

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into driver distraction

Notes of discussion

Melbourne — 5 December 2005

Members

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Mr J. H. Eren

Dr A. R. Harkness

Mr C. A. C. Langdon

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Witnesses

Assistant Commissioner R. Hastings, traffic and transport services department; and
Superintendent P. Keogh, traffic operations and support department, Victoria Police.

The CHAIR — I would like to welcome everybody in the room today to the Victorian parliamentary Road Safety Committee. I would like to provide a special welcome to Assistant Commissioner Bob Hastings and Superintendent Peter Keogh. Peter is from the traffic operations and support department and Bob Hastings is from the traffic and transport services department of Victoria Police. As people who are in the room are aware, the Road Safety Committee is beginning this inquiry into driver distraction, and the police are our first discussion group. It is a very interesting subject. Unfortunately we do not have a quorum of members today so this is not a formal hearing, this is what we would term a discussion. The important point is that we are not under parliamentary privilege. However, as I understand it, the proceedings will be recorded. Having said all that, I now hand over to Victoria Police. I again thank both Bob and Peter and hand over to them.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — We are happy to take questions as we move through it if you like, or do you want us to go through it and then ask questions?

The CHAIR — We will see how we go.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It might be easier if people ask questions as we move along. Clearly we want to talk about fatal crashes, the statistics around the level of enforcement surrounding mobile telephones — I know we are all well and truly aware of those issues — and the display of televisions and visual display units as well as careless driving. We will then provide some comments on internal and external distractions with finally some recommendations that we think are things the parliamentary committee may be able to pick up on.

Overheads shown.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — The first slide is ‘What is distraction?’. There has been a lot of research done into what it actually means by way of definition. The one we have up there is from Mike Regan from the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC). It says ‘When a driver engages, willingly or unwillingly, in a secondary activity which interferes with the performance of the primary driving task’. I think that conveys a fairly simple definition that most people can understand. Clearly it is focusing around that secondary task that actually causes the issue when people are out there driving different types of vehicles — visual, auditory and cognitive sources and the manipulations around those sorts of devices in cars.

The next slide is about the causes of fatal crashes. There were 300 deaths to the end of October 2005 and 343 deaths in 2004, which people are well aware of. That slide shows a breakdown of some of the causes. Alcohol again ranks highly; speed; failing to give way; and fatigue. Fatigue is one of those issues which we are not quite able to qualify in some of these things. Driver error shows 119. Driver error can cover a multitude of things. It could be because of judgment issues, it could be inattention or carelessness, we do not quite know, but it is put down as driver error. Rear-end collision; pedestrian negligence; other; bicycles; medical conditions; and surprisingly, no seat belt, which is still high in terms of people failing to wear those restraining devices. Unlike what occurs in New Zealand, there is no collection of data that specifies whether a particular distraction was the cause of or a contributing factor in the crash. Over a number of years there have been several instances highlighted in the media where mobile phone use was at least one of the causes of a crash. Similar data is unavailable for serious injury crashes. That is pretty much a breakdown of what we have been able to identify as the causes of fatal crashes for last year and up to the end of October this year.

Mr LANGDON — Under the issue of driver error, which is obviously the largest, do you have any idea of whether anything is stimulating the driver into making an error — any device?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I do not know if these ones have been to the coroner yet — —

Supt KEOGH — No, they have not.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — To determine the actual error as part of the coroner’s investigation.

Supt KEOGH — It is an initial opinion of the attending police officer at the crash. The statistics could change when the result of blood analysis is known — they could change more to alcohol or to include alcohol. It is an overarching category that could include a whole host of things, and there is no further breakdown of what is categorised under driver error.

Mr BISHOP — In relation to those figures, any of the first seven could have distraction folded in with them as a reason for the accident.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. As we said, these are the assessments made by our people at the time of the crash. As Peter said, some of those statistics may change once the coronial inquiry has been conducted and we can pinpoint what may have been the cause of the crash.

Mr BISHOP — Is it true that coronial inquiries now might concentrate more on distraction, given the fact that cars now have in them a lot of things to do as well things for driving?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think the coronial inquiries are fairly detailed. They look at a whole range of things about how that death occurred. The coroner is fairly precise in examining all those sorts of things so he can come to a determination of what actually caused the death, whether it be negligence on the part of someone else or one of those things where there was a distraction that caused inattention. I am not sure whether they focus on it in particular, but I am sure it would be part of the hearing. Clearly our people, as part of the evidence to the coronial inquiry, would talk about those sorts of things as part of their findings and investigation.

The CHAIR — What was the point you made before with regard to New Zealand and the statistics for driver distraction?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I might pass to Peter on that, but New Zealand actually collects an enormous amount of data around this sort of activity, and we do not. Perhaps Peter could explain that to you in a bit more detail.

Supt KEOGH — Land Transport New Zealand analysed police crash reports over a three-year period. This included something in the vicinity of 2000 crashes. Land Transport went through all of the statements relevant to each crash, which included specific reference to any distraction which may have caused or contributed to the crash. They then built a database or a subset of that information and analysed overall the results of that review. The result of the review indicated that most of the causes of the distraction were other people in the car, other passengers. I think the second one may have been sun glare. There is no offence in New Zealand for using a mobile phone while driving. I guess if a driver did put his hand up and say, 'I caused the crash because I did something stupid', and nominated that activity, he would probably be charged with some offence, whereas if he said it was sun glare or passenger distraction he would be less likely to be charged with an offence. When we take statements from people involved in crashes, it is probably a training issue, but not always would we go through to that detail.

Mr LANGDON — What have they done with those statistics?

Supt KEOGH — The researcher presented a paper to a road safety conference over in New Zealand a couple of weeks ago. It was to highlight the causes of crashes in regard to distraction — it was a paper presented to the road safety conference.

Mr LANGDON — You say we do not keep any of those informative statistics at all?

Supt KEOGH — No.

