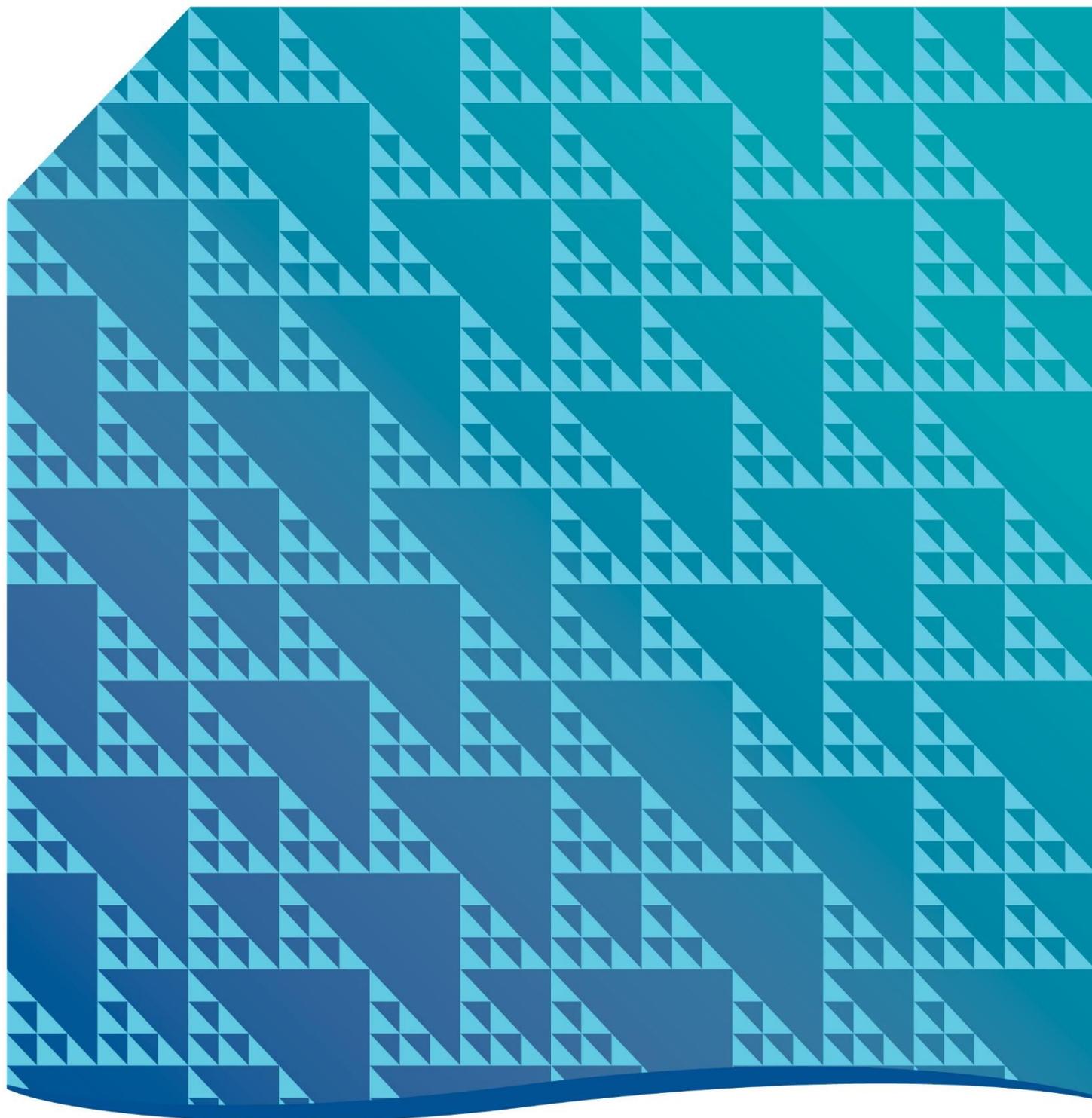


**Midland Highway, Southern Outlet,
South Launceston Speed Limit
Review**

June 2019

Consultation & Findings Report



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Executive Summary

There is a case for reducing the speed limit along this section of the Midland Highway for safety reasons. It was unclear prior to consulting with the community if lowering the speed limit would receive broad community support because the dual carriageway has a high speed appearance and the need for lower speeds may not be apparent outside the busy peak periods. Setting realistic speed limits is important in ensuring road users obey the speed limit, while balancing the desire for minimising travel time and providing a suitable level of safety. It has been shown that setting low speed limits in higher speed environments results in poor compliance and therefore the credibility of a speed limit at a specific location is an important factor that is taken into account. However, research indicates that even small reductions (10 km/h) in travelling speeds can lead to 25 per cent reductions in serious casualties.

The current speed limit between the Bass Highway interchange and the Pipeworks Road interchange at the bottom of the Launceston Southern Outlet is 110 km/h. This section of the Midland Highway carries about 28 000 vehicles per day. The Midland Highway descends steeply from the Bass Highway interchange down to the Pipeworks Road Interchange. Traffic flow is disrupted by slow moving trucks and by vehicles merging on to the highway from the Bass Highway northbound on-ramp.

Community consultation on the speed limit change was open from Wednesday 15 May to Wednesday 29 May 2019 and communicated via one post on the RoadsTas Facebook page, variable message boards on site and a dedicated webpage on the State Growth Transport website. Feedback was collected via an interactive map and Facebook comments.

A total of 578 individual submissions were received; however, multiple submissions or comments from the same person were considered as one submission. In this context, there was a total of 564 submissions.

A breakdown of the 564 submissions reveals:

- 300 submissions opposed the speed limit change
- 210 submissions supported the speed limit change
- 54 submissions were not prescriptive in their support or opposition to the speed limit change.

Following a review of the feedback, clear themes were identified throughout the submissions including poor driver behaviour, the need for better signage, additional lanes and/or longer merging lanes, policing and enforcement of current speed limit and right lane rule, and support for variable speed limit signage.

