



Tarli Bogtstra

I was on a holiday with friends in the Northern Territory in June 2005 when the driver of our four-wheel drive lost control at high speed. I was in the back seat and thrown from the vehicle as it rolled multiple times, and later found about 20 metres away with the vehicle's dislodged roof on top of me. I was trapped for two hours.

Although I am writing this, the only information I have about the crash is what other people have told me. I lost about three years of my memory from around the time of the crash.

This is because I suffered a significant brain injury besides a neck and back injury. Other consequences included right eye damage, lost teeth and many scars. I spent four months in hospital and three years going through intensive rehabilitation.

I was 28 years old at the time and successful in my job as a psychologist, specifically a genetic counsellor at the Royal Children's Hospital, with dreams to go further in my career.

I was forced to change those dreams although my colleagues were amazingly supportive and able to create a new role for me once I was able to get back to work.

Doctors who treated me called me "a miracle lady" because they could not believe how far I was able to come. I tried to look at every day as a challenge and push myself to achieve what others thought was impossible: driving a car, running, travelling. I can do these things now.

I often think in terms of the old Tarli and the new Tarli, whom I have learnt to accept and make the best of. But as hard as it has been for me, the consequences for my family have been huge.

But I am also lucky in my life now having a gorgeous husband and two children, aged eight and six. They too are affected since I still have medical problems. My main one is fatigue and, since I can't do everything, I choose to devote my time to being the best mum I can be.

As I tell people when volunteering for Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV), the crash has had a dramatic impact on my life. But if my story can prevent road trauma from affecting just one other family, I will feel something positive has come from it. This is why campaigns such as **Shine a Light on Road Safety** are vital: to make people think when they are out on the roads. The worst *can* happen, so slow down.



SHINE A LIGHT ON ROAD SAFETY

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria's **Shine a Light on Road Safety** campaign is to raise awareness, to stop deaths and injuries on our roads and to raise funds to support those impacted by road trauma: #shinealightonroadsafety.

Friday 4 May motorists are asked to turn on headlights to remember those impacted by road trauma and show your commitment to road safety.

Sunday 6 May there is a community walk at Albert Park Lake to enable community participation in advocating for safer roads.

ILLUMINATIONS

Australian landmarks will be illuminated in yellow for road safety from Monday 30 April to Sunday 6 May; thanks to the support of key partners including the Victorian Government, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), VicRoads, Victoria Police and campaign sponsors.

KEY CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

- Road safety is everyone's responsibility
- Giving the community voice about road trauma
- Our counselling and support services are available free and unlimited to anyone impacted by road trauma.

OUR ORGANISATION

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation contributing to the safety and wellbeing of Victorian road users. We provide counselling and support to people impacted by road trauma, and address attitudes and behaviours of road users through education. We are committed to educating the community and raising public awareness about road trauma and how it affects people's lives; we do this in part by sharing personal stories about road trauma.