

# Safer Travel Speeds in Shared Urban Spaces Funding Program



# Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Background.....	3
3. Outline of Program .....	4
4. Submissions.....	6
5. Approval and Signing .....	9
6. Dealing with Project Variations.....	10
Appendix A – Signs for projects funded by the Road Safety Levy.....	I

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the *Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2016* (the Strategy) and its supporting 3-year Action Plan provisions have been made to work with Local Government Councils to encourage safer vehicle speeds in shared urban spaces. This initiative is part of the *Safer Travels Speeds* direction of the Strategy.
- 1.2 The State Government has allocated \$2 million over the four-year period (2008-2011) for a dollar for dollar funding program for Councils who wish to implement traffic calming treatments in shared urban spaces. Projects from the first year's program will be completed in June 2009.
- 1.3 The Program addresses urban locations where there is an appreciable risk of crashes occurring as a result of conflict between motor vehicles and other road users. Submissions are assessed against selection criteria to ascertain the validity of the project and the benefits in relation to cost.
- 1.4 It is important to clarify what types of measures are included within the dollar for dollar program and where these measures will be implemented. The following definitions outline some of the issues:

## **Speed**

Excessive speed or inappropriate speed for the conditions is a contributing factor in about one third of crashes and an aggravating factor in all crashes. The speed a vehicle travels is directly proportional to the amount of energy the body must absorb on impact in the event of a crash. Vehicle speed also influences the likelihood of a crash occurring, as well as the severity of injuries sustained in a crash.

Whilst the main aim of this project is to support measures by Councils to reduce speed, there is no exact target figure for speed reductions. However, it is integral that Councils outline the speed reducing effects that traffic calming measures will have.

## **Traffic Calming Measures**

Traffic calming can be defined as "...a general description of the methods used to physically enforce lower traffic speeds and to reduce traffic volumes."<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that traffic calming measures are very effective at reducing crashes and injuries, with reductions of up to two thirds having been demonstrated. The Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) defines traffic calming as "the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorised street users."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> OECD (2006), *Speed Management*

<sup>2</sup> Lockwood I M (1997), *ITE traffic calming definition*, ITE Journal, July 1997, pp 22-24.

## **Urban Spaces**

Traffic calming measures in built up areas have often been implemented in response to “conflict between the needs of different road users that have led to an increase in crashes”<sup>3</sup>. This has been particularly evident in popular shopping precincts where such conflicts have made them high crash risk areas, especially for pedestrians.

For the purposes of this Program we can therefore define urban spaces as built up areas (e.g. residential, shopping precincts, town centres etc.) where there is an appreciable risk of crashes occurring due to conflicts between motor vehicles and other road users.

Traffic calming measures around school zones will not be included in the remit of this Program, as they will be dealt with by other projects in the Strategy, e.g. new electronic speed signs in school zones<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> OECD (2006), *Speed Management*

<sup>4</sup> The electronic speed signs in school zones project involves the implementation of flashing lights to advise motorists of the time of operation of lower speed limits in school zones. The project hopes to increase awareness of school speed limits and also increase compliance with existing speed limits.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The major objective of this funding is for Councils to undertake traffic calming treatments in shared urban spaces. This will enhance the safety of shared urban spaces by minimising the opportunities for vehicle/pedestrian conflict.
- 2.2 This will increase awareness of the important relationship between vehicles and vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians within the road space. It will also help introduce the philosophy that vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians should not be exposed to vehicles travelling at speeds greater than 30 or 40 km/h, as this is the maximum threshold speed that an unprotected human body can tolerate without receiving a serious injury.
- 2.3 Where high numbers of pedestrians cannot be separated from fast moving traffic via a pedestrian walkway, underpass or overpass, the road environment should be treated in such a manner that traffic speeds are reduced to around 30 to 40 km/h.
- 2.4 On roads where large volumes of pedestrians and vehicles are required to mix, the traditional harsh road elements can be replaced with softer landscaping techniques to formulate a pleasing environment to create the effect that all road users have similar rights.
- 2.5 Small roundabouts at extremely close spacing; narrow traffic lanes and use of cobble stone pavements are a few of the traffic calming techniques possible.
- 2.6 On non-strategic local streets (streets with a low volume of traffic that are primarily residential) Councils can introduce a 'home zone' concept, where the road function changes from carrying through traffic to only servicing the abutting properties. The road reservation is transformed into a community-shared space and can incorporate off-street parking, landscaped areas and a variety of street furniture. The normal street hardness is softened and the zones are signed accordingly. Such an approach may allow for the introduction of a lower speed limit.

