

Chapter 3

Road safety in regional and rural Australia

3.1 According to its terms of reference, the committee in this chapter focuses on the different considerations affecting road safety in urban, regional and rural areas. The committee notes that the terms urban, regional and rural are used differently in a variety of policy settings. In this report, however, the committee has chosen to use terminology used by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) in preparing annual road crash statistics. Rather than referring to urban, regional and rural areas, BITRE measure deaths and injuries in major cities, inner and outer regional areas, and remote and very remote areas.¹ Therefore, discussion in this report uses the terms 'regional' and 'remote' to include rural settings.

3.2 Evidence before the committee demonstrated beyond doubt that persons driving on regional and remote roads are at greater risk of suffering road trauma than their urban counterparts. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the department) emphasised this difference, noting that:

- regional and remote areas account for 65 per cent of deaths and 40 per cent of hospitalised injuries from road trauma;
- annual hospitalised injuries per 100 000 persons are approximately 50 per cent higher in regional areas and 200 per cent higher in remote areas; and
- in major cities more than half the road deaths occur where the speed limit is 50 to 60 kilometres per hour, while in regional areas the majority of road deaths occur where the speed limit is 100 kilometres per hour.²

3.3 The committee heard that in regional areas, road deaths are twice the national average. In remote areas, this increases to at least four times the national average.³ Put another way, Australia's regional and remote areas contain 30 per cent of Australia's population but tragically account for over half the road toll.⁴

3.4 Indigenous Australians living in remote areas are disproportionately affected by road trauma. The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia found that:

1 BITRE applies the five 'remoteness regions' set by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Statistical Geography Standard: Volume 5 – Remoteness Structure, July 2011*, 31 January 2013.

2 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 14.

3 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 14.

4 Ms Fiona Brooke, Policy Adviser, National Rural Health Alliance, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 28.

Indigenous Australians living in remote and very remote areas, in particular, experienced higher rates of road transport injury deaths and injury hospitalisations than both their Indigenous counterparts in major cities, and their non-Indigenous counterparts in remote and very remote areas of Australia. Remote and very remote Indigenous Australians were 2.5 times and 2.3 times more likely, respectively, to be killed in a road crash, compared to non-Indigenous Australians in remote and very remote areas.⁵

3.5 According to the Motor Accident Commission of South Australia (MAC), South Australians outside of major cities are six times more likely to be killed in a fatal car accident than their urban counterparts.⁶ South Australia Police submitted:

...our stats show that country people kill themselves quite often—more than metro people... And we do not believe it is all about engineering roads or safer systems on roads; it is about driver behaviour and driver education.⁷

3.6 The committee heard from SA Police that while 'there has been a consistent reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes in both metropolitan Adelaide and regional and remote South Australia', the rate of decrease outside of major cities 'is not as great'.⁸ MAC agreed with this analysis, and offered the following additional reason for the increased severity of accidents in regional and remote areas:

[c]rashes...are actually considerably more severe in outcome when they occur in more remote locations. This is not surprising because the emergency response time is likely to be slower leading to greater severity...⁹

3.7 The committee examines two significant contributing factors that it considers can and should be addressed: road quality and driver behaviour.

Road quality

3.8 Concerns about road quality featured heavily in evidence before the committee. Mr Andrew Scarce, a driving instructor with Road Class Driver Training, discussed the driving challenges presented by the poor condition of Australia's

5 Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, *Responding to injuries in remote and rural Australia*, February 2016, p. 15, www.flyingdoctor.org.au/assets/documents/RN017_Responding_to_Injuries_P14.pdf (accessed 30 March 2016).

6 Motor Accident Commission of South Australia, *Submission 37*, p. 7.

7 Ms Bronwyn Killmier, Assistant Commissioner, State Operations Service, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 40.

8 Ms Bronwyn Killmier, Assistant Commissioner, State Operations Service, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 40.

