



Annual Report 2015–2016

Our Vision

To reduce the incidence
and impact of road trauma.

Our Purpose

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) is a not-for-profit organisation contributing to the safety and wellbeing of Victorian road users. We provide counselling and support to people affected by road trauma, and address attitudes and behaviours of road users through education.

Our History

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) was founded in 1994 by a small group of people whose lives had been directly impacted by road trauma. These people understood the need for a specialist service where support could be offered to those who, like them, were suffering because of the injury or loss of a loved one on the roads. They joined with professionals working in the area to provide counselling and support. From this humble beginning over 21 years ago, RTSSV has grown to offer state-wide counselling, support and education services to any Victorian affected by a road incident. RTSSV now comprises a team of staff and volunteers who provide support and education services to more than 4,000 people annually.

Our Values

Caring

We are committed to serving our clients with empathy and compassion.

Integrity

We display integrity, respect and dignity in all our dealings with clients, stakeholders and members of our workforce.

Quality

Our focus is on the people we serve, and we strive for excellence in service delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Accountability

We are accountable for our actions in working to deliver our services and our mission.

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Chairman's Report



In December 2015 we celebrated 21 years of service delivery, and I would like to acknowledge and commend our staff, volunteers and supporters on this achievement. On behalf of the Board, I extend our thanks to our people for more than two decades of tireless dedication in supporting us to achieve our mission. In working to reduce the incidence and impact of road trauma we rely on partnerships in many forms. To all our partners, whether they be employed by us, engaged with us through voluntary work, supportive of us through sponsorships and funding or participants in one of many RTSSV offerings, thank you. Your efforts are invaluable and, through them, we are making a difference to those affected by, and at risk of, road trauma.

RTSSV continues to extend its reach into the community. We engage more people through our counselling and education services than ever before. Our community road safety forums, education programs, counselling and support services, and our Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign are making us more accessible to the people who need us.

We are buoyed and encouraged by our partnerships with the Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, the Victorian Government, VicRoads and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria.

We are also thankful for our corporate partners who have shown confidence and trust in our work, including EastLink, AAMI, CityLink, Maurice Blackburn, Stillwell Motor Group, Shine Lawyers, Skills Training Australia, Narva and McColls Transport.

Our achievements over the past 12 months include:

- 1,535 counselling sessions delivered to people affected by road trauma
- Conducting our 15th Time for Remembering ceremony at Queen's Hall, Parliament House
- Persistent increase in referral rates for counselling
- 1,186 people attending our Road Trauma Awareness Seminars (RTAS)
- Diversifying our education programs, including the Accelerating Insight Program and Best Drive Ever program

- Introducing RTAS into more regional communities
- Strengthening partnerships with Victoria Police through the delivery of wellbeing seminars
- Delivery of community road safety forums in metropolitan and regional communities
- National delivery of the Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign.

This year we generated a \$8,696 surplus, which is attributable to strong management control, program diversity and effective community and corporate engagement strategies. Our balance sheet has strengthened and we have maintained a stable cash flow.

We thank our partners for their ongoing belief in the efficacy of our work. We are also fortunate to have the support of many individuals, road safety agencies and corporations, and we thank you for working with us for the benefit of all Victorian road users.

Justin Flynn
Chairman



Chief Executive's Report

The 2015-2016 financial year has been one of achievements and celebrations. In December 2015, we celebrated 21 years of supporting people affected by road trauma. It has been a remarkable and at times uncertain journey, but a journey that is non-negotiable given the insidious and devastating nature of road trauma in our community. It is something we can never become complacent about.

From RTSSV's beginnings in 1994, the organisation has grown to be resilient, expert, unique and relevant. To each of you who have helped us achieve this remarkable milestone, thank you!

Last year I stressed the importance of looking beyond the numbers, graphs and statistics, and recognising that each of these represents a very personal story of trauma and sometimes grief. However, this year, let us allow ourselves to acknowledge and celebrate the resilience of the human spirit. We see it every day in the generosity

and selflessness of the people who come to work, volunteer their time and partner with us to achieve our mission. We see it in our road safety partners, sponsors and communities as we continue together to demonstrate our ambitions for safer Victorian roads and, ultimately, zero deaths, injury and trauma.

In the meantime, we continue to grow and to extend our reach in the Victorian community. Last year we supported 533 people through the delivery of 1,535 counselling sessions, facilitated by an increase in referrals of 155 per cent from the year before. Through our Road Trauma Awareness Seminars with 1,186 participants, Community Road Safety Forums and youth-oriented programs we educated more than 2,000 people across the state. Our peer support programs, Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign and Time for Remembering ceremony are successfully engaging communities across Victoria.

These are remarkable achievements for an organisation whose workforce is largely voluntary.

We couldn't have achieved this and worked so effectively without the support and generosity of our partners. In particular, we acknowledge and thank the Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and VicRoads for their enduring partnerships and work in advancing road safety.

I also acknowledge and thank our people – our staff, volunteers and Board – for their skills, dedication and expertise. To our clients, both in counselling and education, we thank you for entrusting us with your experiences and stories. I am optimistic that together we can continue to make a difference.

Cameron Sinclair
CEO

21 years



Jeanette Suhr on the steps of Parliament House, Time for Remembering 2009.

“It was about me needing hope that I was going to survive, and to do that I needed to work with people who had been through something similar.”

The organisation’s poignant 21st birthday was celebrated at our Blackburn headquarters in the afternoon of Friday 27 November 2015.

RTSSV chief executive Cameron Sinclair and founding life member Jeanette Suhr OAM spoke to a big group of supporters at the Whitehorse Road offices about the achievements of our organisation.

Cameron said a workplace called to engage daily with the tragedies of people affected by the road toll needed to be able to stop and recognise its own life story.

With the help of Wendy Bowler, Irene Harrington, Jeanette Suhr and Jess Hofto, we produced a booklet with interviews and

stories about the founding of the organisation and its growth over the past 21 years.

The state’s road trauma support organisation started in 1994 with a meeting in Jeanette’s home and a training course later that year for 22 volunteer “befrienders” to work as peer-based counsellors.

Today RTSSV offers more than 1,500 free professional counselling sessions a year plus road trauma education seminars at 22 locations state-wide. Government funding from the Transport Accident Commission covers about half its costs and the organisation relies on community support to continue its work.

Jeanette, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2007 for setting up what was then called the Road Trauma Support Team, said the difficult experience of losing her 19-year-old daughter Tanya in a road crash in December 1991 inspired all the work she had done.

She and husband Greg had felt a widening gap between the ongoing nature of their personal trauma and grief, and the level of understanding and support from the world beyond.

“It was about me needing hope that I was going to survive, and to do that I needed to work with people who had been through something similar,” Jeanette explained.

Counselling and Support Services

Why do people need counselling?

The counselling team at RTSSV acknowledges that not everyone needs counselling after a serious road incident, nor necessarily after they have lost a loved one: our aim is to offer people a choice so they can decide what level of service they need. The counselling team respects the independence and resilience of people, and we recognise that people have different preferences for the way they access services. Our counselling service aims to work in collaboration and partnership with clients.

Intakes and Referrals

2015-2016 the counselling team had a busy year. The annual referral numbers reached an all-time high of 2,059, increasing by 155 per cent. The counselling team consolidated the intake and referral management system, which provided valuable data for reporting purposes and improved tracking aspects of our client base and service delivery.

Staffing

RTSSV understands the potential impact that constant exposure to traumatic content can have on the counselling staff. The stories that our counsellors are exposed to can place them at risk of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, and it is imperative they have the opportunity to rest and recover. Over the past 12 months, some of our counsellors have had the opportunity to take extended leave. Although this created some challenges due to the high demand for our service, we encourage these leave periods for the overall health and wellbeing of our staff.

Maree Burns resigned from her role as counsellor in April 2016. She worked with RTSSV for eight years. Maree was a valued and highly respected team member, as well as a warm and caring friend to staff within RTSSV. Her contributions to the counselling service were instrumental in shaping many aspects of the programs we deliver, and she was largely responsible for planning and facilitating the family Recharge Days that were held in 2013 and 2014. The farewell messages Maree received from many of her clients were a testament to her skills in the areas of trauma and grief, and her ability to create a warm and safe environment for people.

The position left vacant by Maree has been filled by Connie Ogan. Connie's training and experience will make her a valuable asset to the team, and she has adjusted quickly to the role.

Counselling services

RTSSV offers a state-wide service, with counsellors based in Blackburn, Geelong and Niddrie.

The counselling positions located in the Blackburn office are all part-time and equate to nine days per week and a full-time manager. Maria Smart works half a day a week in Niddrie in office space kindly donated by CoHealth, providing for face-to-face appointments for clients in the northern suburbs. The position in Geelong is one day per week.

Although much of the team's work is dedicated to direct counselling, either by telephone or face-to-face, counsellors are also engaged in our monthly Art Therapy Group and in networking and capacity building. Approximately 70 per cent of counselling is conducted on the telephone.

