

Safer Rural Roads Program

About the Safer Rural Roads Program

The Safer Rural Roads Program (SRRP) was introduced as a new initiative under the Tasmanian *Towards Zero Action Plan 2020–2024*, under the ‘Making our rural roads safer’ theme. The SRRP provides opportunities for Tasmanian local governments to apply for grant funding to implement widespread low-cost road safety infrastructure treatments on rural and regional roads.

Aligned with actions of the *National Road Safety Action Plan 2023–2025*, the SRRP supports local government investment in road safety infrastructure and encourages local governments to assess the risk of their rural and regional roads to identify roads where low-cost targeted infrastructure improvements can reduce run-off-road and head-on crashes.

Funding is awarded to successful applicants through a competitive grant funding process administered by the Department of State Growth.

Aim of the program

The SRRP aims to improve road safety outcomes in Tasmania by reducing the number of head-on and run-off-road crashes that occur on rural and regional roads.

Why this program?

Rural and regional roads owned by local government are the focus of the SRRP as they typically carry lower traffic volume than strategic, state-owned road corridors. Generally, this results in these local government road corridors being unlikely to attract funding for major upgrades. This is an important road safety consideration given that roads owned by local government comprise approximately 80 per cent of the Tasmanian road network – about 14 500 km. Of this 14 500 km, about 78 per cent (10 700 km) are in areas outside of recognised city and town boundaries.

The SRRP focuses on these 10 700 km of roads as they account for approximately one-third of Tasmania’s fatal and serious injury crashes, with head-on and run-off-road crashes being the primary crash types. The SRRP supports local governments as they are often best placed to identify problems on their road network and engage their community to action appropriate solutions.

Funding spent on the SRRP

Funding for the SRRP is provided by the Road Safety Levy and projects are also supported by in-kind contributions and co-contributions from local governments. In 2021, the SRRP was also supported by a \$5.9 million co-contribution from the Australian Government through Tasmania’s funding allocation under Tranche 1 of the Road Safety Program. In 2021 the SRRP awarded \$8.3 million to 59 projects across Tasmania. Together with local government contributions, the investment in local government road safety under the SRRP totals to nearly \$10 million.

Grant spotlight

In 2021, the Kentish Council was awarded \$30 000 from the Road Safety Levy alongside co-funding of \$120 000 from the Australian Government’s Road Safety Program. The council matched this grant with a co-contribution of \$150 000.

In total, the council used \$300 000 to treat 7.2 km of Staverton Road, where there had been six crashes between 2015 and 2020. These crashes were linked to narrow lane widths, short sight distances, damp conditions, and tight curves.

Kentish Council resealed and widened the seal width along the length of Staverton Road. They also widened the whole road in priority locations and added warning and advisory signs, as well as rubber-based flexible guideposts.

Near Cethana, the council increased sight distances and added centrelines to the road.

These treatments will reduce the risk of lane departure crashes, the primary cause of the six crashes between 2015 and 2020.