9 Motor Accident Commission of South Australia, *Submission 37*, p. 7.

regional and remote roads, suggesting that 'most deaths on rural roads are not caused by extreme or risky behaviour but by simple mistakes on very unforgiving roads'.¹⁰

3.9 Monash University Accident Research Centre reported that in regional and remote areas, 'three quarters of serious injury arise[s] from single vehicle run-off-road crashes, usually on high-speed roads that frequently have poor roadside safety infrastructure'.¹¹ Evidence from other states was consistent with this analysis.¹² For example, the South Australian Police stated that:

Of those rural fatal crashes, 52 per cent were a single vehicle that had left the road, out of control, and hit a fixed object. So most of those involved no other vehicles; they have just left the road, out of control, and collided with something or rolled the car.¹³

3.10 It was put to the committee that regional and remote roads do not meet the standard of Safe System roads. Austroads submitted that to qualify as Safe System roads, roads in regional and remote areas should contain audible edge lines, flexible barriers (where volume dictates), a wider median on dual carriage roads or barriers down the middle of the road to separate lanes.¹⁴

3.11 The quality of Australia's regional and roads presents challenges not typically experienced in urban areas.¹⁵ Environmental factors that can exacerbate infrastructure issues include corrugation, dust, potholes, wildlife and agricultural equipment. Insurance Australia Group provided the following observation:

In terms of our rural drivers, they often face extra challenges of travelling longer distances at higher average speeds, often on poorer roads, sometimes in older vehicles with the added hazards of wildlife and stock movements and that sort of thing...¹⁶

3.12 The committee also heard that main roads in regional and remote areas often function as both highways and community centres.¹⁷

10 Mr Andrew Scarce, Owner/Operator, Road Class Driver Training, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 52.

11 Monash University Accident Research Centre, *Submission 67*, p. 35.

12 RAC, *Submission 59*, p. 7; Superintendent Michael Grainger, Victoria Police, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 2.

13 Chief Superintendent Robert Fauser, Officer in Charge, Operations Support Coordination Branch, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 42.

14 Mr Iain Cameron, Austroads, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, pp 54–55.

15 NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, *Submission 23*, p. 2; TARS, UNSW, *Submission 50*, p. 26.

16 Mr Robert McDonald, Senior Manager, Research Centre, Insurance Australia Group, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, p. 2.

17 Ms Samantha Cockfield, Senior Manager, Road Safety, Transport Accident Commission of Victoria, *Committee Hansard*, 3 July 2015, p. 49.

Improving road quality

3.13 Upgrading infrastructure in regional and remote areas was a key proposal put forward to provide the same level of safety on regional and remote roads as in major cities. For example, the Australian Automobile Association's (AAA) submission recommended a holistic approach to infrastructure that is informed by cost-benefit analysis:

Recommendation 3: Governments should invest in road safety infrastructure treatments that are shown to have a positive benefit-cost ratio. An investment of \$4.7 billion would bring 85 per cent of the national highway network to a level of 3-star or above, with a benefit-cost ratio of 3.49:1.

Recommendation 4: The entire National Highway Network should have a minimum safety rating of 3-stars, with all new road sections to be 4-star.¹⁸

3.14 AAA's proposal included a number of treatments which would be particularly conducive to improving road safety in regional and remote areas:

- roadside and central median barriers and shoulder rumble strips;
- protected turn lanes and additional lanes (2+1 with barrier);
- improved skid resistance;
- fewer roadside hazards; and
- sealed shoulders.¹⁹

3.15 The committee asked the department to respond to the AAA's recommendations and received the following response:

The Australian Government has committed \$50 billion for infrastructure investment from 2013-14 to 2019-20 onwards. This includes an additional \$200 million for the Black Spot Programme, bringing the total commitment to \$500 million over the five years to 2018-19.

The [National Road Safety] Action Plan [2015–17] calls for governments to prioritise and treat high-risk rural and urban roads with the assistance of analysis tools and also to assess risk on the roads carrying the highest traffic volumes. These approaches focus on achieving strong safety outcomes and benefit-cost ratios.²⁰

3.16 As the department states, the first action in the National Road Safety Action Plan is to '[p]rioritise and treat high-risk rural and urban roads, focusing on the main

18 Australian Automobile Association, *Submission 54*, p. 4.

19 Mr Craig Newland, Director, Road Safety and Technical Services, Australian Automobile Association, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, pp 46–47.

