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**Sent:** Friday, 18 January 2013 2:06 PM  
**To:** Tom Wise  
**Subject:** Rural Road Speed Limits - submission

Legislative Council Select Committee  
RURAL ROAD SPEED LIMITS

Dear councillors,

Although I believe the emphasis on road safety today is a much needed and important aspect of driving, I do not believe that further *blanket* reductions of rural speed limits is either necessary or wise.

Having driven on rural Tasmanian roads for many years I have found that "driving to the conditions" is a far safer approach to driving than simply being guided by speed limit signs. Many rural roads are perfectly safe driving at 100kph provided conditions are good. Those same roads may well be unsafe at 90kph or even 80kph under different conditions. Driving at an appropriate speed for the prevailing conditions is the best way to retain concentration on the driving task. Forcing drivers to remain at a lower than optimum speed when conditions are good makes the driving task more frustrating and encourages the driver's mind to lose focus thus increasing rather than decreasing the accident risk.

I think the safety message to the community should be one of reinforcing the "driving to the conditions" concept, rather than the unwarranted blanket reduction in rural speed limit. By all means if sections of rural roads are not safe under any conditions at 100kph then they should be signposted as required, but otherwise retain the general 100kph limit overall.

Speed is often claimed as "the cause" of accidents but that is a gross oversimplification. When irresponsible or stupid drivers travelling above the speed limit are involved in accidents the reporting of such accidents tends to emphasise that speed was the problem, and the false logic that follows from this is that speed limits should be reduced to curb these accidents and fatalities; but speed per-se isn't the problem, rather it's the driver attitude and that is what needs to change not the speed limit. No matter how low the speed limit is set, if drivers don't have a positive "driving to the conditions" attitude then driving is going to remain unsafe.

I remain somewhat astounded at some of the other road safety measures that could be taken but are not. For one example, take a walk through any large car park and look at the condition of car tyres (as I sometimes do). A significant number of cars are almost guaranteed to have tyres worn down to the wear-bars, or have no tread on the edges, or even worse may be totally bald; the worst I've seen was one car with tyres so badly worn that the steel reinforcing bands were showing. I feel far more unsafe when driving knowing that vehicles like this are sharing the road than I do if the rural speed limit remains at 100kph.

I really feel that the proposal to reduce rural speed limits is an easy way to say "look at us everyone, we're doing something about road safety" rather than a genuinely thought-out approach to the road safety issue.

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