

## Media Release



### Select Committee on Travelsafe

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*The Travelsafe Committee is a select committee of the Queensland Parliament. It was appointed on 18 March 2004 to inquire into and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland.*

### PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO LOOK AT WARNINGS FOR HIGH RISK DRIVERS ABOUT DRIVING TIRED

A parliamentary inquiry is examining the effectiveness of government warnings about the dangers of driving while tired.

Chairman of the Queensland Parliament's Travelsafe Committee, Jim Pearce MP, said fatigue could be the cause of more crashes than speed and alcohol, yet many drivers continue to drive while tired.

"People everywhere are cramming more and more into their lifestyle and not thinking about the need for regular sleep," Mr Pearce said.

"If you have been awake for 24 hours and you drive, it is as dangerous as drink driving with a 0.10 BAC."

"Not only are people working longer hours, but they are also then socialising, studying, driving children to school and participating in other activities. People are trying to do it all."

"They think they can get away with it but really they can't. It often catches up when they least expect it with horrific consequences."

"If it happens while you're driving, it could kill you or somebody else. Nobody can cheat sleep and get away with it."

Submissions to the committee's inquiry indicate that it isn't possible yet to do a roadside fatigue test. Therefore, educating drivers may be the only option.

"We are particularly interested in how well government warning messages are reaching the high risk drivers," said Mr Pearce.

Submissions to the committee's inquiry and other studies have flagged a number of high risk groups including:

- Young drivers;
- Older drivers;
- Drivers in rural areas;
- Long-distance drivers;
- Shift workers whose sleep is disrupted by working at night or working long or irregular hours; and
- People with untreated sleep disorders such as sleep apnoea.

The committee's issues paper is available from the Queensland Parliament website. The committee will continue to accept submissions until mid February 2005.

They will report their findings to Parliament in May 2005.

For Media comment contact Jim Pearce MP. For background information contact Lyndel Bates at the committee secretariat.