Networking and Professional Development

The counselling team recognises the importance of attending regular supervision and training as an ethical imperative. Supervision and training assists our counsellors to integrate contemporary trauma, grief and bereavement research and theory into their practice, and provides opportunities to meet with others working in the field. Professional development and networking opportunities have included:

- Group supervision sessions with Rob Gordon, clinical and consultant psychologist
- Dr Norman Doidge's 'The brain's way of healing' workshop
- Committee membership and participation in the Loss and Grief Practitioners' Association
- Training with the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement.

Presentations and Stakeholder Engagement

During 2015-2016 we conducted a range of training sessions and presentations, which included:

Victoria Police

Presenting to the Road Policing Investigators' Course (RPIC) each month.

We would like to acknowledge the continued involvement of the volunteers who speak at the course, particularly Christine Latimer.

The feedback from the sessions reflects the value of having volunteer speakers tell their story.

"It was an eye opener. There is a lot I will take back into my professional and personal life. Thanks for educating us on the work within your organisation." (RPIC participant, July 2015)

RTSSV also was approached to develop and deliver eight workplace wellbeing seminars with members of the State Highway Patrol.

The emphasis on member wellbeing has become a priority for Victoria Police management due to the increasing numbers of officers being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and other long-term mental health issues. The sessions have generally received positive feedback.

Australian Funeral Directors' Association

Delivering three information sessions about RTSSV and vicarious trauma to the association's members in Echuca, Gippsland and Geelong. This was a great opportunity to educate more people about our service and develop positive networking relationships.

Transport Accident Commission

Presenting to members of the TAC's First Service Team and customer service officers. The presentations provided an overview of our service, discussed referral pathways and highlighted some of the key issues that clients discuss in counselling about their experiences with the TAC. Volunteer Christine Latimer spoke about her personal story and her involvement with the TAC.

Feedback from the sessions was very positive because many of the issues raised aligned with the TAC's goals for client service delivery.

VicRoads

Participating in both the steering committee and the working party initiated by VicRoads as part of a community consultation process to review its roadside memorial policies. The outcomes of the consultation will help set guidelines for bereaved families and friends.

Restorative Justice for Serious Driving Offences

Consulting on a pilot program, which involved meeting members of the Centre for Innovative Justice and RMIT University, and participating in discussions with people directly impacted by road trauma.

Evaluations

Counselling evaluations

Client evaluations were sent out in September 2015 and July 2016. The evaluations focused on different aspects of a client's engagement with RTSSV, including satisfaction with the arrangement of appointments and accessibility to the service; perception of the therapeutic relationship and the skills and expertise of the counsellor; and, most importantly an assessment of whether a client believed he or she had benefited from contact with RTSSV.

The feedback from clients was overwhelmingly positive, indicating that clients felt the counselling service had directly addressed the impact of road trauma on their lives.

"Following the incident, I felt helpless and inadequate. The sessions with the counsellor helped me view the situation differently and gave me excellent coping mechanisms." (Unknown, September 2015)

Art Therapy Group

The regular participants in the Art Therapy Group completed an evaluation in July 2016. One hundred per cent of the respondents indicated that the art therapy sessions had either met or exceeded their expectations.

VORTS

Victims Of Road Trauma Support

VORTS came about after a meeting between people who had been touched by road trauma in Melbourne's western suburbs. After sharing stories we realised there was a need for a support network for victims, survivors, families, friends and all those connected to come together. VORTS consists of both online members and those who attend our monthly meetings. Together we support each other over a coffee and light refreshments. It is open to any person touched by road trauma and we welcome everyone. We are not counsellors, but a group of friends who understand each other. We can be found on Facebook at the VORTS page.

Narelle Hunter

A Final Word

"I feel like an alien. I have to drum up the enthusiasm to open cards, read letters, express appreciation. Am I still a member of the human race?" (Dr Christine Durham, *Unlocking My Brain*, 2014)

The process of recovery and inner healing following a road incident can be isolating and terrifying. RTSSV's counselling team aims to provide support to people who are often grappling with devastating tragedies. People allow us to enter their lives when they are faced with emotions often too frightening to verbalise. Initial assessments are made so that interventions can be provided for those individuals who may have difficulty recovering on their own.

The counselling team would like to acknowledge the courage of our clients and the trust that they place in us. RTSSV is privileged to have counsellors who believe in the work they are doing and genuinely want to make a difference to people's lives.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the entire RTSSV team including the CEO and Board. We look forward to the future.

Bernadette Nugent
Manager Counselling and Support Services

Contact types

Telephone **1181**
Face-to-face **354**
Other **73**

Total contacts
1613

Number of clients
533

Locations
Regional **35%**
Metro **65%**

Referrals
2059 ↑155%

Lynne Irving

Counselling Staff



"I feel honoured to have been able to work with some extraordinary people, to share in the stories of our clients and be part of creating a place that, I hope, provides some 'tender shelter'."

A bereft mother trying to piece together a life without her beloved daughter; a wife wondering what the future holds as she sits with her husband who has sustained serious head injuries; a witness to a crash who was there as someone took their last breath – these are just a few of the stories we hear in our work as counsellors for Road Trauma Support Services Victoria.

Many people wonder how we can bear to sit with suffering people whose lives have been so tragically changed. Having worked here for almost nine years the hope, resilience and remarkable capacity for the human spirit to endure has inspired and sustained me, and helped me grow as a person over this time.

Many years ago when I was training to become a Lifeline counsellor, I remember one module highlighting the fact that what often underpins people's problems are loss and grief. This lesson resonated with me and, after completing studies at Swinburne University, I continued to deepen my understanding of loss and grief via a course and internship at the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement.

My journey with Road Trauma Support Services began by filling in as a locum. The

position became permanent and my learning began again, continuing all these years later. Early on I remember having the good fortune to sit beside Jeanette Suhr, one of the incredible founding members of this organisation, at the last Rose Garden weekend. I got to know Jeanette's story – the tragic loss of her daughter Tanya, which she had grappled with by pouring energy into creating an organisation to support others affected by road trauma. I marvelled then, and continue to marvel, at Jeanette's warmth, generosity of spirit and good humour, which she managed to nurture despite her broken heart. This experience provided the platform of openness and non-judgement that continues today through the education and counselling programs run by the dedicated staff here. It is this quality of spirit that I have the privilege of witnessing again and again within the people I work with as clients and colleagues.

Trauma, grief and loss strip away all our normal defences. They expose our humanity – our frailties and vulnerabilities – but also our strength and capacity to endure and sometimes transform ourselves. I recently read the following inspirational words by John O'Donohue in his book *Celtic Blessings*:

"May you find tender shelter and healing blessings whenever you are called to stand in the place of pain."

"May you know that absence is full of tender presence and that nothing is ever lost or forgotten."

"May you be blessed with good friends and may you learn to be a good friend to yourself."

I feel honoured to have been able to work with some extraordinary people, to share in the stories of our clients and be part of creating a place that, I hope, provides some 'tender shelter'.

Elva and Vern Board

Counselling Clients

“Vern and I want to tell people to make the right choices when getting behind the wheel of a car. Stay safe and don't become a statistic of the road toll.”



The day of 23 October 2011 brought a lovely sunny afternoon, and my husband Vern and I decided to pick up my elderly mum and take her for a drive in the Dandenongs. But our outing ended in tragedy, a tragedy that has overflowed into the rest of our life, and into the lives of many others who were affected that day.

Just before we reached our destination Vern fell asleep at the wheel and veered onto the wrong side of the road, colliding with another car. My mother was killed instantly and I was seriously injured. Two occupants in the other car were also badly injured. Vern has since been diagnosed with severe sleep apnoea, which was possibly a contributing factor in the crash.

After the collision my first instinct was to get out of the car and see if my mum was alright, but I couldn't move or feel a thing. I kept asking how my mum was and then heard someone say, "She's gone." And then the pain hit me, excruciating pain. I had multiple injuries and would be in hospital for quite a while, and it would take me a very long time to recover.

This road crash, with the loss of my mother and people injured, was so devastating that it changed Vern's life completely. He suffered with anxiety and guilt; the enormity of it all felt too much to bear. He had many sleepless nights, walking the floor until early morning.

Vern was subsequently charged by the police and, shockingly for us, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment with 18 months before parole. This would have to have been Vern's darkest moment: going to prison. He was 72 years old, and separated from me just when I needed him at home because of the injuries I had sustained.

I could not believe this was happening to us. I was crushed, bewildered and I cried every day for months thinking "It's not fair, he's a good man." The pain – physically, mentally and emotionally – sometimes felt too much to cope with. Each day I would struggle to do simple things around the house like hanging the clothes on the line as physically I couldn't do it.

For a long time I was unable to drive. When I did try to drive I felt the panic rising. Everything had caught up with me: the crash, mum dying, my recovery, my husband in prison and travelling to visit him. But through perseverance and endurance – and thanks to my weekly counselling sessions through RTSSV. I managed to overcome my terrible fear of driving.

