

2010-11

Tasmanian Budget Submission



Help when you need it most.

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Executive Summary

The RACT's 2010-11 Tasmanian Budget Submission calls for:

- ü The 10+10 year infrastructure plan: a strategic medium to long term approach to transport and infrastructure planning in Tasmania. A good plan, devised by experts, would set a benchmark against which shorter term ideas proposed by different political parties could be assessed.
- ü An additional junior Minister or Parliamentary Secretary in the Infrastructure portfolio, to assist with the development and implementation of the 10+10 plan, and with responsibility for the strategic project specialists unit.
- ü A small team of specialists, perhaps located as a dedicated unit within DIER, which could coordinate the development of such a plan, and at the same time respond to opportunities such as the Infrastructure Australia call for projects.
- ü An AusRAP risk assessment of the wider Tasmanian State Road network (as Victoria has done on its State Road network) to help prioritise the 10+10 Plan and to inform any investment decisions or complementary road safety measures.
- ü Audible edge and centre line markings ("rumble strips") where required along the full length of the Bass Highway, as soon as possible; and additional roads as identified in the AusRAP study. Five-year statistical averages in Tasmania show that 46% of fatalities and just under 50% of serious injury crashes are single-vehicle, "run-off-road" (off path on curve or straight) crashes.
- ü The teaching of road safety education in Tasmanian schools to be compulsory for all Tasmanian Year 10 students, as a preventive strategy aimed at addressing behavioural change over time and complementing engineering and enforcement measures.
- ü A multi-party Standing Road Safety Committee in the Tasmanian Parliament, which has as its constituent functions "road trauma" and "safety on Tasmanian roads and related matters" (as the Victorian Parliament's similar committee does).

- ü A substantial research project on inattention as a crash factor in Tasmania, including the dangerous practice of using hand held mobile phones and other devices while driving.
- ü Wider use of on-road electronic warning signs, such as the trial at Mt Pleasant. The positive results that have been achieved in the part-rollout of the electronic school zone signs demonstrate the value of these sorts of "on-road" warning/safety measures.
- ü Purchase and deployment of at least two more Automatic Number Plate Recognition Cameras, per Police command district, to target unregistered vehicles and unlicensed drivers.
- ü A funding boost for Tasmania Police to enable at least 8 more high-visibility patrol cars: four (4!) high-visibility Police cars, for the whole of Tasmania, are simply nowhere *near* enough.
- ü A partnership with the RACT in a campaign to encourage the reporting of dangerous driving to Police: *Report Dangerous Driving – It's YOUR Call 131-444* through roadside signage
- ü High-profile enforcement of speed camera operations should be implemented on a very regular basis, including permanent speed cameras. Fixed and/or portable signs advising drivers of radar camera operations should be used.
- ü Despite the scale of the roadkill problem, Tasmanian drivers are under-educated about how to avoid wildlife collisions. We need a public education campaign.
- ü Older drivers: As part of our national campaign, the Clubs will be bringing international experts on ageing and mobility to Australia as part of a National Road Safety Summit in February 2010. The RACT would like to see the Government support and share the funding of any Tasmania-based forums that are part of this national push.

Strategic approaches to transport and infrastructure planning in Tasmania

In its 2009-2010 Budget Submission, the RACT called for a strategic, medium to long term approach to transport and infrastructure planning. Events and developments over the last 12 months have only reinforced this need.

While there are indications that the Government may be moving in this direction, the fact is that Tasmania remains the only state without an explicit policy or plan to manage the overall long term development of our cities and transport systems.

In the meantime, pressure is mounting on the state's already over-worked road infrastructure. It is self-evident that economic and infrastructure development cannot proceed without accompanying, orderly, road and rail infrastructure planning and development. The two go hand-in-hand.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's population stands in November 2009 at just over 22 million. The Federal Government's intergenerational report predicts the Australian population will climb to 35 million by 2050.

Even if just two percent of that growth occurs in Tasmania, it will mean a growth in Tasmania's population of 260,000 by 2050. A more modest one percent increase would equate to an additional 130,000 people living in Tasmania. Yet, where is the planning for these additional residents, and the road and rail travel journeys they will perform?

The issue of population growth has been taken up by the Federal Government, and the Prime Minister has signalled a role for government at the national level in urban development. The head of Treasury, Dr. Ken Henry, has said that population growth is an issue requiring national leadership on urban development.

While at this stage, Tasmania may seem to be on the periphery of this debate, Dr Henry has asked the pertinent question: *where will the extra 13 million people live? "Will they live in our current major cities and regional centres, or will they live in cities we haven't yet even started to build?"*

These important questions don't fit comfortably with the short term and often opportunistic priorities espoused by political parties because of the short parliamentary life cycle.

