Mr Iain Cameron  
Chair  
Road Safety Council  

Dear Mr Cameron  

The State Government has decided to provide funding for a new Police helicopter. It is proposed that the capital funding of $26.9 million across the forward estimates be sourced from the Road Trauma Trust Account.  

I note that funds from the Account are to be applied for measures or activities that pertain to road safety and the reduction of death, injury and property damage resulting from incidents on roads. Also, a measure or activity may be funded from the proceeds of the Account to the extent that the measure or activity is for the purposes identified above.  

The Western Australia Police Force advise that the Police helicopter plays an important role in road safety, including through its contributions to traffic enforcement, the management and safe resolution of pursuits and the apprehension of offending drivers. The helicopter is also a designated back up aeromedical resource and one of the State’s resources for delivering heavy cutting equipment to road traffic crash scenes. Further information will be provided by the Western Australia Police Force.  

I write to you regarding this matter pursuant to Section 6A of the Road Safety Council Act 2002.  

Yours sincerely  

HON MICHELLE ROBERTS BA DipEd MLA  
MINISTER FOR ROAD SAFETY  

22 MAR 2018  

Level 12, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth, Western Australia 6005
Hon Michelle Roberts MLA
Minister for Road Safety
Level 12, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Minister

RE: MINISTERIAL CORRESPONDENCE - SECTION 6A OF THE ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL ACT 2002 – WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE HELICOPTER

The Road Safety Council (the Council) met on the 28th March 2018 to consider your letter of 22nd March 2018 informing the Council of the Government’s proposal to source $26.9 million (m) from the Road Trauma Trust Account (RTTA) for a replacement Police helicopter.

Your letter was pursuant to Section 6 (A) (2) of the Road Safety Council Act 2002 (the Act), which requires the Council to recommend to the Minister as to whether or not money standing to the credit of the RTTA should be spent in accordance with the proposal presented or if the proposal should be modified.

The Council noted that the proposal is to purchase one helicopter for the Western Australia Police Force (WAPF) to replace an existing helicopter. The existing helicopter is presently funded through consolidated fund appropriation. The proposal is for the total capital cost of the helicopter and does not include any contribution to operational costs.

The WAPF proposal states that during 2016-2017 thirty-eight percent (38%) of the helicopter tasks undertaken related to traffic enforcement. The traffic enforcement function relates to resolving vehicle pursuits. It is also stated that such aircraft have the potential to be deployed for medical evacuations; however, WAPF verbally advised that this has not occurred.

The Council was not able to find evidence available to evaluate the effectiveness of this helicopter’s functions in relation to improving the safety of roads and reducing deaths and injuries to people resulting from incidents occurring on roads as per the Act. The Council considered that the proposed allocation of RTTA funds would not increase existing capacity or capability which may contribute to improving road safety outcomes.

Under Section 5 of the Act, the Council makes recommendations to improve the safety of roads and to reduce deaths and injuries to people resulting from incidents occurring on roads. The performance of this function is done in the context of the Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy for 2008-2020 (State Strategy) for road safety and priorities established through understanding the effectiveness of road safety measures, such as the reduction of the number of people killed and seriously injured and cost benefit analysis of alternatives.
Recommendations

The Council:

1. notes the importance of the WA Police Force helicopter service to the community;

2. does not recommend that the proposal as submitted be funded from the RTTA as only a proportion of the helicopter’s time will be allocated to measures that meet the requirements of the Act in section 5 to improve the safety of roads and reduce the deaths and serious injuries to people resulting from incidents occurring on roads;

3. has not recommended a modified proposal for the expenditure of RTTA funds because:
   3.1. there is insufficient information to quantify the killed and serious injury benefits and cost benefits of the helicopter in relation to improving road safety outcomes;
   3.2. the opportunity cost of reallocating available funds away from evidence-based initiatives that have an identified cost benefit for road safety for the community such as shoulder sealing and audible edge-lining on regional roads; and
   3.3. of the importance of maximising available resources towards the priority initiatives identified by the Council in the annual budget as essential towards achieving the ambitious 40% reduction target in serious and fatal crashes in the Towards Zero strategy for WA 2008-2020;

4. notes that there may be other capital projects with an identified and proven cost benefit for road safety improvement that could be considered for funding from the RTTA.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Iain Cameron
Chairman, Road Safety Council

3 April 2018