20 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, answer to question on notice, 14 August 2015.

crash types and vulnerable road users'. The plan specifies that spatial analysis tools including 'severe injury rate/cost heat maps' should be used to determine areas of 'high collective risk'. By end-2017, the plan anticipates that states and territories will have 'identified, prioritised and commenced treating the top 10% of priority locations'.²¹

3.17 While the department's submission and response mark the imbalance in trauma outcomes for 'rural and urban roads', it does not clearly outline how the government's committed infrastructure investment would address that imbalance.²² Some submitters expressed doubt that regional and remote areas would be appropriately prioritised.²³

Local government

3.18 The committee has heard that upgrading the local road network would reduce a large proportion of road deaths and injuries.²⁴ Ms Terri-Anne Pettet, Manager of the RoadWise Program at the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), explained that:

In Western Australia local governments are responsible for 128,000 kilometres, or 88 per cent, of the road network, where around 47 per cent of travel occurs. In 2012, 57 per cent of all the deaths and serious injuries in Western Australia—1,520 people—occurred on the local road network at a cost to the community of \$1.5 billion.²⁵

3.19 Local government receives a share of the \$3.2 billion allocated to local, state and territory governments under the Roads to Recovery programme in the financial years 2014–15 to 2018–19.²⁶ The Commonwealth Government announced on 23 June 2015 that '[c]ouncils across Australia will receive an extra \$1.105 billion over the next two years', allocating funding by local government area.²⁷

21 Transport and Infrastructure Council, *National Road Safety Action Plan 2015–17*, p. 3.

22 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 26; Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, response to additional questions on notice from 14 August 2015, pp 1–2.

23 See, for example, RAC, *Submission 59*, pp 8–9; Chief Superintendent Robert Fauser, Officer in Charge, Operations Support Coordination Branch, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 43; Dr Jeremy Woolley, Acting Director, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 6.

24 Mr Ian King, Chief Executive, Western Australian Road Transport Association, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 21.

25 Ms Terri-Anne Pettet, Manager, RoadWise Program, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 56.

26 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Roads to Recovery Programme*, <http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/r2r/> (accessed 20 April 2016).

27 The Hon Warren Truss MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, 'Fuel excise change a boost for local roads', Media release WT184/2015, http://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/wt/releases/2015/June/wt184_2015.aspx (accessed 20 April 2016).

3.20 In WALGA's view, the cost of upgrading infrastructure is difficult to estimate because 'large parts of the ageing road network do not already meet the current minimum standards', meaning that 'the effort and investment to achieve safe roads and roadsides under the safe system approach is likely to be a substantial underestimate'. The committee heard that among local governments in Western Australia 'there was a clearly expressed need for additional funds, staff and training in the practical application of the safe system approach'. The committee was troubled to hear of 'a shortfall of up to \$100 million a year' just to maintain the Western Australian road network in its current condition.²⁸

Black Spot Programme

3.21 Several submitters proposed that the Black Spot Programme funding and methodology should be revisited to better address the condition of roads in regional and remote areas. The programme provides funding for infrastructure improvements in at-risk areas using cost-benefit analysis. To qualify as a black spot, a location must have seen two 'casualty crashes' in five years, and the project must be assessed as returning 'at least one dollar to the economy for every dollar invested'.²⁹ A requirement limiting the number of projects per local government area was removed 'to make it easier for regional areas to compete for additional funding'.³⁰

3.22 The department advised that half of the programme's funding is earmarked for regional Australia:

The Government will also ensure that at least 50 per cent of funding is dedicated to fixing sites in regional Australia, where more than 60 per cent of road deaths and 35 per cent of serious injuries occur.³¹

3.23 The committee is concerned that this commitment refers to, but is not directly in proportion to, the actual number of road deaths that occur in regional and remote areas.³² In the alternative, RAC proposed that road funding be allocated according to the 'star rating' of roads, which would inevitably increase funding to regional and remote roads.³³

3.24 It was put to the committee that the programme's methodology is ill-suited to improving road safety in regional and remote areas, and should be more flexible. Mr

28 Ms Terri-Anne Pettet, Manager, RoadWise Program, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p 56–57.

29 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 26.

30 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 26.

31 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 26; Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *The Black Spot Programme*, <http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/blackspots/> (accessed 10 November 2015).

