

Mr Tim Mills  
Inquiry Secretary  
Parliament House  
Hobart Tas  
By email [rst@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:rst@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Sir,

### **Inquiry into road safety in Tasmania**

This is a submission made in response to the invitation published *inter alia* in the Mercury, which records that a Select Committee of the Legislative Council is to enquire into and report upon "ways in which to improve road safety in Tasmania".

### **Reform**

In my submission road safety in Tasmania would be advanced and individual rights recognised, restored and entrenched by implementation of the following measures:

1. Increase the 110 km/h limit to 130 km/h on all sections of divided road and on every overtaking lane forming part of the highway network;
2. Restore to 60 km/h the limit applicable to every major interconnecting road which is presently subject to a 50 km/h limit, including, in the south of the State, Davey Street, Macquarie Street and Sandy Bay Road;
3. Restore to 110 km/h the highway limit applicable to the major highways presently subject to the limit of 100 km/h, including without loss of generality the East Coast drive.
4. Restore to 100 km/h the limit applicable to the Kingborough and Circular Head municipalities;
5. Engage in a public education campaign designed to honestly and comprehensively disclose and warn against the extreme levels of danger attending the riding of a pushbike on any part of the motor vehicle road network, including without loss of generality the high likelihood of the suffering by the rider of severe lifestyle destroying personal injuries or death, with a view to reducing, so far as is reasonably possible toward zero, the pushbike density currently affecting the motor vehicle road network;
6. Improve driver training at all levels to include both advanced **and** defensive driving courses, and track experience designed to enhance the skill of drivers **and** to make them aware of the limits of their vehicle in all conditions;
7. Substantially increase the penalties attending the use of a mobile phone other than by use of a hands-free Bluetooth system whilst driving, to include:
  - a. a fine of \$1000 and four demerit points for a first offence;

- b. a fine of \$3000 and six demerit points for a second offence and;
  - c. a fine of \$5000, confiscation and destruction of the mobile phone and disqualification for 3 months for a third or subsequent offence;
- in each case subject to an "exceptional circumstances" defence.
8. Engage in a government-sponsored State fleet upgrade under which old clunkers are bought back by the government for a fixed reasonable amount, such as \$1000, and duty concessions are offered on the acquisition of new vehicles with the highest concessions being offered for high-performance vehicles.

These measures cherry pick the current German system, which is based upon individual freedom and is the most successful in Europe in balancing individual freedom, which the Mercury, the RACT, the RASC, the Greens, and their fellow travellers are seeking to destroy, and the wider public interest, so far as it is genuinely material in the present context. It is of course the case that the German 130 km/h limit is in the main advisory, that is to say, much of the German autobahn system remains unrestricted, as it has been since the fall of Nazi Germany. What the Mercury, the RACT, the RASC, the Greens, and their fellow travellers are seeking to impose by force here in Tasmania is, in my submission, a system indistinguishable from that which applied under the Nazi regime. I oppose it, very strongly, and I do not stand alone.

I record my view that it is not a coincidence that none of the Mercury, the RACT, the RASC, or the Greens make any reference to, let alone properly consider, the German system, despite that system being very similar to that which applies in the rest of continental Western Europe and also in the United Kingdom (save for the German 130 km/h limit being advisory-it is elsewhere mandatory).

### **Recent adverse developments**

Motorists' rights have been further substantially restricted in this State since your last enquiry into it in 2012, in the main by creeping but severe further speed restrictions (most of which have nothing to do with road safety) but also through roadworks for example such as those inflicted on motorists on Sandy Bay Road in Hobart, by which the road has become an obstacle course for almost the whole of which it is impossible to overtake, and on the part of the national highway between Pontville and Bagdad. All of these measures have been an abject failure, because the road toll continues to increase. My view of all this is, thus, strongly vindicated by history since I became involved in this diabolical political process in 2011.

In my submission the worsening of the road toll has occurred primarily because of:

- the reduction of speed limits, which has been inflicted in the main by stealth and legerdemain, and roadworks designed to frustrate motorists and to advance the interests of pushbike riders and

pedestrians who choose to break the law and act in a manner deliberately careless for their own safety;

- the emboldenment of pushbike riders to inflict their selfish lifestyle choice on motorists (and on those who have the duty to care for them after they are injured); and
- the emboldenment of pedestrians on the motor vehicle road network, who choose to break the law and act in a manner deliberately careless for their own safety.