With population growth, comes increased economic activity and greater commercial, residential, and industrial development, requiring a transport system with the capacity to safely handle the increased task.

A discussion paper prepared by Pricewaterhouse Coopers at the request of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia has highlighted the future growth in freight around Australia.

Meeting the 2050 Freight Challenge predicts that the Australian freight task in 2020 will be double the 2006 level, and by 2050, it will be triple its current size.

As the Pricewaterhouse Coopers discussion paper notes, key Australian transport links are already strained as a result of inadequate infrastructure spending, and meeting future growth demands, while at the

same time safe guarding the environment and minimising social impacts, will present an unprecedented challenge.

Last year, Professor Ross Garnaut's final report of the Garnaut Climate Change Review noted the need for long term, strategic planning for land use and transport infrastructure.

"...governments should plan transport infrastructure and land-use change with a horizon of 40 years or more," said the report. "Transparent long term planning will undoubtedly create controversy....However, failing to make long term plans will create a burden of poorly functioning cities that is difficult to unwind and will last for many decades."

The RACT has welcomed the State Government's buy-back of the rail network, albeit as an owner of last resort. Despite the buy-back, the future of rail as an effective partner to the road network in the task for freight carriage remains uncertain. To what extent will rail be modernised so that it can undertake its share of heavy lifting in the freight, and perhaps even passenger, task?

The AusLink 2007 Tasmanian Corridor Study showed that 80% of the freight task was carried on federally funded roads in Tasmania. The road network carried 20 million tonnes of freight each year and rail carried just 2.8 million tonnes.

A strategy needs to be developed which will use road and rail to efficiently and safely support a growing population, and a growing economy. Currently, such planning consists of ideas that are often generated at the political level, and which grow out of election cycle considerations.

A 10+10 Tasmanian Transport Plan

The RACT calls for a long term integrated plan which is developed through stakeholder consultation to provide a basis for future funding consideration. Such a plan would release infrastructure from the shackles of three and four year election cycles, with the welter of uncoordinated commitments which these cycles generate.

The RACT believes a 10 year strategy should be developed, with appropriate action plans at various staging points throughout the strategy. Once developed, a new 10 year plan should come under consideration (the 10+10 concept) while the original plan is implemented.

The strategy should be a living plan, constantly under review and capable of responding as various factors impact upon it. It would require a coordinated and cooperative approach between all relevant government departments, in partnership with the transport industry, the business sector, local government, rail operators and users, and expertise in transport economy, demographics, and road safety.

The current infrastructure portfolio is too large to be led by a single minister whose infrastructure responsibilities must also sit alongside other portfolio responsibilities. This is no reflection on the current minister, but Tasmania's failure to successfully respond to emergency stimulus funding offered by Infrastructure Australia for key projects highlighted the lack of capacity in Tasmania's strategic future infrastructure planning.

Developing a 10+10 plan

The RACT was pleased when the former Premier, Mr Lennon, retained as Premier the infrastructure portfolio, signalling its importance in the future growth of Tasmania. In addition, Premier Lennon had a Parliamentary Secretary reporting to him, focused on infrastructure matters. The portfolio now lies in the domain of a single minister who must necessarily juggle its complexities with a range of other responsibilities. Even though infrastructure represents the bulk of the minister's task, the scope of the portfolio is so extensive that there is always the danger that the critical role of developing an orderly plan for the future is subsumed by important, but more mundane, day to day matters.

Planning for the future should lie with a dedicated group focused on the shape of Tasmania in the years to come, perhaps several election cycles away. The RACT would like to see an additional minister, or a junior minister, tasked entirely with the responsibility of overseeing the development of a long term infrastructure plan. The minister would lead a small team of specialists, perhaps located as a dedicated unit within DIER, which could coordinate the development of such a plan, and at the same time respond to opportunities such as the Infrastructure Australia call for projects, which, under the current system in Tasmania, misfired.

In the first instance, a Working Group should be established by this Unit with a broad cross section of stakeholders. It would include – for instance - all government agencies with a responsibility for economic development and mobility, local government, demographers, geographers, urban planners, rail logistics specialists, port operators, transport economists and engineers, road transport operators, business representatives, and road safety specialists

This group would use its expertise to understand the future shape of Tasmania, and the ramifications for urban development, freight, and safe social mobility, and plan in a coordinated way the developments which would be needed. Under a system like this, a substantial project like the Midland Highway upgrade from single carriageway, to separated dual carriageway, would be considered alongside the broadest range of factors that would affect its prioritisation.

