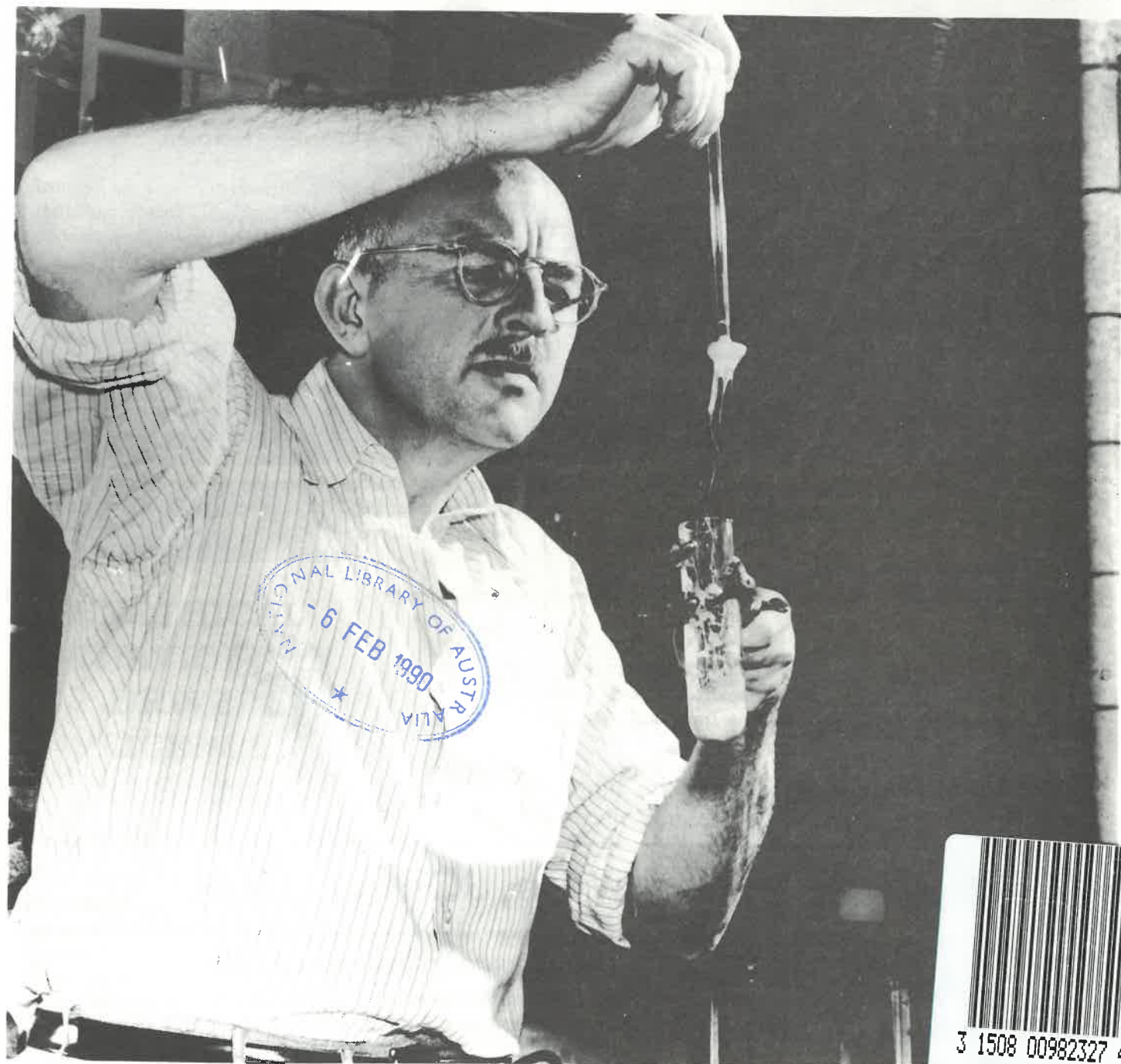


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## ROADWISE

The Journal of the Australian College of Road Safety



Vol. 2, No. 3, August, 1989

### OPERATION BIG BROTHER

Police in four States launched the biggest traffic operation ever conducted in Australia in June this year.

Operation Big Brother was an all-out effort by Police from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia to encourage truck and tourist coach operators to drive safely.

