



PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
NATIONAL ROAD TRAUMA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
CANBERRA - 13 DECEMBER 1990**

Brian Howe
Bob Brown
Sir Nicholas Shehadie (Chairman)
Members of the Council

I am very pleased to be with you today at this inaugural meeting of the National Road Trauma Advisory Council.

When I announced the formation of the Council in August this year I emphasised that it will allow its members to have a direct input into the process for establishing and reviewing road and vehicle safety standards and related issues, on a national basis.

To achieve a national approach to road trauma we clearly need to co-ordinate the efforts of the many Government and non-government organisation whose work contributes to road safety.

The presence here today of my ministerial colleagues Brian Howe and Bob Brown symbolises my Government's commitment to work co-operatively to reduce the national tragedy of road trauma.

I am pleased to note that we have been able to attract people of such high calibre to join the Council. As a result of your presence, this Council possesses skills and experience of the very highest order, including

- . medical experts in trauma management and rehabilitation;
- . transport economists;
- . a representative of the law enforcement agencies; and
- . the motor vehicle industry.

Your collective advice will, I am sure, be of lasting benefit to the Government and the Australian people.

The Departments of Community Services and Health and Transport and Communications will, as you know, play key roles in the working of the Council.

And I have asked my own Department to maintain a close working relationship with the Council and to keep me informed of developments.

You may also be aware that, during the earlier planning stages, I gave my personal assurance to Sir Dennis Paterson and the Australian Medical Association of my continuing involvement in the deliberations of the Council.

I reiterate today that my door remains open to you.

Around this time last year, Bob Brown and I announced a plan to achieve nationally uniform and more effective road safety rules. As an incentive to State co-operation, we promised \$110 million to help eradicate road safety black spots.

And we agreed to invest an extra \$10 million in road safety research and public education programs.

I am pleased to say that during the past year all States and Territories, with the regrettable exception of the Northern Territory, have agreed to adopt the national 10-point road safety package that we proposed:

- . legislation to give effect to the black spot program is currently before the Federal Parliament
- . there has been a greater resolution by all Governments to cut the road toll
 - Victoria is a particular success story and nationally, road fatalities have fallen by nearly 400 this year, to a 30 year low.

The importance of the task that lies ahead of you is underscored by the fact that it is almost a year to the day since Australians were shocked by the tragedy of a crash involving two fully laden buses.

With the Christmas-New Year road toll period now upon us again, it is important that we remind ourselves of the desperate need for safety on our roads.

With those States which had a .08 blood alcohol level now moving to adopt, under our black spots program, the uniform national level of .05, the message all Governments will be putting out this Christmas is clear - if you drink, don't drive. The lives you save, the injuries you prevent, may be your own, or those of your own family.

We do not pretend that this Council's job is made less necessary by the black spots program, or that simple solutions are available.

We need to change attitudes and behaviours which seem to be ingrained into our society - attitudes to speed, drink driving, risk taking and aggression.

We need to foster greater consideration to other road users, patience and respect for others. These changes of attitude are the hardest - but most necessary - issues we need to face.

We need to continue our efforts to develop policies which reduce the incidence of road accidents, to minimise the impact of those which do occur and to assist the recovery of those who are injured in crashes.

The National Road Trauma Advisory Council is in a unique position to assist in meeting these challenges.

It has the support of all the nation's political leaders:

- . my personal commitment
- . that of the Premiers and Chief Ministers
- . and that of the Federal Opposition

Your reports will be addressed to me and they will be tabled in Parliament. And the Premiers and Chief Ministers have agreed to table your reports in their Parliaments.

You have an opportunity to influence legislatures as few other community organisations have.

I encourage you to consult widely with the States and Territories and with local Government and other interested groups.

I know you will present well considered, constructive advice and that you are aware of the complex framework within which advances in road safety need to be made.

But equally, I know that if we work together we will succeed in advancing road safety for the benefit of all Australians.

I wish you well with your task.

* * * * *