



15 February 2005

The Hon Christine Robertson MLC
Chair, Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Robertson,

**Re: Sixth Review of the exercise of the functions of the MAA and the MAC
– invitation to participate.**

Thank you for your invitation to Youthsafe to nominate issues or specific questions for the Standing Committee on Law and Justice to consider raising with witnesses in relation to the Sixth Review of the exercise of the functions of the MAA and the MAC under section 210 of the *Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999*.

Youthsafe, as a not for profit organisation involved in preventing serious injury in young people (aged 15 to 25 years), is primarily interested in the road safety and injury management functions of the MAA. This is particularly so given the over representation of young people in road trauma statistics and the fact that road trauma is a major cause of death and disability amongst young people.

While effective insurance and legal processes are important to the smooth running of the Motor Accidents Compensation scheme, it is vital for all concerned to remember that injury on the roads is central to the scheme and consequently the road safety and injury management functions of the MAA and effective implementation of these is critical. MAA grants and injury management initiatives have made valuable contributions to the prevention of road trauma and rehabilitation of people injured in motor vehicle crashes in the past. Youthsafe would want to see MAA realise its potential for an ongoing and strengthening impact on road safety and injury management for people injured through road trauma.

There are two specific issues Youthsafe would request that the Standing Committee on Law and Justice consider raising with witnesses as follows:

1. MAA Grants Program:

In the MAA's 2003-2004 Annual Report there is reference to a '*Review of the Grants Program*'. Given the significance of this program in furthering road safety and injury management Youthsafe would be interested in the following:

- The outcome of this review both in terms of improving the overall direction and management of the program to ensure that it remains highly relevant and

- effective into the future with robust and rigorous processes for selecting and managing individual grants.
- MAA's intentions for the future operation of the program consequent to the Grants Program review, particularly in relation to addressing issues relevant to young people.
- Measures that would be taken to ensure that there is a capacity to facilitate research to establish sound evidence bases and to involve appropriate road safety and injury management expertise in initiatives supported through the Grants Program.
- Ongoing review strategies.

2. Long Term Support:

Youthsafe is aware that the MAA has been involved in moves towards legislative change with regard to long term care for all people catastrophically injured in motor vehicle accidents. It is expected this would assist in addressing equity of access issues that arise in a fault based scheme where many people seriously injured on the roads can be left stranded in inappropriate environments or fail to achieve appropriate levels of independence and community participation. With the proposed new long term care model Youthsafe considers that prospective data collection and review will be important considerations in determining the impact of the changes and in identifying where refinements may be needed. Beyond equity of access in the first instance, it is critical for long term support for young people injured through road trauma to continue to be accessible throughout their lifespan and to be flexible to accommodate changing needs over time. This includes moving from rehabilitation through periods of increased independence to periods where greater support is required, for example where secondary problems may arise intermittently or where aging impacts on support needs. Long term support also needs to be respectful of the background and lifestyle of individuals. Therefore in relation to long term support Youthsafe would be interested in the following:

- Expected ongoing participation of the MAA in the development, implementation and review of operation of the new long term care scheme for people with catastrophic injuries.
- Directions the MAA is taking to ensure appropriate and flexible long term support for people who are injured through road trauma, particularly young people who require this support over a longer period of time and whose needs are more likely to change over time.

I and other appropriate representatives of Youthsafe would be pleased to meet with you for further discussion if this would be of value.

Yours sincerely

Anne Deans
Executive Officer