

Cabinet Committee: Economic Development (DEV)
Date: 23 October 2019
Paper Title: *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* Programme
Portfolio: Transport

Background:

- On 21 March 2018, Cabinet noted my proposal to tackle unsafe speeds by accelerating the implementation of the Speed Management Guide, investigating speed limits around schools, and considering new camera technologies [DEV-18-MIN-0025 refers].
- On 1 July 2019, Cabinet was provided with a high-level summary of the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* proposals and invited me to report back in October 2019 seeking approval to the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* Programme. Cabinet also invited me to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to commence the drafting of the necessary legislative amendments ahead of final policy decisions being taken by Cabinet on the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme [DEV-19-MIN-0175]. The draft bill, the Regulatory Systems (Transport) Amendment Bill, is expected to be considered by the Cabinet Legislation Committee in November 2019.
- I am now seeking Cabinet agreement to the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme which aims to establish a more streamlined and coordinated process for speed management, implement safer speeds around schools, and move towards a more transparent and effective approach to automated speed enforcement.
- *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* is one of the proposed immediate actions in the *Road to Zero* strategy and action plan, which has recently been publicly consulted on.

Talking Points:

Purpose of the item

- This paper seeks Cabinet's in-principle agreement to the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds* programme.

The case for change

- Speed continues to be a major contributing factor to deaths and serious injuries on New Zealand roads.
- In 2016, travelling too fast for the conditions was the second highest contributing factor to causes of fatal and serious injury crashes. In the event of a crash, regardless of its cause, the speed of impact is the most important determinant of the severity of injuries sustained and the probability of death.
- Tackling unsafe speeds has been a dominant focus in other jurisdictions that have made significant and sustained road safety gains.

Changes to the speed limit setting process

- The current process for setting speed limits is onerous for RCAs, creates confusion and leads to many road controlling authorities (RCAs) choosing to delay or avoid speed management proposals as the process is viewed as too hard.

- I am proposing to introduce a new process to improve the way road controlling authorities (RCAs) plan and implement speed limit changes. This will bring together land transport investment decisions with speed management decisions.
- In each case where a road is identified as high risk, RCAs would be required to explicitly consider whether ‘engineering up’ infrastructure or adjusting the speed limit is most appropriate.
- RCAs would work with the NZ Transport Agency to develop Speed Management Plans, which would be coordinated at the regional level while retaining local decision making.
- There will not be blanket changes to default speed limits across the road network. The NZ Transport Agency is taking an incremental, risked-based approach to speed management changes on the State highway network.

Speed limits around schools

- Current speed limits around schools are often not the recommended safe and appropriate speed limits. This creates safety concerns and discourages some children from using active modes of transport to get to and from school.
- I am proposing to require RCAs to introduce safer speed limits around schools. These could be variable or permanent speed limits and would include reducing speed limits:
 - around urban schools to 30 km/h (or 40 km/h where appropriate)
 - around rural schools to a maximum of 60 km/h.
- RCAs would be encouraged to reduce speed limits in the areas surrounding schools (not just on the road directly outside a school’s front gate).
- RCAs would also be expected to consider safer speed limits in urban centres where there are high numbers of active mode users.

Safety cameras

- There is an opportunity in New Zealand to adopt a new approach to safety cameras to discourage excessive speeds, improve compliance with posted speed limits and reduce deaths and serious injuries.
- I am proposing a new approach to safety cameras similar to that adopted in Sweden.
- Camera locations would be clearly sign-posted so that road users have advanced warning they are approaching a camera.
- Additional cameras would be rolled out and installed on the highest risk parts of the network.
- The ownership and operation of the safety camera network would be transferred to the NZ Transport Agency to incorporate camera placement into the NZ Transport Agency’s broader speed management planning process.
- Communications with the public would be focussed on explaining the purpose of the cameras in the context of the broader safety system discouraging unsafe speeds.

Next Steps

- [REDACTED]