behaviours that contribute to their offending. In order to do this, the department assesses the level of risk and prioritises the issues for each person who has received a court order requiring departmental supervision. This assessment then guides the department's case management intervention for each young person, to ensure that the most serious issues that affect young persons offending behaviour are addressed. There are, in fact, relatively few young people under 18 years of age who come under the supervision of our department for motor traffic offences where those offences are the most serious offences. Children's Court statistics show for road and traffic motor vehicle regulatory offences in 2006 that in almost half the matters the outcome was a fine and that almost a third of the matters were dismissed with a caution. That means that the majority of matters dealt with by courts are dealt with without the involvement of the department.

Young people will often have traffic or driving offences in conjunction with other offences, such as steal motor vehicle. In those circumstances it is likely that the driving matters will not be identified as the principal offence. As such it is very difficult to identify those on our own client records. We have noted that research in the United Kingdom has shown that young people who consistently commit driving offences do so in the context of other offending behaviour. Victorian research has also identified a link between high-risk driving behaviour and other antisocial or criminal behaviour. This study demonstrated the indicators for these behaviours could be identified when young people were under 12 years of age. The study found that problem drivers displayed high levels of aggression and were more likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour and multiple substance use than other drivers. The study also showed that these differences in behaviour became evident during adolescence. This seems to indicate that young people that the department already works with are likely to become high-risk drivers. The Victorian research suggested that intervention targeting one of the factors might have a beneficial impact on the other factors. The study also suggested that to address these issues there needs to be a broad range of targeted prevention and intervention strategies, which is certainly in line with the department's broad intervention in juvenile offenders. More recent

New South Wales research looked at predictors—this was done by the Motor Accidents Authority—in four modifiable behaviours: speeding, not using seat belts and helmets, driving whilst fatigued and drink driving. This study recommended there be further research into the strategies that aim to address these risky behaviours. Certainly from our department's point of view, there always needs to be a particular focus on these interventions as they are relevant to adolescents. Sometimes with driving programs we simply try to modify them for adolescents and certainly in our experience if you are going to communicate something to adolescents it needs to be specifically tailored to them, rather than just a modified adult program. I will leave my opening comments there to leave maximum time for questioning.

CHAIR: Your submission refers to a range of driver education strategies targeting underlying values and attitudes that influence risk-taking behaviour, notably the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness and the Reduced Risk Increased Student Knowledge [RRISK] programs. Does your department have a view concerning the appropriateness and benefits of these programs to school students and young drivers?

Mr MUIR: I would comment that the expertise of this department is working with offenders. So I would really preference my comments by saying that our expertise is in dealing with offending behaviour rather than broad intervention programs. But more broadly speaking, our experience is that interventions in schools delivered early from our perspective can be protective factors for future behaviour. Any messages that schools give, and the earlier they can be given, will be addressing identifiable behaviours that emerge later in adolescence.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: What is the main age range of your offenders? I imagine—I do not know—is it just prior to starting off with an L or a P plate licence?

Mr MUIR: That is correct. If you clustered the offenders under the department's supervision and control they would broadly fit between the 15 years to 17 years age range.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: So the next big thing will be their licence, will it not?

Mr MUIR: Yes.

CHAIR: A view has been expressed in various submissions received, particularly from Blacktown Council and some regional councils, that young drivers in disadvantaged areas will not be able to make the 120 hours and—paraphrasing what they have not said—you will see an increase in prosecutions for driving without a licence. That is a view I happen to share. I know you could not see any evidence of that and share it because the 120 hours has not really started, but to your knowledge is there a lot of unlicensed driving going on?

Mr MUIR: Anecdotally amongst our offending population it is looking at what we detect. In terms of what we receive, for example, driving offences only constitute about 3.5 per cent of all the supervised orders—that is where we can identify that the driving offence was the index offence for the young person—about 6.8 per cent of young people in custody and again about 6.8 percent of young people who go to youth justice conferencing. If you are asking my frank view from 30 odd years of dealing with adolescent offenders, in the offending population I would say the answer to your question is yes but there are probably more factors. The offending population that at the end we are dealing with are a very disadvantaged group. You would be looking at high levels of school exclusion and very high levels of family dysfunction. I was at another Committee here yesterday where evidence was given that about 42 per cent of the young people in our custodial system have a parent in the adult correctional system. We are dealing with the very high end and not the vast bulk of adolescents. Having said that, if these young offenders, for example, have picked up fines from previous offending behaviour and not paid those fines, then it will disqualify them from ever coming into the whole arena of driving. If you picked up a fine as a 14-year-old and failed to pay that fine then you do not even get into the realm of applying for a learner's permit and going through that. If you continue on the path of offending and start to drive whilst unlicensed, you then pick up further criminal offences which will exclude you from the legal process. If I can give a very broad generalisation of the experience of what we see, that would probably typify it.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Would not virtually 100 per cent of your population from the first moment they can get their Ls onwards be doing that?

Mr MUIR: Not one hundred per cent. If I look, for example, at the youth justice conferencing end, which is the lower end of our spectrum, a lot of those people are ones who will exit the system. The department finds we only deal with about 15 per cent of all of those many young people who are apprehended by the police in a year. Of that 15 per cent again you find a very small number who are your repeat offenders and who are responsible for the majority of crime. So you would find the majority of offenders lie in the spectrum of coming in with some intervention with the criminal justice system and then they exist, with that very small number giving the typical cycle that I just talked about.

CHAIR: Can you just clarify one thing? Steal cars does not come in that category of driving offences?

Mr MUIR: Steal motor vehicle is a criminal offence, not a motor traffic offence.

CHAIR: So if someone stole a car and he or she were not licensed—

Mr MUIR: As I said in my opening statement, we do not primarily see large numbers of negligent driving cases. We actually see very few drink driving cases within our supervised orders or within custody. I have the figures. We only get a small number of, for example, aggravated drink driving cases in custody. I can tell you that in our community base in 2006-07, for example, we only had four cases of aggravated drink drive that came to our attention for supervision. In our custodial systems there were only two cases that came into custody for aggravated drink-drive. So, as a department we are looking at very small numbers. But a more typical scenario for us is that a young person commits a criminal offence of steal motor vehicle; that is what they are apprehended for but in the course of their criminal activity they will then rack up a range of motor traffic offences on the back of that primary criminal charge. It can often be extraordinarily risky driving. You would probably be aware of media reports at times when you will see some of these very high-risk offenders engaging in extraordinarily risky and dangerous driving after that.

CHAIR: I believe yesterday there was mention of a 16-year-old with twice the legal limit caught speeding somewhere.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I have another question that addresses some of that. We were talking with previous witnesses about early intervention. The department recommends that further research be conducted in a number of areas, including risk-driving behaviour determinants and early intervention strategies. You mentioned before that you are going to know who these people are at about 12 years of age—year seven, year eight, or thereabouts. This research would then inform more offender programs targeted at specific groups of individuals. In the suggestion to undertake further research into driving behaviour to minimise the risks of reoffending, how should this research be carried out? How should it be funded? Do you see a role for your department in assisting such a project?

Mr MUIR: The answer is that there are probably different people who could do different parts of that research. If we are looking at where these sorts of behaviours are going to become most evident, probably the Department of Education and Training is the State Government agency that is most likely going to be seeing those people because the behaviours will be emerging at a stage when those young people are still in the education system. Having said that, there are probably a number of people who are well placed to undertake that sort of research. Certainly I think there was the initial study from the Motor Accidents Authority that has identified the behaviours that are amenable to intervention, and then there would need to be a design process for the intervention. In the criminal justice field we talk more these days about evidence-based interventions.

I think we are well past the phase where we like to dream up programs, think they are a good idea and hope they work. These days we really like to invest our time in making sure that the investment particularly that the taxpayers are making in our programs is reaping some rewards. So, there would be a need to go through a design phase, a piloting phase and an evaluation phase. There are a number of agencies that could be involved. Should our department be involved? At the moment

our view is that we are best placed to deal with people at the tail end of the intervention. I know that the Department of Education and Training, whose representatives I assume will be giving evidence at some point before this Committee, have some of these things within its PD and PE health curriculum. I know that that curriculum is delivered within our juvenile justice centres.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Has your department been involved in the evaluation of any existing programs? Do you get involved in that? You do not get asked?

Mr MUIR: No. We only would be involved in the evaluation of our own programs at this stage. Given the numbers I have just given you, we focus our intervention on other parts.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Have you entered into discussions with, say, DEET on future involvement? Have you sought to take it to them?

Mr MUIR: Our resources as an agency at the moment are fairly devoted to other parts of criminal offending. We really would not see involvement in this level of prevention within the mandate of the organisation at this point.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Given the statement you made that early intervention really is the way to go and schools are where you get young people in a group, then should your department not have some input or involvement with the education department? We are not just talking about driver education, but if that was then the case, driver education or offending driving or the danger of dangerous driving would just form a subset of that.

Mr MUIR: We have a very close relationship with the Department of Education and Training, particularly with the student welfare branch. The level of expertise within the Department of Education and Training I believe is very high. I certainly have a very high degree of confidence in the people that I deal with in the Department of Education and Training that they have an excellent grasp of these issues.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You mentioned early intervention and, as you know, every dollar spent in early intervention saves \$17, most of which is in your field, which is in incarceration costs. You mentioned that aggression, antisocial behaviour and drug use usually are less and driving is often part of a broad range of problems. You talked about the need for a broad range of target strategies. What do you now do for these highest-risk children and how effective are you?

Mr MUIR: That is a very good question. Our approach currently to the highest-risk ones is that we use what is called an actuarial risk needs tool. The tool we use is an adolescent version: it has a horrendous name, which is called the youth level of service case management inventory—I could give you more, but it would be such a terrible title I will not continue it. The basic function of this tool is to look at what we call a number of domains of risk. The criminological research tells us that there is a range of what we call fixed and dynamic factors that influence a young person's offending behaviour. Fixed factors are things you cannot change: so, things like a person's past offending behaviour, past abuse in their family, whether their parents have been in prison. These are all fixed; what we call criminogenic risks. They are not amenable; you just cannot change them, but they go to a person's risk of reoffending and antisocial behaviour. There is a range of what were called dynamic risks and they are things that are amenable to change: things like a person's peer group, their thoughts, their values, their attitudes, their drug use, their accommodation, their educational status and their job prospects—they are just a few.

What this department does is undertake an assessment process where we identify those risks and needs. Again, the research from the United Kingdom—there is a researcher in the United Kingdom called James Maguire, who really leads the world in this field—says that if we intervene in up to six of those criminogenic needs and risks, that is where we get our biggest payoff. The question is: Is this effective? That is the very question that government is demanding of us through the State Plan at the moment. Again, government has funded the department over the next few years to make sure that we can answer this question well. We are structuring our data systems to make sure that we are doing that and we are working with the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research independently, both ourselves and Corrective Services. So, the answer to your question will be borne out in our reporting of the State Plan.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: What is the ETA?

Mr MUIR: The research is clear: if you do these things, you will get the payoff. Again, it is almost counterintuitive. Again, the research is telling us that we need to invest our time and resources in the highest-risk offenders. Very often people will say, "Look, why aren't you investing in the low-risk ones?" I have heard Dr Don Weatherburn say that it is counterintuitive, but the evidence is clear.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: It make sense to me.

CHAIR: Just out of idle curiosity, what is the highest category?

Mr MUIR: Currently we divide our offenders into low, medium and high risk. When we say "low", it does not mean they get no service, but what we try to do with low-risk offenders, for example, is link them back to community resources. They are the people who standard community-based local agencies can deal with. With high risk, we then will have multiple agencies, multiple interventions that we will put around that person and try to deliver an answer. For example, out of the drug summit since 1999 the department has a network of drug and alcohol counsellors, particularly around rural and regional New South Wales. We found, for example, that there was a dearth of effective drug and alcohol services in rural New South Wales. Both the State and Commonwealth governments have funded us for those positions right around New South Wales. So, if substance abuse is driving a person's behaviour and, again, if they are abusing substances and driving illegally, then they are at very high risk of causing accidents. We actually invest a lot of money—Mr Harvey might know the figure of how many young people; I think it is thousands of young people.

Mr HARVEY: I cannot give you the exact number.

Mr MUIR: Certainly it is in the thousands of young people in rural New South Wales that have accessed drug and alcohol counselling. Again, given what I said in my opening statement, they are some of the young people who are at highest risk.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: When anybody is doing their driver training and they need to be supervised, who actually does that? Is it a member of staff?

Mr MUIR: Our staff would not get involved in doing that.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Who would?

Mr MUIR: Their parents, guardians. We do not take over. I will not have young people in custody get into a car, I think for obvious reasons—some of them may be tempted to keep driving. So, I do not see it as appropriate that young people in custody—

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Okay, so there is no licensing going on?

Mr MUIR: We do not do it in our custodial services. Some of our community-based staff will assist young people, but that will be in things like making sure they can get their birth certificate and their points identification and helping them write to the State Debt Recovery Office. So, we would limit our services to that sort of thing. Getting young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour so that if they have outstanding fines, we will work with them to go to the State Debt Recovery Office, make arrangements for those fines so that they then can become legal.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: My understanding is that about 27 per cent of adults in gaol have functional IQs of less than 70. What is the rate in juvenile institutions?

Mr MUIR: On a culture fair test, the raw score is about 10 per cent.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Luncheon adjournment)

LEONARD PAUL THOMAS WOODMAN, Road Safety Strategy Project Coordinator, City of Sydney, 456 Kent Street Sydney, sworn and examined:

RICHARD PHILIP CAMPBELL, Manager, Transport Strategy, City of Sydney, 456 Kent Street Sydney, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: The Committee has received your submission. Unless there are any objections, it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication. Do you have any objection?

