THE AIM OF THIS PAPER

This paper presents interim findings from the inquiry into rural road safety in Queensland. The Travelsafe Committee of the 50th Parliament released this paper to enable affected groups and individuals to verify or respond to the issues and conclusions.

THE TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

The Travelsafe Committee of the 50th Parliament is a select committee required to monitor, investigate and report on all aspects of road safety and public transport in Queensland, particularly:

♦ issues affecting road safety including the causes of crashes and measures aimed at reducing death, injuries and economic costs to the community;

♦ the safety of passenger transport services, and measures aimed at reducing the incidence of related deaths and injuries; and

♦ measures for the enhancement of public transport in Queensland and reducing dependence on private motor vehicles as the predominant mode of transport.

THE INQUIRY INTO RURAL ROAD SAFETY IN QUEENSLAND

In March 1999, the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament commenced an inquiry into rural road safety in Queensland.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were to examine and report on:

♦ the implementation of the 1996 Rural Road Safety Action Plan in Queensland; and

♦ what, if any, additional measures should be taken to improve rural road safety in Queensland.

To publicise the inquiry the committee:

♦ placed advertisements in newspapers from regional and rural areas throughout Queensland;

♦ issued media releases about the scope of the inquiry and inviting public submissions;

♦ published issues paper No.4 – Rural Road Safety Action Plan and distributed over 1,000 copies to members of parliament, government agencies, community groups and other stakeholders;


♦ wrote to the groups nominated in the Rural Road Safety Action Plan as being responsible for its implementing asking them to make a submission;
♦ wrote to other organisations and individuals likely to have an substantial interest in rural road safety to advise them of the inquiry and invite submissions; and

♦ distributed posters to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Queensland Health (QH) regional offices outlining the terms of reference for the inquiry and calling for submissions.

What is a rural road?

To begin to examine rural road safety requires firstly a clear notion of what is ‘rural’. While it is a familiar and well used term, there is no formal or agreed Australian or international definition (See OECD, 1993, p 13). The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and Queensland Transport (QT) whose data the committee has used during the inquiry define ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ areas based on population, local authority area and remoteness.

The rural crash data provided by the ATSB defined crash locations as ‘rural remote’, ‘rural non-remote’, ‘urban over 50,000 population’ and ‘urban under 50,000 population’ areas as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Rural, non-remote’</td>
<td>Areas with population less than 200 and that are within 100 kilometres of a town with population over 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Rural, remote’</td>
<td>Areas with population less than 200 and that are over 100 kilometres from a town with population over 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Urban, over 50,000 population’</td>
<td>Large towns, capital cities, and major urban centres with more than 50,000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Urban, under 50,000 population’</td>
<td>Medium towns and small towns with populations between 200 and 50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QT and the Department of Main Roads (DMR) define ‘rural’ Queensland as: Queensland, excluding the local government areas of Brisbane, Bundaberg, Caboolture, Cairns, Caloundra, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Maroochy, Noosa, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe, Redland, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville (QT & DMR, Submission, No 36, p 2). This definition effectively excludes roads in the most urbanised regions in south east Queensland and cities with populations over 50,000 persons. It also classifies as ‘rural’ local roads within townships across most of the state.

While rural roads may be classified for statistical purposes as a homogenous group, they comprise a range of very different road types such as single-lane un-sealed developmental roads to single lane bitumen roads and multi-lane dual carriageways. Ownership and responsibility for rural roads is shared by all three levels of government.

The Rural Road Safety Problem

Crashes on rural roads are a growing road safety problem around the world. A report on rural road crashes prepared for the OECD conservatively estimates that more than 75,000 people are killed annually on rural roads in OECD member countries. This equals more than 60 percent of all road fatalities in OECD countries (OECD, 1999, p 13).

The OECD report also notes that:

♦ fatal accident risks on rural roads are generally higher than on urban roads;
♦ accidents on rural roads have a tendency to be more severe—in terms of the number killed or injured—than on other roads;
♦ the costs of rural accidents are higher;
♦ rural crashes and fatalities are spread over a wide area because of the vastness of rural road networks; and
♦ the challenges this creates for the analysis and treatment of rural road safety (OECD, 1999, pp 27-9).

In Australia, more than half of all road fatalities occurs on rural roads. This is significant given that Australia is one of the world’s most urbanised countries with less than 15 percent of its population resident in rural areas (ABS 2000). In recent years, the level of road trauma in Australia has declined significantly. Though, the reductions in crashes and fatalities achieved in rural areas have been smaller than the reductions achieved in urban areas.

Tables (1) and (2) at the back of this paper present statistics for Australian and Queensland rural and urban road crash fatalities 1990 - 1996 compiled by the ATSB. Table (3) presents Queensland crash data for the period 1994 - 2000 provided by QT. From Tables (1) and (2):
In 1996 half (50.7 percent) of road fatalities in Australia, where the land classification was known, occurred in rural areas. In Queensland in the same year, the proportion of fatalities in rural areas was 55 percent.

Fatalities in urban areas of Australia fell over the period from 1244 fatalities or 54.4 percent of all fatalities in 1990 to 936 fatalities or 47.5 percent of fatalities in 1996. In Queensland, the reduction in urban fatalities was more pronounced from 218 fatalities (55.5 percent) in 1990 to 164 fatalities (42.9 percent) in 1996.

Over the period, fatalities in rural remote areas increased to 6.2 percent nationally and 4.9 percent in Queensland where the land classification was known.

From figure (3):

- Compared to the risk of dying in an urban crash, the per capita risk of dying in a rural crash in Queensland in 2000 was 4.2 times higher.
- Similarly, compared to the risk of being hospitalised following a crash in urban areas, the risk in rural areas is 2.3 times higher.
- For particular types of fatal crashes, the per capita risk in 2000 of dying in rural areas compared to urban areas is:
  - 4.7 times higher for speed-related crashes;
  - 4.3 times higher for alcohol-related crashes;
  - 6.4 times higher for single vehicle crashes;
  - 13.5 times higher for fatigue-related crashes; and
  - 5.2 times higher for crashes where the failure to wear seat belts was judged by police to be a contributing factor in the death.

**The Rural Road Safety Action Plan (RRSAP)**

**What is the RRSAP?**

The RRSAP was part of a broader national attempt to strategically manage road safety by improving systems for planning, coordination and resource use, under the auspices of the National Road Safety Strategy: 1992 - 2000.

The RRSAP was the culmination of research and effort by a number of groups and individuals to place rural issues firmly on the nation’s road safety agenda. It was unanimously endorsed by federal, state and territory ministers for transport at an Australian Transport Council meeting on 7 June 1996 (NRSSITF, 1996).

**How was the RRSAP developed?**

A committee appointed by transport ministers and responsible for overseeing the National Road Safety Action Plan developed the RRSAP during 1995 and 1996. Called the National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Task Force (NRSSITF) – the committee included a QT representative.

The RRSAP was devised using the report from a national seminar, Rural Road Safety: Focus for the Future, held in Wodonga, Victoria in 1994 (NRSSITF 1996). It was a top-down policy response - it did not arise out of consultation by the Australian Transport Council or the National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Task Force with rural road safety stakeholders or the general public.

