

URBAN STREET SPEED STRATEGY - CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT SUMMARY

The need to improve the compliance of urban speed limits has been a major concern to our community. Since the implementation of the 50 kph Urban Speed Limit throughout Cessnock City LGA, community concerns have increased and police resources have been unacceptably stretched attempting to enforce the new limits.

There was also a view that there was a need to better utilise the available resources of both police and Council in a more coordinated approach so as to maximise results and achieve significant outcomes.

The Urban Street Speed Strategy was developed as an education and enforcement based program incorporating a collaborative approach to speed management throughout urban areas utilising Council resources and Police Co-operation.

It was intended to adopt this new approach to 6 streets that would be identified through examining councils complaints register, crash data, traffic information, police concerns / Traffic Infringement Notices offences. Streets were also evaluated on their road environment and their amenability to engineering solutions.

The Urban Street Speed Strategy was developed.

URBAN STREET SPEED STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

The need for a coordinated and more effective approach to reducing speed in local streets became apparent when speed issues continued to be a constant and major concern to council, police and the general community.

One of the major issues regularly facing the local Traffic Committee is the management of speed in urban streets. The management of limited funding for the implementation of engineering solutions necessitated a different approach to the management of speed concerns in urban streets. Similarly, engineering solutions alone have not always provided an answer.

It therefore became increasingly apparent that council needed to investigate and focus on other solutions instead of the more traditional engineering solutions due to the nature of the local road network and council's limitation of available funds.

There was also a view that there was a need to better utilise the available resources in a more coordinated approach so as to maximise results.

THE RESEARCH

After community consultation a team was formed consisting of local police, council engineering and traffic staff as well as road safety staff to implement a program designed to best effect the resources available in a coordinated approach to deal with the issue of speeding in local streets.

Research was undertaken by examining

- ?? councils complaints register
- ?? crash data
- ?? traffic information
- ?? police concerns / Traffic Infringement Notices offences
- ?? Streets were also evaluated on their road environment and their amenability to engineering solutions.

Because of available resources by both Police and council, it was decided to concentrate all efforts of all stakeholders initially on 6 streets where it was considered that the available resources could be maximised.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

Six streets were selected, where the 85th% speed was considered high (greater than 5 kph over posted speed limit) and significant public comment had been received. Traffic classifiers would then identify times and days of major speeding concern. These motorists would then be reminded of the local speed zoning and a vehicle's current speed through the use of Council's Courtesy Speed Check Equipment. These streets are then be targeted by police enforcement.

Data is constantly provided to police so that they could provide enforcement in a strategic manner. This information would be provided regularly throughout the year to constantly modify and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. The monitoring would occur over an entire 12 month period to provide valuable evaluation material during this phase.

TIMELINE:

Council	-	<u>Data - Traffic Counters</u> Counters to be placed permanently on all streets from 1 November.
	-	<u>Education - Courtesy Speed Check equipment</u> Equipment to be used >3 sites per day over 10 working days in each of the 3 month periods which will give a rotation of at least 5 recordings in each of the 6 streets in each period. <u>Education – Media, signage, advertising and press releases –</u> Council will provide an education an awareness campaign throughout the community by way of signage on participating streets, media advertising and press releases prior to commencement and throughout the program to provide feedback to the community on the progress of the strategy.
Police	-	<u>Enforcement</u> – 1 November 2000 – 31 October 2001 Police to provide regular enforcement on all participating streets during this period as well as providing feedback and evaluation information.

The key stages of the program are:-

- ?? Identify streets
- ?? Develop and erect suitable signage to advise residents and the driving community of the project.
- ?? Public education campaign including advertisements, media releases and mayoral columns
- ?? Collection of speed and traffic data by council
- ?? Courtesy Speed Check monitoring by council
- ?? Police enforcement
- ?? Evaluation of all available data

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation has been an integral factor in the project with many road safety stakeholders fully committed to the implementation and success of this speed management project.

The project has full community and council support as it attempts to maximise the use of limited resources for a safer community.

EVALUATION

This aspect of the program is the most important as it will hopefully provide all stakeholders with valuable information in ways to manage urban speeds in urban streets.

In evaluating the strategy, council will record all traffic classification data and provide information in the areas of 85th percentile and volume during periods of concern regarding speed. The traffic classifiers will also be analysed at appropriate times to determine the effect and success of both the Courtesy Speed Check education equipment and the high profile Police enforcement.

