Australian Road Network in Crisis

The 565 local councils across the country manage 650,000km of local roads, representing more than 80% of the entire Australian road network. An estimated $1.2 billion will need to be spent each year just to maintain the current standard of the Australian local road network. These are the findings of an independent study of Australia’s local roads, released by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) at the 2010 National Local Roads and Transport Congress.

The study examines a sample of 158 councils from across the country and calculates the rate of annual under-expenditure by all councils is $860 million. This will blow out to $1.2 billion if current expenditure settings are not improved.

The study also finds that while councils have increased rate revenues to meet funding shortfalls, the pressures on councils in other service areas means there is simply not enough available from the local rate-base for roads.

The full report is available on the ALGA website at www.alga.asn.au, under ‘Recent Updates’.

Further Road Safety Levy Projects Announced

Infrastructure Minister Lara Giddings has announced a further $3 million worth of infrastructure projects to be funded from Tasmania’s Road Safety Levy this financial year.

The program, which has been recommended by the Road Safety Advisory Council, was funded from the $20 levy applied to the annual registration fees of all motor vehicles.

Funding from the Road Safety Levy is applied directly to road safety initiatives with the proven ability to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The new projects to be funded are spread across the state, and are consistent with the ‘best practice infrastructure’ direction of the Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy.

Ms Giddings said the $1 million to be spent on the installation of a safe system mid barrier on the Brooker Highway at Granton is an excellent example. “This sort of barrier is designed to help prevent head-on crashes and reduce the severity of loss-of-control crashes,” she said. “Flexible barriers can achieve a 90% reduction in serious road trauma caused by head-on and run-off-road crashes.”

Other projects in the 2010/11 Infrastructure work program are:

- Tactile line-marking on the Bass Highway between Launceston and Deloraine ($800,000);
- Funding for Local Government – Shared Urban Spaces in Hobart and Devonport ($256,000);
- Safe system mid barrier at Dilston ($200,000);
- Motorcycle safety measures ($200,000);
- Lower urban speed limit for vulnerable road users ($200,000); and
- Preliminary design for new infrastructure projects ($300,000).

The Road Safety Levy started in December 2007, for an initial period of five years, to provide $42.5 million for initiatives to make our roads safer.
More than 300 representatives of councils from across Australia who attended the National Local Roads and Transport Congress, held in Western Australia during October, have developed a communique to highlight the issues critical to Australia’s local roads, transport services and infrastructure.

In the communique, delegates have called for:

- Roads to Recovery to be continued beyond 2014 at a rate of $1.2 billion per year, indexed in line with the cost increases of roads and bridges and made permanent until the backlog is removed;
- Re-introduction of the Strategic Regional Roads program to fund upgrades to regionally important local roads with projects for funding be selected by an independent agency, similar to Infrastructure Australia; and
- A dedicated program of funding for bridge maintenance and renewal.

Delegates have also called for a review of the formula for the distribution of identified roads grants, an end to cost-shifting by state governments, and the need for Local Government to be recognised in the Constitution.

The full communique is available at www.alga.asn.au/policy/transport/ALGA_Local_Road_Funding_Report.pdf.

Launceston Adopts “Who’s Des” Program

The successful Who’s Des Tonight designated driver program has now been adopted by councils and organisations across the Launceston region.

Originally developed as a Community Road Safety Partnerships initiative in Burnie in 2004, the program aims to encourage potential drivers to plan ahead and travel with a driver who has not consumed alcohol. After West Tamar Council led the way in the North, the program has now been embraced by Launceston City Council, Meander Valley Council, Launceston Safer Community Partnership and Launceston Liquor Accord.

Each year, one in four fatalities and one in eight serious injuries can be linked to drink-driving. The Who’s Des Tonight program encourages a whole-of-community approach, with State and Local Government, industry and community groups working together to address the issue of drink-driving.

Participating venues provide free soft drink to the identified designated drivers who register to participate at venues, which are supplied with posters, tabletop ‘tent cards’, bar mats, staff T-shirts and Des identifying wrist bands.

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The Essential First Step
Wildlife Warning Signs Trialled

New wildlife warning signs will be trialled on the Tasman Peninsula this summer in a bid to reduce roadkill and help protect the endangered Tasmanian Devil.