I appreciate the tremendous help that RTSSV has provided, including very supportive counselling for me over a long period. Each week Lynne Irving would ring me and together we would journey through my struggles and emotional trauma.

We would talk through the grief and loss that I was experiencing, including my loss of energy to be able to do things the way I used to, and the loss of my husband to prison. She would help me bring things back into perspective, and I am very thankful to her. I was determined to not just survive, but to come through this as a better, wiser person.

Recently we have become involved as speakers at the RTAS seminars. I experienced the tremendous support that RTSSV gave me and now want to assist in changing the attitudes of road users by volunteering at these seminars.

We want to help people become aware that our crash – the death and injuries that occurred resulting in a driver going to prison because of driving when tired and falling asleep at the wheel – could equally happen to anyone else who speeds, or drives while influenced by alcohol or drugs, or who uses a mobile phone. The potential for something tragic to happen on the roads is there.

Vern and I want to tell people to make the right choices when getting behind the wheel of a car. Stay safe and don't become a statistic of the road toll.

The Art Therapy Group



Since 2012 RTSSV has offered clients the opportunity to participate in Art Therapy Group sessions as part of the recovery process after road trauma. Financial donations have allowed these sessions to continue this financial year on a monthly basis at the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre. The art works of the participants adorn the walls at the organisation's Blackburn head office, inspiring those who visit and affirming the place of creativity in healing after traumatic experiences.

In facilitating the monthly art therapy sessions I encourage participants to relax in the safe and peaceful environment and to explore various creative processes. No prior experience of arts or crafts is assumed, and participants are encouraged to use the materials and instructions provided to just express themselves.

In 2015 participants created their own mosaic pieces – including planter boxes, wall tiles, mosaic rocks and trinket boxes – to keep. The process of breaking the tiles and then reassembling the pieces to form a new design poignantly resembled the impact of trauma in their lives. Participants were also encouraged to contribute mosaic hearts and circles for a triptych to be displayed at the Time for Remembering service last November.

The broken tile pieces were glued together, with the group acknowledging the beauty of the finished works. In discussion, participants agreed that the pieces represented “broken lives” but also “shards of hope”, words which became the title of the triptych. The creative process helped people to see the potential for turning points to occur in their own lives following their experiences of road trauma.

For the 2016 Time for Remembering this November the Art Therapy Group has decided to explore a floral garden theme using felting processes to create flowers and a felted mural. The idea is that the floral display will symbolise dedication, love, devotion and honour. Creative techniques of needle felting and wet felting have been explored, with flower brooches being made to give as gifts to people attending the ceremony. The creative process of pulling wool fibres apart and bringing them together again helps participants to observe a material process that mirrors the internal healing process after trauma.

The art sessions allow people to share their stories within a setting of focused empathy. In relaxed conversation, over cups of tea and often slices of cake, myriad points of connection are made.

Participants acknowledge anniversaries, and share ideas for rituals and ways of remembering and honouring their losses. There can be deep moments of stillness as people allow themselves time to sit with their feelings of loss and recovery. As people are at various stages of recovery, they can observe the many aspects of traumatic loss, and the feelings associated with the possibilities for recovery and renewal. Sometimes the energy of post-traumatic growth will lead participants to create projects outside of the group, providing the benefits of ongoing healing and recovery.

Group art therapy contributes to recovery from trauma by:

- Allowing individuals to acquire and build skills to allow for safe expression of thoughts and feelings related to grief and loss
- Providing art materials and instructions that allow for the expression of an individual's grief process
- Contributing to the development of a more integrated sense of self with increased self-awareness and acceptance.

Barbara Joyce
Art Therapist



Education Services

I would like to say a huge thank you to the education team, which is made up of casual regional coordinators, group facilitators, volunteer speakers and emergency service speakers. Our volunteers share their personal experiences of road trauma because they want to make a difference to others. They typically say of their volunteer work: "It gives me an opportunity to talk about what happened in a way that means something"; "It provides me with hope"; and "It helps me to heal." Our volunteers also assist the TAC and Victoria Police in their campaigns and strategic directions towards reinforcing and personalising road safety messages for the wider community. We have a diverse team of group facilitators from backgrounds in both education and the social sciences, and they bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the organisation.

A special highlight this year was the presentation of the 'Enhancing offender programs to address recidivism' research paper to the International Road Safety Conference at the Gold Coast. Thanks go to Belinda Clark, Jennie Oxley and Steve O'Herna for conducting the research. The paper was peer-reviewed and the results were shared at a motor-vehicle-offending community forum in the Eastern Region. Further key initiatives have included our work with the Victorian Police Strategic Division to develop a program for low-level speed, now awaiting funds for the evaluation stage, and the provision of support to young people to develop road safety education programs that are meaningful to them.

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

I would like to stress something that becomes more and more apparent as we deliver our education programs about safe driver behaviour: the need to involve young people in the decisions that affect them. Meaningful youth engagement views young people as equal partners with adults in the decision-making process. With this in mind, RTSSV strives to provide programs and activities that are developed with youth, not just for youth.

RTSSV understands that young people typically gain information and form ideas in association with their peers, so it makes sense to encourage the young participants in our programs to view themselves as peer educators and to learn from each other. A number of things happen when we try to help young people focus on their strengths rather than on their 'problem' behaviour. As peer-helpers and educators

themselves, youth are empowered; they are seen as credible and positive role models; they learn in the process of helping others; new skills are learnt and accurate information is given. Overall this approach encourages active participation by youth in our programs.

As part of our work in this area we have supported Staughton College's senior VCAL class. Students worked on advertisements aimed at young people focussing on the risks of driving at speed, mobile phone use while driving, drug and alcohol use, and generally unsafe behaviour behind the wheel. Students first surveyed their peers at the college from years 9 through to 12 to identify the relevant themes, while RTSSV organised staff from VicRoads, trauma workers and personal survivors to help with the school's program.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Traffic Offenders

RTSSV programs for traffic offenders use a similar model of delivery: small group, discussion-based, and involving volunteers personally impacted by road trauma. The programs give participants an opportunity to look at their behaviour in a way that has them learning from each other, to be better informed on the reasoning behind current practices and laws, and to see the impact their behaviour is having on themselves and those surrounding them.

Drive To Learn (DTL)

Drive To Learn aims to educate young traffic offenders about the implications of their behaviour in contributing to road trauma, criminal records and associated life outcomes. The DTL is a three-hour educational program that targets young people aged 14-17 (pre-licensing) who are facing or have been charged with traffic-related offences.

It is based on restorative justice principles and employs a cognitive behavioural approach using volunteer speakers with personal experiences of trauma as well as presenters from the emergency services sector.

Road Trauma Awareness Seminars (RTAS)

The RTAS program has been operating across Victoria since 2004, forming part of a disciplinary measure which includes the seminar.

Together with Victoria Police, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and

Community Corrections we are making a difference to many traffic offenders. The participant feedback and police region checks on recidivism suggest we can be hopeful of cultural change over time.

Any traffic offender for any traffic offence can attend the RTAS program.

- Traffic offenders can be referred as part of a police cautionary process, as a court ordered sanction as part of sentencing, or through a lawyer or solicitor
- All traffic offenders involve themselves in discussions and activities and need to own their traffic-offending behaviour
- All participants share their offending behaviour in a small group, working through what has happened and planning for a change that is achievable
- This financial year we delivered 178 RTAS programs to 1,186 traffic offenders
- RTAS was delivered in 22 venues with the addition of Swan Hill, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Seymour and Shepparton this financial year
- Males make up 84 per cent of all participants. The 15-to-30-year age category accounts for 45 per cent of all participants
- Most referred offences: 472 people with driving disqualified, driving while licence suspended or unlicensed; 434 people with dangerous or careless driving; 356 people for drink driving
- When asked how many times participants have offended; 26 per cent 1 time; 17 per cent 2 times; 16 per cent 3 times; 12 per cent 10 or more times
- 72 per cent of the participants say they drive on a daily basis
- Our group facilitators have been reporting that many participants who reoffend will be facing prison time due to their offending behaviour
- Many participants have multiple offences and magistrates are referring reoffenders to more than one program. For example, many drink drivers are being referred to RTAS and the mandated Drink Drive Program. Our facilitators are reporting back that this appears to be of value as participants are stating that the Drink Drive Program shows them 'how much not to drink' and RTAS shows them 'why not'
- When asked if what they heard and learnt at the seminar might change their current driving behaviours, 95 per cent of participants report yes. Some comments on how they might do this include:

Education services cont.

"Knowing the ripple effect and how much any road trauma incidents can effect so many people, I don't want to add to the statistics in a huge way."

"My driving will be safer, more aware and respectful towards other road users and people in general!"

When asked if there will be anything that will stop them making positive changes to their driving behaviour, 78 per cent said nothing would get in the way of changing their behaviour. Some comments about what might get in the way and how they would deal with it include:

"Underlying issues that have led to grief, low self-esteem and anger."