While QT was represented on the task force, it appears that other rural road safety stakeholders had little input. In Queensland, government departments such as QH and Department of Emergency Services weren’t consulted about the plan, despite being assigned responsibility in it for implementing key actions (Croker, Hearing Transcript, p 2, correspondence of 15 January 2001 from Professor Bryan Campbell, Chief Health Officer, QH).

Nor does it appear were local governments that collectively administer 80 percent of the state’s road network.

**What did the RRSAP contain?**

The RRSAP contains a range of specific activities to improve rural road safety across eight broad areas:

1. Planning road improvements;
2. Public education programs;
3. Involvement of local communities;
4. Speed management;
5. Management of fatigue;
6. Enforcement;
7. Trauma services; and
8. Remote areas (NRSSITF 1996, pp 7-10)

For each specific action, the plan nominated both responsible and supporting agencies.
What is the status of the RRSAP?

The Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament sought advice on the status of the RRSAP from the ATSB. Executive Director, Mr Kim Bills, informed the committee that the plan adopted in 1996 was to be reviewed and reported by early 1998 (Correspondence of 29 February 2000). QT assumed responsibility for monitoring implementation of the RRSAP in Queensland (Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 5). However, the Australian Transport Council adopted a further raft of measures on 23 May 1997, the National Road Safety Package, following a ‘... disturbing trend in the road toll’. This package included the more-promising initiatives of the then road safety agenda and, in doing so, over-shadowed the previous 1996 National Road Safety Action Plan and Rural Road Safety Action Plan (See FORS, 1997). The rural road safety initiatives picked up in the 1997 National Road Safety Package included:

♦ Black Spot programs to rectify known accident sites on rural and other roads;
♦ programs for shoulder sealing and audible edge lining to be upgraded and accelerated;
♦ targeted enforcement of seat belt wearing in rural areas;
♦ increased public awareness of enforcement activities associated with alcohol, speed and seat belt wearing;
♦ development of guidelines and individual state and territory plans for highway rest areas;
♦ implementation of a targeted public education strategy to create awareness of good fatigue management practices and the locations of rest stops;
♦ implementation of a comprehensive, nationally consistent speed zoning system covering both urban and rural areas and including the hierarchy of speed limits proposed in the Austroads Report AP 118 Urban Speed Management in Australia; and
♦ development of fatigue management guidelines for long distance light vehicle drivers, recreational and business/commercial drivers.

Is the RRSAP still used in Queensland?

QT advised the committee that the RRSAP wasn’t superseded, and that transport ministers agreed that they would continue to use the plan in their individual planning and focus on those components where they saw the highest priorities for their jurisdictions (Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 1).

QT continues to refer to the plan when devising its annual road safety action plans for Queensland, and match base actions against it (Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript pp 1). Similarly within the QPS, the RRSAP remains an intrinsic part of the service’s corporate planning for road safety and enforcement (Pitman, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 1).

How were the initiatives in the RRSAP funded?

Despite committing substantial government and non-government agency resources to improve rural road safety, the RRSAP provided no funding. The government departments and other stakeholders listed as implementing or supporting specific actions for the plan were expected to do so using resources they already had.

CONCLUSIONS

The committee concludes that the RRSAP was a necessary national initiative to reduce a significant and growing component of the road toll involving crashes on rural roads. As a policy response, however, the RRSAP was developed exclusively of key rural road safety stakeholders, and failed to address the resource implications for government and non-government agencies nominated to undertake specific actions.

The committee invites further submissions on these matters.

EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY THE TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE OF THE 49TH PARLIAMENT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RRSAP

The Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament collected substantial evidence through 45 written submissions, a public hearing in Brisbane on 26 October 2000 and meetings with agency staff and road users in rural and remote Queensland centres. Issues Paper No. 3 of April 1999, Rural Road Safety in Queensland, submissions to the inquiry and the hearing transcript are available from the committee secretariat and via the committee’s Internet site at: http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Committees/
In June 1999, the committee conducted meetings in Perth to discuss, among other things, the implementation of the Rural Road Safety Action Plan in Western Australia.

During 2000, the committee visited a cross-section of rural centres and met with community leaders, regional departmental staff and residents. During February and July 2000, the committee held meetings at Roma, Longreach, Tambo, Birdsville, Mount Morgan, Cairns, Cooktown, Wujal Wujal, Weipa, and Kowanyama. Its visits to these centres provided the committee with the opportunity to gauge the views of rural people about safety issues on their roads, the implementation of the RRSAP and the impact of safety interventions. It also exposed members to the diverse social, cultural and environmental conditions that impact on road users in rural and remote areas.

The committee held a public hearing in Brisbane on Thursday 26 October 2000. The committee structured the hearing around the subject areas in the RRSAP and invited witnesses from departments and other stakeholder groups listed in the RRSAP to appear throughout the hearing.

The following sections discuss the evidence collected by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament concerning the implementation of specific actions in the RRSAP in Queensland. They also present conclusions for comment.

1. **Planning Road Improvements**

The standard of roads is a perennial issue for all levels of government. With road construction and maintenance (like the provision of health services), demand has always outstripped supply in Queensland. Part of the problem is the vastness of the state and, consequently, the road network serving it, and the size and distribution of the population.

Queensland has approximately 174,000km of public roads. Approximately 34,000km (20 percent) are state-controlled roads. These roads carry 80% of the state’s road traffic. Included in the state-controlled network is 4,200km of national highways. The DMR is responsible for managing the state-controlled network. Local governments manage the remaining 140,000km of public roads in the state.

Around 1/3 of all road accidents are associated with the road environment. For this reason, road standards and measures to improve road design and construction are important issues in rural Queensland.

1.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP contained specific and substantial actions for planning improvements to rural roads through safety audits and road improvement programs dealing with un-sealed shoulders, road delineation problems and road-side hazards as follows:

(a) Undertake safety audits of all national and state highways and other rural roads. Formulate road improvement programs on the basis of their findings. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Commonwealth and State/Territory Road Safety Authorities).

(b) Implement a special program of shoulder sealing with a high-quality centre and edge-line treatment and other forms of delineation. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities).

(c) Implement a program for removing or otherwise reducing the danger from potential roadside hazards, including culverts, poles and trees in particularly dangerous positions. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities/Local Government).

As a measure of progress, the RRSAP proposed that safety audits of 50% of national and state highways be completed by December 1997. This gave Queensland road safety agencies 18 months to complete safety audits of 2,100km of national highways and 14,900 km of other state-controlled roads.

The RRSAP did not provide specific timeframes for the other road improvement initiatives.

1.2 What has been done?

(a) Road Safety Audits

Since the RRSAP, DMR has audited 22 percent of state-controlled highways in Queensland (QT & DMR Submission, No. 36, Attachment 3). The department has also set goals for future years to complete the auditing project (Queensland, DMR, Roads Implementation Program, 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 State Program, pp 1-5).
Between July 1996 and March 1999, 829 kms of the 3,813 kms comprising the National Highway were audited along with 6,160 kms of the 27,910 kms comprising state-controlled highways. The committee was unable to determine the proportion of audits that were formal audits as described in an AUSTRALOADS manual (See AUSTRALOADS 1994, pp 37-87) or lower-level “network” audits (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, pp 6-7; SA Parliamentary Environment, Resources and Development Committee, 30th report, 1998). Compared to road safety audits, network audits are inclusive of local government, informal, less structured and less expensive, and may be more appropriate to monitor the frequently changing conditions of low-volume rural road networks (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript p 8). They are designed for lower standard roads (typically those maintained by local governments) with less traffic and where network condition do not vary significantly by distance (SA Parliamentary Environment, Resources and Development Committee, 30th report, 1998).