The signs will be targeted at roadkill hotspots, especially at times of the year when wildlife is most active. At present, four large wildlife warning signs on the Tasman Peninsula feature an image of the Tasmanian Devil, an advisory speed, and the words “Dusk to Dawn”.

Infrastructure Minister Lara Giddings said that roadkill is a major threat to the survival of the Tasmanian Devil – a species already depleted by the Devil Facial Tumour Disease. “We need to do all we can do reduce roadkill of these vulnerable animals, as well as to reduce the risk of accidents and the annual bill of car damage from roadkill, estimated at up to $1 million each year, Ms Giddings said.

The new warning signs will incorporate yellow flashing beacons, a symbol of wildlife and an advisory sign with a message warning motorists to slow down when the beacons are flashing. The project will look at whether better signage changes driver behaviour and results in less roadkill. Vehicle speed and roadkill data will be collected before, during and after the demonstration project to analyse the effectiveness of the project.

New Road Safety Advisory Council

Mr John Gledhill has been announced as the inaugural Chair of Tasmania’s new Road Safety Advisory Council, which consolidates the work done by the former Road Safety Council and Taskforce in educating the community and informing Government policy on road safety issues.

Mr Gledhill has recently retired from the Tasmanian Fire Service after 35 years of service, including 14 years as Chief Officer and CEO. Involvement of the Fire Service in road rescue operations has given John a good understanding of the very real cost of road trauma to the community.

Other members of the Road Safety Advisory Council are the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources; the Police Commissioner; the CEO of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board; and the CEO of the Local Government Association of Tasmania. The advisory council’s initial priority is to finalise the second Road Safety Action Plan 2010-2013.
Tasmanian Quarry Operations

Site/Location
BIS’ Quarry operations have depots strategically located across the Northern half of Tasmania, from St Helens to Burnie. BIS has fixed crushing assets located at Burnie and Western Junction, and utilises BIS owned mobile crushing and screening equipment onsite at Bell Bay, and engages contracted equipment at other locations. BIS also currently provides onsite services to Cement Australia at Railton via the Devonport depot.

Customers
Local Councils, Asphalt/Sealing Contractors, Concrete Suppliers and Cement Australia

Key Activities
BIS Industries Limited (trading as BIS Industrial Logistics (BIS)) has operated quarries in Northern Tasmania since the late 1970’s and from July 2008 acquired further mining leases which provides BIS the capacity to supply approximately 1,000,000 tonnes of crushed quarry products per annum. This capability recognises that BIS is one of the largest operators in the extractive industry in Tasmania.

Contact Details
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TECHNICAL DATA


Typical Equipment - Fixed Plant Crushing includes:

- Jaw crusher
- Gyratory secondary
- Vertical impact crushers
- Large screen decks
- Conveyors.
Safer Speeds

Save Lives

What is a ‘default’ speed limit?
Tasmania uses two default speed limits. These apply automatically in the absence of any speed limit signs.
The two default speed limits are:
• Urban - within built-up areas the default speed limit is 50km/h.
• Rural - outside built-up areas the default speed limit is 100km/h.
*Except for Kingborough and Tasman Municipalities where trials of lower default speed limits have been operating. In these municipalities the urban default speed limit is 60km/h on sealed roads and 50km/h on gravel / unsealed rural roads.

What are the proposed changes?
We are proposing three main changes:
• A reduction on rural sealed roads from 100km/h to 90km/h, unless otherwise signed.
• A reduction on rural gravel and unsealed roads from 100km/h to 80km/h, unless otherwise signed.
• High standard roads will remain at 100km/h and will have speed limit signs.
It is important to know that all roads in Tasmania which currently have a 110km/h speed limit will remain at 110km/h.

Why do you want to change things?
Speed is the most critical contributing factor in the event of a crash. In a crash, the human body can withstand only a certain amount of force before it is seriously or fatally injured.
Research has shown that even small reductions in average vehicle speeds can help reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

Why are you focusing on rural roads?
In Tasmania most casualty crashes, including deaths and serious injuries, occur on rural roads. The proposed changes in speed limits on these roads would result in a significant reduction of crashes.