The overall thrust of the plan would overlay election cycle promises made by the political parties. A good plan, devised by experts, would set a benchmark against which shorter term ideas proposed by different political parties could be assessed. In this way, political parties themselves would be able to use a medium to long term plan as a useful framework in which to propose their own shorter-term agenda.

The *AusLink 2007 Tasmanian Corridor Strategy* provides a good starting point from which to develop the explicit 10+10 Plan for Tasmania. A significant amount of work, from a strategic perspective, has already been carried out by the Tasmanian Government in the development of this document. It clearly states part of the problem is:

"...Historically, transport investment has focused on a single issue or element of the network." (Page 21)

Chapter 5 of the Strategy (pages 22-24) describes the strategic priorities as the:

"...measures of national importance are consistent with the corridor objectives and need the most urgent attention. The corridor priorities provide specific guidance to investment priorities and framing of projects for the corridor as a whole, or a specific link." (Page 22)

Midland Highway

As *Meeting the 2050 Freight Challenge* has canvassed, the freight task in 2020 will be double the 2006 level, and by 2050, it will be triple its current size. Predictions such as this underline the importance of both upgrading our road infrastructure, and nurturing Tasmanian rail. With hindsight in years to come, the necessity of saving the Tasmanian rail system through the enforced buy-back by the Tasmanian Government this year should prove to have been a wise investment of taxpayers' funds. If, for whatever reason however, the rail system became uncompetitive and was *not* fully utilised as the north-south freight corridor – *what would the solution be?*

There can be no other medium-term answer than "Midland Highway". As the only other North-South corridor, it would increasingly come under sustained pressure as more containerised freight would be moved on it. If traffic volumes increase on the Midland Highway, then risk will also increase. It is from an "efficiency of freight movement" perspective together with a "safer roads" perspective that the RACT for a number of years has supported the upgrade of the Midland Highway to a dual carriageway, separated highway as the ideal solution.

The majority of the current highway, as it stands, rated only three stars of five for road safety in the only publically available report of its kind to rate the risk assessment of Tasmania's national highway (see the reports on the Auslink network in Tasmania at www.ausrap.org) There are regular complaints about the age and condition of a number of stretches of pavement, the prevalence of roadside hazards such as trees in other areas, along with requests for more overtaking lanes and the reduction of risk at some junctions. It can be a fatiguing and/or frustrating trip if drivers find themselves on long stretches of single lane highway behind slow-moving commercial (or private) traffic.

The key countermeasure to reduce the risk of catastrophic head-on and side-on collisions on a high-speed road like the Midland Highway, according to the AusRAP methodology, is the separation of the opposing traffic flows; usually this would include a median strip of some type and a centre barrier of concrete, steel, or popular in recent times – flexible wire rope barrier.

A significant infrastructure project in Sweden over the last decade has seen the conversion of wide single carriageway undivided highway into roads featuring three narrower lanes, with a continuous wire rope barrier that divides the road into a "2+1" set-up, with this configuration changing regularly to ensure that both directions of travel have the benefit of the two lanes. The RACT has advocated the safety benefits of this type of highway in the past.

There can be no denying that such 2+1 separation (together with appropriate safer roadsides) would achieve a significant reduction in the risk of casualty crashes, and in a cost-effective manner. This was the reasoning behind the Swedish move; and also, in Ireland. However, the Irish have now stopped installing the "2+1" model or "Type 3 dual carriageway" and instead are reverting to single carriageway and four-lane dual carriageway as their default road models.

The RACT realises the Government supports the 2+1 solution for the Midland Highway: the MAIB brought Mr Torsten Berg, a Swedish road traffic engineer to Tasmania to promote the Government's case. However, at the briefing from Mr Berg in Hobart, it was noted that Sweden's terrain is less hilly than Tasmania, and the audience raised questions about the impact on traffic flow in single lane sections of 2-plus-1 roadways of breakdowns, heavy freight transport, older drivers, provisional drivers, and cyclists.

There would also have to be a thorough investigation of the cost-effectiveness of 2+1 for the Midland Highway versus dual carriageway; and whether the highway would be able to be upgraded to dual carriageway in the future after the 2+1 solution has been installed.

The RACT's view is that the 2+1 vision may be a less than permanent solution *for the Midland Highway*. At the Hobart briefing, we asked the question: how well will this concept serve Tasmania in the years ahead, when all the expert analysis points to much greater freight transport on our roads? What if the rail system into the future no longer carries its fair share of the North-South freight task?

