



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS:

ROAD SAFETY

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon.
William McMahon, C.H., M.P.

The Commonwealth Government is determined to save lives on the Australian roads.

It is not enough to feel sympathy for those involved in motor accidents. We must work vigorously with the States to ensure that every possible means of reducing this toll are fully exploited.

Few people have not been touched in one way or another by a road tragedy.

- . Road accidents rank fourth among the major causes of death in Australia and are the major cause of death for young men under the age of 25 years.
- . The road toll last year, when more than 3,500 were killed and more than 90,000 were injured can only be described as a national tragedy.
- . In addition to this human suffering, there is the staggering economic cost to the community which could be more than \$5 million annually.

In order to find out what more the Commonwealth could do, we appointed an expert group to undertake a detailed and scientific review of the road accident situation in Australia.

We received the report of the expert group last month and I have already announced our decision to accept the group's major recommendations for action on the part of the Commonwealth.

A high level specialist National Office of Road Safety will be created within the Department of Shipping and Transport to co-ordinate and support State and Territory efforts in road safety.

It will become a focal point of national efforts to promote road safety.

We also propose to assist the States in removing danger spots that menace the drivers on our roads. We will provide immediately \$5 million a year to the States to double their present expenditure in this regard and will undertake with the States a survey of locations with poor accident records to see what more needs to be done to make our roads safer.

The task of reducing the road toll is not a simple one. It will not be solved by subjective thinking or strong support of personal attitudes. It will demand objective analysis of the problems involved and a high degree of co-operation between the many authorities concerned. We have shown that we are prepared to do our part at the national level.

CANBERRA,

27 November 1972