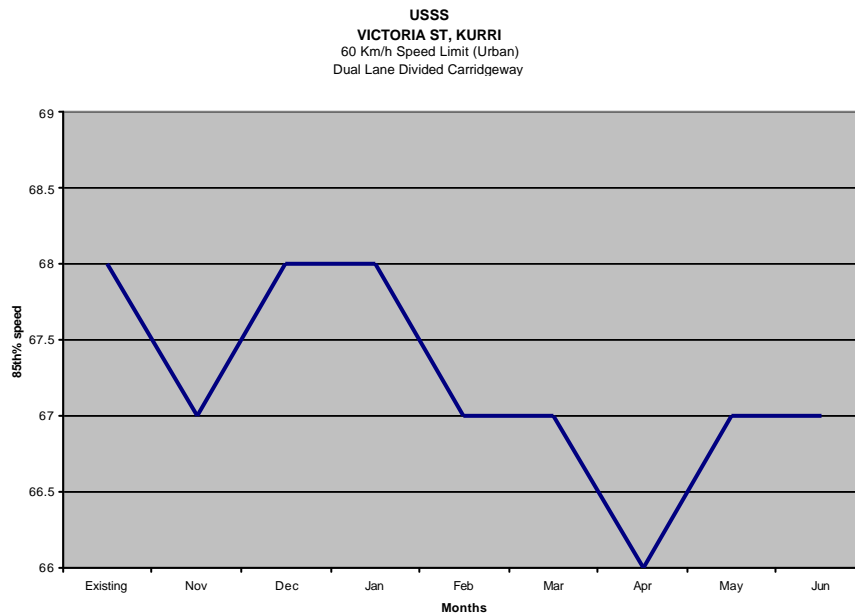
Council will record and provide police with all Courtesy Speed Check data for the purpose of strategic targeting and evaluation including times, direction, volume, speeds and also consult with the local community to ascertain any notable changes and anecdotal information.

Police will provide enforcement times and site information as well as relating the number of Traffic Infringement Notices, noting speed severity which will be used in the overall evaluation process.

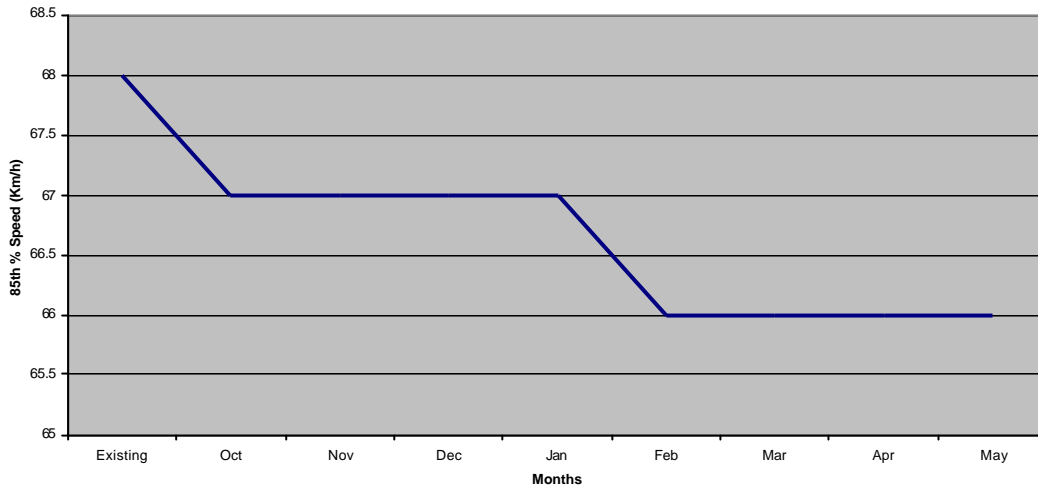
At the conclusion of the 12 month period Council will draw together a report outlining the results so that future programs can be modified to an even greater effect.

TRENDS TO DATE

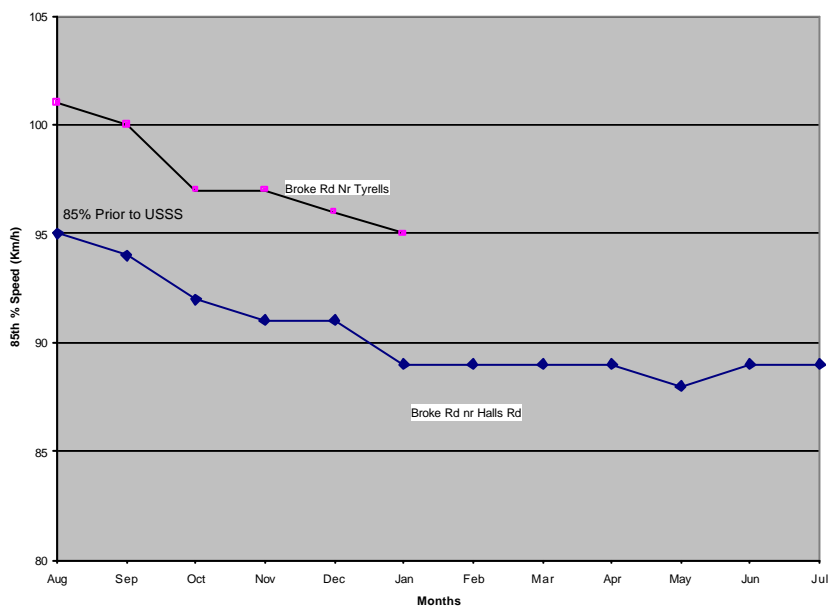
The following charts represent the 85th speed in streets targeted. The trends are encouraging at this stage with all streets showing a downward trend. It is interesting to note that the flat periods represent times during low or zero enforcement. The 85th speed did not rise but remained static. Then during subsequent periods of high enforcement and speed checking the 85th speed proceeded to drop once again.