Failure to plan and act 40 years ago – when costs were much cheaper - has given us the clogged urban couplets of Bathurst St/Wellington St and Davey St/Macquarie St that we now experience. Let's not leave to future generations, when costs will be much higher, what we should start today, with respect to the Midland Highway. Investment in upgrading the Midland Highway would have to be staged, so as to not take up all the available infrastructure funds, some of which will be required for important investments in projects such as those listed below.

Over a number of previous submissions to the Tasmanian Budget, the RACT has recommended the following roads as investment priorities (keeping in mind the substantial infrastructure projects currently underway in the State including the Dilston Bypass, the Brighton Transport Hub, the Brighton Bypass and the Kingston Bypass):

Illawarra Road

The Auslink 2007 *Corridor Profile* also describes the "Key Road Links" (pages 2-3) such as the Illawarra Main Road around Perth.

The RACT has called for a number of years for Illawarra Main Road to be upgraded and for additional passing lanes to be constructed, and for it to be added to the (formerly AusLink) National Transport Network. It is the *de facto* link of the national highway between Devonport and Hobart, and should be treated as such. The RACT has lobbied the Federal Infrastructure Minister, Hon Anthony Albanese, to this end at each of our two face-to-face meetings in 2008 and 2009.

Batman Highway

The road which links the East Tamar Highway with the West Tamar Highway – Batman Highway – has lanes which are too narrow and with poor shoulder quality. According to the AusLink 2007 Study it carries 1.5 billion tonnes of freight annually, which makes it one of the highest carriers of road freight in the State. It also has "poor road geometry and safety outcomes" according to DIER's own *West Tamar Corridor Study (2004)*. This road should be upgraded as a high priority from a road safety and freight efficiency perspective.

Launceston Airport road

There is a consensus amongst stakeholders that the "key road link" between Launceston Airport and the Breadalbane roundabout on the Midland Highway needs upgrading to deal with current and future growth in freight and general traffic, including the growth in tourist traffic. Despite vehicle movement numbers not being at the "15,000 per day minimum" for dual carriageway, it makes sense to build divided dual carriageway at this location, due to the substantial increase expected in industrial and freight traffic as the

industrial estate expands, and the risk of light passenger vehicle/truck conflict increases on the existing single carriageway.

North-East Freight Roads Strategy

The RACT believes that any investments in the North-East Freight Roads strategy, currently being devised by government, should consider as an overriding principle an effort to divert as much freight traffic away from Launceston and its suburbs. This should also be based on the consensus amongst stakeholders that a "greater Eastern Ring Road" is not affordable in the medium term, nor is there a land corridor readily available. Instead, traffic re-direction link road plans in outer Launceston should be considered, to help manage movements.

The West Tamar Corridor Study

In conjunction with the RACT's priority on the Batman Highway, the RACT believes that *the Draft West Tamar Corridor Study*, prepared by DIER's Transport Infrastructure Branch in June 2004, should be revisited as soon as possible, with specific recommendations being taken into account in the strategic prioritisation for the 10+10 Plan, such as:

"...DIER has identified the Westbury to Bell Bay Route as the highest priority freight route in the region" "The identification of poor road geometry and safety outcomes on the Frankford Main Road and Batman Highway" and "the need for road infrastructure planning to consider road users outcomes such as the Tourism and Wine Routes, cycling routes and pedestrian facilities in town boundaries." (Page 4 of 55).

Safer roads and roadsides in Tasmania

AusRAP study of Tasmanian State roads - NOW

To complement the Auslink Corridor Study and other extant reports on Tasmanian roads, the RACT recommends that the Tasmanian Government conduct an AusRAP study of the Tasmanian State Roads network (as Victoria has done on its State Road network) to help prioritise the 10+10 Plan and to inform any other complementary measures being considered by government such as speed management strategies.

Safer roads and roadsides in Tasmania can lead to significant savings in the road toll. Advances in intelligent transportation technology also rely on good quality roadside delineation. The Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP)¹ is an initiative of the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), in association with Australia's motoring clubs and utilising significant funding from the Australian Government. AusRAP provides a consistent system to rate Australia's roads for safety by calculating a Road Protection Score which is utilised in determining star safety ratings for roads.

Detailed inspections involve thorough measurements of a number of design elements known to have an impact on the likelihood of a crash occurring and its severity, e.g., lane and shoulder width, road alignment, presence of roadside hazards and safety barriers. The Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) is usually engaged to carry out these measurements. AusRAP is a sister program to ANCAP (Australasian New Car Assessment Program) which awards star ratings for safety of new cars.

