

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PERSONAL CHOICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

INQUIRY ON PERSONAL CHOICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2019**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Hon Aaron Stonehouse (Chair)
Hon Dr Sally Talbot (Deputy Chair)
Hon Dr Steve Thomas
Hon Pierre Yang
Hon Rick Mazza**

Hearing commenced at 9.54 am**Mr STANLEY KHOSE****State Director, Australian Street Machine Federation—WA State Division, sworn and examined:**

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the committee, I would like to welcome you to the meeting. Before we begin, I must ask you to take either the oath or the affirmation.

[Witness took the oath.]

The CHAIRMAN: You will have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood that document?

Mr Khose: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of the hearing for the record. Please be aware of the microphones and try to talk into them. Ensure that you do not cover them with papers or make noise near them. I remind you that your transcript will be a matter of public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session. For instance, if you name any individuals, you may want to make that testimony in private and you can request that. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. I advise you that publication or disclosure of the uncorrected transcript of evidence may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

Would you like to make an opening statement to the committee?

Mr Khose: Our presentation to the committee is about the proposed implementation of the 180-kilowatt-per-tonne rule for engine capacity and the safe modification of vehicles. Firstly, I would like to introduce you to the ASMF—WA. In 2006, the ASMF—WA was formed by a group of motoring enthusiasts to provide a representative body to engage with government and other stakeholders on matters relating to the safe modification of enthusiast vehicles, and, in particular, vehicles originally manufactured between 1949 and 1984, commonly referred to as “steel-bumpered vehicles”. I would like to begin this discussion by stating that the ASMF—WA believes that there is a misconception in the broader community that people who drive modified cars are hooners. As a group, we do not condone hoon behaviour. We fully support all current and future legislation the government implements to change this behaviour.

I will now talk about the core of the problem: “Vehicle Standards Bulletin 14”. When a motoring enthusiast wishes to modify a vehicle, an application is made to the Department of Transport. Such applications are usually supported, provided it conforms with VSB14. The VSB14 is a document commissioned and published by the Department of Transport. Regional services in all states had input into this document. It was first published in 2006 and a future revision was completed in 2011. This document ensures that any vehicle modifications are done safely. A further requirement of licensing modified vehicles is that engineers are engaged to prepare a report certifying that the modifications are completed in accordance with the requirement of VSB14 guidelines. It is a further requirement that the modified vehicle handles and brakes safely prior to being registered. In late

2016, we became aware that people were submitting applications that conformed to the requirements of VSB14; however, they were being rejected by the Department of Transport on this basis, and I will quote from an application response letter, that the modification was —

... too much of a safety risk, despite the fact that the replacement engine met the requirements of VSB14 Table LA1.

[10.00 am]

Upon further investigation with the Department of Transport, we became aware that the safety risk concerns relate to a power-to-weight ratio of the vehicle that offers minimal occupant protection. We understand that DoT has adopted a baseline of 180-kilowatts-per-tonne engine capacity. However, there has been no explanation of how this figure is arrived at. I offer a comparison with a brand-new motorbike that we can all purchase and has arguably less occupant protection. When compared with a modified vehicle, the Kawasaki Ninja, for example, has a power-to-weight ratio of 550 kilowatts per tonne, almost three times the figure being applied to a modified vehicle.

The rejection letter is prefaced by the comment, and again I quote —

DoT has adopted ... “VSB14” ... which is a set of nationally-agreed guidelines ... however, has not been enacted into national law and therefore the application of VSB14 in any State or Territory is subject to the discretion of the jurisdiction concerned.

The rejection letters also go on to state that VSB14 was developed prior to 2000 and therefore used engine power figures prior to 2000. However, as I mentioned earlier, the first edition was published in 2006 and was further revised in 2011. Clearly, there were concerns by the VSB14 working group regarding engine capacity. This would have been addressed in the revised document.

The current method of assessment by DoT, whereby apparently conforming applications are being rejected at DoT’s inconsistent discretion, is creating a great deal of uncertainty among the enthusiasts’ community to the point where businesses that rely on the construction and modification of vehicles are letting staff go, and some are considering closing their doors due to enthusiasts not proceeding with their projects. The average cost of a project is in the vicinity of \$100 000 to \$200 000.