Although the majority of respondents opposed the speed limit reduction, there was a significant portion that supported the change. The consultation indicates a level of community acceptance rather than complete or overwhelming opposition to the reduction in speed.

Given the high crash rate on this section of the Midland Highway and the Department's commitment to improving safety, an application will be made to the Commissioner for Transport to reduce the speed limit at this location.

Project overview and background

The Department of State Growth (the Department) implemented a consultation process to gauge community acceptance to a proposed speed limit reduction along the Midland Highway. The consultation process will inform decision making on the application to the Commissioner for Transport. The Department proposes to reduce the speed limit from 110km/h to 90km/h for about 1.7 kilometres between the Bass Highway interchange and the Pipeworks Road Interchange at the bottom of the Launceston Southern Outlet, travelling in both directions.

Crash analysis indicates this section of the Midland Highway has a comparatively high crash rate, both in terms of the crashes per kilometre and crashes per vehicle-kilometre travelled. The crashes are fairly evenly split between the north bound (downhill) and southbound (uphill) directions. Crashes on this section of the highway occur most often during weekday peak times. About half of the reported crashes are nose-to-tail type collisions, which indicates a car was travelling too fast to stop safely. It is expected a reduction in the speed limit would reduce nose-to-tail type collisions.

There is a case for reducing the speed limit along this section of the Midland Highway for safety reasons. However, lowering the speed limit may not receive broad community support because the dual carriageway has a high speed appearance and the need for lower speeds may not be apparent outside the busy peak periods.

Project Location

The project is located in the Launceston City Council and Meander Valley Council local government areas, and includes the suburbs of Sandhill South Launceston, Prospect and Glen Dhu.



Consultation objectives

The objective of the community consultation was to gauge community agreement to the proposed speed limit change.

Engagement summary

Engagement on the speed limit change on the Midland Highway between the Bass Highway Interchange and the Pipeworks Road Interchange was undertaken from Wednesday 15 May to Wednesday 29 May 2019.