Mr WOODMAN: No.

CHAIR: There being no objection, it is so ordered. Is there any further documentation you wish to table to form part of your evidence here today?

Mr WOODMAN: No.

CHAIR: I am advised you have been issued with a copy of the terms of reference of the Committee and also a copy of the Legislative Assembly's standing orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses, is that correct?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes, please. Just as an introductory statement, the City of Sydney would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity for us to give evidence. The City of Sydney is currently embarking on a long-term vision called Sydney 2030. We are looking at how we are going to plan the city over the next 22 years. The key objectives of the program are to make the city better for people, to reduce unnecessary vehicles and, as part of that vision, road safety is a key element, as you would imagine.

The City of Sydney's major road safety issues include pedestrian safety. We have a high level of pedestrian activity, especially in the central business district, as I am sure you are all quite aware. In the local government area on any given day we could have up to 990,000 people, including residents and visitors, and a lot of that concentration would be in the CBD—around 600,000 on a busy summer's day with a lot of visitors. Cyclist safety is a key concern. We have a growth in numbers. We are encouraging the use of bicycles as a sustainable method of transport. Motorcycle and scooter activity is also growing in numbers, and we are probably all quite aware of how many scooters are buzzing around. They are also vulnerable.

The key area we look at is traffic speed. While we are sure it is quite low, low speeds do not necessarily mean that we do not have serious accidents particularly involving pedestrians and cyclists and scooter riders and motorcyclists. Whilst generally speeds are low, we have measured quite high peak speeds particularly in mid-block areas, and that is quite often where pedestrians like to cross rather than to go down to the traffic lights. So, there is a high risk there. We are promoting awareness of appropriate speeds and speed limits around the city. Particularly an issue that is coming up more is the issue of shared zones, which are 10-kilometre-an-hour zones, which really are pedestrian priority, if you look at the rules. One of the things we will be looking at in the future is trying to change that to a pedestrian priority area—places where motor vehicles can access but at the risk that if they hit a pedestrian they will probably be at fault.

Engineering solutions in many parts of the city have already been introduced. We have several hundred sets of traffic lights but we still have issues at traffic light controlled crossings—vehicles approaching at speeds inappropriately and cannot necessarily stop, and we have a fair number of people going through amber and red lights. So, road user behaviour is the most important area we

see for improvement, together with various engineering programs. We feel there is a need for better understanding of vulnerable road users by drivers. This is best if it can come right from the basics, if people learned this from day one that there are pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users that they really need to pay attention to. That, we think, would probably be a good start. It is not something we add to as they get experience.

Other issues that are specific to the City of Sydney and relate to the submission are the important factors that whilst we have a lot of people in the city, we have very low car ownership. Nearly 20 per cent of our households do not even own a car. That gives us issues with regard to driver training. There is still a need for young people to get a driving licence—16 per cent of our residents are aged between 18 and 24, so we still have those young people wanting to learn to drive. The dilemma is we do not always have the facilities and people do not always have the finance to enable them to complete the required supervised driving that is required by the current system. We need to look at how we can address that.

We have issues in getting volunteer supervisors. We can, through many of the businesses in the city, get people to come and give supervision in cars that the City of Sydney can provide, but there are issues relating to the Driving Instructors Act, because if they are doing it in their own company's time they are getting some reward for it and so they would be contravening the Driving Instructors Act. We have a unique city environment and even as we spread out from the city and we look at places like Glebe and Paddington and all that, we have some very narrow roads, lots of hazards and it is ideal if we can get new drivers to spend a bit more time in those areas.

The City of Sydney does a number of programs to help young drivers. We have, through our youth services department, a program called driving for employment. That is to help young people to get work. If we find they are being held up from getting a job because they do not have a driving licence, and if they make the appropriate application to the city and you have services, you can provide them with some of the facilities towards getting a driving licence. We have two cars that are equipped with dual control that can be used. Currently we have been employing a retired qualified driving instructor and I am aware that youth services are about to put out to tender a contract to get professional driving instructors to do specific work for us.

We have also recently run, together with assistance from funding from the NRMA, a driver education program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. That includes classroom work to help them prepare for the computer road knowledge test they have to take and to give them additional road safety information. Of course, we do emphasise vulnerable road users, pedestrians and cyclists. We also take part on behalf of the Roads and Traffic Authority, as all councils do with road safety officers, the graduated licensing scheme parent workshop, which we run two to three times a year, and we also will run pedestrian awareness programs to target pedestrians to make them aware of safety on the road and their responsibilities.

To conclude, our view, and it is part of this vision 2030, if we can start to make new road users safer and more knowledgeable about road safety, they in turn will pass that on to make better road users as we go through those next 22 years and more. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: In relation to your issue of licence instructors for hire, we raised the issue with the RTA this morning and asked for advice as to whether legislative change is needed. That at least will be addressed.

Mr WOODMAN: We have been speaking with them as well, so thank you very much.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: What involvement do you have in relation to Ride to School Day, 12 March?

Mr WOODMAN: We are about to take on an officer who is going to be looking after cycling completely, a dedicated cycling officer.

Mr CAMPBELL: We sponsor a large number of programs, including sponsorship of the City Cycle event as well.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: What has been the response by residents and other interest groups to council's suggestion to reduce the speed limit to 40 kilometres an hour?

Mr WOODMAN: In 2004 we did quite a major public consultation process where we put advertising into the newspapers. We had available flyers to show the intended area that we proposed to the RTA for a 40-kilometres-an-hour speed limit. We had over 1,000 responses to that—in the region of 66 per cent, two-thirds, very strongly for reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres an hour in the CBD area. Consequently that went through council and the proposal was put to the RTA that we be involved in the 40 kilometres an hour in high pedestrian areas program and at the time that was rejected. We have made further representations?

Mr CAMPBELL: We have made further representations.

Mr WOODMAN: We are still pushing on with that one.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Following on from that, the Hickson Road issue is within your province. There have been attempts to put in place provisions to stop antisocial behaviour across that road. Can you give us your thoughts on the results of those efforts? Were they effective or have they ended up moving the problem somewhere else?

Mr CAMPBELL: I can answer that question. It has been a difficult issue for us to tackle. We have been trying to deal with it since probably 2001-02, when it first surfaced in a significant way along Hickson Road. We have had a step-by-step process. We looked at putting in no-stopping restrictions overnight so that they did not have a place to stop. Enforcement of that was particularly difficult. We extended the no-stopping areas and that had some impact on adjacent businesses around the Millers Point area—restaurants, the theatre and those sorts of things. We then stepped it up and looked at temporary road closures. They were trialled for a while, and they have been quite successful. We also trialled a transit-mall option. That was not very successful because it fell down on the enforcement side of things. The police said it just could not be adequately enforced. So we have tried a number of different things to try to stop it occurring.

As to your question about whether it has relocated, we are not sure about that. It does pop up in various places around Sydney. We are aware that it has been in Gosford. We are aware it has been down in the Cronulla area, in the Penrith area and in the Bondi area as well. So it is a difficult issue that needs to be tackled. We are not necessarily trying to shift it to someone else's LGA; we are trying to tackle it generally so that it does not occur. But it is not an easy one.

The Hon. IAN WEST: It is obviously tragic that it occurs at all but that it occurs on the historical Hungry Mile is especially tragic. Has there been any study done of recidivism? Are you coming across the same individuals who were along the Hungry Mile and are now perhaps in another part of your LGA?

Mr CAMPBELL: We have had some complaints that it has surfaced to a certain extent in the Kings Cross area around Macleay Street and through there—which is an even harder area to try to tackle it in because if you close roads there there is just nowhere for people to go. We would like to see it tackled in some fashion and addressed rather than relocated.

The Hon. IAN WEST: So there have been no studies of the actual individuals involved.

Mr CAMPBELL: No, not by us anyway.

Mr WOODMAN: The police might be able to provide better advice on that. In the past I have attended a number of police operations at Hickson Road and, from my observations, a number of people turn up in the same car or the car gets sold on to someone else so the same car turns up with a different driver. The police at one stage told me anecdotally that what happens is the fines are quite high so they sell the car to pay the fines. Then someone else takes the car and does the same thing and gets fined again. So it rotates. But the police would have details about that.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: You raise the important point in your submission that under the terms of the graduated licensing system drivers must obtain a variety of driving experiences, one of which is

classified as city motorway. Have you had any thoughts about how that could be achieved in general learning practice given that specific skill sets are needed in the city, such as being able to think and plan ahead in terms of which lane you are in, and two things that are probably more in the head than anything else: patience and courtesy?

Mr WOODMAN: If you are in some towns outside central Sydney it can be a difficult journey to travel in. But obviously we try to encourage people to travel that distance. For example, if someone from Wyong is getting into the later stages of their GLS program we might suggest that they take a motorway trip from Wyong to the city and get some experience—even if it is at the weekend—and see that we have lots of shadow areas, high buildings and the sound is different. The feeling of people moving around and the potential for people to jump out in front is considerably higher than in some suburban areas—although some of the larger towns may have the same problems to a lesser degree because of numbers. It is the same difficulty for people in Wagga Wagga, for example, getting motorway experience.

But, from memory—going back to the work I did when the GLS program started in 2000—some research showed that generally people will stay around the area where they are brought up. So the experience they get in those towns is unique to them. From my years as a professional driving instructor and from the years that I have been the road safety officer for the City of Sydney, I would say that if you have the opportunity to be challenged by the city driving environment that, in turn, can develop appropriate behaviour and patience because you get used to the fact that it is going to take you a longer time to travel a shorter distance. I think that may equip you more generally than if you do not have that opportunity. Again, I go back to saying that if it can be done by those people in outer areas, give it a go if you can plan it. Certainly we are encouraging the parents we talk to on our GLS workshops to get new drivers to drive around in towns. There is a tendency for them to say, "I live in Ultimo; I'm going to take my kids somewhere else to teach them to drive". We say, "No". They are concerned about the risks.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The other issue is that a lot of country kids learn to drive in the country and then come to university in the city and assume that they can drive in those conditions. But city conditions are very intense and high pressure and you have to make quick decisions. It is a lot more difficult.

Mr WOODMAN: Perhaps there is room for consideration at universities and such to have additional driving practice. If country kids are going to go to the University of Sydney or wherever they might want to contact the road safety officer. It may be an area that we should look into.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Kangaroos do not respond to a flash of high beam but people do. To confine the issue to young drivers, your paper says—I hope I have not missed it—that 27 per cent of crashes in the Sydney local government area involved drivers aged under 26. Later you say that 28 per cent of your statistics are pedestrian and cyclist related but I do not think you have linked the young drivers with those statistics. Have you done that somewhere else?

Mr WOODMAN: No, not for the purposes of this document.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Is it your feeling anecdotally that there would be a disproportionate number—

Mr WOODMAN: No. I would say it is quite across the board.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: So the 27 per cent crash rate would be the same 27 per cent pedestrians and cyclists, which is more than double the remaining metropolitan area still.

Mr WOODMAN: Yes. We have such a high level of pedestrians and pedestrian activities. We also have a lot of experienced drivers and professional drivers involved in crashes. What may happen there is that professional drivers in the higher age groups are probably doing a lot more kilometres in the city so their exposure to risk would be greater. But statistically the numbers would be across the board.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I do not suppose there is any zeroing in on the number of incidents in school zone areas.

Mr WOODMAN: The school zone areas have a very low number of crashes. We have done quite a lot of high-level enforcement. You probably saw late last year that we had covert rangers around. So the general driving environment around schools is quite calm.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: When you talk about crashes in school zones do you also mean pedestrians and cyclists?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: So in the Sydney local government area school zones exhibit a fairly low incidence.

Mr WOODMAN: No higher than average, yes. They are not standing out with high numbers of accidents in those zones because there is a high level of enforcement around those areas.

Mr CAMPBELL: Ironically, a lot of our pedestrian accidents tend to occur at traffic lights. So probably something needs to be done—which is the underlying thread in our submission—to get people to experience driving in the city with traffic lights so that they can deal with those conflict situations with pedestrians, and hopefully avoid them.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: What do the Rangers do?

Mr WOODMAN: They are generally there to enforce the no-parking and no-stopping regulations. But, from my observations of having the Rangers around and being with them, having the rangers' activity gets everybody to do the right thing a little more. It has probably worn off a little bit now from the program we had in October and November with the covert, or plain-clothes, rangers. We will probably start doing that again. There was quite a noticeable reduction in infringements given out after that program went into place.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: If a Ranger is standing at a zebra crossing at a school in a school zone and mummy comes in and stops where she should not, is the ranger empowered in any way?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes, once the motorist has stopped. The rangers generally do not have the power for moving violations so we cannot use them for speed.

Mr CAMPBELL: It is only stopping and parking violations.

Mr WOODMAN: So if they stop on a pedestrian crossing they will get an infringement.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: So that is a parking infringement effectively.

Mr WOODMAN: Yes.

CHAIR: May I pass on an observation from a colleague who is not at the table but who commented to me about cross-city pedestrian traffic? He told me that if he leaves here at 10.30 at night to go to his apartment on York Street, follows the lights, gets a bad run and does not jaywalk it takes him 20 minutes longer than if he jaywalks and gets a good run on the lights. I simply pass that on. Did I hear you say that you are a former driving instructor?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes, in the United Kingdom. I have not been a professional instructor in Australia.

CHAIR: What do you think are the key components that you should teach young people when you are training them?

Mr WOODMAN: We have got to influence their attitude, and I think that is where we can use the emphasis on vulnerable road users to show that those vulnerabilities mean that an approach to

dealing with them is essential. I suppose the key thing—it is very basic—is to teach them the use of speed. Many situations occur in the city and our biggest number of accidents—around 21 per cent—are rear-enders. That is because the driver cannot stop in time. Therefore, whatever their speed, they must have been going too fast for the conditions.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Or following too close.