To try and ascertain why DoT has recently changed its adoption of VSB14, we spoke to insurance companies—for example, Shannons insurance—to see whether there had been an increase in accident statistics with older modified vehicles. We actually have information to support that from Shannons. Following this investigation, we are pleased to report that modified vehicles are well underrepresented in accident statistics, as evidenced by the much lower insurance premiums for older cars. These insurance companies recognise the lower risk associated with these vehicles, so why can our government departments not recognise that?

In May 2016, the ASMF–WA met with the Department of Transport to discuss and present some suggested changes to VSB14, which was received positively. Shortly after the meeting, the ASMF–WA received some information that some vehicles builds were being rejected by the Department of Transport due to safety concerns, although they do conform to VSB14 guidelines. The ASMF–WA has undertaken research to determine whether the DoT safety concerns are based on fact or opinion. The research is based around actual accident history of vehicles modified in accordance with VSB14, discussions with registered mechanical engineers and our own web-based research. The upshot of our research is that vehicles modified in accordance with VSB14 have a significantly lower occurrence of accidents than the majority of vehicles that use the roads. We are therefore of the view that the public safety concerns raised by DoT do not have any factual basis and we seek the abolishment of the 180-kilowatt-per-tonne rule.

To sum up, our requests basically include the abolishment of the 180-kilowatt-per-tonne rule. We cannot find any statistical information stating that vehicles manufactured between 1949 and 1984 are a major problem on Western Australian roads. The second point is that despite repeated requests, we would still like for DoT to meet with ASMF–WA and discuss why it has concerns and present any statistics to us. The third point is that we would like the ASMF–WA to have regular meetings with the Department of Transport to present any proposed, safe variations to VSB14. This will build a strong working relationship between both parties and confidence within the industry to employ and grow.

Ending it at that point, there is further information that I have, as you can probably see, that I have supplied statistics, Centre for Automotive Safety Research from South Australia, and so on and so on. It goes through all the crash tests, speed-related percentages, so I will not go into that at this point in time. If there are any questions, I can answer from here.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that, Mr Khose. You have provided us with a lot of information here. In your submission, which you made last year, I think you mentioned that you have yet to achieve your meeting with the Department of Transport officers that you were seeking.

Mr Khose: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Has there been any movement since? Have you managed to meet with them since then?

Mr Khose: Again, as you have made it clear to me in regards to names, I will not mention names at this point in time—I would prefer that to be private—but yes, I actually have. I would like to think I have a good relationship with the Department of Transport in regards to the two gentlemen who are directly involved with this particular rule. One of them has said to me he understands what we are trying to do but told us a year and a half ago that there is a policy being put together. In October last year they were going to put this policy together but they wanted to engage with a group like the ASMF WA. That was the last phone call I received. We have made numerous email contact and nothing has come back to us. As far as I know, there is no policy document in place yet to support this 180 kilowatt per tonne rule, and they are applying it still.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just on that, have you approached the Minister for Transport to try to get a meeting with —

Mr Khose: We approached Rita Saffioti’s office—David Hay-Hendry and another gentleman. They were her advisers. We sat with them and produced all the statistical information, and it was the point I just mentioned, what we were proposing to do. One of their office admin people rang me and said to me, “Look, I’ve gone through your information. I can see what your point is and we will contact the Department of Transport.” That was the end of that; I have not had any more correspondence from them. Since, I approached Aaron Stonehouse and obviously you gave us the opportunity to present what we wanted to get across and here I am.

Hon RICK MAZZA: How long ago did you contact the ministry for a meeting?

Mr Khose: That was February last year.

The CHAIRMAN: The 180 kilowatts per tonne, can you give us an idea of what kind of engine that is or what kind of car that is, for the layperson? For those of us who are not petrolheads, what are we talking here?

