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The Secretary of Government Business
Mr Tom Wise
Scrutiny Committee
Rural Roads Speed limit reduction
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000



RE Secondary Road Speed Limits

My qualifications for commenting on the above, is that I have been driving on Tasmanian roads for 48 years. In this period of time, my attitude has changed, from that of a teenager, in Mini Cooper S, GT Falcon, loss of licence for speeding, to one of obsession with fuel economy, my own personal car now a four cylinder diesel that can be driven around Australia, on "the smell of an oily rag".

For most of my 48 years of driving history, my livelihood (truck sales) has largely depended on mobility, much on secondary highways and country roads, in all types of weather conditions.

My general experience has been that speed certainly, at times, has been evident and the cause of some accidents. Speaking with transgressors in an informal way it becomes quite obvious that:-

1. Generally, regardless of the speed limit, whether it be 80kph or 110kph, the transgressor will do as they wish for various reasons.
2. Mostly the reason for speeding is not a contest, but caused by an overriding urge.
 - a/ I am late
 - b/ I am in a bad mood
 - c/ I am showing off

Country roads cover a very large part of the state and generally carry light traffic, they are therefore not heavily policed, making transgressors confident.



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Reducing the speed limit from 100kph to 80kph will generally not be a solution to those accidents of major severity, regardless of the limit be it 80 or 100, those who have a tendency to transgress, will still do so. Speed cameras are only a very limited deterrent because many of the accidents on country roads are on corners or caused not driving to the conditions, i.e. slippery, bad cambers or corners or inexperience. To show a speed camera picture of a car speeding that is a little further down the track, buried in a bank or tree is of limited value.

My overriding experience of near misses and the “look at that” situation is due to inattention to driving, be it daydreaming or working a modern complicated dashboard on the go, etc. These are the types of things that allow cars to wander into oncoming traffic lanes causing very nasty high impact collisions. I feel that reducing the road speed limit will only increase complacency in a large number of people who follow the current regulations. You are then creating more dangers than you are solving.

Recently (about 12 months ago) Pateena Road, Launceston to Longford, was downgraded to 80kph. I travel this road regularly and have done so for many years. This road has not had many serious accidents, but does have minor accidents from time to time. The road is narrow, has curved sections and has many farm driveways coming onto it. Over the last 20 years, both the road and cars have improved greatly, but the speed limit has been reduced. This has led to a very detectable lack of care and consideration for many people that drive this road. Many of the locals have become complacent in their habits because of the slow traffic and tree lined hidden driveways coming onto the road with no visibility. Neither the person coming onto the road or the person already driving on it can see what is going on. Carelessness of four wheel bikes, farm machinery and poorly marked and dirty implements (no indication of width etc.) are also a problem. Boredom, when driving long distances at such slow speeds is also something which should be considered. I am not against rural people in the slightest, but I do think that some of the above problems could be addressed quite successfully and could be of more use than speed restrictions on many roads.

Finally, if you do expose the law abiding public majority to an artificially low speed limit, the locals in that area will become used to that pace and when they enter the highway 110kph zones their acquired abilities will become sorely tested.

Yours Faithfully


Stefan Rybarczyk