Mr LANGDON — Do you think it would be beneficial if we did.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am sure it would. I think this whole issue around distraction is one we have to start to understand. As I said, it is probably a little bit like fatigue — we do not know when some of these things happen whether it is a fatigue issue or whether it is something else. I really think that if you actually start to collect the data, then you can build the case that supports what you are trying to achieve.

Mr LANGDON — I refer to your earlier comments about driver error. If one-third or even one-half of that is from a distraction in the car and we can help to solve that problem, we could go a long way.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. As I said, those statistics might change slightly following the coronial hearings. They might become more related to alcohol or speed, but it is still a high number. Again it is based on our own police member's assessment at the time.

Mr BISHOP — Are there any other jurisdictions you know of which do an assessment à la New Zealand?

Supt KEOGH — Not specifically. I think this was just a research project which Land Transport instigated. I think it was their Land Transport ministry that caused the research to be undertaken.

Mr LANGDON — Do you know if there was a reason they wanted that research undertaken?

Supt KEOGH — They wanted to look more closely at why these crashes were occurring. The research paper is available; I think it has been referenced at the back of the document. With driver error as well, particularly with the single-vehicle crash where the driver and/or other occupants are killed, often we may not get to the cause of the crash, the type of distraction, at all.

Mr BISHOP — It is similar to fatigue, isn't it? How do you judge it?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — That paper would be worth looking at, because it is part of an Australasian traffic research presentation that was held in New Zealand.

The CHAIR — I might be missing the point here, but is what we are saying with those figures there that in 2004 and 2005 there was no accident that has been directly attributed to distraction?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It would probably be lumped somewhere in that driver error category. The issue for us is how we tease that out and say that that was caused by distraction or there was some other cause.

The CHAIR — I am from Geelong, and in 2002 a cyclist was killed by a young lass using a mobile. That was obviously directly attributed to distraction. If we looked at the statistics back to 2002, would it be listed as distraction?

Supt KEOGH — No, driver error.

Mr LANGDON — You spoke earlier about coronial inquiries. When do the coronial inquiries for the 2004 statistics take place? Would they have had some of those coronial inquiries?

Supt KEOGH — Yes, they would have, but this database is not updated after the coronial inquiry. It is a database that is built after the initial report, which is submitted within 24 hours and sometimes within 2 or 3 hours of a crash occurring. It is just the initial opinion about the cause of the crash by the attending member, and he sends it through to head office and we just fill in that database.

Mr LANGDON — Is there another database which can be changed after the coronial inquiry?

Supt KEOGH — No.

Mr LANGDON — There is not, so after the coronial inquiry we have no idea of what the real cause could possibly be?

Supt KEOGH — That is right.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure whether the Coroners Court keeps it. I suspect it probably does not, but it may.

Mr BISHOP — I would argue that there could be a lot of distraction in the top six or seven of those incident categories. We cannot measure it.

The CHAIR — That is the point. I agree.

Supt KEOGH — And they do not add up, so sometimes there is more than one cause of a crash.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think we are all probably well aware of the types of distraction — visual, auditory, physical and cognitive. They are four broad categories that all impact on us when we are in motor vehicles and we are trying to navigate our way around. Research shows that these types of distractions have a detrimental effect on driver performance. Mobile telephones are probably the most common and prevalent distraction we see — hands free, hand held, text messaging. I gave you a press clipping about that case you mentioned. The crash occurred back in 2001, but by the time it went through to trial it was 2003 or somewhere around there. Then we have dialling a number and voice activation.

About 80 per cent of us now own mobile telephones, and I think it is fairly common that we use them most of the day. Using a hands-free mobile telephone while driving is no safer than the hand-held. It is the act of talking, not holding the phone, that is most distracting, and that will come through with some of the research you will hear no doubt. The issue is that if I am talking to someone at the other end of even my hands-free, if I have to take some sort of evasive or corrective action, the person on the other end has no idea what is confronting me as a driver, so the conversation continues even though I am trying to take some emergency action, so these are the sorts of things that —

Mr BISHOP — It is a build-up, is it not? It is the concentration level while you are talking, but if you have to dial up, that would probably triple it or whatever.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It does, because you are taking your eyes off the road for a start, and it just keeps compounding. Using a mobile telephone increases the risk of a crash four times and is equivalent to driving at a BAC alcohol limit of about .08. The physical and cognitive distraction of using mobile phones can significantly impair the drivers search patterns, reaction time, decision-making process, ability to maintain speed, throttle control and lateral position on the road. Sending a text message is probably even more distracting. I think that has been pointed out in that sad case that we had down in Geelong some years ago.

Mr BISHOP — I could not possibly drive and send a text message. I am flat out doing it if I am sitting here.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I have normally got to get a younger person to come and tell me how to work some of these things. You can see there the mobile phone offences detected. We are sort of averaging now somewhere around about the low 20 000s in terms of mobile phone detection from an enforcement point of view.

Mr LANGDON — When did enforcement come into place?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure — 2001.

Mr LANGDON — Your statistics show 30 000 and then down to 23 000 from 2002 to 2003.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — That is all based around the enforcement activity in terms of our people detecting people using mobile phones whilst in motion — nothing more than that. But what we are trying to do is have campaigns where we go out and focus on this sort of behaviour, and that goes for periods of time and across regions and the like, but I am not sure that we can actually say that we are on top of the problem here, because you can see in 2002, as you indicated, that we detected 30 000 and in 2003 it was back to 23 000, but that would be more around an enforcement effort, not necessarily to say there was less of it happening.

The CHAIR — What are the enforcement difficulties the Victoria Police have in detecting illegal mobile phone use?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It is being able to see what they are doing. Some people are very good at disguising how they use these devices too. Some of them are quite blatant, but it is all observation based. That is the only thing we can rely on, similarly to people wearing or not wearing seatbelts. We have to rely on the observation of our people.

Supt KEOGH — , just to add to that, I guess some of the difficulties can also include, particularly when you are on a metropolitan freeway where traffic is quite heavy and there is a car more than a lane away, being able to pull that car up safely is a problem, and sometimes tinted windows can be quite dark and it is really hard to see what is going on inside the car.