As part of future enhancements to the AusRAP methodology consideration is being given to iRAP² models that provide the ability to Star Rate roads across a range of speeds in both urban and rural environments and for a range of road user groups together with the option of proposing physical countermeasures. A trial of the "Enhanced AusRAP" methodology has recently been completed in Queensland.

Five-year statistical averages in Tasmania show that 46% of fatality crashes and just under 50% of serious injury crashes are single-vehicle, "run-off-road" (off path on curve or straight) crashes. This is above other jurisdictions, and is an indicator that the roads themselves are likely to be contributing in a higher-than-average context to crash levels. The AusRAP methodology argues that the most significant and cost-effective road safety savings can be achieved through treatments such as increasing roadside safety. From a Tasmanian comparative perspective, the New Zealand KiwiRAP program has achieved high benefit-cost ratios through projects dealing with "out of context curves", increasing the retro-fit of audible edge line and increasing the quality of delineation.

To be able to properly assess these risks in Tasmania, we need a risk assessment audit of the existing infrastructure. The AAA and Clubs support the enhanced AusRAP system of assessing crash risk. RACT urges the Tasmanian Government to carry out an AusRAP risk assessment of the wider road network in Tasmania; in this way, an independent, and arm's-length set of recommendations about Tasmanian roads can be developed to inform investment programs and community communications.

¹ www.ausrap.org

² www.irap.org

Audible Line Marking – Bass Highway

Audio tactile profiled markings ('rumble strips') are used extensively overseas and are seen as a low-cost treatment that provides significant road safety benefits. Rumble strips are not only one of the few effective countermeasures for fatigue, but also assist with a wide range of crash causes like distraction, drink driving and poor visibility. The audible edge and centre line markings that have been applied to the Midland Highway during 2008/09 have been welcomed by all road users as a positive step in making the highway safer.

Recent intensive research of this measure in New Zealand shows that benefits exceed costs on all roads carrying over 600 vehicles per day; and benefits are four times the cost for State highways carrying an average of 2200 vehicles per day. Overseas research shows on average they reduce overall crashes 27%, run-off-road crashes 32% (edgelines), and head-on crashes 42% (centrelines). For higher volume roads the benefits were even more dramatic; in some audited results, benefits exceeded costs by 182 times. New Zealand's transport agency has developed a free model to assist road controlling authorities calculate the benefits of treating different stretches of road with various levels of treatment; the RACT has a copy.

The RACT believes that a priority must be placed on rolling out audio tactile profiled markings on a number of stretches of the Bass Highway (where the highway is still single carriageway, undivided; and in addition, in other locations where previous line markings have worn and are now ineffective).

Additional Measures

Road Safety Education in schools

The Australian Transport Council's road safety guidelines state: "Young road users need to be educated in road safety in order to develop the knowledge and attitudes that lead to responsible behaviour on the road. This process includes parents, *school based programs* and novice driver training...."

The RACT has called for, and will continue to call for, the teaching of road safety education in Tasmanian schools to be **compulsory** for all Tasmanian Year 10 students, as a preventive strategy aimed at addressing behavioural change over time and complementing engineering and enforcement measures.

Since receiving a letter from the Education Minister dated 15 March 2006 giving a commitment to \$444,000 over 4 years to introduce driver education "into all public schools in years 9 and 10 and to encourage participation by private schools", the *Road Risk Reduction* resource materials have been developed by DIER for schools. We congratulate the DIER road safety consultants for their professionalism and the hard work they are doing to promote it.

RACT welcomes the Premier's most recent announcements to make RRR an accredited TCE subject, and the commitment of additional funds towards training teachers. However, despite RACT's strong lobbying, the program remains voluntary. School based road safety education should be **compulsory** and not about individual preferences.

Previous surveys conducted by the RACT amongst its members shows strong community support that road safety education should be compulsory in all schools. The Tasmanian Road Safety Council's chairman,

Bryan Green MHA, told *The Examiner* that he agreed "...the course should be offered in all schools. 'It would be a smart thing for us to do,' he said 'I think generally the community would expect that sort of thing.' Mr Green said that education was one of the best ways to reduce the road toll..." (13 July 2009).

In 1997 Langford conducted a significant five-year study in Tasmania of school-based road safety education and the corresponding crash statistics, *The Evaluation of Tasmania's Pre-Driver Education Program* concluding "students enrolled in a road safety education program were less likely than those with no road safety education to be involved in an incident in their first year of driving". To further this argument results were magnified as students progressed to second and third year drivers.