### 3. Outline of Program

- 3.1 Under this Program, Councils will be invited to submit a proposal for funding. The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources should receive submissions by no later than Friday, 1 May 2009.
- 3.2 Submissions will need to meet the eligibility criteria.
- 3.3 \$500,000 has been allocated for 2009/10 financial year. Funding will be made available to Councils on a dollar for dollar basis.
- 3.4 The following timeframe will apply for the second year of the funding program:

<b>January/February 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submissions from Councils invited</li> </ul>
<b>May 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submissions from Councils due by Friday, 1 May 2009</li> <li>• Assessment of submissions for proposed projects undertaken by the working and steering committees</li> </ul>
<b>June 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister for Infrastructure announces successful projects for the 2009/10 financial year</li> <li>• Projects for the 2008/09 financial year to be completed by 30 June 2009</li> <li>• Funding provided by State Government for 2008/09 projects after completion audit</li> </ul>
<b>July 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commencement of projects for 2009/10 financial year</li> </ul>
<b>February-June 2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New round of submissions &amp; assessment for projects commencing in financial year 2010/11</li> <li>• Projects for the 2009/10 financial year to be completed by 30 June 2010</li> <li>• Funding provided by State Government for 2009/10 projects after completion audit</li> </ul>

#### Project eligibility

- 3.5 Funding is available for the treatment of sites where the implementation of traffic calming measures can be proven to reduce speeds within the area.
- 3.6 Projects should be completed within the financial year in which they commenced i.e. projects that are awarded funding for 2009/10 should be completed by the end of June 2010. Council contributions to projects also need to be expended in the same period.

- 3.7 Only new submissions and additions to existing projects are eligible for funding.
- 3.8 As a finite amount of funding per financial year (\$500,000) is available, cost/benefit details must be provided to show the financial advantage of the project.

#### Eligibility Costs and Timing of Government Contributions

- 3.9 Dollar for dollar funding may only be sought for costs directly associated with the design and implementation of an approved project. Ongoing maintenance costs are ineligible, as are any administration costs incurred.
- 3.10 Funding will not be provided for Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid on supplies as Councils can obtain the full tax credits for these amounts. All cost estimates provided with submissions in respect to project costs should be net of the GST cost component of supplies.
- 3.11 Funding will be made available once projects have been completed and a representative from the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) has conducted a completion audit.
- 3.12 It is a requirement of funding that information concerning the project, including funding received from the State Government, be included in the Council's annual reporting.

## 4. Submissions

- 4.1 Funding is available for specific road infrastructure treatments aimed at reducing traffic speeds in shared urban spaces. Projects under the dollar for dollar funding program may be integrated with other projects being undertaken by Councils e.g. landscaping. However, funding will not be provided for these additional projects (e.g. maintenance works, ancillary works, landscaping etc.) under this Program.
- 4.2 Submissions made by Councils must:
- outline the outcomes expected from the project i.e. the reduction in speed that treatments will achieve;
  - clearly articulate the funding needed for the project;
  - include a completed application form (see Attachment A for a copy of the application form);
  - outline the location of project; and
  - outline the costs and benefits of project.
- 4.3 Submissions by Councils for funding under the Program will be invited once a year.
- 4.4 Initial assessment will be made by a Program Working Group comprising of representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).
- 4.5 Recommendations for Program funding will be made to the Road Safety Strategy Steering Committee (DIER).
- 4.6 If you have any enquiries regarding the project and the submissions process please contact Jonathan McGuffie on (03) 6233 5186 or by e-mail at [Jonathan.McGuffie@dier.tas.gov.au](mailto:Jonathan.McGuffie@dier.tas.gov.au).

