

MPS Ref: A9575128

26 February 2020

The Secretary
Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
Via: roadtollinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Secretary

Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 'Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll'.

It was a horrific year for road trauma across the Mornington Peninsula Shire in 2019, with 14 lives lost and over 100 people seriously injured. When compared with Victoria's 29 municipalities, Mornington Peninsula Shire has suffered the highest losses of life on its roads in two years during the past decade. The Shire has worked in partnership with TAC, VicRoads/DoT and Victoria Police for many years yet continues to endure heavy losses of human life and wellbeing. This is an unacceptable situation and signifies to our Council, our communities and visitors, that a fundamentally new approach to the *delivery* of road safety interventions is needed.

As evidence of Council's determination to eliminate severe road trauma, the Shire formally committed in 2016 to becoming Victoria's first 'Towards Zero' municipality. The Shire strongly supports the Safe System strategic approach to preventing deaths and severe injury. The Safe System is regarded as international best practice, including by the Netherlands and Sweden, which have consistently led the world in reducing road death and serious injury.

The rising road trauma in Victoria, or at best the plateaued Victorian road trauma, is believed to be due to failure to implement Safe System thinking on a meaningful operational scale rather than to any shortcomings in the Safe System approach.

Contact the Mornington Peninsula Shire

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**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

Most regrettably, many institutional impediments to implementing Safe System-aligned design and system operation still exist. The Shire regards the removal of these impediments as essential to progress and has directed its submission within the Shire and across Victoria.

The approach would involve the State's road safety partners working proactively with Council to lead new approaches to implement Safe System aligned road infrastructure improvements and speed corrections.

The Shire requests that its roads be used to trial and demonstrate system-based design not only to eliminate road trauma locally, but to facilitate the replication of successes across the State.

Please find attached Mornington Peninsula Shire's submission requesting that we take a unique role to lead with key decisions to demonstrate advanced Safe System thinking, as part of a long-term strategic approach of reaching 'zero by 2050'. We are confident that, with the required support and matched enthusiasm, actions proposed in our submission will assist the State to protect all Victorians in the decades ahead.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss our submission, please contact Team Leader Traffic and Transport, Tom Haines-Sutherland on 59501287.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Sam Hearn
Mayor – Mornington Peninsula Shire

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Mornington Peninsula Shire's Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll

Summary

This document comprises Mornington Peninsula Shire's (The Shire's) Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll, addressing the Inquiry's Terms of Reference with a particular focus on:

- (1) current Victorian Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020 and progress towards its aim of a 20 per cent reduction in fatalities with 200 or less lives lost annually by 2020;
- (3) adequacy of current speed enforcement measures and speed management policies; and
- (6) adequacy of current road standards and the road asset maintenance regime.

It is our intention to present a solution-based submission, focusing on collaboration and innovation to have a major impact on the lives lost on our roads.

We contend that, to achieve both the Nation's and Victoria's goal of zero road fatalities by 2050, fundamental change is needed to remove critical impediments to progress, including:

- Improved practices for managing speed limits;
- Innovation in road design and management;
- Streamlined approval processes; and
- Modernised, restructured, strengthened and genuinely collaborative partnerships.

In April 2016, the Mornington Peninsula Shire became a Towards Zero Municipality. To address the severe trauma problem within the Shire and to accelerate progress at the state level, the Shire wishes to expand the scope of its Towards Zero commitment to serve as a Safe System demonstration area for innovative system-based design, speed management and other supportive trauma reduction measures.

The Shire is currently developing its Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2020-24, which will be adopted by Council and include an ambitious target timeframe for zero lives lost on our roads.

With the backing of the State Government, it is proposed that we form a unique and modernised *Towards Zero Leadership Team* which is specifically:

- Agile and enabled;
- Autonomous and innovative; and
- Responsible and strategic.

This could be quickly established, and new streamlined procedures developed to allow high-impact, strategically significant trials and demonstrations to be undertaken within the Shire.