USSS
Mitchell Ave, Kurri
 60 Km/h Speed Limit (Urban)
 Dual Lane Divided Carridgeway



USSS
BROKE ROAD, POKOLBIN
 80 Km/h Speed Limit (Rural)

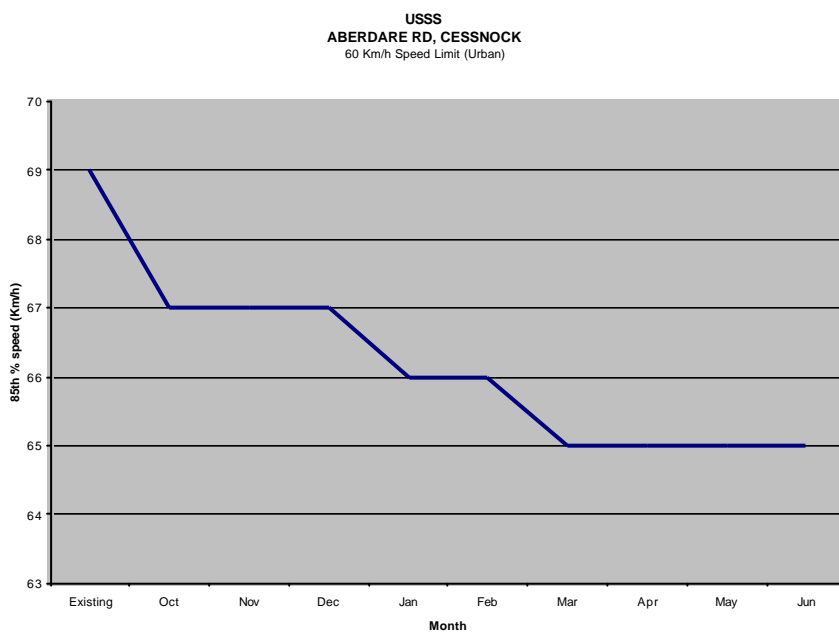


The final chart represents the 85th% speed of vehicles during enforcement periods and the trend outside that period. As can be seen during the non enforcement period there is a halo effect without only a small rise in the 85th% speed.

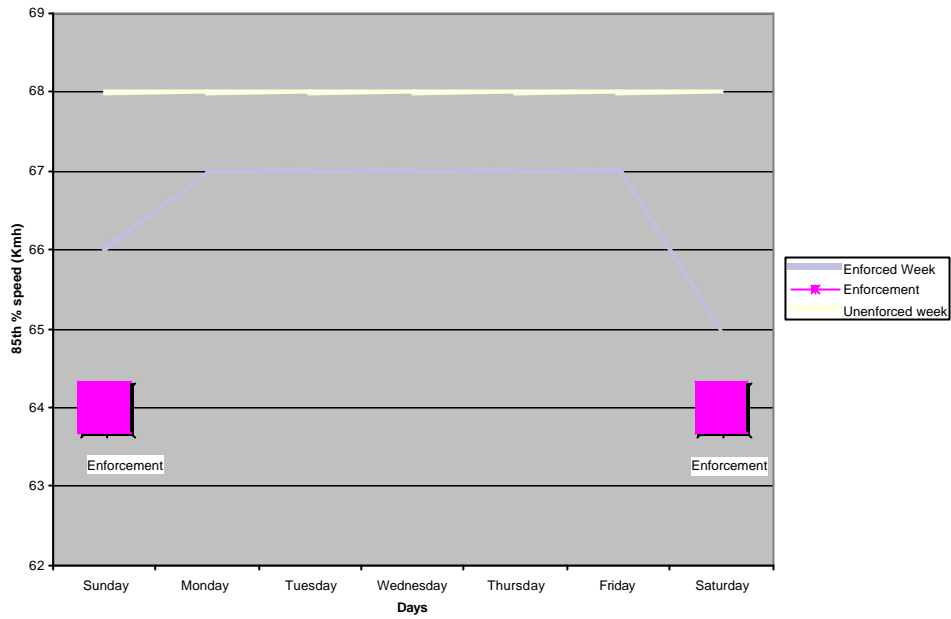
CONCLUSION

The strategy has been developed to determine an effective means of dealing with excessive speed on urban streets. The classification of streets varies from arterial roads to residential streets with varying road environments.

The development of this strategy is to determine whether speed can be decreased through education and enforcement alone and if not on all streets targeted it will provide information on which streets will require a change in their road environment. These streets then can be targeted for traffic management schemes. The feedback from the community has been positive with the police presence and the use the courtesy speed check radar showing that Council has recognised their concerns and is proceeding to address the problem.



Mitchell Ave, Kurri



The strategy should indicate if it takes 3-6-9 or 12 months or more to obtain a sustainable change in speed. The trends so far have been encouraging and after the full twelve months more effective useable data will be available. It is hoped that eventually speeds in the targeted streets will fall through this program alone and large scale traffic calming devices will not be required.
