

Media Release



Select Committee on Travelsafe

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

INQUIRY TO LOOK AT POLICE POWERS TO DEAL WITH TIRED DRIVERS

A parliamentary inquiry will consider tougher police powers to deal with drivers who are impaired through lack of sleep to reduce fatigue-related crashes on Queensland roads.

Chairman of the Queensland Parliament's Travelsafe Committee and Member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce MP said fatigue causes one in seven of the state's road fatalities.

"I am sure most people would agree that driving tired is dangerous. It can be as dangerous as drink driving."

"Yet, while most people frown upon drink driving, many still don't take the dangers of driving tired seriously. Whenever you drive while you are sleep-deprived, you increase your chances of crashing."

"People who drive long distances, work long hours or have sleep problems are particularly at risk of falling asleep at the wheel and crashing. Driving tired is not just a problem for long-distance truckies out on the open road. It affects all motorists in urban and rural areas driving for all kinds of reasons."

"As well as the policing issues, the committee will look at ways to better detect fatigued drivers before they crash, and the crashes involving fatigue. This is crucial to understanding the extent of the problem. Fatigue remains an area of road safety where there are more questions than answers."

Fatigue was a factor in 1,141 crashes in Queensland during 2002. Forty-two of these involved a fatality. This is 24 per cent more than the average for the previous five years."

The committee released an issues paper for the inquiry to encourage submissions. The closing date for submissions is 30 July 2004. The issues paper is available from the committee's secretariat at Parliament House or the committee's website at: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees/travel.htm. Electronic submissions to the inquiry may be lodged at this site.

The Travelsafe Committee will report its findings to the Queensland Parliament by May 2005.

Ends

For Media comment contact Jim Pearce MP. For background information contact Rob Hansen at the committee secretariat.