The model above was successfully proven when, at short notice, a small autonomous team was formed between the Shire, Road Safety Victoria and the TAC which achieved the

successful implementation of the 'Safer Speeds Trial' to reduce high-risk, rural roads to 80km/h.

The effectiveness of selected trials and demonstrations would be comprehensively evaluated, with high priority given to supporting local government to implement effective, strategically important initiatives, as rapidly as practicable. The overall safety benefits of high-impact initiatives can then be multiplied across Victoria. The Shire is confident that the trial will provide evidence that the State's Safe System approach can be truly effective.

Conditional upon the streamlining of government approval processes, gaining necessary funding support and a commitment to a holistic and coordinated approach, this proposal could be activated in a short timeframe and have an immediate positive impact in preventing road trauma on the Peninsula. This would enable government to give confidence to the Victorian community that ambitious, practical steps are being taken in response to the 2019 surge in road deaths and the concerning start to 2020 (eighteen deaths state-wide in 2020 compared with nineteen deaths at the same time in 2019).

As a result of its past commitment to road safety, and its declaration as a Towards Zero Municipality, the Shire has a substantial number of innovative, cost-effective, Safe-System aligned projects, designed and ready to be implemented. This state of readiness helps greatly with delivering early benefits, not only on Peninsula roads, but also in building a state of readiness and capacity in key technical fields within other local government areas across the state.

For practitioners yet to become proficient with the application of Safe System thinking, the evaluation of trials and demonstrations has the potential to provide compelling evidence that the state's commitment to the Safe System approach is well-founded. Once support is more extensively established, the accrual of safety benefits will accelerate and spread, whilst supporting change with removing institutional impediments. The proposal will provide the basis for delivering an effective evaluation program through relevant and achievable Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) to display immediate gains in the Safe System implementation, pending realisation of trauma reductions.

A high priority of the *Towards Zero Leadership Team* would be to provide a prioritised, targeted approach to safe infrastructure investment, to gain maximum initial trauma reduction. The *Towards Zero Leadership Team* would also work to establish the foundations for an ongoing, sustainable program to reduce deaths and serious injuries across more diverse and challenging trauma categories, including crash types that tend to be highly spatially dispersed.

The Peninsula is the ideal trial location with its well-defined boundaries, strong Council and community support, innovative mindset and absolute resolution to reduce road trauma.

Mornington Peninsula as a Safe System Demonstration Municipality

Mornington Peninsula Shire offers to serve as a geographically contained area in which to trial and demonstrate Safe System-aligned innovation in road design and speed management, as well as other new road safety initiatives aligned with the Safe System. This would offer the following advantages:

- provide additional opportunities for the State to develop, assess and refine road safety management systems and build capacity in strategically important areas, such as making a paradigm shift to system-based thinking, design and operation;
- developing and applying Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) and targets;
- refining intervention evaluation methods;
- strengthening approaches to community engagement and stakeholder partnerships; and
- integrating road safety goals with other high-level global goals, such as economic prosperity, climate change, liveability, health and sustainability.

Successful trials, demonstrations and methodological developments in road safety management can then be implemented by LGAs across Victoria, as applicable, to accelerate the state's progress towards zero road trauma by 2050.

Why the Mornington Peninsula

This section provides detailed information on the Mornington Peninsula Shire, its recent history with respect to road safety and its long-term vision for eliminating severe road trauma. We are innovative and able leaders with a commitment to see an immediate and lasting impact to improve road trauma and safety. The information below is provided to attest to the Shire's commitment, suitability and readiness to perform this progressive and ambitious role.

The Peninsula is the ideal location for road safety trials; we have well-defined boundaries, few shared borders with other municipalities and limited access roads. There is strong community, media and Council support for change and, with millions of visitors each year, the trial area will be measurable, yet the reach and exposure will be broad.

Towards Zero Road Trauma on Peninsula Roads

An analysis of the latest data on deaths and serious injuries on Shire roads over the past decade shows a severe spike in deaths in 2019, relative to recent trends.