Mr LANGDON — Also at night it would be very difficult, would it not, unless you have got one of those phones that really light up?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It is quite disturbing. Peter was referring to a case that he had recently where you actually pull up next to someone and try to attract their attention to say, 'Stop talking', and they are just in another land. When we are enforcing, if we are on freeways today we are also interested in the safety of everyone. Trying to intercept people on freeways where you have high speeds and high volume is done with some caution. We can always take the number and follow up later on, which we will subsequently do.

Mr LANGDON — It is a fair definition of distraction if someone is on the phone and cannot see a police car next to them trying to get their attention.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Absolutely, and it is not for want of trying either. We sometimes have to come up on either side — try a different side and see if we catch their eye.

Mr BISHOP — In relation to that, we are talking about hand-held phones at this point, I think.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes.

Mr BISHOP — If we move to hands-free phones, how would you manage an enforcement process if you stopped a motorist and said, 'You are talking on the phone', and they said, 'No, I am not. I am singing.'? Has there been any work done on that? It seems to me to be really quite difficult.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I suspect it would be, because you see people talking into the ether, and they are probably talking on a phone to someone, or as you say — —

Mr BISHOP — And they probably are.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Or they could be singing. It would be difficult from an enforcement point of view. It is difficult enough trying to detect when they have got the phone to their ear, without the other bit. I am not sure there is much technology around that would help us do that — to stop the car if you start talking on a phone. Those sorts of things are just probably not about.

I know enforcement is the stick part, but I also think we have to start doing the educative part of it at the front end, and perhaps that is the better way to start to focus at times — to start from a young age, so that people clearly understand what it is if you engage in this sort of activity and what it means potentially for you and others. I know with some people it does not work and you have to come along with the heavy approach through enforcement, but it is like a lot of these things: you have to get a balance, I believe. I am not sure there is an easy answer to that.

Supt KEOGH — I think, as I indicated, technology would be an easy answer to it, but then you would also prevent passengers in the car from using phones, so it is probably difficult to introduce a method to prevent people from using the phone at all. Bob mentioned leadership and corporate leadership. There are some companies around that have introduced policies saying that their employees shall not use a mobile phone while they are driving, and I guess it is that sort of corporate leadership that needs to extend through the community and to other companies. But people just liken talking on a mobile phone to talking to a passenger in the car. They do not really understand the associated risks.

Mr BISHOP — On the technology side, are you referring to, for instance — let's pick a point — if the ignition is on, the phone will not work?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. I know we are using more and more technology to start to intervene in some of these behaviours, through alcohol interlock systems and the like that are coming into cars, but again we were discussing this on the way up here. To me the motor car is really a means of transport. I know it has become a lot safer and a lot more comfortable and a lot more whatever, but you now have a cockpit that is loaded up with all sorts of gadgets and devices — from stereo systems through to DVD players and the like — and whilst they might be nice to have, I am not sure at the end of the day they make us any safer on the roads. It is trying to get that balance.

Clearly technology and the advance in motor vehicle production starts to get ahead. Legislation is always coming along behind trying to stop some of this sort of thing. Earlier this year we got a letter from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries saying that we should not enforce if their device complied with the Australian design rules, and we said we could not agree to that. There is a whole lot of pressure coming through from manufacturers and others suggesting that if something complies with the Australian design rules, then that is sufficient. Unfortunately the Australian design rules are not legislation. They are exactly that, they are design rules, and even some of those now are well behind the modern era in terms of dealing with some of these issues. Is that fair comment?

Supt KEOGH — Yes, and Bob was talking about the DVD players in the back headrest so people in the rear passenger seat can view them. That is still a problem for other passing traffic because they are distracted by what they can see, particularly at night. The availability of these devices and the after-market fit-up mean they do

not care where they put them so long as they can watch them, whereas the Australian design rules in our legislation talk about the driver not being able to view the screen when they are driving, providing it is not a navigation system. But even navigation systems, which are nice to have, can be really distracting.

Mr LANGDON — They would be.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — There is an interesting story of someone travelling down your way, Chair. I think he was travelling down the coast and someone followed him all the way down at night. I think he stopped somewhere around Lorne and said, 'I am the only car on the road. Why are you following me?'. He said, 'I like watching what you have on the screen'. So they are out there.

The CHAIR — He must have had good eyesight!

Mr LANGDON — In defence of those DVD players in the backseat, as a parent having driven to Queensland with three kids in the back of the car, I can say that it can save distraction. It can save the distraction of them saying every 5 minutes, 'When are we going to get there?'. But I take the point that it has to be in the backseat.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I agree with you, they are great devices. I suppose it is how you get the balance right so the driver is not distracted. But you can see that clearly the offences for those sorts of things are a lot lower than mobile phones. The penalty for that is currently \$79 with no demerit points. The penalty for using a mobile phone is \$141 and 3 demerit points.

The CHAIR — Bob, you may not be able to answer this question, but would Victoria Police support a blanket ban on drivers using all types of mobile phones?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I probably cannot answer you; I would have to talk it through with others. I think the safest way is for people to stop. If you are going to use one of these devices, you should pull over and stop. I know organisations like the TAC have a message so that if you ring one of their people it says, 'I am unable to take your call at the moment. I might be driving. Please allow me some time to stop and I will get back to you'. That type of thing. It would be unfair for me to make a comment either agreeing to it or not.

The CHAIR — That is fine.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — But I would certainly favour better behaviour of people in the use of these devices.

The CHAIR — As you pointed out first up, through other means such as education.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. That goes so far, but I think you have to use both parts of it. If people are more informed, then they can make better decisions themselves and pass it on.

The CHAIR — Just with those statistics, are there particular groups of drivers that are major offenders?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — We do not have that breakdown in there unfortunately, but we could find it out and probably get back to you.

Supt KEOGH — It might be hard to find out.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Is it? It is difficult to search by ages. We do not take people's occupations either. They just get an infringement notice for the offence.

The CHAIR — Older drivers compared to younger drivers, for example?

Supt KEOGH — My experience is that it is a wide range. It is not limited to younger people.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Today the car has become a mobile office to some people.