### Assessment of Proposals

- 4.7 All submissions will be assessed by the Program Working Group, with recommendations being made to the Road Safety Strategy Steering Committee regarding eligibility under the following selection criteria:
1. Reasons for proposed traffic calming treatment and the effect it will have on traffic i.e. what reduction in speed will result from the measure(s);
  2. Plans showing the proposed site(s) for treatment and the location of the traffic calming measure(s);

3. Details of traffic calming infrastructure<sup>1</sup> that will be put in place e.g. speed humps, chicanes etc;
  4. Information on the location of signage. Where appropriate a sign(s) must be erected to inform that the project is jointly funded by the relevant Council and the State Government through the road safety levy.<sup>2</sup> The need to install signs will be dependent on the scope of the project and will be evaluated during the assessment process;
  5. Details of costs involved in implementing proposed measures and the benefits of the proposed measures. Whilst there is no cap on the maximum amount of funding that Councils are eligible for, there is only \$500,000 per annum available for all projects. As it is envisaged that multiple projects will receive funding through the program, the \$500,000 available may not be awarded solely to one project;
  6. Outline of timeframe for works. The project must be completed in a financial year to be eligible for funding under this Program;
  7. Traffic volume data on the roads to be treated and on surrounding roads, if a significant change is likely in the traffic patterns, together with an assessment of the implications;
  8. Details of any traffic studies carried out, including any studies carried out on surrounding roads, and any crash, speed and noise studies if available;
  9. Details of consultation with stakeholders who will be effected by the introduction of proposed measure(s) e.g. residents, bus companies, shop owners etc.
  10. Details of provisions for emergency access<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.8 Eligible projects will be appraised by one of two methods: economic appraisal (based on reported crash history) or a proactive method using a risk management approach.

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a high safety return under the economic appraisal method. However, it is recognised that a proactive approach to eliminate crashes before they occur has worthwhile merits.

The economic appraisal will essentially involve:

- Analysing the location's crash history (using DIER's crash data manager) and calculating the annual crash/serious injuries cost based on the type of crashes that are occurring;

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<sup>1</sup> Measures may need to be assessed against specific technical guidelines by the Traffic Engineering Branch within DIER.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for details of signage

<sup>3</sup> Concerns may be raised by emergency services over the use of traffic calming measures.

- Identifying the expected percentage of each crash/serious injury that would be saved by the implementation of the proposed traffic calming measure; and
- Calculating the value-for-money (cost/benefit ratio) in terms of crash/serious injury cost savings in comparison to the costs of the treatment.

Under the risk management approach, the likelihood of an incident occurring based on exposure rates and the consequence of an incident will be assessed.

It is impossible to remove all risks in all conditions, when pedestrians and motor vehicles are required to interact. Generally, a risk is considered acceptable when there is an opportunity for conflict avoidance by either party or where the severity of any incident does not lead to a fatality or serious injury.

## 5. Approval and Signing

- 5.1. The Road Safety Strategy Steering Committee will take its recommendations for funding under the Program to the Minister for Infrastructure.
- 5.2. In the event that the cost of submissions that meet the selection criteria is greater than funds available, the Committee will decide which are the most valid projects based on prioritising criteria.
- 5.3. The Minister for Infrastructure will announce the approved program of works. No public announcement concerning a project is to be made before the Minister's announcement.
- 5.4. Where appropriate, Councils shall erect signs, at approved project sites, outlining that the project(s) have been funded jointly with the State Government through the road safety levy.

## 6. Dealing with Project Variations

- 6.1 Significant changes to the scope of approved projects must be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of construction. A significant change includes the use of different traffic calming measures (for example, chicanes rather than speed humps), and varying the extent of the works. Submissions to vary the approved scope must be accompanied by supporting information.
- 6.2 Cost increases may be funded through the Program but approval must be sought before the commencement of construction. Any request to vary the cost of a project must be accompanied by supporting information explaining the reasons for the requested variation. The Minister for Infrastructure's power to vary the project cost is discretionary and is dependent on money being available from the annual funds.

## Appendix A – Signs for projects funded by the Road Safety Levy

The wording and layout of signs for projects funded through the dollar for dollar program are to take the following form:



*SIGN LOCATION - To be determined by Contract Supervisor.*

*SIGN SIZE - 900mm x 1200mm*

### *SIGN PANEL SIZES*

*Panel 1 - 900mm x 350mm*

*Panel 2 - 900mm x 500mm*

*Panel 3 - 900mm x 350mm*

### *SIGN COLOUR DETAILS*

*PANEL 1 - Red letters on retroreflective white background (class 2).*

*PANEL 2 - White letters on retroreflective blue background (class 2).*

*PANEL 3 - Red letters on retroreflective white background (class 2).*

*LETTER TYPE - Series E (excluding Logo)*

### *NOTE:*

*Signs are to be manufactured according to:*

- \* DIER Specification R63.*
- \* DIER signs guide notes.*

