

Question on Notice

No. 965

Asked on 8 June 2007

MR WELLINGTON asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS) -

QUESTION:

With reference to traffic speed review committees-

What criteria does his departmental staff refer to at traffic speed review committees, and what weight do the various issues considered carry when staff consider the issue of risk management on the road, for example the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road and Moy Pocket Road?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Nicklin for the question.

I can advise that the Department of Main Roads sets speed limits in accordance with Part 4 of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which is based on Australian Standards. By following this process, road users can be confident that speed limits are being set in a consistent manner across the state and can have confidence that they are an appropriate limit in normal driving conditions.

I am advised that Main Roads considers a number of criteria when determining speed limits, including the road function, prevailing measured traffic speeds and the speed environment. This criteria is not weighted as such, but is assessed on an individual basis to determine an appropriate and safe speed limit for each criteria. The speed limit for each criteria is then correlated to determine a recommended speed limit for the road.

Main Roads advises that the basis of these guidelines recognise that regulatory speeds must be appropriate to the general environment of the road, otherwise motorists will largely disregard the imposition of unreasonable limits. Experience and research in Australia and overseas has demonstrated that arbitrarily imposed speed limits that are too low attract poor levels of compliance, unless continued enforcement is undertaken.

I am advised that recent speed studies indicate that, when the regulatory speed limit drops by 20km/h with little apparent relationship to the abutting roadside development, the majority of motorists will not comply with the speed limit. This ultimately leads to an undesirable spread of differing speed limits between vehicles. However, realistic and credible speed limits will be observed by the majority of road users and can be effective in regulating traffic flow, reducing crashes and maximising safety. It is important that the department continues to use a consistent approach when setting speed limits to minimise these differences and maintain safety.

The crash history of the road also forms part of the assessment process. If the crash rate is statistically high in comparison to other similar type roads it will have an influence on the recommended speed limit.

The applicable road agency is responsible for the approval of the recommended speed limit. However, in accordance with department's policy for changing speed limits, Main Roads must present its recommendation to the relevant Speed Management Committee for endorsement. This committee includes representatives from Queensland Transport, Main Roads, Queensland Police Service and the relevant local authority.

As you are aware, Main Roads conducted a review of the speed limit on Eumundi-Kenilworth Road in 2005. This review included an assessment of all criteria including the road function, prevailing vehicle speeds, other site specific information and the crash history. It confirmed the existing speed of 100km/h, with an 80km/h speed restriction applied on school days, during bus operating times from 7.30am to 9.30am and 3.00pm to 4.30pm, over the sections yet to be upgraded. This confirmation was endorsed by the Maroochy Speed Management Committee.

I understand that community representatives are seeking a permanent 24/7 speed restriction of 80km/h over the entire length of the Eumundi-Kenilworth Road due to an increase in heavy vehicle volumes. Main Roads advises that the MUTCD does make reference to considering heavy vehicles when reviewing speed limits. However, it is considered that the volume of heavy vehicles on Eumundi-Kenilworth Road would not influence the recommended speed.

As promised, I will ensure Main Roads complete a speed limit review of the entire length of Eumundi-Kenilworth Road. I understand this review is in process and that the department will be in a position to present the outcome of the speed review at the next Maroochy Speed Management Committee meeting which is scheduled for 17 July 2007.

With regards to Moy Pocket Road, this is not a state-controlled road, although there have been requests for state funding to assist in upgrading the road. The state government has contributed \$175,000 in Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) funding to Cooloola Shire Council in 2006-07 and will contribute another \$478,000 in 2007-08. I understand that Cooloola Shire Council have reduced the speed limit on Moy Pocket Road within its local government area to 70km/h. Maroochy Shire Council will also investigate the possibility of following Cooloola's lead in lowering the speed limit.