The CHAIR — Ours are.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — People do everything in their car. They are on the road sometimes for 4 or 5 hours a day, particularly the trucking and heavy haulage industry. They are going all the time, and a mobile phone is one way of doing business.

The CHAIR — I am guilty myself. When I drive to Melbourne I think, ‘I will not bother making my phone calls in the office. I will spend the hour in the car talking on the mobile phone’. It is hands-free of course. That is what people do.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It is interesting, and I suppose we have all done it, you can engage in a hands-free conversation and travel from there to there and when you stop you sometimes wonder what happened in between.

The CHAIR — That is right.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — You do not have much recollection about what you did or did not do over that journey because you have been having a conversation.

Mr LANGDON — I might add that you can do that without a mobile phone!

Mr BISHOP — Talking about the heavy haulage industry, obviously they have radio connections as well. It seems to me that is slightly different to mobile phones, because you have to click on and off quite consciously.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure if there is much research about that, but you have to hold something in your hand while you are driving, and I am not sure whether that is good practice either. I know the trucking industry is very much into radio communications with one another.

Mr BISHOP — For a number of reasons!

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. Or with their firms.

The CHAIR — I imagine Victoria Police has a range of equipment in its cars that is distracting. As an employer, does Victoria Police take any form of initiative with regard to the training of its staff?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — You are right. The modern-day police vehicle is fitted out with everything. We now have mobile data terminals going into them. We try to make our people aware of the fact that when you are using it you should do it in a safe way. I try to promote corporate responsibility for our people, even though the legislation says we can do these things without being subject to any breach of the law. I think in terms of practice, it is good practice to show the community that you do the right thing. We do not always get it right either. There are people out there who will use the processes and say, ‘I do not need to, because the law says I am exempt’, but that does not stop you reinforcing a message. It is good to demonstrate to the community that you are showing the way a little bit on this.

There is a whole occupational health and safety issue around our police vehicles, in what is in them and how they are now configured, because there is so much in them. It is an issue for us. We have an occupational health and safety working group that is always looking at these sorts of things for our own people’s safety as much as anything else.

Supt KEOGH — And we have a policy for mobile phones. While we have an exemption to allow us to use mobile phones, our policy says that they will only be used in exceptional circumstances of operational necessity, albeit you hear people talking about the issue on radio inferring that the police use them contrary to advice.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — This slide shows careless driving offences from 2000 to 2005, and again, as we have probably already highlighted, within that range some of it might relate to distraction or inattention. We are unsure what — —

Mr BISHOP — Why has it come down, Bob?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure whether we are lazy, Barry, or whatever.

Supt KEOGH — The figures are to June.

Mr LANGDON — June, not October.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It is June. A lot of it would be around crash investigation too. Clearly when they go to the scene of a crash they indicate whether someone has done something they should not have done. The penalty for careless driving is quite steep. For a first offence it is 12 penalty units and not more than 25 penalty units for a subsequent offence.

Mr LANGDON — How do you define careless driving?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure of the legal definition. We would call a rear-end collision careless driving, because you have travelled too close to the vehicle in front. If the vehicle in front has had to stop and you have been so close that you cannot stop, then you have been careless in what you are doing. So a rear-end collision normally fits the bracket of careless driving. It is more serious than going through a give-way sign. It involves some more conscious decision, that you did some act that took you above that level. But I have not got a definition of it.

Supt KEOGH — I would see it as not paying due attention to your driving task.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — But it is a subjective assessment by our people, and it always will be. At the end of the day, if it goes before a magistrate, then the court has to determine whether it fits the careless driving range or not.

Supt KEOGH — And this has to go to court; it is not a penalty notice offence.

Mr BISHOP — On that 2005, did someone say that is only until June?

Supt KEOGH — Yes.

Mr BISHOP — Well, that explains that then.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Other technologies that are about — navigation systems we have touched on. Again these are fantastic for getting you around — I do not know if anyone has used them — except you normally have someone with an American accent talking to you on them. They normally work well. We have them fitted to some of our police units, particularly our dog squad units, which travel one-up with a dog, and if they get a job, they key in the location because they cover the whole metropolitan area. It gets them there very efficiently and quickly.

Mr LANGDON — How does it work? It is on a screen, is it?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes, it is a screen base, and it also talks to you. You key in coordinates of where you want to go, and it then plots the best route for you and tells you to turn left in 500 metres and then turn right and all the rest of it. It steps you through it, and there are various iterations of these devices — some are actually fitted as part of the car, some are add-ons, and they work on GPS satellite systems. It positions you on the road.

The CHAIR — So they do not rely on the dog — one bark right and two barks — —

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Or pointing its tail — I am not quite sure. TVs and DVD units we have touched on, office equipment, radios and CD players. We have got the mix, and we have also got the talking, eating, drinking and smoking and all those other things we do in cars.

Mr LANGDON — Personal grooming.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes, and note taking. I have often seen people pull out the newspaper and start reading at a set of traffic lights in between waits. So all of those things — —

Mr LANGDON — A navigational system would be better than someone trying to read the *Melway* in the chair next to them.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It could be. You could get in more of an argument with someone trying to read the *Melway* next to you.

Supt KEOGH — I do not know if all navigational systems talk to you. There are some that are less expensive, and I suspect they do not.

Mr LANGDON — It is purely visual.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — There has been a lot of research done too. I think there are a number of papers around this sort of activity. Clearly if you drop a cigarette between your legs, then all sorts of things are likely to happen. If you are drinking or eating, you have actually got to physically do something which takes your eyes off the road.

The CHAIR — I am interested with regard to passenger restrictions, especially for younger drivers.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It has been part of a debate around younger driver licensing. There is probably some evidence to suggest younger drivers with passengers get urged on to do things they may not want to do, but I am not sure whether there has been enough done about it to come to a firm conclusion on it. A lot of this is anecdotal sort of stuff. Clearly peer-group pressure is an enormous thing young people have to cope with no matter whether they are driving cars or it is just day-to-day living where they have got two or three others in a car who are indicating they should do something else. The driver has to say, 'Well no, I am not'. It is quite a big ask for younger people and probably not easy.

