

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors

Melbourne—Monday 11 September 2023

MEMBERS

Ella George—Chair

Annabelle Cleeland—Deputy Chair

Chris Couzens

Chris Crewther

Gary Maas

Cindy McLeish

Meng Heang Tak

WITNESSES

Jacqui Sampson, Executive Director, Regulatory Programs and Services, and

Tim Mitchell, Director, Operational Policy Customer and Partnerships, Department of Transport and Planning.

The CHAIR: Good afternoon. My name is Ella George, and I am the Chair of the Legislative Assembly's Legal and Social Issues Committee. I declare open this public hearing of the Legislative Assembly's Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors.

I begin today by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their elders past, present and future and extend that respect to First Nations people across Victoria.

I also acknowledge my colleagues participating today: Deputy Chair Annabelle Cleeland, who is joining us via Zoom and is also the Member for Euroa, and Cindy McLeish, Meng Heang Tak and Gary Maas.

Earlier this year the Legislative Assembly tasked the Legal and Social Issues Committee with an Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors. The Committee will report back no later than 31 March 2024. The Committee has received a number of valuable submissions to date, which can be viewed on the Committee's website. The Committee also heard from a number of witnesses during public hearings during June, July and August. Transcripts and other information from these hearings can also be found on the Committee's website.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided a written submission, particularly the individuals and families who have bravely shared their own personal stories of organ and tissue donation.

I would also like to acknowledge that September is world Blood Cancer Awareness Month, and 16 September is World Marrow Donor Day. The Committee has learned a lot about the need for more bone marrow and stem cell donors during this inquiry. If you would like to learn more, please visit the Leukaemia Foundation's website.

The Committee held seven days of public hearings over June, July and August. Today the Committee will hear from the Department of Transport and Planning. I thank the witnesses for their time and interest in participating in this important inquiry.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live. While all evidence taken by the Committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside the hearing may not be protected by this privilege.

We will now commence public hearings with the witnesses today, and I welcome from the Department of Transport and Planning Jacqui Sampson, Executive Director, Regulatory Programs and Services division, and Tim Mitchell, Director, Operational Policy Customer and Partnerships. Thank you very much for appearing before us today. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement of around 5 to 10 minutes, and this will be followed by questions from Members. Thank you.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Committee. On behalf of the Department of Transport and Planning, we are really pleased to be here today, and obviously we have submitted some information ahead of the hearing. I also would like to acknowledge those families impacted by organ donation and those that have elected to donate their organs.

In terms of the role of the Department of Transport and Planning and VicRoads, through our joint venture partner, we are supporting the promotion of organ donation through our direct mail, through both online and physical mail channels, to approximately 1 million licence-holders per year. That is consistent with other jurisdictions. However, noting that Victoria in particular has supported that through the online channel, given the channel shift now to receive—obviously electronic mail has been a popular choice for a number of Victorians through their licence registration. Importantly, we are promoting it also through our website, directly connecting to the federal channels available as well. We are actively promoting it through the VicRoads information in addition to obviously the brochure and mail-outs that are supporting. The myVicRoads portal is something that we are obviously looking to continue to support—so that is the online channel—and as mentioned, that is a channel of preference for many to receive electronic distribution. We have made the conscious decision to continue as much as possible the continuity between the physical channel and the online

channel, and as such the organ donation direct link is available through the mail-outs that are received by Victorians.

In particular, just to note, Victoria is one of the only jurisdictions that has continued the information insert in its licence renewals. So in particular other states have made conscious decisions not to include it. Victoria has continued with this practice and continues to be supportive of including that information in a way that we can promote organ donation through an alternative channel for people to understand how they could go about organ donation. I will just invite my colleague Tim—did you want to raise anything further there?

Tim MITCHELL: Only to make the point that licence renewals happen every three or 10 years, so it is a regular cycle. So at a minimum every three years a Victorian will receive a reminder in the mail via the licence renewal process.

Jacqui SAMPSON: I think we did include some historical information in terms of just the process through VicRoads. There was a change back in early 2000, and that was based off the recommendation of the Health Insurance Commission at the time and the Australian organ donation register. There was some confusion in terms of whether the inclusion of a tick box was actually confirming that the applicant wanted to donate their organs, and hence the process now is really about promotion and support of promotion of organ donation as opposed to taking on that administrative duty of actually confirming whether someone has registered as an organ donor through our licensing channels. So I am happy to take any questions, but yes, I think just in summary the department supports the active promotion through its channels. We obviously have really good access to Victorians. We have got around 6 million Victorian-registered licence-holders on our registry and, as Tim mentioned, it is an active cycle through the licence renewal process of promoting organ donation.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Jacqui and Tim. Throughout the course of this inquiry we have heard from many witnesses who have also referenced that previously in Victoria you could register to become an organ donor through ticking that box when you apply for your drivers licence, so we are really pleased that you can be here with us today to speak with the Committee because it is something that has come up quite frequently. I might just start with some questions relating to the old practice of people registering to become donors through their VicRoads licence. Are you able to tell us how many donors were officially registered when this was under VicRoads management?