Mr WOODMAN: Or following too close—it is too fast for that distance and they cannot stop the vehicle.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Or they are distracted.

Mr WOODMAN: If they are distracted they should be travelling at a lower speed. Because they are being distracted they are travelling at too high a speed for the conditions. I think there should be a strong emphasis on the appropriate speed for the conditions, taking into consideration the environment.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I have one general question about road rage. Is there any particular group in the community that tends to exhibit more road rage than other groups?

Mr WOODMAN: I do not think so. I would say that it is innate in the majority of us. It depends on levels of control. We get road-user rage—we get pedestrians getting angry and cyclists getting angry. I think it is something that, particularly with drivers, we can perhaps deal with by trying to take the rush out of everything we do. I know from personal experience, from my wife, of course—not me, but from my wife—that she is always in a rush to take my daughter places. My daughter, at seven, is getting used to my wife being in a rush everywhere. When she starts to drive I hopefully will have an influence on her to not be in a rush to do everything. We see this around school zones. We were talking about school zones before. I had a chat with a teacher from one of the schools that we did the enforcement program in. She said that since kids have been coming to school and generally are being dropped at school by car more kids turn up late than when they used to walk or take a bus or bicycle because they are dependent on their parents getting out of bed early enough to get them there and everything else. If we can just take the rush out of things and try to influence new drivers not to hurry places I think that can help. It sounds great.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I have two questions, one of which is in the terms of reference and another of which is not, if I am permitted. You are a British driving instructor and we talked today about motivation and driver behaviour. Are road rage and aggressive behaviour a worldwide phenomenon, particularly in Australia and Britain, or is Britain different from here in terms of driver behaviour?

Mr WOODMAN: I have been here 20 years but I have been back quite regularly. When I go back I do take part in driving courses—safer driving courses—and I go to refreshers and things like that. I tend to drive probably a lot more when I go back than I do here in Sydney. I would say that it is pretty common throughout Europe. My recent overseas trip included Belgium, France and Britain—

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I am more interested in Britain at this stage because it has a lower road toll than Australia does.

Mr WOODMAN: Yes, but they still have people who do it. What I think happens is that perhaps it is not so congested in central London now because of the congestion charge. People have got used to taking a long time to move from A to B. While they might get cross, they probably might get cross at lower speeds. On the other hand, when you get onto the motorways and they get cross they are going at much higher speeds. The flashing of headlights is a much more common thing throughout Europe.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: And now my question off the terms of reference—

CHAIR: Yes.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: When is the cycleway on King Street going to open?

Mr CAMPBELL: I would have to look at the information and get back to you.

CHAIR: Take it on notice.

Mr WOODMAN: On our website there is an electronic brochure on what is happening there.

Mr CAMPBELL: All consultation has been done.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Do not worry.

Mr WOODMAN: It will happen.

CHAIR: Does the council currently employ a road safety officer?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes. We have two.

CHAIR: What do you think about the effectiveness of the Road Safety Officer Program that is currently jointly funded by the Government and the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Mr WOODMAN: I think it is very effective. I am the longest-serving road safety officer, I think. I am coming up for 13 years. I have seen a lot of changes but one thing that has changed has been the road toll over those years. Now, while we cannot identify each person we might have saved, I think the program in bringing road safety to the local community has been a very, very key part in reducing the road toll. My manager might want to add to that.

Mr CAMPBELL: I have worked at four different councils throughout the Sydney metropolitan area—from Penrith to Liverpool to North Sydney to here. All councils have road safety officers. I come from an engineering background, which is about putting in roundabouts and traffic lights—all those sorts of things—and they can only go part of the distance to solving the problem. You cannot put those sorts of treatments in everywhere; in some locations they will not solve all incidents at a location. For example, in the CBD one of our worst pedestrian spots is at a set of traffic lights where it has everything it could at the moment.

We need to develop programs to educate people to take things a bit more cautiously so that they do not expose themselves to risk, or just slow down—whatever it turns out to be. I believe that the Road Safety Officer Program is very good and provides a very good complement to other initiatives as well.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Could I just add that that is true, and that the printing on the roadway "Look Left" and "Look Right" is actually very effective.

Mr WOODMAN: Thank you.

Mr CAMPBELL: Mr Woodman was the driver behind that one.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Very well done.

(The witnesses withdrew)

DAVID GERARD TYNAN, Road Safety Officer, Blacktown City Council, 62 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown, 2148, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: I thank Mr David Tynan, who is the road safety officer for the Blacktown City Council, for appearing today to provide evidence on the Staysafe Committee's inquiry into young driver safety education programs. The Committee has received your submission. Unless there are any objections it is proposed that your submission will be authorised for publication. Do you have any objections?

Mr TYNAN: No.

CHAIR: There being no objections, I so order. Do you have any further documentation which you wish to table to form part of the evidence?

Mr TYNAN: Yes, just one.

Document tabled.

CHAIR: I so order. I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference as well as with a copy of the Legislative Assembly's standing orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses. Is that correct?

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr TYNAN: Yes, please—just a quick summary of Blacktown local government area [LGA], just so that the Committee has the context of where our submission is coming from. The population is approaching 300,000. There are 114 schools, 41 of which are high schools, and the majority of those do years 7 to 12. We are one of the road transport hubs of Sydney, with the M4 and the M7 intersecting the LGA. We have one of the largest number of registered vehicles in New South Wales for an LGA, and traffic volumes have increased significantly over the past 10 years. We have three TAFE campuses, a major motorsport precinct, which has its own issues, three police local area commands [LACs], one of which is the Mount Druitt LAC, and it represents most of the disadvantaged youth that we will be talking about.

To give you an idea of some of the issues they have out there, there are somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 suspended or cancelled licences for all age groups at any one time in that particular LAC and they have one of the highest release-from-prison rates of any LAC in the State as well, which reflects earlier submissions given this morning. We also have one of the largest Aboriginal populations of any LGA in the State followed closely by Campbelltown. Also, a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious groups are represented. The socioeconomic groups range from the upper middle class down to working class and welfare class as well, particularly in the western areas of the LGA. Our approach to road safety is to link in with other stakeholders and agencies as much as possible, both statewide and in any national programs that are running that we can get involved with, from a funding point of view as well as from the point of view of being able to utilise existing resources. That is about all as to background.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: The Blacktown City Council's submission argues that the increasing affordability of cars has resulted in a larger percentage of young people buying expensive and modified cars and that this should be examined in relation to crash risks. Has the Blacktown City Council conducted any studies that would back up that assertion? Is this a trend that you think is reflected across all of New South Wales, or is it only related to your own local government area?

Mr TYNAN: Working backwards, I do not know if it is reflected across all of New South Wales. We see a fair bit of it in Blacktown because of the motor sport precinct, particularly the drag

strip—the Western Sydney International Dragway. They run almost every Wednesday night and some Friday nights when they run off-street drags for basically anyone who shows up with a street-level car. In our area we tend to see a lot more highly modified cars, also because the drag strip has attracted a lot of the performance shops from other parts of Sydney into the LGA.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Does the Blacktown City Council have any statistical data on disposable income? Is it a high-disposable income area, given what you said previously about the range of socioeconomic groups that you have in your area?

Mr TYNAN: I am not sure whether we are higher or lower than any other part of Sydney. I do not know if we have done any studies on that. Economic development people may have.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Basically what you are saying is that the assertion that there are a high number of modified cars is not based perhaps on the fact that car affordability is the reason but rather just because of the nature of the types of facilities that are available in the local area for young people, like the dragway. I suppose going farther west, you have the speedway and things like that.

Mr TYNAN: It could be, but we do not have any actual evidence one way or another. But it is something that has been observed, that is all.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Okay, it is an observation.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: In relation to the affordability issue, would your observations confirm that young people generally drive cheaper second-hand cars and do not have the same safety features as older drivers might have, and therefore, if they have an accident, there is a greater consequence?

Mr TYNAN: I used to believe that. In recent years I think young drivers have tended to want to have more modern cars. It is a hell of a lot more cool, and my own two sons have gone through the same thing.

CHAIR: Mr Tynan, I do not know if you were responsible for the submission, but I congratulate whoever prepared it. It certainly has some thought-provoking matters in it. I will probably deal with some of those later, particularly the issue of analysis of crash sites. It is a very carefully thought-out response. But at the moment I am particularly interested, assuming that you do employ a road safety officer—

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

CHAIR: —in what you think about the effectiveness of the Road Safety Officer Program that is currently jointly funded by my local government and the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Mr TYNAN: Blacktown has been involved in that since 1996 and it has been very effective in being able to get programs into the local community. In some areas it has been more effective. It has been more heavily supported by council and the RTA than in other LGAs, although in the last couple of years, with the reduction in the RTA's budget, naturally they have reduced support in several areas. They have also reduced their funding in the light of the road safety program, which has seen some withdrawal of support in some areas. It is still working and it is still working relatively well, although it is changing.

CHAIR: Do you think it is good value for money for the RTA?

Mr TYNAN: Having local representation? Yes, definitely—definitely.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I worked in Mount Druitt for years. I think it is surprising that you found road crash information that shows that that is relatively uncommon. I do not know if that can be true in the light of other evidence.

Mr TYNAN: That is using the Australia wide hospital data from the health department.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: But you would agree it does not reflect the severity of illnesses. There is a big deference between a broken toe and major trauma.

Mr TYNAN: That is just hospital admissions. The approach that has been taken—personally, from my point of view, the approach is about crash reduction, not reduction in fatalities. Reduction in fatalities is a much, much smaller picture to look at. A reduction in crashes widens the scope to see what other influences are involved.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You talk about concepts of speed compliance and appropriate speed for the conditions.

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: That is used by the pro-speeding group—"I can speed safely". How would you comment on that? I know you try to say the opposite, but how can you clarify that?

Mr TYNAN: All right. I am a petrol head, so I look at both points of view in regards to that. Speeding for the conditions, as far as I am concerned, from my interaction with young drivers—when you talk about speed for the conditions, which is the reason why you should do a particular speed or not, they tend to take more notice. When you talk about speed compliance—for example, you ask, "What is the speed in a school zone?" and they will say, "40ks." If you ask what speed should you be doing in a school zone if there are a lot of kids about and a couple of buses in the area they will still say 40 kilometres. They understand the law, they know the law, but they do not necessarily understand why it is important to judge the appropriate speed.

CHAIR: I am interested in your submission about conditioned response and the example you quoted about those young people killed in the industrial area. I understand entirely what you are saying and the statistic that most accidents occur within one kilometre of a person's home because they know where they are going.

Mr TYNAN: Exactly.

CHAIR: Are you convinced as to that argument of conditioned response?

Mr TYNAN: My background, I spent 15 years as a management consultant working in a number of organisations around Australia. A lot of the work I did in that regard was looking at how a person would reasonably respond to any work conditions, work practices, environment, that sort of thing. So I have been exposed to that in a range of different areas, more related to workplace safety than anything else. Looking at an incident, whether it be a fatality or not, it is quite easy to see how a conditioned response could give you the incident. It is a reasonable expectation that anyone else in the same situation would make exactly the same mistake. That is the whole basis for the workplace safety stuff. So I am only applying that concept, which has been quite well proven in other areas, to the road safety idea.

CHAIR: I have asked the Roads and Traffic Authority to look at your submission—they had not seen it this morning—and give us some comments on it. You are quite critical of the Roads and Traffic Authority in part of your submission. In relation to the Drive to Live to Drive program, which is in development, at page 11 of your submission you said:

Despite a demand from the RTA to withdraw all support, Council continues to support the project due to the potential to achieve several complementary outcomes including:

- Providing a positive influence of young driver safety
- Providing opportunities for disadvantaged youth to gain employment in the LGA
- Attract new business to that LGA
- Contribute to a reduction in youth related crime and antisocial behaviour

Why has the Roads and Traffic Authority asked you to withdraw all support from this program?

Mr TYNAN: The reasons given have been that the only young driver programs up until about last year they supported were the GLS free parent workshop scheme and the Aboriginal driver

safety program. So while we are allowed to undertake very interesting and somewhat trial type work with the Aboriginal community in Mount Druitt, they have not let us get involved in any other young driver programs. Last year issues relating to some of the emerging African communities came up in terms of crime prevention and road safety. Obviously, they have been using licensing for slightly different reasons than just being able to drive legally. So now that is an area where the Roads and Traffic Authority allow road safety officers to get involved as well. Apart from that, no other young driver programs have been supported.

CHAIR: What is your opinion of the 120 hours requirement?

Mr TYNAN: Where young people have access to a car and a range of mentors or supervising drivers, it will go, I think, quite a fair way in reducing the amount of serious crashes in the first couple of years of a driver's experience, particularly if they can be beside a range of different drivers who can give them varying experience. If those young drivers do not have access to the money or a car or a supervising driver, it will have no effect whatsoever. In fact, it will probably increase other antisocial issues as well because the feedback we are getting from the Mount Druitt area is that they are just going to drive anyhow. They are not being exposed to the education but they are still driving.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Mr Tynan, I think you were present when I asked the Sydney City Council representatives a question relating to the young driver percentage of about 27 to 28 per cent of incidents, whether crashes or incidents, involving pedestrians or cyclists in school zones versus pedestrian crossings. Their focus was away from where I thought it might have been. What is the situation at Blacktown? Is that similar, being metropolitan?

