



Mr Jeff Dart
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Dart

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF RACHEL E MEAD

I refer to your letter dated 11 September 2013, regarding the inquest finding including recommendations made by the Coroner regarding the death of Rachel E Mead – Court reference: 2010 000921.

VicRoads provides the following responses to the Coroner's recommendations.

The first recommendation is:

That VicRoads examine, in consultation with industry bodies and experts, the appropriateness of current torque guidelines in relation to spider wheel grips designed to be fitted to heavy vehicles.

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

The Australian Trucking Association currently produces an industry based advisory procedure for *Commercial Vehicle Wheel Security* to help reduce the incidence of heavy vehicle wheel detachments. The guideline provides recommended torque specifications for wheel nuts, including spider wheels. It is apparent from the State Coroner's investigation that there is a difference in opinion on the recommended torque specification for tightening wheel nuts on spider wheels between some industry experts.

While VicRoads is not in a position to comment on specific wheel nut torque recommendations, VicRoads will convene a meeting of the relevant parties and experts to review the industry's current advice. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, VicRoads will advise the Australian Trucking Association of any change needed.

The second recommendation is:

In view of the roadside inspection regime which has been adopted by VicRoads in relation to heavy vehicles, which includes inspection of wheel and tyre fixing, I make no recommendations as to this matter.

The Coroner's recommendation is noted.

The third recommendation is:

In view of the publications which have been produced and disseminated by VicRoads to all licensed heavy vehicle testers in Victoria addressing the fitting and fixing wheels and tyres, I make no recommendation as to this matter.

The Coroner's recommendation is noted.

The fourth recommendation is:

In view of the evidence that it is possible that small truck operators may not receive information from industry associations as to wheel safety, I recommend that at re-registration of all heavy vehicles, VicRoads provide information as to the critical nature of adequate wheel inspection and wheel adjustment, with particular emphasis on the spider wheel mechanism.

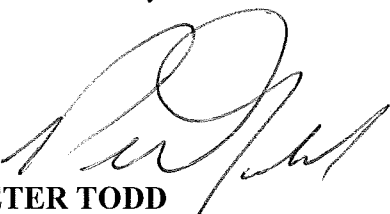
The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

VicRoads will include an advisory message regarding wheel nut torque specifications on its heavy vehicle renewal notice in future. A revised renewal notice including this information can be expected by mid-2014. At this stage a more specific timing for the revised registration renewal notice cannot be determined until renewal notice printing schedules are determined for 2014.

VicRoads notes that there are a range of road safety and vehicle maintenance issues that warrant inclusion on the renewal notice. However, print space for advisory messages is limited by the constrained space left after the mandatory administrative information such as payment details and vehicle registration information is placed on the notice. Therefore, VicRoads will consider a periodic rotation of the message with other important heavy vehicle road safety and maintenance messages as they arise.

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

Yours sincerely



PETER TODD
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

19/11/2013