Our best information is that currently around 67% of all year 10 students (private and public) are involved in a road safety education program that uses Road Risk Reduction as a resource. RACT believes that Road Risk Reduction should form the basis of an ongoing pre-learner, in-school program and we believe that all Year 10 students in Tasmania should be accessing it. This should be augmented as widely as possible with targeted single-event programs like Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA), which bring a strong road safety focus to a broad student audience. RACT currently provides significant funding support to RYDA in Tasmania. The RACT's target is 100% of students should be learning road safety education- not 67%.

A Tasmanian Parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety

The Victorian Parliament has a standing Road Safety Committee, which has as its constituent functions "road trauma" and "safety on roads and related matters." State Parliaments are in a unique position to identify public policy issues and parliamentary committees are able to commission the type of research and manage the inquiry necessary to address substantive issues of this nature.

In addition, a multi-party Committee with members from both Houses would help to de-politicise the issues considered. The Tasmanian Parliament should have a standing Road Safety Committee and the RACT recommends that the Tasmanian Government take leadership on this issue in the Parliament and establish such a Committee. RACT stresses that this Committee would not be a replacement for any other bodies in Tasmania – for example, an advisory body like the Tasmanian Road Safety Council.

Research the "inattention" crash factor in Tasmania – now

Inattention is not understood enough in Tasmania. The RACT believes a substantial research project needs to be carried out into inattentive driving in Tasmania, including the dangerous practice of using hand held mobile phones and other devices while driving.

Statistics recently released by Tasmania Police point to a growing trend in the numbers of people caught using a hand held mobile phone to nearly 6,800 in 2008-09. In addition, motorists report instances of people blatantly using their hand held phones every day.

Inattention is reported as a crash factor more than any other factor in Tasmania and the RACT believes much of the inattention can be attributed to people concentrating on their mobile phones. This makes them a danger to themselves and other road users around them.

We need to understand why Tasmanian drivers are so prepared to break the law and endanger themselves and other road users simply to use a hands held mobile phone, or send a text message. MUARC conducted a study on young drivers (*The Effects of Text Messaging on Novice Driver Performance 2006*)

which showed that serious driving performance impairment. The MUARC report also suggested that further research needed to be conducted across all age groups and experience ranges.

The Virginia Tech 100-car naturalistic study in the US involved putting video cameras in cars and found that nearly 80 per cent of all crashes and 65 per cent of all near-crashes involved driver inattention just prior to the conflict. (see http://www.vtti.vt.edu/PDF/100-Car_Fact-Sheet.pdf for more).

RACT believes funds could be utilised from the Road Safety Levy, as part of the next Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy *Action Plan*, to conduct a research project to better understand inattention amongst Tasmanian drivers under Tasmanian conditions. MUARC or one of the other Australian University-based road safety institutes could do it; at arm's length from the Government. This reflects the RACT Board's concern that perhaps more research into and analysis of the crash factors and the people involved may need to be done in Tasmania, from an 'independent-of-government' viewpoint.

Using technology 1: more vehicle-activated electronic warning signs

These innovative, technologically-advanced warning signs are widespread in England and Ireland, to name two overseas locations. The trial at the Mt Pleasant site has been a success – signs activate when a vehicle approaching at a speed considered too fast to negotiate the ramp safely triggers the speed detection system. The RACT believes that further funding should be committed to a full-scale study as to which locations would benefit the most from these electronic signs, using readily-available crash data; and commence a roll-out of additional signs as soon as practicable.

The government claimed in a media release (former-Minister for Infrastructure, Steve Kons, 4 April 2008) "It is hoped that these signs will reduce casualty crashes at Mount Pleasant by more than 40 per cent." If these sorts of crash savings (40%) are in fact achievable, then these signs should be used as widely as possible in Tasmania. RACT understands that the cost of a sign is around the \$10,000 mark – nonetheless, the positive results that have been achieved in the part-rollout of the electronic school zone signs demonstrates the value of these sorts of highly-visible, "on-road" warning/safety measures.

Using technology 2: ANPR cameras for unregistered and unlicensed

RACT welcomed the Premier's announcement in September of the extension of Automatic Number Plate Recognition Camera (ANPR) technology to operations in Tasmania Police to better-target unregistered and unlicensed vehicles. Without any MAIB premiums paid on that vehicle, an unregistered car is a significant danger to all other road users and pedestrians. In addition, unlicensed drivers persistently recur in the crash statistics. RACT understands that there is to be one ANPR camera in each Police Command District, as a result of the Premier's announcement.