### **Detailed submissions-letter to the Minister and its attachments**

I dealt with these issues by recent correspondence to the responsible minister, the Honourable Michael Ferguson, and I attach as part of this submission my letter to him dated 23 February 2021 and its attachments. That letter is in my submission a good summary of the current position in this State. I request that it be read now, along with its attachments. I adhere very strongly to the views therein expressed.

I add that:

1. The chairman of the RSAC to whom I referred is a Mr Bailey. He left that role not long after my letter to the Minister and was shortly thereafter appointed by the RACT as its public advocate.
2. The fact that the RACT has appointed a doyen of the pushbike riders as its public advocate illustrates the extent to which the RACT has abandoned its role as the promoter and protector of motorists' rights. Moreover what the RACT does now is to actively support and promote the destruction of motorists' rights *inter alia* by:
  - a. refusing to contest, and on the contrary giving effect to or supporting, the monstrous speed limit reductions already made in the city of Hobart including on the major interconnecting roads and now, very recently, across the whole of the CBD;
  - b. advancing and promoting the rights of the pushbike riders, and pedestrians who choose to break the law and act in a manner deliberately careless for their own safety, instead of standing hard against them and campaigning for their removal from the motor vehicle road network;
  - c. supporting the continuing destruction of the amenity of the city of Hobart through traffic congestion, by refusing to support and on the contrary opposing, the construction of the Cotgrove bypass and other infrastructure required to increase the traffic capacity of Davey and Macquarie streets by at least 40%.
3. The Mercury has recently engaged in a passive-aggressive campaign the purpose of which is to seduce the public into the view that the current ludicrously low speed limits are too high, *inter alia* by publishing a fake news story purportedly authored by a senior driver who had "decided to break the



habits of a lifetime" by always driving in the 100 km speed zone at 80 km. This story was genuinely infuriating *per se* and because it made a number of baseless assertions to the effect that doing so was *ipso facto* and in all conditions much safer than driving at 100km/h. What the story fails to state, of course, is the driving at that speed in 100 km zone will induce road rage in other drivers and is highly likely to induce other drivers, acting reasonably, to overtake or to take other action which will or may involve elevated risk; it also fails to state and acknowledge that driving at such a low speed in 100 km zone will induce boredom and inattention and may even put the driver to sleep, which will result in a very serious accident. It would enable the driver, of course, to be on the phone at the same time and play a video game or with something else on the driver's lap. The assertion in the story that this kind of low speed involves more time to react &c. is just garbage; low speed breeds boredom and inattention and that results in accidents.

4. The RACT has participated in the Mercury's campaign by publishing an article apparently under the hand of its new CEO, in which *inter alia* the CEO extols the virtues of Norway and denigrates the Northern Territory in each case without any detailed analysis for example of the reason why Norway has succeeded in reducing its road casualty rate at a higher rate than the rest of Scandinavia. Further, the CEO does not state that the default speed limit in Norway is 80 km/h; the overwhelming inference is that the CEO is attempting by legerdemain or outright deceit to inflict that default limit on drivers in Tasmania. This kind of thing incites civil unrest and promotes violence against the State and the individuals seeking to inflict their views by force on others who hold strongly contrary views.
5. The RACT CEO also does acknowledge and state that Norway, along with the rest of Scandinavia, is not comparable to any part of this country including Tasmania because *inter alia*;
  - a. the blood alcohol limit in Norway and elsewhere in Scandinavia is .02 and is vigorously enforced, with very heavy penalties for breach;
  - b. the whole of Scandinavia suffers from a continuously dark winter freeze out such that for six months of the year driving is virtually impossible or very heavily restricted; and
  - c. there is a much higher level of driver training in Scandinavia including in particular in adverse conditions, with the result that the driving population is better trained and more highly skilled than in this country.
6. There does not seem to be any persuasive scientific basis for the Norway casualty rate to be less than that of the rest of Scandinavia, but a reasonable hypothesis for it is that Norway has for the past many years engaged in a very aggressive campaign to replace fossil fuelled vehicles with electric vehicles. The campaign has involved very heavy subsidisation of the purchase by everybody of electric vehicles, with the result that the uptake rate of those vehicles is the highest in the world. A corollary, relevant to the present issue, is that the motor vehicle fleet in Norway has been effectively renewed, with

older fossil fuelled vehicles being trashed in favour of new electric ones. There is no reason why something similar could not be undertaken here, but there is in my submission no need to limit any new vehicle acquisition program to those fuelled by electricity in whole or part.