"I think my anxiety/agitation affects my driving behaviour."

RTAS can be an opportunity for participants to identify the precursors to offending, to look at what can be done and where to get support.

Accelerated Insight Program (AIP)

This program recognises that a different intrinsic motivator is required for recidivist offenders for whom obtaining a licence and vehicle may not be paramount. Often the motive to avoid further punishment or judicial involvement is the main factor in encouraging participation.

The program is funded by Corrections Victoria. Participants are referred to RTSSV as part of the Community Based Order treatment pathway to address risk factors identified for driving offences, or as a direct referral from the court.

The AIP aims to positively change the behaviours of participants – those identified for repeatedly committing motor vehicle thefts, substance-affected driving, driving in a dangerous manner and unlicensed driving offences – by way of a longer program combined with tasks to be completed before, during and after.

- 67 per cent of participants have other offences not related to driving
- 35 per cent have offended with traffic offences at least three times
- 33 per cent are unemployed
- 34 per cent are tradespeople.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

We have continued to work with our emergency services partners. We understand that attending serious crashes in the line of work can have different impacts on members and that they can get hurt themselves. We have given presentations to MFB, CFA and SES, and in particular to their peer supporters.

Victoria Police – Road Policing Investigators' Course

RTSSV has been involved in this program for road police since its inception. In our session we promote the services we offer so police know they can refer people to counselling and to our traffic offending programs if necessary.

We explain how road trauma can impact people, and suggest ways to help at the scene of a crash and during the investigation, including giving death notifications. We also discuss how police can look after themselves. Feedback has continued to be rated at a high level for overall quality of the program. Some comments have been:

"Excellent presentation. Fantastic mix of information, videos and real life road trauma examples."

"Surprisingly open and factual. Well related to policing. Gained greater understanding of impact on family/victims."

Police workplace wellbeing sessions

Anecdotal evidence and formal research have suggested that road policing can lead to PTSD, which can be carried into retirement. We wanted to assist police in their wellbeing and to look at ways they could prevent and manage workplace burnout, stress, and vicarious trauma.

During 2015-2016 we facilitated eight sessions for State Highway Patrol Units and also presented to the Macedon Ranges and Casey/Dandenong Highway Patrols. A total of 83 members have so far been involved and the evaluations have shown our sessions to be worthwhile to them both at a personal and professional level.

This session of four hours gives members some time to reflect and learn, and an opportunity to strengthen their peer-support system.

"I personally got a lot out of the day. It gave me some strategies I can use in the workplace, not just at road trauma events."

"I am more aware of triggers and signs of stress, and how to handle it."

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE GROUPS

This financial year we have presented to various community groups to spread our message about the need for safety on the roads – to make people aware that it only takes a split second for a crash to happen and for lives to be totally changed. We have spoken to seven community forums or expos, 12 youth or school groups, and three workplaces to highlight driver safety.

HVP Plantations

This large private timber plantation company decided to implement a change to its mobile-phone-use policy, banning the use of the hands-free capability in company motor vehicles. RTSSV was engaged to assist with the roll-out of the policy and provide an overall look at road safety with a focus on distractions, particularly mobile-phone use while driving.

"Vision is the most important sense for safe driving. Yet, drivers using hands-free phones (and those using handheld phones) have a tendency to 'look at' but not 'see' objects," (Understanding the distracted brain, National Safety Council.) RTSSV commends the management of HPV Plantations for being proactive in the road safety area.

The RTSSV session delivered as part of the policy change was well received, including comments such as:

"The content was good; it has inspired me to keep my speed down when driving. I still think a lot of people out there will not stop using their mobile phones until signal-scrambling devices become mandatory in vehicles."

"Excellent session. Presentation hit home with both speakers providing emotional and hard-hitting facts. I have thought about this presentation each time I've driven since."

Chris Harrison
Manager Education Services



Lorraine Yeomans

Education Staff

“Our volunteers are the back-bone of our education programs, and I am in awe of their dedication.”

Like too many Victorians I have witnessed the devastation of road trauma, which is why I jumped at the chance to work with RTSSV when the opportunity arose in early 2013. I have found this work to be rewarding, interesting and, at times, challenging. In particular, it is the dedication and passion of the volunteers – and seeing the positive impact that their stories can have on people’s lives – that has made me so proud of the organisation.

My role as coordinator for the Grampians region has involved building relationships with organisations to raise awareness about road trauma. We have enjoyed strong support from the Magistrate’s Court, Victoria Police and Highway Patrol, and from the emergency services in the area. Local media outlets have also been very willing to promote our work.

Since 2014 we have held an annual Ballarat Road Safety Forum with Victoria Police. Initially we targeted this forum at young people: learner drivers and young people preparing to learn to drive. We were

finalists in the Victorian Regional Achievement and Community Awards in 2014 in recognition of our contribution to road safety. This year we also organised a forum for older drivers, which was well received.

In 2016 the Ballarat community saw the Town Hall in Sturt Street and the Ballarat Fire Brigade building illuminated for Shine a Light on Road Safety, and we received great media coverage of the campaign. Hopefully the 2017 event will be bigger and brighter.

Over the past three and a half years I have facilitated education sessions in Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Werribee and Melton. Road Trauma Awareness Seminars are held in Ballarat on a monthly basis while the Accelerated Insight Program is delivered to Community Corrections clients on a regular basis.

I am always heartened by the impact the education sessions have on most people. Often participants will swagger into a

session but then confess to never having thought about the consequences of their driving behaviour and the impact on other people. To see the change in both their body and oral language during the session is a major source of satisfaction.

It is the stories from the volunteers that have the greatest impact by far. Our volunteers are the back-bone of our education programs, and I am in awe of their dedication to the cause of saving lives on our roads.

My work with the organisation has provided a rewarding transition into retirement, and I am now looking forward to enjoying life as a full-time retired person after 50 years in the workforce. I will not forget my time with RTSSV nor the many courageous and generous people whom I have met.

Deon Cameron

Education Staff

“There is a culture of complacency and flippancy when it comes to road safety.”



I began work as an facilitator at the end of last year when Andrina Mitchell passed on the torch to me. Before this, in June 2015, I became a trainer for VicRoads in delivering its L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program to volunteers interested in becoming driver mentors. I was employed to coordinate the L2P Program in the Warrnambool and Moyne local government areas.

When Andrina approached me to consider delivering the Road Trauma Awareness Seminars in the Warrnambool area, I thought it would be a great opportunity to expand on the road safety message.

For almost eight years I had worked as a case manager for Western District Employment Access in disability employment services. During this time I assisted many people with disabilities to prepare for, start and sustain employment. Numerous clients had injuries and mental health issues related to road trauma, as well as reduced access to transport due to the loss of their licences.

I have seen the effects of road trauma in many forms. However, if someone had told me 18 months ago that I'd be working in services relating to road safety, I would probably not have believed them.

Being able to help RTSSV send out the very important message about people needing to make safer decisions on the roads has further opened my eyes. There is a culture of complacency and flippancy when it comes to road safety, and too many irresponsible drivers on our roads.

The organisation's work provides a valuable platform for people touched by road trauma to share their experiences and try to change the attitudes of road users. We all need to encourage safe driving practices in people from a very young age, from before they learn to drive. Further, if we are on the wrong track with our own driving actions, we need to be aware that they will be absorbed in turn by our children – and that we need to make changes.

Many members of the community still think that risky drivers are in the minority, without understanding that the choices and actions they make have the potential to affect a far greater number of people. We all need to be proactive, not just reactive, on our roads.

Glenn Dunn

Volunteer Story



“For most people, driving is something they do in between other activities in life. People rush from one place to another with the result that not enough attention is paid to the actual act of driving.”

I am a leading senior constable and have been with Victoria Police for nearly 15 years. I identified early in my career that my main interest in policing was in trying to help reduce the amount of road trauma in the community. For the past six years I have been performing road-policing duties with the Casey and Cardinia highway patrols in Melbourne’s south east.

I was inspired to become involved with Road Trauma Support Services Victoria after hearing a presentation by Chris Harrison at a training course. I contacted the organisation, and since February 2016 have been presenting the emergency services component of the seminars at Narre Warren.

At work my daily duties include patrolling the roads and highways to provide a visible police presence and to encourage motorists to comply with the road rules, with the aim that eventually every journey can be a safe one.

When I do detect motorists who are not complying with the road rules, I intercept them and encourage them to modify their driving habits. I treat every intercept as an opportunity to educate the driver that while driving is not an overly difficult task, it has the potential to be a very dangerous one; that every time he or she is driving there is a risk of being involved in a collision.

I have intercepted many motorists who engage in intentionally high-risk driving behaviour such as driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, doing burnouts, travelling at excessive speeds, and using a mobile phone while driving. All these people have had the attitude that it is OK to drive this way and to see what they can get away with. The mindset that you are unlucky if you get caught by police is obviously an immature and irresponsible one.