It is the RACT's view that these numbers of cameras should be increased to at least three in each District, as soon as Budget considerations allow it. There are strong, persistent links between unlicensed drivers/unregistered vehicles and serious motor vehicle crashes, and ANPR is a highly targeted, cost-effective, proven technology solution to combat the problem. RACT understands that the cost of ANPR cameras are around \$60,000+.

For a Victorian viewpoint (remembering Victoria is the only State in Australia that is consistently meeting its fatality/serious injury targets set in the National Road Safety Strategy) go to

<http://www.themotorreport.com.au/43331/victoria-police-to-deploy-number-plate-recognition-technology-over-grand-final-weeken/>

More high-visibility Police vehicles; research their effect

Four high-visibility police patrol cars, for the whole of Tasmania, is nowhere near enough and could be seen as almost tokenistic. RACT understands that the whole-of-life cost to upgrade a standard police vehicle to a high-visibility vehicle is around \$10,000, per vehicle.

RACT members are very supportive of the “highway patrol” cars and all anecdotal evidence shows that their presence has a positive effect on driver behaviour. However, for a definitive survey of community attitudes towards this measure, the government should conduct some research across Tasmania to confirm this.

If this research demonstrates community support and attitude adjustment, the RACT would like to see at least eight (8) more high-visibility vehicles on the road by end of calendar year 2010.

Report dangerous driving: It’s YOUR Call 131-444

The RACT Board has decided to develop a campaign of roadside signage to encourage community involvement in road safety, and is looking to partner with the State Government on the project.

The principle being: if road safety is “everyone’s responsibility”, then motorists need to report instances of bad driver behaviour that they witness, especially on high-speed highways.

RACT has gained the support of senior Tasmania Police officers, and at officer level in the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources. Police have suggested motorists use the Police Assistance Line 131-444 and believe they can handle the increase in calls that they may receive.

Our proposed tag line for the campaign is Report Dangerous Driving: It’s YOUR call 131-444

Permanent speed cameras

High profile enforcement of speed camera operations should be implemented on a very regular basis. Fixed and/or portable signs advising drivers of radar camera operations should be used.

Permanent, fixed speed cameras with appropriate advisory signage operating in areas or junctions with known excessive speed-related crash rates should be considered – especially on higher-speed highways such as the Midland, Arthur, Bass, Huon and East Tamar Highways.

In addition, with speeding penalties (monetary) having been increased, the RACT believes that all net increases in speed camera fine revenue should be directed to road safety measures – in particular, audible edge marking and linemarking rehabilitation on our high-speed roads and arterial routes.

The RACT recommends that permanent speed cameras be extended across Tasmania, in addition to those currently operating at Longford and on the Tasman Bridge. The Club has collected suggestions from its members and Advisory Committees as to locations, and is ready to provide these to Tasmania Police to assist.

Educating Tasmanian drivers about the roadkill problem

RACT has formed a roadkill working group (including representatives from DIER, DPIW, CSIRO, the tourism industry, NRM, and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust), to develop strategies to address the roadkill problem in Tasmania.

According to environmental communications consultant Chloe Lucas, 293,000 animals are killed on Tasmania's roads every year. In 2008, wildlife on the road was a crash factor in one death and seven serious injuries to drivers. The toll includes 3,000 Tasmanian Devils a year – approximately 5.7 per cent of their entire population. Road kill is a major threat to the survival of this species now that it is depleted by facial tumour disease. RACT Insurance receives claims of over \$1 million annually. Tourists who visit Tasmania to see its pristine environment and world-famous wildlife are often shocked by the amount of dead animals on the road.

Despite the scale of the problem, Tasmanian drivers are under-educated about how to avoid wildlife collisions. The proposed public education campaign ties together best practice driver behaviour for avoiding wildlife, new tools using GPS technology to warn drivers of roadkill hotspots, and a proposed initiative by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) to improve wildlife hazard signage. It will include: *Sharing the Road with Tasmanian Wildlife* a video to be used by driver education providers, tourist information centres, Spirit of Tasmania, National Parks, hire car companies, wildlife carer training days, and induction for employees in jobs that involve driving extended hours around the state (eg. Aurora, Hydro). The project will be undertaken by Chloe Lucas, with support from the *RACT Community Fund*. She has previously made a film about the impact of roadkill in Tasmania, and has produced award-winning community service announcements and documentaries. RACT is seeking funding support to assist in the cost of production of the DVD.

