

## History of Road Trauma Support WA

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### From tragedy, something meaningful begins...

In February 1999, Western Australian couple Alan and Glenda Maloney found themselves on a journey no one would wish to take. Their 17 year old daughter Skye and her friend died suddenly in a road crash.

They became increasingly aware about the lack of support available while trying to cope with their trauma and negotiating all the post-crash procedures whilst in this state.

In 2000, the Road Safety Council Chair invited Alan and Glenda to become advocates for road safety. This led them to form APART (Australian Parents Against Road Trauma) and for three years, the group delivered school presentations, advocated a 50 km/hour urban speed limit and petitioned for a car manufacturer 'code of conduct' against using speed to advertise vehicles. Part of their vision was a dedicated service providing road trauma support in WA.

In 2003, they relocated to Northcliffe, a small rural town in the South West. Contact by other grieving families seeking support during this time reinforced their belief in an enormous gap in support services. Their own research showed existing agencies were severely stretched. Time delays and costs accessing suitable help led to people feeling isolated and unsupported.

An email from a bereaved mother and wife made its way to Alan and Glenda in 2007. She had relocated to Perth from Victoria, having previously been supported by Road Trauma Support Services Victoria. Glenda sought advice from the founding member of RTSSV, who encouraged her to lobby the WA government, despite knowing a positive outcome, if any, would likely take years. Alan and Glenda decided to take up the challenge and thus in 2008, began five years intensive lobbying for establishment and funding of a dedicated road trauma counselling service for WA.

### Advocacy process

Some years earlier, Alan and Glenda had been advised by the Office of Road Safety Director that a potential avenue to securing this was via the Road Safety Council's Department of Health representative. The request to fund a service from the Road Trauma Trust Account appeared on the Road Safety Council Agenda in November 2008.

Meanwhile, countless agencies and individuals associated with road safety, trauma, mental health, emergency services and countless other areas, had also been working over many years to ensure support would be available to those affected by road trauma.

Glenda personally spoke and wrote to many of them which included Road Safety Council members, Office of Road Safety, Victim Support Service, Coroners Counselling Service, hospital and emergency services (WA Police, St John Ambulance and Fire and Emergency Services Authority), Insurance Commission of WA, RAC and politicians, gathering information about gaps in existing services, lack of dedicated support and funding available possibilities. Letters of support were requested from relevant service providers.

Glenda and Alan wrote to Hon. Peter Watson MLA who had offered his support two years earlier and met with Hon. Terry Redman, who brought the issue to the Minister for Police and Road Safety and Minister for Health. Parliamentary Members began to actively support the project:

- Hon. Margaret Quirk, MLA contacted Alan and Glenda (August 2009).
- Mr. John Quigley read a Grievance in Parliament to Hon. Rob Johnson (Minister for Police and Road Safety) urging the government to commit support and funding of dedicated WA road trauma support service (September 2009).

Finally in July 2009, the Road Safety Council recommended that:

- The Road Safety Council recognises and supports the need for road trauma counselling services to be established in WA, which provide professional counselling, facilitated individual access to appropriate community service providers, and a one-stop support information service for all road trauma victims.
- Funding of \$35,000 be provided to the Department of Health, Western Australia, from the Road Trauma Trust Account; through the normal budgeting process, to independently investigate options and budgeting associated with establishing a road trauma support service in Western Australia.

In support of this, Labor introduced a Private Members' Bill to amend the Road Safety Council Act; allowing the Road Trauma Trust Account to fund a road trauma support service (November 2009) as legal advice to this point indicated legislation protected trust account monies from being used for this purpose.

## Recommendations for a service

This led to formation of a Reference Group, supported by Sylvia Griffiths and Dr. Revle Bangor-Jones from Department of Health WA, to establish the report scope and research parameters.

