



### 2.1 SPEED LIMIT SETTING

The Department of Infrastructure (DIER) is the only agency in Tasmania authorised to set speed limits. RACT supports the single regulator model, with DIER as the regulator.

### 2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPEED LIMITS

- Consistent speed limits, avoiding multiple and frequent changes of speed limit over short sections of road.
- Speed limits should be realistic, because if they are, there will be substantial community compliance without the necessity for draconian enforcement.
- The community expects to have reasonable level of mobility, at an acceptable risk, and expects government to provide both mobility and safety, not one at the expense of the other.
- There can be no support for illegal or irresponsible behaviour involving speeding.

The speed limit on a particular road is the upper limit, not necessarily the speed that it is safe to travel at for the full length of the road. If crashes occur at a particular corner at 70 km/h, reducing the open road limit from 100km/h to 90 km/h will not in itself reduce crashes at that corner

### 2.3 SPEED LIMIT IN URBAN/BUILT-UP AREAS

Research has shown in general terms, lower travel speeds lead to reduced crash severity and – to a lesser extent – reduced crash numbers.

RACT accepts that there are benefits in the pursuit of national uniformity, reduced death and injury rates, consistency of speed limit and increased amenity in residential streets with an urban speed limit of 50 km/h. However, speed limit reductions cannot be simply used as a substitute for investment on infrastructure. The RACT supports the general urban speed limit of 50 km/h provided that:

- Appropriate signage is installed for the 50 km/h speed limit, as well as general warnings signs where required.
- Police issue cautions to drivers detected over the limit, where it is appropriate and within policy to do so.



- Adequate, recurrent funds are made available for properly-maintained linemarkings, relevant signage, and for ongoing public education.
- Individual roads or junctions that are assessed as specifically higher-risk than the rest of the network are treated using appropriate infrastructure or engineering solutions.

### 2.4 DEFAULT SPEED LIMIT ON OPEN ROADS/HIGHWAYS

The RACT supports the need to prioritise investment on the National Highway and, subject to an evidence based approach, RACT also supports a general (default) 100km/h limit on those roads:

- that carry higher volumes of traffic
- that provide the principal connections within the State, or have specific importance with respect to key freight or tourist routes

### 2.5 RESIDENTIAL STREET SCHEMES (LATM)

The RACT supports the implementation of certain local area traffic management (LATM) schemes, provided that such schemes are aimed primarily at reducing crashes with consequent improvements to the environment. The safety and amenity of residential streets should be preserved by appropriate speed limits and/or traffic calming devices together with the provision of an adequate arterial road system. Traffic calming devices should always be clearly visible in darkness or adverse weather conditions. Speed reductions on local streets where conflicts are potentially hazardous must be based on traffic management measures aimed at changing the road environment, rather than simply posting reduced speed limits.

### 2.6 SPEED MANAGEMENT

AusRAP research has shown that the greatest gains in road safety will come from improved road infrastructure. Consequently, RACT considers that the first-best approach to providing the community with safe mobility is to improve, where necessary, the engineering or designed safety of roads.

Safety treatments and upgrades to roads and roadsides play a role in preventing a crash and, in the event of a crash, can reduce the severity of the outcome for the road users involved

Crashes are unpredictable events and can occur at any speed limit. A reduced posted speed limit does not mean that crashes would not occur. Infrastructure treatments such as safety barriers (both for roadsides and centre median) can “cushion” the impact should a driver make a mistake.



RACT rejects the notion that reducing harm is only achievable by reducing speed limits.

The real cost effect and economic consequences of reductions in travel times and freight distribution times needs to be fully researched and evaluated prior to any across the board reduction in speed limits.

Lower speed limits may be appropriate in certain circumstances, including those instances where funds to improve infrastructure in the short-term are not available; and especially temporary speed limit reductions where the condition of a road requires an immediate speed limit reduction on safety grounds.

### **2.7 SPEEDING FINE REVENUE**

RACT supports returning the proceeds of speeding fines to road maintenance, road safety programs, public education and black spot road programs, which have demonstrated positive benefit cost ratio outcomes.

### **2.8 MINIMISE SPEED LIMIT CHANGES**

RACT believes that changes in speed zones over short distances should be minimised. A compromise in setting such speed limits should be implemented even if it means a lower or higher speed limit over a larger section of road. Constantly changing speed limits result in drivers inadvertently travelling over the speed limit, particularly if the signage is inadequate.

### **2.9 SPEED LIMIT AHEAD SIGNS**

“Buffer zones” should be replaced with larger “xx km/h Speed Limit Ahead” signs. Buffer zones can be confused with genuine lower speed zones.

### **2.10 REALISTIC SPEED LIMITS**

Artificially low speed zones only result in poor compliance. Police enforcement at locations with unrealistic speed limits are viewed by motorists as speed traps and revenue-raising and not motivated by road safety concerns. These sorts of speed limits should be avoided.

### **2.11 PAINTING SPEED LIMITS ON ROADS**

RACT supports painting the speed limit on the road at change of speed limit on some rural roads, especially for the speed limit to be painted on the road at the entry to towns.



## 2.12 SCHOOL ZONE SPEED LIMITS

RACT supports the 40 km/h speed limit through school zones. The limit should be painted on the road in any cases where the LED signs are not made available for lower traffic volume zones.

The main focus must be to reduce the risk of fatalities and injuries of children who are very vulnerable road users and ensure motorists are aware they are in a school zone.

## 2.13 PERIODIC SPEED LIMIT CHANGE REQUESTS

RACT refers consultation requests from DIER regarding local speed limit changes to its Regional Advisory Committees to consider and make recommendations. RACT requires that information such as traffic volumes, crash history, numbers of accesses and all other relevant indicators be made available with each consultation request.

## 2.14 END SPEED LIMIT SIGNAGE

RACT opposes the use of "END" speed limit signage as a substitute for appropriate speed limit signs displaying the speed limit zone being entered *and* exited. The RACT supports the use of appropriate and adequate signage to reinforce the existing speed limit.