Mobility of Older Tasmanians: State forum

The national policy group of the AAA met in Hobart in October 2009, with one priority topic being the mobility of older Tasmanians. Having focused on the higher risks faced by novice drivers and their poor performance in crash statistics over a number of years, the Australian motoring organisations are now concentrating on older drivers as a public policy priority for a combination of reasons including their mobility requirements, driving abilities as they age, and their safety.

The Clubs believe that it is a significant and immediate challenge for the Australian Government to develop a comprehensive and strategic national response to these issues. As part of our national campaign, the Clubs will be bringing international experts on ageing and mobility to Australia as part of a National Road Safety Summit in February 2010.

The opportunity will exist for the Clubs to host the international guest speakers in their respective States/Territories to run complementary forums at this level. The RACT would like to see the Government support and share the funding of any Tasmania-based forums that are part of this national push.

Ends.

Appendix 1: The Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania Ltd

RACT's vision and values

The RACT strives to be the most dynamic and innovative service organisation in Tasmania. We believe that our people make the difference, and that we're here to make peoples' lives safer and easier. Above all else we value Trust, Care, Commitment and Performance at the RACT.

RACT's role and functions

The Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania Ltd [RACT] is the largest and strongest community service organisation in Tasmania. Formed in 1923, the RACT is an apolitical and independent transport infrastructure, road safety, and mobility advocate. It has a broad community perspective and a balanced attitude to the full range of road users. It is committed to supporting and furthering the interests of its motoring constituency, and does this through a comprehensive program of consultation, education, awareness, and public advocacy.

In reaching its positions on issues affecting motorists, the RACT draws on an extensive consultative base within Tasmania, nationally, and internationally.

The RACT takes a "safe system" approach, in keeping with the philosophy underpinning its sister clubs through the Australian Automobile Network. That is, we seek to advance the aim of "safer drivers, in safer cars, on safer roads" and influence governments, the policy agenda and community attitudes for the benefit of members.

RACT's structure and stakeholders

Total membership of the RACT, including commercial arrangements and relationship memberships stands at over 186,000, and continues to grow. Our magazine, *Motor News Journeys*, is distributed to around 113,000 households every two months; in addition, a full-view digital version is available. The Club maintains a strong online presence through its website www.ract.com.au and is well-known in particular for its online Tasmanian fuel price monitoring page.

The RACT Community Fund provides several grants of up to \$2,000 to community not-for-profit groups to support worthy community projects, in two funding rounds per annum. Since its inception in 2008, the RACT Community Fund has received hundreds of applications from across Tasmania.

Around the State, the RACT maintains a significant branch network; a structure which is unique in many ways across Tasmania's corporate sector and community groups. Nine city and town branches provide a local presence in the community, supplying important feedback on local attitudes and concerns and giving members and non-members alike "somewhere to go" to voice their concerns about matters concerning their families or businesses.

The RACT relies on the support and advice provided to it by its members through our network. Our three Regional Advisory Committees meet regularly and are made up of locally-resident RACT financial

members, who serve on these committees on a voluntary basis, many with current or previous road or transport experience in their work, professional or family lives.

The *Regional Advisory Committee Charter* states, in part, that a Committee's role is to:

"...consider road design and traffic management issues within the region and to liaise with and make recommendations to the relevant local authorities to improve road design, road safety and traffic management [and] ...consider and make recommendations to the RACT Board regarding road safety, public education and enforcement policy issues."

The Regional Advisory Committees report to a specific RACT Board Committee constituted to deal with matters including road safety; that is, the RACT *Road and Traffic Committee*.

The RACT also deploys dedicated resources to coordinate its policy making, public relations and advocacy, and to liaise with key state and federal stake holders. On a wide range of motoring-related matters such as mechanical safety, technical support, and the fitting of child restraints, the RACT retains a strong body of expertise within its own staff.

The RACT is represented by senior staff in a number of stakeholder reference organisations in Tasmania and undertakes structured liaison with local government, business organisations, not-for-profit groups, political parties, service organisations, and professionals in the transport and road safety industries. RACT is a board member of the Road Safety Task Force and a member of the Tasmanian Road Safety Council

Nationally, the RACT is a constituent member of the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), <http://www.aaa.asn.au> which represents some 6.5 million Australian motorists and maintains a secretariat in Canberra. The RACT is a regular contributor to the committees and forums of the AAA. The President and the Group Chief Executive of the RACT sit on the Board of the AAA.

Internationally, the RACT has joined with the other Australian motoring organisations as a member of the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA) to work on road safety and related issues at a global level – see <http://www.fiafoundation.org> This includes the *Decade of Action* and *Make Roads Safe* campaigns to put global road traffic injuries on the G8 and UN agenda.