Sixty-nine people were killed and 1352 seriously injured on roads within the Shire in the decade to 2018, with 41 per cent of these crashes occurring on Shire-managed roads. This demonstrates the opportunity to make a substantial impact by focusing on treatments to local roads.

In 2010, the Shire suffered the highest number of deaths among the state's 79 municipalities. In 2019, the Shire once again experienced the largest number of deaths of any Victorian municipality with 14 fatalities and over 100 individuals sustaining serious injuries.

Natural statistical variation in annual road deaths can cloud attempts to determine whether there is the beginning of a genuine upward trend. However, whether this spike in deaths is a statistical aberration or not, should not divert attention from the fact that the lives of seven more citizens were lost relative to past trends. In the first two weeks of 2020, a further two people were killed, and another critically injured in the popular coastal township of Rye. These outcomes are unacceptable to local communities and Council's resolve to address this major health concern is stronger than ever.

Residents and Visitors

The Mornington Peninsula is one of Victoria's greatest assets, characterised by unique townships, world-renowned tourist attractions, and areas of national and international conservation significance. The Peninsula spans 723 square kilometres and is home to approximately 10% of Victoria's total coastline. Unfortunately, we are also a municipality with a high road trauma record. A once rural area, we now have a rapidly growing population and exceptionally high visitor numbers over the peak summer period.

Historic default speed limits of 100 km/h in non-built-up areas have remained largely unchanged, yet the municipality has become increasingly urbanised and roads that once passed through open countryside now provide direct and indirect access to a host of new developments, wineries, tourist attractions and residential dwellings.

Containing 30 towns and villages with three major activity centres being Mornington, Hastings and Rosebud, the Peninsula supports a permanent population of over 165,000 and in the year ending September 2018, the region received approximately 7.5 million overnight and day-trip visitors (business.vic.gov.au). With only 18 per cent of the Peninsula serviced by public transport, there is a heavy reliance on car travel and a sharper focus on assuring the safety of residents and visitors alike is needed.

Leadership – Victoria's First Towards Zero Municipality

The Mornington Peninsula Shire understands the fundamental role of genuine leadership in road safety. For more than a decade, the Shire has sought to be a courageous leader, not only among municipalities, but also in relationships with state agencies and our local community.

In April 2016, Council unanimously resolved to become a Towards Zero Municipality. The Shire's vision for its Towards Zero initiative is founded on the belief that *human life and health are paramount*. With the support of its road safety partners, the Shire strives to eliminate death and serious injury from its roads by adopting the philosophy and principles of the globally recognised Safe System road safety vision. The long-term aim is for all journeys to be safe and to feel safe for all road users, including for cyclists and pedestrians. In so doing, it hopes to be an effective national leader, inspiring others through its high ambition and evidence-based decisions, driving innovation and, ultimately, becoming the most liveable municipality in Australia.

The Safe System aspiration and principles are being progressively applied where possible in existing individual projects across the municipality. The impact of this approach on road trauma is limited, as it has been across Victoria, due to the spatially dispersed nature of projects, limited funding availability, long approval timeframes, and lack of a coordinated system- and risk-based approach. Enhancements to liveability are being made concurrently, where practical and affordable.

The Shire is currently developing its new Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy for 2020-2024 and is incorporating material, as appropriate, in its Submission to this Inquiry. The new

Strategy will be adopted by Council and include an ambitious target timeframe for zero lives lost on our roads. It is expected that the strategy will be finalised by May 2020, in order to align with the new road safety strategy being developed at state level.

A Commitment to Change

Mornington Peninsula Shire is a proud leader in the area of proactive road trauma reduction. With a commitment to innovative change, the Shire is currently implementing a two-year Safer Speeds Trial which will see the speed limit reduced to 80 km/h on the Peninsula's high-risk Shire-managed, sealed rural roads (38 roads). There is compelling evidence that a significant reduction in road trauma can be achieved by ensuring speed limits match the road environment. Many of these roads, which until now have been 100 km/h and 90 km/h, have significant crash histories and high crash and severe injury risks, including: narrow lanes, large trees close to the road, table drains, and poor sight lines. The Safer Speeds Trial (supported by the State and TAC) will be monitored and assessed to determine its road safety benefits.