At the Road Trauma Awareness Seminars I gain great satisfaction from watching participants have moments of awakening. As the facilitators assist them to take responsibility for their prior actions on the roads, and to realise that their driving could have caused pain and suffering to other people, you can see them start to ‘get it’.

Over the years of performing policing duties I have had many insights into how people use the roads. One of these is that, for most people, driving is something they do in between other activities in life. People rush from one place to another with the result that not enough attention is paid to the actual act of driving.

When I present at the seminars my message to participants is quite simple: “Drive in a manner that will help get you from point A to point B safely and help you to avoid the sudden stop!”

I usually share with the participants my A, B, C and D of driving:

- A Drive with Awareness – pay attention!
- B Don’t forget to Breathe! Take a deep breath from time to time
- C Concentrate on your driving and don’t allow yourself to be distracted
- D Realise that every road user has a duty of care to every other road user.

If we can encourage more motorists through education programs such as the ones run by RTSSV to apply this approach to driving – to help motorists take responsibility for their actions and get them to take their duty of care seriously – then I believe we can go a long way towards reducing the amount of senseless road trauma and achieving the ultimate goal of zero injuries and fatalities.

Volunteer Services



“The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.”

The key to RTSSV's success over the past year – as in the previous 20 years – is the contribution of its volunteers. Volunteering is the lifeblood of our organisation and, quite simply, RTSSV would cease to exist without this commitment and generosity. Our volunteers are the most important resource.

Our volunteers give generously of their time and experience for the sense of purpose it provides and to make a difference, in the hope that one more family will be spared the impact of road trauma.

The majority of work done by volunteers in supporting RTSSV's mission is through speaking personally about how road trauma has impacted their lives. Their stories provide a perspective that the group facilitators or road trauma facts and figures could not achieve.

Volunteer services also extend to administrative support, fundraising, marketing and counselling, as well as governance as Board members.

HIGHLIGHTS

- RTSSV had the invaluable support of 135 volunteers during the year
- 5,000 hours of service was contributed equating to more than \$150,000 in financial terms
- 70 per cent of volunteers engaged in voluntary speaking engagements, with the main purpose of getting the road safety message into the community and helping to save lives
- Recognition of our volunteers' generous contribution in National Volunteer Week, including acknowledgement at regional and metropolitan events.

INITIATIVES

- A focus on ongoing training, development and support for volunteers; exploring methods of engaging the community and keeping well informed of relevant research and trends in road safety
- Continual recruitment of new volunteers across the state. This enables us to provide additional support in areas of demand and provide relief and rotation opportunities for existing volunteers

- Implementation of a Volunteer Management Database, which will create an efficient communication and management resource.

We look forward to the coming year with a great sense of confidence and pride that what we do as an organisation is worthwhile, and is making a real difference to Victorian communities. We commend all of our volunteers and emergency service workers for their personal commitment, and reiterate our ongoing support to those directly impacted by road trauma as they deal with their own unique journey.

Brenda Wathall
Office Manager



Kat Kranz

Volunteer Story

“It’s become personal – and that’s what helps others to change their thinking and driving, isn’t it?”



I am a volunteer for RTSSV in the Mildura area. I was involved in a serious car crash in 2011 leaving me with life-changing injuries. Once every two months I present my story to Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) participants, and on occasions I speak to the media to help promote safe driving and road trauma awareness.

In my story I make it clear that I do not remember the night of my crash, only what I woke up to. By spending time with the RTAS participants and letting them get to know me, I can see them begin to realise that they are like me. An accident can happen to anyone; good people as well as irresponsible people. Just a moment of not paying attention while driving can come with a really high price and terrible consequences.

I go home from RTAS hoping that I have been able to change at least one person’s view. Recently I got a message on social media from a person who’d participated in a session. He said that because of my story, he had never hooned again.

Getting the feedback that what I do is really helping to reduce road crashes is awesome. Since I have had my car crash and been involved with RTSSV, I’ve made a point of reminding friends and family of the importance of road safety. It’s become personal – and that’s what helps others to change their thinking and driving, isn’t it?

Margaret Millington

Volunteer Story



Photo used courtesy of YOURS Magazine

“None of us are immune from road trauma. We all need to slow down, be patient and show respect for all others on the roads.”

My daughter Sallie and I were invited to be volunteers for Road Trauma Support Services Victoria in the Grampian region, following the death of my 34-year-old son Simon in a single-car crash in 2010. I also lost a second son, Daniel, at age 18 in a motor bike crash. I felt that, if we shared our experiences, we might prevent other families from having to suffer the loss of loved ones.

My audiences have included men, women, and young and old alike – people from all walks of life. I have also addressed many senior school groups: those vulnerable kids on the verge of receiving their licences (and, to their way of thinking, the keys to power and independence).

The most moving experience I have had was following a presentation at which a truckie was present. When I first saw him I was a little intimidated: he was wearing not only a blue singlet, shorts and thongs, but was covered in tattoos from head to toe. I wondered what, if any, impact my story would have on him and the other kids who had been dragged to the session, as directed by a magistrate. After I had finished, there was a deadly silence, but then my truckie friend came to me with tears in his eyes to thank me for helping him to realise the consequences of his risky driving. He vowed never to speed again. His reaction made it all worthwhile. I have encountered this kind of reaction many times since.

I always begin with a warning that the story I am about to tell is meant to be confronting and to have an impact, so that people will hopefully think twice before acting irresponsibly on the roads. I have made my story into a PowerPoint presentation with images of my handsome sons, Simon and Daniel, to demonstrate how tragedy can befall anyone. There are also images to reinforce the possible consequences of a collision. As many people will agree, kids believe themselves to be indestructible; perhaps we all felt the same once, taking uncalculated risks and having lucky escapes from crashes. My dad used to say that once you receive your licence then the real learning begins.

I acknowledge that some of the people present may have been affected first-hand by road trauma through the death or injury of someone close to them. I acknowledge those who are first on the scene and are faced with having to deal directly with the trauma: the police, ambulance officers, paramedics, the SES and often the fire brigade. Some policemen or women have the job of delivering tragic news to families. My heart goes out to them, especially to those in rural areas who often know the victims. Such was the case with our boys. Both crashes happened on the quiet, country back roads of Nhill.

I try to enforce that there are no set rules or places for collisions to occur. No parent, husband, wife or child wants to be woken in the middle of the night by a policeman

bearing tragic news. One can never imagine the feeling, which once experienced is never forgotten. After both crashes we were so appreciative of the ongoing support and compassion from our community, including from those police, SES, Ambulance and fire brigade officers who attended. We were treated like people, not statistics. I applaud the amazing work they all do under such confronting circumstances for the good of their communities, trying to care for us and keep us safe.

Although I still feel very emotional when I do my presentations (similar to my husband, who comes along to support me), I figure that if our story makes someone stop and think before they drive in a risky manner – and if it saves one family the horror of the suffering and grief that comes with losing a loved one – then the volunteer work that I do has all been worthwhile.

None of us are immune from road trauma. We all need to slow down, be patient and show respect for all others on the roads.

Jeanette Suhr

Volunteer Story

"I needed to work with people who had been through something similar."



In December 1993, Jeanette Suhr accompanied a friend to a public meeting at the Prahran Town Hall to discuss the national road toll and the devastating effect on communities of road crashes. "Would anyone interested in helping to form a Road Trauma Support Team in Melbourne please sign a sheet?" the organisers asked.

At the meeting, convened by the Jaycees, Jeanette met Tasmanian woman Colleen Hall who had founded the Road Trauma Support Team (RTST) in Launceston. It was Colleen's vision that there would be a network of support teams Australia-wide.

The meeting and introduction to Colleen would have far-reaching consequences. However, it was an early-morning visit from police two years prior that changed Jeanette's life irrevocably. That was when Jeanette and her husband Greg were told their 19-year-old daughter Tanya, the eldest of their two children, had died in a two-car crash.

How are you meant to go on after news like that?

In the aftermath, Jeanette knew she needed someone she could always talk to, but felt the help that had been so forthcoming after the crash had waned. She was at a loss.

Jeanette went to the Prahran meeting in support of one of the speakers, a recently bereaved mother whose 16-year-old daughter had been killed in a bus crash in Coober Pedy while on a Mt Lilydale Mercy College excursion. Sixteen students had been injured, some seriously.

The sudden death of a student on an excursion had rocked the college community of which Jeanette was part; Tanya had been a Mt Lilydale student and Jeanette still worked full time in the office there.

The empathetic connection that day between Jeanette and the school girl's mother came to typify the work of the original volunteers of this organisation. Jeanette was learning that to endure the pain of traumatic grief "you have to take people with you."

Other vital ingredients were the easy comradeship and the sharing of stories, often too confronting to tell elsewhere, and the power of these to help with healing and to bring about change.

"I tended not to speak to people about it," Jeanette reflects, "because I thought they would be saying 'here we go again' ... when you really want someone to travel along with you until such time as you don't need it."