Jacqui SAMPSON: We do not have that information with us today. We are happy to take that one on notice and come back to the Committee.

The CHAIR: Yes, great. And just a follow-up to that question, does VicRoads still have the data of registered users from when it last managed this process?

Jacqui SAMPSON: My understanding is no, but I am happy to confirm that absolutely for the Committee post.

The CHAIR: That would be great, thank you. We have heard about the data being transferred from VicRoads to the Australian organ donor register. Are you able to confirm who was responsible for that transfer in Victoria?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Obviously that was a historical process back in 2000. We might need to unfortunately take that one on notice as well. There would be some confirmation that we need to do internally.

Tim MITCHELL: We looked through our records at the time and, you know, given this was two decades ago, it was quite challenging to find that level of detail.

The CHAIR: Yes, I fully appreciate that. It was quite some time ago, but if there is anything that you could share on that, that would be great to know.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: And you might want to take these questions on notice because they also relate to that data transfer.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Sure.

The CHAIR: Could you confirm when the data transfer occurred and how the data transfer occurred, whether it was one upload or multiple uploads?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. So I think we do not have that information available. As Tim said, it has been challenging to confirm, but we will take it on notice and come back to the Committee around obviously the timing but also the actual forum in which the data was transferred—so how many multiple uploads or any information around the security of data transfer.

The CHAIR: That would be great. And just a few more on the data transfer—if you could also provide how many registrations were transferred to the Australian organ donation register and whether all Victorian records were transferred, that would be great as well.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Sure. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Sorry, just to confirm, Chair, when you are talking about Victorian records, is that just relating to organ donation applications?

The CHAIR: Yes, that is right. We will provide you with a list of questions on notice as well for your review following this hearing.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Would my Committee Members like to start with some questions now?

Meng Heang TAK: I think Cindy.

The CHAIR: Cindy.

Cindy McLEISH: Yes, sure. Thank you. Thank you very much for coming in. How long, Tim, have you been with the department—and you, Jacqui?

Tim MITCHELL: I have been with the department proper for about four years but with this part of the department for about 18 months.

Jacqui SAMPSON: I have been with the Department of Transport and Planning for the last two years, but prior to that I was with VicRoads for 20 years, so I was definitely around at the time of the organ donation data transfer.

Cindy McLEISH: And do you think there are others who are still around?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, absolutely. One of the things that we will come back with, Chair and Committee, is some further work. In terms of data transfer, we obviously use third-party providers for that. There is an existing longstanding third-party provider that we have tried to get some historical information from. We will go back and ask some further questions around that and will be able to come back to this Committee with hopefully some more information around the data transfer.

Cindy McLEISH: Does this issue come up from time to time in discussions internally?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Not really internally. There might be some general inquiries through the VicRoads processes in terms of the information that is included in licence renewals, so organ donations. But in terms of our customer service staff and the VicRoads customer service staff, we obviously direct them back to source, so they will direct the customer back to Australian organ donation—the central register.

Cindy McLEISH: Yes. Sorry, I probably was not very clear. I was more thinking about whether or not you should have organ donation as part of the drivers licence process. Is that a discussion that you have internally—about whether this is a good idea, whether it is a bad idea—or has it gone now to the organ donor registry?

Jacqui SAMPSON: What we are really protective of and really conscious of is—we obviously deal with privileged data. It is very much from a road safety perspective. There are two registries that we have: one is the

vehicle registry, which obviously includes personal information as well as vehicle information; and then there is the driver licensing registry. The purpose of the driver licensing registry is around recording any sorts of infringements or regulatory issues under around the *Road Safety Act* and our road safety regulations. The way that the registry is physically set up is all about your drivers licence record, your credential to drive and obviously personal information like address et cetera and other details. There is not anything on the registry that is outside of that. The purpose is really focused on roads and road safety.

Cindy McLEISH: Just a couple of more little questions. With the promotion and reaching licence-holders—you have got it on your website, and I went in and had a look at where that is—how long have you had those systems in place?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Those systems have been in place—they have been longstanding—I would say, for at least 20 years. We can come back and confirm this, but definitely I think it preceded the recording of any application process that VicRoads did back in 2000. It has been a longstanding process in terms of including material with our drivers licence renewals.

