

8 January 2011

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Sandy Bay

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

**Email: saferspeeds@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 than 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