The committee could not determine the level of road safety auditing undertaken by rural local governments, though noted that formal audits of local roads are unlikely (See Kerr, IMEA., Hearing Transcript p 10). It noted though that rural councils may be reluctant to spend limited funds on audits to document safety problems with their roads when they haven’t the funds needed to repair the problems they already know about.

The committee noted the assistance the DMR provides to local governments. The department provides road safety audit training opportunities for local government engineers through a joint DMR/Queensland University of Technology training course (See Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 20). While there is no base-line data available since 1996, the committee was informed that this course is very well attended (See Sheehan, CARRS-Q, Hearing Transcript, p 6).

Local governments are also encouraged to undertake audits to access funding programs such as the Safe School Bus Routes Program and the Federal Government’s Black Spot Program (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 9; See Kerr, IPWEA, Hearing Transcript, p 7).

(b) Shoulder Sealing and Delineation

The Main Roads Department stated that it had made considerable progress with its shoulder sealing program, particularly in rural areas, where the problem (of unsealed shoulders) has been identified as a major safety issue for motorists (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 6). As part of network audits, the department is able to identify areas in which there is significant shoulder wear and then target those areas as part of the shoulder sealing program (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 6). Because of the narrowness of many rural roads, road widening and shoulder sealing are the main priorities before any delineation work can be done (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 12).

The committee was also informed that there has been a major emphasis over the past four years on widening existing, narrow, regional and rural pavements throughout the State with 4,286 kilometres of pavement in Queensland widened or realigned at a cost of over $415 million. The DMR also claim significant enhancements in delineation of lanes through line-marking and highway audible line marking with over 109,000 kilometres completed at a cost of over $29 million (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, Attachment 3; Updated December 2000).

(c) Removal of Roadside Hazards

QT and DMR state that the removal of hazards is planned through a combination of audits, routine maintenance arrangements and local consultation to identify priority actions. Over 120 specific drainage obstacles have been widened in the past three years and a far larger number of roadside hazards have also been removed during the course of other road improvement and maintenance works, but are unable to be separately identified (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 6).

In addition to the removal of road-side hazards, Main Roads has undertaken extensive safety-related infrastructure improvements to the state-controlled rural road network since the RRSAP was agreed upon. These improvements include:

- the construction of over 230 kilometres of new routes/deviations; and
- the installation or replacement of 17,300 traffic and direction signs on Queensland rural roads, partly linked to the change to the Australia Road Rules (See QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, pp.10-11 & Mahon, QT, Hearing Transcript p 53).

The committee was told that hazardous roadside obstacles are also addressed during network level audits. Programs include -
♦ guardrail repair and the removal of hazardous trees or structures within the road reserve;
♦ the management of roadside vegetation via a fire threat management plan and the elimination of high-growing grass species, particularly introduced species; and
♦ the retention in western areas of low-growing native grasses (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 6).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the action in the RRSAP in regard to road safety auditing of rural roads have been substantially implemented by the Department of Main Roads in respect of state-controlled highways. Issues yet to be resolved, however, relate to the standards of audits the department has conducted and whether lower-level network audits are reasonable for low-volume rural roads.

The committee could not determine the level of audits undertaken by local governments in Queensland. It also questions whether investment in a major program of road safety audits will be the best course of action at this time for rural local governments to improve road safety.

The committee invites further submissions on the level of road safety audit activity by rural local governments. It also seeks comment on whether investment in large-scale auditing of low-volume road networks is both desirable and viable for rural local governments, and what is an appropriate level of audit activity. The committee also invites comments on the auditing methodology and policy that is appropriate to rural road networks.

The committee concludes that the actions in the RRSAP in regard to shoulder sealing and delineation and the removal of roadside hazards have been substantially implemented.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION

To a large extent, road safety depends on road users voluntarily obeying the road rules. Governments utilise a variety of educational and publicity instruments to encourage voluntary compliance and self-management of behaviour by road users. Typically, these have included mass media advertising campaigns, the distribution of educational material such as pamphlets, posters and videos, the inclusion of road safety messages in school and tertiary curricula, and the production of guidance material.

2.2 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP sought to improve rural road safety by making generic city-based road safety education campaigns relevant to rural audiences, and by publicising the fact that those most likely to be involved in serious crashes in rural areas are rural residents, and not visitors from urban centres. These actions are as follows:

(a) Localise the content of generic mass media education and make it available to relevant local communities. Give special attention to fatigue, alcohol use and failure to wear seat belts (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Commonwealth and State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities/ Police Services, Insurance Sector & Motoring Associations)

(b) Publicise locally the fact that those most likely to be involved in serious crashes in rural areas are rural residents. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities/ Local Government and Motoring Associations)

The RRSAP did not provide timeframes for localising media campaigns. However, as a measure of progress, the RRSAP proposed that a nationwide program publicising the high incidence of involvement of rural residents in serious crashes be instituted by 1997.

2.3 What has been done?

(a) Localising Media Campaigns

The QPS's network of 8 regional traffic coordinators plays a key role in localising road safety public education campaigns in Queensland. The QPS Media and Public Relations Section provides regional traffic coordinators with a generic media release that encompasses the theme of a particular road safety campaign, e.g. fatigue, drink driving, etc (See Lake, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 13). These officers enjoy regular contact with local media, and develop their own campaigns based on generic, statewide campaigns and issues current in their local area.

QT and DMR also stated that local police often have a higher public and media profile in rural and regional...
areas than their urban counterparts. The localised road safety messages delivered by police in rural areas are supplemented by work carried out by QT’s network of road safety consultants and 52 community road safety groups that the department supports (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, pp 12-13).

The ATSB (previously FORS) also delivers road safety public education campaigns targeted at rural road users with localised message/presentation/formats that are designed to appeal to rural people. ATSB/FORS campaigns localised in this way have addressed speeding, fatigue, drink driving and seatbelt wearing in rural and regional areas of Australia (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 13).

The committee received mostly positive feedback from rural residents about the cooperation between the various authorities and groups in establishing public education programs at a local level in the various regions they visited. Although at the committee’s public meetings in the far western region, the committee noted criticisms from rural residents of the relevance and information provided by the ATSB campaigns (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meeting, 16 February 2000).

(b) Publicising the Crash Risks to Rural Residents

QT told the committee that it had not sought to implement a publicity campaign regarding the crash risks to rural residents, as required under the RRSAP. This, the department states, was because it felt that the issue was being addressed through other measures (See QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, pp 14-15). The department based its conclusion on the results of community attitude surveys commissioned periodically by the ATSB. These surveys suggested that rural and urban participants have comparable attitudes to and awareness of public education campaigns targeting the fatal four (speeding, drink driving, driving tired and not wearing seatbelts) and other major issues such as speed cameras, pedestrian safety and bike helmets.

