



Safe Roads Policy

February 2021

RACT Policy – Safe Roads

Mobility Strategy Pillar: Road Safety

Road safety is a key pillar in RACT's mobility strategy. Within this pillar, RACT's goal is to increase the quality and safety of Tasmania's roads to better protect all road users.

Safe roads policy statements

Safe roads explained

- As part of the Safe Systems approach to road safety, road design can help reduce and minimise the severity of a crash. Common crashes include vehicles leaving the road, side impacts at intersections and head-on collisions or collisions with pedestrians and cyclists (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
- The installation of roundabouts at intersections, as well as run-off road preventions such as roadside barriers, highly visible lane markings, wider sealed shoulders, tactile ripple strips and flexible wire barriers can reduce crashes (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
- Protections for vulnerable road users include separate lanes or cycleways for cyclists, raised crossings for pedestrians and traffic calming in busy areas such as shopping districts (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).

Purpose of this policy

- As Tasmania's peak motoring body, RACT is an advocate for improvements to road safety, particularly through safe roads.
- This policy will discuss RACT's position around safe roads as a means to reduce Tasmania's road toll and serious injuries. It will address increasing Tasmania's rating in the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP), safer road infrastructure and design and safer road education.
- This policy will also inform how RACT will advocate for safe roads in Tasmania through liaison with all levels of government, key transport stakeholders and the media.

Relevance to RACT

- RACT strongly believes there is a need to ensure the state and national highway network is rated and maintained at no less than three stars under the AusRAP scheme by 2030.
- RACT also believes all other local government or privately owned roads should be maintained to Australian standards.
- Road maintenance and road infrastructure investment were the top two member concerns in RACT's 2020 Member Survey, which RACT will now focus on in, in order to reduce Tasmania's road toll and serious injuries.
- RACT advocates for better road safety outcomes for all Tasmanians through safe roads, in order to reduce Tasmania's road toll and serious injuries.

Background, evidence and position

Background

- The National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) was signed by all Australian State Governments in 2011 with the aim of reducing road deaths and serious injuries by at least 30% by 2020 (Australian Automobile Association, 2018).
- The NRSS is based on the Safe System approach to improving road safety and considers four key pillars: safe vehicles, safe roads, safe road users and safe speeds (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2018).
- The Safe Systems approach forms part of the Tasmanian Government's Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy. This strategy is a long-term vision where no road user is seriously injured or killed as the result of a crash in Tasmania (Department of State Growth, 2018).
- Safe roads can help reduce crashes and minimise the severity of a crash. Common crashes are caused by a vehicle leaving the road, side impacts at intersections and head-on collisions and collisions with pedestrians and cyclists (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
- Designing roads to minimise the consequences of collisions has the potential to significantly reduce death and injury for road users. This can include traffic control devices, such as traffic signals, pavement markings and signs (Royal Automobile Association, 2016).
 - Multi-lane rural highways can reduce crashes linked to inappropriate overtaking manoeuvres, reducing driver frustration and improving road capacity.
- The installation of roundabouts at intersections, as well as run-off road preventions such as roadside barriers, highly visible lane markings, wider sealed shoulders and medians, tactile ripple strips and flexible wire barriers can reduce common types of crashes (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
 - However, there are concerns that guard rails and flexible wire barriers can create a hazard for motorcyclists who fall off and hit the posts (Department of State Growth 2019).
 - The Tasmanian Government has agreed to fit rub rails below guard rails on high speed, tight radius corners and for padding to be fitted on wire barrier posts on slow speed, tight radius corners.
- Protections for vulnerable road users include separate lanes or cycleways for cyclists, raised crossings for pedestrians and traffic calming in busy areas such as shopping zones (Transport Accident Commission, 2018).
- The AusRAP analyses the major highways and motorways in Australia and adheres to the International Road Assessment Program (iRAP). It is undertaken by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) and state motoring clubs (AAA, 2016).
- The AusRAP, undertaken every 3-4 years, comprises two distinct yet complementary methods for assessing the safety of Australia's national highways (AAA, 2019), including:
 - Risk mapping based on crashes that have occurred. Highways are coded based on five colours according to their risk ratings. Intervention through infrastructure upgrades are suggested for those with a poor risk rating. This was last undertaken in 2016.
 - The other form are star ratings, where highways are assigned a score from one star (least safe) to five stars (most safe) as part of a system used to measure the safety of the road infrastructure. This was last undertaken in 2013.
 - The AusRAP star rating system assesses highway roads 80km/h or greater and takes into account lane number and width, sealed shoulders, visual cues and delineation, highly visible line markings, audible edge lines, medians and importantly the separation of traffic through flexible wire rope

barriers. Other key safety features include safe overtaking opportunities no more than 7-8 minutes apart, as well as turning facilities and stopping bays (Department of State Growth, 2019).