Mr TYNAN: School zones in Blacktown are very successful in terms of road safety. We have had ongoing police support for enforcement and the rangers do a lot of good stuff out there as far as parking infringements are concerned. So, relatively speaking, school zones are relatively safe during the morning and afternoon peak times. But we have exactly the same problems as everywhere else. When the rangers are not there people will park in no parking zones.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: The number of incidents of the sort of fatalities I mentioned earlier, would that be about 28 per cent in Blacktown? Do you have any statistics on that?

Mr TYNAN: The number of incidents in school zones for Blacktown is so low you cannot actually do any statistics of any value.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Prior to school zones coming into force was it a different story?

Mr TYNAN: I am not sure.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The motor sport industry must bring a lot of jobs and money into Blacktown.

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Despite the impression you are giving the Committee that there are problems associated with the younger generation, does the council support the continued operation of the motor sport industry within the Blacktown area?

Mr TYNAN: Yes, most definitely. They are developing new plans for development within the precinct from both the business point of view, the daily commercial business, and tourism. It is a major focus for the local government area.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Are you looking at programs that are specifically designed to offset that other influence you have been talking about?

Mr TYNAN: Yes. Last year we trialled an event called the Youth Motor Sport Expo, which was trying to link youths in Western Sydney, particularly Blacktown, into the local motor sport industry. One of the concepts behind the business plan that is being developed for the Drive to Live to

Drive program is to have licensing linked into employment and the maintenance of the licence linked into maintaining employment. One of the concepts we are working on also with TAFE out there at the moment is to try and get the idea that a licence might only be a tiny piece of paper or plastic but it actually opens up a huge window of opportunity. So the longer you can maintain it, the more employment and lifestyle opportunities are going to be there.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: When you talk about a licence, are you talking about a motor sport licence?

Mr TYNAN: No, a drivers licence just to be able to get to and from work. For those people who want to work in the motor sport industry, the idea is to have even more incentives for them to hang onto their licence and not get any points at all.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: You state that Blacktown will continue to support the Traffic Offenders Program, regardless of whether a full evaluation is carried out or not.

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Are you aware of criticism by some magistrates that until there is a comprehensive assessment they will not refer people to the program? Have you raised your support of the program with the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Mr TYNAN: We are aware of criticism by some magistrates. I am not sure exactly who they are, but the administrator, Graham Symes, is aware of those. We have raised the issue with the Roads and Traffic Authority. We met with the Roads and Traffic Authority corporate management I think it was last year or the year before to try and get an evaluation done. We have also met with Minister Roozendaal to try and get an evaluation done as well. So far we have not had anything as a response to that.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: You did also criticise or raise alarm in regards to the implication of the passenger restrictions for P1 drivers and how that will impact on drink-driving in that the designated driver system would be unable to continue. That is quite difficult because it is said that distraction is a major cause of accidents and if a car is loaded with drunk adolescents it is difficult for the driver to concentrate on the road. Do you still hold that view?

Mr TYNAN: That was the idea. We were interested to see what the traffic infringement data is going to show starting from July 1.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It is too early?

Mr TYNAN: Yes. It is something that needs to be evaluated.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: During the presentation by the Roads and Traffic Authority it was pointed out that they did not encourage ad hoc programs across the State because they thought that would lead to inconsistency. In your submission you argue exactly the opposite. You talk about the driver education programs RYDA and NRMA Blacktown, the driver education programs that you do and so on. Has Blacktown City Council formally tried to put its views to the Roads and Traffic Authority to argue this difference of opinion or is this the first forum at which you have expressed it?

Mr TYNAN: For a few years road safety officers from around New South Wales had been arguing this point with the Roads and Traffic Authority people from various regions. The point is that the programs have not been evaluated. So it is very difficult to say one way or another whether they are actually doing harm or doing benefit. Generally speaking, things like the RYDA program, I think, the Drive study has shown that it is very hard to say one way or another that the program is doing anything, but it is not causing any harm.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: In parallel, the Department of Education and Training representatives talked about where driver education was generic across the curriculum that individual schools in individual locations would obviously tailor what they thought suited their areas.

Mr TYNAN: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Do you believe that councils and the road safety officers in councils have enough influence on school education? How do you do that? You have talked about starting a TAFE program, but what about primary and secondary education? Are you penetrating the schools?

Mr TYNAN: According to the Local Government Road Safety Program, road safety officers are not allowed to be active inside schools. We have to rely on the Roads and Traffic Authority curricula material to do that.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Says who?

Mr TYNAN: The Roads and Traffic Authority. That is one of the prerequisites for the program. However, one of the programs that we have got running, the Keep Aboriginal Youth Safe Program in Mount Druitt, is a whole-of-government program involving Health, the Department of Education and Training, the New South Wales Police, the New South Wales Fire Brigades and a few others. We are running this program specifically for Chifley College at Mount Druitt just on the licensing and road safety material.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Are there any indicators that it is a successful program?

Mr TYNAN: Once again it is early days. It is hooked up with a long-term study by the George Institute. After four of five years we should be able to see whether that is affecting fatality rates and crash rates. At the moment it looks like it is having some interesting results, although we cannot say much more than that.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: As to the issue of P1 and P2 drivers and the number of passengers that can be in a car after certain hours, it even sounded okay when I heard the Roads and Traffic Authority representatives say this morning that a young sober driver with four drunks in the car will act like a drunk driver. At the same time I thought about the designated driver program, which has saved many lives. What are your feelings about that? Surely it is better to have a young person who is the designated driver not drinking and taking his friends home alive than to restrict the number of passengers?

Mr TYNAN: I suppose it depends on which side of the logical argument you are coming from.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I want to hear about your experience at Blacktown.

Mr TYNAN: I am not sure of any particular experience in Blacktown. I have worked with some of the licensing officers and the licensees of the venues out there. Some of them found that the designated driver system worked well. But that was across the board, they did not necessarily say that it was young drivers. It appears in Blacktown most people who go to the pub or club for a few drinks have already sorted out how they are going to get home. That seems to be what people are telling me when I go into those places.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: What about young people that are going to TAFE courses that might be required to drive for three quarters of an hour or whatever? Is it not better to have one young person taking three friends to TAFE than to have two vehicles out there with two people in each car?

Mr TYNAN: I think that is going to be an exception under the guidelines if they have to go to employment, TAFE or study, they can actually get an exception; although I have not heard of anyone getting one.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Going to Eastern Creek Raceway then?

Mr TYNAN: It would not be employment, would it?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: No.

Mr TYNAN: Unless, of course, they are all working for the catering service.

(The witness withdrew)

ROSS ALFRED YAPP, Executive Manager Pricing, AAMI, Level 3, 616 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, and

ANTHONY DREW DURAKOVIC, Executive General Manager, AAMI, Level 4, 616 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I thank you both for appearing before the Committee to provide evidence in the inquiry into young driver safety and education programs. The Committee has received your submission and, unless there are any objections, it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication? Are there any objections?

Mr YAPP: No.

Mr DURAKOVIC: No.

CHAIR: There being no objection, it is so ordered. Do you have any further documentation you wish to table to form part of the evidence here today?

Mr YAPP: Yes.

Mr DURAKOVIC: Yes.

CHAIR: I accept that. I am advised you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and also a copy of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Order 291, 292 and 293 which relate to the examination of witnesses, is that correct?

Mr YAPP: Yes.

Mr DURAKOVIC: Yes.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under Parliamentary Privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr DURAKOVIC: Yes. I would like to thank the Staysafe Committee for this opportunity to present some further information to you today in relation to young drivers. The additional facts that I will provide to you this afternoon support the AAMI submission that was sent to you in November 2007. As we only have a few minutes I wish to concentrate on the AAMI's Skilled Drivers Program.

Since 1982 AAMI has been providing a driver-awareness program open to all licensed drivers under the age of 25 years. It is widely recognised that young drivers are far more likely than any other group to be involved in serious crashes and insurance claims data consistently confirms that fact. Because of this concerning social issue, AAMI has put a significant investment into providing a behavioural-based driving program to under 25 year olds for free if the driver or their parents or grandparents are comprehensively insured with us. The broader young driver community can access and also attend these programs for a fee of \$165.00. On completion of the program, the driver receives a 10 per cent discount on their comprehensive insurance premium in recognition that AAMI believes this program does positively influence the driving behaviour of our young people. In 2007 we had 5,500 attendees nationally, of which 1,536 were from New South Wales. If any member of the Committee would like to come out to our New South Wales centre we would be more than happy to spend a day with you explaining the program and you may, if you wish for first-hand experience, participate in the program as well.

In your packs I have presented a summary of some of the information that I will today be speaking to. The first slide shows a summary of what AAMI Skilled Drivers is. It is an approach to driver education that differs from traditional skill-based driver training. AAMI believes that the safety of young drivers depends on how they choose to drive rather than on how technically skilled they are. The program attempts to give a realistic view of driving ability and an understanding of the risks

involved and the potential consequences of poor decisions. Skilled Drivers does not teach young drivers advanced driving skills like skid control as this, in our opinion, often leads to overconfidence. The program, however, does deliver experiences that help young drivers discover their limitations and adopt low-risk behaviours on our roads. The program differs considerably to the more traditional types of skill-based training. We believe it remains an initiative that is unique in the Australian insurance industry and an appropriate and effective way of improving the safety of young drivers. AAMI deliberately chose to have a behavioural driving program. Skilled Drivers shows participants how to avoid getting into trouble in the first place, rather than providing the skills to get out of it. The program provides experiences that help motivate young drivers to adopt sensible and safe driving practices, such as lower speeds and increased following distances. It does not teach them about advanced or emergency driving skills. It is a preventative approach rather than a cure.

When AAMI wrote its submission to the Staysafe Committee in November we were not able to furnish the most up-to-date and relevant data. In your packs you will see that we now have, through an extensive exercise, analysed the claim rates of the program's most recent attendees to try and provide some statistical support to the extensive anecdotal evidence that shows the program has a positive influence on the young drivers who attend. The period of time looked at was from 2005-07 inclusive and the sample size was 1,053 participants. Firstly, I would like to point out that these figures are for periods of six months. Therefore if you look at the incident rate of attendees six months prior to completing the program it was 6.46 per cent. So these were at-fault accidents that we label crashes. It excludes such things as thefts, falling items on cars or anything of that nature, where a claim is lodged and the occupant would be deemed at fault but there was no crash as such in the process. Prior to doing the course it was 6.46 per cent. We then looked at the same group of people in the first and second six months after completing the program and the results are clear. There is a clear reduction in at-fault claims both after the first and second six months, falling from 6.46 per cent through to 5.05 per cent after the first six month period and then falling again to 3.4 per cent for the second six month period. Overall the fall is dramatic! This, for an insurer, is a significant reduction in incident rate. I should mention that our average incident rate for people under 25 years of age for all types of accidents runs at 22.7 per cent nationally.

As provided in our submission to the Committee, Skilled Drivers conducts research on its participants in regards to the program. AAMI engages an external research agency, Brian Sweeney, to conduct this research. It is conducted on an 18-month cycle. I have picked out some of the highlights from our most recent research. In summary, all components of the course were seen to be helpful to the participants, with 99 per cent saying that they were likely to change how they would drive in the future. The parts of their driving they were most likely to change: 66 per cent of the participants said they would increase the distance between vehicles when driving, and 40 per cent said they would be decreasing their speed or wiping off five kilometres. Of the respondents, 81 per cent said that they were likely to recommend the course to friends and others. Based on this feedback, which I might add has been consistent throughout the years; AAMI believes that the AAMI Skilled Drivers Program helps young drivers reduce the likelihood and severity of a crash by addressing some of the key behaviours or beliefs that lead to crashes, particularly close following distances and inappropriate speed. If we take both sets of research together, AAMI believes that its Skilled Drivers Program does reduce young driver incident rates significantly. Behavioural-based driving programs for young people do work. They work because they motivate young people to focus on increasing following distances, reducing speed, increasing concentration when driving, creating a greater awareness of the risks around them and ultimately being more cautious.

As can be seen from our submission, our claims data confirms that drivers under 25 years of age are in the highest risk category of having an accident. Our young-driver index, which you will find a copy of in your packs—I should point out that our next survey is in March of this year—tells us that drivers under 25 years of age are more likely to engage in dangerous driving practices. Taking into consideration these facts, from our perspective is great to see that the AAMI Skilled Drivers Program is going some way to addressing young drivers and has been shown to positively influence the behaviour of young drivers on our roads. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. Since 1982 AAMI, via its Skilled Drivers Program, has been actively trying to lower the incident rate for young drivers. We have been committed, and remain committed, to the Skilled Drivers Program. We are always interested in participating in any process that can lead to the outcome of fewer crashes by young people on our roads. If you would like any more information on our submission we would

be more than happy to provide that. We would also be more than happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Just a quick question on this graph. Straight away I do not know just what this is telling me really. Before the course 6.46 per cent of the 1,050 people had had a crash?

Mr DURAKOVIC: That is right.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Quite likely they came to the course because of that. But after that I do not know whether the 5.03 per cent means that some or none of that 6.46 per cent had a second crash? They may have had a third crash in the following six months? I just do not know what the statistics are trying to tell me? I do not know whether the sample is pure enough, if you take a before and after of the same people? I do not know the purity there?

Mr YAPP: Yes, they are statistics.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I can tell you more lies but let's stick to the statistics.

Mr YAPP: Exactly. As you have probably established we have a number of competing difficulties here. Firstly we let, as Anthony mentioned, access to the course in many cases through the parent having insurance with us. That means that they do the course on the parent policy and we have no record of how the child behaved in any form after that. The tracking of the individuals that undertook the course is difficult for us. The one place we could look was at those that then accepted insurance for themselves—they held their own insurance policy. The difficulty, of course, in exposing young people to this course is having some hook or motivation for them to do it. The motivation is the fact that it comes at no cost and they get a consideration or discount on their insurance having completed the course. The problem for the data is that many young ones only buy it at the moment they do the course for the discount. So we do not have a lot of information about these people prior to having done the course. They usually do it within six months of having taken the policy. So what we have looked at here is pure, in the sense that it is those that did the course. We had a group that we could look at six months prior to them having done it but our data gets very implausible before that.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Did you offer all of the 6.46 per cent crashers prior to insurance a 10 per cent discount subsequently?