Cindy McLEISH: Because it is on the website, it would be, I think, relatively easy to see how many times that gets clicked. Does somebody check that?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, we can. What information will be available will be about the webpages. I am unclear, and we will come back to the Committee, in terms of whether we can monitor the link, but definitely the page impressions, so when someone goes onto a certain webpage—we would be able to get that information. We can come back to the Committee with that information.

Cindy McLEISH: So when you go to the webpage, there are a whole lot of options that you have under ‘licensing’, and this is one of them. Then when you click it, it does go directly, so you should be able to work out the number of clicks onto that link from your website, yes?

Tim MITCHELL: Yes.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, we should.

Cindy McLEISH: Does that happen? Does anyone see how effective that is? You have got these things longstanding, and I am trying to get a feel about their effectiveness, whether they are working or not.

Jacqui SAMPSON: From my understanding, it is not something that is actively monitored. It is generally monitored across the website in terms of active licence pages and obviously customer feedback on licence pages. It is not being monitored in its own performance from an organ donation perspective in terms of how effective it is in a promotional sense.

Cindy McLEISH: Okay. You mentioned you have got both physical and online. How do you monitor the effectiveness of those?

Jacqui SAMPSON: It is really more around—it is included as part of the promotional material, so it is included as part of general information for customers. Obviously then it is an individual choice around how they utilise that information and what they want to do with that information, but we do not actively singularly monitor it as its own sort of performance measure.

Cindy McLEISH: So you just put it out and then if it works, it works; if it does not work, it does not work.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. It is not a measure.

Cindy McLEISH: And it is like on the website—if it is there and they click it, great.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. With the website obviously there is more general information around webpage and usage, but it is not, like, a singular sort of performance metric that we are looking at.

Cindy McLEISH: But you could dig that data out for us.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, absolutely. We will come back to Committee around the cut through on webpages.

Cindy McLEISH: Thanks.

The CHAIR: Great. Thanks, Cindy. Heang.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Chair. Perhaps to Tim: you know how you said that every three to 10 years those who have got a drivers licence need to renew? Do we have sort of a percentage of the Victorian population who have a drivers licence or renew it each year?

Tim MITCHELL: It is in the order of about a million. It varies. There is a bit of cycling to it, but we send out a million notices, and that would be a mix of three year and 10-year renewal notices.

Meng Heang TAK: Do we have data in terms of the difference between age group, regional, metro, diversity and faith?

Jacqui SAMPSON: We can take that on notice from the Committee if that is a request. We have got good segmentation data, whether it is age profile or, alternatively, location. We can sort of provide that in a deidentified fashion, yes.

Meng Heang TAK: Okay. Yes, that is good. The next question that I have is on opt-in organ donation through their drivers licence: do we know, among those who renew or those who have a drivers licence, what percentage of people register through –

Jacqui SAMPSON: I think the role that VicRoads and the department have taken is in terms of making sure that the information is available through their channels. Consistent with the response given to Cindy before, essentially we are not actively then monitoring the performance in terms of, I guess, washing the data with the Australian registry to understand if someone has actually then gone and elected to be an organ donor. It is more around utilising what are large-scale customer channels—leveraging that network to be able to promote organ donation.

Meng Heang TAK: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Heang. Gary.

Gary MAAS: Thanks, Ella. Thanks to the two of you for coming in today and for the evidence that you are providing. Just to clarify for me and my understanding of the time line, up around that 2000–2002 period—certainly I am of the generation to remember receiving a physical licence, getting the red sticker and seeing the five categories of donor registration that you could potentially opt in to. Are we saying that prior to 2000 you could sign up as a donor that way? Is that a correct statement?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. Essentially what VicRoads provided through their channels at the time was around an application process, so it introduced an application to register your interest. It was not the final registration process to be undertaken—the final stages. Essentially the department and VicRoads then passed that information on and then obviously the application process with that individual was then finalised in terms of their confirmation. It was essentially part of an application process that then enabled the Australian organ donor register to actually then directly contact. We were essentially utilising our customer list, getting that initial confirmation and providing that centrally for them to then maintain that contact and then obviously maintain that data as well.

Gary MAAS: All right. So there was never really then a consent that was given by the driver—it has always been a ‘register your interest’ process until it has been formalised at a later stage.

Jacqui SAMPSON: My understanding of the process at the time is it caused confusion as to whether that was actually part of the formal application process or whether that was a ‘register your interest’, as you just identified. So I think that was part of the challenge, in terms of was that sufficient consent or was that consent that ‘I’m interested’ as opposed to ‘Yes, I’m confirming I am formally applying to be an organ donor’?