All available Highway Patrol units patrolled major roads and highways across eastern Australia on a 24 hour basis, supported by Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) inspectors and officials from the Department of Transport and Communications.

In New South Wales, Police from metropolitan areas were re-deployed to assist with patrols of country routes.

Maximum use is being made of stationary and mobile radar units and Random Breath Testing (RBT) operations. Police again used unmarked and spotter vehicles.

The Commissioner of NSW Police, Mr John Avery, said that special attention would be given to major routes such as the Hume, Pacific, New England, Newell, Oxley, Princes and Great Western Highways.

"Operation Camouflage, conducted on the Hume Highway earlier this year, was the first step in our campaign to crack down on irresponsible drivers of heavy vehicles. Operation Big Brother is the next".

"This is the first time that four State Police Forces have combined to carry out such a major operation. I am confident Big Brother will be the forerunner to other joint campaigns," Mr Avery said.

The maximum speed limit for heavy vehicles in NSW was increased to 100km/h in July last year. In 1988 however, fatal crashes involving semi-trailers increased by 94 percent.

Supt Merv Lane of the Traffic Operations Group, said there had been a levelling-off in the number of heavy vehicle accidents in recent months, and he attributed this to improved co-opera-

tion by the trucking industry and an increase in Police enforcement activities.

"It is far too early to tell however, if this trend is just seasonal. The public perception is that many truck and coach drivers not only speed, they also drive in a dangerous manner, by convoying, tailgating and intimidating other road users.

It must be noted that there are huge numbers of heavy vehicles on Australian roads. For example, an average of 3,500 trucks and coaches use the Hume Highway every day".

"A recent RTA survey found that close to 20 percent of heavy vehicles exceeded the speed limit on two-lane rural roads during the day. At night, more than 50 percent of trucks were guilty of speeding," Supt Lane said.

"Problems Police encounter include not only speed, but fatigue, intimidation, and unsafe vehicles. While most drivers observe the traffic laws, it is apparent that a few operators are continuing to put their foot down, placing their lives and the safety of other road users at risk".

"Obviously, the behaviour of a minority of truckers is doing great harm to the reputation of the industry. For this reason, I believe the community and the majority of truck drivers will support our decision to undertake Operation Big Brother," he concluded.



#### SAFETY SIGN SERIES

This is No1 in a series of interesting safety signs. It is located on the New England Highway at Braxton, Hunter Region of New South Wales.



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**Editorial**

The outcome of injury, death, damage to equipment and loss of productive time is no ACCIDENT. An accident is often defined as an event, happening by chance. Chance is an occurrence that is governed by no known physical laws; this suggests that accidents occur without a known cause.

But we know the causes of loss and trauma which occur on the roads and highways. They can be classified as either human or environmental. Human causes are directly attributable to human mistakes (errors of action, judgement, perception or impression) brought about by carelessness, intoxication, daydreaming, tiredness, human deficiencies and inabilities. Environmental causes are attributable to the facilities and systems which we have developed for the purpose of greater human mobility. This includes vehicles, thoroughfares, wayside obstacles and the methods adopted to control the orderliness and speed of movement. Experience has shown that the human factor is the cause of the vast majority of traffic COLLISIONS.

Engineers have worked to improve environmental safety features, legislators have drafted road laws, police personnel provide control and enforcement but substantially, individual behaviour is the CAUSE of COLLISIONS.

Complacency and pretention should not be allowed to develop in our society because of a belief that tragedies on the roads are accidental.

**Day of Remembrance for Road Victims**

**There is still a lot of apathy connected with the dangers of road use. As Queensland's road toll continued to spiral throughout 1988, DRUG-ARM became increasingly concerned. Its efforts to awaken general concern seemed to go substantially unheeded.**

Confronted by community apathy, government inactivity, lack of media response and a road toll out of control, DRUG-ARM organised a Day of Remembrance for road victims. This followed a meeting with the State Director of PADD (People Against Drink Driving) who had knowledge of a similar event observed in the USA.

the human cost of road accidents. The costs that statistics do not show are those associated with the loss of life.