- The AAA have no plans to undertake AusRAP future star rating or risk mapping projects.
- The objectives of the AusRAP are to reduce deaths and injuries on Australia's roads. The program identifies shortcomings that can be addressed with practical measures as well as the risk assessment of crashes to make strategic decisions on road improvement and crash protection (AAA, 2016).
- RACT believes a review is needed into road funding mechanisms, including consideration of the following:
 - Research shows that road project investment in Tasmania is disproportionate to the funding granted to road maintenance programs
 - Road funding mechanisms and processes, including the Road Safety Levy, Black Spot Program, Roads to Recovery Program, Community Road Safety Grants Program and the Bridges Renewal Program.
 - Consultation with Tasmania Police also found that road enforcement revenue in Tasmania does not go directly back into road safety, but instead into consolidated government revenue
 - Continued investment into public road safety education, road safety strategies, enforcement and crash data programs
 - A lack of collaboration between state and local governments in regards to road upgrades
- Autonomous vehicles (AVs) also need to be considered in regard to future road design standards (Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, 2017), including:
 - The development and implementation of standardised road designs to enable AVs to drive on all roads, well maintained road markings to guide vehicles and narrower lanes as AVs may travel closer together.
 - Cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS) to replace traffic lights and stop signs with intersection communications, like sensors, allowing AVs to wirelessly communicate their position with each other. Digital and static road signs will be needed until vehicles are fully autonomous.
 - Incorporation of ICT technology, such as of sensors, transmitters and cabling, into road design standards. This facilitates live traffic data and vehicle to infrastructure communication that provides real time road and traffic conditions.
 - Consideration of interaction with normal vehicles, dedicated lanes for AVs, bridge design standards that are compatible with AVs and vehicle to pedestrian/cyclist communication.
 - GPS and 5G networks for accurate positioning and navigation data, as well as enhanced data storage capabilities.

Evidence

- An average of 300 people are seriously injured or killed as a result of crashes on Tasmanian roads per year. Tasmania's Towards Zero Strategy has a target of reducing the number to fewer than 200 by 2026 (Department of State Growth, 2020).
 - Between 2011-2020, the average annual fatality total was 32 people, with an average of 270 people seriously injured each year.
- There is approximately 370km of risk-rated national highway in Tasmania, which is just under 2% of the total Australian road network (AAA, 2016)
- The highest level of road trauma in Tasmania was on the Bass Highway, which accounts for 45% of casualty crashes and 41% of fatalities. By length, the Bass Highway constitutes 36% of the network, meaning that its casualty crash and fatality rates are disproportionately high (AAA, 2016).
- Three of the 10 worst sections of Tasmanian highway in Tasmania also rank in the worst 10 across all of Australia on the National Land Transport Network (AAA, 2016).

- Just two of the nine best sections of Tasmanian highway received a risk rating of low. This shows that even the best highways in this state have significant room for improvement when compared with the entire Australian network (AAA, 2016).
- The AusRAP Star Rating Report assessed 366km of Tasmanian highways in 2013. In total, 98% were rated at 1-3 stars, with just 2% at 4-stars and no 5-star roads (AAA, 2013).
 - It is acknowledged that this percentage is now likely to be higher, given upgrades to the Midland Highway. However, it is still expected that the average rating is below the national average.
- The AusRAP report also developed a Safer Roads Investment Plan for Tasmania's highways.
 - It found that a \$74 million investment in Tasmanian highways would result in 71% of Tasmania's highways being rated at 3-4 stars. However, 29% of the highways would still be rated at 2-stars. Tasmania's 1-star ratings would be eliminated, but there would still be no 5-star highways.
 - This investment would also prevent 400 fatalities and serious injuries, thus resulting in \$186 million in safety benefits, over 20 years (AAA, 2013).
- Investment in Tasmanian roads includes:
 - State and Federal Budgets: Tasmanian road investment between 2020-21 and 2023-24, from both the state and federal governments, totals \$2.4 billion. However, just \$311 million of this total will go towards road maintenance (13%) (Tasmanian Budget, 2020)
 - Tasmanian Road Safety Levy: vehicle owners pay a fee each year as part of registration, with 75% of the fund going towards road infrastructure and 25% towards other road safety initiatives. In 2019-20, the Levy generated \$14.5 million in revenue (Department of State Growth, 2020)
 - Black Spot Program: Tasmania will receive \$3.5 million in 2020-21 funding, with councils contributing a further \$1.7 million to the successful projects (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2020)
 - Roads to Recovery Program: more than \$17 million committed to Tasmanian councils in 2020-21 (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2020)
 - Community Road Safety Grants Program: \$337,000 in grants were provided to community groups in 2019-20 (Department of State Growth, 2020)
 - Bridges Renewal Program: \$5.1 million to be provided in 2020-21 (Tasmanian Budget, 2020)
- Revenue from traffic policing was \$20.9 million in 2019-20, and budgeted to be \$21.5 million in 2020-21. (Tasmanian Budget, 2020). However, consultation with Tasmania Police found that none of this road enforcement revenue is reinvested into roads and road safety, instead going into consolidated government revenue.
- On average, 60% of Tasmania's annual fatalities and serious injuries occur on regional roads, compared to 40% on urban roads (Department of State Growth, 2020).
- Road defects have been deemed a contributing factor in approximately 5% of crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries in Tasmania each year (Department of State Growth, 2019).

