



# PARLIAMENTARY TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

ISSUES PAPER NO. 9

DECEMBER 2004

## EDUCATING DRIVERS TO STOP DRIVING TIRED

### THE AIM OF THIS PAPER

The committee has published this paper to stimulate debate and encourage interested groups and individuals to participate in the inquiry. The committee invites public submissions. Issues raised within this paper do not restrict the scope of submissions. Groups and individuals making submissions may comment on any matter that they consider relevant. The committee will consider all written submissions when drafting their findings for report to Parliament.

### 1. THE TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE

The Travelsafe Committee is a select committee of the 51<sup>st</sup> Parliament 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.

### 2. THE INQUIRY

In June 2004, the committee commenced an inquiry into fatigue driving in Queensland. In this inquiry, the committee will examine and report on:

- The involvement of driver and rider<sup>1</sup> fatigue as a factor in road crashes in Queensland;
- The causes and symptoms of this fatigue; and
- Legislative, enforcement, educational and other measures to reduce the incidence of fatigue-related crashes.

<sup>1</sup> In this inquiry, the committee defines 'rider' as the controller of a motorbike, scooter or bicycle.

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The committee has published background information, public submissions and other information to assist groups and individuals to participate in the inquiry. They include:

- *Issues Paper No. 8: Inquiry into Crashes Involving Driver and Rider fatigue in Queensland*, released in June 2004 at the commencement of the inquiry, provides information about the causes and prevalence of fatigue driving;
- Public submissions to the inquiry; and
- A transcript of the proceedings together with papers and presentations by invited speakers at the committee's **Fatigue Symposium** in the Parliamentary Annexe in Brisbane on 22 October 2004.

Copies of these documents are available from the secretariat and can be downloaded from the Parliament of Queensland website at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm).

### 4. HIGH RISK GROUPS FOR FATIGUE DRIVING

The submissions to the inquiry and other studies of fatigue driving highlight a number of high risk groups of drivers for fatigue crashes. They include:

- 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 apnoea syndrome and narcolepsy.

The committee notes, however, that no driver or rider is immune from the impairing affects of fatigue.

## 5. LIGHT VEHICLE DRIVERS

The vast majority of drivers in Queensland are light vehicle drivers. They include people who drive for work purposes such as tradesmen and taxi drivers, people driving to and from work, parents transporting children and individuals driving for other reasons.

As in other jurisdictions, fatigue management legislation in Queensland focuses on heavy vehicle drivers and appears to have a limited effect on drivers of light vehicles.<sup>2</sup> The current legislation does not specifically identify fatigue as an offence for light vehicle drivers and enforcement relies upon subjective assessment by Queensland Police Service (QPS) officers.

Driving is an essential activity for most people. Many people participate in a range of daily activities such as parenting duties and social events. These activities may not only be the cause of fatigue, but also the reason for driving while tired (Harrison, 2002). For instance, parents may have disrupted sleep patterns due to young children waking during the night but, because they are parents, they also need to pick these same young children up from daycare or other activities.

Light vehicle drivers also include those who drive vehicles such as minibuses or people movers. Examples of this type of driver include teachers, youth workers and those who work in community centres. These people are often responsible for safely carrying passengers (ROSPA, 2001).

Research indicates that some drivers are unable to recognise the cognitive signs of tiredness such as reduced concentration (Harrison, 2002). The first sign of tiredness they recognise is falling asleep. Another study, conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), found that some drivers underestimate the likelihood of falling asleep while driving (Reyner & Horne, 1998). This suggests that education may have

<sup>2</sup> The *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Fatigue Management) Regulation 1998* defines a heavy vehicle as a heavy truck, a commercial bus or a bus with a vehicle mass of more than 12t.

a role in informing drivers about recognising the early symptoms of fatigue and appropriate strategies to reduce crash risk.

## 6. EDUCATION ABOUT FATIGUE DRIVING

A key component of the efforts by governments and other groups to counter fatigue driving is public education. These initiatives are designed to encourage drivers to self-manage their driving to prevent and limit fatigue. These education initiatives provide information about:

- The risks of fatigue driving;
- How easy it is for drivers to underestimate the likelihood that they will fall asleep at the wheel if fatigued;
- How to recognise the early signs of fatigue;
- The importance of trip planning to avoid driving during high risk times; and
- Other measures such as taking regular breaks during long drives to counter the risks of falling asleep while driving/riding.

A number of studies have supported the importance of education about fatigue driving (Reyner & Horne, 1997; Stutts, Wilkins, & Vaughn 1999).

Overall, it appears that there are three strategies to public education. These are:

- Education of the general public about the dangers of driving fatigued. This type of education also seeks to gain general disapproval of fatigued driving;
- Education of at-risk groups using targeted strategies; and
- Education of individuals who influence the opinions of others. These may include employers, school teachers and police officers (Loughborough University Sleep Research Centre, 2001).

## 7. QUEENSLAND COUNTERMEASURES

Queensland fatigue driving education initiatives include mass-media education campaigns, road signage, websites, brochures and guidelines.

As in other Australian jurisdictions, Queensland Transport (QT) and the QPS in conjunction with community groups provide ‘Driver-Reviver’ roadside rest stations across the road network at peak holiday periods. These rest stations operate during the day to provide free coffee to drivers as an inducement to take essential rest breaks from their long-distance driving. This community-based approach may be superior to mass media education

(CARRS-Q, 2004). QT is currently reviewing their Driver Reviver initiative.