Supt KEOGH — Some other states are in the process of implementing legislation restricting passengers late at night in vehicles of young drivers. Overseas there has been quite a bit of research about the increased dangers of passengers in vehicles in that situation. However, whilst there has been a discussion paper for younger drivers here in Victoria for a number of months, it was not included as one of the suggested actions.

Mr BISHOP — Its effect is questioned because if you just put it as passengers, it could be a parent rather than three or four other young people saying, 'The thing will go quicker. I bet you cannot go round this corner at such and such'. There is a definition in there which is rather important, particularly in rural areas where we have not got a lot of, or any, public transport, and then you run into the designated-driver area. So passengers are quite a complex issue.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I suppose, picking up on Peter's point, in the Victorian context we really have not thought about it in that way. I suppose we will probably look at other jurisdictions in terms of the road safety benefits that might come out of that. Mobility is an important thing to us, and being able to get around where the public transport system is not running is important. Also there are issues around enforcement when you say, 'You are carrying one more passenger than you should be'. There are some things to think through, but certainly in Victoria at some stage we will have to come to some conclusion on it.

Mr BISHOP — Have you looked at the education side of the system which we touched on briefly before? If so, would that be an issue for the TAC in its advertisement process?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think the TAC has delivered some powerful messages over the last 10 years or more going from the shock-horror stuff through to appealing to different things. All of those things are important. But we have to start with young people, not when they are about to get a licence; they have got to start to understand that. Unfortunately most of them drive around with their parents and not all parents are great role models when they get behind a wheel, so they actually learn from mum or dad's attributes as a driver, and they are not necessarily the right ones. You cannot overvalue education, but I suppose at the end of the day if people do not comply, you also have to enforce. That is where we get to.

There is quite a bit of research around external distractions. Commercial advertising — you only have to drive along the road to see a proliferation of signs, and they are quite big signs. You will no doubt hear from VicRoads, and it has a code — I think a 10 dot-point program, and if people want to put up billboards and the like they have to comply with it. Some of these advertising signs are quite provocative — they are right in your face, and I am not sure whether they do anyone much good at the end of the day. The street signage — I know there has been quite a focus through VicRoads on actually trying to eliminate a lot of unnecessary signage that distracts drivers from key

street signs they need to focus on. Traffic and pedestrians — they are always about. Incidents on the road or in the vicinity of the road, and weather conditions at different times.

The CHAIR — It is interesting with commercial advertising — for example, on probably one of the busiest intersections in Melbourne, the corner of Flinders and Swanston streets, you can read the news. Is that Channel 7? You can read the news as you are driving along, which I find distracting, especially when you are in the middle of the busiest intersection in Melbourne.

Mr BISHOP — There is no doubt street signage is distracting, particularly for people who do not know where they are going. You often see a driver in the middle of the road looking around trying to work out whether they should be in the centre of the road or in a left-hand turn lane. I do not know what can be done about that. I have often complained about the speed signs — they go up and down, and unless you have your eye on the ball you are likely to get picked up on a camera. My personal point of view is that there could be a fair bit of work done on that.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. You get signs saying, ‘Welcome to’ and, ‘this is a great’ whatever. That is great, but I am not sure whether it helps the driver terribly much. I am not sure how we get around it. But if you look at our parking signs, we have to put up a parking sign on every 10 square metres of ground somewhere, whereas in the UK and London they just put lines down the side of the road which tell you to not park there because it is a tow-away zone, or whatever, so you do not have this clutter of signs along the side of the walk. But as to how it would work in our context, I really have not given much more thought to it than that. People clearly understand when they go to the UK that those sorts of yellow or red lines mean ‘Do not park here’, or whatever.

Mr LANGDON — Particularly when those signs can, unfortunately, be involved in an accident and fatalities can occur even with those signs.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — And you do not have to walk too far from here to see advisory signs stuck up on a footpath. I mean the two posts are stuck in the middle of the footpath, for God’s sake. As a pedestrian it becomes a nightmare to navigate your way around them.

Mr BISHOP — We heard of some innovative stuff in the UK where in fact the signs on the roads change with the weather conditions. Have you had any research on that?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — The speed signs or the — —

Mr BISHOP — No, on what the weather is like on the road. If it is bad weather they change; they reflect what the weather is on the road and they light up.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — No, I have not. But some of the signs we have on the freeways are quite helpful. They can tell you that there is something up ahead that will cause you a problem. That can keep the motoring community updated as they are moving along and advise them on those sorts of things.

You have all seen the motorbikes and cars, three or four long, that go around advertising. They drive aimlessly around the city with something stuck on the back of them saying, ‘Buy this product’. I am not sure what they achieve — commercially they might achieve good things — but they are the sorts of things that keep distracting people. If you are driving on the Monash Freeway I think there is one sign there — quite a big one — that actually changes every 30 seconds to a new sign. I suppose all we are saying here is that we probably need to be cautious of how many of these things we put around and what message they are conveying.

The CHAIR — Do you see any merit in the argument put by some people that the proliferation of various speed zones, especially in metropolitan areas, can be a distraction to drivers? For example, if the member for Polwarth, who is a member of this committee, were here he would describe how, as you drive into his home town of Colac, you go from — he knows them off by heart — 100 to 80, back to 70, back to 90, and to 40 if you are going through a school zone. Obviously a lot of people claim that that is an actual distraction in itself.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I do not think they are helpful. It would be nice to have a consistent, acceptable speed for that area. I think with the Colac experience — if you talk to VicRoads and others — a lot of the pressure to have those different signs supposedly came from local government. As much as they might have wanted something, there was pressure to have this area 40 and that area 60. It does create unnecessary angst

amongst drivers. If they know they are going to be in a zone and they can travel at this speed and it is recognised as being a safe travel speed, it is probably better.

