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## Extract from Melton Weekly

### Road toll plagues Melton

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MELTON is Victoria's 10th-worst area for road fatalities, new figures reveal.

Data released by the Transport Accident Commission last week shows Baw Baw topped the list with 15 fatalities in the 12 months to April. It was followed by Benalla, Casey, Mornington Peninsula and Wangaratta (all 11), Bendigo (10), and Cardinia, Central Goldfields, Geelong, Melton and Mitchell (9).

Melton's figure was higher than its seven deaths recorded in 2010.

But Melton's Leading Senior Constable Allan Edwards said it could be troublesome to compare the raw data on face value.

"It is difficult to say it's an increase in context when considering the number of vehicles using the road and population increase over the 10 years. It is not an outrageous increase."

He said factors such as fatigue, speed and drug and alcohol impairment accounted for most single-vehicle accidents.

Leading Senior Constable Edwards urged motorists to travel with caution during winter.

"No matter what the conditions are, you must drive to them," he said.

"The other factor is that not everyone drives safely so you have to allow for other people's mistakes and lapses in concentration, and drive defensively".

Calder Action Group president Russell Mowatt said he would welcome any improvements designed to reduce fatalities on the freeway.

He agreed motorists should drive to conditions but said that if roads weren't up to a safe standard there was only so much that could be done.

"Other groups and other shires need funding, too, but we need to get to the top priorities and unless you get to that window of opportunity for the federal budget in 2014, you miss out," Mr Mowatt said.

The group, which formed in 2007, has worked with VicRoads to develop a plan to prevent illegal U-turns at the Calder Park Drive and Calder Freeway interchange and the Organ Pipes Road and Calder Freeway interchange.

The plan was approved by VicRoads in late May and Mr Mowatt now wants the Baillieu government to commit funding for the project.