The QT public education campaign for fatigue in 2003-2004 comprised a new commercial, 'Microsleeps', and radio advertising in key fatigue risk zones. All media carried the slogan 'Rest or RIP'. The campaign highlights that microsleeps (short sleeps of 3 to 4 seconds duration) increase crash risk for drivers and their passengers. The department public internet section focuses on 'driving tired' (QT, 2004). The department is planning a more specific campaign discussing the effects of drugs and driving. QT's submission stated that fatigue is a common side effect of drug driving.

The QPS and the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) commenced a 'fatigue sucks' public education campaign in Mackay. This program involved stopping motorists and providing drivers who appeared as if they had been travelling some time with an information brochure and a lollipop (QPS, 2004). After the Mackay trial, this campaign was introduced as a state-wide initiative for the 2003 Easter holiday period (RACQ, 2004).

The RACQ was also a major sponsor of the 'Fatigue Busters' travel diary created by the Road Accident Action Group in Mackay. This initiative involved the printing and distribution of colour travel diaries that encouraged drivers to stop at driver reviver and tourist information centres (RACQ, 2004).

The Department of Industrial Relations is in the process of producing a Fatigue Management Guide for Queensland workplaces. The guide will include information on fatigue and its effects, the additional risks posed by shiftwork and extended working hours, legislative responsibilities and factors to consider when managing fatigue (Department of Industrial Relations, 2004).

Fleet management programs for drivers of work-related vehicles may also incorporate components about fatigue driving.

## 8. INTERNATIONAL COUNTERMEASURES

A study by UK researchers in 2001 concluded that the UK, the United States of America (USA) and Australia have produced the most public education materials about fatigue driving. Similarly to Australia, the message has been widely distributed in the USA. Techniques included public service announcements on radio and billboards, articles in national and local media, print advertisements, brochures, leaflets and booklets. In the USA, there is

a strong level of co-operation between the government sector and public and private agencies (Loughborough University Sleep Research Centre, 2001).

### Issues for comment:

**The committee invites submissions on whether current education initiatives about fatigue driving are reaching groups most at risk and resulting in behaviour change, and how the initiatives can be improved.**

## 9. REFERENCES

- CARRS-Q. 2004, *CARRS-Q Submission to Travelsafe Inquiry into Driver/Rider Fatigue*.
- Department of Industrial Relations. 2004, *Submission to the Travelsafe Committee*.
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- Loughborough University Sleep Research Centre. 2001, *Survey of public education literature regarding driver sleepiness*, downloaded from [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk), 15 December 2004.
- QPS. 2004, *Queensland Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee Inquiry into Crashes Involving Driver and Rider Fatigue in Queensland – Queensland Police Service Submission*.
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- Reyner, L. A. & Horne, J. A. 1998, Falling asleep whilst driving: Are drivers aware of prior sleepiness? *International Journal of Legal Medicine*, 111, 120-123.
- Reyner, L. A. & Horne, J. A. 1997, Suppression of sleepiness in drivers: Combination of caffeine with a short nap, *Psychophysiology*, 34, 721-725.
- ROSPA. 2001, *Driver Fatigue and Road Accidents: A Literature Review and Position Paper*, February.
- Stutts, J. C., Wilkins, J. W. & Vaughn, B. V. 1999, *Why do people have drowsy driving crashes? Input from drivers who just did*, downloaded from [www.aaafits.org](http://www.aaafits.org), 15 December 2004.

## GUIDELINES FOR MAKING A SUBMISSION

### FORM

- ◆ There is no set form for a submission to the committee. Written submissions may be in the form of a letter, a substantial paper or a short document and they may include appendices. Submissions may contain facts, opinions, arguments and recommendations for action. The committee will accept both written submissions and submissions lodged via their website.
- ◆ *Written submissions* must be signed and dated. Those signing a submission on behalf of an organisation should indicate at what level of the organisation the submission has been authorised (eg sub-committee, president, chair, state branch, etc.). A return address and contact number should also be provided. Typed text on A4 paper is preferable, though legible hand-written submissions are acceptable.
- ◆ Public officers may make submissions as private individuals. However, if reference is made in a submission to their official position, it should also be made clear that the submission is made in a private capacity.
- ◆ *Electronic submissions* may be lodged via the committee's web pages at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm). Please contact the secretariat if you require any assistance.

### CONTENT AND RELEVANCE

- ◆ A submission should be relevant to the committee's inquiry, otherwise the committee may decide not to accept it. The committee will inform you of its decision to accept your submission or otherwise.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ If you want your submission, or part of it, to be treated confidentially, then you should clearly write '**confidential**' on each page and, in a brief covering letter, explain why your submission should be treated confidentially. The committee will then consider your request for confidentiality.

### UNAUTHORISED RELEASE

- ◆ A submission made to the committee should not be published or disclosed to any other person in that form without the committee's written permission.
- ◆ Submissions published without the committee's permission are not protected by parliamentary privilege. The publishers of these submissions may also be in contempt of Parliament.

### All written submissions should be sent to:

*The Research Director  
Travelsafe Committee  
Parliament House, George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000*

### Submissions close on 13 February 2005

Extensions to the closing date may be given. If you need more time to make a submission, or for further information about the inquiry, contact the committee secretariat:

Telephone: (07) 3406 7908  
Fax: (07) 3406 7070  
Email: [tsafe@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:tsafe@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Copies of this paper and all other Travelsafe publications are available on the Internet via the committee's home page at:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/>

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