The community engagement was communicated via one post on the RoadsTas Facebook page, variable message boards on site for the duration of the consultation period and a dedicated webpage on the State Growth Transport website.

Feedback was collected via an interactive map and through Facebook comments.

Feedback summary

We received a total of 578 submissions with regards to the speed limit review. A summary of the feedback submissions includes:

- 468 comments from 454 individuals via interactive map
- 104 Facebook comments over 1 post (more with tags, shares and replies)
- 6 direct emails or letters from 6 individuals.

For the purpose of analysing the feedback, where individuals made multiple submissions or comments, this was considered as one submission. In this context, there was a total of 564 submissions.

A breakdown of the 564 submissions reveals:

- 300 submissions opposed the speed limit change
- 210 submissions supported the speed limit change
- 54 submissions were not prescriptive in their support or opposition to the speed limit change.

Interactive responses

Interactive map – overview

The interactive map was open for comment from Wednesday 15 Wednesday until Wednesday 29 May 2019. A summary of the engagement activity includes:

Total Visits	Unique Users	Average Time	Unique Stakeholders	Comments
4 847	1 786	2:32 mins	454	468
The total number of visits to the project site	The total number of unique people viewing the site	The average time people are spending on the site viewing and interacting with the project	The number of people who are interacting with the site (adding comments)	The total number of comments on the site

Interactive map - responses

Total number of comments	Support reduction	Support reduction only at variable times	Support reduction for northbound (downhill) traffic	Do not support reduction	Unclear if support or do not support
468	136	32	21	248	31

The themes from the interactive map are listed below.

- Speed limit does not need to change, driver behaviour does
- There needs to be additional lanes and/or longer merging lanes
- Better signage
- Slow cars are travelling in the right lanes and this is a safety concern
- There current speed limit and slow moving traffic in right lanes should be better policed and enforced

If the speed limit was to be reduced this should be done using variable speed limit signs, in response to peak flows and/or weather conditions.

Facebook

The following are the top posts from the RoadsTas Facebook page:

Comment (verbatim)	Reaction/s	Replies	Total interactions
I don't think it's speed that causes the crashes, it's lack of concentration & people need to drive to the weather conditions. Learn the road rules !! Keep to the left unless overtaking !!! So bloody frustrating especially coming up the outlet.	19	1	20
Start policing drivers who insist on staying in the right hand lane despite not overtaking. This is the reason for being so unsafe and I've seen many near misses because of it.	12	1	13

Comment (verbatim)	Reaction/s	Replies	Total interactions
Reducing the speed defeats the purpose of what it was built for. Maybe start policing the lanes and enforcing the law!	11	1	12
No doubt the percentage of accidents happen in peak traffic, yet in peak traffic your lucky to go faster than 60km cause of the slow drivers who insist on staying in the right lane! So speed isn't the issue here, stupid drivers is.	11	2	13

Feedback summary

Following a review of the feedback, clear themes were identified throughout the submissions. These include:

- Driver behaviour particularly around merging and slow moving traffic in the right lane.
- Better signage
- There needs to be additional lanes and/or longer merging lanes
- There current speed limit and slow moving traffic in right lanes should be better policed/enforced
- If the speed limit was to be reduced this should be done using variable speed limit signs, in response to peak flows and/or weather conditions

Overview of key feedback themes

Summary

Although the majority of respondents opposed the speed limit reduction there was a significant portion that supported the change. The consultation indicates a level of community acceptance rather than complete or overwhelming opposition.

It should be noted that more than one third of community members who were in favour of the reduction expressed that this should be done either on the north-bound (downhill) section only and/or reduced using variable speed limit signs, in response to peak flows and/or weather conditions.

Driver behaviour

Summary of issues

A number of comments were about driver behaviour and its impact on safety for other road users and effect on traffic flow.

Response

State Growth encourages safe driving practices for all road users. We remind road users of the importance of driving to the conditions, and of recognising the variety and differences of road users, such as vehicle type and the experience or age of drivers.

