

## **RACT Policy #2 – Speed**

<b>Organisation</b>	RACT
<b>Business Unit</b>	Road and Traffic Committee

Version	Author	Description	Date Revised	Review Date
1	R&T	Board endorsed	December 2012	October 2015
2	R&T	R&T Committee reviewed	October 2015	October 2017
3	R&T	R&T Committee reviewed	February 2018	February 2020

## **RACT POLICY #2 - SPEED**

### **2.1 SPEED LIMIT SETTING**

- a) The Department of State Growth is the only agency in Tasmania authorised to set speed limits. RACT supports the single regulator model, with the Department as the regulator.

### **2.1 SAFE SYSTEMS APPROACH**

- a) RACT supports the Safe Systems approach being adopted by the Tasmanian Government and agrees that there are a range of factors involved in achieving safe roads. Infrastructure improvements, driver education, vehicles with high safety ratings and speed limits appropriate to the environment are all essential components of an effective system. Given this, speed limits should not be considered in isolation when working to achieve a safer road.

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

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

### **2.4 SPEED LIMIT ON OPEN ROADS/HIGHWAY**

- a) RACT supports the upgrading of all state managed roads to a 3 star AusRAP safety rating and urges the Government to facilitate this work as soon as is practicable. This will enable safer and more efficient travel for domestic and commercial vehicles at speeds appropriate to a higher standard of infrastructure.
- b) The remote nature of much of Tasmania's regional network should necessitate the assessment of appropriate speed limits on open roads and highways on a case-by-case basis. The RACT believes there are many existing examples where a default limit is inappropriate.
- c) Lower speed limits may also 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.
- d) 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.

## **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**

- a) RACT supports painting the speed limit on the road on some rural roads, especially on the road at the entry to towns. This is a regular practice in New Zealand and can assist drivers not familiar with local roads.

## **2.12 SCHOOL ZONE SPEED LIMITS**

- a) 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.
- b) 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 the Department 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 VARIABLE SPEED LIMIT SIGNAGE**

The RACT supports the implementation of variable speed limits in key CBD locations. These variable limits should be accompanied by digital signage and only apply when

there are significant differences in the volume of traffic at various times of the day. This will enable more control over traffic flow and higher speed limits on appropriate roads during low traffic times, such as at night.

### **2.13 ROAD SAFETY AUDITS**

The RACT is supportive of the Tasmanian Government establishing Road Safety Audits to assess major arterial roads and freight routes, similar to a number of other Australian states. These Audits should be conducted by dedicated officers and result in recommendations regarding regulatory and/or infrastructure enhancements.