

The Secretary,  
Legislative Council Select Committee  
Rural Road Speed Limits.

Dear Sir,

I wish to submit the following for the Select Committee's consideration, but would like to request that the Committee grant us an interview to best explain the details – a small group being Richard Sherriff, David Elmer who both have supplied written submission, and myself , Malcolm Eastley,

Executive Summary

1. The Monash Report social costs actually show a benefit on 110 – 100 Cat. 1 roads but, a detrimental cost on rural roads 100-90kph.
2. The present mean speed on rural roads (85 kph) is already lower than the optimum mean speed they were trying to achieve.
3. The Kingborough Trial indicated that speeds increased on curved road sections ( a 5% rise above background trends, rather than a 6% drop used in estimates by Monash.)
4. The faults in the process used by Monash and the RSAC have misled the public and show a need for the RSAC to be re-structured.

We can show that the Monash Report contains several faulty assumptions in the inputs to the model – the 5 page Independent Review which was supplied to the RSAC in early 2011 and to Minister David O’Byrne in June 2011 will be forwarded by mail.

The RSAC failed to realise that the Monash Report was an amalgam of 110-100 roads and 100-90 roads. The Government deleted the 100-100 roads from consideration very early, but the RSAC public information to a very large degree was not modified, and as such is misleading.

The Monash Report in fact found a benefit in reducing speeds in the 110-100 category using the social cost method, but by Section 6, and 7, it became clear that on rural roads it was detrimental. See Monash section 7.2 and Table 7.2.1

The conclusions in Section 10 acknowledges this - quote “ would show a benefit if willingness to pay crash costs are used.” However, the definitions in the terms of reference mentions only the standard “Human crash costs” method,

The point of the Monash Report was to identify the optimum mean speed that minimises total economic cost. See Table 7.2.1.

The present mean speed generated by the current 100 kph limit measured by DIER is already below that figure, 85 kph.

The fundamental flaw is that the Monash Report and the information from the RSAC is based on the assumption that a 5 kph drop in speed across the board would be achieved. The DIER background figure is an average of 85 on rural roads. Clearly any speed reduction is generated on straight sections, with no basis to assume that driver behaviour would change on curved sections where the average speed, by definition, is about 75 kph.

The RSAC referred to the Kingborough Trial in print and on website as a success. We pointed out that it was a disaster for road safety because the results showed that instead of the 6% drop (5 kph at the 85 kph average) they were expecting, there was a 1% drop on the straight sections and a 5% rise above base trends on curved sections.

The result was that the RSAC declared the trial deficient, despite the fact that it was the only hard evidence they had, (The Monash Report is simply projections based on faulty assumptions), and represents 2 years of their own work.

They must confront the fact that if their own methodology in claiming 5 lives a year will be saved for a 5 kph drop in speed is used, then the trial results show that it will cost lives.

Please see the attachments which follow by mail for details of the Monash Report failings – and we feel that a short interview with the committee would save a great deal of time in the process of understanding what has happened over the last 2 years.

With respect, if the Committee comes to the conclusions that we have regarding the results and lack of integrity shown in this process, would you please consider making the following recommendations.:-

1. That the information available (Monash and Kingborough) indicates that the current rural speeds are at the correct level.
2. The RSAC should be encouraged to evaluate other proposals – see attached sheet, that have been with RSAC for over a year.
3. The intransigence and culture shown by RSAC and Monash must be addressed. Please recommend that the RSAC be restructured to include a better cross section of professional drivers, transport operators – even someone who can read a report.  
There is a conflict of interest in the process by some who are more interested in deflecting constructive criticism of the departments’ policy than in a genuine concern for the road toll.
4. The same intransigence has lead DIER to install wire rope barriers for the last 17 years without any guidelines as to where they should or should **not** be used. Please recommend that guidelines for the installation of wire rope barriers be adopted – with input from motorcyclists etc.
- 5 Depending on what actions are available to the Select Committee , could you please consider referring the process used by the RSAC to the Integrity Commission with the intention of improving the performance of DIER in future actions