SAFER VICTORIAN ROADS WITH 40 YEARS OF BREATH TESTING

The Andrews Labor Government today marked 40 years of random breath testing – with thousands of lives having been saved since Victoria Police conducted their first test in July 1976.

Minister for Roads Donnellan today joined Assistant Commissioner for Road Policing Doug Fryer at a random breath testing site in Melbourne’s inner north to mark the anniversary.

Victoria was the first state in Australia to introduce random breath tests for drivers and has a proud history of road safety innovation.

Since its introduction, random breath testing has helped to save thousands of lives, prevented road trauma and has been critical in changing Victoria’s drink driving culture.

The proportion of motorists killed with a blood alcohol level of more than .05 has dropped dramatically over this time – from 49 per cent in 1977 to 15 per cent in 2014.

Victoria Police’s roadside breath testing has expanded from 40,000 in 1978 to around 4 million tests annually.

In 1989, the year that the Transport Accident Commission commenced its drink drive campaigns, 114 drivers and riders died in road accidents with an illegal blood alcohol concentration. This figure had dropped to 22 in 2014.

The Government is cracking down harder on drink drivers by ensuring that everyone convicted of drink-driving will be required to have an alcohol interlock device fitted to their car.

Under these reforms, anyone found to be driving with a BAC over 0.05 will be required to drive vehicles fitted with an alcohol interlock device for a specified period, depending on the severity of the offence.

The Government is also delivering a new fleet of drug and booze buses to give police more resources to test and catch more drivers in every corner of Victoria.

These initiatives are part of the Government’s Towards Zero 2016-2020 Strategy and Action Plan which aims to reduce the number of lives lost on our roads by 20 per cent, to below 200, over the next five years.

More than $1 billion over five years has been invested to protect motorists and support safer roads as part of the strategy.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Luke Donnellan

“We’ve come a long way in changing people’s attitudes since Victorians took their first breath test in a ‘puff bag’. We know that drinking alcohol and driving doesn’t mix.”

“We owe it to all motorists, trauma victims, their families and friends to deliver new ways to keep our roads safe, and we’re doing just that.”

“We want everyone to come home safely and that’s why we’re investing more than $1 billion in our Towards Zero strategy, with more drug and booze buses, and interlock devices for everyone caught over 0.05.”

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