7. The reference to the Northern Territory requires further analysis but *prima facie* it is at least disingenuous of the CEO to refer to it, because there is no reasonable comparison to be made between the driving conditions in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Until relatively recently the Northern Territory enjoyed unrestricted speed on its rural sealed roads; a few years ago that was changed to a 130 km/h speed limit, but the last territory Liberal government broke new ground by honouring an election promise, relevantly to undertake a trial again derestricting the speed on a long section of highway immediately to the north of Alice Springs. The trial took place, despite opposition from the Northern Territory equivalent of the RACT, which was inexplicably and breathtakingly acting directly against motorists' interests, and, most breathtakingly of all, from the AMA, whose business it was not. The trial was a tremendous success, in that there was no increase at all in the casualty rate and:
  - a. the trial resulted in a very substantial uptick in tourism to Alice Springs by the drivers of high-performance cars, who took the opportunity to use those vehicles for their designed purpose and travel to Alice Springs (and consequentially also to the rest of the Territory) expressly for that purpose; and
  - b. during the trial Bentley honoured this country by launching one of its new models at Alice Springs-the launch was one of three held worldwide, with the other two being in Germany and in the Middle East respectively.
8. The Northern Territory Liberal government rightly continued the reduction in the trial area but unfortunately, on its defeat, the newly elected Labour government reversed it and inflicted by force the 130 km/h limit which had previously applied. In my submission that was an outrageous thing to do, and amounted to infliction of a Nazi-style limit for no good reason. It was an outrageous breach of the most fundamental of all human rights, namely freedom of action. The fact that the AMA apparently supported it, when it had no expertise whatsoever in the area, in my submission reflects very badly on the AMA. This ultimate outcome is, in my submission, an embarrassment to this country.
9. The casualty rate in the Northern Territory is also highly likely to be in part a function of the racial composition of the territory, which is, of course, very different to Tasmania. The statute law of this country prevents me from taking this aspect of the matter any further.

In all of the foregoing circumstances I submit that the plan for reform which I set out at the beginning of this correspondence is the best way forward in Tasmania.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AJ Abbott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

AJ Abbott  
retired and part-time primary producer



23 February 2021

The Hon Michael Ferguson  
By email  
[michael@michaelferguson.com](mailto:michael@michaelferguson.com)

Dear Minister,

**Speed limit policy and related issues**

I am writing to you in your capacity as the Minister responsible for road safety and as the Minister to whom the RSAC reports. I am 6th generation Tasmanian and a retired tax silk and, in retirement, a part-time farmer. I have had a lifelong interest in high-performance vehicles and have driven them extensively in this country and in continental Western Europe.

I provide, by way of background, my submission made to the RSAC by letter dated 18 January 2011 in relation to a proposal then extant and subsequently implemented, in slightly restricted form after public uproar, to lower the default speed limits excepting only the 110 km highway limit, and my submission made to the Legislative Council by letter dated 28 November 2012 in amplification of the submissions earlier made. I adhere to the submissions thereby made and I respectfully direct your attention to them. It is appropriate to emphasise at this point that they were made in response to a proposal by the green left Giddings Labor government.

The purpose of this correspondence is four-fold.

Firstly, I submit that the speed limit reductions effected since 2012 have been an abject failure, at least in relation to country roads. Despite that abject failure it is my understanding that the RSAC, in the *persona* of its chairman, is pressing you to make matters worse from the viewpoint of motorists, *inter alia* by implementing all of the partly abandoned 2011-12 proposal to blanket reduce the limits.

Secondly, I draw to your attention that the RSAC purveys the view that there is but one fundamental principle by reference to which all road safety policy in this State and in this country ought to be regulated and the current ludicrously low limits inflicted, namely that:

*Lower speed reduces the damage caused when a motor vehicle accident occurs.*

In my submission this principle, properly viewed, is at best a disingenuous half-truth. It assumes that every motor vehicle accident is inevitable. Patently obviously that is not the case. At the very least it ought to be expressed in these terms:



*Lower speed reduces the damage if a motor vehicle accident occurs.*

The RSAC does not express the principle in the iteration just stated because, as it well knows, the substitution of "if" for "when" does not suit its purpose, which is to inflict by force lower speed limits so as to destroy motorists' rights and to advance and promote the rights of pushbike riders and others who seek to use the motor vehicle road network for their own benefit.