Mr Khose: We are talking the vicinity of a 1970 to 1980 Falcon GT, Holden Monaro, Torana. They are probably the core Australian muscle cars that from the factory, when they came out, had more than 180 kilowatt per tonne, and has not been a problem. Even with VSB 14, as it sits and as it

stands, still complies with those vehicles. For example, an engine that has come out of a brand-new Commodore 2018 is actually designated as an LS engine. It has got a capacity of five litres. It has got a power output of about 300 kilowatts. That comes out from the Holden or Ford factory—300 kilowatts. They have reduced this rule of 180 kilowatt, which just does not make any sense. I had some discussions in the beginning with the VSB working group and their argument is a brand-new car has airbags, has all the safety structural inbuilt into the design, whereas a 1970 Holden Monaro has not. We had crash-test results given to them and they still came back and said, “How do you make a 1970 car structurally strong?” The reason, if I refer back to the cars being spent 100 to 200K, there are consulting engineers that give us structural designs to build into these cars. They become, obviously, stronger or more safe regardless of airbags and upgraded brakes, everything upgraded basically to 2018–19 technology. We are just using the shell of the old car.

[10.10 am]

I will go back on that. We are still using the undercarriage of the car to make it, in layman’s terms; it is the floor which is braced with steel tubing. A brand-new Commodore has the same or a similar design. Without getting too technical in regards to what I am trying to say here, consulting engineers are qualified people who give this safety information to people who want to build cars. The Department of Transport—I do not want to overstep my line here—but there are no actual qualified engineers in there to approve or to even liaise. At the moment, or the last two years, the engineer gives the approval and all the documentation gets submitted to the Department of Transport and they use this 180 kilowatt per tonne rule to decline it or reject it. If the builder or the owner wants to take it further, they have said in their letter there is a code 235 which states that it cannot be contested.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Is this 180 kilowatt per tonne policy contained anywhere in the VSB 14 or is this simply a Western Australian policy?

Mr Khose: Good question. There is no policy or no documentation stating this 180 kilowatt rule.

Hon RICK MAZZA: This is just a Western Australian Department of Transport policy?

Mr Khose: Yes. They are putting it in rejections but we have gone through everything we can find the Department of Transport has online in regards to policy and there is nothing there stating that that has been an approved policy of 180 kilowatt per tonne. There is nothing; no evidence.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Is there any avenue to appeal the decisions made by the Department of Transport as far as having approval done on a modified vehicle?

Mr Khose: The code 235, as I mentioned, states that they cannot appeal. But I have had people approach me that have taken the matter to lawyers and three people succeeded and they showed me their documentation and actually said to me that it was the discretion of the Department of Transport to approve these three and to not make it public that it has been approved.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Of those people you say had legal advice, did any of them actually go to the State Administrative Tribunal?

Mr Khose: They did.

Hon RICK MAZZA: And an agreement was reached there?

Mr Khose: It was reached on their application only.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just on their application?

Mr Khose: Just on their application.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Which was done without it being made public?

Mr Khose: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Khose, can you break down the approval process for us? You want to get into perhaps rebuilding a classic car, you buy the car—what is the process then?

Mr Khose: There is an application form. There are a couple but in regards to what we are talking about, there is a light vehicle modifications form that you can download online. You used to be able to fill it in manually but now it is only online. The potential builder would either take it to a business or they would do it themselves. They would fill in their wish list, if I can say a wish list, of what they want and then they need to consult with a consulting engineer in the state of Western Australia. On the Department of Transport, they had a signatory list of 12 consulting engineers. They are the engineers that people would go to. You would fill this application in with the consultation of the engineer and he will say yea or nay. He signs it off and it gets submitted. Six to nine weeks later, it would come back rejected.

The CHAIRMAN: So you go through this process of buying the car, of going through the light vehicle modification process, of taking it to a shop where they might make these modifications, and getting the engineer to sign off. How long might that process take?

Mr Khose: The approval process itself, not just the build of the car, would take at least three months.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you mentioned earlier that it could cost someone tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr Khose: What I was going to mention, too, this weekend there is a car gathering. I would not call it just a car show. It is an Australian tradition, where families and everything are involved in this thing. It is called Cars and Coffee. For myself, as an immigrant, I came to this country when I was 10 years old. I grew up around the Australian tradition of cars, and I would like to say I am very much Australian in regard to how I understand all of this. It is not something that has just popped up in the last couple of years. I came to this country in 1974. It is part of the Australian lifestyle, if people are into cars. The cost goes anywhere from a minimum of \$60 000 to \$70 000 to build a car—minimum. That is to bring an old 1970 to 1980 car up to the standard of being registered under VSB14. That is just a restoration; that is not a modification. When you start going into modifications, you go up to \$100 000—\$150 000 is average—and then it just climbs up to \$200 000, \$300 000, \$400 000, \$500 000, \$600 000, up to 1 million. I am saying that these cars are Toranas, Holden, Ford—iconic Australian vehicles.