The committee notes however the significantly elevated risk in rural areas of dying in accidents involving single vehicles, speed, alcohol/drugs or fatigue compared to risks for people in urban areas (see fig. (3) in the appendix). While the risks for rural residents of dying in a road crash have declined in recent years, the risks remain substantially higher than equivalent risks to urban residents. From Table (3), in Queensland in 1998, compared to risks in urban areas, the per capita risk of dying in rural areas in a speed-related crash was 4.7 times higher, 4.3 times higher for an alcohol-related crash, 6.4 times higher for a single-vehicle crash, 13.5 times higher for a fatigue-related crash and 5.2 times higher for crashes where the failure to wear seat belts was judged by police to be a contributing factor.

In April 2001 while Acting Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads, Hon Stephen Robertson MP announced a public education campaign by QT aimed squarely at Queensland’s rural drivers. The campaign’s focus is on low seat belt wearing rates by rural motorists and the risks of driving while tired (See Hon Stephen Robertson MP, A/g. Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Media release dated 22.4.01, Rural Road Safety Campaign Launched).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSAP in regard to public education campaigns have not been fully implemented by the road safety agencies in Queensland.

The committee invites further submissions on:

- the efficacy of the Queensland Transport/Queensland Police Service and ATSB approaches to localising generic media campaigns for rural consumption; and

- whether the campaign, as proposed in the RRSAP, to inform rural residents of their crash risks is still warranted given Queensland Transport’s rural driver campaign announced in April 2001.

3. **INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Local governments play a vital role in the application of successful road safety countermeasures. Local governments are collectively responsible for 140,000 kilometres of rural local roads in Australia that is over 80% of the total, national public road network (Henderson 1995, p 29).
3.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP contained five specific actions dealing with local communities.

(a) Promote greater involvement of rural shires and councils and their local communities in defining local road safety issues and developing partnerships to address them. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities/ Australian Local Government Association, Institute of Municipal Engineers Australia and Australian College of Road Safety (ACRS).

(b) Assist local authorities in the detailed analysis of factors impacting on local road safety, and in the development of action plans to target problems. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities).

(c) Establish information programs to disseminate information to local councils and local communities about successful local initiatives and local programs, as well as those found not to be effective. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Commonwealth and State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities/ A C R S).

(d) Provide training opportunities and guidance for local government on best practice in application of road safety countermeasures. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities).

(e) Formulate special arrangements for Aboriginal communities, particularly in remote areas, ensuring representation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs to improve safety for them. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Federal Office of Road Safety/ ATSIC, State/ Territory Road Safety Authorities).

3.2 What has been done?

(a) Engaging Local Communities

QT states that it has been promoting greater involvement of rural shires and councils in defining local road safety issues since 1992 when the first Rural Road Safety Committees were established in Charleville and Stanthorpe (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 16). QT supports 52 road safety action groups throughout Queensland, 20 local speed management committees and SafeST committees established by school communities to monitor the impact of road safety upon schools, particularly safe school travel (See Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 16-17 February 2000; and Kursius, QT, Hearing, pp 18–19).

The QPS stated that there had been another level created above the road safety action groups and these are the regional traffic advisory committees which examine road safety issues on a shire or district basis (See Lake, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 22).

QT involves local government representatives in its Regional Road Safety Summits. This exposes local government representatives to state level road safety issues that feed down to the local level (See Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 20). The department also employs 14 road safety consultants that network throughout the state and assist in identifying with local councils the pertinent road safety issues and best practice operations, so that the councils can do the work themselves (See Bullock, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 22). Local participation is also encouraged and supported in community programs such as the Driver Reviver Scheme.

QT’s Remote Communities Trial Project facilitates participation in road safety planning by members of North Queensland Aboriginal Communities.

(b) Analysis of Road Safety Factors by Local Government

QT has developed a crash analysis system called ‘Local Crash’. This system has been available to local governments at no cost since 1995. Local Crash gives local governments access to standard crash analysis reports that assist them to target road safety problems and prioritise road safety issues for attention in the local area. (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 17). The committee noted from its contact with rural council staff, however, that Local Crash might not be widely known to or used by councils (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meeting, 16 February 2000).

(c) Information on Road Safety Programs

QT faxes a weekly information news sheet Road Sense News Fax to local councils, community groups, Queensland MPs, MHRs, and rural police stations to provide current information on state-wide and local road safety programs and general safety information (QT & DMR, Submission No. 36, p 18).
The Australian College of Road Safety – Queensland Chapter distributes a newsletter to its rural members, and they include representatives from local councils (See Lee, ACRS, Hearing Transcript, p 20).

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) provides best practice information for its members on a range of topics including transport and road safety (See the association’s website at: www.alga.com.au).

(d) Road Safety Training Opportunities and Guidance

As previously mentioned in Planning for Road Improvements, DMR has developed a five-day Road Safety Audit training course in conjunction with the QUT to train road safety practitioners in the conduct of road safety audits. The department also provides “Foreman Training” courses that cover all safety-related aspects of road construction and maintenance works for departmental and local government staff.

The DMR informed the committee that road safety-related issues are also addressed at the annual Main Roads’ Regional Symposia and District training sessions, with a high number of local government officers in attendance (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 18).

The DMR also provides a suite of technical training packages that local governments are encouraged to access, e.g. a road signage workshop and training on work zone practice (See Douglas, DMR, Hearing Transcript, pp 22–23).

In July 2000, the RACQ/CARRS-Q Queensland Road Safety Awards recognised road safety initiatives at a local level for the first time in Queensland. Information about awarded programs is made available to community organisations (See Lee, ACRS, Hearing Transcript, p 22). These awards are now held annually.

(e) Special arrangements for Aboriginal communities

The proposed action concerning special arrangements for Aboriginal communities is similar to the actions specified in the RRSA for Remote Areas. The committee has therefore discussed this action in the context of actions for remote areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSA in regard to Involvement of Local Communities have been implemented in Queensland.

The committee invites submissions on the usage of the Local Crash crash analysis system by local governments in Queensland.

4. Speed Management

Speed remains a major factor in crashes on rural roads.

As noted in Table (3) in the appendix, speed was judged by police to be a factor in 34 fatalities or 18 percent of the 187 rural road fatalities in 2000. From the table, the per capita risk of dying in a speed-related crash on rural roads in Queensland in 2000 was 4.7 times higher than the risk in urban areas.

4.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSA

The RRSA contained three specific actions to improve speed management on rural roads:

(a) Rationalise speed limits on rural roads to provide greater consistency for similar conditions, develop guidelines and tools for nationally consistent speed zoning. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities/Local Government Authorities).

(b) Use the same guidelines for speed zoning roads through rural villages and towns and on the approaches to provincial cities. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety A authorities).

(c) Introduce appropriate ‘traffic calming’ measures to induce more moderate speeds through towns. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Relevant State/Territory Road Safety A authorities).
4.2 What has been done?