Further and more importantly, the expression of the principle as I would have it, that is with "if" substituted for "when", draws into relief the fundamental issue here, which is as to the cause of motor vehicle accidents. Motor vehicle accidents are not caused by speed, except at extreme levels and in unusual circumstances not presently relevant, but are caused by:

- Inattention, for example through playing with one's phone or anything else whilst driving
- Lack of skill
- Boredom
- Intoxication caused by the self-administration of alcohol, drugs or medication
- Vehicle defects
- Insufficient training and practice in particular in driving in difficult conditions such as snow, ice or heavy rain
- Suicide or attempted suicide
- Deliberately pushing the limits of a motor vehicle well beyond the vehicle's capacity as it is known, or ought to be known, to the driver

In some of these cases speed may be involved, and in these cases it is said by the RSAC to be a "factor". This leads to the further disingenuous view expressed by the RSAC to the effect that speed is one of the substantive causes of accidents; that is a non-sequitur. If the relevant dot point cause is removed the accident would not happen. Speed, thus, is at least in almost all cases simply **not** the cause of the accident.

Thirdly, I direct your attention to a fundamental conflict of interest from which the current chairman of the RSAC suffers. The current chairman is, as I understand it, a doyen of the pushbike riders. Also he is also a former editor of the Mercury, which for many years has been anything but a responsible capital city newspaper; it has been and it is the organ of the hard green left. Pushbike riders are the natural enemy of motorists. It follows that the current chairman simply cannot advise you, in any impartial or proper way, as to the resolution of the conflict between pushbike riders and motorists.

It is appropriate to provide you with one example of the conflict. Recently the pushbike riders have had a major victory, in that they have had reduced the speed limit on the Richmond Road from a sensible 100 km/h to an insensible and totally unacceptable 80 km/h. That was done solely to suit the convenience of the pushbike



riders, and was followed by the erection of infuriating road signs which, under a message of "share the road" put the pushbike riders on a par with tractors and trucks. The road is of course used by tractors and trucks, but those vehicles are driven by their drivers in the ordinary course of their employment and/or for legitimate business purposes. Pushbike riders on the Richmond Road are engaging in a recreational activity intended by them to infuriate motorists and to push a green left agenda. In that they succeed; there was and is a very high level of anger about all of this, which included large public rallies in Richmond. Further, even after motorists have endured months and months of roadworks intended to build and building a lovely bike lane on either side of the Richmond Road, the speed limit has not yet been increased to 100 km/h on the very substantial part of the road on which the works have been completed. The current chairman of the RSAC is in no position to advise you, impartially and properly, in relation to any of that.

The Richmond Road victory mirrored the victory achieved by the pushbike riders on part of the national highway network between Pontville and Bagdad-after years of very tedious and highly inconvenient roadworks we now have long straight stretches of road with lovely bike lanes on both sides and a totally unacceptable 80 km/h speed limit. Every motorist is fundamentally inconvenienced by that without there being any justification for it on any basis.

Pushbike riding is inherently highly dangerous. For example:

1. A leading Hobart specialist medical practitioner crashed his pushbike whilst riding on one of their expropriated favourite roads, namely over Bonnet Hill, and suffered irreversible substantial damage to his spine, which will make the rest of his life a living misery;
2. a leading Hobart lawyer crashed his pushbike whilst riding on to the approaches to the Bridgewater Bridge, and suffered irreversible substantial damage to his lower arm, which will make the rest of his life a living misery;
3. one of my neighbours, under pressure from the green left to ride a bike, crashed an e-bike on the Hobart cycleway, suffering substantial injury including a broken arm which took a very long time to mend and then not completely;
4. the left-wing Mayor of the City of Sydney, participating in a pushbike riding day intended to seduce the public into the view that that is an appropriate activity in which to engage, fell off and broke her ankle-I'm not sure of the ultimate outcome but at her age the high likelihood is that it will never be the same again and will make her life a living misery.

Pushbike riders are of course perfectly entitled to engage in that activity but what they are **not** entitled to do is to force their view on motorists by expropriating the motor vehicle road network and/or making driving on it a misery for motorists.

It is the role of government, I submit, to educate the public about the high level of inherent danger and therefore strongly against non-essential pushbike riding on the

motor vehicle road network, with a view to reducing that to as near as is possible towards zero.

Fourthly and most importantly, I must draw to your attention the fact that you are a Liberal member of Parliament and that the Liberal party is supposed to be the party which stands for the most fundamental of all human rights, which is freedom of action. The German autobahn system is founded upon that human right, which had been denied by the Nazi regime. Germany has one of the best road safety records in the world, and most of its road system is directly comparable to the road system in this State and in most of this country, unsealed remote outback roads excepted. For the right to be interfered with, as it is in this country, is just outrageous and without any reasonable justification. **I implore you not to make that worse, and to do your duty as a member of the party which stands for individual freedom.**

The current chairman of the RSAC is on the record as stating that he wants the road regulation system in this State to mirror that which applies in the Netherlands which is, of course, flat and nirvana for the hard green pushbike riding left. The infliction of that system here, in my view, would spark violence such as that which has already happened in Victoria but at a higher level. In my submission that would be undesirable.

