

ACRS Submission



About the Australasian College of Road Safety

The Australasian College of Road Safety was established in 1988 and is the region's peak organisation for road safety professionals and members of the public who are focused on saving lives and serious injuries on our roads.

The College Patron is His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

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Introduction

The Australasian College of Road Safety is the region's peak membership association for road safety with a vision of eliminating death and serious injury on the road. Our members include experts from all areas of road safety including policy makers, health and transport professionals, academics, community organisations, researchers, federal, state and local government agencies, private companies and members of the public. The purpose of the College is to support our members in their efforts to eliminate serious road trauma through knowledge sharing, professional development, networking and advocacy. Our objectives include the promotion of a collegiate climate amongst all those with responsibilities for and working in road safety; the improvement of relative safety outcomes for vulnerable demographic and user groups within the community; the promotion of post-crash policies and practices; the promotion of road safety as a critical organisational objective within government, business and the community; and the promotion and advocacy of policies and practices that support harm elimination.

ACRS submission on the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2021

a) Intent of the Rule

The proposed Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2021 (the Rule) has been developed as an action arising from the *Tackling Unsafe Speeds Programme*, which itself is an action of *Road to Zero*, New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy 2020 – 2030. The *Tackling Unsafe Speed Programme* includes three components:

1. Introducing a new regulatory framework for speed management to improve how RCAs plan for, consult on and implement speed management changes.
2. Transitioning to lower speed limits around schools to improve safety and encourage more children to use active modes of transport.
3. Adopting a new approach to road safety cameras to reduce excessive speeds on our highest risk roads.

The first two points are covered by the Rule.

The ACRS acknowledges the purpose of the Rule is to replace the existing speed management process, which is resource intensive, time-consuming and complex, with a more holistic, coordinated and transparent speed management process that is better integrated with infrastructure and enforcement proposals.

The ACRS strongly supports any mechanisms (legislative or otherwise) that remove barriers and/or simplifies pathways that facilitate faster and more widespread implementation of safe and appropriate speed limits in our towns, cities and rural areas. In this regard, the ACRS believes that the Rule can accelerate the delivery of extensive speed limit changes throughout New Zealand, and in turn generate meaningful reductions in road trauma more quickly than can be achieved under the current rule.

On this basis, the ACRS fully supports the intent of the Rule.

b) Specific Matters

In preparing this submission, the ACRS has sought the views of its members in the NZ Chapter. Whilst no member has expressed opposition to the Rule, queries about some aspects of the Rule have been raised. Specific aspects of the Rule that the ACRS submits on are:

Option to set speed limits outside urban schools as either 30km/h or 40km/h

The ACRS is supportive of mandating lower speed limits outside of all schools. However, we query the sensibility of permitting a 40km/h option when the overwhelming international evidence, including information published on the Waka Kotahi website <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/driving-safely/speed/>, is that the maximum safe survivable speed for a collision involving a vehicle and a pedestrian is 30km/h. This Waka Kotahi website also references the International Transport Forum research report '[Speed and Crash Risk](#)' (2018), which shows that pedestrian fatality risk doubles when the impact speed increases from 30 km/h to 40km/h.

On this basis, the ACRS submits that Section 5.2 *Maximum Permitted Speed Limits Outside Schools* subclauses (3), (4) and (5) should be deleted to remove all reference to an option of either a permanent or variable speed limit of 40km/h. If an option of 40km/h is to be retained, the ACRS submits that this should be an interim / transitional measure only and be fully phased out by 31 December 2029.

Capacity of RCAs and RTCs

The ACRS supports the intent of Section 3 *Planning for Speed Management* but queries whether Road Controlling Authorities (RCAs) and Regional Transport Committees (RTCs) have sufficient capacity to:

- a. fulfil their obligations under the Rule, and/or
- b. develop speed management plans to the extent that is envisaged.

The key risk arising from insufficient capacity in any such organisations is that speed management plans may lack ambition and coverage to deliver the meaningful change that the Rule aspires to achieve. The ACRS acknowledges that Waka Kotahi will provide guidance and information to support speed management, but queries whether this will be sufficient to address situations where RCAs and/or RTCs lack capacity to deliver. The ACRS submits that consideration must be given to the further support that Waka Kotahi can provide RCAs and RTCs to build capacity in those organisations that may struggle with this.

Timeframe for Implementation

The ACRS acknowledges and supports Section 5.4 *Implementation Period for Setting Speed Limits around Schools* which sets interim and final dates to set lower speed limits around schools. However, the ACRS queries why there is no similar expectation or timeframe to implement safe and appropriate speeds on the balance of the network where the majority of road trauma occurs. The absence of any interim or final date for implementing safe and appropriate speed limits across road networks beyond schools may result in some RCAs and RTCs electing to pursue minimal changes to speed limits on their networks – the majority of which are known to be higher than safe and appropriate levels.

Reasons why this may occur, in addition to the issue of organisational capacity (raised above), are costs of implementation and lack of community support for such change. These are perennial issues that hamstring many local government organisations from delivering meaningful road safety change. If the legal instrument (the Rule) required change to be implemented by a certain date, then we believe this could help overcome any reluctance from RCAs or RTCs to be more aspirational with their speed management plans, which in turn will deliver better outcomes that are more aligned with the intent of the Rule. The ACRS submits that a timeframe to implement safe and appropriate speed limits throughout New Zealand, not just outside schools, should be included in the Rule.

Separate State Highway and Regional Speed Management Plans

The ACRS understands that the intent of Section 3.2 *Speed Management Plans* is that regional speed management plans will be prepared and consulted on inclusive of both State Highway and local road components. However, Sections 3.2 through to 3.5 are written in such a way that it could readily be interpreted that the State Highway speed management plan is prepared and consulted on quite separately from the regional speed management plan. The ACRS would be concerned if this manifested, as it could readily lead to public confusion.

The ACRS supports a collaborative approach to the development and consultation of regional speed management plans that include both State Highway and local road networks. On this basis, we submit that the Rule should be rewritten to remove any ambiguity on this matter, encourage the development of regional speed management plans that include both State Highways and local roads, and mandate consultation on a single combined regional speed management plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the ACRS fully supports the intent of the Rule. We have identified four areas / issues that we believe need to be addressed to ensure the outcomes sought by the Rule are realised in practice. These are:

1. Speed limits outside urban schools should be 30km/h to align with the maximum safe survivable speed for a collision involving a vehicle and a person walking or on a bike. If an option of 40km/h is to be retained, the ACRS submits that this should be an interim / transitional measure only and be fully phased out by 31 December 2029.
2. Consideration must be given to the further support that Waka Kotahi can provide RCAs and RTCs to build capacity in those organisations.
3. A timeframe to implement safe and appropriate speed limits throughout New Zealand, not just outside schools, should be included in the Rule.
4. Rewriting Section 3.2 through to 3.5 to clarify the regional speed management plans should be developed in a collaborative manner between all RCAs (including Waka Kotahi as RCA for the State Highway network) and consulted on as a single combined regional speed management plan that covers both State Highways and local roads.



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