Mr YAPP: Yes. The successful completion of the course—

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Was it a random sample or did you make sure there were no negligent drive bookings that went with those crashes that you gave 10 per cent to in the second six months?

Mr DURAKOVIC: No. Whoever completes the course and receives a certification of completion is automatically entitled to the 10 per cent discount.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: No. I mean one of those crashes might have been—and I hope the answer is no—really bad negligent driving, culpable driving and so on. You then said, "Good night. You are no longer a client of ours let alone doing a course of ours or having anything to do with us."

Mr DURAKOVIC: No. With AAMI no-one is excluded from insurance just because they have had an accident.

Mr YAPP: I think he is suggesting we have guidelines that would say we insure people until they have claims, then we send them away. We do not.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I mean claims with crimes.

Mr YAPP: I understand. You are quite correct, you are citing the Act, which would allow us to not invite renewal where we have clear evidence of fraud or behaviour that is akin to what you are suggesting. We do not do that. Every one of those policies would have been invited renewal and will to this day be invited renewal. We do not retreat from cover. We do not impose excesses, as we sit

here. So, we have not modified those people specifically because of those accidents to prevent a future accident, if you know what I mean. Our approach to young people has been more broadly across the whole pool than it was traditionally. Once upon a time the idea of an insurer penalising for improper, in its view, behaviour was very common. We now adopt a pool approach that says we will have the rogues within the pool, but it is a pool. The good will pay for the bad.

The Hon. IAN WEST: If there was the rare occasion that was to occur, would you not have counted them in the sample before or after?

Mr YAPP: Yes, but there were none. That is the point. The sample was 1,053 and we did look at the same group of people before and then after that rate the claim per 100 people is the experience we found.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Those subsequent crashes also did not involve those bad charges of PCA or whatever?

Mr DURAKOVIC: No.

Mr YAPP: They may have, but they are still there. My point is that we have not declined to invite renewal on those kids at any point in time or cancelled them mid-term.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I have no criticism of AAMI; I congratulate you on doing this type of work. I am just arguing the stats.

Mr YAPP: And rightly so because the data is one of those things, as we established at the outset. I would make the point that you will have heard Anthony allude to a 22 per cent incident rate, which is the reality of what young people experience. What we have looked at there is the culling down of the types of accidents where we believe the course modifies behaviour. So those are the ones where we think the individual had the opportunity to avert the eventual accident or crash, whatever the term, rather than being a victim of it, if you know what I mean. So, where the third-party failed to yield right of way, we have excluded it; where someone has collided with the rear of them, we have excluded it. This is just those accidents that have arisen out of their behaviour, which we were trying to modify through the behaviour of attitudinal approach that we have adopted.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: This is a wonderful course and I have not heard of anything like it. Is there anything like this anywhere else in the world? I think this is the only one in Australia.

Mr DURAKOVIC: Not that we are aware of.

Mr YAPP: I am not aware of one. I share your belief. I sit here as a parent, like many of you I am sure. My two daughters are at that moment in time. I have a 19-year-old on a provisional licence and a 16-year-old with a learner's permit. My experience was that as soon as they developed the initial skills of stop, start, turn, their confidence elevated exponentially—they were away, and even with me there in the car, which instils a fear of what it might be like in my absence. So, bringing them back down to earth, no matter how interesting or compelling the data, I found the validation for me is the reality that hits home with the kids. You have to try to remove some of that bullet proofing.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: That brings me to my more difficult question. We were told this morning that advanced driving courses do not work. You do not do an advanced driving course; you do a different sort of course.

Mr DURAKOVIC: That is right.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: And you have given us the figures that show a progressive reduction. However, could that be a learning curve or could that be yourselves?

Mr YAPP: There is still a residual. I think the argument is still valid that the older a driver the better they get, even if you do nothing. There seems to be evidence to show that maturity brings a better result. There is a residual there when we compare them to the balance, but the course is contributing to a better outcome.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: So you may not have any proof—you probably do—that it is cost-effective, which is the main measure?

Mr DURAKOVIC: We have never taken the viewpoint that this is a commercially viable thing to do; It was one borne out of the needs we established or identified as well as the feedback from our own customers, which, back in those days, was along the lines of when we were far stricter on interpretation of policy and young drivers: "Well, you're happy to take my money but you're not happy to take my son's money;" and also along the lines, "Well, look, young Johnny has just got a licence and I'm sitting here worrying that he may not come home at 3.00 a.m. in the morning." So, that was when we saw there was a need to have something we could offer our customers to help relieve their stress and provide peace of mind, which is the essence of what we do through all of our insurance products. We identified that there was a gap where we were not able to do that and Skilled Drivers went some way in our viewpoint to at least provide some guidance for some behavioural modifications to young drivers, who were recognised not only within the insurance industry but socially as being at far greater risk on our roads than any other.

Mr YAPP: I would just add one thing. Anthony is right, we do not visit this frequently on whether it is a commercial return; that is not what it is about. This Committee and our presence here motivated us to do that. It is sort of break-even, as we sit here. We are not reaping the rewards to the extent of the cost of providing it, but as Anthony said, that has not been our motivation over time anyway.

Mr DURAKOVIC: In fact, over the years we have widened the number of young drivers who are eligible for it by extending it not only from their parents but through to grandparents to allow grandparents to try to encourage their grandchildren to do this course. So, we have certainly tried to encourage as many as we possibly can to do it rather than limit it from a cost-effective process. We would say that since 1982 we have had over 50,000 young people attend and complete the course.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: AAMI is a member of the Insurance Council of Australia or some body like that?

Mr DURAKOVIC: Yes we are.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Your submission obviously makes reference to research in young driver attitudes to regulations and this formed part of your young driver research for 2007. The results of this research indicate that young drivers are less keen to have limitations placed on them than older drivers. In relation to young driver attitudes about driving rules and regulations, what do you consider to be the most significant findings of your research in relation to safer driving? Do you consider that any current regulations—and again I guess we are talking about New South Wales here—should be amended as a result of your research? In other words, do you think we should do something or revisit something that we have not looked at so far, things like numbers of people in cars after a certain time, longer training hours, all those sorts of limitations?

Mr DURAKOVIC: I would have to say that our research has not extended to looking at those types of things to form a concrete view about whether they should be imposed or whether we should support those. We have focused on our behaviours to try to identify the mindset of people on our roads and the fact that it continually comes out that young drivers acknowledge that they take greater risks on our roads. We would support the behavioural training we are trying to do and the attitudinal change through the Skilled Drivers Program.

Mr YAPP: It is an interesting question because as we were waiting I heard some of the talk about how the designated driver has impacted. We do not have any data to give you any valid information on that. What I would say is to an ever-increasing degree, we have taken more guidance from authority, from the jurisdictions, and this is not just a young driver's statement. In the past we tried ourselves to evaluate the difference between a driver at 0.05 against 0.07 and someone with five points and seven points, all those degrees of badness, for what of another word, that were measures and we would underwrite around those things. The reality is that we found that within the jurisdictions the work was being done for us in that committee such as yours determined what the penalty point is for certain offences. So what we have been left with is just an overarching view that we now

underwrite insurance by asking a consumer have they lost their licence. Now, the jurisdiction has done the work for us; it has determined that that means at a certain age you only had so many points and you have lost them. It puts value on the type of offence in the accumulation and you lose them over time. So, we are very happy with the sort of measures that are sitting in place at the moment to aid us, if you like, in gleaning a better understanding.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Does AAMI intend to try to discuss this program and the research you have with the regulators at any level in any State or federally? If not, then with your peak body so that this sort of program, which, I agree with Dr McDonald, does seem to be going in the right direction, could be perhaps rolled out? I understand that you might have a commercial interest in AAMI just being specialists in doing this and showing some difference, but really from the point of view of saving young lives, the sort of stuff you are doing should be fed back into the regulatory systems so that perhaps these sorts of programs can be pushed into schools, TAFEs and everything else. Is it your intention to do that?

Mr DURAKOVIC: My belief is that over the years we have engaged with regulatory authorities and made them aware of Skilled Drivers. We have from time to time gone out to schools and run education programs about Skilled Drivers and made people aware of it. We continually inform our own policyholders of the Skilled Drivers Program and actively encourage it and sell it to young drivers who ring us for insurance and we make them aware that there is an offer there. We have tried continually to find ways of enticing them or increasing the carrot to actually attend by the 10 per cent discount by gift certificates to grandparents to give to their grandchildren. Our desire is that whatever programs the road authorities see, Skilled Drivers be considered as one of a number of initiatives out there. We are not here to say that Skilled Drivers is by any means the sole combatant of the problems of young drivers, but we certainly feel it plays some part in that.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: From the statistics you have given us, can you tell us what geographical area those drivers cover? Were they all city drivers or was there a mixture of city and country?

Mr DURAKOVIC: I would say the vast majority would be in the metropolitan areas. Skilled Drivers is run in only a select number of locations in every State. So, the number of country people that we get to come through is very small by comparison. I do not have an exact figure, but I would say the vast majority of them would be in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The not-at-fault statistics that you removed from the figures, can you recall if there are any animal impact accidents within those figures and were they deemed to be at fault or not at all?

Mr YAPP: They are deemed to be at fault. In the terminology we would call that at fault. There was not any impact with animals in that.

Mr DURAKOVIC: No, they were removed.

Mr YAPP: My recollection is that there were not any impact with animals but, again, if you want to see the complete data, we are happy to furnish it for you.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: You might have addressed this before, Mr Yapp, but just to confirm it, the 22.7 per cent incident rates in under 25s, I think you said you were unable to track that through in that group as to what that incident rate was in the under 25s that actually did the course, is that correct?

Mr YAPP: No. More correctly, what I am saying is that that is the overall incident rate. So, in that you have where they are at fault and where they are not at fault, all of the mixes of the different types of categorisation of the accident. For the purpose of this, we were just trying to look at the course content. As you can see in the literature, you cannot information overload in this course. We were trying to get to the three things we thought would make a difference, and it was the distance, the space and the speed. So we cut it down to looking at things arising out of areas we are trying to influence. I get the sense that we might be looking a little as though we have camouflaged, and that

would not be our intent at any point. We are happy to send you the whole of the breakdown and you can interpret the data.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: When you were talking about the financial success of this course or otherwise, it would be my view that while it might be financially unsuccessful, if it saved one life it would be socially very successful.

Mr DURAKOVIC: Absolutely, and that is one of the primary reasons for doing that.

Mr YAPP: Yes. The most difficult thing for us, we would like it to get to a much broader community. The more people who do it the better we think it would be. Our difficulty has been the motivation to get someone to do it. At one moment in time we tried treating them like 25-year-olds, so do the course and we then applied rates for their own insurance and we waived age excesses. That was a commercial disaster, I have to say without fear of contradiction. We went too far in what we believe the course might deliver in commercial terms. So we came back to a balance where we are not making money—but that is not the ambition—but we are not burning a lot of money either. I will have no hesitation in admitting that is a good thing from our viewpoint but it is delivering. We are getting them to do it because they can get it for free and there is that extra little thing that says they get some alleviation in their insurance.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Did you say you have been doing it since 1982?

Mr DURAKOVIC: Yes, that is right.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you have any figures about the incident rate for drivers once they get over 25?

Mr YAPP: Yes, we can break them into any groups.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Is it a downward spiral?

Mr DURAKOVIC: We cannot go back that far before 1982 because since then we have had computer changes and changes in databases but we certainly can provide some data back further in terms of ongoing—

Mr YAPP: You were interested more in the ageing of the person?

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Yes, as they get to 25 and 30.

Mr YAPP: Absolutely.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do the incident rates remain low, that is what I am getting at.

Mr YAPP: Every insurer has a pretty much traditional curve where the young are high, the rate at which they have accidents. We all get better. There is that moment as we advance in years where we are worsening again.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I would like to see the graph that shows the line of those who do your course—what is their line—and those who have not done it, the rest of the whole sample, what that line does.

Mr YAPP: Happy to do that.

Mr DURAKOVIC: Happy to do that. I do not know how large the sample would be who would be continuously insured with us since 1992 but there would be a number that we could extract to show that.

The Hon. IAN WEST: As I understand it, you have no commercial sensitivities about this? You want this to be taken up by all and sundry and there is no reason why your course could not be V-tabbed?

Mr DURAKOVIC: No.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Is it currently accredited or is it just solely AAMI?

Mr YAPP: I am not sure whose accreditation we would seek.

CHAIR: I think I can answer that. The answer is no. It would not be V-tabbed.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: On page 8 of your submission AAMI says only 4 per cent seem to say that the course was beneficial. Is that right?

Mr DURAKOVIC: I am sorry, I do not have the original submission in front of me. I am terribly sorry.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: It says that only 4 per cent of the people who did the course found it very beneficial. I think that figure may need clarifying.

Mr DURAKOVIC: It does not sound correct.

Mr YAPP: It did not sound terribly compelling when you said it. The disclaimer is we were not involved in the preparation of it initially.

Mr DURAKOVIC: I would need to check on that and I will come back to the Committee on that.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

ALBERT TERENCE BIRSS, Chairman, RYDA Australia Ltd, 10A Julius Avenue, North Ryde,

JOHN LEONARD LOUGHLIN, Director, RYDA Australia Ltd, 10A Julius Avenue, North Ryde,
and

GREGORY PHILIP CANTWELL, Director of Operations, RYDA Australia Ltd, 10A Julius Avenue, North Ryde, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: We have received your submission. Unless there are any objections it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication. Are there any objections?