In my submission the RSAC has no proper role to play and should be abolished.

Kind regards,



AJ Abbott SC  
retired and part-time primary producer

28 November 2012

Mr Tom Wise  
Clerk of Committees  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000  
Email:tom.wise@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Sir,

**RURAL ROAD SPEED LIMITS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE**

I refer to the advertisement published in *The Mercury* on 24 November 2012 and I take this opportunity to:

1. make to your Committee the submission which I made to the Road Safety Advisory Council by my letter dated 8 January 2011 a PDF of which is attached, which I made to that body when this monstrous proposal was first mooted, albeit in a slightly different form to the present proposal; and
2. make further submissions by this letter.

**As to the submissions already made**

At numbered point 3 on p.4 of the submission I note that the Tasmanian evidence, based on a study in Kingborough, supports the view that the so-called "safer speeds demonstration" in that municipality did no such thing, that is to say, the results of the study showed no statistically significant reduction in fatal or serious injury crashes. When this result became known, the Chair of the RSAC, who I understand to be a retired fireman named Gledhill, was interviewed by one of the Tasmanian television channels. He stated in substance that:

- the very few numerical reductions were "significant"; and
- in any event and come what may he was determined, as Chair of the RSAC, to press on to inflict the 90km/h limit proposal on the public by force of law.

I personally witnessed this broadcast when it went to air. I formed the view that Gledhill was either lying outright or, more likely, that he had no understanding or acceptance whatsoever of the concept of statistical significance. In either case it was clear beyond any question that he was bent on a course of action intended to destroy motorists' rights irrespective of whether or not there was any proper justification for that as a matter of road safety. This is, in my submission, appalling. I submit that it is clear beyond any question that Gledhill is unfit to hold his office.

I add that it is in my opinion no coincidence that the RSAC includes amongst its members some natural enemies of the motorist, including a representative of the pushbike riders and a representative of the pedestrians, and only one representative of the motorists, namely the RACT. Further, the RACT has failed abjectly in its duty to fight for motorists' rights. If the RACT is to properly perform its duty it must:

- engage in a public advertising campaign to highlight the inherent dangers of pushbike riding on the road and the inherent dangers of traversing the road as a pedestrian in circumstances in which that traversal is unsafe; and
- contest by litigation and every other lawful available means, including targeting every at fault politician, every speed limit reduction which is inflicted by the green left Giddings Government by force of law.

### **Further Submissions- the Policy Document**

At the time of writing the submission already made I was unaware of the content of the policy document published by DIER under the misleading and deceptive general heading of "Our Safety Our Future". The royal plural of that kind is, of course, beloved of the green left. It is also entitled "Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2016". The parts of this document which deal with motor vehicle speeds are no more or less than self-justifying political dogma, taken directly from Sweden and the Netherlands. This is made plain by s.5.3 at p.6. No reference is made at all to Germany, nor to the rest of Europe, in which these policies rightly do not have any application. Instead there is blanket acceptance and assertion that the Swedish and Dutch approach is holy writ. Clearly the authors of this execrable document occupy the chair of infallibility claimed by the green left. The State has no legitimate business interfering with fundamental individual rights in the way foreshadowed by this policy.

The "holy writ" aspect of the matter is taken a good deal further at s.10.1, which has the misleading and deceptive heading "Safer Travel Speeds". This section is replete with statements that are patently ludicrous and in themselves an infuriation to the sporting motorist. For example, it is asserted that speeds "just 5km/h above the speed limit in urban areas and 10km/h in rural areas are sufficient to double the risk of a casualty crash occurring. This is roughly equivalent to the risk associated with driving with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05." The source of this is said to be a National Road Safety Action Plan 2007-2008. It is sufficient, for the present purpose, to note that driving whilst intoxicated is different in kind to driving at any high speed. By "high speed" I mean German autobahn speed. It is an incontestable established position that the former is inherently and necessarily dangerous and that the latter is not, depending on all of the circumstances including the kind of vehicle, the skill of the driver and the prevailing conditions.

For these statements to have been made the statisticians must have been at mischief, applying assumptions which are baseless, with a view to producing a result sought



by a green left government. Alternatively both statements are good old fashioned barefaced lies. In any event they are to be rejected outright.

