

19 June 2015

Justice Marcia Neave AO  
Commissioner  
Royal Commission into Family Violence  
PO Box 535  
FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009

Dear Commissioner

### **Royal Commission into Family Violence**

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) is a Victorian Government-owned organisation, established under the *Transport Accident Act 1986* to reduce the social and financial cost of transport accident injuries to the Victorian community.

The TAC's key functions are paying for treatment and support services for people injured in transport accidents, promoting road safety in Victoria and improving the state's road trauma system.

Although the TAC does not have experience in the prevention and response to family violence, there are specific areas within the terms of reference provided to the Royal Commission where the TAC may be able to make a contribution.

In particular, the terms of reference identify:

- Investigat[ing] how government agencies and community organisations can better integrate and coordinate their efforts, and
- The need to establish a culture of non-violence and gender equality, and to shape appropriate attitudes towards women and children.

Family violence and road trauma share many similarities in terms of the challenges of influencing behaviour change. They are both driven by poor attitudes with similar risk factors (such as alcohol and drug use etc.) and both have horrific consequences for families and the broader community.

While the TAC has no direct role in the area of family violence, I believe that we have some valid behavioural change insights that may be of benefit. The TAC would be happy to share its views, data or other material of relevance should the Commission feel it would be relevant.

Outlined below is some relevant background from the TAC's experience as it relates to the Royal Commission's terms of reference.

#### **Established in response to a Victorian crisis**

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s road trauma had reached crisis levels. The road toll peaked in 1970 at 1,061 deaths. Not unlike family violence, the associated cost to families and the wider community were horrific.

**Janet Dore**

Chief Executive Officer

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The TAC was established in 1987 to tackle road trauma and implement a transport accident personal injury scheme. Over the past 27 years, the TAC has achieved significant reductions in the annual road toll, achieving a 75% reduction from 1970 to 2014.

In pursuit of our vision of a future where every journey is a safe one, the TAC is focussed on evidenced based prevention strategies to reduce road death and serious injuries by more than 30% by 2022.

The establishment of the TAC was informed by the Woodhouse Royal Commission in New Zealand and previous financial failures of compulsory insurance models in Australia.

The Royal Commission highlighted the need for the coordination of the three pillars of prevention, compensation and rehabilitation.

The *Transport Accident Act 1986* required the TAC to design a holistic approach to providing accident compensation and rehabilitation to Victorian motorists and promoting road safety. As a statutory agency with a skills based Board of Management, the TAC has invested in accident prevention, and delivered quantifiable returns by reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. It is important to note that while injury reduction has economic value, this does not include the enormous social value of preventing avoidable trauma and its life-changing consequences.

In addition, the objectives of the Transport Accident Act require the scheme to operate in an efficient and expeditious manner to maintain financial sustainability. This ensures benefits can be provided to the most catastrophically injured over the course of their lifetime. The Act also provides the TAC with an ability to collect sufficient premium from the registration payments of Victorian road users and thus is a self-funding entity.

### **Community attitudes**

The TAC has a record of shaping community attitudes and establishing a culture of road safety in Victoria through effective public education campaigning. The campaigns have focused on the main causes of road trauma: drink driving, speeding, fatigue, drug driving, distractions and more recently, the influence parents have on their children's driving behaviour. These campaigns have undoubtedly had a significant impact on attitudes and have resulted in sustained behaviour change. This is reflected in the extensive research we do in monitoring attitudes towards road safety issues. Research also plays a key role in guiding the development of new community safety campaigns.

### **Partnership approach**

In partnership with VicRoads, Victoria Police and the Department of Justice, the TAC has supported greater drug and alcohol testing, improved driver education, investment in safer road infrastructure, mandated vehicle safety standards and targeted community engagement.

### **Client centred approach**

The TAC was initially established to reduce road trauma and support Victorians injured on our roads. In recent years, the TAC has adopted a more client centred approach to the insurance side of the business that helps people get their lives back on track after a transport accident. This is reflected in the TAC setting performance targets in the areas of client satisfaction and client outcomes.



This has enabled the TAC to provide more innovative and tailored support to injured Victorians. For instance, financial support for clients with severe injuries can be managed by clients themselves through an individualised funding model. This gives clients more independence and flexibility as they can make their own choices on how their care is managed.

### **The model**

As stated above, the TAC's functions span the wide spectrum of trauma prevention to lifetime care post accident. By operating on insurance model principles, the TAC takes an evidence led, long-term commercial approach to decision making. In doing so, the TAC is mindful that as a monopoly provider of services, there is an obligation to operate as efficiently as possible and deliver the Victorian community value for money.

I trust that the above information has provided you with an adequate snapshot of the TAC's history and the role we currently play in reducing road trauma and supporting those it affects.

I am hopeful that the Victorian community is about to embark on a similar journey of social change as that which TAC has undertaken in road safety prevention when it comes to family violence and personal support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Janet Dore'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Janet' and last name 'Dore' clearly distinguishable.

Janet Dore  
**Chief Executive Officer**

cc: John Walter, TAC Chairman