Gary MAAS: Okay. So 20-odd years have passed. We now have different channels of delivering, different ways of registering your interest, whether that be through the physical paper that comes in the mail-out with your licence or whether you go online to do that. The state of Victoria is looking at digital licences to be introduced soon. What are your views on potentially how this system might look into the future where we have digital licences, also keeping in mind that when we had this previous process—it is just a fact—the percentage numbers of people registering their interest were higher than they currently are now?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, we have gone out to pilot with a digital drivers licence in Ballarat earlier this year, so we do actually have a digital drivers licence, which is great to see. In terms of the process, we have not changed our licence renewal process. Licence renewals will still be available either through online or the mail channel, and in terms of being able to incorporate into a digital licence, it really is a matter for government policy around how we see that drivers licence. As I mentioned before, it is a credential to drive, and obviously introducing it in a digital form expands it around a digital identity. The current design of the digital licence achieves both. It is a credential to drive and it is a confirmation of digital identity. Introducing new fields into that, there is a technology aspect that would need to be explored, but I think first and foremost there is a government policy decision around what that product should be in the future. To our understanding, South Australia is the only state that still includes organ donation information on its licence.

Gary MAAS: And look, from my point of view, hats off to South Australia, because what they have actually got is a generation, or a cyclical momentum that is happening through the generations that just automatically know that this is the way you register your interest in organ donation, and I feel as though potentially there are difficulties in Victoria with that as a result of that break. I agree with you: it is probably up to the Parliament and government to drive policy in this area. If we were to move to that registering on a digital licence, I was just wondering what your views might be in terms of potential costs—the sorts of costs involved in that—you talked about technology and potentially data or privacy concerns that might be interspersed with that, and any other benefits or challenges that you might see.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, so notwithstanding it would be a matter for a government decision in terms of a digital licence, probably what I just want to communicate here is that what we have essentially taken in the design of a digital licence is a replica of the physical licence. So in terms of all the data feeds et cetera and how it functionally works to date, it is reading off the registry, the Victorian licensing registry. In any consideration of expansion we would obviously have to look at what technology is required around that, where we are actually receiving the information from, noting that obviously we do not have that information currently on the licensing registry. So there would be quite huge technology considerations that would need to be tested from a feasibility perspective.

The other element I should mention too is we are in pilot stage with the digital licence, so we are not in a stage of maturity. There is a road map that we have developed, which is obviously a matter for government consideration before the release, but in terms of this current status we do not have all licence and permit types available. It really is in pilot stage. So I think in terms of what you said, there will be privacy considerations around this as well. With the digital licence or any sort of digital experience, privacy impact assessments and information security assessments need to be undertaken. Especially if we are receiving data from other sources, an information security assessment will need to be considered. So not to put barriers up, but I think there is a lot to consider in that space. I could not put a cost on it, because that work would need to be absolutely scoped, but I think there is a question first around whether it is a confirmed policy commitment for government.

Gary MAAS: Okay, thank you. The next questions have more to do with data, around how many people hold a drivers licence in Victoria and what the percentages are in different cohorts, but first up: of the eligible population who could hold a Victorian drivers licence, what is the percentage number of people who do actually have a licence to drive?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. There are more than 5 million licences in Victoria, so there are 5 million licence-holders obviously spread across a number of different licence types. We can come back to you in terms of confirming that against the actual available population demand.

Gary MAAS: There are different types of licences too, aren't there?

Jacqui SAMPSON: There are, yes. We have got the breakdown; what we can provide this Committee post-meeting will be a breakdown of the total number of licence-holders in Victoria and the types of licence they hold, so whether that is a heavy vehicle, a car learner permit, et cetera. But there will be a percentage of the population that chooses not to hold a drivers licence. The other information we can provide the Committee easily is also around registered operators; you can own a car without actually having to have a drivers licence, but you just cannot drive your car. So there will be a difference between the information on our Victorian vehicle registry and our licensing registry as well.

Gary MAAS: Okay, thank you. Are there any percentages across, or is any data collected on, our First Nations or Torres Strait Islander people?

Jacqui SAMPSON: I think I will take that one on notice. I think we do, in terms of our application process, record that information, but if we can take that one on notice, because it is not data I have on hand and available.

Gary MAAS: Okay, sure. And then potentially other cultural groups; I imagine that is probably not the case?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Not through my understanding of the application process. The only time where we would consider if English is not the first language or any other accessibility issues is in the testing for credentials, where we would support that particular customer with whatever support they needed, which is when it would be more obvious if English was not their first language, for example.