The next pearl of wisdom is as follows:

“The slower a person travels, the less likely they are to crash. Travelling more slowly provides a person with more time to take evasive action to prevent a crash happening. If they do crash, the slower a driver travels the less likely they are (sic) to be badly injured.”

No evidence or authority is cited in support. Every sporting driver knows the first two sentences to be mere assertions which comprise transparent arrant nonsense. Driving at high speed increases concentration and the enjoyment associated with the drive. Driving at low speed, on the contrary, creates fatigue, boredom, and a tendency to fall asleep or, if the slow speed is inflicted by force by the green left for example in the name of push cyclists or some other noisy self interested minority group bent inflicting its lifestyle by force on other people, infuriation. High performance vehicles love being driven hard; at low speed they barely tick over. As to the last sentence, I point out in the original submission that it is surely better to avoid accidents in the first place than to blithely accept that just because some are inevitable speeds should be lower to “minimise the damage”. Low speed causes accidents-push bike riding on the road is a perfect example.

Further, it is often necessary to hard accelerate to avoid a dangerous situation; every V8 driver knows the great benefit to road safety that follows from driving a vehicle with adequate power to accelerate out of trouble. Similarly the braking capabilities of high performance vehicles are breathtaking and far superior to that for example of a Trabant.

Penultimately and without attempting to be exhaustive in relation to this particularly noxious section of this policy, it is asserted that if “vehicles travelled as little as 1km/h slower, in [urban] zones, serious casualties would be reduced”.

It is again the case that this is a transparent arrant nonsense. 1km/h can make no difference whatsoever. If some statistical model has proven the contrary, it can only be on the basis of assumptions that are false or on the basis that the statisticians have manipulated the statistics to please their paymaster, presently the green left government.

Finally, I note that this section of the policy trumpets the 50km/h limit. It has its place in small urban streets and cul-de-sacs where children may be expected to play. But what has been done by the infliction of that limit in the major interconnector thoroughfares of Macquarie, Davey, Regent and most lately Sandy Bay Road is a monstrous atrocity of the worst kind. Further, it has been conceded on the record by one of the proponents of the expropriation of these roads, the Hobart City Council, that the reduction in the limit was done to merely to please pushbike riders. It had nothing to do with safety as such. Rather, it was intended to make the pushbike riders feel better when the cars went past them at a lower speed. All that this does is

encourage pushbike riders to further assert their rights to dominate and to be preferred to those for whom the roads were built and by whom the roads were paid for, namely motorists. My soul burns with anger.

I conclude and submit that what underpins this section of this policy is nothing more or less than green left political philosophy. The lynchpin is homogeneity, by which it is to be assumed that every car and every driver are the same, and aged and infirm, and that the car is to be viewed as or as being equivalent to a Trabant. Further, this green left philosophy, according to the policy document, is to be "forced" inter alia by modifying infrastructure to lower travel speeds and by brainwashing the public "to drive more slowly".

The green left should assume that sporting motorists, once this devious piece of work becomes better known (and it is neither well known nor well understood presently), will be and remain very strongly hostile. The RACT needs to be reinvigorated to action in defence of motorists generally and of sporting motorists in particular; that should happen sooner rather than later.

### **Final Submissions**

I implore the Legislative Council to reject outright the monstrous proposal to further lower the non-urban speed limits.

As I understand it, the current proposal of the green left Giddings Government is to ask each local Council in Tasmania to identify which roads within its municipality ought to remain at 100km/h. It is submitted that this amounts to the infliction of the original proposal to reduce the default limit from 100km/h to 90km/h by legerdemain and subterfuge. It will be necessary, of course, to contest every decision to reduce any 100km/h limit, but that will be difficult and expensive process because of the method now adopted by the green left Giddings Government to inflict its proposal. I add that there seems to me to be no reasonable basis upon which it might be asserted that a local Council has some expertise or indeed any legitimate interest in inflicting even lower speed limits on motorists who are not residents of its municipality.

I add finally that it is not clear whether or not highways are excluded from the present form of the green left Giddings Government's proposal. If they are not exempt, the proposal is even more outrageous; it will have to be fought to the death by every lawful means.