Our Vision for the Peninsula

The Shire's long-term goal is that people who use the Peninsula's roads:

- with speeds above 80 km/h, will be protected by continuous flexible mid- and side-barriers from the ever-present risks of high-severity injuries and death caused by head-on impacts or collisions with any number of the many roadside hazards;
- without continuous flexible mid- and side-barriers will be protected with 80 km/h speed limits or lower;
- at intersections, will experience minimal conflicts and/or entry speeds not greater than 50 km/h;
- in residential areas will be limited to and designed for 30 or 40 km/h travel;
- will see road safety-related maintenance on all roads expedited, including clearing of sealed road shoulders, rectification of poor road surfaces and renewal of unclear line marking and directional signage on roads and intersections;
- in townships and other places used for social, business or educational purposes will experience safe, enjoyable and, where appropriate, commercially prosperous surroundings;
- for access to schools, or places where children, senior citizens or mobility-impaired people live or gather, will be limited to and designed for 30 or 40 km/h, while walking and cycling will become low-risk, convenient choices for short to medium length journeys; and
- for access to and from coastal and tourism attractions, local events, and sporting, recreational and entertainment venues will present the lowest practicable risk.

In addressing all four pillars of the Safe System approach, all road users will be supported to comply with key rules, proven to substantially lower crash and injury risk; for example, driving within speed limits, driving, walking or riding unimpaired by alcohol, drugs, medical conditions, pharmaceuticals, fatigue or mobile technology use, using seat belts and child restraints, and driving or riding only while authorised.

When cycling or motorcycling, riders will be supported to wear helmets and recommended forms of protective clothing. In line with other proven means for lowering crash and injury risk, people will be encouraged to purchase (or otherwise travel) in five-star safety-rated cars (and equivalent for motorcycles), and to use public transport services offering the highest available levels of safety.

Partnerships and Collaboration

The Shire wishes to significantly strengthen its working relationships with Victoria's road safety partners; the TAC, DoT, Victoria Police (and other emergency services), the Department of Justice and Regulation, and the health sector. A restructured approach to collaboration between authorities and sectors will assist in modernising the approach to addressing the current road trauma crisis.

The Shire will continue to lead, by driving and supporting innovation and ambition aimed at eradicating death and serious injury in the Shire. The levels of support provided will be aligned with Victoria-wide priorities. The road safety partners will need to make strong and lasting commitments to making significant change and rejecting the status quo, with the goal of applying transferable successes and resultant improvements in practice elsewhere in Victoria. In particular, the State and the partners will be requested to support the Shire with

targeted resources, funding and expertise, in accordance with Victorian strategies and priorities, to maximise the potential for saved lives and serious injuries state-wide.

Activities such as road policing, regulation and infringements, the Safe System Road Infrastructure Program (SSRIP, recently renamed Safer Roads) investment and trials, ongoing promotion of safe road use and enhancements to post-crash response and care are fundamentally important to success.

The Critical Importance of Innovation

An essential element of making progress towards zero deaths and serious injuries is innovation based on sound principles or robust evidence. Council supports undertaking trials and demonstration projects of Safe System principles, design innovation, technologies and programs, with human-centred design being integrated where possible within planning, development, design and maintenance processes.