Gary MAAS: Okay. So potentially across those where English is not their first language, if that data was available. The last cohort was just: you talked about accessibility and people with a disability who might have the ability to drive as well, is that data collected?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, so we have a medical review. Just to go back on that, there will be two things in terms of data sources that we can draw from. We can get some information around how widely interpreters are used across our services, so that should be accessible data that we are able to provide. And the second element is we have a medical review function. There are usually about 80,000 Victorians that are in our medical review process, and they will have a number of accessibility considerations relative to a drivers licence. That might be about having different conditions placed on their licence to drive, so we will have some information to be able to provide back to the Committee around that.

Gary MAAS: That would be great. Thank you. No further questions from me.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Just a follow-up question from Heang.

Meng Heang TAK: Oh, thank you, Chair. Just further on Gary's question: in your submission, you talk about promoting organ donation awareness through stakeholders. Can you take us through a little bit more on that?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. I think in terms of that, what we do undertake when working with stakeholders and obviously those that are going—so it is through the licensing process. We have got key stakeholders like driving instructors, for example, and also other stakeholders through the licensing process where we would essentially be able to end-to-end walk them through what our process is, so that would be about making sure that they understand the information that they are being given. It would not necessarily be more than that from a promotion perspective but in terms of if they are getting different pieces of collateral—one being a licence renewal and one being an organ donation pamphlet et cetera—to make sure that they are actually understanding the information they are provided and they understand where that fits in as part of the licensing process.

Meng Heang TAK: Okay. All right. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I have got a few different questions on different areas, so it might feel like we are jumping around a little bit. Firstly, just to give some further context to some of the questions that Gary and Heang were asking, we have heard, obviously, that drivers licences could be a really important piece in helping increase the number of registered donors, but we have also heard from multicultural communities that in those

communities drivers licence percentages are often lower as well. So that is kind of where we are also going with some of this fact finding as well.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, no worries.

The CHAIR: Appreciating your comments earlier about it being a government policy decision in terms of linking drivers licences to organ and tissue donor registration and also appreciating that the digital drivers licences are very much in that pilot stage, if we get to the end of that pilot stage and the digital drivers licences are rolled out statewide and you have moved beyond that pilot into BAU, is VicRoads capable of managing this process where organ and tissue donation registration is linked directly to a digital drivers licence?

Jacqui SAMPSON: As I said before, I think there would need to be some feasibility testing to understand it. Really from my perspective, and obviously if a decision is made to that effect, it will need to be scoped properly. We are not the holder currently of that information, and there would be requirements to test around being able to link that data through, whether that is through an API link or not or otherwise. But there are some information security considerations. Obviously our first and foremost is around protecting the licensing registry and the information on the licensing registry, so we would need to really look at the feasibility. There would have to be some scoping around that conducted to understand whether that is something that technically is capable of being completed. I think in terms of the application process, the channels are there. So the application process could be supported, but it is the technical element in terms of how to pull it all together. We are looking at modernising systems: going to more cloud-based systems and getting off the legacy system. That is part of the modernisation journey that the department and VicRoads itself are undertaking. I think there will be limitations to some capability in the legacy systems that would need to be considered as part of this. I cannot confidently say that it is easy. It would need to be scoped, and it would need to be really understood from a technical perspective whether we have actually got the capability of undertaking that. Really from our perspective it would be about what you are looking for in that space. If you are looking for it to be another field on the digital licence, then we would need to understand what that does to the digital licence, introducing a third-party feed that is actually outside of our environment. There are a lot of technical considerations and information security considerations around that. There is also the privacy and consent that we mentioned before, in terms of we would want to make sure that that element is well considered as part of this and obviously that those that are applicants are understanding that information. We have taken a privacy by design principle on our actual drivers licences, so it is not as easy as saying we are just going to add that in as a field. We will need to consider the design elements of a licence, noting that it is a credential to drive, and we have got other product design features that are deliberately hidden et cetera because we have taken a privacy by design perspective on the product. There will be a number of elements in the scoping that would have to be considered as part of that in order to confidently say, 'Okay, well, the feasibility of it looks like it can be completed.' The cost et cetera to that—we would obviously have to look at that as well.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Jacqui. That is a really excellent answer. That pre-empts my next question, which was around: what would that feasibility study look like? Apart from what you have just outlined, is there anything else that you would like to add in terms of what that would look like and what work would need to be undertaken?