Yours faithfully,



A.J. ABBOTT

8 January 2011

Road Safety Advisory Council  
Dept. of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources  
GPO Box 936  
HOBART TAS 7001

Email:safer speeds@dier.tas.gov.au

Dear Sirs,

## **PROPOSAL TO LOWER THE DEFAULT SPEED LIMITS**

### **Introduction and Preliminary Observations**

This submission is made in response to the invitation published in the local newspapers and on the RSAC website under the disingenuous misleading and deceptive heading "*Safer Speeds Consultation*". It should say "*Slower Speeds Infliction by the Green Left government*". The website publication is emblazoned with the misleading and deceptive catchphrases "*Safer Speeds Save Lives*" and "*Limit Your Speed. Limit the Damage*". To be accurate they ought to say "*Slower Speeds Cost Lives*" and "*Go hard but drive to the conditions*".

The East coast and every other highway to which the default limit applies are **not** rural roads.

It is the case, no doubt, that if an impact accident occurs lower speed results in less damage. But lower speed in general causes accidents, by inducing inattention and boredom and/or, if it is caused by a slow driver or a cyclist, infuriation. You just don't seem to understand that. It is very obviously better to prevent accidents than it is to reduce the damage caused by them when they happen.

It is necessary to commence this submission with two further preliminary observations of the utmost importance. They are:

1. Non-urban speed limits in this State and this country outside the Northern Territory are already ludicrously low.
2. The system by which non-urban speed limits are established and applied is fundamentally flawed and must be rebuilt from the ground up.

### **A Case Example**

The points just made are easily drawn into relief by reference to a recent case example. It occurred in the State of Victoria, but there is no relevant difference between the Victorian system and the Tasmanian system.



In December 2010 the famous English test cricketer Kevin Pietersen suffered the imposition of a conviction and a fine for exceeding a 100km/h speed limit by a little more than 20km/h, whilst driving a new yellow Lamborghini which had been lent to him by the Melbourne dealership so that he might enjoy one of Victoria's best sporting drives, along its Great Ocean Road. There is a close analogy between this sporting drive and the sporting drives in Tasmania:

- across the sidling, between Scottsdale and Launceston; and
- for almost all of the East Coast Highway.

*The Mercury* reported this incident and stated that Pietersen had thereby gone from "champ to chump". Nothing could be further from the truth. Pietersen remains a champion and what was done to him graphically illustrates why every sporting motorist despises the present system with a passion. The system which convicted Pietersen:

- imposed a ludicrously low non-urban speed limit;
- made no allowance for the fact that what was being driven was a new Lamborghini;
- made no allowance for the higher level of skill that the driver, Pietersen, brought to bear in and as part of a sporting drive.

I draw attention to the fact that the same limit would have applied in all of the same circumstances to an octogenarian, still driving only because he or she has a friendly GP, at the wheel of a clapped out barely roadworthy old car.

Historically it may have been necessary, as a matter of practical law enforcement, to have ubiquitous limits. But now we live in the computer age. There is no reason whatsoever why a higher limit ought not to apply **at least** to vehicles the capabilities of which far exceed the average.

### **High Capability Vehicles**

It is now necessary, unfortunately, to explain to the RSAC, and to DIER, what is a Lamborghini. The necessity arises because all of the current nonsense can only have been written and is being promoted, at the expense of the taxpayer, in total ignorance of the existence and nature of high end European and other specialist performance motor vehicles.

A Lamborghini, in its modern form, is an Italian built ultra high level specialist two door sports car, with V8 or V12 engine, depending on the model variant. It has technical capabilities which are a factor of 10 in advance of, for example, anything made (now or ever) in Korea.

Lamborghini is but one example of a genre. It shares its high level technical capabilities, in summary being especially designed for speed with safety by virtue of magnificent levels of power, torque, road holding, braking, handling, and general



build quality, with a number of other vehicles, including amongst others (in alphabetical order):

1. Aston Martin (post 1990);
2. Audi R series and the large sedans;
3. Bentley (post 1990);
4. BMW all M series and any 5 series and above;
5. HSV series Holden and FPV series Ford;
6. Ferrari (post 1980);
7. Lotus (post 1990);
8. Maserati (post 1995);
9. Mercedes Benz all AMG series and any E Class and above, and Maybach;
10. Porsche (post 1985).

I have extensive overseas and local personal experience with 3 of these, BMW, Mercedes and most recently Porsche. They will all cruise in perfect safety, in good and appropriate conditions, at speeds which make our speed limits look ridiculous (as is the fact most of the time). In Germany, their country of design origin, much of the highway network has no applicable limit. Slow vehicles are required by law to keep out of the way, as should be the case here.

It is submitted that the higher capabilities of these vehicles ought to attract a higher speed limit, of **at least** 20km/h on any State highway.

