



Office of the Chief Executive
60 Denmark Street
Kew Victoria 3101

Telephone (03) 9854 2029
Fax (03) 9853 0512

vicroads.vic.gov.au

Please Quote: VRPC005686
(File No: PC019548)

Mr Richard Wright
Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Wright

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF ALICIA ALISON CHLOE TRIMNELL

I refer to your letter dated 31 October 2013, regarding the inquest finding, including recommendations, into the death of Ms Alicia Alison Chloe Trimnell.

The first recommendation made by you is:

'It is likely that side and curtain airbags would have reduced the severity of Trimnell's injury. It has previously been observed that parents often hand their older vehicles to their children, whereas it is the novice driver who is more likely to need modern safety features. Further education surrounding vehicle selection for novice drivers could be beneficial.'

VicRoads provides the following response to your recommendation.

The recommendation will be implemented.

VicRoads is pleased to note that the Commonwealth Government has recently reached agreement with other international vehicle regulators to establish a new global regulation for pole-side impact, which will, when introduced, mandate the fitment of side-head protecting airbags in new vehicles.

This is an important step towards increasing the availability of this technology for younger drivers, as the vehicles manufactured today will eventually end up in the hands of younger drivers in the following years.

VicRoads considers that the most effective means of ensuring that the older, used vehicles that younger drivers access are of a safe standard, is to promote the highest possible safety standards by ensuring that the new vehicles delivered at the point of entry into the fleet, are of the highest possible safety standards.



VicRoads recognises that there is often a time lag in younger drivers accessing the most up to date safety features. To offset this, VicRoads and its local vehicle safety partners, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), are working to increase younger driver's understanding of the importance of purchasing a safe used vehicle. These agencies have been promoting the Used Car Safety Rating guide which provides advice on the safest used vehicles.

A new website howsafeisyourfirstcar.com.au is also currently being developed to help younger drivers identify the safest used vehicles that fit within their budget. As part of the marketing of this website, efforts will be made to encourage parents to consider handing the keys of their safer, newer vehicles to their children.

The TAC recently developed (with the support of VicRoads and the RACV) a parent campaign aimed at parents of learner or probationary drivers. The campaign includes television commercials and a website that parents can visit, to help their children get through their probationary licence. For more information please visit www.saferpplaters.com.au.

VicRoads also manages the L-Site which is a website designed for pre-learner drivers, learner drivers and supervising drivers. The website includes the Used Car Safety Rating guide. For more information please visit www.lsite.vicroads.vic.gov.au.

The second recommendation made by you is:

'Jubb's vehicle would have been more visible with its headlights operating. Victorian Road Rule 215 already requires headlights to be used in "hazardous weather conditions causing reduced visibility". Further education surrounding vehicle colour selection could be beneficial.'

VicRoads provides the following response to your recommendation.

The recommendation will not be implemented but VicRoads will implement an alternative.

Research by the Monash University Accident Research Centre suggests that the association between vehicle colour and crash risk is strongest during daylight hours where relative crash risks were higher for the colours listed, compared to white, by up to 10 per cent. The research identified a small range of colours including white, yellow and orange as being marginally safer than less conspicuous colours such as black, grey and dark green. Acknowledging this finding, the VicRoads website provides advice on suitable colour choice for new vehicles.

VicRoads is not aware of evidence that there is scope to further encourage safer vehicle colour choice. Instead, VicRoads aims at encouraging consumers to purchase new vehicles with safety technologies that improve crash avoidance and the likelihood of surviving a crash, and technology that is less influenced by fashion, such as side-head protecting airbags and electronic stability control (ESC).

Most drivers are unaware that their vehicles are equipped with life-saving technology such as ESC and side-head protecting airbags, and in the near future, autonomous emergency braking.

It should also be noted that new vehicle-colour surveys reveal white is the most popular new-car colour choice. This is likely due to the re-sale of the vehicle and sun radiation reflection. Overall, it is a welcome trend that supports the desired road safety outcome.

Should you require further information, Mr James Holgate, VicRoads' Director; Vehicle and Road Use Policy (Tel: 9854 2550), would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Todd', written in a cursive style.

PETER TODD
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

24/12/13