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Time for the Government to deliver on much-needed road safety reform

After an appalling year on Tasmania's roads, the RACT is calling on the Tasmanian Government to deliver dramatic, yet sensible reform to the setting of speed limits.

This comes after the 2011 and 2022 Legislative Council Select Committee inquiries both recommended government adopt a consistent approach to managing speed limits on state and local roads.

"Nothing happened for a decade after the first inquiry. This time inaction is not an option after the worst year for road trauma since 2009," RACT Chief Advocacy Officer Garry Bailey said.

"The fact we have had two inquiries deliver the same verdict shows that sensible reform should not come as a surprise to anyone."

The RACT is calling on the Tasmanian Government to adopt all recommendations from the 2022 inquiry if it is serious about improving the road toll, including consistency across the entire road network.

"With 80% of Tasmania's road network managed by councils, the infrastructure simply isn't there to support higher speeds, yet these are the roads most regularly signposted at 100km/h," Mr Bailey said.

Mr Bailey said that of the 11 speed limit reviews and changes to Tasmania's roads in 2022, not one applied to a council-controlled road.

"Despite the review of speed limits quickening over the past 12 months with sensible, evidence-based decisions, we now have a crazy situation where a council road may have the same physical limitation as a state road, but the council road remains at a far higher speed limit," Mr Bailey said.

"The current split in responsibilities between state and local government is a major impediment to a consistent speed-setting regime in Tasmania.

"We have a role to push for safer roads for not only our more than 210,000 members, but the entire motoring community in Tasmania.

"We now have the highest road toll per capita of all states. It's time for our decision makers to pick up the gauntlet and act on the blueprint set out by this latest inquiry," Mr Bailey said.

The 2011 Legislative Council Select Committee noted:

Careful attention must be given to the setting of speed limits, as there are glaring inconsistencies in this respect in some locations in Tasmania. It is a disconcerting fact that the condition of the majority of the roads in the Tasmanian highway network is considered unsuitable for a speed limit as high as 110km/h.

The 2022 Legislative Council Select Committee into Road Safety in Tasmania made the following recommendation:

State road authorities collaborate to implement a consistent approach to managing speed limits on State and local roads.

The committee made its recommendation based on the following findings, all of which fall under the responsibility of both the state and local government as road managers.

- There is an inconsistent approach to managing speed limits on state and local roads and how they are set.
- Some Tasmanian roads that cross multiple local government boundaries have inconsistent speed limits.
- Road infrastructure is considered when setting speed limits in other Australian jurisdictions.
- There is lack of expertise available to some Tasmanian councils to appropriately assess speed limits on non-State managed roads.
- There is a need for all Tasmanian road users to be aware of the maximum speed limits on unmarked roads through better and consistent signage.
- There are divergent views as to how optimum safe speeds on Tasmanian roads should be calculated and applied.

Contact:

Becher Townshend: 0418 370 661