One example: just past Buckland towards Orford there occurs a long straight stretch of top condition limited access four lane highway, with overtaking lanes in each direction. Despite all just mentioned, even the overtaking limit is 100 km/h, and is soon to be 90 km/h. So an S class Mercedes, which will cruise in absolute comfort and safety at 200 km/h or more, has to crawl past a wandering ancient combi van load of hippies struggling to maintain an unsafe 85 km/h. It's just a joke and no sane person can reasonably think otherwise. And good luck in persuading the S class driver to increase the danger to the S class and its occupants by the required-by-"law" slow overtake of the combi.

### **The Justification for Speed Limits**

It should be borne in mind that the legitimate purpose of a speed limit is **not** to act as a dog in the manger; it is reasonably imposed **only** in genuine furtherance of road safety. It is the case, no doubt, that some of the vehicles listed above are only available to individuals who are high achievers, but that is nothing to the present point. And some of the vehicles are readily available to any sporting driver, such as those numbered 5 and 7.

### **Vehicle Specific Limits illustrated**

To return to the Pietersen example given above, the general limit which ought to have applied in the area ought to have been at least 120km/h. The further limit

which ought to have applied because a Lamborghini was being given ought to have lifted that limit by a further 20km/h to 140km/h. That, I observe, is the highway speed limit across most of Europe, including France; as earlier pointed out across much of Germany there is no limit at all.

### **The Limits should also be driver specific**

It is further submitted that every licensed driver ought to be afforded the opportunity to undertake State run training and testing, to determine whether the individual has a higher than usual capability of and in relation to the driving of a motor vehicle. If the individual passes the test then a further allowance ought to be made for the individual's higher capacity, at least in a non-urban context.

### **The Current Monstrous Proposal**

I turn now to the monstrous proposal to cut further the default speed limit. The proposal is very strongly opposed. I draw attention to the following matters:

1. This proposal, if implemented, will substantially increase the extent to which the present system is held in odium and contempt by every sporting motorist. That is strongly undesirable as a matter of policy. The nanny State which so seriously curtails individual rights in this way thereby sows the seeds of its own destruction. Certainly sporting motorists will consider abandoning the State to the tender ministrations of the Green Left; it is to be expected that those who are in a position to do so will do just that.
2. The proposal, if implemented, will strongly discourage sporting motorists from travelling to Tasmania to enjoy their high end vehicles on its driver's roads including the East Coast Highway and its tributaries, and will thereby further damage the tourism industry and render less or non-viable the restaurants and accommodation facilities. I add that nobody will come here to drive a road like the East coast highway at 90 km/h. Most of the vehicles listed above will do that speed in second gear.
3. There is no satisfactory evidence which supports the view that implementation of the proposal will improve road safety. The study, in Kingborough and Tasman, was based on a very small sample size and the results allegedly showing an improvement did so only within the range of error that is known as the band of statistical significance, that is to say, the improvement is in fact a statistical illusion being relied upon by some disingenuous pious cretins pushing the proposal in and as part of a wider green left agenda. The manipulation of statistics is an easy thing for an expert to do; the results of the study and the nonsense being peddled out of Monash University are an affront to common sense.
4. **As you know full well, the default limit applies well beyond the so-called rural roads to which the current trial limits have apparently been applied.**

## **Sporting Motorists Drive as part of and for their Life**

Finally, I am bound to record that nowhere in the published material about this proposal is there any consideration whatsoever given to the rights of sporting motorists, for whom:

- the nature and characteristics of the car being driven; and
- the manner in which the car is driven;

are very serious lifestyle issues of fundamental importance.

I suspect that this lack of consideration results from none of the disingenuous pious cretins referred to above being sporting motorists, but that is as may be.

If the disingenuous pious cretins wish to understand the other side of the debate then it is my recommendation that each of them borrow or hire one of the high end vehicles listed above for a weekend, and redline the motor at least once in the course of overtaking or during some hard cornering. It seems to be necessary to explain that the redline is shown on the tachometer, which will be a large dial on the dashboard in front of the driver. It counts and shows the revolutions per minute that the motor is doing. Every V8, and every sports motor, sounds magnificent on the way to and at the redline (maximum rpm for the motor, usually about 6000 rpm for a V8-Ferraries go higher).

After or during the weekend a number of episodes of older series of *Top Gear* should be watched. They will educate the viewer and give the lie *inter alia* to the content of the infuriating Dier ads.

Taking these steps ought to give these enemies of the sporting motorist some insight into the reason why they have started a war which they will never win.

Yours faithfully,



A.J. ABBOTT