

**Submission
No 29**

REDUCING TRAUMA ON LOCAL ROADS IN NSW

Organisation: Port Stephens Council

Date Received: 10 March 2020



Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety)

Dear Committee members,

Re: Inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW

I make the following submission on behalf of Port Stephens Council.

Local roads play a key part in road safety generally and with particular regard to each of the following four pillars of the Safe System Principles:

- **Safe speeds**

With safe speeds being one of the main pillars of the safe system approach to road safety, it is critical that the incidence of speeding is reduced on all roads in order to continue the trend of reducing road trauma.

Although speed limits are generally lower on local roads compared to major roads, there is often increased exposure of vulnerable road users, such as cyclists and pedestrians, on local roads. This, combined with a perception by drivers that they may be less likely to be caught speeding on local roads can lead to a dangerous situation in many rural and residential areas and may result in road crashes and trauma.

One opportunity to reduce the trauma occurring on local roads may be to increase the level of compliance of road users to the signposted speed limits. However it is acknowledged that this may require increased enforcement activity by Police perhaps via greater use of mobile and fixed speed detection devices. Council's traffic data and anecdotal evidence indicates that the posted speed limits on local roads are routinely ignored by many drivers. One of the most often received complaints by Council is about drivers speeding on local roads and consequent requests for installation of traffic calming devices such as speed humps.

There may be opportunities to consider an increased roll-out of red light camera and other speed detection technology, combined with the removal of the pre-warning signage for mobile speed cameras. These measures may assist in deterring dangerous behaviour and in reducing vehicle speeds and the potential trauma resulting from vehicle crashes.



Port Stephens Council has been a strong supporter of reducing speed limits within our Local Government Area. This has been in both general requests from the community and through project applications such as Safer Roads NSW and Federal Blackspot programs.

There may be opportunities to investigate and give consideration to reducing the timeframes taken for response, assessment and implementation of approved speed limit reductions.

The important issue of speed zoning guidelines and implementation on local roads could be an area of investigation for the Committee.

- **Safe roads**

In order for Councils to continually improve the safety of the local road network there is an ever present need to be able to access Government funding for the construction and maintenance of local roads. Enabling grant monies to be made available will allow for Council to implement road safety measures such as:

- resealing of local roads to improve the road pavement friction characteristics and hence reduce on-road skidding and improve road user response to situations,
- Improved linemarking of delineation/separation and installation of pavement markers,
- Installation of safety barriers or removal of roadside hazards, and
- Installation of lighting at critical locations.

Council's also heavily rely on road crash data when analysing / reviewing the local road network and determining which locations warrant design treatments and hence may be the subject of a grant funding application. The accuracy of crash data, in particular crash location, has been an issue for many years. In fact Port Stephens Council presented an oral presentation at the 2018 Australian Road Safety Conference on this subject: "*Crash data – when it's wrong, are we putting more lives at risk?*" The importance of having accurate crash data upon which to base decisions which may lead to the construction of design treatments cannot be understated. There may be opportunities to further explore improving the veracity of crash data thereby ensuring critical safety treatments / improvements are constructed or installed at the correct location.

- **Safe People**

Continued support of the Road Safety program to allow education of new drivers and creating greater awareness of road safety campaigns is paramount in ensuring people have the sufficient knowledge, skills, attitudes and information to make safe choices on the road.



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- **Safe Vehicles**
This is generally not an area over which Local Government has much influence other than through promoting the use of the highest possible safety rated vehicles and through the proper maintenance of Council's fleet.

Yours sincerely,



John Maretich
Assets Section Manager

9 March 2020