(a) Speed limits

QT and the QPS established the Speed Management Strategy in 1993 to reduce the incidence of speed-related crashes in Queensland and to establish a socially unacceptable attitude towards speeding in the community, as exists for drink driving. A key component of the strategy is to use integrated engineering, enforcement and education initiatives to achieve these goals (QT & DMR, Submission No. 36, p 20).

Other measures included -

♦ the formalisation of QT’s Speed Control Guidelines which establishes the standard for setting speed limits in Queensland;

♦ the completion of speed limit reviews in accordance with the Speed Control Guidelines on state-controlled roads prior to the introduction of speed cameras;

♦ the completion of speed limit reviews of council-controlled, local roads in south east Queensland;

♦ a continued expansion of speed limit reviews on council-controlled, local roads throughout the state; and

♦ the completion of road hierarchical plans by some rural councils wishing to introduce the 50 km/h local street speed limit (QT & DMR Submission, No 36, p 20, QT, Correspondence, 15 November 2000).

In northern Queensland, the committee was informed of a road safety problem linked to speed signage. Residents informed the committee that international tourist drivers commonly drive at 100km/ hr on poor quality, unfamiliar rural roads signed at this speed, irrespective of the prevailing conditions (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 3-6 July 2000). The committee travelled on a number of narrow, poor quality roads signed at 100 km/ hr during their visit, including the Bloomfield to Cooktown Road.

(b) Speed zoning in rural villages

Speed zoning is the establishment of a speed limit for a particular length of road where roadside development is such that a general speed limit does not reasonably fit the prevailing road and traffic conditions (Queensland. DMR 1995, p 1)

QT and the DMR state that Queensland’s Speed Control Guidelines (Part 4 of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) are followed for all speed limit reviews in Queensland. By the introduction of the one standard for assigning speed limits, road authorities are able to establish consistent and credible speed limits throughout the State. Therefore, speed limits on roads through rural villages and towns as well as on the approaches to provincial cities will be assessed and determined in the same manner (QT & DMR, Submission, No 36, p 22).

QT and the DMR stated that Queensland’s Speed Control Guidelines (Part 4 of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) are followed for all speed limit reviews in Queensland. By the introduction of the one standard for assigning speed limits, road authorities are able to establish consistent and credible speed limits throughout the State. Therefore, speed limits on roads through rural villages and towns as well as on the approaches to provincial cities will be assessed and determined in the same manner (QT & DMR, Submission, No 36, p 22).

(c) Use of traffic calming to moderate speeds through towns

The Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament was unable to gauge the use of traffic calming measures to moderate speeds through towns.

According to QT, Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) plans that would include traffic calming measures are not well supported in rural areas. A number of issues have arisen where councils have requested that state-controlled main roads running through towns be signed at 50 km/ h without changes or treatments to modify the road environment (Mahon, QT, Hearing Transcript, pp 30).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSAP in regard to Speed Management have been fully implemented in Queensland, except for the proposed use of traffic calming to modify speeds through towns.

The committee invites submissions on the efficacy of speed limit reviews on poor quality rural roads and the use of traffic calming measures in rural towns.
5. **Management of Fatigue**

Driver fatigue is an important factor in crashes on rural roads.

As noted in Table (3) in the appendix, driver fatigue was judged by police to be a factor in 32 fatalities or 17 percent of the 187 rural road fatalities in 2000. From the table, the per capita risk of dying in a fatigue-related crash on rural roads in Queensland in 2000 was 13.5 times higher than the risk in urban areas.

5.1 **Proposed Actions in the RRSAP**

The RRSAP contained three specific actions to improve the management of driver fatigue:

(a) **Develop guidelines and programs for installation or upgrading of rest areas at appropriate locations with facilities that will make their use attractive to long distance travellers.** (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Commonwealth and State/Territory Road Safety Authorities, the Road Transport Industry, Motor associations, Local Councils and Austroads).

(b) **Encourage community organisations to provide 'coffee stops' on holiday traffic routes. Facilitate coordination of their operations into a publicised network of rest opportunities.** (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities, Community Groups).

(c) **Encourage governments to initiate programs at state and regional level of profile line marking or other fatigue management treatments.** (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities, Local Government).

As a measure of progress, the RRSAP proposed that a needs analysis for a national network of rest areas on national and state highways be completed by June 1997.

5.2 **What has been done?**

(a) **Guidelines and programs for the installation of rest areas**

The National Road Transport Commission (NRTC) is coordinating a review of current road agency guidelines and practices for the provision of rest areas across Australia as part of the third heavy vehicle reform package [item 3.3]. NRTC will develop a set of nationally agreed guidelines governing frequency, location and facilities for rest areas for heavy vehicle drivers. Those guidelines may be combined with guidelines for rest areas for drivers of light vehicles. It is anticipated that the proposed guidelines would be submitted to the Australian Transport Council (ATC) in October 2001 (See Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript p 33), (Information Bulletin Nov. 2000, Improved National Approaches to Heavy Vehicle Driver Health and Fatigue, NRTC).

According to the QT/DMR submission, the DMR recognises that setting in place and promoting roadside amenities, as proposed in the RRSAP, must be coordinated and integrated and involve a number of key initiatives:

- strategic location of rest areas in identified fatigue zones;
- location of rest areas to support and integrate with other road safety initiatives, e.g. a Driver Reviver Program;
- developing and setting in place a comprehensive signing system to identify and direct road users to roadside amenities; and
- provision of maps/brochures to the travelling public indicating the locations and facilities provided (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 23).

(b) **Coffee stops**

The government has addressed this proposed action through the Driver Reviver program, which is jointly facilitated by QT and the QPS. The aim of the program is to reduce driver fatigue and fatigue-related crashes on Queensland roads, by encouraging an increase in the frequency, duration and quality of rest breaks taken by drivers travelling long distances, particularly on the State's rural road network. Motorists are encouraged to ‘STOP, REVIVE, SURVIVE’ and are offered free coffee, tea, Milo and Kit-Kats (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 24).

Currently, there are 31 Driver Reviver sites strategically placed in the high-risk, fatigue crash areas across the State, with the majority located in rural areas. Additional temporary sites are established to cater for special events e.g. the Birdsville races in September (Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p. 33). Driver reviver sites operate during the Australia Day, back to school, Easter, Anzac Day, Labour Day, Queen’s Birthday, September School Holidays and Christmas/New Year holiday periods.
QT maintains Driver Reviver sites in close cooperation with local community groups and volunteers, with support from the QPS (See Kursius, QT, Hearing Transcript, p 31).

QT publishes site locations across the state in brochures and on its Internet site (See http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/safety).

(c) Profile line marking and other treatments

In excess of 71,000 kilometres of line marking to improve the delineation of lanes and audible edge lines have been undertaken over the past three years by Main Roads as part of a special program of fatigue management funded by the department (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 25).

In 1996-1997, when Main Roads introduced the audible line-marking program, $4 million was allocated for its implementation. Now the program is part of the department’s Road Implementation Program along with a range of other treatments which address fatigue management (See Hellmuth, DMR, Hearing Transcript, p 33).

