Safer Roads: Vulnerable Road User Program

Department of State Growth
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1. Introduction

The Safer Roads: Vulnerable Road User Program has been developed to improve the overall safety of vulnerable road users by minimising the opportunities for conflict between them and motor vehicles.

Funding of $1.5 million was made available for the program in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years and $500,000 is available for future years from the Road Safety Levy until 2016/17.

The program addresses areas (including both urban and non-urban locations) where there is current or potential risk of crashes occurring as a result of conflict between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users. Submissions will be assessed against selection criteria to ascertain the validity of the project and the benefits in relation to cost.

2. Vulnerable road users

In the event of a crash the human body can only withstand a certain amount of force before it is seriously or fatally wounded. Vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, are particularly vulnerable in the event of crash due to being exposed to impact forces that are beyond the limit of human tolerance.

Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists for example have a high risk of being severely injured in crash with other motor vehicles as they are completely unprotected and have no physical protection to absorb crash energy.

Impact speed has been found to play a key role in determining the outcomes of a crash; this is particularly the case in crashes involving vulnerable road users where the probability of being killed or seriously injured in a crash increases significantly with speed.

Strategies aimed at reducing serious casualty crashes involving vulnerable road users primarily focus on measures aimed at reducing vehicle speeds in areas where there is likely to be interaction between motor vehicles and vulnerable roads users. Such an approach has already been undertaken in Tasmania, for example through the provision of electronic school speed signs to provide protection for children who are particularly vulnerable in the road environment.

Other strategies aimed at improving the safety of vulnerable road users have focused on separating them from motor vehicles. This includes the provision of infrastructure for vulnerable road users which separates them from the main road (for example, bicycle lanes and pavements).

3. Scope of program and project eligibility

The objective of the program is to provide funding for initiatives that will improve the safety of vulnerable road users on our roads. The program applies to locations...
where there is an appreciable risk of conflict occurring between vulnerable road users and motor vehicles, this includes urban and non-urban areas.

For the purposes of the program, vulnerable road users include pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. However, it should be noted that there is already a program in place under the *Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2016* to address the issue of motorcycle safety. The Motorcycle Safety Works Program provides for the implementation of appropriate motorcycle safety infrastructure treatments targeting roads or routes with high motorcycle crashes or popular routes with high crash potential.

Initiatives included in the scope of the program are those that are specifically aimed at reducing the risk of conflict between vulnerable road users and motor vehicles. This includes infrastructure treatments aimed at reducing vehicle speeds, for example traffic calming measures, or separating vulnerable roads users from other traffic. However, all infrastructure initiatives (including technology solutions) will be considered that can be shown to be cost effective measures to reduce vulnerable road user crash risk.

Funding is available for the treatment of sites where the implementation of measures can be proven to reduce the risk of crashes involving vulnerable roads users.

Project works should be completed within the financial year in which they commenced. Only new submissions and additions to existing projects are eligible for funding.

As a finite amount of funding per financial year ($500,000) is available, cost/benefit details must be provided to show the advantage of the project.

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.

Funding will not be provided for Goods and Services Tax (GST) paid on supplies as applicants 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.

Funding will be made available progressively throughout the project and the final payment will be made once projects have been completed and a representative from the Department of State Growth (State Growth) has conducted a completion audit.

It is a requirement of funding that information concerning the project, including funding received from the State Government, be included in the applicant’s annual reporting.

4. **Links to other policies and programs**

   *The Safer Roads: Vulnerable Road User Program* is an initiative under the *Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2016*. While the program is primarily
focussed on safety outcomes for vulnerable road users it also has linkages to other strategic policies relating to sustainable and active transport, these include the:

- *Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework*
- *Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy* (including implementation of Principal Urban Cycle Networks)
- *Tasmania’s Plan for Physical Activity 2011-2021*
- *Move Well Eat Well Program*
- *National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016*

5. Submissions

Submissions can be made by local government for projects on all roads on the Tasmanian network, regardless of road owner (for example, state or council).

Submissions for funding under the program must:

- outline the current or potential crash problem at the treatment site
- outline the expected outcomes resulting from the proposed treatment and how these will reduce vulnerable road user crash risk
- clearly articulate the funding needed for the project, and any other existing funding including its source
- include a completed application form
- outline the location of the project
- outline the costs and benefits of the project.

Submissions for funding under the program will be sought annually.

Assessments of project submissions will be conducted by the Department of State Growth’s Road Services Division. Recommendations for funding under the program will be made to the Project Steering Committee.

The following information will be considered as part of the evaluation of project submissions:

1. Reasons for proposed treatment and the effect it will have on vulnerable road users. For example, how will proposed project reduce vulnerable road user crash risk.
2. Plans showing the proposed site(s) for treatment and the location of infrastructure treatments.
3. Details of infrastructure that will be put in place, including any known assessment of its crash reduction potential.
4. Details of costs involved in implementing proposed measures and the benefits of the proposed measures. The minimum level of funding for a project under
the program is $10 000 and while there is no cap on the maximum amount of funding that projects 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.

5. Details of any co-contribution provided by applicants for the project. Preference will be given to projects where funding is also provided by applicants.

6. Details of any other funding sources and linkages to other strategic policies and programs relating to vulnerable road users.

7. Outline of timeframe for works. The project must be completed in a financial year to be eligible for funding under this program.

8. Traffic volume data for the proposed treatment site. This data will be used to calculate the potential crash risk based on exposure data.

9. Details of any traffic studies carried out, including any studies carried out on surrounding roads, and any crash, speed and noise studies if available.

10. Details of consultation with stakeholders who will be effected by the introduction of proposed measure(s) e.g. residents, bus companies, shop owners etc.

11. Details of provisions for emergency access (as appropriate)\(^1\).

Projects are assessed using a risk management methodology which considers the benefit-to-cost ratio of the proposed treatment compared to the existing/potential risk to the vulnerable road user, using a risk assessment matrix.

It is impossible to remove all risks in all conditions, when vulnerable road users 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.

As part of the assessment process consideration will be given to any co-contribution, either financial or in-kind support, provided by applicants. Preference will be given to projects where a co-contribution is provided by applicants. Links to other key strategic policies (see Section 4) relating to vulnerable road users will also be taken into consideration as part of the assessment process.

6. Approval and project variations

The Project Steering Committee will be responsible for approving funding for projects.

In the event that the cost of submissions that meet the selection criteria is greater than funds available, the Project Steering Committee will decide which are the most valid projects based on prioritising criteria.

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\(^1\) Concerns may be raised by emergency services over the use of traffic calming measures.
Where appropriate, applicants shall erect signs, at approved project sites, outlining that the project(s) have been funded by the State Government through the road safety levy.

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 infrastructure treatment, and varying the extent of the works. Submissions to vary the approved scope must be accompanied by supporting information.

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.