Safety

Better signage

A number of comments were about the need for better signage to prompt drivers to change behaviour, i.e. slow or heavy vehicles should be reminded to use the left lane.

Additional lanes and/or longer merging lanes

The comments relating to the addition of lanes and/or longer merging lanes were linked to frustration at slow or heavy vehicles on the south-bound (uphill) section of the highway. Comments indicated that heavy vehicles are either travelling in the right lane or are travelling very slowly in the left lane near the crest of the hill and that this causes following vehicles travelling near or at the speed limit to make late and risky lane changes to pass the slower vehicle. Some felt that reducing the speed limit on the south-bound (uphill) section would cause heavy vehicles to travel even slower on this section of the highway, further compounding the issues outlined above.

Increased policing and enforcement of road rules and laws

Along with driver behaviour and the need for improved signage, community members felt that the current speed limit and slow moving traffic in right lanes should be better policed and enforced on this section of the highway and that this would raise awareness of the issue and influence driver behaviour positively.

Reduction of speed limit at variable times

There was moderately strong support for variable speed limit signs to be installed to reduction in speed limit in responseto changing traffic and road conditions such as at peak times or extreme weather.

Response

State Growth will consider this feedback when assessing all the information available in making the recommendation to the Commissioner for Transport.

Location of submissions

The following table outlines the location of those stakeholders and community members who submitted feedback.

Postcode	Suburb (covered by postcode)	Number of submissions
4870	Brinsmead, Cairns, Earlville, Freshwater, Edge Hill, Kanimbla, Kamerunga, Manoora, Lamb Range, Manunda, Martynvale, Mooroolooloolo, North Cairns	1
7000	Queens Domain, West Hobart, Mount Stuart, North Hobart, Glebe, Hobart	1
7004	Battery Point, South Hobart	1

Postcode	Suburb (covered by postcode)	Number of submissions
7010	Dowsing Point, Glenorchy, Goodwood, Montrose, Rosetta	1
7015	Geilston Bay, Rose Bay, Lindisfarne	1
7018	Warrane, Rosny Park, Tranmere, Bellerive, Montagu Bay, Howrah, Rosny, Mornington	1
7050	Kingston Beach, Kingston	2
7150	Adventure Bay, Allens Rivulet, Barnes Bay, Dennes Point, Alonnah, Apollo Bay, Sandfly, Pelterata, South Bruny, Simpsons Bay, Upper Woodstock, Great Bay, Gordon, Killora, Kaoota, Lunawanna, Longley, Oyster Cove, North Bruny	1
7212	Blessington, Ben Lomond, Deddington, Burns Creek, Nile, Evandale, Western Junction, Upper Blessington	12
7215	Upper Scamander, St Marys, Seymour, Scamander, Chain of Lagoons, Coles Bay, Beaumaris, Bicheno, Douglas Apsley, Falmouth, Cornwall, Douglas River, Friendly Beaches, Gray, Four Mile Creek, Freycinet	1
7216	Goulds Country, Goshen, Binalong Bay, Akaroa, Stieglitz, St Helens, Pyengana, Lottah, The Gardens	1
7248	Mowbray, Mayfield, Invermay, Newnham, Rocherlea	17
7249	Kings Meadows, Punchbowl, South Launceston, Youngtown	48
7250	Travellers Rest, Summerhill, Waverley, Trevallyn, West Launceston, Blackstone Heights, East Launceston, Launceston, Newstead, Norwood, Prospect, Prospect Vale, Ravenswood, Riverside, St Leonards	184
7252	Beechford, Hillwood, Dilston, Lulworth, Lefroy, Pipers River, Mount Direction, Swan Bay, Stony Head, Windermere, Weymouth	6
7253	George Town, Bell Bay, Low Head, Long Reach	1
7255	Killiecrankie, Emita, Lady Barron, Lackrana, Blue Rocks, Wingaroo, Palana, Ranga, Strzelecki, Whitemark, Leeka, Loccota, Lughrata, Memana	1
7258	White Hills, Relbia, Breadalbane	3
7259	Patersonia, Nunamara, Myrtle Bank, Targa, Tayene	1

