



Department of Transport and Planning

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Your ref: COR 2020 001341

Our ref: LEX 12884

Kate Bryant
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

By email only: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au, team2@courts.vic.gov.au

Dear Registrar

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF TAKAMASA TAKEDA – RESPONSE TO CORONER'S RECOMMENDATION

We refer to your email of 12 May 2025 to the Department of Transport and Planning (Department) and Transport Accident Commission (TAC) regarding Coroner McGregor's Finding without inquest (Finding) concerning the death of Takamasa Takeda dated 9 May 2025.

The Department and the TAC extend their condolences to his family and friends. Every life lost on our roads is a tragedy and our hearts go out to those impacted by Takamasa's death.

The Department and the TAC have considered the findings and the recommendations made by Coroner McGregor. Our joint formal response to these is detailed within this letter.

The Coroner's recommendation

Pursuant to section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic), Coroner McGregor made the following recommendation in the Findings:

"I recommend that VicRoads and the Transport Accident Commission consider updating their public education materials in relation to cannabis use and driving to reflect the longer-term effects on driving risk beyond the immediate psychoactive phase."

The Department and TAC note the recommendation and are committed to supporting action to reduce harm from drug-driving and to ensure Victorian drivers are aware of the risks associated with drug-driving. The following details outline how existing activities have responded to the recommendation of the Coroner and outlines further action following the Coroner's findings.

Response to Recommendation

The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

The Department

In 2019, VicRoads was amalgamated into what is now the Department of Transport and Planning. Policy matters related to drug-driving are the responsibility of Road Safety Victoria within the Department. Road safety, including drug-driving, is a priority for the Victorian Government, and we are committed to reducing trauma on Victorian roads with the aim of achieving zero road fatalities by 2050. This is supported by our Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030, which aims to halve road deaths and significantly reduce serious injuries by 2030.

Department activity to educate and inform the Victorian Community of the risks associated with drug driving.

1. THC and driving

Driving while impaired including drug-driving under the influence of cannabis containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, remains a significant road safety concern. The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring the risk of harm on our roads from impaired driving is minimised. Under current presence-based drug-driving laws, any detectable amount of THC results in an offence. It is also a separate offence for any person to drive while impaired.

2. Transport Victoria website

Impairment from THC can result from recreational cannabis or prescribed medicinal cannabis. Information on both is available on the Transport Victoria website. This includes information regarding driving laws, how drugs affect driving ability and specifically how the impairing effects can last hours following consumption. The information can be found here <https://transport.vic.gov.au/road-rules-and-safety/algorithmic-driving/drugs-and-driving-laws>. The Department is committed to regularly reviewing public information and strengthen messages regarding longer-term impairing effects of THC.

3. Department research

As part of the 2024-25 budget, the Victorian Government announced \$4.9 million to conduct a closed-circuit track trial to investigate driver performance and impairment associated with prescribed medicinal cannabis containing THC. The outcomes of the trial will contribute to evidence to inform whether Victorians prescribed medicinal cannabis containing THC can safely operate a vehicle without comprising their own safety or that of other road users. The trial will identify the safeguards, processes and requirements necessary to inform the merits of drug-driving regulatory reform in Victoria.

Participant recruitment commenced on 28 October 2024, after the methodology and research protocols were thoroughly assessed. The first driving assessment of the trial occurred on 31 October 2024 at the METEC Driver Training facility in Bayswater.

4. Department health professional and patient resources

The Victorian Government has developed new resources about medicinal cannabis and driving to support prescribers of medicinal cannabis to manage and advise their patients with respect to driving. The resource was developed in consultation with a health professional expert advisory panel and focuses on road safety considerations as an important aspect of the clinical management process. It addresses how THC in medicinal cannabis affects driving performance, the relevant Victorian driving laws, and provides advice for talking to patients about driving. The section of the resource aimed at prescribing health professionals identifies risks related to driving and offers management options for prescribers to consider within their clinical decision-making process. It also includes a downloadable PDF fact sheet about driving risks for prescribers to give to patients if they are considering medicinal cannabis as a treatment option. The resources and further information can be found here: <https://transport.vic.gov.au/registration-and-licensing/licences/medical-conditions-and-reviews/medicinal-cannabis-and-driving-resources-for-health-professionals>.

The Department is currently implementing a communications and engagement plan, including a stakeholder information pack, to ensure that the health professional and patient resources reach the target audiences. An example of the Department's implementation activities for the 'Medicinal Cannabis and Driving Resource' was having a trade stand at the three-day Victorian General Practice Conference and Exhibition, which was attended by approximately 3000 GPs in July 2025.