The first steering committee meeting of the RTST in Melbourne was held in March 1994. The following year 22 volunteers undertook a training course to work as 'befrienders', and with \$5,000 in the bank, a mobile phone, a donated fax machine and an office at home "we were off and running," Jeanette remembers.

The training course, held at Bethesda Hospital, was in basic counselling skills to equip the volunteers to handle telephone calls to people impacted by road trauma and make home visits as required. Bethesda's manager of social work services Rod Watts was the team's first contact person. At the same time volunteers prepared posters and small notices about the new RTST to post in medical centres, police stations, libraries and other public places.

Besides the befriending work, the early team ran three regular peer-support groups: for carers of people with Acquired Brain Injury, for the bereaved, and a group to support drivers involved in a crash.

In 2002 the team started the monthly Traffic Offenders' Program run by counsellor Michelle Roberts. The Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court asked the RTST if it would be prepared to take over its program with the court initially doing the administrative work. The organisation agreed. As Jeanette explained, this arrangement provided a vital second source of income, forming the basis of the Road Trauma Awareness Seminars (RTAS) of today.

In 2005 RTST moved from Hawthorn to its current premises in Blackburn to gain extra space and for easier access for staff,

volunteers and clients who needed to travel to the office by public transport. An organisation that had started in a bereaved mother's home had already come a long way.

WE FEEL A HAPPINESS AGAIN

Jeanette Suhr does not like to champion her achievements over those of her peers in the organisation, yet has twice received official recognition: she was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003 and the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2007.

The awards were for her work in establishing the RTST, which at the October 2008 Annual General Meeting changed its name to Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Inc. Her roles have included president, secretary and two stints as chief executive in 2003-2006 and 2012.

Speaking about her OAM, Jeanette said in a newspaper report that her work with RTST had been "a very personal project for me." She was driven by the memory of Tanya and her family's experience of there being a lack of support at an extremely difficult time.

"It was about me needing hope that I was going to survive and to do that I needed to work with people who had been through something similar," she said.

She remembers that it took her five years to feel that she would be ok. "I remember walking out of Mt Lilydale college – it is beautiful there – and looking across to see the hills. I never thought I'd feel again, but on that day I could appreciate the beauty of our trees and sky."

Speaking publicly at the 15th annual Time for Remembering ceremony last year, Jeanette said: "Greg and I now have two beautiful grandsons and feel a happiness that we never thought possible again. We still feel Tanya's loss every day and that will always be part of what our life is now."

As told to Wendy Bowler, a volunteer and the bereaved mother of Jesse Bowerman, who died in 2012 aged 18.

Jess Hofto

Volunteer Story



“I began to wonder if there was some way that I could help Michael to get his life back on track, and then it occurred to me – help him get a car!”

I was introduced to RTSSV by my friend, Chris Harrison, after hearing many stories of the organisation’s investment in the community and its outstanding success. I began volunteering in a marketing capacity under the watchful eye of mentor Bronwyn Saville, the organisation’s Marketing and Communications Coordinator. With Bronwyn’s guidance I worked on various projects including the revision of marketing material and the 2015 Shine a Light on Road Safety walk. It was greatly rewarding to see so many people band together on the day and walk as one to help raise much needed awareness of road safety. The way the campaign grows in strength and support each year is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteers.

During my time with RTSSV, I was deeply saddened by the undeserved tragedies that had befallen many families and the lives torn apart. I wanted to help but was at a loss as to how I could make a difference, however small, until the opportunity presented itself while I was working on some articles for RTSSV’s 2015 Annual Report. I came across the devastating, personally-written story of Michael Perkins, a volunteer speaker whose life was derailed after being the passenger in a single vehicle collision when he was 18, which left him with fractures to 90 per cent of his skull and life-long injuries.

I had met Michael a few times and been touched by his gentle and kind nature, underpinned as it was by an overwhelming sadness, but had not truly understood his story – and it broke my heart. To add to his difficulties, Michael had been without a car for over a year, leaving him house-bound with his big dog Moose for company. He was unable to continue his valuable mission of educating the next generation by volunteering with RTSSV.

Michael had dedicated his post-crash life to helping others, speaking to over 80,000 people in the course of his voluntary work about the importance of road safety and the lifelong consequences of that one mistake.

I began to wonder if there was some way that I could help Michael to get his life back on track, and then it occurred to me – help him get a car! If I could give Michael his freedom and mobility he would have the chance to lead a happier and more fulfilling life, and fight off the loneliness and depression that had plagued him for so long.

So, in October 2015, the mission began to raise the funds to buy Michael a safe, efficient and reliable car. I created a crowd-funding page and approached local print and digital media outlets to share Michael’s story. In addition, I approached some automotive industry contacts and

asked for donations of parts to auction on eBay, with all proceeds going to the cause. I also ran a paid social media campaign to spread the word. By early December we had raised over \$2,800 for Michael’s gift and my partner Jack (a mechanic) and I began test-driving cars. In the end we decided on a Hyundai Getz. The look on Michael’s face when we dropped it off made it all worthwhile. Since then, Michael and Moose have been on many outings together in their little white Getz, exploring the countryside and visiting friends.

A big thank you goes to all who donated; Michael is extremely grateful and touched by your generosity.

To Michael, you are an amazing person and I envy your strength. Keep your chin up and keep moving forward. Good things will come to you, I’m sure.

“It is amazing what Jess did for me. It gave me back my independence and freedom and I can’t thank her enough. To everyone that supported and donated to get me a car, I am so very grateful and thankful, thank you.” Michael Perkins



Time for Remembering



“Time for Remembering shows that road trauma is an ongoing thing. Grief doesn’t go away.”

The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is commemorated on the third Sunday of November each year to remember the many millions killed and injured on the world’s roads, together with their families, friends, emergency services and many others who are also affected.

This special remembrance day is intended to offer personal comfort and public recognition of the loss and suffering caused by road trauma.

In 2015 we commemorated this special day with our 15th annual Time for Remembering service at Queens Hall, Parliament House. The service was led by the Reverend Andy Calder, the Hon. Luke Donnellan presented a message from the

government and Jeanette Suhr OAM shared her personal story of road trauma.

Mosaics created over the year by the women of our Art Therapy Group were on display. This is the third year the group has created a major art work for the Time for Remembering ceremony, and our collective appreciation of their works is enriched by the knowledge that something of the pain and suffering caused by road trauma has been transformed into something so beautiful.

Special thanks go to Reverend Andy Calder; Amanda Bavin from the TAC, Deputy Chief Magistrate Robert Kumar; Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer; Liz and Phil O’Donnell; Nadine Ahfat, Irene

Harrington; Jeanette Suhr; Michael Johnson; Barbara Joyce, members of the Art Therapy Group and the Brunswick Women’s Choir for lending their voices to this important event. We are very grateful to the TAC in particular for their ongoing support.



**Shine
a Light**
on road
safety

Shine a Light on Road Safety



Reaching Out

A huge thank you to everyone who got involved and shared our messages. Together we have reached over a million Victorians through social media and achieved widespread print, radio and TV coverage of the community walk on Channel 7, 9, 10 and the ABC.

Involving the Community

To let people know about us there were lots of different ways for the community to engage in Shine a Light on Road Safety.

Illuminations: During the first week of May, iconic Victorian landmarks were illuminated in yellow to raise the profile of the campaign, generate media interest and start conversations about road safety. These included Parliament House, Bolte Bridge, Victorian Arts Centre Spire, Victorian State Library, AAMI Park Stadium, Melbourne Star, Box Hill Town Hall, Ballarat Town Hall, Ballarat CFA Tower, Frankston Arts Centre and Geelong Carousel.

Launch: The campaign was officially opened on the steps of Parliament House by the Hon. Luke Donnellan, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Doug Fryer, Assistant Commissioner Victoria Police, on 5 May.

Headlights: On 6 May we asked motorists to 'Turn on your headlights for road safety'. Messages were displayed on all major highways.

Gippsland Festival: More than 2,000 people attended the road safety festival at the Traralgon Showgrounds on 6 May, with entertainment from the Transformers, live music by the Strzelecki Stringbusters and lots of great food and activities. Huge thanks to the Gippsland team.

Geelong Carousel: The carousel was lit in yellow and there was a poster competition to involve local families in road safety.

Melbourne Walk: The Premier Daniel Andrews and the Hon. Luke Donnellan joined us at the community walk on 15 May to launch Victoria's new road safety strategy 'Towards Zero 2016-2020'. More than 300 people walked together around Jells Park lake and then enjoyed the Lions Club barbecue.

