

28 November 2012

Mr Tom Wise
Clerk of Committees
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000
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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