Jacqui SAMPSON: I think we would really need to understand what data fields are available through central sources, and looking at what their information security and protection is like. I think one is around understanding what the data is, and the next one is around understanding the feasibility around the information security. We would probably get in an expert around that independently to help support that process. The third element is really understanding how the data feeds would then work into a digital drivers licence and what sort of security protections need to be in there as a baseline, and consent elements. So there is a little bit to that scoping piece. There are the policy considerations, but, you know, that is assuming a government has made a decision around this and it is a firm decision. But there are policy elements around that.

The other complicating factor is in terms of we would need to make sure that if someone is adding or removing their consent, that is a real-time purpose. So you would not want the drivers licence used as the source of truth if perhaps its feed is not up-to-date with what is happening, essentially. I think you have just got to make sure. I think the whole point of having a central register is about making sure you have got one source of truth. If you are introducing other channels of promotion, then that is going to be a consideration of how it works technically as well. And I think that is one of the limitations with the South Australian display of information on their

drivers licence, that that could actually be out of date compared to what the customer's choice is at that time. So, you know, you are relying on a physical form that does not necessarily get updated quickly. And I guess that is one of the considerations in any sort of digital form around, well, then what is the frequency of that update? Our registry changes quite often, so the digital drivers licence is being built for sort of dynamic feeds to make sure it is as accurate as possible. But I guess any considerations of external third-party feeds into our digital licence have got to be real primary considerations.

I think the other element, Chair, if I may, is just in terms of what reliance basis we are giving on the digital licence and then how we think it would be used in terms of the use case more broadly as well, noting that part of the digital licence is for people to have their own sort of protections in place—so their sign-on process. So it is not about how that would be utilised more broadly in the ecosystem in terms of is that going to then be a form of confirmation that I am an organ donor, or is the central registry, the health system et cetera, going to continue to be reliant on central registries? So I think we need to really understand, well, what the problem is we are trying to solve and what the use cases are that support that to then work through: okay, well, what are the right channels for promotion and obviously recording of information?

The CHAIR: Thank you. So then I guess looking at the current system of drivers licences—and I know that Cindy asked this question earlier around the conversations that might be being had within the department around whether staff members thought this was a good idea to do or not—has any work been done to explore this further in terms of, say, the costs or the feasibility with the current system?

Jacqui SAMPSON: No, not at this time.

The CHAIR: Yes, okay. Thank you. Cindy.

Cindy McLEISH: Thanks, Ella. Thank you for your comprehensive information. I am not very familiar on what happens in other states with their drivers licensing. Are there any other states that have moved to digital?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. So there are two, Queensland and New South Wales. So New South Wales and Queensland released theirs last year, and then Victoria is the third state that has a digital licence.

Cindy McLEISH: So do you talk to them about what mistakes they have made so that you do not replicate those?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Absolutely, yes. We worked really closely with Queensland in particular, and we are probably more closely aligned on some elements, but yes, all states share information. There is also an international digital licence standard, an ISO standard, as well that has been agreed to by all states, and that will be a benchmark going forward that will be adopted into the future, and the Victorian Government is committed to that. Our current licence is not ISO compliant, but we are working towards that. I think from a platform perspective that will mean that there will be interoperability across all digital licences in the future, which will be a great thing from an Australian perspective.

Cindy McLEISH: How are we not ISO-compliant?

Jacqui SAMPSON: It is only a new standard that came in very late last year.

Cindy McLEISH: No, I mean: what are the areas that we are not?

Jacqui SAMPSON: No, no. In terms of the benchmarking against international standards, it is not that we have not completed the right diligence from a security or privacy perspective. There are just elements around, well, how do we align from an international compliance perspective? So we are still undertaking our feasibility of what actually needs to be completed to be fully ISO-compliant. I do not have all that information for you here today.

Cindy McLEISH: So you are still trying to work that out too.

Jacqui SAMPSON: We are still trying to work it out. It is a very, very new standard. There is a very new standard, and Queensland is the only one that has currently completed its ISO evaluation. Whether it has actually been ISO-certified—I am unclear with Queensland. It is really a new lens that now obviously is going

to be a requirement for all jurisdictions that are introducing their digital licences. We are still investigating that piece in Victoria.

Cindy McLEISH: Have Queensland moved to even be thinking about organ donation links?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Not that we have directly discussed with them. I am happy to take that one on notice and find out for you both from a New South Wales and a Queensland perspective. Their focus very much, as ours has been, is about ensuring that the efficacy of the licence is upheld through the digital channel so that first and foremost, whilst it is a digital identity, it is also able to be used as a credential to drive. That has definitely been the focus in Queensland as well.

Tim MITCHELL: And Queensland is also a pilot. They are piloting, so they are in the same status as us—they are targeting a specific geographic area.