The CHAIRMAN: I will just quickly finish my point. So you go through this process and it takes you months?

Mr Khose: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: You spend potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars, you get the engineer to sign off on the process, and then you get a letter back from DOTAG saying, no. At that point, there is no appeals process unless you threaten legal action?

Mr Khose: Yes, exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you saying that unless you threaten legal action, you have no appeal process?

Mr Khose: Exactly. There is proof of that as well.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: I am just trying to get this time line absolutely clear for the committee. You have the distinction between restoration and modification. Do these requirements only apply if you are modifying rather than restoring?

Mr Khose: Exactly.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: If you are restoring to original condition, you do not need to go through any of these processes?

Mr Khose: No.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: In the modification process, do you submit the form that you referred to before you start the work? Is it a pre-approval, or are you submitting a machine for inspection?

Mr Khose: Okay. It is a pre-approval.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: So you have not spent the money?

Mr Khose: No, but in saying that, I have spoken to a lot of businesses in WA and it is not very clear in the Department of Transport that it actually tells people that they need to go through this process before they start the build. A lot of people have already started restoring the car, and sometimes halfway through they have realised that they need to submit this application. At that point, they have already—a big percentage of those people—committed \$50 000-plus.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: So there is nothing in the publicly available information that advises modifiers that they need to get the approvals in place before they start?

Mr Khose: Exactly, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Just going back to some of the research that you have conducted, I think you provided some of the statistics and some of the studies you rely on in the document you made available to us when you came in. That information, I think you contend, shows that modified cars—these classic muscle cars, the steel bumper cars—are less likely to be involved in a traffic incident or a fatal crash.

Mr Khose: They are a much lower risk for insurance companies.

The CHAIRMAN: To what would you attribute that?

Mr Khose: They have spent anywhere between \$100 000-plus. The age group of these builders is anywhere between 25 to 50, 60 years old. They do not use these vehicles as an everyday driver. It is too expensive to leave these cars parked on the street. So, yes, the percentage of them on the road only comes out on events. The higher risk, on which I have the information, is the average vehicles on the road.

[10.20 am]

The CHAIRMAN: You described to us earlier some of the feedback applicants have received from the Department of Transport and that it seems—I might be paraphrasing here—that the Department of Transport is concerned that these older classic cars do not have airbags and other safety features and they may not be as structurally sound as a modern car. That sounds to me as though the Department of Transport's priority is not the safety of other drivers and other traffic users, but the driver of the modified car. Do you see this as an imposition on modified car owners and drivers for their own safety, against their own will?

Mr Khose: To put the older vehicles back on the road, these owners want more safety built into the cars rather than have them as they were built in 1970 or 1980. We have so much out there in the after-market industry to actually upgrade these vehicles, and that is why the cost of these vehicles goes up. In fact, to a point, the 2014 or 2015 Ford Mustang failed the Australian crash test. Some of these older vehicles exceed the crash structural test. These vehicles are also put under a torsional test. If there is any doubt that the vehicle's engine capacity affects the torsional strength of the car, the engineer will put it in on an apparatus that basically twists the car to a certain tolerance to make sure that it withstands a lot of pressure in the test. Again, we are exceeding everything that we

should be doing, and an engineer is signing off on it—not the owner of the car, not the business that is building the car, but a qualified consulting engineer that has the degree of knowledge to approve these cars safely, and they are registered on the signatory list. But the department chooses, of their opinion, that it is not safe.

The CHAIRMAN: Am I on the right track, though, when I summarise the Department of Transport's concerns as being for the driver of the modified car as opposed to the safety of other traffic users?

Mr Khose: No, they have never brought that up. They have never brought up the fact that it is the driver. It is more the vehicle they are concerned about. I have actually got, again, evidence to state that the drivers and the age group of the drivers which are being bundled in as the hoon demographic—I have not got the factual information in my head, but I know that we have the evidence for it—between the ages of 18 to 25 is when most of the hoon vehicles are being impounded. Yes, it is the drivers, the older drivers. The Department of Transport has not brought that up at all—not the drivers at all. It is more the vehicle.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: Can I just follow up on my previous question, as a further point of clarification. In relation to airbags, for example, does the distinction still apply between modification and restoration?