QT has taken other measures to reduce fatigue-related crashes. These include:

♦ the endorsement of the National Driving Hours Legislation and the provision of a fatigue management training program for heavy vehicle operators;
♦ the introduction of the national driving hours package on 30 October 1998 with the commencement of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Fatigue Management) Regulation 1998;
♦ the introduction of the Transitional Fatigue Management Scheme (TFMS);
♦ the trialing of a Fatigue Management Program (FMP) in conjunction with the Road Transport Forum; and
♦ the passage of the Road Transport Reform Bill (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, pp. 36-37).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSAP in regard to Management of Fatigue have been implemented in Queensland with the following exceptions:

➢ guidelines for rest areas in Queensland have not been developed. NRTC is developing national guidelines for heavy vehicle rest areas, however, these may not adequately address the needs of motorists in light vehicles;
➢ there is no program in place for the installation of rest areas;
➢ driver reviver “coffee stop” sites only operate during peak holiday periods and provide no assistance to travellers at other times; and
➢ the location of Driver Reviver sites in Queensland is not widely promoted.

The committee invites submissions on these issues.

6. ENFORCEMENT

The QPS undertakes enforcement through the State Traffic Support Branch and regional traffic and general duties’ police. Other enforcement activity is undertaken by 155 QT Inspectors who have powers to perform checks on vehicle roadworthiness, registration, loading and the carriage of dangerous goods (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 27).

6.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP contained five specific actions related to enforcement:

(a) Improve public acceptance of enforcement strategies through public education and community support programs that explain the safety and social implications of infringing important road rules. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities/Local Government and Community Groups).

(b) Public education and community support programs to reinforce targeted enforcement in areas with high crash rates. (Lead agency/supporting...
agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities/Local Government and Community Groups).

(c) Apply random surveillance to heighten perception of risk of detection of infringing road rules. (Lead agency/ supporting agencies: Police Services).

(d) Use special police task forces to enhance local resources. (Lead agency/ supporting agencies: Police Services).

(e) Use new technology to improve the efficiency of scarce enforcement resources in targeting high-risk behaviours, particularly driving at speeds excessive for the road, traffic, or weather conditions. (Lead agency/ supporting agencies: Police Services).

As a measure of progress, the RRSAP proposed that a national public education campaign supporting strategic enforcement programs directed to major road safety issues be instituted by 1997.

6.2 What has been done?

(a) Improving public acceptance of enforcement; and (b) Programs to reinforce targeted enforcement programs in areas with high crash rates

QT and the QPS seek to educate the public about the benefits of their traffic enforcement activities. This publicity is part of the integrated approach to behavioural change and illustrates the benefits of enforcement to the local community (QT & DMR, Submission No. 36, p 28).

QT Road Safety Consultants throughout the State promote enforcement strategies in a local capacity (See QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 28). The QPS works on regional strategies at two levels - through regional traffic coordinators who deliver programs at schools and community forums and via the State Traffic Support Branch which conducts a training program with major agencies (See Pitman, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 35).

(c) Random surveillance

Randomised enforcement has been a hallmark of traffic policing in Queensland since the introduction of random breath testing in 1988, the Random Roadwatch Program in 1992 and the Speed Camera Program in 1997.

For the Random Road Watch (RRW) Program, police are deployed across the entire road network with QT devising the deployment sites and times (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 29).

QT argues that targeted enforcement combined with public education campaigns has proven effective for both resource allocation and road safety benefits (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 28). An evaluation of the RRW program by the Monash University Accident Research Centre found the program to be both an effective and efficient method to build the perception among road users of greater detection when infringing road rules (See MUARC, Report No. 149, February 1999).

The committee was told during its meetings in south western and northern Queensland that regional police do not always follow the RRW schedules because of: a shortage of officers; the lengthy stretches of road to be covered; the lack of traffic movement on rural, secondary roads; and a lack of enforcement equipment (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 15-17 February 2000).

(d) Police task forces

The QPS established the State Traffic Task Force in September 1997. The Task Force is made up of 18 police officers and has 6 patrol vehicles, 3 motorcycles and a mini-booze bus. All patrol vehicles are equipped with mobile radar detection devices. The task force operates patrols and may be deployed on request from regional police. It also monitors the movement of excess dimension loads, liaises with the transport industry and provides training for regional police in traffic enforcement policy and procedures (QPS, Submission, No. 34, p 3).

Patrols are concentrated in regions that allow same-day travel from the Brisbane base. This policy restricts the task force to regions out to Toowoomba, Warwick, Stanthorpe and north to Gympie as well as the southeast region, which includes Logan, the Gold Coast and the Gold Coast hinterland. The committee was told the task force spends approximately 2 percent of its daily patrolling time in the metropolitan area, with the bulk of its deployment in other regions (See Mansfield, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 36).

(e) New enforcement technology

Since the Speed Management Strategy was adopted, new technology has been acquired which has greatly benefited the QPS's efforts to reduce the incidence of speed-related crashes. The new technology includes -
LIDAR (Light Imaging Detection and Ranging) – a device which uses a narrow beam of light to target a specific vehicle that, unlike radar, determines how far away it is and its direction of travel. LIDAR is lighter and more portable than radar and can be set up as a freestanding unit along the roadside or used as a hand-held device; and

speed cameras which the QPS stated allow police to enforce speeding through a randomly deployed but targeted site selection framework, providing best use of resources while enhancing road safety benefits. Also, speed cameras enable the deployment of more police to undertake other enforcement activities including traditional radar operations (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 30).

QT has also developed hand-held and car-based mobile data terminals (MINDA/MAVERICK) for use by police and transport inspectors to interrogate the department’s driver licensing, vehicle registration and arrest warrant records systems in Brisbane via mobile phone technology. The MAVERICK units are permanently mounted in patrol cars and have hard drive backups to supplement the data available via the phone links.

The committee was informed of funding problems that were preventing the provision of this technology to officers across the state (See Mansfield, QPS, Hearing Transcript, p 39). The committee also notes a commitment in the 2001/2002 state budget papers to equip more primary response and transport inspector vehicles with MINDA units (2001-02 Queensland State Budget, Ministerial Portfolio Statement, QT, p 1-22).

Police have also developed enforcement management systems that enable them to effectively target their available resources (QT & DMR, Submission, No. 36, p 30).

### 7. Trauma Services

Trauma services serve rural communities that do not normally have the resources and facilities to respond to major trauma episodes such as injuries sustained in road crashes.

#### 7.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP contained two specific actions to improve trauma management of people injured in rural road crashes:

(a) Give priority to the establishment of regionally linked trauma services and to their support with appropriate technology, including improved communication services. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Health Departments).

(b) EMST (Early Management of Severe Trauma) training for rural doctors and paramedical personnel to be given high priority in development of regional trauma services. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/ Territory Health Departments/ Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Australian Advisory Committee on Road Trauma (AACRT).

The timetable set out in the RRSAP was the acceptance of the NRTAC Trauma Systems report by all State and Territory health departments by 1997.

#### 7.2 What has been done?

**a) Establishment of regionally-linked trauma services supported by appropriate technology**

This proposed action came from recommendations of a 1993 report of the National Road Trauma Advisory Council (NRTAC) Trauma Systems Working Group. The NRTAC report set general principles for the establishment and operation of trauma systems and recommended that the emphasis in Australia should be on regional trauma services based on networks and linkages, rather than on stand alone trauma centres.