There is difficulty in gauging the success of such an event. The organisers considered several criteria, viz. to prick the conscience of Government Authorities so that more resources will be provided for road safety; some increase in

**A Day of Remembrance display was mounted within the Police Pavilion at the Brisbane Exhibition during August.**

The display stood alongside a variety of displays set up by the State Emergency Service, the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the Fire Brigade and DRUG-ARM as well as several divisions with the Police Department.

The Day of Remembrance display was created by DRUG-ARM in conjunction with PADD - People Against Drink Driving and PCYC - Police and Citizen Youth Clubs. Features of the display were a giant poster board bearing a large photograph of a baby captioned "I almost had a Daddy" and an accompanying audio presentation of the story behind the photograph.

The photograph reflected a real life situation. The baby's father, a motor cyclist, was killed in a road crash involving a car driven by a person whose blood alcohol level was well above the legal limit.

Over the duration of the Exhibition around 80,000 people went through the Police Pavilion. The Day of Remembrance display created delays in the movement of people as individuals and family groups paused to absorb the message of the display.

The Day of Remembrance was held on December 3, 1988 to precede the annual summer holidays including Christmas/New Year when there is a peak in road carnage. The major activities were a vigil in King George Square (marked by the laying of flowers around a floral cross and a bagpiper playing laments) and a Carols by Candlelight program in Albert Park with the Scout and Guide Associations. In addition to those attending, others were aware of the message through the assistance of the media.

The message was the need to reduce

awareness of the need for individual responsibility for road safety; but in the final analysis a substantial reduction in the road toll.

The feedback which was received has indicated the potential for the Day of Remembrance to be repeated. It may even be possible for activities to be conducted simultaneously throughout Queensland and Australia. DRUG-ARM is inviting the expression of interest from any group or individual in providing support or participation (contact at PO Box 6, West End 4101 or telephone 07-8447474).

**Abroad****TRY BELGIUM STYLE TRAFFIC SAFETY**

"Theoretically, Belgium ranks only fifth in auto carnage among the European Countries. But the others count all deaths, while the Belgians count only those killed instantly. Anyone who lives long enough to get to the hospital before dying is left out of the official statistics".

The above is extracted from the recent Seattle Times/Post Intelligencer article on the state of highway travel in Belgium. The article, written by RC Longworth of the Chicago Tribune, also noted an old gag that the British drive on the wrong side of the road and the Belgians drive on both sides. It appears this stereotype has a strong basis in fact.

The Belgium custom of *priorite a droite* brings terror to the heart of any traffic safety professional. This practice gives unrestricted right of way to any car entering traffic from the right.

Technically, a car merging into traffic on a four-lane roadway from a driveway or country lane has the priority. It's just fine to pull from the right into speeding traffic, even if that traffic finds it impossible to stop.

The right lane seems to reign supreme at all times. Rolund Bruynsdrader of the Royal Auto Club was quoted saying "In France, they go 95 miles an hour on four-lane highways (Belgium's speed limit is 75), but at least the fastest drivers go in the left lane, and slower ones in the right lane. Here everybody drives in the same lane. Sightseers going 40 miles an hour are simply run over".

Belgians are also noted for their tendency to switch lanes at random, ignore red lights, dart in and out of traffic and concentrate more on back seat conversations than on the road in front.

Safety belt use has been required for 15 years, but so what? The law is ignored. Also ignored are drunken driving laws. Drunken driving is blamed for 40 percent of all accidents.

The Belgian government is working to change all this.

Sounds like quite a challenge. Any volunteers?

Reprinted from "Centreline", newsletter of Washington Traffic Safety Commission, USA, May 1989.

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## New Specialised Qualifications in Road Safety

### A tertiary level course in Road Safety Studies is to be introduced in Australia.

The Chairman of the Institute of Road Safety Officers (Australia Group), Mr Ray O'Dowd said "such a course has been lacking in Australia and his Institute had been seeking ways of filling this void".

Responses had been received, following the approaches for assistance made by the Institute to organisations, including a number of tertiary institutions. EastAus Management Unit, Armidale, New South Wales has been selected to assist in development of the course.

Mr Colin Grigg, Manager of East Aus Management Unit confirmed the involvement of his organisation. The course will be at a tertiary level and

based on courses of a lower academic level currently conducted in the United Kingdom. The course will be adapted for Australian conditions and legislation. It will be a distance education package. Assistance available from tertiary institutions will be investigated.

