



LCSC/RST 86

• 38 Bligh St Rosny Park
• PO Box 96
• Rosny Park TAS, 7018
• **Dx** 70402
• **Ph** 03 6217 9500
• **E** clarence@ccc.tas.gov.au

30 August 2021

REQ2021-043461

Mr Tim Mills
Inquiry Secretary
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000
Via Email: rst@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Mills

Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee – Road Safety in Tasmania

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to your Committee on this important issue for Tasmania. The points listed below are critical to improvement of road safety outcomes for our council and are considered to be common issues for local government across the State.

Speed Limits

There is a clear linkage between lower speed limits and resultant lower crash severity – particularly for vulnerable road users. There needs to be a lead taken by the Department of State Growth in ensuring the consistent application and use of speed limits across Tasmania but also in the implementation of lower speed limits for improved road safety outcomes. For example, the City of Hobart has replaced all 60km/h speed limits on local arterial roads with 50km/h speed limits although this doesn't translate across municipal boundaries where Glenorchy City Council, Clarence City Council and Kingborough Council areas still include a number of 60km/h roads.

Technical Guidance for use of Traffic Management Devices

Since the delegation of approvals for changes to traffic management, signage and linemarking was provided to councils from the Transport Commissioner (Direction 2014/02, dated 19 December 2014) there is no longer consistent oversight of the use of traffic management devices implemented across Tasmanian local government roads. Consistency in the use of traffic management devices is an important contributor to road safety as driver confusion can lead to crashes. Although the Transport Commissioner Direction (2014/02) requires the application of the Australian Standards and Austroads Technical Guides there are often requirements for the establishment of warrants and local deviations from these standards. For example, warrants for the use of zebra and wombat crossings are not specified in the Australian Standards and practitioners are directed to the relevant local authority on these matters – and the inconsistent or inappropriate use of zebra or wombat crossings may result in crashes involving vulnerable

road users. In Victoria, there are supplements published by VicRoads that provide warrants and agreed variations to the Austroads Guides and Australian Standards.

Maintenance of line marking on Local Government road networks

The arrangements for maintenance of line marking on Local Government road networks is a legacy issue which does not reflect the importance of the task. Current arrangements are that DSG are responsible for funding the work and councils put forward lists, annually, of sites where they wish line marking to be renewed. DSG then make decisions on which sites are addressed based on available funds and focus the efforts of their contractors on defined geographic areas of work, for efficiency reasons, to achieve the best value from available funds.

There is no proper 'asset management' approach to renewal of line marking. A data base of existing line marking and its condition against importance of individual road function does not exist. This means that the actual funding needed to maintain an accepted level of service for line marking against road function and road priority is unknown. Given the obvious importance of line marking in road safety outcomes, this seems an area where improvement is very much needed.

Ability to be more strategic in allocation of funds targeting safety improvements

Current funding streams for road safety projects, such as the Blackspot Program, Vulnerable Road User Program (VRUP), Safer Rural Roads Program (SRRP), tend to follow a piecemeal approach based on an annual review, usually conducted within a very limited timeframe, of potential eligible projects against available crash data and in acknowledgement of overall grant funding constraints. These funding programs have generally been running for many years and the 'low hanging fruit' has been addressed, so that it has become more difficult to find eligible projects and projects put forward now tend to be marginal against eligibility criteria.

Funding for a more strategic analysis of road safety issues, taking a longer term view and based on a network approach could deliver more meaningful outcomes and allow councils to support grant funding through their own capital budget processes, i.e. co-fund safety projects. The current annual 'rush' to identify and put forward projects does not work well with council's internal annual capital budget processes and makes co-funding very difficult.

Review of effectiveness of funded projects

There are several programs to improve road safety within the state and at individual local government level, but the effectiveness of these programs, on completion, is not well assessed or communicated with road safety professional. Case studies and assessment of completed programs or projects would assist local government professionals to identify and translate learnings to similar projects.

Driver awareness /education programs

There are limited programs for delivering/improving driver awareness and safety awareness into specific community target groups, for example, college students, school children or new drivers. Awareness of road rules and driver safety could be embedded in vocational training or similar.

Access to better crash data

The availability of relevant crash data to councils has diminished over recent years and the ability to interrogate the data and investigate crash patterns is very limited. The Department of State Growth (DSG) provides information from the data base when requested but gaining regular access to this information at the local government level is vital in understanding the underlying issues with particular road sections. Access to detailed Police reports would also help local government professionals to identify crash patterns and specific issues with road geometry or similar, to better inform an appropriate treatment.

Technical resources

Councils are experiencing real difficulty in recruiting experienced technical engineering staff, both engineers and civil designers. It appears that the cessation for many years of the TAFE diploma qualification for Civil Design, in combination with stimulus funding in recent years to 'kick start' and maintain the construction industry, has resulted in the available pool of technical expertise being depleted. Availability to bring this expertise in externally, from consultants or similar, is very limited as they are impacted by the same issues.

Thank you again for providing council with the opportunity to contribute to the valuable work of your Committee and I wish you well with the Parliamentary Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Nelson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Nelson
General Manager