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Ms Marika Norton
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Norton

**INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF SABRINA MICHELLE BRADY AND
MADISON LEE DOBIE AND JUSTIN ROSS POMERY**

I refer to Coroner Spooner's findings and recommendations in the above Inquest made on 30 March 2011.

Please find enclosed VicRoads' response in relation to the Coroner's recommendations that are relevant to VicRoads.

Yours sincerely

**GARY LIDDLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

27/6/2011



**INQUEST INTO THE DEATHS OF
SABRINA MICHELLE BRADY (2038/09),
MADISON LEE DOBIE (2039/09) AND JUSTIN POMERY (2040/09)**

VICROADS' RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

I recommend that VicRoads review their road maintenance system in light of this finding, and the Comments and Recommendations from Pettet/Guajardo and implement a 'best practice' system for inspecting, monitoring, auditing, funding and repairing road surfaces to minimise the risk of crashes. This system should also incorporate specific considerations relating to the incidence of extreme climate events and road surface management.

RESPONSE

VicRoads is committed to building on its current policies and programs to develop a best practice system aimed at further minimising the risk of crashes on its road network. In doing so, VicRoads has considered the comments and recommendations made in the Pettet and Guajardo Inquest, along with the recommendations made in this inquest.

VicRoads is currently in the process of reviewing a number of its policies and programs to meet this objective.

1 Management of Low Surface Friction Sites

VicRoads is reviewing its existing policies and processes for managing roads with poor surface and low surface friction. VicRoads is currently in the process of consolidating a state-wide guideline for consistent inspections, monitoring, speed zoning and advisory signage for roads identified with poor surface, including low surface friction.

These reviews aim to ensure that such policies provide more targeted warnings to road users about a change in road conditions, giving them appropriate warning to adjust their driving according to the relevant road surface and driving conditions. In addition to this, it is also the aim to develop more targeted processes for implementing and monitoring programs for roads identified with low surface friction.

VicRoads is also analysing its processes to assist contractors and surveillance managers to better understand their obligations and reporting mechanisms when dealing with roads which have low surface friction. The process will also seek to implement a traceable record so that surveillance managers can track the surface condition of a particular road more easily over time.

It is anticipated that these reviews will be completed by the end of this year.

2 Extreme Weather Events

VicRoads is currently in the process of developing a new procedure for assessing road texture after extreme weather events. This procedure will build on the current inspection and maintenance regime and further assist VicRoads to identify and manage high risk areas after an extreme weather event.

As part of this procedure, VicRoads will continue to provide funding for water blasting in high needs areas as required, but ensure that it can be shifted if priorities change

during any particular year. This is particularly useful in dealing with high risk sites identified through the extreme weather events procedure.

3 *Specialist Pavement Surface Condition Inspection Training*

Specialist pavement surface condition inspection training is currently being rolled out across the various Regions in the State for the remainder of 2011, commencing with the South Western Region. This training aims to assist in better identifying low surface texture so that observations can be made with confidence and reported to VicRoads in a timely way so that appropriate action can be taken.

4 *Centralised Records Management*

VicRoads has recently introduced a new single system for program development and program approval, known as 'Connect Bids'. Using Connect Bids, VicRoads staff across the State can submit bids for future road improvement projects and maintenance works, and can locate planned works using an interactive map. These bids are assessed and prioritised by VicRoads core business areas and funding is approved and allocated accordingly. This process previously involved over a dozen separate systems, but with the introduction of Connect Bids, the entire process - from bid development to bid approval and funding allocation - is managed through a single system.

The Connect Bids system went 'live' on 17 May 2011. It is currently being used to finalise VicRoads program of works for 2011/12, and for the creation of bids for future years.

The benefits of Connect Bids include:

- improved efficiency in the program development and program approval process through the use of a single system;
- improved analysis of previous and future year's programs;
- improved integration of the program development and approval process with VicRoads financial management systems;
- improved reporting of program funding vs actual expenditure;
- simplified data gathering;
- greater data integrity;
- the ability to view past, current and future years' programs on a map;
- the ability to identify opportunities for cost savings and reduced impacts on road users by coordinating works that are spatially coincident.

VicRoads will also soon be seeking expressions of interest for the purchase of a "Maintenance Management System". Similar systems are currently being considered by other States and are characterised by one centralised records management system which allows VicRoads and contractors to input data into the system via various methods which may possibly include remote hand held terminals. The system is expected to assist in the coordination and administration of asset management and assist in developing and prioritising projects and allocating resources. The system is also expected to contain capabilities to allow for auditing of actions undertaken and to monitor future actions required.

Funding has been allocated for part of the project and VicRoads has begun preparing a request for tender. VicRoads anticipates the procurement process will commence shortly and the delivery process will begin by the middle of next year.

5 Inspection and Maintenance Contracts

VicRoads has revised the maintenance inspection criteria within its maintenance contracts (otherwise known as Section 750). This revision now requires contractors to report skid resistance issues with road surfaces (where it is visually apparent) and to provide this information immediately to VicRoads. This was not previously the case.

Maintenance contracts which will be renewed at the end of this financial year will contain the new Section 750. For existing contracts that will not be renewed this year, it is anticipated that VicRoads will issue contract variations to incorporate the revised Section 750 shortly.

RECOMMENDATION 6

I recommend that in the event that child restraints are made mandatory for buses subject to ADR68/00 in Victoria, the Department of Transport review the Road Rules 2009 to define responsibilities for ensuring that a child is suitably restrained in a bus.

RESPONSE

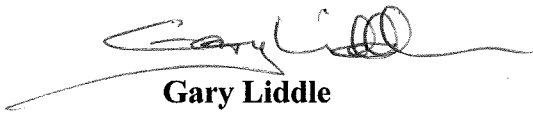
VicRoads will continue to monitor the work carried out by Transport Safety Victoria in relation to Recommendation 5. In the event that child restraints are made mandatory for Victorian buses under Recommendation 5, VicRoads will take the necessary steps to review the *Road Safety Road Rules 2009* as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That Transport Safety Victoria in conjunction with the relevant road safety agencies such as Victoria Police and VicRoads, ensure that a comprehensive strategy is developed to improve seat belt compliance and passenger awareness of the importance of seat belts.

RESPONSE

VicRoads will continue to work with Transport Safety Victoria, and will provide its expertise to Transport Safety Victoria to assist it to develop the appropriate strategy for managing seat belt compliance and passenger awareness.



Gary Liddle
Chief Executive
VicRoads

Date: 27/6/2011