Mr BIRSS: No.

CHAIR: There being no objection, it is so ordered. Do you have any further documentation that you wish to table to form part of your evidence here today?

Mr BIRSS: No.

CHAIR: I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and also a copy of the Legislative Assembly's standing orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses, is that correct?

Mr LOUGHLIN: Yes.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr BIRSS: We are happy to go straight to questions.

CHAIR: I thank representatives of Rotary for appearing here today. I should acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of Rod McLean, from Campbelltown Rotary. He inspired me to ask that Rotary be invited to make a submission to the Staysafe Committee because of the work it does in Campbelltown and Camden. I am sure Rod would want me to say that they run the best course in New South Wales—but that would probably be contested elsewhere. We have a series of questions. The Rotary Youth Driver Awareness, RYDA, program was established following a series of young driver fatalities in 2000. It is a community-based initiative involving local government, schools, health officials, police and emergency services personnel and Rotary clubs. The program is targeted at year 11 students and complements the existing school curriculum. Who was involved in the initial design and development of the content of the RYDA program and to what extent was the RTA involved in its early design and implementation?

Mr BIRSS: Certainly right from the outset RYDA as a matter of policy connected with the New South Wales Government, in particular the RTA, and also police operationally. In relation to other elements of the program—for example, safe celebrating, fatigue and so on—we sought input from health authorities.

Mr LOUGHLIN: To add to that, we also in the very initial stages had a joint meeting with the RTA and the Education department to make sure that the methods of presentation we used were up to best practice from the point of view of the Education department. Gail Bruton, who is now with the RTA, was the person who advised us at that time.

CHAIR: Following on from that, what kind of training and qualifications do the course presenters have?

Mr LOUGHLIN: At the RYDA course?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr LOUGHLIN: At Rotary we are merely facilitators of this program. We always make sure that the people who present the program are experts in their field. We have six subjects we present on and each one of those subjects is presented by an expert. One is the police department, and we use such people as youth liaison officers with the police department to make those presentations. Others are crash survivors. We use people who have survived crashes and also people who have trained as part of their rehabilitation program to make these presentations. For that alone, our program is a wonderful thing. It enables those people to get their training and get back out there and feel useful again. We are often the first thing they have done one, two or three years after having a major, debilitating accident. So we have people like that. We have experts in finance and insurance, who make presentations about safe stopping distances. We use expert driver education people. Initially the program was held at the Honda Australia Rider Training, or HART, centre at the old police training centre at St Ives. We used their presenters to do the road safety aspect of the program.

Mr BIRSS: Perhaps we could summarise by saying that we are looking for accredited people, experts and professionals with real-life experiences. It is part of our role as RYDA to identify those people and then to ensure that the program is consistently delivered.

CHAIR: Do you have any idea what percentage of year 11 students in New South Wales participate in the program? Has it been taken up in any other States?

Mr BIRSS: There are two questions there. As to the first in relation to New South Wales, approximately 20,000 students per annum attend the program. We believe that would represent about one-third of New South Wales students. We would anticipate a significant increase this year given the new arrangements we have through the Ministry of Transport and the RTA for the development of the program in the west and the south of Sydney. In relation to the rest of Australia, the program now runs in Tasmania, where more than 50 per cent of students attend—and this year they are planning 70 per cent. The program has been launched in South Australia, with small numbers there, and next month the program will launch in Queensland. As an aside—I know it does not quite count—the program now also runs in New Zealand.

CHAIR: Congratulations.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: It counts: they all come over here and drive.

CHAIR: I have one other question. Your submission expresses an intention to consolidate the program's relationship with the New South Wales Government. What is the extent of the current agreements, funding arrangements and joint program evaluation activities with New South Wales government agencies?

Mr BIRSS: We have a two-year agreement with the RTA in relation to their support generally and an element of funding. In addition, it also calls on us to provide feedback to the Government in relation to, if you like, our customers—to put it in a business sense. So we are very much at the grassroots in dealing with the program. It is a two-way arrangement with the RTA in terms of communication. So to encapsulate that, there is an element of funding, there is an element of support from the RTA and there is also an element of feedback from RYDA.

CHAIR: Do you believe the level of support from government is sufficient at the moment?

Mr BIRSS: At the moment we believe that, insofar as it goes, it is reasonably adequate. We understand that as a not-for-profit, charitable organisation we can deliver this program at a fraction of its commercial cost. That said, we also believe that for the sustainability of this program—and it has now been running eight years—it is essential that all elements of society make a contribution to this—in other words, share the burden. Of course that includes the local communities. It includes local communities through Rotary. It also includes larger commercial sponsors. Indeed, the major sponsor of RYDA is BOC, the industrial gases company that is in the safety business. We also look to governments for both in-kind knowledge support and an element of financial support without taking away the responsibility from our organisation to be accountable for the provision of the program.

So to that extent it is so far, so good. But there is one element on which we are seeking further support from the New South Wales Government, and that is in relation to the cost—which is not small—of bussing students to the venues and back again. That is very roughly a cost—as I think we have indicated in our submission—that runs at about \$10 per head. We have made a request to the Minister for Roads and, in turn, the Minister for Transport and are currently working with both Roads and Transport authorities to see how in fact the Government can provide support there in a simple way from our perspective through the utilisation, for example, of student bus passes. In other words, we would like to get students to and from the venues without additional cost. We would say this to you: If we are able to do that, the rate of take-up of the program in the west and south of metropolitan Sydney will be greatly enhanced.

CHAIR: What is the take-up in regional New South Wales as opposed to metropolitan Sydney? Do you have any idea?

Mr CANTWELL: I do, Mr Chairman. We cover Dubbo, Bathurst, the Central Coast, Bega, Taree, Young, Cowra and Narrabri, where there are current programs. And there are certainly plans to expand throughout regional Australia.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: This morning we heard from the Department of Education and Training about external courses, how they do not always fit in with the curriculum. How does this course fit in with the curriculum?

Mr BIRSS: Right from the outset, as you heard from Director John Loughlin, we have sought to mention what we are doing with government. The Department of Education has a role to play in terms of the style of presentation—in other words, interactive presentations which the students find effective, but it is based on the current curriculum. The RYDA Program is designed to be part of the content of learning from K to 12. It also is very cognisant of the content of Crossroads and, in many respects, draws out Crossroads in a way that is not always available to all students—students, for example, who are not taking personal development, health and physical education. But through the RYDA Program, they have the opportunity of actually being exposed to the Crossroads curriculum.

Mr LOUGHLIN: We would like to extend that involvement with curriculum. We see that this program presents really well, as some similar programs present well, the information that is required. Because of the way we put it together it is absorbed very readily by the students. But of course you need to have an extension of that learning. We have done some research on how fast learning recedes and so on. We realise that we need to better integrate going forward with some of the actual driver education programs once they get behind the wheel of a car, but we also need schools to perhaps tweak their curriculum on a little bit too.

For example, the economic costs of a car accident come in lots of ways and could become a research module, for example, in a commerce course. Obviously, there are things that exist out there that sometimes that are taken up, or not, such as the physics of car accidents and things like that. If they were dealt with a little bit better in the curriculum it would not need any change and they could still be doing the same things that currently doing. It would help us with a continuum into that. Going forward, we also need to do a little bit more research with some of Sydney's major research organisations—we have approached a couple of our universities and so on—to help them with an extension of learning, either through that curriculum or by linking with further driver education programs to make sure that it works. We are very, very concerned and aware that a continuum has to take place.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: In integrating it with the school curriculum, how long does it take to actually deliver those six modules? What sort of time span does it take now?

Mr BIRSS: It is a one-day event held out of school. Students would leave school after they arrive, typically at 8.30. They would arrive at the venue, typically at 9.30. There would be six periods, similar to what they would have at school. They would leave before three o'clock and be back at school at 3.30. So it is one day.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: You are fairly confident that they would be able to be delivered locally, logistically across the whole State?

Mr BIRSS: Oh, yes. Our model is designed to do that. For example, a new venue for RYDA is now the Homebush centre, which will now service a good part of the south of Sydney—a major location which will, within two and a half years, we believe, actually be looking after 10,000 students per annum. The Penrith Regatta Centre, which is our Western Sydney location, has gone from zero to 5,000 in just over a year, and that will, within another year, be running at 10,000 students. Looking at it regionally, there is a quite different environment there. If we go into Dubbo, as an example—and we have been running the program there for a number of years—the program can and is held at the showgrounds in an environment which local students find quite satisfactory. They are quite amenable to that. But we are able to go into different locations and find the appropriate resources. Our model supports that variation.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Do you have a critical mass of students? Is there an optimal number to participate in the workshops? Is it a big event that you have many schools come to, or is it a small-group type of exercise?

Mr BIRSS: No. Consistent with the advice we received from the education department, we want small class interactive activity. Typically, in the day we have six sessions happening, we have six classes happening. Typically, there would be between 20 and maybe nearly 30 students in each class at that time. So it is relatively small and intensive, and that is what we are advised is the course that is likely to produce the best results. This can then be moved up: in other words, 120 a day up to 200 a day, depending on the physical restrictions of the site, of the location, but we can run that one day. For example, at the moment the program is running in St Ives—it has run now for eight years—and it will run for four months, virtually every day for four months. When we go to Narrabri we will run for one day or two, to Cowra for one day, to Young for two days, and so on.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I assume that independent schools would have access to the program as well?

Mr BIRSS: Independent, as opposed to State schools?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

Mr BIRSS: Yes, the independent schools and also the Catholic schools. They all have access. Part of our philosophy is very much that we are looking to provide a program which is a consistent program. It is a relevant program, it is a uniform program, and a program which in fact is available to everybody. It is available to all students, State or private, metropolitan or bush. That is our aim.

Mr LOUGHLIN: We are starting to bring in some TAFE colleges as well for those who leave in year 10. They are a little bit harder group to catch. Through TAFE and over time through some employer organisations we hope we can pick some of those people up as well.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: You have probably answered a couple of questions, or at least have gone some way toward answering some of the questions I have. We talked about expansion of the program. You mention in your submission that the program total since 1999 is about 60,000.

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Yet in the last financial year there were 20,000.

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: So obviously your program is exponential.

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: You also mentioned that you could take your 120 participants to 200, et cetera, and you could do a number of courses all over the State on the same day.

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: And that the courses are built around the number of students. If you want to take this into the school system as part of the curriculum, do you believe you can do it physically? In other words, could you provide the resources and the methodologies and the way you are doing that, provided the funding was there, to be able to physically do it as part of the school curriculum?

Mr BIRSS: I am not sure I understand your question but let me give you a preliminary answer. Our plan, our model, is to make the program available to all schools throughout New South Wales, and we believe that the model will support that.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: So you do it once per group of students. You do not repeat it. You do not do it in year 7 and then do another one in year 10 or something?

Mr BIRSS: No. Our program zeroes in on year 11 because year 11 is crucial, we say, if we are going to try to make a difference here. Year 11 is crucial because that is the time when they are thinking about driving or are about to get into a motor car, or indeed are about to become a passenger in a vehicle with their peers. So that is where we zero in on.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: You state in your presentation that your program typically costs about 15 per cent of the cost of a full commercial program. You also mentioned that the most expensive part of the program is actually getting the kids there—\$10 a head to bus them. What is the approximate cost per head to do the program now?

Mr CANTWELL: It would average out at roughly \$15 per student per venue.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Plus \$10 for a bus ticket?

Mr CANTWELL: Plus \$10 for buses, yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: So it will be \$25 a head.

Mr BIRSS: However, in the country it is less. It does relate essentially to the cost of the venue and the cost of the presenters. The venue, of course, as an example, is going to be more expensive in metropolitan Sydney than it will be in the bush. So the cost is as low as, I believe, \$7.50.

Mr CANTWELL: Yes.

Mr BIRSS: So \$7.50 in the bush, plus the cost of bussing.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: You have mentioned that you would like to take it into TAFE if you could develop a methodology and a program to do that?

Mr BIRSS: At present there are some TAFE colleges attending, but we have not gone looking for that opportunity because we are still dealing with the demand from schools.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: The RTA in its submission has pretty much made the statement that they do not generally support community-based programs because they felt that there was no consistency. You are arguing that in fact yours is a consistent program right across the State. Is that right?

Mr BIRSS: That is correct. I think we are not able to talk, and do not choose to talk, about other community programs, but our program is based very much on a professional approach. We have, through the funding of our major sponsor, a national office. Within that national office we have experienced and competent people who are there to develop the program in conjunction with the government authorities. So we would have, as an example—and I think we refer to that in our submission—a very substantial policies and procedures manual about the content of the program, the manner in which we can change the program, and there is a procedure for that and we outline that, the

way in which we promulgate the program to presenters, and the manner in which we identify how the presenters are in fact performing.

I would agree with your comment that in fact there is an inconsistent program throughout the State and it is very difficult for government, for the RTA, to provide support—because what in fact are they supporting? What sort of "control" do they have over the messages? To that extent, whenever we make a change to our program of any materiality not only does it come through our technical advisory committees on the recommendation of the executive, which is then approved or not but approved by the board, that process only happens after it has had the tick of approval. I cannot say a tick of approval from the RTA, but certainly it has been past the education department and the RTA and the police service for any comment. That is how we seek to provide a quality program which is consistent.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: State Governments typically, when they pony up the money for programs like this, like to see some sort of uniformity—that is there.

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: They also like to see accreditation when it comes to the people who are actually giving the lectures or teaching. Are you looking at developing a system of accreditation for your program as presenters? In other words, would you be seeking to have your people accredited by the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board [VETAB], or whatever the accreditation requirement is?