Cindy McLEISH: Okay. Thank you. I am just trying to get my head around a couple of things. You mentioned that the digital licensing pilot would pretty well replicate what we have got, but then you went on to say that there are some design features that are deliberately hidden. When you have got something that is hard, you cannot hide anything.

Jacqui SAMPSON: No, that is right.

Cindy McLEISH: So is it a direct replica or not?

Jacqui SAMPSON: I am happy to actually show you my licence. I am not sure if we can have a quick pause. I am happy to get my digital licence and show you if you want to talk to it.

Tim MITCHELL: And I could talk a bit about it, if you like. I we could do that.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes. I think what you have here in the physical sense is you have got your physical card. As we said, information could update on the system and there might be a delay in you receiving your new card, so if your licence is suspended or cancelled there would obviously be action taken on your card. In a digital world what we have tried to do is really have that sort of dynamic update, which is really good progress in terms of making sure that (a) as a driver I am aware of my current licence status, but (b) I have got it there also to use as a digital identity. A use case for that might be if I am picking up a parcel from Australia Post—I do not want to show all my drivers licence details, but I am only showing elements, which is my name and address, because that is all I need to confirm for that particular piece. So I think when I reference privacy by design, those are the sorts of considerations, including age. I will let you continue, and I will actually get my digital licence if you would like to see it so you can see the different elements around that.

Tim MITCHELL: There are three use cases that we have designed for. One is the full licence, which replicates all of the licence conditions—expiry, the holdings, the proficiency—and also catering for if a person has a full licence to drive a car and a learners permit to drive a motorbike, or has a heavy vehicle category. The second use case is identity, as Jacqui said, so that is about who I am, my photograph, my address and my signature, and that is a transaction that Australia Post might use. The third use case is around age. That is the scenario where you go into a licensed establishment and there is the privacy by design—it is very binary: ‘Is the person over or under 18 years old?’ And you can see a simple tick or a cross. And that allows—if my daughter is going to a nightclub, the bouncer does not see where they live or how old they are, they just know the fact that they are over the age of 18.

Cindy McLEISH: And I guess you get that pretty easily when you just turn over your thing.

Tim MITCHELL: Well, they can also know where the person lives as well, when that is shown.

Cindy McLEISH: I guess I am thinking still about organ donation and how this would be included in a digital licence. As I understand it, there are different conditions on the licence, so when you are saying there might be a bit of a time lag—I mean, it is not going to be a month?

Tim MITCHELL: No.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Well, I guess what we do not know is how that currently works to date, and I think that is the point I am trying to make here: there are a lot of considerations. We are bringing in potentially an external source into a new environment. That needs to be considered, which includes looking at stability and load and performance. There are a lot of considerations from a technology perspective, so it is just that that needs to be understood. We have had to undertake the same process in the development of a digital drivers licence as well, which includes looking at the nature of the upload of when something changes on a licence or a new condition is introduced. Within our own environment that is a lot easier, rather than obviously dealing with or trying to connect in an external source, so that needs to be considered as part of the scoping, as mentioned to Ella before.

Cindy McLEISH: Do you think it is going to be simple? You make it sound as though there are almost insurmountable problems and that it is going to cost a lot of money because you have got to do all this feasibility and scoping and things like that. Whereas if I change my address, that is something quite simple—people change their addresses all the time and it gets uploaded. If you get pulled up by the police, if you have got a hard copy—unless they throw a sticker on the back, not that that has happened.

Jacqui SAMPSON: I am not trying to present that it is insurmountable, I am just trying to have a perspective for the Committee that when there is a policy change, we need to actually make sure that the technology environment can be supported, and I think that piece of work needs to be understood in a lot more detail before making a final recommendation. The ability for us to work in a dynamic environment is because it is within our own registry. The change of address scenario that you just mentioned—yes, that is a dynamic change that happens. We are currently working with legacy systems and obviously working to more modern technology. Some of those changes, depending on the type of change it is, might take 24 hours before they update. We are not saying it is 30 days, but some of the changes on our registry are not immediate. Court fines et cetera—they come in overnight. There are legacy feeds that come into the registry. The new cloud-based environment that we are moving to in the future is more modern technology, obviously—these things become easier over time. I think the bit that is unknown for us at this stage is: how would that work, working with the central registry source? Yes, there will be ways that we can connect through APIs et cetera, but we really do need to understand their environment in terms of how it would integrate then into whether it is our registry or, alternatively, feed into a digital licence in the future. That includes considerations around the storage of information as well. That is something else in terms of the ability for us to sort of record and store information. We would need to see, from a policy and regulatory perspective, whether we actually have the platform to do that in Victoria as well.