Mr LANGDON — Would you find it more or less distracting if the speed zone — say, a 40-kilometre zone or a 60-kilometre zone — was painted on the road?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I actually quite like that. Where I live there are a couple of those sorts of things. I know New South Wales does that. I actually think it helps you focus on where you are going. That is just my personal experience; others might say they are of not much value. But I suspect that when you get into that sort of thing there will clearly be a cost associated with putting them down and maintaining them. If it means you are getting a road safety outcome, where people are actually slowing down and not causing crashes and not doing other things, then the cost — —

Mr LANGDON — You want a driver to concentrate on the road. If they are busy looking at the signs on the road, it is not as good as actually watching the road.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes; I think these are some of the issues around it. VicRoads is probably better equipped to answer it than I am, but I think it is looking at the whole speed zone issue across the state and how it can be made simpler and easier for people to understand. To some degree people often say that there are probably not enough repeater speed signs around — in other words, you get into a zone but you do not get something that constantly tells you that you are still travelling at the right speed. There are those sorts of things.

The CHAIR — At the moment the state government is doing a review — of which Victoria Police is probably a member — which is led by VicRoads.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. Setting speed limits is sometimes fairly subjective; it is based on the condition of the road, and all sorts of issues have to be considered, such as the environment they are in.

Supt KEOGH — I believe one of the recommendations coming out of that review is to trial the speed limit being planted on a road at certain locations. To comment further on the signs being based on weather conditions, there are some locations where ice can be a contributing factor. Some of those areas have signs that light up and that sort of thing.

Mr BISHOP — On the issue of distraction, and I suspect it is about bringing the drivers attention back to where it ought to be, what about the rumble strips? In one area where I drive there are bumps in the road just before a railway crossing or a dangerous intersection. It does not appear to me that we do enough of that to warn people that a difficult or a dangerous intersection is coming up. Do you have any views on that?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think those rumble strips are quite good. If you drift off, they certainly focus you back on the job. If all of those sorts of things help people to focus on the job, then all the better. With some of those treatments, we are getting more and more speed humps and those sorts of things around streets as a way of trying to slow traffic down and treat it. Sometimes they are good; sometimes people get frustrated by them.

Mr BISHOP — I would suspect it is probably more a point for the country areas, where you have driven for perhaps an hour and not taken any great notice of anything, and where you might become distracted. Where you come to a dangerous intersection, if the rumble strips are across the road they would certainly bring your attention back to where it ought to be.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes, and there are some of those around. I am not an engineer, but look at some of our roundabouts here. When you go overseas and approach a roundabout, you actually have to slow down and almost stop to enter it. If you approach a roundabout here, you can almost go straight through at the speed you are travelling at without diverging anywhere. We are clearly approaching too fast and going through roundabouts too fast because the engineering does not bring us to actually having to slow our speed and navigate our way around them. We have all been at a roundabout when someone flies through from the right without even slowing; it is because they can see clearly up front that it is clear, and away they go. I think there is a whole host of engineering things that can be done to attract people's attention to the job or keep them on the job. But at the end of the day it all comes down to each and every one of us. The moment we get into a car we have to accept responsibility for what we are about to do. That is the hard bit.

Perhaps I could conclude by making a few recommendations.

Mr BISHOP — Before you go to that — I would rather do this now rather than when you get to the recommendations — can I take you back to the types of distraction and spend a few moments on that. They are visual, auditory, physical and cognitive. Can we make it very clear what we are talking about.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I have got some comments here that I will go through.

Visual — the driver looks at or for an object inside or outside the car, taking his eyes off the road. This transfer may occur for a brief or extended period of time.

Auditory — the driver concentrates on listening either to a phone call, to another passenger, to music or to the radio instead of observing the road and the traffic conditions.

Physical — the driver uses hands to adjust or operate a device inside the car rather than maintaining full control of the steering or other related tasks; in other words they are tuning something in.

Mr BISHOP — Or leaning over towards the back seat getting the kids in order or something like that.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes, that is true.

Cognitive — the drivers concentration is directed to activities that reduce awareness of other traffic movements and so reduce reaction time. The research shows that these types of distractions have a detrimental effect on driver performance. Does that help in terms of what we mean by that in this part of our submission?

Mr BISHOP — Yes, it does.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — There is so much going on. You are driving a motor car and you are doing so many different things at once. You have thought processes, you are accelerating, you are braking, you are looking ahead and you have all this other noise going on around you. It often makes it difficult.

Mr BISHOP — Have you ever seen any research which might alleviate that distraction or, call it what you will, perhaps fatigue distraction? I know in one of the cars I was in the other day, if you do 2 hours a beeper goes off and you have to reset it. When we were overseas we saw other things relative to fatigue. Have you any views on that?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think the more we can use technology in cars that actually warns us about some of the things we are not doing or we should be doing, the better. There are some vehicles now that actually stop you from accelerating beyond certain speeds. There are all sorts of things happening.

I am not sure, but given that the Victorian fleet is probably about 12 years old, to actually move this stuff into the new world, and then to actually convince manufacturers that it is in their interests to promote safety issues and not performance issues, is another concern for us. Similarly a lot of the cars that are imported into Australia come in with certain standards that we do not require here, and you have got to ask why. Why do we have an Australian standard? Why can we not accept a European standard if we believe that is the requirement here? A lot of the safety things in cars are actually wound out here because we do not see a requirement for them.

Supt KEOGH — There is emerging technology monitoring eye movement.

Mr BISHOP — Blinking.

Supt KEOGH — Yes, and it has been trialled. The outcomes are still coming but it seems to have some good results. I saw another item the other day. You put it on your ear and once your head starts to fall down, it rings a bell and that sort of thing. In the short term there is probably nothing that they can stick in a car, but in the long term I am sure something will happen to assist in overcoming fatigue.

Mr LANGDON — You still have to be careful generally. Like Barry said, you set a timer for 2 hours and if you go over that you have to reset it. Resetting it can be just as dangerous as going beyond the 2 hours.

Mr BISHOP — Yes. I suppose I am struggling a bit in the difference between distraction and fatigue, or distraction being if you have been driving too long and you are just driving rather than taking a note of what you are doing.