It is anticipated that the course will be available for the second semester of 1990. It will incorporate subjects such as:

- Driver attitudes - Stress factors
- Seat Belts/Child Restraints
- Traffic Regulations/Legislation
- Australian Design Rules and Standards
- Natural Laws - Vision - Speed
- The system of vehicle control
- Statistics
- Pedestrian Safety
- Traffic Engineering
- Principles of Instruction and Publicity

## ROAD SAFETY PENANG STYLE

Many road accident victims are young people cut down in their prime, and statistics show that alcohol and reckless speed are often the ingredients for their deaths.

Mount Penang has for three years been tackling the problem head on, as part of its caring outreach into the community. The Central Coast Traffic Offender's Program was established to provide an education program for under 25 year olds who are referred by the court as the result of a traffic offence. The young offender attends court, is remanded for at least 10 weeks, attends the eight week program and submits a written project, then reappears in court for sentencing. The co-ordinator of the course assesses work and supplies the court with a report. The participating magistrates, Mr Errol Considine from Wyong, and Mr Morrahan from Woy Woy support the program by placing

selected offenders on the course.

Visiting lecturers come from various backgrounds - the Police, the Spinal Unit of Royal North Shore Hospital, Drug and Alcohol units, Road and Traffic Authority, Motor Vehicle Maintenance, the Courts, NRMA. The group has two visits to the Ambulance Station at Point Clare during the program.

Priority number one of the program is to change the attitude of the young people to their responsibility when driving. By making them aware of the consequences of drug use, speed, and recklessness when driving it is hoped that their own lives and the lives of law-abiding road-users will be saved.

The Traffic Offender's Program is another way Mount Penang tries to assist young people on the Central Coast.

(Article submitted by Therese Frewin, Co-ordinator, Traffic Offenders Programme, Mount Penang Detention Centre, NSW).

## Briefly

### MOTOR VEHICLE STANDARDS ACT

The Federal Government has recently passed new legislation, effective July 1989, which will enable the Government to establish nationally uniform safety and environmental standards applicable to all new Australian made or imported vehicles. (Reference "Road Crash Statistics Australia", June 1989)

### NATIONAL DAY-TO-DAY TRAVEL IN AUSTRALIA

The Federal Office of Road Safety has released a document "Day to Day Travel In Australia 1985-86". The data on land transport activity is intended for calculations of risk of road fatality for various road user groups at various times of the day.

### DEATH OF CYCLISTS

In releasing statistics of road fatalities in July 1989, the South Australian Minister for Transport, Mr Blevins expressed concern about the high number of cyclists killed on South Australian roads so far this year (ten in the first seven months).

Two of those killed had a blood alcohol level of over 0.08. Mr Blevins pointed out that "the effects of alcohol can be just as disastrous for a cyclist or a pedestrian" (as for drivers of vehicles).

### TRUCK SAFETY

Heavy trucks surveyed by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority showed that 59% had unsafe brakes. The study was carried out using an innovative truckalyser. This instrument is also being tested by Queensland Transport Department with consideration to its introduction.

Random checks in Queensland have also detected many (88 in two months) trucks with defective brakes.

A Queensland Traffic Police spokesman said that some unscrupulous truck operators actually disconnected brakes of prime movers to save maintenance costs.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

We have shown the video "Be Bright - Stay Alive Day and Night" to Year 8 boys and girls as part of the School Safety Unit in Health Education.

It is very clear in presentation and if anything, repeats the facts for "being seen" almost too much! Although some students joked at the repetition, many of them repeated it along with the presenter, so perhaps it has a positive effect.

The video would probably be most useful in primary and early secondary school classes. In Year 8 it stimulated discussion on the costs of maintaining a bike in good condition, and the local shops likely to have reflective tape available. Some students who identified with the boy with the unsafe bike were slightly shaken when he was hit by the car at night.

We will use this video in future units of bicycle education.

Ross Brady

Duval High School

Ed. Note: Details of the video are given in 'Publications', of this issue.

Dear Editor,

I am offering a method (psychotechnical driver selection) which was scientifically validated in 1970 not in America but in France. Americans, Canadians and the British have bought it and lately they have produced some positive results. Will we accept it only after the Americans have digested it first? Cannot we accept something that proved to be a great life and money saver?