32 Mr Iain Cameron, Austroads, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, p. 57.

33 RAC, *Submission 59*, p. 7.

Iain Cameron, Chairman of the Austroads Safety Taskforce explained that it is easier to identify black spots in major cities due to higher volumes and predictability:

Traditionally what we have done is that, when there is an awful pile of people who get killed or seriously injured at a particular spot, we have called that a black spot and we have dealt with that. The problem is...on long lengths of road, particularly country roads, we are chasing lightning strikes. These crashes are distributed, volumes are very low and we do not know exactly where the next one is going to occur.³⁴

3.25 The committee endorses the Austroads proposal that the definition of black spots should consider the risks associated with longer lengths of road.³⁵

Technology

3.26 As discussed in Chapter 2, vehicle safety technology is improving. The committee heard that unless roads are upgraded, Australians in regional and remote areas will miss out on technological improvements.³⁶ As an example, Victoria Police explained that vehicles fitted with lane assist technology would be of limited assistance outside of major cities, as:

Most of them at the moment will require a white line to set a boundary for the lane assist to determine that it is leaving the lane. Most of our roads in rural Victoria—we classify them as C roads—do not have that capability. So we can put the best technology in the world on those roads but people are still driving at 100 kilometres an hour on a gravel-edged road which is tree lined.³⁷

3.27 RAC foreshadowed the possibility of a two-tier road safety system, in which the new safety technologies available in major cities exceed those available to residents of regional and remote Australia:

It is important to note that [intelligent transport systems (ITS)] and the movement toward autonomous vehicles offer most promise in infrastructure and vehicle-rich environments. The low density infrastructure and vehicle environments of rural and remote WA may therefore gain relatively fewer benefits. With this in mind it is critical to ensure that there is appropriate investment and strategies in place to target rural and remote populations. This should ensure that the disadvantaged communities in road safety terms

34 Mr Iain Cameron, Chairman, Austroads Safety Taskforce, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, p. 55.

35 Mr Iain Cameron, Austroads, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, p. 57; The Centre for Automotive Safety Research, The University of Adelaide, *Submission 40*, p. 3.

36 Dr Jeremy Woolley, Acting Director, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 2.

37 Inspector Stuart McGregor, Victoria Police, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 3.

do not become further marginalised by a growing focus on ITS and autonomous vehicles.³⁸

Committee view

3.28 There is a marked and unacceptable difference in the quality of infrastructure in major cities and in regional and remote areas. The committee is strongly of the view that Australians' safety should not be compromised by living outside of major cities.

3.29 A complete change or a one-size-fits-all approach to speed on regional and remote roads was not supported by submitters to this committee. However, the committee heard a clear view that governments should not allow road users to drive faster than rapidly deteriorating road conditions allow.

3.30 The committee appreciates the department's advice that the government has committed \$50 billion to upgrading Australia's road infrastructure. The committee emphasises the need for tailored solutions in regional and remote areas that focus on road safety rather than driver convenience. The committee sees merit in considering each road on a case-by-case basis. To this end, the committee endorses the proposal for the Black Spot Programme to be adjusted to place a greater emphasis on regional and remote roads. A funding model that more accurately reflects the number of deaths and injuries will help close the gap in road deaths between urban and regional and remote road areas.

3.31 The committee appreciates the advice provided by the Victoria Police that, as a starting point, regional and remote roads should be upgraded to include white lines and sealed verges, and draws this to the attention of the Commonwealth's Black Spot Programme and state and local governments.

Recommendation 9

3.32 The committee recommends that Commonwealth Government increase funding to the Black Spot Programme and increase the percentage allocated to regional and remote areas.

Recommendation 10

3.33 The committee recommends that the definition of 'black spot' be revised to account for the dispersed nature of accidents in regional and remote areas.

Driver behaviour

3.34 As well as in major cities, driver behaviour was identified as a key contributor to accidents on regional and remote roads.³⁹

38 RAC, *Submission 59*, p. 7.

3.35 The department advised that high-risk behaviours including speeding, failure to wear seatbelts and unlicensed driving are more common in regional and remote areas.⁴⁰ Submitters suggested that what would be unacceptable in major cities is often considered a condition for driving on regional and remote roads.⁴¹

3.36 The committee heard debate about whether accidents on regional and remote roads more frequently involved locals or visitors. MAC noted that in South Australia there is a perception that the majority of persons killed outside of major cities are visitors.⁴² To the contrary, South Australia Police confirmed that '69 per cent are residing in the communities in which they are dying or becoming seriously injured'.⁴³ The National Rural Health Alliance suggested that further analysis on this question is required.⁴⁴

Policing

3.37 The committee heard that policing and road safety strategies, such as random breath testing and speed cameras, may not be suited to regional and remote areas. Victoria Police reported that their effectiveness diminishes outside major cities, illustrating that:

As soon as a booze bus turns up and starts setting up, the grapevine advises everyone of its whereabouts—same with our automated speed-detecting services.⁴⁵

3.38 Likewise, speed cameras were not considered to be effective outside of major cities due to their visibility from up to two kilometres away.⁴⁶

3.39 The committee recognises the enforcement and speed monitoring challenges that particularly affect regional and remote areas, and the need for unique deterrent measures. The committee sees merit in using point-to-point speed cameras in those areas, particularly to minimise the impact of road trauma on vulnerable road user groups.⁴⁷

39 Mr Andrew Scarce, Owner/Operator, Road Class Driver Training, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 52; Ms Bronwyn Killmier, Assistant Commissioner, State Operations Service, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 40.