The Detailed Proposal

The purpose of the Mornington Peninsula Shire's proposal, forming part of its submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll, is four-fold:

1. **To assist in the achievement of the Mornington Peninsula Shire's long-term target** for eliminating death and serious injury from its roads by 2050;
2. **To significantly contribute to the achievement of the State Government's long-term and intermediate targets** for achieving 'zero by 2050' on Victorian roads;
3. **To contribute to the adoption of a harm elimination approach** - historically, road safety programs and interventions have been reactive to existing and emerging safety problems. Given the vast increases in knowledge and capability today, it is time to proactively apply this system-based knowledge and no longer build systemic risk into new roads and the redesign of existing roads;
4. **To contribute to making a fundamental, long-term shift in approach** - Victoria needs to modernise its thinking and practices to incorporate system-based design in all future expansions and modifications to the road-transport system. In this respect, the continuation of practices that trade lives and health for economic benefits is unacceptable to the Shire.

What is Needed to Succeed

Mornington Peninsula Shire's proposal for serving as a demonstration area for innovative, Safe System-aligned initiatives should be developed with the proposed *Towards Zero Leadership Team*, in collaboration with Victoria's road safety partners and stakeholders. Further work is needed to define, in greater detail, a holistic and co-ordinated approach, while still allowing flexibility to fine-tune processes as vital practical experience is gained. However, for the purposes of this submission, several indicative elements of the proposal are outlined below:

- Identify the Shire's key road safety priorities, as part of analysing death and serious injury data for its new Road Safety Strategy (currently under development). Analysis of deaths and serious injuries will focus on systemic crash types by locations, routes and areas, road types, speed settings and population demographics in order to proactively reduce risk and therefore eliminate this trauma by 2050;
- Establish a *Towards Zero Leadership Team*, comprising representatives of DoT, TAC, VicPol, Department of Justice and Regulation, the Shire, and other relevant organisations, as needed, to develop Safe System-aligned packages of initiatives and programs. The involvement of TAC, VicPol and DoJR will be particularly important in addressing the enforcement and vehicle-related TORs of the Inquiry (2, 3, 4 and 5). The roles and responsibilities of the proposed *Towards Zero Leadership Team* could be formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding or similar;
- Identify packages of measures where demonstration within the Shire can be expedited for implementation over the coming 6 to 24 months. Packages of measures would be chosen, not only to address local priorities on the Peninsula, but also for their potential to accelerate the delivery of strategically valuable solutions at state level. Treatments aligned to the Safe System approach could include:
 - construction of compact (cost-effective) roundabouts at approximately 30 high-speed rural intersections and at up to 50 local street intersections in urban neighbourhoods;

- 80 km/h speed limits on over 70 km of state-managed, low-traffic volume, high-risk rural roads;
- 40 km/h speed limits and supportive, low-cost traffic calming infrastructure in all commercial areas (approximately 10) with high pedestrian activity and in local neighbourhoods; and
- trials of alternative cross-sections for roads along which a speed limit of 80 km/h is appropriate, to determine design elements needed in the future to achieve acceptable Safe System risk levels.
- Develop an action plan and implementation schedule for trials and/or demonstrations that can be undertaken in the medium term (e.g., 2 to 5 years) and longer term (e.g., 5 to 10 years); and
- Progress the prior initiatives that the Shire has previously proven to be effective and capitalise on the preparedness of the Shire to roll-out already developed but currently unfunded Safe System projects in the short term (6 to 24 months).

The Role of the Shire

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has a pivotal role to play in achieving the Towards Zero long-term goal. The Shire will lead and collaborate in strategically important ways to integrate Victoria's Towards Zero message into all applicable forms of community consultation and support communities to be informed and to build understanding about Towards Zero and the Safe System.

The Council has an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate leadership by purchasing affordable, five-star fleet vehicles and municipal transport services. By also ensuring that its fleet is used in accordance with best-practice safe-use policies, it will be well-placed to lead-by-example in promoting safe vehicle purchase and use practices among communities, local industries and businesses. To strengthen the understanding and commitment to low risk use of its roads, Council will continue its ongoing support for full take-up of Towards Zero programs which target safe road use by high risk groups.