Furthermore, the resources have been acknowledged as having national value by Austroads and are in the process of being adapted for a national audience so that conversations regarding driving and impairment are part of early considerations when considering prescribing medicinal cannabis. Adapting the resources for a national audience will also address the fact that a significant percentage of prescribing originates from interstate health professionals via online consultations, and will improve national practices as a result of Victoria's work.

5. Department media

The Department periodically receives media inquiries relating to medicinal cannabis and driving impairment. Examples of responses include:

- Continuing to work with road safety partners to look at all available evidence and data related to medicinal cannabis and impairment effects on driving behaviour to advise government on future recommendations.
- Medicinal cannabis is playing an increasing role as a therapeutic option for individuals with certain health conditions who feel they can drive safely without impairment – yet significant gaps remain in understanding THC's potential impairment on driving performance.
- From 1 March 2025, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria has the discretion on whether to cancel the licence of an individual convicted or found guilty of an offence involving THC, provided they are taking a legal medicinal cannabis product in accordance with a valid prescription. It will remain an offence for drivers to have THC in their system, and the change does not impact existing drug-driving laws.

The TAC

The TAC was established by the Transport Accident Act 1986 (the Act) to provide compensation to Victorians injured because of a transport accident, assist people to rehabilitate following an accident, and reduce the incidence of accidents on Victorian roads. Every year, the TAC provides over \$1.5 billion worth of services and compensation to

Victorians who have been injured as a result of a transport accident; and invests in infrastructure and public education to engage with Victorians about road safety and reduce road trauma. The TAC works with the Department and other Victorian government agencies as part of the Victorian Road Safety Partnership.

TAC activity to educate and inform the Victorian Community of the risks associated with drug driving.

A. TAC Website

The TAC's corporate website is currently undergoing a review. As part of this process, the Coroner's recommendations will be incorporated to raise awareness of the driving risks associated with cannabis use- including those that extend beyond the immediate psychoactive effects. In addition, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) is contributing to the development of an information package on the roadside drug testing program. The package aims to provide the public with accurate facts about drug driving and the associated crash risk. The updated information will be available on the corporate website within the next two months. Opportunities to extend public education materials and communications, including the development of a digital campaign are also being explored for application from 2026-27.

B. Vanessa's Place

The TAC engages with young drivers about road safety issues—including drink and drug driving—through face-to-face interactions at 'O' week events, festivals, and via online education and information provision. This content is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it reflects the most current information, helping young drivers make informed decisions. The Vanessa's Place program engages thousands of young drivers each year through a range of events and targeted activities. Longitudinal research conducted by Burnet Institute indicates that young people not only understand and recall the safe driving messages delivered through Vanessa's place but are also applying these messages to their driving behaviour.

C. Research

The TAC continues to fund, design, and deliver research projects aimed at strengthening the evidence base on the risks associated with drug-driving. Findings are shared with road safety partners, the education and health sectors, and the public to enhance broader understanding of drug-driving risks.

In 2024, the TAC partnered with Turning Point (a national addiction treatment, training and research centre) to conduct the largest qualitative study in Australia involving individuals who report drug driving. Insights gained from this study will continue to inform policy and service development, helping to address gaps in knowledge of this cohort through Turning Point and other alcohol and drug support agencies.

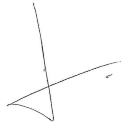
D. Partnerships with the Alcohol and Drug Sector

The TAC has intentionally established a strong working partnership with agencies in the alcohol and drug treatment and education sector to ensure that drug-driving messages are delivered to their clients alongside other harm minimisation strategies. This collaboration aims to increase awareness of the risks associated with drug-driving and reduce its occurrence. Turning Point, Mission Australia and Saints College, have partnered with the

TAC and DTP to offer expert advice and shared resources in order to strengthen the evidence base and improve road safety outcomes for their client groups.

We trust that you will find the above information valuable in providing a response to the recommendation following the death of Takamasa Takeda. If you have any queries regarding the above details, please do not hesitate to reach out via email to Marcelo Vidales – Executive Director of Road Safety Victoria on Marcelo.Vidales@transport.vic.gov.au, or Samantha Cockfield, Executive General Manager, Road Safety samantha_cockfield@tac.vic.gov.au or via 0418 316 749.

Yours sincerely



Jeroen Weimar
Secretary
Department of Transport and Planning



Tracey Slatter
Chief Executive Officer
Transport Accident Commission

Date: 21 August 2025