The Power of Partnerships

This campaign would not have been possible without the strong support of our partners. We extend heartfelt thanks to all who contributed including:

- Premier Daniel Andrews and the Hon. Luke Donnellan
- Road safety partners the TAC, Victoria Police and VicRoads
- Ambassadors Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer and Christine Durham
- Emergency service providers including the CFA, MFB and SES
- Corporate partners and sponsors EastLink, AAMI, CityLink, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Shine Lawyers, Stillwell Motor Group, McColls Transport, Narva and Skills Training
- Road safety community groups including the Amy Gillet Foundation, Australian Motor Cycle Council, Community Road Safety Victoria and Recording Artists, Against Drink Driving
- Interstate agencies Enough is Enough New South Wales, Northern Territory Government Department of Road Safety and Education, Road Trauma Support Teams in Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, and the Safer Roads and Highways Group.

Road Safety Week

The campaign is held in the first week of May to coincide with the UN Global Road Safety Week and the Decade of Action for Road Safety. Across Australia major landmarks were illuminated in yellow during this week including:

- Old Parliament House, National Carillon, National Gallery of Australia and Majura Parkway Flyover in the Australian Capital Territory
- Gateway Bridges and the Storey Bridge in Queensland
- Gladesville Bridge in New South Wales
- Adelaide Oval and Riverbank Bridge in South Australia
- Yellow ribbons in Raintree Park, Northern Territory.

Fundraising

This campaign is only possible due to the support of many and we sincerely thank everyone who participated. As demand for our services grows and the pressure on government support intensifies, our focus on fundraising has increased. Finding new ways to raise our profile and funding base is a key priority.

We're pleased to have raised nearly \$40,000 in this year's campaign. We would particularly like to thank everyone who was part of our events and who raised funds.

Next Year

We hope to continue growing the campaign, particularly in regional Victoria.

Our focus will remain on the core aims of the campaign which are to raise awareness, to stop deaths and injuries on our roads, and to raise funds to support those impacted by road trauma.

Board Members & Executive Team

What is your vision for RTSSV for the next three years?

BOARD MEMBERS

Justin Flynn Chairman

To be in a financially strong position to enable us to expand our operations and support more people in need of counselling, to be a valued partner of the courts and legal system, and their first and only choice for driver re-education.

Ingrid Williams Deputy Chairman

My ultimate vision for the next three years is that we have no trauma as a result of a road crash. Until that happens, I hope for everyone who is impacted by road trauma to be provided with the best care and support possible so they can become a whole person again, as much as that is achievable.

Mark Musgrave Treasurer

My vision is to develop and enhance RTSSV's trusted role in the community for delivering high quality education and counselling services, with the objective of reducing the incidence of – as well as providing empathetic and caring support to, those impacted by road trauma. The continuation and growth of our passionate staff and volunteers, with appropriate management, training, support and tools, and a long-term sustainable funding model, will ensure the organisation can innovate and adapt well to changing needs and expectations.

Clinton Licht Secretary/Public Office

To support ALL who have been impacted by road trauma, whether by face-to-face counselling, education or other means; to allow those impacted to see that they are not alone and that there is support.

Simon Bolles

I would like to move towards a sounder financial footing, so that we are able to grow the organisation, support more of those in trauma, upgrade systems, and attract and retain quality staff.

Rob Ewing

I envision RTSSV achieving growth and diversity in secured funding, coupled with broader community awareness, so we can expand our reach to meaningfully support all Victorians impacted by road trauma

Maree McCabe

To support and empower all those who have been impacted by road trauma, and through awareness-raising and education reduce the risk of this for everyone in our community.

Richard Watkins

My vision for RTSSV over the next three years is for us to understand and improve on what we do that helps to reduce the harm from road trauma. As we understand better how our counselling services reduce the impact people experience from road trauma, we will look to make these services even more effective. As we understand better how our education services work to reduce the likelihood of participants' involvement in fatal or serious injury crashes, we will look to make these services more effective also. I believe that the services provided by RTSSV make a difference; I want us to make more of a difference!

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Cameron Sinclair CEO

That we strengthen our contributions to the eradication of transport-related death, injury and trauma for all Victorians.

Bernadette Nugent Manager Counselling and Support Services

My vision is to provide support to people impacted by road trauma through a range of relevant, effective and sustainable programs and services, and to continue to educate the community in the hope of reducing trauma on our roads.

Brenda Wathall Office Manager

My vision in the next three years is to generate and sustain an increase in road safety through our community, and contribute to a reduction in the incidence of death and serious injuries. Through the expansion of strong relationships with road safety stakeholders, government departments, educational bodies and community organisations, we have the potential for our vision to become a reality. To achieve this, addressing road user behaviour through education is critical. I will continue to commit myself, as part of the RTSSV team, to attain this vision.

Chris Harrison Manager Education Services

My vision for the next three years:

- To strengthen staff connection, value and support in all the work they do across the state, and to be recognised for the skill and knowledge they have.
- To continue to work together with those working in road safety to provide accessible services across the state. To provide timely, accurate services, based on need, and professional educational programs that align with the Government's strategic direction.
- Working with communities to raise awareness and providing opportunities for people to have a voice on issues of road safety.

Subcommittees



Development and Communications subcommittee

The Development and Communications subcommittee is responsible for the oversight of the fundraising and communications functions of the organisation. It ensures that we continue to develop and profile the business consistently with strategic objectives.

The year 2015-2016 has seen ongoing softness in general fundraising, however, the third annual Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign in May resulted in wonderful outcomes. We engaged metropolitan and regional communities at events, this year welcoming Gippsland and Geelong to the campaign. We promoted road safety awareness through illuminations of notable Melbourne and regional landmarks, while motorists across Australia were encouraged to turn on their headlights on 6 May.

The campaign attracted significant national media attention, being promoted on radio, in print media, TV and on social media.

Thanks ultimately to the wonderful support and encouragement of our sponsors and communities, who contributed and raised nearly \$40,000, we are better able to continue to support Victorians affected by road trauma.

We have done well this year and our success is a testament to the support and encouragement we have received from our people, partners and communities. We thank you and will continue to succeed so that our ability to support you is strengthened.

Justin Flynn

Appointments and Remuneration subcommittee

The Appointments and Remuneration subcommittee meets as needed to review CEO performance and salary, and to monitor the performance of the Board's directors. This year, we farewelled Kim White and Tony O'Byrne, who provided RTSSV with expertise, sound guidance and support. We thank them for their contributions and wish them well as they embark on new ventures.

Conversely, we welcomed Mark Musgrave as Treasurer and Maree McCabe to the Board. They diversify the skills-set of the board and will support the organisation in its growth strategically and operationally.

In review of our functions, we monitored the revisions made last year to our subcommittee structures. These included:

- Combining the Finance and Audit committee with the Risk committee
- Reverting the Research and Evaluation subcommittee to an operational working group
- Modifying the Appointments and Remuneration committee charter to enable the committee to meet as needed.

These changes have energised our subcommittees and have created efficiencies for the benefit of the organisation, and we are confident that they are serving RTSSV well. We continue to be optimistic and, with renewed focus and energy, we look forward to the new financial year.

Justin Flynn

Finance and Audit subcommittee

The Board strengthened RTSSV's position to manage risk and finances commensurately, and in 2015 combined the Finance and Audit subcommittees. The revitalised committee led by our chairman, Justin Flynn, met regularly with good effect. I was welcomed as Treasurer, with the job of reinvigorating the work of managing risk and finances.

RTSSV's strengthening financial performance saw the 2015-2016 financial year deliver a profit of \$8,696, a significant improvement on the losses generated in the previous three years. We attribute the improvement to a growth in RTAS revenue and the success of our annual Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign. These have significantly strengthened not only our financial position but also our ability to engage communities and create strong and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Strong management controls have continued to ensure a responsible approach to expenditure while simultaneously creating innovation and diversity in revenue streams.

I thank the committee members for their guidance and I am reassured that our management team will continue to deliver strong results in the coming year.

Mark Musgrave

Treasurer's Report



Through a combination of diligent cost control and strong Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) revenue, we finished the 2015-2016 year with a modest profit of \$8,696. Adherence to budget across most revenue and cost lines was very strong with the exception of donations being lower than anticipated by approximately \$30,000, although this was largely offset by a favourable variance of \$31,000 in fundraising and corporate sponsorships for the Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign. Our objective is modest profits enabling continuing investments in staff, IT, and enhanced services.

We enjoyed a positive net cash flow for the year of \$49,265 and our balance sheet remains strong with net equity of \$245,836. Our only non-cash item was depreciation of \$13,515.

With approximately half our funding, coming from the TAC for the provision of counselling services, we have had to continue to supplement the funding of our counselling activities to meet the shortfall from other sources.

The negotiation of a new three-year contract with the TAC, addressing the long-term financial stability of RTSSV, has been a primary objective of the Finance Committee, CEO and Board. The move to replace the current annual contract with a more appropriately funded three-year contract with annual CPI increases, and a requirement to notify RTSSV if the TAC does not intend to continue its financial support, six months prior to expiration of the contract, provides the stability we

require. This ensures that RTSSV can provide our loyal and hard-working staff with improved security of tenure, as well as provide confidence to make long-term commitments such as the lease of premises.