40 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, *Submission 51*, p. 15.

41 NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, *Submission 23*, p. 2; Superintendent Michael Grainger, Victoria Police, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 1.

42 Motor Accident Commission of South Australia, *Submission 37*, p. 4.

43 Chief Superintendent Robert Fauser, Officer in Charge, Operations Support Coordination Branch, South Australia Police, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 42.

44 National Rural Health Alliance Inc., *Submission 39*, p. 3.

45 Inspector Stuart McGregor, Victoria Police, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 6.

46 Inspector Stuart McGregor, Victoria Police, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 6.

47 Pedestrian Council of Australia, *Submission 58*, p. 4.

Recommendation 11

3.40 The committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory governments work with police agencies to increase the number of point-to-point speed cameras in regional and remote areas.

Community awareness and education

3.41 Submitters emphasised the need for awareness campaigns to educate drivers of the unique risks attached to roads in regional and remote areas. At the outset, the committee was advised that such campaigns 'are notoriously difficult to make effective',⁴⁸ although MAC has provided the committee with examples of their success.⁴⁹

3.42 Good road safety advertising can reduce up to 12 per cent of crashes, according to analysis by MAC and Global Road Safety Solutions.⁵⁰ They have determined that advertising has at least three types of benefit:

Type 1: Influences behaviours directly. Examples may include campaigns which enhance the effects of enforcement by increasing general deterrence, and so changes behaviour.

Type 2: Influences behaviours via attitudes.

Type 3: Generates changes in attitude or belief which allow more effective other actions such as reduced speed limits, reduced BAC limits, increased enforcement or increased penalties, which will change behaviours.⁵¹

3.43 MAC's analysis is that the aim of influencing behaviour via attitude (type 2) is the most commonly pursued and the most difficult in which to achieve success.⁵² Influencing behaviour directly (type 1) is considered most effective alongside changes in legislation or enforcement, such as random breath testing and mobile speed cameras.⁵³ The effect of generating change (type 3) was described as lacking 'clear evidence for direct behaviour change' but capable of increasing public acceptance of measures such as speed limit reduction.⁵⁴

48 Dr Jeremy Woolley, Acting Directory, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 6.

49 Mr Michael Cornish APM, Motor Accident Commission of SA, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 7; Additional information from the Motor Accident Commission of SA, received 31 March 2016, p. 8.

50 Motor Accident Commission of SA, additional information received 31 March 2016, p. 8.

51 Dr Jeremy Woolley, Acting Directory, Centre for Automotive Safety Research, University of Adelaide, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 6.

52 Motor Accident Commission of SA, additional information received 31 March 2016, pp 3–4.

53 Motor Accident Commission of SA, additional information received 31 March 2016, pp 2–4.

54 Motor Accident Commission of SA, additional information received 31 March 2016, pp 5–6.

3.44 Insurance Australia Group recommended careful targeting of campaigns:

...there could be more targeted regional and rural specific strategies and current road safety strategies. They are more global, more broad, and I think there is room to have some specific rural and regional focus because there are some different issues experienced by those people.⁵⁵

3.45 Particularly for regional and remote areas, the delivery of road awareness education should include community engagement where possible.⁵⁶ This is an invaluable part of establishing a culture of responsible road use. Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer of the National Road Safety Foundation, theorised that:

...if you were to ask most people in the street who is responsible for road safety, the answer you would get would be 'government' or 'police'. I do not think anyone would come up with the answer that as road users we are the ones who are responsible.⁵⁷

3.46 The committee supports the endeavours of community-based driver education programs and especially notes those designed for primary and secondary students.⁵⁸ MAC advised that 'there is clear evidence of attitude, knowledge, and belief change from such programs'.⁵⁹

3.47 Road safety is included within a number of units in the Australian Curriculum (for example, ACCPS018 'Being healthy, safe and active'). However, its presence in the education of primary and secondary students could be strengthened.

