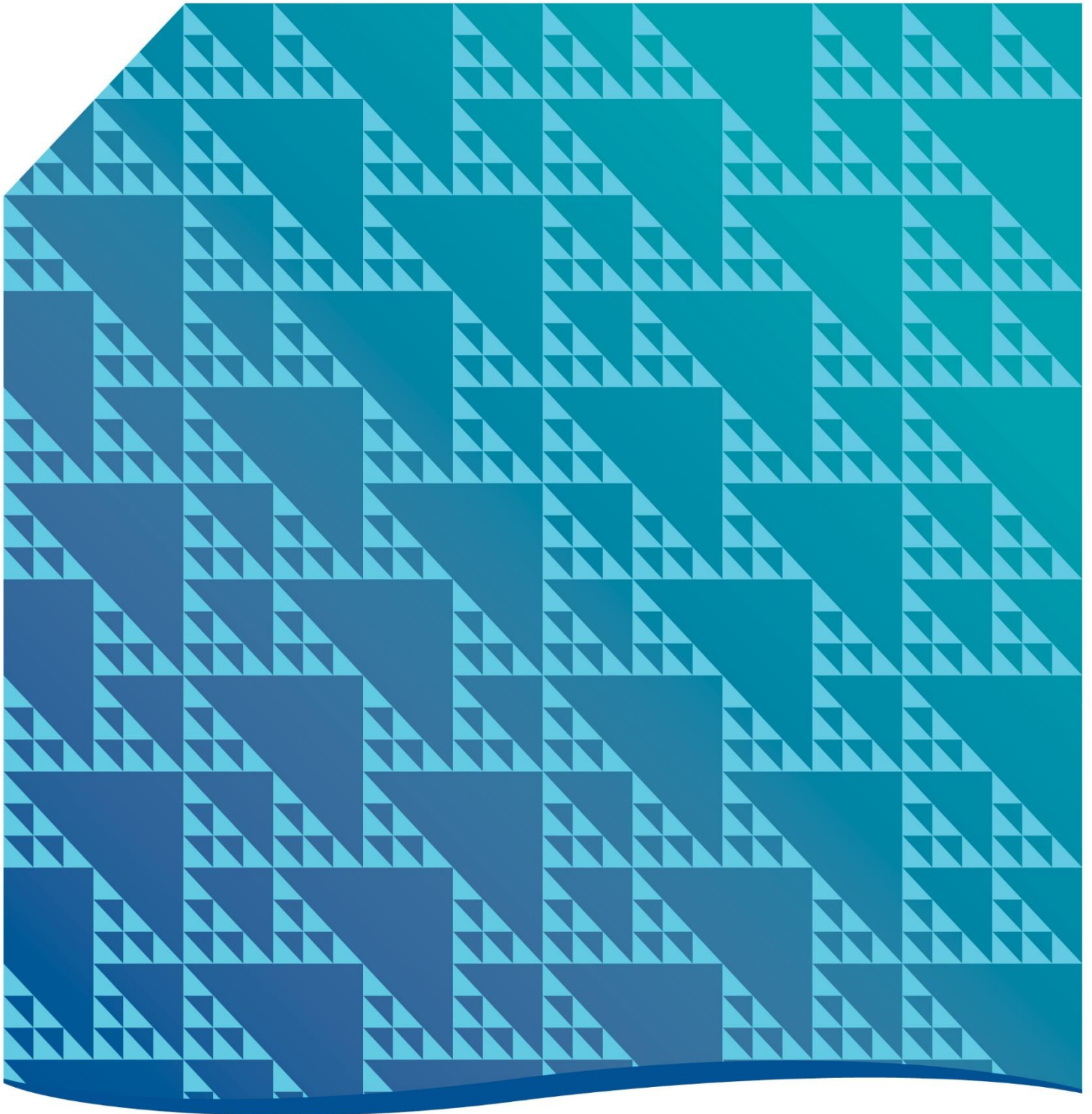


Safer Rural Roads Program Guidelines



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Safer Rural Roads Program

The Safer Rural Roads Program (SRRP) forms a key component of the Making our Rural Roads Safer theme of the *Towards Zero - Tasmania Road Safety Action Plan 2020-2024*. The SRRP provides an opportunity for authorities to apply for funding for corridor-based infrastructure treatments to improve road safety on rural, non-State-Government-owned roads.