CHAIR: Most of them have that.

Mr BIRSS: I can say that that is something we have not considered at this stage.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Do not get me wrong: I am not saying the Government would require something like that; I am just asking the question. If you have not, then you maybe need to think about that if you want substantial funding.

Mr BIRSS: If it adds to our ability to achieve our overall objective—and that is current, relevant, uniform and consistent programs—it is something that clearly we could look at, yes.

Mr LOUGHLIN: I would think that one of the reasons we have not accredited is that we would not know who to accredit with. There is no accrediting organisation that I am aware of. Our presenters are really accredited with us because we have criteria for selecting presenters and we would not let the police one be done by a community service officer. It has to be the police one. There is a form of control and accreditation throughout our procedures, but to go broader than that, it has to be an organisation to accredit with. I am not aware of one in New South Wales.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: What is the process? Does the school know about RYDA and make an approach? What is the role of the local Rotary Club? Is their involvement also in mounting the course in any way? Do you have a team of presenters who go to places?

Mr BIRSS: Yes.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Did you develop a course in a location with locally sourced providers? These are all very basic questions, but I do not know the answers and that is why I am asking.

Mr BIRSS: First of all, the structure is this: RYDA, this organisation, develops and controls the program. That is where we get the quality, the uniformity, the relevance and so on. Because we are a Rotary organisation under the Rotary umbrella we, to use business language, distribute the product through Rotary clubs. Why? Because Rotary clubs are in every single community going around this country. They know everybody in the local community, whether it is the local copper, the mayor or the school principal.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: They are better than the CIA. I know: I am a member of Rotary.

Mr BIRSS: We have got a centrally controlled program quality mechanism and we have got distribution through voluntary organisation Rotary clubs. That is the first question. To come to the third question, the program cannot be changed on the basis that a Rotary club in some location wants to change it. That is not possible. What happens though is that because we are community based in the way in which we do things and because we want to engage, and we do, through Rotary with the local community to help solve that local community problem, then we look to see the extent to which the program emphasis needs to be changed. Let me give you one example. In the Illawarra because of the socioeconomic environment there are more riders of motorcycles, for example, than you would perhaps find on the North Shore or in the Sydney metropolitan area. Therefore, there is an emphasis in our presentation in relation to motorcycle riding safety. An example again, in the bush or even in the Illawarra where there is a greater emphasis on trucks in the environment, there is an emphasis in hazard perception, for example, that focuses on that. The fundamentals of the program are not changed; the emphasis is to meet with local community conditions.

Mr LOUGHLIN: The Rotary club's role, in particular, is one more of logistics than anything else. They will assist us with getting a proper venue. Through the criteria we give them they will assist with setting up that venue. They also assist with staffing the venue for the day. They are not staffing from the point of view of presenters but we need other people, people to lead around, people to show where to park cars and those sorts of classic Rotary-type things. They do that. They also often have a very good relationship with the local school and the local school principal through other programs they have participated in. We will go with that Rotary club through the school and that makes it very easy to have a chat with the people and get them to come to the program, which is very important. Participation is a lot better when we are working with the local Rotary club.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I presume you have more requests than you need for participation in the program?

Mr LOUGHLIN: No, we are quite happy to take as many requests. We cannot necessarily take people instantly when they request, but schools do not work that way in any case. Schools have a program that works a year in advance and we have to do all our hard work around October. Then they plan and it can be done in a very ordered way. We will get contacted by schools or Rotary clubs now and it will become next year's program. It works pretty consistently that way.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The program sounds very good and I believe you have it right targeting year 11 students, which is the age at which kids generally get their licences. Have you looked at any models of accessing higher risk kids who may leave school and not necessarily go into the TAFE system and are generally those kids who would benefit most from this sort of program?

Mr BIRSS: It is fair to say it is on our mind because it troubles us somewhat, but we have not found a solution to that. I would say that we are flat out coping with what we are coping with in terms of running out the program. That is not to say we cannot do more than one thing at a time but, no, we have not found a solution for that.

Mr CANTWELL: If I could just add to that, there was a pilot run with Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre to trial it up there. We had to modify things like stopping distances and putting kids into cars was considered not to be a good idea in case they did not stop and continued on. It is certainly something that is on the agenda.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Roughly how many Rotary clubs are there in New South Wales that could participate in this program?

Mr BIRSS: Within 10 per cent of 500, I would think. There are just over 1,200 in Australia, so about 40 per cent. A lot of Rotary clubs, a lot of communities, a lot of people doing good work.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I am familiar with the Rotary U-Turn the Wheel Program. What is the relationship between the U-Turn the Wheel Program and your program?

Mr BIRSS: The U-Turn the Wheel Program operates in the south of Sydney and I believe it operates well south and also into the east. Through Rotary we are exploring an agreement whereby in

relation to that part of U-Turn the Wheel that runs nearer Sydney but just south of Sydney that program will become a joint program, a program that we will support in terms of the professional background that we have got to provide that program. We are looking at how that might be labelled. We are looking at how we can effect it in the coming months. That is actively underway. I think it would be fair to say in respect of U-Turn the Wheel and RYDA our idea is that whereas U-Turn the Wheel has a marvellous relationship with the communities in which it is operating, we nevertheless have quite a lot of horsepower in terms of ensuring the quality of the program, the quality of our model which can be scaled up and developed. I think it is fair to say that the U-Turn the Wheel people, the group that I am talking to, have come to the view that acting together is better than acting separately.

CHAIR: I think you have covered the series of questions. Is there anything you would like to add?

Mr LOUGHLIN: I want to go back to the question on the time available for the program. The thing about road safety is that it is actually one subject. We just break it into six modules but those modules are interrelated. So even though it sounds like there are six and there are a lot of things to cover, they tie together very well—for example, if you are doing a safe celebrating presentation and talk about the consequences of road accidents and then present the consequences with a brain injury victim. That is why they are different modules and have a different emphasis, but it is still on the consequences of behaviour. Insurance ties in with other legal aspects. So it is really just one big question throughout the day that is looked at from all directions. That is why you can put it into that a one-day presentation. If you go on and on and on with it, it would wear you down.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I was a teacher. When we were asked to integrate anything into the curriculum we would have to look at the total curriculum and whether it was skimming the surface. If it is a one-day presentation it is probably a good model rather than six units over a long period of time.

Mr BIRSS: I would like to finish with one element, if I might. The evaluation in which we participated three years ago indicated that one of the important things that should occur is that there be an intersectorial approach. That is to say that what we are doing should clearly be embedded in the road safety conversation—that is, what happened in year 10 should flow appropriately through to what happens in year 11, the highlighter of which is the RYDA program. Importantly for our program to help with extended learning and retention of knowledge it should then flow into what comes next. We are happy to play our part in that by working with the reference group—which we have established with the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Department of Education And Training, Youthsafe and independent schools—to ensuring that we are not duplicating, we are not missing and we are part of this continuum of learning right through.

We see that as something that we can contribute because we have demonstrated over eight years a systematic approach to the way in which we are going about this. We also see that it would be helpful, and I have touched on this, that the New South Wales Government explores with us how we might continue further evaluations of the program. I have indicated quite clearly in our submission that we believe in a fair go for our youth, that is, give them the information first before you subject them to the penalties for breach. Equally, we should be looking to see how we can make the program better, all of these programs better. To that extent we would like to work with the New South Wales government in determining how we can further evaluate the program, further develop the program for the benefit of our youth.

CHAIR: Thank you, gentlemen, for your attendance today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

ROSS COOPER, Education Program Coordinator and Presenter, Enough is Enough Antiviolence Movement Incorporated, Level 1, 4 Gray Street, Sutherland, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I welcome Ross Cooper, Program Coordinator for Enough Is Enough. Thank you for appearing today to provide evidence on the Staysafe Committee's inquiry into young driver safety and education programs. The Committee has received your submission. Unless there are any objections, it is proposed that your submission be authorised for publication. Do you have any objections?

Mr COOPER: No objection.

CHAIR: There being no objection it is so ordered. Do you have any further documentation that you wish to table to form part of your evidence here today?

Mr COOPER: Yes.

CHAIR: That is included in your evidence. I am advised that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and a copy of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders 291, 292 and 293, which relate to the examination of witnesses. Is that correct?

Mr COOPER: Correct.

CHAIR: In what capacity are you appearing before the Committee?

Mr COOPER: As program presenter with an organisation called Enough is Enough.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr COOPER: Yes. I would not mind reading an overview of the four programs that I do. There are four separate distinct programs, and we can look at the analysis of these programs later if you so wish. I have given each of you a copy of this at the front of your folders and at the back there is further information, which I will refer to later. I thank the Committee for looking at this subject because it is long overdue, in my opinion. I would like to commend you for doing this. There are four programs. I would like to note that all of our programs are evaluated pre- and post-presentation and a range of therapeutic models underpin all of our work. The first program I deal with is a program called SKYDS, Skilled or Killed Young Driver Safety. This program, which runs in the Shoalhaven on the South Coast of New South Wales, was developed by myself together with the now retired Shoalhaven road safety officer Duncan Marshall and the then police youth liaison officer Belinda White. It is currently co-ordinated by the sitting Shoalhaven road safety officer Kim Davis, who is a founder member of U-Turn the Wheel Program—a program that you understand about. That program has been running in the Southern Highlands since 1999. SKYDS is a year 10 school driver awareness program currently made up of six workshops of 30 minutes each. The students rotate through these workshops during the day. This, of course, takes up the entire day. There is a referral there. You have the full SKYDS 2007 evaluation report in the back of your folders. This program was first trialled in 2002 with the full program running since 2003. The format has been fully evaluated and appropriately consolidated each year since opening.

The evidence and value of both the SKYDS and U Turn the Wheel programs in the areas they are run are well documented and show that the current percentage of deaths in the 17 to 25-year-old age group has reduced considerably below the State's 36 per cent down to 25 per cent. It is an 11 per cent lowering. This positive effect is compounded by the fact that the Shoalhaven area has been experiencing one of the highest population growths in the State. The program's value within the nine high schools, both private and public, together with the Shoalhaven community is highly regarded. The schools book up for the next year at the completion of the program. So all the nine high schools in the Shoalhaven are already fully committed and booked for next year. Enough is Enough physically supports other councils and groups in a variety of other programs, such as U Turn the Wheel, where

one of our presenters presents it for the Southern Highlands schools. We do other work with Muswellbrook Law Week and several areas. That is a rough overview of the SKYDS program.

I will now go to the second program called the Road Awareness Program [RAP]. This program has been developed especially to accommodate the driver education needs of year 10 to year 12 students within Sydney high schools. It contains all of the core components of our other programs and is run en masse for all of the students at each school in one large group setting and takes one hour. Currently five of our presenters with Enough is Enough are running the program into 11 Sydney high schools and five high schools in the south-west. We are currently undertaking installation of this program into both the central and north-west areas of New South Wales. The evidence and value of this program is well documented. Its value within participating schools, both private and public, is highly regarded. The cost of running RAP varies from nil to a maximum cost of \$3.85 per student. I forgot to mention that the Shoalhaven Sunshine Rotary Club funds the SKYDS program.

The third program is TOP, the Traffic Offender Program. People who have been charged with a serious traffic offence and are trying to establish good intent on their behalf attend this program. Presenters with Enough is Enough are currently facilitating this program at 16 venues in Sydney, Gosford, Southern Highlands, Central West and the South Coast. The program consists of six to eight modules, which feature most of the SKYDS components. We had Enough is Enough facilitate one of the modules in each of these venues. For the 16 venues there is six to eight weeks where we do one of those and they contain all of our core features and original concepts. This program was funded at approximately \$100 per person by the participants, the traffic offenders.

The fourth program that I do is the R Driver Awareness Program and this is currently being trialled in two prisons in New South Wales: Muswellbrook and Cessnock. It consists of a full day of lectures and workshops with 20 participants per day and is attended by inmates who have been incarcerated for traffic-related crime. I am only dealing with traffic-related inmates, not other crime. This program, although having all the core features of our other programs, is solution focused and very proactive within its delivery. To date, the resulting evaluations are overwhelmingly positive. I can then go on to some sort of analysis of each program and take one program at a time, if you wish, so that you have a better understanding of exactly what is going on.

CHAIR: We will take some questions first. Otherwise I am a bit worried that we are going to run out of time.

Mr COOPER: Yes, I feel like I am in the hot seat here. I have given you a copy of everything so that you can do it at your own leisure.

CHAIR: The obvious question to me, after listening to the Rotary RYDA program being described and you talking about your program, they both sound similar if not identical. Do you feel there are competing interests between both groups trying to do good work?

Mr COOPER: I do not feel that there is any competition or competing interests between any of these groups, whether it be U Turn the Wheel, RYDA, us or whatever. I have addressed that on the last page you have there. The last bit is my personal comments, not necessarily comments of my organisation. The first comment addresses what I feel about the RYDA program. The way we do our program has real effect. I do not want to knock any other program but kids being kids, once something is "sanitised" to such a degree as the RYDA program, it is not emotive and it is not in their face. I really question the long-term value of a "sanitised" program. But I certainly feel the intent of every program, no matter who is running it, has value. I do not feel that there needs to be, nor should there be, a competition that one is better than the other, et cetera. I hate that type of thing. We all have a good intent and we are all doing our best with the limitations of our own abilities.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Bringing you back to the "sanitised" driver education program, we have heard evidence this morning that fear and loathing does not work?

Mr COOPER: Okay.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: How would you respond to that?

Mr COOPER: I would say that if you are installing fear and loathing, making people frightened—particularly year 10 students—of getting their licences et cetera, that is detrimental and does harm. I am dead set against—

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I was more thinking about the consequences of accidents—they believe it is something that happens to other people—in terms of long-term change of behaviour?