"National Guidelines for Medical Practitioners in Determining Fitness to Drive a Motor Vehicle" reads: "Slowed reaction time, lack of attentiveness, poor judgement and faulty attitudes are responsible for many crashes at any age". Who ever assesses these factors in an objective way?

"Human Factors & Road Crashes - a review of their relationship", by Wendy A MacDonald published by the Federal Office of Road Safety, page 3 reads: "Research on the perceptual and cognitive abilities of drivers of varying levels of experience....appears to be one of the most promising for the future develop-

ment of more valid licence test procedures as well as for the improvement of driver training programs".

The above plus visuo-motor abilities is what the methods I am offering are all about.

A large transport company in France which initiated psychotechnical selection of drivers in 1924 states in 1970: "It is worth noticing that while over a period of time the number of vehicles in our region increased by 218% it corresponds with 84% increase in accidents."

To the contrary, over the same period of time, an increase of the fleet of vehicles by 200% (almost identical to the region) in our Company, corresponds with a decrease of 31% in number of accidents".

"The results show all the advantage of psychotechnical methods of driver selection in the matter of transport management from the safety and economy of transport point of view".

Irena Kubarek

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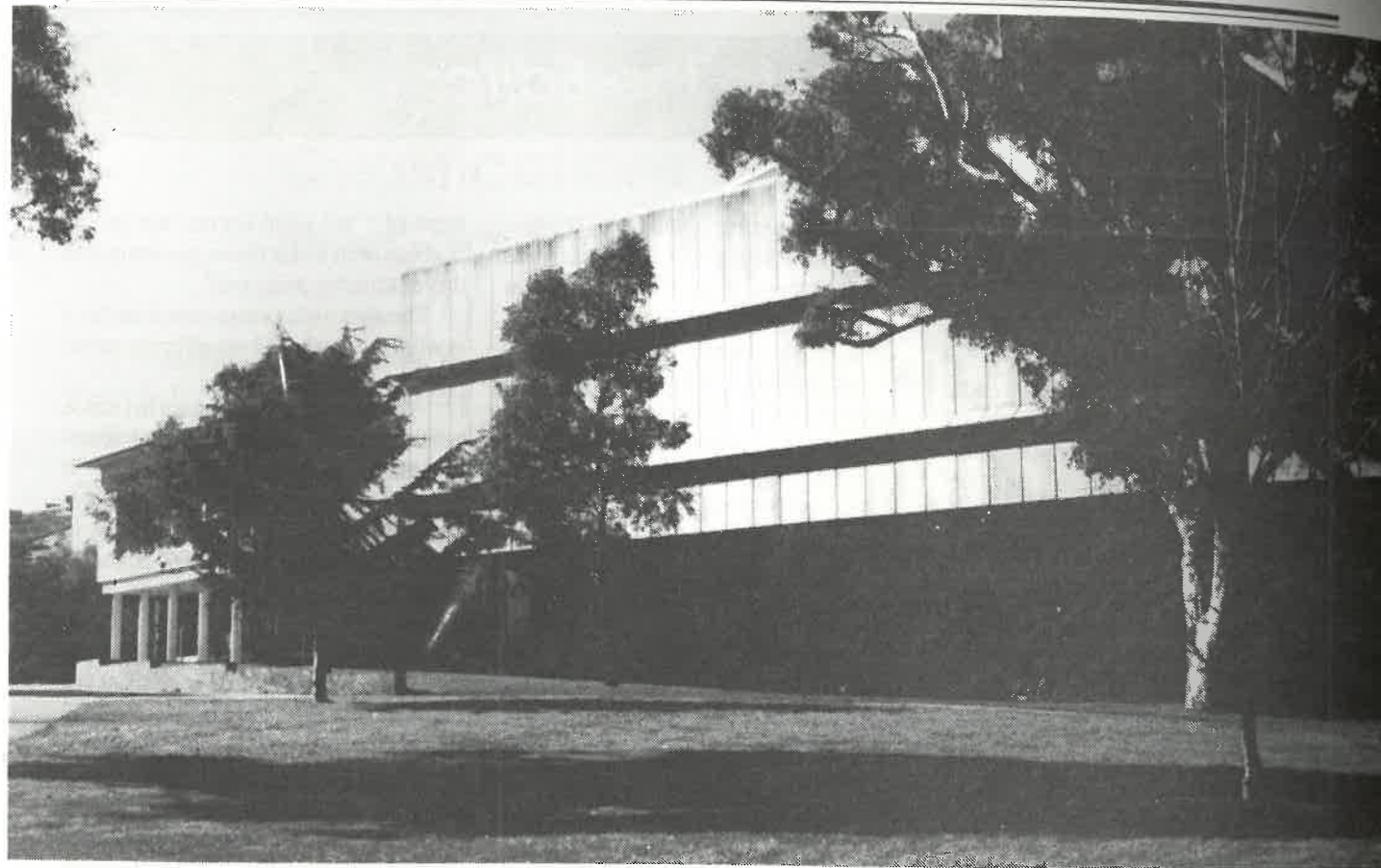