Rural, non-State Government owned roads are the focus of this initiative because they:

- typically carry lower volumes of traffic than strategic corridors; and as a result
- may not be likely to attract sufficient funding for major upgrades (e.g. shoulder sealing, lane separation) in the medium to long term.

By way of background and context:

- Local government roads comprise approximately 80% of the Tasmanian public road network (14,500 of 18,300km).
- Of this 14,500km, approximately 10,700km (78%) are in rural areas (i.e. outside of recognised city and town boundaries).

These 10,700km account for approximately one-third of fatal and serious injury crashes.

Applicants should refer to the Austroads research report *Local Government Road Safety Management Guidance*, released in January 2020. This report is designed to provide guidance on contemporary best practice methods on the development and implementation of road safety management frameworks suitable for use in a local government context. The report can be accessed at <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-safety/ap-r612-20>. An accompanying webinar has been developed by Austroads and can be found at <https://austroads.com.au/publications/road-safety/web-r612-20>.

Local road safety issues are often best dealt with at a local level. Local councils and road owners are well placed to identify specific problems and devise appropriate infrastructure-based treatments.

Safe System Principles

The Safe System approach underpins the Government's *Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-2026* and represents a shift away from traditional reactive approaches to road safety infrastructure. The core Safe System principles are:

Fatal and Serious Injuries are not acceptable on our roads. Every road user has the right to travel safely on the road network and this right cannot be traded for other gains (such as traffic efficiency).

Humans are fallible. Traditional approaches that assume 100 per cent compliance at 100 per cent of the time by road users will make the roads safe is not realistic or acceptable. Human error is inevitable meaning that crashes are inevitable.

Humans are vulnerable. By accepting that crashes are inevitable, we must acknowledge that all road users have limited tolerance for energy in a crash before it becomes a fatal or serious injury. Core to the Safe System approach is that the energy in collisions that do occur is minimised so that resultant harm is minimised.

There is a **shared responsibility** for road safety between system managers and road users. System managers must acknowledge that fatal and serious injuries are not acceptable, humans make mistakes and humans are vulnerable in decision-making. Road users also have an obligation to attempt to use the road safely.

Infrastructure Treatments

Applications are sought that include appropriate infrastructure treatments to improve overall safety and reduce the risk of crashes. Because of the likely length of corridor treatments the type of infrastructure are typically focussed on the broader application of a range of lower-cost treatments rather than fewer, localised, high-cost treatments.

Types of infrastructure treatments envisaged under this program include:

- warning signs, including curve advisory speeds
- chevron alignment markers (CAMs) to highlight out-of-context curves or curves beyond crests
- guide posts
- centreline markings (on roads too narrow for continuous centreline, it may still be still be an option to install in the vicinity of curves and crests)
- Road widening. While it would likely be too expensive to treat an entire road, limited sections of widening could be proposed in the vicinity of high risk curves
- tree and roadside hazard removal, particularly on the outside of curves
- short sections of safety barrier to protect against severe hazards
- sight distance improvements – vegetation removal or sight benching
- improved skid resistance – an over-representation of loss-of-control crashes in wet conditions may be an indicator of inadequate skid resistance
- reduced speed limits may be considered appropriate where, even after treatment, the road would remain significantly more hazardous than the surrounding road network

Ineligible Treatments

Certain infrastructure treatments are not eligible and will not be considered for funding under the SRRP. These include:

- routine or periodic maintenance;
- additions to existing projects;
- bridge or structure works; and
- Urban localised treatments.

Depending on the type, urban treatments (the 4th dot point above) may instead be able to be progressed via the Vulnerable Roads User Program. Details available at:

https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/road_safety_and_rules/grants_programs/vulnerable_road_user_program

Route Selection

In determining potential routes for treatment under this program, applicants should consider the following principles and program objectives:

- The program is intended to treat road corridors rather than isolated locations
- The objective is to achieve a consistent standard of treatment application
- Crash rates and particularly any identified crash clusters should be considered as part of the location identification and subsequent project development phases
- Traffic volumes should be considered - higher volumes may indicate a higher priority for treatment
- Community concern is a valid indicator
- A systematic and proactive approach to treat an entire corridor is the core purpose of the SRRP

Road Owner Collaboration

Collaboration between road owners for road corridors that span multiple local government areas is strongly encouraged.