Supt KEOGH — If to reset it you had to stop and get out of the car and reset it in the boot, that would be a good idea.

Mr BISHOP — It would go off on the bridge somewhere!

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Just to wrap up, Mr Chairman, if I could. Clearly there needs to be a review of the legislation and changes made where appropriate, whether that is increased penalties or whatever. That is something that probably needs to be looked at. But the other thing, as I said, is that legislation is always running behind the technologies and trying to keep up with what these devices mean and then how we actually manage them so that they do not interfere with road safety.

The CHAIR — With regard to legislation, is road rule 297 — that a driver must have proper control of a vehicle — adequate for prosecutions where drivers are not paying adequate attention, or is a more specific rule regarding distracting activities needed?.

Supt KEOGH — I think the general provision is good because to try to introduce specific offences for each type of distraction could be unwieldy and you could miss out on some that should be included, so I guess that has a general application to all types of situations where the drivers attention to what they should be doing is lacking.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — There have been incidents where people have been eating and then they have stuck the wrapper up on the front dash, which has partly obscured the windscreen. People have been prosecuted for those sorts of things.

Mr LANGDON — Dare I say it, but the things they hang from the mirror that sway.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes, normally the used CD disk or something that spins around. I am not sure what value they add, to be quite honest. I think anything that obscures vision is an issue. You get anything from a CD disk to these big fluffy things and whatever. I do not know what they are but they hang off cars and they do not probably help vision terribly much. You really do need to be able to see.

The second point is the review of standards for the fitment of internal technologies. I think we have probably touched on some of that, but how do you engage with the vehicle industry, because the next thing we know there will be some other device put in a car and we will be saying, 'How are we going to deal with this?', so it is an ongoing issue. It is okay to have Australian design rules but how does it fit into the overall scheme of things?

Methods of enforcement — we have probably touched on that. At the moment we are pretty much limited to observation in detecting these things. As you say, even if we had an offence for hands-free, unless you intercept someone and they said, 'Yes, I was talking on my phone' it could be a debated point.

Mr LANGDON — Has a device been created anywhere in the world that can indicate if someone is on the phone in the car next to you?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — You can actually do checks of whether they were making a call at that time, but that is a whole new world.

Mr LANGDON — That is after it?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. You could actually take the telephone. In fact, Peter's people, our major collision people, if they go to a fatal crash now, they will actually take possession of the mobile phones and do CCR checks to see whether anyone was actually engaged in conversation at the time of the crash.

The CHAIR — You do that as a general rule now?

Supt KEOGH — Yes, we do, but that only has application where there is culpability and in fatal crashes. I guess in a lot of fatal crashes where the person who has caused the crash dies, that probably would not occur.

You mentioned earlier some limitations on enforcement. If we suspect that someone was using the phone and we do intercept them, I guess we rely on their honesty as to whether we charge them or not; and if they remain silent, which they can do, we probably lack evidence.

The CHAIR — But as a general rule, where there is a fatality, Victoria Police will take the telephone and check the records?

Supt KEOGH — With an investigation undertaken by major collision people. In other situations it may not always occur, to be honest.

Mr LANGDON — Do you think it should occur?

Supt KEOGH — Yes, but I think we may need some type of legislation to allow us to do it, otherwise we could get our fingers burned with, 'You had no right to do that', sort of thing.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — The major collision people go to those fatal crashes where there is suspected culpability involved. There are other fatal crashes where there is not, but they will certainly undertake that sort of activity. But it is a process in itself; you then have to go back to the telephone company, do the checks and all the rest.

Supt KEOGH — It is not just one telephone company; now there are plenty of providers.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — For those they do it is important to at least be aware of that for the coronial inquiry so the coroner has got some knowledge of that.

The CHAIR — So that information is readily available to the various telephone companies? There is no privacy type of situation?

Supt KEOGH — Generally, if there is any objection lodged by the phone holder or owner, we get a warrant, and that is often a tedious task. New Zealand police were saying that they ask the driver to go back to the last call, but they do not have to do that; there is no requirement.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — We have spoken about reviewing penalties. I think a New South Wales penalty for a telephone call is up to almost \$300 and 6 demerit points; it is quite a high penalty up there.

Mr LANGDON — In your experience, if you increase the number of demerit points and the fine, do people take more heed?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think people tend to take a lot more heed of demerit points than necessarily the fine. You have only got those 12 points to lose over a three-year period, and that seems to focus people fairly sharply on their activity if they are losing demerit points at a significant rate.

The CHAIR — We raised this issue in the country road toll report that we just provided to the state government. It has given us a response that it will be reviewing those penalty points and penalties in 2006. That is a positive.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. That is some of the feedback that we have got even from our people. They seem to say that it is the demerit points that people hang on and they are important to them. A \$100 fine is a \$100 fine, but if it means that they are a bit closer to losing their licence, then it makes them sharpen their thinking.

The last point of course is education, which we have spoken about. I do not see this as just a police thing; it has to start through the school process and everything else that we can expose younger people to, because they are the drivers of the future and the road users out there. We rely on them to take good practices with them. That is our presentation.

Mr LANGDON — On the education aspect, when the TAC undertakes a major campaign — for example, on distraction, mobile phones or whatever — do you find it results in a couple of months of different attitudes out there at all?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I am not sure to be quite honest. If you talk to the TAC people they seem to say that whilst whatever they do in an informative way is terrific, unless you come along with rigorous enforcement then nothing much changes. They really want that enforcement to follow any campaign, whether it is a wipe-off-five type thing or whatever they do. This is where we have to be in sync. Whatever they want to launch then we have to be in the mix in terms of making it also happen, because it is all about changing behaviours and attitudes at the end of the day. We have probably done it here pretty much through an enforcement regime, and you people understand from visiting overseas countries that they have not got much of an enforcement regime and have relied on engineering and car design to bring about their approach.

