Our Ref: ME:CA

25 March 2021

Ms Gabby O'Neill
Office of Road Safety
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Via email: RoadSafetyStrategy@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Ms O'Neill

Draft National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Office of Road Safety's draft National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030. This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of all 29 Tasmanian councils.

Due to the short timeframe provided, we were only able to gain a limited response from member councils and, those that did respond, did not have time to fully canvas their elected representatives. The limited engagement of councils from the outset may pose a risk to the success of the strategy.

Responding councils had no objections to the Strategy's intent and targets, and there is willingness from some Tasmanian councils to partner with other organisations to help deliver on the Strategy's goals. However, councils raised a number of specific issues for your consideration, which are detailed below.

Support First, Requirements Later

Firstly, the long term direction of *"Local Government supported to embed road safety in business as usual"* (p. 3) is supported and suggests an understanding of the right way to work effectively with Local Government. However, the enabling action of Upskilling Local Government (p. 20) appears inconsistent with this long term direction, as there is no discussion of support needs for Local Government in the section. By the section's second sentence, rather than outlining support, the focus has shifted to imposing

additional requirements upon councils: reporting, reviewing state requirements of councils, and requiring councils to undertake road safety risk assessments. These may all be necessary steps. However, if the Strategy seeks to work effectively with Local Government in road safety and is serious about embedding road safety in day-to-day council operations, then 'support' must be at the forefront of the strategy. It is a risk to the success of the strategy to encumber councils with further requirements before first supporting them to achieve these objectives. We suggest redrafting the Upskilling Local Government section to better align with the intent of the long term directions.

Setting an Operating Framework

Councils noted that the critical element to the success of the Strategy will be for the Australian Government to establish an operational framework for State and Local Governments to work within. For infrastructure funding to be linked to measurable improvements in road safety (p. 15), councils will need access to quality crash and road safety data and a clear methodology/framework to measure and report consistently.

Road Network Safety Plans

Developing network safety plans (p. 15) is a sound first step but this will be new work for a majority of councils. The strategy should therefore focus on building both capability (skills) and capacity (resourcing) within councils. Councils will need templates, training and resource support to develop these plans and critically, access to quality crash data.

Speed Limit Reductions

Speed limit reductions (p. 15) make sense from a technical perspective but often generate community controversy and conflict. This is likely to require a cultural shift in many, perhaps most, local communities to generate support and avoid backlash. This requires a better, and more widespread, technical understanding of speed and the part it plays in increasing both likelihood and consequences of crashes. The community will need to come to an understanding of the direct trade-off between speed and safe travel first, in order to make that trade off in favour of safety.

To enact the widespread speed limit reductions envisioned by the draft Strategy, may require a review of the relevant part of Australian Standard AS1742 that deals with speed limit assessments. Road managers noted that it should not be assumed that mass speed reductions will comply with speed limit assessments of the current AS1742.

The Strategy is inaccurate, for Tasmania, in its reference to local law regulations and speed limits (p. 27), as this is the role of the Transport Commissioner rather than, councils.

Rural Road Use

Some of our regional councils, while broadly comfortable with the document, were keen to ensure that the driving of agricultural equipment, such as mechanical harvesters, along rural and regional roads and highways would not be prohibited by the Strategy's actions or outcomes. This equipment is an essential part of regional economies and country life.

Leadership – Networks of Road Management

Finally, councils recognise that achieving the Strategy's goals will require effective leadership from state road authorities and collaboration with local road managers across the country. To achieve this in Tasmania needs to be a change in approach from the Tasmanian Government, which has been hands-off in its approach to local road safety for several years. Effective engagement and a collaborative approach from the Tasmanian Government will assist in creating the culture change and shift in focus required to steadily improve road safety over the life of the Strategy. This will also help to identify capacity and capability gaps and support councils in developing their responses.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Edrich at michael.edrich@lgat.tas.gov.au or on (03) 6146 3740.

Yours sincerely



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