Position

RACT

- Supports reduction targets for road fatalities and serious injuries in line with the National Road Safety Strategy and the Tasmanian Government's Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy.
- Urges the Tasmanian and Federal governments to increase road infrastructure expenditure to ensure all the state's highways are rated no less than three stars under the AusRAP scheme by 2030 in order to reduce deaths and injuries. Newly constructed sections of highway should achieve a safety rating of no less than four stars. This should include:
 - Multiple lanes, improved lane widths, sealed shoulders (particularly on cyclist routes), visual cues and delineation, highly visible line markings, audible edge lines, medians, flexible wire rope barriers,

safe overtaking opportunities no more than 7-8 minutes apart, as well as turning facilities and stopping bays.

- Increased funding for road maintenance, so that it is proportional to road project investment, in order to improve the long term quality of the Tasmanian road network. This must include the monitoring and auditing of road standards.
- Prioritising necessary safety upgrades to rural and urban roads and highways in areas where there is high traffic, high risk and elevated crash numbers.
- RACT also urges local government or private land owners to maintain their roads to Australian standards. These are outlined in greater detail below.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to maintain road line markings to Australian standard on all Tasmanian roads and install audible-tactile lines on roads that have experienced high fatigue related crashes.
- Supports the Tasmanian Government fitting rub rails below guard rails on high speed, tight radius corners and for padding to be fitted on wire barrier posts on slow speed, tight radius corners to protect motorcyclists during a crash.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to ensure the quality and visibility of intersections, medians, median/traffic islands, roundabouts, traffic lights and kerbs are to the Austroads standards through regular audits.
 - If these are not to standard, the responsible road owner must deliver appropriate maintenance.
 - Installation of these safety features, particularly roundabouts and traffic lights, should also be considered at required locations through regular audits.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to implement protections for vulnerable road users, such as separate lanes or cycleways for cyclists, raised crossings for pedestrians and traffic calming in busy areas such as shopping zones.
- Urges local government and the Tasmanian Government to minimise roadside hazards such as vegetation, embankments and roadside furniture, as well as the implementation of a multi-agency approach to address excessive roadkill.
- Will monitor road standards and report issues to relevant authorities where appropriate.
- Urges the Tasmanian Government to continue undertaking projects contained within its Tasmanian Infrastructure Project Pipeline, which is regularly updated.
- Urges the Tasmanian Government to review funding mechanisms that contribute to road infrastructure and maintenance, as well as road safety, including:
 - Increased investment in road maintenance programs for Tasmanian roads
 - Reviewing the Road Safety Levy, Black Spot Program, Roads to Recovery Program, Community Road Safety Grants Program and the Bridges Renewal Program to ensure appropriate levels of funding are going into roads and road safety,
 - Investing road enforcement revenue back into roads and road safety initiatives, rather than general government revenue.
 - Continued investment in public road safety education programs that target schools, young and elderly road users and tourists. Programs should also address high risk roads. Investment should also continue for road safety strategies, enforcement and crash data programs
 - Improved collaboration between state and local governments in regards to road upgrades
- Urges Tasmania Police to maintain a highly visible on-road presence to ensure the safety of all road users.
- Urges all relevant agencies to adequately coordinate and communicate roadworks and road closures in order to maximise operational efficiency and safety of road users.
- This incorporates any measures that enhance the safety of roadside workers, including RACT Roadside Assistance workers. Urges all levels of government to invest in road-rail connectors and rail infrastructure to assist in the movement of freight across Tasmania, in order to reduce heavy vehicle impact on roads and subsequent maintenance costs.

- Will continue to conduct and support targeted, practical road safety programs in schools as well as the broader community that focus on road conditions and quality.
- Urges all levels of government to consider autonomous vehicles in future road design standards, with the technology continuing to rapidly develop.

Scope

Policy Application and Ownership

This policy applies to:

- Tasmanian road users
- The Road Safety Advisory Council
- Local government
- Tasmanian Government policy makers and ministers
- Australian Government policy makers and ministers
- Road engineering and construction companies

The ownership and responsibility of this policy is with the RACT Board.

Approvals

Date of approval: [insert date]

Date of review: [insert date]

Signature of CEO: [insert signature]