### Original Reference Group Members:

- Amber Arazi, People with Disabilities WA
- Christina Wright, (as above)
- Jenny Bergman, Victim Support Service
- Allyson Browne, Royal Perth Hospital
- Marianne Carey, RAC WA
- Gary Cooper, Office of State Coroner
- Deborah Costello, Injury Control Council of WA
- Paul Davis, Carers WA
- Sharon Easton, Swan Districts Hospital
- Diana Elliott, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
- Peter Farnham
- Catherine Ferguson, Edith Cowan University
- Stephanie Fewster, Carers WA
- Colleen Fisher
- Steele George
- Richard Higgins, Paraplegic Benefit Fund Australia
- Odwyn Jones
- Rob Kingma, DFES
- Tara Ludlow, Carers WA
- Carole Macey, Victim Support Service
- Alan & Glenda Maloney, Bereaved parents
- Barry May
- Angela McDowall, Royal Perth Hospital
- Robert McKrill, Princess Margaret Hospital
- Corinne Moulé, WA Police
- Chris Parry, Department of Indigenous Affairs
- Terri-Anne Pettet, Roadwise
- Barbara (Barb) Rawlins
- Antonella Segre, ConnectGroups
- Sam Sita • Don Sonsee, St John Ambulance
- Benny Sullivan, Curtin University
- Merle Taylor

In 2011, Dr. Lauren Breen, researcher and senior lecturer at Curtin University WA, conducted indepth research on behalf of Department of Health WA: "Establishing a Sustainable Road Trauma Support Service in Western Australia" (Associate Investigators: Moira O'Connor and Anh T. Le, Research Associate: Jenny Clarke).

The report recommendations, with bi-partisan political support, were followed up with a State Government commitment in the 2012/13 state budget:

- \$750,000 from the Road Trauma Trust Account allocated for the service (2013/14 and 2014/15).
- Department of Health WA tendered the establishment of a free, statewide service providing sustainable information, peer support and professional therapeutic interventions for anyone affected by road trauma in WA.

## On the way

Injury Matters (previously the Injury Control Council of WA (ICCWA)) was awarded the contract in November 2012 with the report's 22 recommendations forming the basis of Road Trauma Support WA's Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles. A Road Trauma Support WA Steering Committee formed immediately to provide strategic advice regarding service development and establishment and included relevant industry and community representatives, some directly affected by road trauma. Many of the original Reference Group were invited to continue.

### Original Steering Committee Members:

- Alan & Glenda Maloney, Bereaved Parents
- Carole Macey, Co-ordinator - Victim Support Service WA
- Corinne Moulé; Senior Constable - WA Police Major Crash
- Freda Crucitti; Independent Member
- John Smith; Major Crash Investigator / Supervisor -WA Police • Keith Conder; Community representative living with spinal cord injury (also PBF Educator)
- Kristine Trevaskis; Senior Coronial Counsellor - Office of the State Coroner
- Dr. Lauren Breen; Senior Lecturer -Curtin University
- Maxine Drake; Community Representative - Acquired Brain Injury Inc. WA
- Michael Hansen; Community Representative living with an ABI (Also Board Member ABI Inc. WA)
- May Bowden; General Manager - Paraplegic Benefit Fund Australia
- Sharon Easton; Senior Social Worker - Swan District Hospital
- Dr. Sudhakar Rao; Patron (Head of Trauma Unit at Royal Perth Hospital)
- Don Sonsee (retired St. John Ambulance) – no longer active.

## Vision becomes reality

Supported by the Road Trauma Trust Account through the Road Safety Council, Office of Road Safety and Department of Health WA, the vision of many became a reality: Road Trauma Support WA launched Sunday 17 November 2013, on the annual World Remembrance Day for Road Traffic Victims with Dr Sudhakar Rao as Patron

Injury Matters acknowledges the myriad of individuals and organisations who participated in the planning and development of this service. We particularly acknowledge Alan and Glenda Maloney for their commitment and dedication in advocating for a dedicated road trauma support service in Western Australia in memory of their beautiful daughter, Skye Maloney. Thanks to the efforts of so many wonderful people, support is now available to all people in WA affected by road trauma.