Postcode	Suburb (covered by postcode)	Number of submissions
7262	Bridport, Waterhouse, Tomahawk	2
7264	Ansons Bay, Cape Portland, Boobyalla, Eddystone, Derby, Telita, Weldborough, Gladstone, Herrick, Moorina, Mount William, Musselroe Bay, Pioneer, Rushy Lagoon, South Mount Cameron	1
7267	Bangor, Karoola, Lalla, Lower Turners Marsh, Turners Marsh	3
7270	Kelso, Kayena, Greens Beach, Flower Gully, York Town, Sidmouth, Rowella, Clarence Point, Beauty Point, Beaconsfield, Badger Head	2
7275	Blackwall, Winkleigh, Robigana, Swan Point, Frankford, Glengarry, Deviot, Exeter, Loira, Notley Hills, Holwell, Lanena	2
7276	Gravelly Beach	2
7277	Legana, Rosevears, Bridgenorth, Grindelwald	25
7290	Hadspen	38
7291	Carrick	7
7292	Rosevale, Selbourne, Westwood, Hagley, Quamby Bend	8
7300	Devon Hills, Perth, Powranna	30
7301	Liffey, Longford, Toiberry, Bishopsbourne, Blackwood Creek	22
7302	Bracknell, Poatina, Cressy	7
7303	Oaks, Exton, Westbury, Osmaston, Cluan, Birralee, Whitemore	9
7304	Chudleigh, Central Plateau, Deloraine, Dairy Plains, Brandum, Caveside, Breona, Liena, Mayberry, Jackeys Marsh, Kimberley, Elizabeth Town, Golden Valley, Doctors Point, Dunorlan, Parkham, Quamby Brook, Montana, Needles, Mole Creek	14
7306	Cradle Mountain, Claude Road, Cethana, Beulah, Barrington, Acacia Hills, Gowrie Park, Lorinna, Lower Barrington, Lower Beulah, Middlesex, Mount Roland, Nook, Nowhere Else, Paradise, Promised Land, Roland, Sheffield, Staverton, Stoodley	2

Postcode	Suburb (covered by postcode)	Number of submissions
7307	Bakers Beach, Hawley Beach, Harford, Moriarty, Latrobe, Port Sorell, Northdown, Shearwater, Sassafras, Thirlstane, Squeaking Point, Wesley Vale	6
7310	Aberdeen, Devonport, Ambleside, East Devonport, Don, Forth, Forthside, Erriba, Eugenana, Lower Wilmot, Melrose, Kindred, Lillico, Palooa, Quoiba, Miandetta, Moina, Stony Rise, Tarleton, South Spreyton	9
7316	Cuprona, Heybridge, Howth, Loyetea, Camena, Sulphur Creek, West Pine, Penguin, Preservation Bay, Riana, South Riana	3
7321	Cowrie Point, Crayfish Creek, Chasm Creek, Corinna, Boat Harbour, Boat Harbour Beach, Black River, Hellyer, Highclere, Guildford, Hampshire, East Ridgley, Edgcumbe Beach, Detention, East Cam, Ridgley, Port Latta, Parrawe, Natone, Mooreville	2

Outcome and recommendations

The review concluded that although the majority of respondents opposed the speed limit reduction there was a significant portion that supported the change. The consultation indicates a level of community acceptance rather than complete or overwhelming opposition to the reduction in speed. Given the high crash rate on this section of the Midland Highway and the Department's commitment to improving safety, an application will be made to the Commissioner for Transport to reduce the speed limit for this section of the Midland Highway.

Next steps

State Growth will communicate the outcome of the speed limit consultation process to the community. We thank the community for their participation and patience while we undertook this process.



Department of State Growth
4 Salamanca Place
Salamanca TAS 7001 Australia

Phone: 1800 753 878

Email: info@stategrowth.tas.gov.au

Web: www.transport.tas.gov.au