Why do we have a default speed limit?
A driver should be able to achieve and maintain the posted speed limit, where a speed limit sign applies, under ideal conditions over a reasonable distance. However, due to the nature of some rural roads it is not always possible to safely reach or consistently drive at the speed limit. To post safe speed limits on these roads would involve the need for changing speed limits over very short distances and increasing the amount of signage on the road.
The rural default speed limit forces drivers to actively measure their driving speed against their ability; the nature of the road, the weather and prevailing traffic conditions.

Will travelling 10km/h slower really make a difference?
Yes! You have more time to respond if something unexpected happens which means you may be able to avoid a crash altogether or you will be travelling more slowly if you do crash.

International and national research shows that a reduction of 10km/h in speed can lead to a 2-3% reduction in casualty crashes. By travelling 10km/h slower you could reduce your risk of being in a casualty crash (that is one where you are either injured or killed) by 20-30%.

How do we know that this will work in real life?
Tasmania has experienced the benefits of lower speed limits first hand following the introduction of the 50km/h general urban speed limit, where serious casualties fell in 40, 50 and 60km/h zones. A two year evaluation of the impact of new speed limits concluded that there were 143 fewer casualty crashes in 40km/h, 50km/h and 60km/h speed zones.
Safer default speed limits are being successfully trialled in both the Kingborough and Tasman Municipalities. Both the Tasman Safer Speeds (TaSS) Trial and the Kingborough Safer Speeds (KoSS) Demonstration have received strong community support (in excess of 80% of survey respondents).

Does this mean my journey will take longer?
Yes, but not by very much. Research has shown that, if travelling at 90km/h instead of 100km/h, the increase in travel time is about 6%. That means if your journey was supposed to take an hour, it would only take an extra three and a half minutes.

This will cost me more though, won’t it?
Actually, no! You would see some significant savings in terms of vehicle operating costs. Fuel consumption increases significantly at speeds over 90km/h (e.g. travelling at 110km/h uses around 25% more fuel than travelling at 90km/h).
Driving at lower speeds also reduces wear and tear on tyres, brakes, etc… which will save you money on maintaining your vehicle.

How do I comment on these proposed changes?
Please send your comments to:
Road Safety Advisory Council
C/O Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
GPO Box 936 Hobart 7001
You can also email saferspeeds@diettas.gov.au
Please could we have your comments by 18 February 2011.

Road Safety Advisory Council
C/O Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
GPO Box 936
Hobart 7001
www.rsac.tas.gov.au
Compressed Natural Gas Vehicles Launched

The Minister for Alternative Energy, Nick McKim, launched two vehicles, owned by Tas Gas, which will run on compressed natural gas.

Mr McKim said compressed natural gas (CNG) was increasingly being recognised as an alternative vehicle fuel and had several benefits. “It is very easy and safe to use and the price is relatively stable,” Mr McKim said. “CNG also produces lower emissions than other fossil fuels and the number of vehicles with CNG is also increasing.”

“I am pleased to see Tas Gas leading by example in terms of using its own product – in this case compressed natural gas or CNG – to operate two of its own vehicles, Mr McKim said. “Tas Gas has made a substantial commitment to demonstrate the viability of natural gas for vehicles and to highlight its benefits. The two vehicles are filled with CNG at the company’s Moonah headquarters where they have installed a small compressor,” he said.

The company has ordered a larger, fast fill facility for the United Petroleum’s 24-hours-a-day / seven-days-a-week Selfs Point site that will work like the traditional service station for filing CNG vehicles. This facility is set to start operating early in 2011, and Tas Gas has generated some early interest in CNG among the Tasmanian business community. CNG is an Australian-sourced vehicle fuel which benefits this nation’s economy and without the potential for supply disruption due to global effects.

(L-R) The Minister for Alternative Energy, Nick McKim, pictured with Michael Cummins of Tas Gas and one of two cars owned by the company which will run on compressed natural gas.

AIM FOR ZERO

46% of OH&S injuries and deaths result from driving a motor vehicle to and from a place of business and or operating a motor vehicle as part of conducting business

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