## Diary

The Third Biennial National Traffic Education Conference will be held on February 16 & 17, 1990 at the Campus Conference Centre, University of New England, Armidale NSW. The theme of the Conference is "the implementation of Road Safety Programs".

The second annual general meeting of the Australian College of Road Safety will be held in conjunction with the conference.





## Briefly

### UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN DRIVER LICENCE TESTING

The release of the document "Malpractice in Driver Licence Testing" (STAYSAFE 14) in August 1989 by the NSW Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety describes some unseemly behaviour. The investigations of the Committee found that corruption in the system of issuing driver licences was "much more extensive and was far more damaging than was commonly realised".

The bribery which has occurred was named as a factor "significantly hampering 1988 efforts to keep incompetent drivers off the roads". It has been recommended that police and the Independent Commission against Corruption investigate and then prosecute officials and driving instructors if incriminating evidence exists.

Dixon Library, University of New England, where the National Road Safety Resource Centre will be established by the Australian College of Road Safety

## New Members

The following new members have joined the Australian College of Road Safety.

### Personal

Mr R Angus Kidston (Co-ordinator, Young Drivers' Awareness Program, Thornleigh NSW)

Dr George Cho (Lecturer, Applied Science, Canberra CAE)

### Community

Ormond Youth Centre, Thornleigh NSW (Mr J Renehan)

Traffic Offenders Program, Mt Penang Detention Centre, Gosford NSW (Ms Therese Frewin)



## Publications



"Be Bright - Stay Alive Day and Night" - Video, June 1988, produced for Shire of Ballarat by Video Factory - BTV Productions, Richmond, Victoria.

"Road Traffic Accidents in NSW - 1988" - Road Safety Bureau, Roads and Traffic Authority, May 1989.

"Malpractice in Driver Licence Testing" Staysafe 14, Parliament of New South Wales Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, August, 1989.

### "Beyond Sympathy"

Janice Harris Lord, Director of Victim Services for MADD/National, has written a new book *Beyond Sympathy*. The 192 page volume published by Pathfinder Publications, focuses on what to say and do for someone suffering injury, illness and loss.

For copies, send US\$7 to MADD/King County, 1511 3rd Avenue, #911, Seattle, WA98101.

"Passenger Coach Safety", Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport Safety, June 1986.

"Bicycle Helmet Safety", Final Report on Motorcycle and Bicycle Helmet Safety Enquiry. Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport Safety, November, 1985.

### New report on Developing Adolescent Programs

"Modeling and Participation: Elements in Education to Reduce Alcohol Impaired Driving" is a new report from Michigan State University, Department of Pediatrics/Human Development.

This report describes efforts to develop an educational program for adolescents including both curricula and extra-curricula activities to reduce their involvement in alcohol-related traffic crashes. Paper copy: 213 pages, US\$25.95. Order Number PB88-202684/ABS. (National Technical Information Service USA).

### Adult Seat Belt Report

"Papers on Adult Seat Belts: Effectiveness and Use", National Center for Statistics and Analysis. The NHTSA's major accident data bases are used in eight papers on front and rear safety belt effectiveness in different types of vehicles and crashes. Paper copy: 104 pages, US\$19.95. Order Number PB88-236526/ABS. (National Technical Information Service USA).



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