Mr COOPER: I would put it to anybody that content needs to be real and needs to be perceived as real and emotive. When I say it needs to be in their face, I mean it needs to be real and emotive. It does not want to be just lectured, sanitised talking. It has to be perceived as real by young kids or they do not take it on board. There is a big difference between showing a certain amount of footage et cetera. You have one of the SKYDS DVDs there on file—not in those folders but I did give Bjame one. There is a big difference between frightening somebody and making it real whereby they take it on board. There is a fine line, I appreciate that, and I personally feel that we have got that to a fair degree correct. Let me state that all of our presenters at Enough is Enough have gone through road trauma personal experience. I think that does entitle our presenters to have a feeling of personal balance between just going out and lecturing and it being in your face and to sanitise it where it is not real at all. There is a fine line.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: The highest risk group, do you do service—

Mr COOPER: Yes, the 17-25 age group basically.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I am talking about the Traffic Offender Program and the R Driver Awareness Program, the ones that have already run into problems. They will almost definitely have difficulties accessing SKYDS and RAP because they will have already left school?

Mr COOPER: No, that is too late. They are totally different programs. Let me state that the difference between these four programs that are run is enormous. Some of the tools are the same. For example, the SKYDS content, method of delivery and even the language that is used, are totally different to say the RAP program compared to the Traffic Offenders Program.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: What I am saying is that the people who end up in the Traffic Offenders Program and R Drivers Awareness Program—

Mr COOPER: It is too late. They are not in that younger age group.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: And they would have probably left school?

Mr COOPER: Most of them. Just about all of them, yes. Definitely.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: So you have no way of capturing these people?

Mr COOPER: After they have left school?

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Yes.

Mr COOPER: I am not aware of any program that deals with young adults once they have left school. Unless they are picked up for doing something wrong, I am not aware of any. I address along those lines in the last page of my submission as well.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: To what extent were the Roads and Traffic Authority involved in the early design and implementation of your program?

Mr COOPER: Which program?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: The SKYDS program, my apologies. Just having a look at the notes on the program analysis of SKYDS I can see the types of people you are using. So that probably answers part of the other question. The second question is, what kind of training and qualifications do presenters have? If I am right, you are putting an emphasis on the fact that you need

to have presenters who have been there, done that, seen it and know what it is like or can talk firsthand to these people. Of course police, ambulance officers, health department et cetera. Do the volunteers and the other people who talk to the schoolchildren have relevant qualifications in some area?

Mr COOPER: For example, I have done a counselling course. I have done workplace training and assessment, Train the Trainer. I have done a brief therapy training session workshop, et cetera. So I have appropriate training to deal with this type of situation, yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Going back to the question of the Roads and Traffic Authority's involvement in the early design—

Mr COOPER: We got an initial amount of money for the initial set up. The cost of setting up SKYDS to begin with was approximately \$4,000. I do not have an exact breakdown. Some of that was from donations, some was from the Roads and Traffic Authority and some was from other sources. I could find that if you needed it, but the Roads and Traffic Authority was involved in the initial funding of setting up and buying the equipment. It has not been involved at all since.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Has it been involved at all in the assessment of your course?

Mr COOPER: The Roads and Traffic Authority has not been involved at all in the program running or content whatsoever.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: There are a lot of different courses out there that people can access. Just tying you into your opinion on driver training, should the Government be looking at giving a discount for your licence fee or something if you have attended one of these courses?

Mr COOPER: I address that as well on the last page of my submission. Yes, I agree. I will read them to you as I have put them down, if you like. I refer to point No. 2 on page 5 of my submission:

The setting up and running of a High School Program such as SKYDS, should be required as part of every RSO's job description [that is the road safety officer's job description] in every district of NSW.

I can talk at length about why I feel that. I work with RSOs and this would work. I honestly believe that. I continue:

Should this not be forthcoming: The Driver Education, RAP should be compulsory in every High School and all High Schools should be required to participate in such a program, as part of the fulfilment of their schools Drug/Alcohol curriculum requirements.

That is where we slot in and solve that problem for the schools. I go on to say:

Schools often experience difficulty fulfilling these requirements and as a result they are often overlooked or under resourced.

SKYDS goes in as part and parcel of the drug and alcohol education section of the curriculum. Returning to the point you were raising:

Any new licence should only be issued after the applicant has completed a program such as SKYDS.

In other words, new licence—new SKYDS. I continue:

All drivers who have had their licence cancelled must complete a course such as TOP before the licence is reissued.

A credit should be given—

This is the one you asked me about—

(Re-gaining of Points) to drivers who undertake such a course.

In this day and age I think all offenders—if we want to start at the offender level—should be given brownie points, if we can call it that, for changing their lives, undertaking courses, waking up,

becoming aware and becoming responsible citizens, because to a certain degree a lot of this is caused by antisocial behaviour. In a way, kids need to grow up, but they need time to be able to grow up. I could talk at length on that as well, but we will be running out of time. I hope that answers your question.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You talked about increasing the number of people who do the SKYDS course by enlarging it to other areas?

Mr COOPER: Yes.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: You are going to have difficulty in finding presenters, are you not, if you require presenters to have been through—

Mr COOPER: No. We do not require them, but if presenters have been through some sort of road trauma it does give them a far greater insight to the fineness of where to go, but that does not necessarily limit it. We are not insisting on all our presenters having that kind of thing, not by any means. If they do not have this life-gained experience, they would certainly need to have counselling experience or some kind of professional experience in this way. It would have to be appropriate teaching.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: Teaching experience or counselling?

Mr COOPER: Not necessarily. Teaching experience does have a wealth of advantage controlling kids, talking to kids et cetera, but no, I do not think the appropriateness would necessarily be that all teachers would be right for the program.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: How do you reach a town other than the ones mentioned in this book? I am referring to SKYDS only. How do you get found or how would you enter a town? There is no organisation, I imagine, that is there for you like Rotary is with RYDA.

Mr COOPER: I honestly believe that for every road safety officer in every district of New South Wales part of their job description should be running a program such as SKYDS or U-turn the Wheel or that type of program. It should be part of their job description to run this program into schools. That then becomes self-evident as to how to do it. If you look through the program for SKYDS, the police are involved, the ambos are involved, the RTA is involved—the road safety officers are half paid by the RTA in most cases. In my opinion that is the way to reach all of these outlying areas; wherever there is a road safety officer in control of an area, that is the appropriate person to do it.

In Sydney we run the RAP program and, as I have said, we are in a good number of schools: there are 11 Sydney schools plus 5 in the south-west. So that is a total of 16 schools that are actually doing a program like that. Already that is now what we are doing. That seems to be growing at an enormous rate for us. We are getting inquiries from other schools and it is almost starting to snowball. There is this need for it. I will go to page four of my notes on the RAP program: "This type of format works well and is extremely effective. Note: This program is the best and most effective school driver education program if minimal involvement and disruption is required by the school and teachers."

What we have found is that Sydney schools do not want to dedicate a full day away from school or in the school because SKYDS will go into school. We used to go into the school; we do the program either way. Sydney schools tend to only be prepared to put in an hour or so outside schoolwork; they do not want a full day's disruption. Once again, it comes back to the road safety officer: if they were really involved and it was part of their job description, then it would have to be part of the curriculum; it does satisfy and slot into the drug and alcohol side, as I said. So, through the road safety officer is how we would reach these other areas. If this is not forthcoming or wanted to be in there, then our program, the RAP program, as I said, is already starting to snowball.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Just reading the last page of your supplementary it appears to me that your comparison between SKYDS and RYDA is two things: firstly, SKYDS is more realistic or more real and, secondly, that it does not take up a full day. Would that be correct?

Mr COOPER: SKYDS is a full-day program. As I have stated in the front, it is six workshops and the kids go right through all of the six workshops. We have a DVD that you have on file that you could watch. That is the old format with eight work shops; we reduced it to six.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: How many total participants have done the SKYDS program?

Mr COOPER: We have done it now since 2003 and we have approximately 1,600 kids per year do that.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: So that would be fewer than 10,000?

Mr COOPER: Oh yes. We are dealing only with nine high schools.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: As some of my colleagues have mentioned, we had presentations from various organisations, including Rotary and its RYDA program. Would you consider sitting down with the RYDA people to see whether they might modify their program to incorporate what you want to do?

Mr COOPER: Absolutely.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: And you get the value of being able to develop that program, as Mr Souris mentioned, much more rapidly. They claim that they have done 60,000—20,000 in the last financial year. They have 500 clubs statewide and they have the network to ramp this thing out.

Mr COOPER: I understand and, of course, no problem at all. I still maintain that with the New South Wales system, the way it is set up already, we already have the network for it and that is through the road safety officers. They are being paid to do a job. I have been to the PARSO meetings with the New South Wales road safety officers as part of their actual get-together and I do honestly believe that some of them are putting in good efforts for their job in their areas, but there are a lot of them. They are already being paid to do the job; if you made it part of their job description and it became a satisfying part of the school curriculum, there we are, we already have it set up.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: What about the concept of rather than just asking for it to be made a pre-requisite to getting a licence that the Government actually puts your program or a similar program into the curriculum so that there was no reticence on the schools to do the program: it is part of the curriculum, you do it?

Mr COOPER: Yes. My suggestion is that all kids should have done a program such as SKYDS or U-turn the Wheel or similar, RYDA, whatever. I feel that RYDA needs more teeth in it but U-turn the Wheel and SKYDS are very similar in the way we present things, the way we get there. Can I just say one thing. Kim Davis, the Shoalhaven road safety officer, who is now the road safety officer, was a founding member of U-turn the Wheel. We are lucky to have her now in the Shoalhaven. This came in and was developed before I was involved in it. I understand that RYDA more or less was taken from U-turn the Wheel and then developed by Rotary et cetera. I think it has lost a lot of its impetus and, as I say, it is sanitised.

Let me just highlight something for you that is a fact. You have the stats etc. Kim Davis, the Shoalhaven road safety officer can give you more facts if you like; in fact, I have the full plan from the Shoalhaven City Council here if you want it. These are facts. The south coast and southern highlands areas, these are where SKYDS and U-turn the Wheel run, are experiencing much lower road deaths in the 17 to 25-year-old age drivers despite the ratio of young drivers versus older drivers being unchanged. These are facts. In these areas where these programs—that is, SKYDS and U-turn the Wheel—are being run, deaths of young drivers are now 11 per cent lower than the State average: "Note: This fact is contrary to the norm and that being that road deaths of young drivers in country areas are normally higher than the State or city." So, we are 11 per cent down and it has been running since 1999 with U-turn the Wheel and 2003 for the full program of SKYDS. These are statistical facts.

This is not happening anywhere else in the State. U-turn the Wheel and SKYDS are very similar formats. There is not a lot of difference between them now. There was: SKYDS had eight workshops; it was just too much to redo your own workshop eight times a day, so we brought it back to six. Now that it is at six, the format works between those two programs. This is the evidence and any of your facts and figures will show that for you. That is not happening anywhere else where any other program is being run.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: How many people have you taken through the Traffic Offenders Program and the R Driver Awareness Program?

Mr COOPER: The Traffic Offender Program, I am actually not privy to those figures. I do not know. I would have been doing the Traffic Offender Program for seven years myself at Maroubra, Wollongong, Nowra and Ulladulla. It varies from eight participants to 50 participants. Maroubra usually is around 40, Wollongong is usually around about 8 to 15, Nowra is usually about 20 to 25 and Ulladulla is usually about 6 or 8. So, that is only myself; I have no idea what the other presenters are doing in Bankstown or any of those other areas.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: What about the R Driver Awareness Program?

Mr COOPER: I am the only one doing that. I am currently trialling it in Muswellbrook and Cessnock gaols. I have some testimonials or end-of-course statements of the participants, if you want them. I do 20 participants per day. The morning program is very similar to the TOP program, but in each of these programs you have to be mindful; for example, it would be very bad and wrong with the program we are talking about, the R Driver program, to put some of those tools and do some of the things I do and use with the kids because most of the kids are not yet even driving, let alone criminals. So, that has to be borne in mind. The afternoon with the R Driver program is very solution focused; it is workshops and is no longer the lecture-type program, which the TOP program is. The afternoon is 100 per cent solution focused about changing habits, becoming aware that your habits are causing grief to others, et cetera. So, it is a different format altogether.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Just a comment to sum up, I do not believe it is the Committee's role to determine which programs are better than another program.

Mr COOPER: Fair enough.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: But certainly the Committee would play a role in making recommendations about how programs are accredited and evaluated and how they would fit into the total driver learning scheme of things, whether they actually become part of a criteria or, as you said before, they get credits back for points lost and that sort of thing. So, do you agree that it does not matter what the program is; it is more how the programs are accredited and how they fit into the total system rather than just being randomly out there?

Mr COOPER: Yes. At present, why I congratulated you on looking at is program, the whole thing to begin with, is that it really is a hotchpotch and I think it needs to be brought in. I am the first one to agree with that. It is very much "How's your father" and there does need to be what you are looking at and exactly what you are trying to do. I agree with you 100 per cent.

CHAIR: Mr Cooper, thank you for coming today. If you would like to leave any of the testimonials and they need to be copied, please make sure that you leave an address so that we can post them back to you.

Mr COOPER: That is all right, no problem. I have testimonials on the TOP program and the R Driver program. They are photocopies, but I only just copied them this morning from the originals. I would like to extend an invitation to any of you gentlemen, or whoever is interested, certainly to come and look at any of these programs that I am doing. You have only to get hold of me and I will provide you with the appropriate dates.

(The witness withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 4.30 p.m.)

