



Dissent Report—Mr Patrick Secker MP, Member for Barker

It has been my observation that in recent years there has been a move to reduce speed limits and increase policing of those speed limits as a priority to reduce road deaths and injuries.

Of course road trauma can be reduced by reducing speed limits. Reducing speed limits to zero km per hour would reduce road trauma to zero but is that a sensible approach?

No amount of speed limits will stop the habitual speeder, the inattentive driver, the sleepy driver or the stupid driver who overtakes in a dangerous manner, where as better policing at “black spots” (not at the bottom hills for revenue raising), driver education, road construction, safety features such as “rumble strips” to wake the sleep driver and better car designs can assist in reducing road trauma.

Evidence given to the Committee showed that road deaths have been reduced substantially in the last two decades (less than half) but the reductions had ‘levelled off’ in recent times.

The priority of reducing speed limits even though cars are safer and roads are better in many cases leads me to think that other priorities should be addressed such as better designs for vehicles and roads and driver education may continue the reduction in the road toll without this undue priority to reducing speed limits which are cynically seen by many as mere revenue raising by State Governments.

Recent introduction of blanket lower speed limits by the SA State Government, without due regard to local government concerns and beliefs, have not helped this cynical belief especially when road signage to indicate these changes are often inadequate to alert the unsuspecting motorist.

With this in mind I would request a new recommendation to be inserted in to the Committee's report as follows:

"the Committee believes that all reductions in speed limits should be clearly sign posted at the entrance to that altered speed limit."

I advise the Committee that in the following areas I dissent from the Committee's findings:

3.34

I move that the words "60km per hour on urban arterial roads" be deleted and replaces with "speed limits appropriate for urban arterial roads which may be 60, 70 or 80 km per hour depending on traffic conditions, road conditions and safety concerns"

3.35

I move that the second dot point be deleted and replaced with "appropriate speed limits on urban arterial roads that take into account road width, design, traffic congestion and conditions and may be 60, 70 or 80 km per hour as appropriate"

5.39

All words up to and including Similarly in the fourth line should be deleted.

The reason for this is I believe that periodic retesting of drivers is totally unnecessary and that experience is far better than testing which only ensures that drivers behaviour for the duration of the test. New laws can be adequately addressed by driver education and information through media and direct mail upon changes to laws.

5.46

Add a new recommendation – Recommendation 5.46, which reads "The Committee believes that appropriate videos or CDs be provided to purchasers of caravans and trailers on how to load, how weight affects it, sharing the roads, dealing with winds and dealing with possible accident scenarios."

5.47

Delete recommendation 5.47. The reason for this deletion is that this may lead to States like South Australia having to raise their driving age to comply with uniformity and not enough evidence was provided to show that raising age limits has had any effect on total road traumas. Anecdotal evidence may suggest that learning to drive at 16 years old, without the right to drink alcohol, may be more sensible than giving licences to drive and drink at the same age. No consideration has been given by authorities to the Committee on the possibility of raising the legal drinking age, so that we don't have the conjunction of inexperienced drivers with inexperienced drinkers.

New Recommendation:

Insert a new Recommendation: "That the possibility of raising the age for zero alcohol tolerance for drivers be investigated."

5.58

Delete the first two dot points, because we already have an adequate graduated licence system of P-Plates for novice drivers and uniformity has not discussed the previous points over 'when is the right time to learn to drive' with differences in age limits between States.

The exception could be on the age for zero alcohol tolerance.

Having special licences for 4WD vehicles is unnecessarily problematic with the introduction or more All Wheel Drives (still 4WD) on the market and the existence of many smaller 4WDs that have normal handling characteristics comparable to many sedans and wagons. It could be argued that there is a greater difference between driving a front wheel drive and a traditional rear wheel drive than there is with many 4WDs such as the Subaru, Mazda Tribute, Ford Territory, etc.

6.45

I move that 6.45 be deleted and replaced with "The Committee believes that alcohol interlocks may prove to be a useful tool for law enforcement but that more evidence is needed to show that the extra cost of installation and that their reliability is proven before any ADR is introduced."

It was the Committee's belief that alcohol interlocks could be too easily overcome and that in emergency situation could prove problematic.

6.46

I move that 6.46 be deleted and replaced with "The Committee believes that further study should be done on the effectiveness and reliability of alcohol interlocks."

6.51

I move that 6.51 be deleted and replaced with "The Committee believes that more stringent policing of non-compliance with seatbelt laws should occur and that intrusive seatbelt warnings should be fitted."

6.52

6.52 Should read "The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that there is an ADR for intrusive seat belt warnings for all passenger cars and that a study be instigated on their practicability for commercial vehicles."

6.72

6.72 Should be deleted. This is because tariffs have been used in the past for protection of the local industry (fruitlessly) and as there is virtually no local 4WD industry then the use of tariffs is not warranted. It also ignores the fact that tariffs are being reduced for all vehicles anyway so it becomes a meaningless proposition. It also ignores the rights and freedoms of Australians, the right to choose without excessive taxes on those choices.

6.73

As a result of the comments pertaining to 6.72 recommendation 6.73 should be deleted.

Patrick Secker MP

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