Mr Khose: I understand.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: If the original 1970 model did not have airbags, are you now required to put airbags in?

Mr Khose: No. The vehicle can be registered without the airbags, but one of the main requirements is the seatbelts. The seatbelts must comply.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: Are seatbelts the only thing that applies to a restoration?

Mr Khose: Yes, exactly.

Hon PIERRE YANG: Mr Khose, can I just ask you to help the committee in terms of the pre-2016 situation. Are you aware of the success rate of applicants prior to 2016, as far as you can assist?

Mr Khose: Okay. Good point. The VSB14—Vehicle Standards Bulletin—is actually a well-documented book of rules that has not had any troubles with applications. The applications prior to that, there was a gentleman that was in the department for at least 17 years—again, I will not name names—but he had a group called the VSB 14 working group that would go through these applications, and I think the rejection rate was minimal, very minimal. There were no concerns because the general public did not make any noise about it. It was working quite well. I can tell you when it changed and why it changed at that time; there was a change in management, and the gentleman that is in charge, since he took position, has changed this rule.

Hon PIERRE YANG: Okay. In terms of raw numbers, on average how many applications would be put in? I understand you would not have the overall figure, but as far as you are aware from your observations?

Mr Khose: On a yearly basis?

Hon PIERRE YANG: Yes.

Mr Khose: There would easily be, I could safely say 100-plus applications.

Hon PIERRE YANG: Sure. Thanks.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just getting back to the engineers, you submit what you want to have done to a vehicle to an engineer, the engineer provides a report as to the engine, power-to-weight ratio, whether you widen or lengthen the wheelbase, braking capacity and all those sorts of things to have

the car safe. So you get that certificate from the engineer. Can I ask: how much do engineers usually charge to assess all that?

Mr Khose: Approximately \$165 to \$180 an hour.

Hon RICK MAZZA: An hour, okay. What would be the average time for them to do that?

Mr Khose: Over the whole period of the approval, of the engineer's time?

Hon RICK MAZZA: This is from the beginning to the end.

Mr Khose: From the beginning to the end? At least five visits.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Right, okay. So even though the engineer has said that the power-to-weight ratio, the wheelbase alterations, the braking and everything else is compliant, DOT are knocking it back?

Mr Khose: Yes.

Hon RICK MAZZA: In other states of Australia, are approvals being granted for vehicles that have been rejected here in Western Australia?

Mr Khose: South Australia in particular; last year, or the beginning of last year, Stephen Mulligan was the transport minister there. We approached him and spoke to him and he was supporting the engineers and working with the Department of Transport, and they actually had an increase in registered vehicles, so the revenue from the unregistered vehicles that we get knocked back here, these vehicles were now able to follow not just the VSB14 rule, but an engineer would consult further because the VSB14 is only a guideline; it is there to be interpreted, so it is not just a set group of rules, and they are doing quite well with engineers.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Are some Western Australian enthusiasts going to other states to have their modified vehicles approved?

Mr Khose: Yes, but —

Hon RICK MAZZA: What happens then if, say, it is registered in South Australia, they come back here and of course they are required to then have it registered in Western Australia after it has been here for a certain length of time. What is actually occurring after that point?

Mr Khose: Okay, they have the certification from the engineer in South Australia or New South Wales or wherever. As soon as they come back over here, the vehicle obviously can transfer into being registered under WA until a policeman suspects that the car is powerful from the noise or whatever, and the vehicle is pulled over. Then it gets a yellow sticker. After that point, the engineer's certification from South Australia or whatever is completely null and void.

[10.30 am]

Hon RICK MAZZA: Right, so we fall back to the 180 kilowatt per tonne rule?

Mr Khose: Yes, and has to go through the WA side of things.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just before you carry on, Chair, do you mind if I interject a little bit on this?

The CHAIRMAN: Sure, go ahead.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just to be clear in my mind, if you have a 1971 GTHO Shaker or a Torana XU1, and you restore that car to its original condition, quite often there might be small modifications made to increase the power, which would exceed 180 kilowatts per tonne, is my understanding.

Mr Khose: Easily.

Hon RICK MAZZA: And that is fine, even though at best it will only have seat belts, no airbags, clutch or steering column, probably, at that age, and that is it?

