

## 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.*

### DRIVING ON EMPTY: FATIGUE DRIVING IN QUEENSLAND

Queenslanders may not be getting enough sleep before they get behind the wheel a Queensland Parliamentary committee inquiry has found.

A report of the Travelsafe Committee released today, *Driving on Empty: Fatigue Driving in Queensland*, reveals that drivers who have been awake for over 20 consecutive hours have the same crash risk as drivers with a blood alcohol content of 0.10. This is double the legal BAC limit.

Committee Chairman, Mr Jim Pearce MP says statistics showing fatigue to be a contributing factor in 13 per cent of fatal crashes in Queensland almost certainly under-represent the problem.

Mr Pearce says, "We know fatigue is a road safety problem. We need effective strategies to reduce fatigue-related crashes in this state, particularly in relation to light vehicle drivers."

The report makes 31 recommendations to reduce these crashes, some aimed at high risk groups such as shift-workers.

"We are making practical recommendations to stop tired workers driving", says Mr Pearce. "We are saying that in industries where people work long hours and shift-work, employers need to have mechanisms in place to stop driver fatigue", Mr Pearce says.

"The focus is on raising community awareness of fatigue as a high risk factor in crashes, combined with promoting sleep for its overall health benefits. We want to ensure that Queenslanders who work long hours, or drive long distances get the rest they need to avoid crashes", Mr Pearce says.

Recommendations include industrial countermeasures such as more effective rostering systems and alternative transport arrangements. For long-distance travellers, the committee recommends revamping the Driver Reviver Program and constructing additional quality rest areas.

Mr Pearce says, "A combined effort by Industrial Relations, Health, the Police Service and Queensland Transport is needed to combat the problem of driver-fatigue."

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#### Editor's notes:

- The Travelsafe Committee is a select committee of the Queensland Parliament required to monitor, investigate and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland.
  - Mr Pearce is available for interview - please call the committee secretariat on 07 3406 7908, or Mr Pearce on 0419 778 401.
  - For further information about the committee's inquiry please contact Acting Research Director, Lyndel Bates at the committee secretariat on 07 3406 7931.
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