In such cases, individual submissions from each involved road-owner are required.

All road owners involved in a multi road owner project should provide details in their applications of the liaison that has taken place to develop the proposal as well as details of how the project will be managed and coordinated to ensure effective delivery of the overall project.

Mandatory Criteria

All applications need to meet all the following criteria to be considered.

- The applicant must be a non-State Government road owner (e.g. local council or other road owner).
- All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed.
- Initial applications must provide designs to the concept stage only. The Department of State Growth will need to formally review and endorse detailed designs prior to project implementation.
- The application must relate to an identified corridor and address identified risks.
- The application must deliver cost-effective infrastructure improvement.
- Applications not supported by a co-contribution from local council/road owner need to provide an explanation on this matter.
- The road corridor targeted for treatment must be primarily in a non-urban location (i.e. not within an urban centre/locality as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1270.0.55.004 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 4 - Significant Urban Areas, Urban Centres and Localities, Section of State, July 2016), and comprise council-owned roads.
- The application must be for a new project.

Assessment Criteria

A risk management approach is used to assess applications. Applications that meet the mandatory criteria will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The likelihood of a crashes occurring based on exposure rates (i.e. traffic volume data) and the likely consequence of a crash or crashes.
- The potential crash reduction benefit(s) of the proposed infrastructure treatment.
- Co-contribution or explanation for applications not supported by local council funding.
- The use of the Safe System design tool (Reference 5).
- Alignment with key directions under the *Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-2026* and the *Towards Zero - Tasmania Road Safety Action Plan 2020-2024*.

The SRRP Assessment Committee conducts the assessment of applications. Membership includes representatives from the Road Safety and State Roads branches of State Growth.

Requirements

All grant recipients must sign an agreement with State Growth. This confirms State Growth's and the applicant's responsibilities according to the application. The main provisions of this agreement cover the following:

Funding

- State Growth will commit to an agreed payment timetable based on the terms of the agreement and the amount funded for the approved project. For example, a project grant could be funded at key milestones (negotiated for each project), and/or at the project completion.
- State Growth may select a project at random for financial and/or compliance auditing.
- The applicant is responsible for the project and the management of all associated activities and risks. State Growth's role is to provide funding.
- Funding for the project, including the component received from State Growth, must be included in the applicant's annual reporting.

Reporting

- The applicant is required to notify State Growth when the project is complete.
- A completion audit is to be undertaken by State Growth once the project is complete. Final payment will only be made by State Growth once this has occurred.

Legislative Compliance

- The applicant will need to consider if the approved project is subject to any legislation. This includes, but is not limited to, the *Roads and Jetties Act 1935*.

Publicity

- State Growth may use the information from the approved project for business purposes. For example, State Growth may use the data, project outputs and/or financial information as a showcase, or use photos as examples to put on Tasmanian Government websites or in support materials.

Acknowledgment

- State Growth may require the installation of signage at the entry to the defined corridor to inform road users of the existence/role of the SRRP and the source of the project funding.

Variations

Approved projects must not be varied unless the variation is approved by the SRRP Assessment Committee. A variation includes the use of different infrastructure treatments to those detailed in the application, and/or a variation in the funding amount. Requests to vary the approved project must be accompanied by supporting information, including details and revised design and schedule of works.

Reference Documents

The following documents provide useful information to inform applications.

1. Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-2026
2. Towards Zero – Tasmanian Road Safety Action Plan 2020-2024
3. Austroads Research Report Local Government Road Safety Management Guidance,
4. Austroads, Towards Safe System Infrastructure. A compendium of current Knowledge, AP-R560-18
5. Austroads, Safe System Assessment Framework, AP-R509-16
6. Austroads, Embedding Safe System in the Guide to Traffic Management, AP-R595-19



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