Mr Khose: Exactly.

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: Because it is a restoration?

Mr Khose: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you give me an idea of some of the modifications someone might want to make to one of these classic cars? Aside from safety enhancements, which you have already mentioned.

Mr Khose: Okay, let us look at visual. Wheels, obviously. The rest is more cosmetic; paint. There could be some body changes, to change certain things like headlights and tail lights and things like that. That again goes back to structural, which goes back to the engineer.

The CHAIRMAN: So if you change the headlights on a classic car, it would no longer be a restoration, it would now fall under VSB14 for a modified —

Mr Khose: Modified, exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: So you could have a vehicle like what was just mentioned, a classic Aussie muscle car, modify the headlights and you now fall under a completely different regime, under a completely different safety standard, even though, for all intents and purposes, the power of the vehicle is not going to change, the safety of the vehicle is no different to the restoration.

Mr Khose: The headlights have a different beam; they have a different pattern of light. Just like an American vehicle that gets imported here, the tail lights have to be changed, the headlights have to be changed, because the beam pattern is different when it comes on. It does not comply with WA. But if an engineer was involved and he signs it off, then he will give the right requirements, but even after he has given the right requirements, it is rejected.

The CHAIRMAN: The engineer—is he working to the VSB14 standard when he is employed? He is?

Mr Khose: That is it; that is all he is doing.

The CHAIRMAN: So he is giving it his sign-off that it complies with VSB14 and the DOT is exercising its own discretion and applying a different standard?

Mr Khose: I will emphasise on that a little bit. If a certain part of VSB14 is not giving the owner of the vehicle what he wants, then the engineer will give supportive information to that particular rule, in his professional opinion, and he will sign off on that. Back to where you were saying, prior to all this, that sort of process would still be looked upon and approved, but on an individual basis. But now it is more like a blanket rejection.

The CHAIRMAN: With no clear appeal process.

Mr Khose: With no clear information why, and the frustration within the enthusiasts' community now is that everyone has uncertainty about what they can do with their cars. The Australian cars are not going to disappear because Shannon's, for example—I keep referring to Shannon's, one of the biggest insurers—recently there was a GTR XU1, as you brought up, with which a restorer was involved. It got valued by the gentleman in the Whiteman Park museum. He valued the car at \$150 000 as an original—not modified, original. If it was modified, it would be probably about \$180 000, and Shannon's would insure that, based on that.

Hon PIERRE YANG: The certifying engineers, they are generally self-employed?

Mr Khose: Yes, they are, but they are signatories in the Department of Transport recommendations.

Hon PIERRE YANG: And there are a number of them in Western Australia?

Mr Khose: Twelve of them.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned earlier the types of meetings that take place with car enthusiasts across the state. How many people turn up to those kinds of things?

Mr Khose: There are approximately 600 cars that turn up every month; 20 000 to 30 000 people—mums, dads, kids. It is not just a car show; there are a lot of other businesses there, like food vendors. It is more a family outing. Even if you are not a car enthusiast, there is something there for everybody. So it is a big input every month. One of the main ones, I think, this Sunday coming up, is in Kwinana, for example. It would be a minimum of 15 000 to 20 000 people, and approximately 400 to 600 cars.

The CHAIRMAN: Of those 400 to 600 cars, any idea of what percentages might be modified as opposed to purely restorations?

Mr Khose: Again, the age group of the cars is between 1949 to 1984, predominantly. I would say 75 per cent—65 to 75 per cent—would be modified.

The CHAIRMAN: I suppose it might be hard to tell, if a modification might be as simple as a change in headlights or cosmetic change that —

Mr Khose: The majority of them would be wheels. That is the most cosmetic thing they can take off and change at any time. Wheels is another problem, which I had not brought up, because in VSB14 you can upgrade the wheels, width and diameter, and everything like that. The engineer, again, gives the approval of the percentage of width and height and all these things in relation to the brake power. As I said, everything hinges on everything. The engineer does give documentation to hinge on every modification, from wheels to brakes, to chassis and whatever. But the biggest cosmetic one is the wheels.

Hon RICK MAZZA: How many members would the ASMF—WA have?