The Role of Local Government

Local Government performs a vital role in the safe and efficient management of roads across Victoria. Of Victoria's roads with speed limits of 100 km/h or higher, local government is responsible for some 70% of the road network. These municipally managed roads account for approximately 30% of deaths and serious injuries. In Metropolitan Melbourne, local Government is responsible for an even greater percentage of the total road length and deaths and serious injuries. Local Government receives a disproportionately smaller share of funding for its roads, relative to state roads and to the levels of trauma that occur on local roads. Inadequate funding and wide-ranging responsibilities for service delivery combine to create major challenges for local government in meeting its road safety responsibilities. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Shire is fully committed to meeting its road safety responsibilities and to working with state government agencies to make its contribution to meeting Victoria's long-term road safety target of zero by 2050.

The Role of State Government

To be successful in reaching zero by 2050, the State Government will need to modernise and streamline approval processes for the design, implementation and evaluation of innovative, Safe System-aligned measures. Speed limit setting is absolutely integral to

system-based design and therefore must also be more easily fine-tuned to meet Safe System principles and be subject to more streamlined and agile approval processes.

Currently, these procedures are cumbersome, involve lengthy delays (e.g., up to 18 months for a simple application to modify a speed limit or several years of advocacy to implement innovative treatments) and often require years of perseverance to gain necessary approvals.

Consideration should be given to authorising the proposed new *Towards Zero Leadership Team* to be responsible for:

- approving changes to speed limits;
- innovative infrastructure design; and
- expediting maintenance where it is required for road safety reasons.

By their nature, innovative treatments would typically be subject to comprehensive and scientifically robust evaluations. Funding support for demonstrations and evaluations of innovative treatments that are strategically valuable in addressing state priorities would be sought from Road Safety Victoria or another of the State's road safety partners. It would be the responsibility of the proposed *Towards Zero Leadership Team*, established to oversee and coordinate this initiative, to develop short- and longer-term works packages for the allocation of funding. Determining funding requirements would form part of the development of an action plan and implementation schedule for the trials and demonstrations within the Shire.

Infrastructure on the Ground

To illustrate the magnitude of reductions in the risks of deaths and serious injuries that can be expected from the measures proposed for implementation, the following treatment types have been evaluated and found to substantially reduce the risks of deaths and serious injuries:

- **Roundabouts** – by an estimated 80-90 per cent at intersections;
- **Continuous flexible mid/median and side-safety barriers** – by an estimated 85 per cent for lane departure crashes along high-speed roads (>80 km/h);
- **Speed limit reductions from 100 to 80 km/h** – by an estimated 30 per cent in fatalities and 20 percent in serious injuries for a typical reduction in mean speeds from, say, 95 to 85 km/h;
- **Speed limit reductions from 50 to 40 km/h in residential streets and busy pedestrian settings** – by an estimated 30-40 percent in pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries, with cyclists and vehicle occupants also experiencing substantial reductions in severe injury risk.

While the above estimates are indicative of risk reductions, actual impacts and cost-effectiveness can be enhanced by sensitive design and selective deployment of measures. Speed effects can be further strengthened when supported by police enforcement.

Funding Required

The successful delivery of the demonstration will require an initial capital investment of approximately \$30 million to expedite the delivery of the identified packages of measures, in the short term (6 to 24 months).

The success of the trial in the long term will require a further investment of approximately \$120 million to deliver a program of packaged treatments, developed by the *Towards Zero Leadership Team* to be delivered over the following 8 years.

Conclusion

The recent spike in road trauma must drive significant change and modernisation of the current approach to improving road safety. It is no longer acceptable for historical processes to continue to prevent action and innovation, sustain risk and delay proactive measures to reduce road trauma.

The Mornington Peninsula's Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll provides the opportunity for the state to demonstrate that its Safe System approach is effective. Through the Shire, it presents a previously unexplored pathway for Victoria towards its goal of zero road deaths by 2050. This will give the Victorian community confidence that the state government is proactively taking steps to reduce the likelihood of further horrific levels of road trauma in the future.

The Shire thanks the Victorian Government for the opportunity make a submission and welcomes an invitation to host and discuss this proposal with the Committee.