QH has accepted the NRTAC Report and, at an organisational level, has:

- divided the state into three zones – northern, central and southern, so that each zone is now clinically independent;
instituted a tertiary teaching hospital for each zone – Townsville (Northern), Royal Brisbane (Central) and Princess Alexandra (Southern);

for the purposes of referral services, developed hubs from each zone whereby middle-sized hospitals service a number of the smaller, peripheral hospitals;

designated particular physicians, within a number of major, emergency departments throughout the state, as clinical coordinators, whose role is to provide advice on - stabilisation, the need for continuing treatment, forms of transport and the arrangement for referral to the next appropriate hospital up the line;

accorded each emergency department a numerical value with a set number of descriptive factors against each number which identifies the expected skills’ levels of each hospital so that the clinical coordinator can assess the appropriate response, e.g. Royal Brisbane – 6; Bundaberg – 4; Nambour – 5; and

developed, with Department of Emergency Services (DES), the Queensland Emergency Medical System (QEMS), which seeks to facilitate collaboration, integration and coordination between providers of emergency health services in Queensland (See Barnes, QH, Hearing Transcript, pp 38-39).

Part of the improved communications includes a rural addressing scheme so that persons seeking assistance, because of a road accident, can direct the appropriate emergency/health response to the site quickly. The Rural Road Addressing scheme is a project of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the DES. It is based on a system devised by the Australia and New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) which numbers properties by reference to the distance of the property entrance from a designated road junction.

At the public hearing in October, the DES informed the committee that so far, of the 126 local authorities throughout Queensland, 105 had initiated the rural addressing system. Of the 105, 21 have completed the scheme across the whole of their authority. The DES provided support for DNR with submissions when the former is negotiating with a council to implement the scheme in an area (See Evans, DES, Hearing Transcript, p .44).

The committee noted the differing levels of trauma services, and technological support in the various rural regions. These included:

In south western Queensland -

- the involvement of the larger centres in the coordination of trauma training for paramedical staff;
- the introduction of technologies such as Map Info, a revolutionary, electronic mapping system which allows ambulance staff to access location data following an 000 call made from land line phones; and
- the problems that smaller centres experience in retaining permanent ambulance officers and having staff trained because of a lack of funding (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 15-17 February 2000).

In north and north-west Queensland –

- the better equipped major centres, e.g. Cairns, Weipa and Mt. Isa with adequate training and technical support in comparison with a remote Aboriginal community, e.g. Wujal Wujal, which suffers from a smaller medical complement, no resident doctor, a dangerous road, an outdated ambulance and problems extricating patients by emergency helicopters due to weather and topography (Cunningham, Hearing Transcript, p 40); and
- the difficulties that confront the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) in landing planes close to road crash sites (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 3-6 July 2000; Kerr, IMWA, Hearing Transcript p 47).

(b) Trauma training for rural doctors

A range of trauma training resources is available to assist rural doctors and other health and emergency personnel. These resources include –

- Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST)

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) conducts the Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST) course, which is run over two and a half days. The EMST course focuses on the initial period of trauma management when the patient is received in the emergency room. The course includes a series of lectures, skill stations and teaching of procedures.
Only medical practitioners can attend an EMST course (RACS, Submission, No. 29, pp 1-2);

- Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) Training Program

Because the EMST course was only available for medical practitioners, another course to improve the skills of rural health professionals was devised by QH - the Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) Training Program. A core of PHTLS instructors has been established in QH and the Queensland Ambulance Service. These instructors deliver training within a relatively close proximity of each trainee’s district, developing a network of trained personnel across rural Queensland - including doctors, nurses, QAS paramedics and ambulance officers and SES volunteers (QH, Submission, No. 27, p 5);

- Trauma Nursing Core Course

This course is conducted by the Emergency Nurses Association (NSW) and is held in Queensland at least once a month. Each course trains 15 to 20 nurses and uses the same core protocols as EMST (QH, Submission, No. 27, p 4);

- Trauma Treatment Video

The Australian Advisory Committee and Road Trauma (AACRT) and FORS (now the ATSB) have produced a video titled “A Guide to Trauma Treatment in Rural & Remote Australia”. The video is a training tool with information for rural medical practitioners on early trauma treatment, specifically in rural and remote Australian locations.

In regard to trauma training, the committee was informed at its meetings in south western and northern Queensland of problems confronting medical practitioners trying to access the EMST course. The committee was told that, because a number of medical colleges require their students to undertake the course, there is a large waiting list (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meetings, 15-17 February 2000, 3-6 July 2000). As well, the committee was told a sizeable component of the medical staff in the Cape York region are itinerant, overseas doctors who did not stay long enough to receive trauma training (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meeting, 6 July 2000).

QH stated that its PHTLS course, which is held regularly throughout Queensland’s regions, does alleviate this problem to a certain extent since it is open to doctors as well as other health and emergency staff (See QH, Submission, No. 27, p 5).

The committee also heard concerns regarding which service involved in transferring patients. It was told that the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) staff are very good for primary response work, but lacked the critical injuries’ training needed for patient transfers to Townsville or Brisbane (Queensland, Travelsafe Committee, Minutes of Public Meeting, 6 July 2000).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSAP in regard to Trauma Services have been implemented in Queensland.

The committee invites submissions on the adequacy of trauma training opportunities for rural medical staff in Queensland.

8. REMOTE AREAS

8.1 Proposed Actions in the RRSAP

The RRSAP contained the following actions to improve road safety in remote areas:

1. Address the unique problems of the most remote areas of Australia by developing programs together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The consultation will extend to the design, implementation, and evaluation of local road safety programs. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Relevant State Road safety Authorities/ATSIC)

   (a) Support a research program directed specifically to the needs of remote areas. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: Federal Office of Road Safety/ATSIC)

   (b) Appoint Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander road safety officers to appropriate areas and give training that will enable them to become leaders in the promotion of road safety for their communities. (Lead agency/supporting agencies: State/Territory Road Safety Authorities/Local Councils)
As a measure of progress, the RRSAP proposed that a research program directed at the specific road safety needs of remote areas of Australia be instituted by 1997.

8.2 Developing programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

(a) What has been done?

QT has actively sought to increase road safety awareness and local community road safety planning in the remote regions of the state. This has been done primarily through the department’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Road Safety Strategy: Remote Communities trial project initiated in October 1996 (QT, Submission, No. 36, p 34). Key components of the project are –

♦ the development of a community-managed approach to road safety planning in the Cape York communities of Hopevale and Kowanyama;

♦ the employment of local Community Road Safety Officers who would coordinate the identification of local road safety issues to be addressed within these two communities; and

♦ the inauguration of a community workshop with key stakeholders from Kowanyama, Hopevale, Cunnamulla and QT in August 1998, which developed community work plans that identified four major areas requiring action – licensing, resourcing, training and legal issues (QT, Correspondence, 15 November 2000).

(b) Research into the needs of remote areas

The committee could not identify a Commonwealth Government-supported research program directed specifically to the needs of remote areas. However, it did identify research by QT and QH.