Mr Khose: I put this together in 2016. I am a business owner in the restoration business myself, and also in construction. There are two others. One is a land developer—that is in my group—and the other is a guy that owns a big automatic transmission company that has factories in every state in the country. Altogether, there are four of us, actively.

Hon RICK MAZZA: So there are four active members within that federation?

Mr Khose: Yes. We have not made anything we have done public, for a particular reason. As soon as I formed the group, I started to get people calling me and saying to me, “We want to support you and we want to rally against the government.” I did not want any part of that.

Hon RICK MAZZA: So this federation, basically, is representing business owners within this industry. Underneath that, in the car enthusiast groups, how many associations would there be?

Mr Khose: All of us, including myself, I am a committee member of probably about four car clubs. All up, in WA, I would say there is about—the CMC cover all of them, but I would say at least 50-odd car clubs—individual car clubs.

Hon RICK MAZZA: And membership, as a bit of a guesstimate, across those 50 car clubs ?

Mr Khose: \$50 to \$70.

Hon RICK MAZZA: No, numbers of members.

Mr Khose: Numbers of members? Sorry. In the smallest club, probably about 25 or 30 people, up to 40-odd, or 50-odd members in individual clubs.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I do not know whether you have got this in your submission or not, but what would be the number of modified vehicles registered in Western Australia? Would you have that detail?

Mr Khose: I have that information, yes. I have that on a statistical level. I have not actually got proof from the Department of Transport on that. I could produce that. I could probably give you a good approximation from one of the insurance companies.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Can we have that as a question on notice, Chair? I would be interested to see what the number of approved modified vehicles is in Western Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take that question on notice, and we will provide you with a written form of that question, and you can provide us with an answer at a later date.

[10.40 am]

Mr Khose: Thank you. I have got to admit, I am sorry, but I have got an overload of information in my head in regard to this.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, we appreciate that.

Hon PIERRE YANG: Just to help me picture in my mind the requirement of 180 kilowatts per tonne, I used to have a Holden Astra. It is a small sedan. How many kilowatts per tonne would that vehicle be? Sorry if it is a bit hard to gauge.

Mr Khose: It would be 60 or 70 kilowatts. It is not classed as a vehicle—you have just reminded me of a very good point. We have found that the lower powered vehicles are in more crash statistical information in the speeds of 40 kilometres.

Hon RICK MAZZA: You have got that in your submission actually.

Mr Khose: Yes.

Hon PIERRE YANG: And a present-day, let us say, Toyota Camry, what would that be?

Mr Khose: Again, no more than 100 kilowatts per tonne, but then your brand-new Holden or Ford, 300 or 400-kilowatt, factory, on the road registered, from the manufacturer.

Hon PIERRE YANG: And many vehicles that are put into the application are 180 kilowatts per tonne?

Mr Khose: No, they are all pushing the limits of probably 200 kilowatts per tonne starting, up to anywhere between—yes, 200 to, say, 400 to 500. Again, not too much more than a brand-new performance car coming out from the factory.

The CHAIRMAN: I guess trying to figure out the power-to-weight ratio is a little bit harder, but I suppose the series 2 Holden Caprice, which I drive, straight out of the factory, that is 304 kilowatts. So something like that—admittedly, that has the modern safety features—power-to-weight ratio would far exceed what is being applied by the DoT, at 180 kilowatts per tonne.

Mr Khose: Exactly. I know we have bundled it from 1949 to 1984, which we have found then to be more the steel-bumpered vehicles, but my argument is, if I am only looking at that demographic, in the future, as time goes on, there is going to be another group again, which, if there was some sort of guideline that was being followed, we could have consistency.

The CHAIRMAN: We are almost out of time, Mr Khose, but maybe, if we can follow what you are saying there, as a final question: What is it exactly you are looking for? Are you looking for clarity for your members? If you could pin it down to one issue that you need resolved, what would it be?

Mr Khose: We want to do what we originally did—work with the Department of Transport on their policy of VSB14. That is the bottom line, because we can comfortably give them more technical information—engineering information—to help them approve or disapprove, but to build on VSB14, that is our core.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for attending today. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction. If you believe that any corrections should be made because of typographical or transcription errors, please indicate these corrections on the transcript. The committee requests that you provide your answers to questions taken on notice when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. If you want to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points you have provided, you may provide supplementary evidence for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence.

Hearing concluded at 10.44 am