3.48 As Mr Russell White identified, road awareness should start much earlier than obtaining a learner drivers' licence:

Clearly, well before someone even gets to the stage of picking up the keys to a vehicle, we should be looking at what childhood or school based programs could be integrated into a learning curriculum—especially as these days fewer and fewer children are riding pushbikes to school.

55 Ms Naomi Quinn, Manager Road Safety and Regulatory Policy, Insurance Australia Group, *Committee Hansard*, 2 July 2015, p. 15.

56 Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, *Responding to injuries in remote and rural Australia*, February 2016, p. 15; Ms Fiona Brooke, Policy Adviser, National Rural Health Alliance, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 32; Professor Mark Stevenson, Executive Committee member, Australasian College of Road Safety, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 27; Ms Terri-Anne Pettet, Manager, RoadWise Program, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 57.

57 Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Safety Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 51.

58 Roadcraft Driver Education Specialists, *Additional Information: The Roadcraft model*, p. 2.

59 Motor Accident Commission of SA, additional information received 31 March 2016, p. 4.

Typically, a person's real experience of being on the road comes when they are taking to the road with their 'L' plates on the first time.⁶⁰

3.49 The committee recommends a review of the Australian Curriculum to ensure there is a strong emphasis on driver behaviour at primary and secondary school level. The committee encourages a focus on 'human factors' including awareness and observation.⁶¹

Recommendation 12

3.50 The committee recommends that the Australian Curriculum includes road awareness training for both primary and secondary school students.

3.51 The committee is optimistic about the potential of adopting a 'lifelong learning' approach to driver education. Mr Russell White identified that the current driver education system perpetuates 'a belief that the moment you get the driver's license that somehow the learning experience finishes', when in fact 'it is the exact opposite; it is just where things start'.⁶² He proposed incorporating incentives such as:

...creating a gold level of licence or a gold level of driver who has committed to safety, who has done more training and is setting the right sort of example on the road.⁶³

Recommendation 13

3.52 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government in the 2018–2020 National Road Safety Strategy Action Plan commit to the introduction of accredited post-licence driver education programs.

First aid education

3.53 As previously noted, the time between accidents and the arrival of emergency services is greater in regional and remote areas.⁶⁴ St John Ambulance Australia reported that ambulance response times in regional Victoria are 39 per cent longer than in metropolitan areas.⁶⁵

60 Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Safety Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 50.

61 Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Safety Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 52.

62 Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Safety Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 51.

63 Mr Russell White, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Safety Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, 18 February 2016, p. 51.

64 Ms Fiona Brooke, Policy Adviser, and Mr Andrew Phillips, Policy Consultant, National Rural Health Alliance, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 34.

65 St John Ambulance Australia, *Submission 8*, p. 2.

3.54 For this reason, the committee agrees with submitters on the need for online or in-person first aid training for learner drivers, and commends St John Ambulance Australia for its innovative solution and dedication to creating safer roads.⁶⁶ The committee understands that such schemes are currently operating in Europe.⁶⁷

3.55 While online courses are no substitute for hands-on training, the committee agrees that they are the 'next best solution'.⁶⁸ St John Ambulance Australia explained that it already runs two web-based training courses:

First@Scene and *Clicktosave*...take approximately half an hour to complete. They are really pitched at a basic level, highlighting very basic concepts that can save a life. They are provided free of charge to the public.⁶⁹

3.56 The committee considers that first aid training should be mandatory not only for learner drivers but for drivers seeking to renew their licence. A 30-minute online training course would not appear to place a significant burden on new or current drivers. However, it may significantly increase safety on Australia's roads.

Recommendation 14

3.57 The committee recommends that Austroads work with state and territory driver licensing authorities to introduce compulsory first aid training as a condition of receiving a learner's permit or renewing a drivers licence.

66 Ms Fiona Brooke, Policy Adviser, and Mr Andrew Phillips, Policy Consultant, National Rural Health Alliance, *Committee Hansard*, 14 August 2015, p. 34; St John Ambulance Australia, *Submission 8*, p. 2.

67 St John Ambulance Australia, *Submission 8*, p. 3.

68 Mrs Belinda Ding, National Policy Manager, St John Ambulance Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 16.

69 Mrs Belinda Ding, National Policy Manager, St John Ambulance Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 26 October 2015, p. 15.