But they all say to me, 'If we had what you have got in Victoria as an enforcement regime, we would really kick some goals in terms of road safety'. I do not think there is one single stream to it. There is a whole host of things that we have to do on all these things around road safety. We have engineering, the education, the enforcement, but we also need positive engagement with the community. Otherwise, if you do not engage with the community, then you lose them, and it is hard to get them back on side with some of these things. Then they have also added the c's — cooperation, coordination and commitment — and that is across agencies to actually deliver something.

Mr LANGDON — Are they in sync all the time, or do you often find out at the last moment that they are about to do something?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Most of the time we are in sync, but sometimes we are out of sync a little bit. This is where I think clearly we have the commitment and we have the cooperation; it is the coordination that sometimes gets slightly out of sync. It is important, because if TAC is going out to promote an aspect, it is clear that we need to understand what it means and then how we are to support that. If our people do not understand that then it is meaningless to them; they do not know why they are doing it.

Mr BISHOP — We have talked about a number of issues today; one has been the driver, one has been the vehicle and one has been the outside environment to the car. If you were king for a day, give us a recommendation as to what you would do about distraction with each of those issues — drivers first.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — It is probably a hard call.

The CHAIR — Not probably; it is.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I do not think there is a simple answer. I would like to be able to say we would just ban everything — that would be an easy way to go — but at the end of the day you are looking for compliance from the community. That is where it gets back to the fact that if you are seeking compliance, then you have to take the community with you. I am not sure just hitting them over the head all the time is the best way to go, and saying, 'You cannot do this'. We are probably pretty good at saying what you cannot do — we are always doing something to them — but sometimes it is good to do something for them and just turn it a little bit.

It is a bit like speeding, if I can diverge slightly. When the traffic camera program started we had a non-compliance rate of 24 per cent; we now have a non-compliance rate of just under 2 per cent. When you are talking about compliance, that is where I am trying to come to, so let's not talk about speeding tickets. If 98.5 per cent of the community are complying that is a pretty good outcome. I suppose I really have not got a simple solution to your question. Do you have one, Pete?

Supt KEOGH — I think it is education — making them aware of the risks — and when they do not comply, hit them with a big stick.

Mr BISHOP — Saying something like that to me is a fatal mistake because of my views on driver education.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — The other one was vehicles?

Mr BISHOP — Yes.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think we have to work with manufacturers and start to understand that we are not just promoting performance and power; it really is about safety. Our community is becoming a lot more selective now. Some people are now starting to look at cars in terms of the safety benefit for themselves and their families, and not necessarily what is the speed or the power benefit. That is not everyone, but I think there is a

slight change there. If we can start to work with manufacturers to say, 'It is in your interests and our interests to factor in all these sorts of things', then that is a good win. I am sure that more people are alive today based on the technologies that have been built into cars around airbags and the like than what there were. More people are alive today as a consequence of the golden hour — in other words, the capacity to respond to the scene and get people treated within that hour, which we could not do years ago. That is what I am trying to promote through the vehicle bit.

The environment is picking up on all of those things that we spoke about, those things that keep you focused on the road, whether they are rumble strips or whatever. They are things that do not take your eye off the road. With the proliferation that is around us I know that is hard to do, because we live in a consumer-led society where people want to advertise a product and sell it. There is nothing wrong with that; but it is how we strategically do it so it does not impact on the road environment. You can walk around the street and look at that stuff. I do not necessarily believe you need to be driving along a road to read it all the time. I would rather be driving along a road and seeing road safety messages than seeing advertisements for buying something else.

Mr LANGDON — On the question of vehicles, earlier you said other jurisdictions were very envious of our enforcement levels when they were mainly concentrating on the vehicles, technology and what have you. If we could match them on the vehicles and the technology, would our roads be a lot safer?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — I think so. I think we have the back end pretty right through the enforcement regime, but what we need to do is get the front end right. I think we are moving that way now in dealing with the infrastructure issues in the country and the vehicle issues, which they have probably reasonably right. That is where we need to take it so that we pick up on all those good wins. Others have probably said if we can do good infrastructure work, then our road trauma will come down again. I am not sure we have another silver bullet sitting out there that just says if we bring this in, we will reduce road trauma significantly. I think there will be a number of different interventions that will probably cost a lot of money to achieve where we are going.

Mr BISHOP — Given the silver bullet is a package which we probably all agree on, what do you see of the education side of it? Do you see that starting in primary school, going through secondary school and then going out into the wider community as well?

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — Yes. The younger the kids are that we get to, the better. By the time kids are 14 and 15 they are starting to be pretty well set in their ways. It is probably the 10-year-olds and the 11-year olds we want to start getting to. How you tell the story is important. If we are going to have education out there, we have to do it in a best practice way. There are different theories at the moment that you go out there and you give kids blood, guts and gore. I am not sure that is best practice. As a community and as agencies, we ought to have an education package that reflects best practice so everyone sings off the same page, because although blood and guts stuff has a short-term effect, I am not sure whether it lasts that long. It needs to be fairly well-thought through. It is a fairly powerful message. We go out with our people and deliver messages to schools and community groups, but we have others who can tap into those people better than we ever could.

The CHAIR — It is interesting because I have an occupational health and safety background and one of the speakers I heard at one of the conferences we attended said that when you go into a workplace now there is great commitment to occupational health and safety in the workplace, especially from the young. The lecturer was saying that if we could transfer that attitude to the roadway — especially with the young — and if it could be done from the workplace, we would have taken a significant step in reducing our road toll. I thought that was a pretty good statement to make. There is a good commitment now towards occupational health and safety.

Asst Comm. HASTINGS — If you talk to most of the big fleet owners now, their biggest worry for their people is not the industrial accidents in the workplace any more, it is when they are out on the road. That is where they are most vulnerable. More of them are now starting to pick up on that part, because that is when they are more exposed to being hurt than walking around the factory, because we have that part of it pretty much covered.

The CHAIR — We will leave it there. Thank you, Bob and Peter. Victoria Police has been a significant contributor to the Road Safety Committee and its inquiries over the years. We appreciate your contribution to the driver distraction inquiry. Thank you for your time.

Witnesses withdrew.