Subsequent to year end, we received confirmation (in September 2016) that the TAC will make an adjustment to its annual funding of an additional \$50,000 per annum for the three-year term of the contract commencing 1 July 2016. We are very appreciative of the increase received and the TAC's continued support for our counselling services. We also negotiated a three year office lease in September 2016.

RTAS revenue has continued to increase above budget. Year on year the increase has been \$48,561 or 12 per cent as a result of:

1. The increase in the number of regional RTAS venues – now expanded to Portland, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Wangaratta and Wodonga. This is especially important since the number of deaths and serious road trauma is proportionately much higher in regional areas.
2. The great work of Chris Harrison and the education team increasing awareness amongst magistrates and solicitors to order/recommend that offenders attend.

We have made provision in the 2016-2017 budget for appropriate increases in staff remuneration, rebuilding of our website, and the improvement of some of our

information systems. These were all key recommendations made by an independent consulting company engaged by the TAC to assess the quality and value for money of our counselling services.

As Treasurer, I would like to thank our CEO, Accountant Theresa Cocking (who provided the day-to-day financial support), and the entire RTSSV team for their tireless efforts in improving our services, raising revenue and carefully managing costs.

Mark Musgrave
Treasurer

Independent audit report to the members of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Inc.

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Inc. (the association) which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2016 and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the Board.

Board's responsibility for the Financial Report

The Board of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Auditor's opinion

In our opinion:

The financial report of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Inc. is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2016 and of their performance for the year ended on that date; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.



Quality Financial Solutions Pty Ltd
David Petersen

Dated this 20th day of October 2016

Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
INCOME FROM TRANSACTIONS		
Fees and charges	439,078	387,228
Grants	454,694	501,833
Fundraising and other Income	70,231	33,240
Donations	34,932	39,639
Interest	9,422	10,781
TOTAL	1,008,357	972,721
EXPENDITURE FROM TRANSACTIONS		
Advertising, branding and business development	3,334	3,466
Accounting and audit fees	1,920	1,850
Bank charges	6,747	6,177
Cleaning	3,063	3,228
Minor equipment, service and maintenance	26,620	23,336
Client support projects	3,874	2,756
Postage and stationery	14,915	18,100
Depreciation	13,515	21,465
Entertainment and gifts	1,765	858
Fundraising expenses and commissions	6,170	4,326
Security and Insurance	10,502	10,993
Office/business consultancy expenses	11,411	38,720
HR recruitment, meeting and other expenses	12,559	9,996
Rent and venue education	54,150	52,407
Salaries and wages	673,271	634,141
Time for Remembering	9,131	7,195
Superannuation	58,682	55,848
Support groups and memberships	2,409	2,248
Telephone and communication	24,603	19,677
Training and development	5,495	5,626
Travel, accommodation, parking and motor vehicle expenses	24,693	14,121
Volunteer expenses	5,299	5,389
Utilities and permits	10,570	25,691
Work cover	14,963	13,991
TOTAL	999,661	981,605
Net result from transactions	8,696	(8,884)
Other economic flows	0	0
Changes in reserves	0	0
COMPREHENSIVE RESULT	8,696	(8,884)

Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	337,628	288,363
Receivables	20,897	14,285
Other	15,484	16,685
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<hr/> 374,009	<hr/> 319,333
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and equipment	30,942	41,657
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<hr/> 30,942	<hr/> 41,657
TOTAL ASSETS	<hr/> 404,951	<hr/> 360,990
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Payables	64,841	45,108
Provisions	56,011	47,039
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<hr/> 120,852	<hr/> 92,147
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provision for employee entitlements	38,263	31,703
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	<hr/> 38,263	<hr/> 31,703
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<hr/> 159,115	<hr/> 123,850
NET ASSETS	<hr/> 245,836	<hr/> 237,140
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Capital profits reserve	0	0
Other reserves	0	0
Retained profits	245,836	237,140
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	<hr/> 245,836	<hr/> 237,140

Note: All financial information should be read in conjunction with the Financial Report which can be obtained at www.rtssv.org.au or by contacting RTSSV on 1300 367 797

Supporters



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Transport Accident Commission for their support since 1999, and the following supporters.

AAMI	Hume Global Learning Centre	Rev. Andy Calder, Disability Inclusion, Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Acton Print	IMES Social Club	Rev. Ian Smith, Victorian Council of Churches
Ambulance Victoria	inSync Surveys	Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist
Austwine Viticulture	Jan Webb, Melton Road Safety Officer	RTSSV Art Therapy Group
Barbara Joyce, Art Therapist	JCI	SEN 1116 FM
Belinda Clark, MUARC	Jennie Oxley, MUARC	SERCO
Blooms on Brice	Jim Giddings – RoadSafe Westgate	Shine Lawyers
Bowerman and Bowler Family in memory of Jesse	Community Road Safety Council	Skills Training Australia
Brunswick Women’s Choir	Leadership Ballarat and Western Region	State Library Victoria
Bunnings Nunawading	Lions Club Forest Hill	Stillwell Motor Group
CFA	Luke Gillman	SysOp Support Australia Pty Ltd
Chris and Kate Parkin	Luke Hodge	Tobin Brothers
Chris Gill, Sentencing Advisory Council	Magistrates’ Court of Victoria	Tom Wuthipol Uj, Melbourne Brought Me Here
City of Ballarat	Marchesin Family in memory of Jack	Tomorrow Agency
City of Geelong	Mark Robinson	Transport Accident Commission (TAC)
City of Whitehorse	Matthew Smyth	University of Melbourne
CityLink	Maurice Blackburn	VicRoads
CoHealth Niddrie	McColls Transport	Victoria Police
Dave Vinegard, Behaviour Matters	Melton City Council	Victorian Arts Centre
Doug Fryer, Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police	Michael Johnson, Harpist	Victorian Government
Dr Christine Durham	Montano’s Patisserie Café	Victorian State Emergency Services
Dutton Family in memory of Emma	MUARC	Volunteers Victoria
EastLink	Narva Automotive Lighting	Will Hamer in memory of John Voss
Food Factory Sales, Bayswater (SPC)	Neighbourhood Justice Centre	Woolworths, Kilsyth
Frank Amato Photography	Overton Catering	Youth Justice
Gavin Devine	Parliament of Victoria	
GTI & R Owners Club	Rainbow Meats	
Heath Little-Spence	Ray Wathall	
Hope Bereavement Services in Geelong	Readings Cinema Chirside Park	
Hume City Council	Recording Artists Against Drink Driving (RADD)	
	Red Earth Florists	

Volunteers



Adrian Benson
Adrian Gervasoni
Alistair Barrett
Amanda Pollard
Andrew Knowles
Andy Calder
Anthony Johns
Avishan Baghaei
Bill Hodges
Bruno Aquila
Caitlin Little
Carmel O'Brien
Carole Reid
Carolyn Cole-Sinclair
Chris Parkin
Chris Stuhldreier
Christine Latimer
Christine Bordon
Christine Mair
Clinton Licht
Coral Robertson
Cristine Feely
Damian Sumner
Daniel Reader
Danny Anderson
Darryl Crowley
Daryl Silvey
David Bedford-Lee
Dean McInnes
Deanne Hibbert
Dianne Rock

Donna Parsons
Elodie Nugent
Elva Board
Emilia White
Fiona Umbers
Gary Chandler
George Greaves
Geraldine Harley
Glenn Dunn
Graeme Petrie
Graham Milner
Ingrid Williams
Irene Ackland
Irene Harrington
James Thompson
Jan Dilworth
Jason Kisielis
Jason Naumann
Jayson Hirt
Jeanette Suhr
Jeffrey Smith
Jennifer Gibson
Jessica Hofto
John McTaggart
Judy Della
Justin Flynn
Karen Robinson
Kat Kranz
Kate Drain-Parkin
Ken Jones
Kerry Ann Norton

Kevin Pettit
Kristine Papworth
Kristy French
Leigh Booth
Lynette Srinivas
Lynne Glennon
Manny Marchesin
Maree McCabe
Margaret Millington
Mark Cartledge
Mark Cattell
Mark Frackowski
Mark Musgrave
Mark Welch
Martin Ledwich
Martin Wrangle
Matthew Armour
Matthew Pope
Melinda Krause
Melissa Felton
Mellisa Lane
Michael Hellwege
Michael Perkins
Mitchell Van Eerden
Narelle Bowden
Natalie Stanway
Nicole Smith
Pam Knight
Paul Illman
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Reg Stott
Rick Williams
Richard Watkins
Robert Ewing
Roger Astell
Rosie Johnston
Russell Harley
Sallie Millington
Samantha Barker
Sandi Hearn
Shane Jayasinghe
Sherry Pratt
Simon Bolles
Steve Rosewarne
Stuart Morris
Sue Cox
Tania Rome
Tara Stark
Tarli Bogtstra
Tim Nolan
Troy Milner
Vernon Board
Wendy Bowler
Wilma Felton
Yeksan Altun
Yvonne Upton



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