Cindy McLEISH: You had it previously, though? Has that been taken away or has it just gone to the site?

Jacqui SAMPSON: No. I will take that one on notice. I would have to go back and understand the basis in terms of what the 2000 regulatory piece was. I do not have that at hand at the moment. As we explained before, there were issues with the original consent process in terms of how it was perceived from a community perspective, and whether it was an actual application for an organ donation or, alternatively, just ‘I’m interested in understanding more about being an organ donor.’ I think that is, on previous advice, why the change in process.

Tim MITCHELL: It is important to stress, I think, that that was done at the request of the donor registry. The people who administer the registry made that request of us. I actually have found total licence numbers, Chair, if that is useful for you. I will read it out, and I can supply it too afterwards. These are dates of total licence drivers as at 31 August this year. The total is 5,129,202, and I can break that down into three categories. There is the full category—4,428,855. The second category is learner—it is 364,225. The final category is provisional licence holders, so that is the P1 and the P2—that is 336,122. I can supply those formally if you need them as well.

The CHAIR: That would be great, thank you. Just on the digital licence example that you provided us with, Jacqui, do you have a PDF version that we could potentially publish alongside the transcript so that –

Tim MITCHELL: We can send you that—we have got a website.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: That would be great. Also, if you have got an example of what the physical licences previously looked like with the donor sticker on them.

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, no worries. We will take that one on notice and we will try and confirm that for you. As Tim mentioned, we can provide the wire frames of the digital licence. We have got images of that.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you very much.

Cindy McLEISH: That is all good. Thanks, Ella.

The CHAIR: All right. I might just wrap up with two quick questions that relate to a couple of things that you mentioned in your submission. Firstly, in your submission you noted that you work with the Organ and Tissue Authority to support the promotion of organ and tissue donation. I am just wondering if you could give us a couple of examples of how you are working with OTA.

Jacqui SAMPSON: I think that is more around the currency of information, ensuring that our channels have current information and that we are promoting what they would like through our channels. In terms of our interactions, it is around confirming that the information is the current information. That is what they would like through our channels, so that is the type of stakeholder engagement in terms of making sure there is currency of information, including making sure our website and other content is up to date as well.

The CHAIR: We have heard from the OTA and a number of other witnesses about the grants that the OTA provide to, say, community organisations who run their own awareness campaigns about increasing registered donors. Is that something that VicRoads engages with the OTA on as well?

Jacqui SAMPSON: I might take that on notice. From my understanding, I do not think we have ever engaged around community grants per se, but we will take that on notice and confirm absolutely for you.

The CHAIR: Great, thank you. Now, we have touched on earlier about how you work with your key stakeholders around donation awareness—for example, you mentioned that you work with driving instructors about increasing their awareness of organ and tissue donation. But I am wondering if you can walk us fully through the different key customer channels that you have at your disposal to increase awareness?

Jacqui SAMPSON: Yes, sure. In terms of the VicRoads core channels, we obviously have online through the myVicRoads portal, of which there are about 4.1 million online customers now. We have the customer database that sits across the vehicle and licensing registries, which we have got about 5 million as we said licence-holders and there are about 6 million registered vehicles, so we have the ability to be able to contact those customers both by physical mail channel, or alternatively, electronic, where supplied. The other two main core channels we have are the call centre through VicRoads and the customer service centres, so the physical customer service centres where we support customers in-person. In terms of the three customer channels, it really is the physical, the online and the call centre channels that that we have available. Through other elements in our Department of Transport and Planning remit, we also oversee the medical review function and deal with health professionals and obviously customers around that particular portfolio. So there are opportunities there as well; they are not currently leveraged. Those customers will receive the same information as other licence-holders, so that is consistent in terms of their licence renewal process, but there also could be some ways in the future we could target that to do it more broadly. Then we also promote through the website as well in terms of the VicRoads website, so that is a huge channel available to customers in terms of making sure that customers are directed to the right channels and web links et cetera. So it is about the information and access to information.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Well, Jacqui and Tim, thank you very much for appearing before the Committee today on behalf of the Department of Transport and Planning and for your contribution to this inquiry. The Committee greatly appreciates the time and effort you have taken to prepare your evidence, and also for your written submission. You will be provided with a proof version of today's transcript to check, together with any questions taken on notice. Verified transcripts and responses to questions taken on notice will then be published on the Committee's website.

Thank you again for giving evidence to the Committee today. And thank you to the Hansard team and the Committee Secretariat. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Committee adjourned.