



18 March 2013

Ms Zoiee King  
Coroners Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

**Janet Dore**  
Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Ms King

**Investigation into the deaths of Anthony Iannetta, Benjamin Hall, William Te-Whare, Matthew Lister and Steven Johnstone**

Thank you for your letter dated 21 December 2012 regarding the inquest findings and recommendations relating to the deaths of Anthony Iannetta, Benjamin Hall, William Te-Whare, Matthew Lister and Steven Johnstone.

The TAC has considered the findings and the recommendations made by the Coroner, Ms Heather Spooner. The TAC's formal response to Recommendation 3, which is directed to the TAC, is attached.

Please contact Ms Elizabeth Waller, Major Projects Manager, Road Safety, or John Bolitho, TAC Special Counsel should you require any further information or assistance. Elizabeth can be contacted on 5225 6954 or by email at [elizabeth\\_waller@tac.vic.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth_waller@tac.vic.gov.au). John can be contacted on 5225 6206 or by email on [john\\_bolitho@tac.vic.gov.au](mailto:john_bolitho@tac.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Clare Amies**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

## **INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATHS OF ANTHONY IANNETTA, BENJAMIN HALL, WILLIAM TE-WHARE, MATTHEW LISTER AND STEVEN JOHNSTONE**

### **Introduction**

The Coroner has delivered findings on the contributing factors to the deaths of Anthony Iannetta, Benjamin Hall, William Te-Whare, Matthew Lister and Steven Johnstone and made recommendations.

On the night of the crash, the late Steven Johnstone, the driver of the Ford Falcon, had been engaging in high risk behaviours including drink driving and speeding. He had a poor driving record. He is described as an atypical young driver, as most young people do comply with their licence conditions and the road rules, and do not engage in high risk driving, putting themselves, their passengers and other road users at risk.

New Graduated Licensing System (GLS) laws were introduced during 2007 and 2008 to reduce the crash risk of young novice drivers. An interim evaluation of the Graduated Licensing System commissioned by VicRoads<sup>1</sup> has shown a reduction in casualty crashes for first year drivers.

The TAC, along with its road safety and education partners, has developed a range of supporting programs and interventions to assist young people, their families and schools to develop safe driving and passenger behaviours.

These types of programs, to which most young people respond positively, often are rejected by atypical drivers such as the late Mr Johnstone. However, road safety agencies will continue to review research about effective interventions that lead to behaviour change. Road safety research, as well as research from other relevant fields, such as health promotion and injury and crime prevention will be monitored by the TAC and road safety agencies with the aim of reducing the outcomes of road trauma for Victorian families and communities.

### **Recommendations**

The Coroner has made five recommendations regarding the deaths of Anthony Iannetta, Benjamin Hall, William Te-Whare, Matthew Lister and Steven Johnstone.

Although the TAC has been nominated to address the third recommendation, relating to the Fit to Drive (F2D) program, the TAC has consulted with VicRoads and supports their position with regard to the first, second, fourth and fifth recommendations, and will continue to collaborate with VicRoads and other relevant road safety agencies to address road trauma.

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<sup>1</sup> Healy, D., Catchpole, J. & Harrison, W. (2012) *Victoria's Graduated Licensing System Evaluation Interim Report*, VicRoads Report, February 2012.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: VicRoads and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), in association with their other road safety education partners, undertake an evaluation of the Fit to Drive community road safety program for secondary school students to determine the success of the program in empowering participants to make safe decisions, modify their behaviour and reduce their crash risk.**

***This recommendation is accepted in principle. The TAC, together with VicRoads will undertake an evaluation of the Fit to Drive Program for secondary school students.***

The Fit to Drive (F2D) program has been operating in many Victorian schools and education settings for more than ten years. The program was established as a result of a young novice driver fatal crash on the Mornington Peninsula.

F2D aims to support students to develop strategies and decision making skills when faced with risky situations as a young driver or passenger of a young driver.

Over the last 10 years, F2D has evolved to incorporate and reflect best practice education and road safety principles. The TAC and its road safety education partners including VicRoads, Victoria Police, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the RACV have continued to support the program to meet best practice.

VicRoads is currently assisting and supporting the development of a new F2D curriculum. The updated curriculum draws on behaviour change principles that have been effective in other health promotion, injury prevention or crime prevention programs. The TAC has contributed to this development and, as announced in the first action plan of the new Victorian Road Safety Strategy launched on 1 March 2013, F2D has been identified as a key road safety education program. The TAC will provide funding over three years to make F2D available to all Victorian schools, commencing in 2013/14, including evaluation.

As part of this implementation, the TAC and VicRoads, with their road safety and education partners, and experts in youth and road safety psychology, will develop an evaluation framework. The TAC will provide funding in the current 2012/13 financial year for the development of the evaluation plan in line with the updated curriculum in support of the Coroner's recommendation.