Road crash statistics relating to remote areas are available on a QT database. However, while the majority of people in remote areas of Queensland are Aboriginal, these statistics do not include Aboriginality because it is not recorded at the crash site, and therefore do not appear in police investigations or coroner reports (QT, Submission, No. 36, p 181).

As a result of these findings, in 1996-97, QT facilitated an inter-agency reference group to assist in the research and development of strategy appropriate to remote communities (QT, Submission, No 36, p 181). The group helped shape the project’s objectives, outcomes and mechanisms for implementation (QT, Correspondence, 28 February 2001).

QH’s Tropical Public Health Unit (TPHU) is trialing a transport injury surveillance system in the remote indigenous communities of Yarrabah, Pormpuraaw, Wujal Wujal and Aurukun. QT has supported the trial in order to ascertain the level and impact of transport related incidents in the communities. Initial data from the trial confirms the overrepresentation of indigenous people in remote communities in transport-related crashes with one community recording incidents at a rate six times higher than the wider Queensland community over a ten month period (QT, Correspondence, 28 February 2001).

8.3 Appointment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Road Safety Officers

QT’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Road Safety Strategy: Remote Communities trial project initiated in October 1996 included the appointment of Aboriginal road safety officers in two remote communities. The second phase of the project will extend coverage to all 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland, of which 32 are in the department’s Northern Region. The project employs a Senior Advisor (Indigenous Communities Project) who will provide on-the-ground support to remote indigenous communities. A Community Road Safety Grant Scheme is included, and communities can apply for funding of up to $2000 to support their local road safety initiatives (QT, Correspondence, 15 November 2000).

The Aboriginal Coordinating Council supports the appointment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander road safety officers. However, submits that the long-term funding and training requirements of these positions need to be carefully planned and properly resourced. Creating positions without adequate support structures is setting people up to fail (ACC, Submission, No. 10, p 15).

QT advised the committee of the appointment of a steering committee of stakeholders from QH, QPS, Education Queensland, Bluecare, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development and a community representative to over-see the trial project (QT, Correspondence, 28 February 2001).
CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evidence compiled by the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament, the actions in the RRSAP in regard to Remote Communities have been implemented in Queensland except that the Commonwealth Government has not supported a research program directed specifically to the needs of remote areas.

The committee invites submissions on whether this action remains relevant and, if so, how it may be progressed.

9. ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE RURAL ROAD SAFETY IN QUEENSLAND

In the terms of reference for the inquiry, the Travelsafe Committee of the 49th Parliament invited submissions on additional measures to improve rural road safety in Queensland that were not addressed in the RRSAP. Numerous suggestions were received through submissions, at meetings the committee convened in rural and regional centres, through evidence provided at the committee's public hearing in Brisbane in October 2000 and through the committee's own research. The committee has identified the following areas as warranting further research:

♦ Measures to reduce rural road funding shortfalls;
♦ Road safety, driver training and licensing in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
♦ Measures to improve the efficacy of road signage for people with limited English language skills and literacy, and to warn motorists of prevailing road conditions;
♦ Measures to improve the delivery and responsiveness of trauma services to crash victims in remote areas;
♦ The provision of advisory and emergency response services to motorists in remote areas using information and telecommunications technology;
♦ Measures to reduce vehicle collisions with animals;
♦ Measures to prepare drivers for the risks and hazards of rural and remote area driving in Queensland; and
♦ Measures to improve the collection and quality of rural crash data.

The committee invites submissions on the importance of these issues and activities by government and other agencies and the private sector that are relevant.
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Royal Australasian College of Surgeons 1999, Submission to Rural Road Safety Inquiry, No. 29.

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING A SUBMISSION

• There is no prescribed form for written submissions to a committee. They may take the form of a letter or a more substantial paper and may contain facts, opinions, arguments and recommendations for action.

• The best submissions are to the point, supported by evidence and are written in plain English.

• The committee will only consider written submissions. Typed or printed text is preferable, though legible hand-written submissions are acceptable.

• All submissions must include (i) the name, (ii) a postal address and (iii) a contact telephone number of the person who makes the submission.

• Submissions must be signed and dated by the person making the submission. The original copy of the submission should be sent to the committee.

• Number the pages and, if the submission is over twenty pages long, provide a brief summary at the front and include a table of contents.

CONFIDENTIAL SUBMISSIONS

• Anonymous submissions will not be considered, however, the committee may direct that a submission be treated confidentially.

• If you want your submission to be treated confidentially, clearly write ‘confidential’ on each page and, in a brief covering letter explain why your submission should be treated confidentially.

OTHER MATTERS

• Once the committee receives a submission it must not be published without the committee’s authorisation. Publication of a submission without the committee’s permission may jeopardise its protection by parliamentary privilege and may amount to a contempt of parliament.

• If you make a submission, the committee may invite you to appear at a public hearing. Questioning at a public hearing allows the committee to examine particular issues in detail.

All submissions should be sent to:

The Research Director
Travelsafe Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane QLD 4000

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS FRIDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2001

EXTENSIONS TO THE CLOSING DATE MAY BE GIVEN. IF YOU NEED MORE TIME TO MAKE A SUBMISSION CONTACT THE COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT. DO NOT ASSUME THAT A LATE SUBMISSION WILL BE ACCEPTED.

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SECRETARIAT

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### Table (1): Road Fatalities By Land Classification (Australia 1990 - 1996)

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<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (non-remote)</td>
<td>985</td>
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<td>939</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (remote)</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: ATSB Fatality File 2001

### Table (2): Road Fatalities By Land Classification (Queensland 1990 - 1996)

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
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</table>

Source: ATSB Fatality File 2001
Table (3): Queensland Transport Crash Stats Data

### Urban and rural fatalities and hospitalisations, Queensland 1994-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban fatalities</th>
<th>Rural fatalities</th>
<th>Urban hospitalisations</th>
<th>Rural hospitalisations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>2533</td>
<td>2103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>2418</td>
<td>2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>197</td>
<td>2206</td>
<td>1940</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2448</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>2441</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>2684</td>
<td>2084</td>
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### Urban and rural fatalities and hospitalisations, Queensland 1994-2000 per 100,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban fatalities</th>
<th>Rural fatalities</th>
<th>Urban hospitalisations</th>
<th>Rural hospitalisations</th>
</tr>
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<td>96.7</td>
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<td>221.1</td>
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### Urban fatalities by nature of crash, 1994-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Single Vehicle</th>
<th>Fatigue</th>
<th>Seatbelt not used</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>25</td>
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### Rural fatalities by nature of crash, 1994-2000

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Single Vehicle</th>
<th>Fatigue</th>
<th>Seatbelt not used</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>
Table (3): Queensland Transport Crash Stats Data) Cont’d

### Urban fatalities by nature of crash, 1994-2000 per 100,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Speed</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Single Vehicle</th>
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<td>1994</td>
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### Rural fatalities by nature of crash, 1994-2000 per 100,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Single Vehicle</th>
<th>Fatigue</th>
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</table>

Source: Queensland Transport 2001

* Population data was calculated using reliable 1996 LGA figures as the base proportion. Queensland population data was then allocated for each year using the 1996 proportion.