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NRMA AD PLACES CHILDREN'S LIVES AT RISK

Road safety advocate Peter Olsen has today slammed the NRMA over its current Motorserve television commercial featuring babies crawling along roads. He claims that the commercial could lead to a tragedy.

"I was appalled when I first saw the commercial. It started airing shortly after the incident in Texas on 20 May where a baby was found sitting in the middle of a road and was almost run over by a bus.

"Children at that age are very impressionable and learn by copying. The commercial sends the message that playing on roads is acceptable behaviour. It could easily lead to a child being killed.

"Governments spend millions of dollars on road safety campaigns trying to teach young children the dangers of roads. This commercial has the potential to undermine those efforts, purely in the name of revenue raising.

"I wrote to the NRMA to express my concerns over the commercial. A manager from their Public Relations department rang me yesterday in response to that correspondence.

"Far from agreeing with any of my concerns, the manager insisted that there was nothing wrong with the commercial and that it posed no risk whatsoever to children.

"The reasons cited by him for believing so were: "It was not the NRMA's intention to place children's lives at risk." and "The commercial is unrealistic because the babies are larger than life".

"Far from being unrealistic the commercials would appear totally real to a young child, as demonstrated in the photo below from the NRMA Motorserve web site. It shows the exact perspective that a baby would see when crawling beside another baby. The other baby, in the foreground, will always appear much larger than background roads and buildings.

"The NRMA has often raised concerns about car commercials that feature speed and reckless driving, claiming quite rightly that they influence the behaviour of young people. It now claims that its own commercials do not influence the minds of children who are at a far more impressionable age.

"I call on the NRMA to immediately withdraw the commercials before a child is killed through the natural learning process of copying.

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