

Speed Management? Let's Talk About it!

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Abstract

Inappropriate or excessive speed is a major cause of road trauma. Effective speed management is fundamental and critical to solving this issue. Most of the current guidance is focused on the analytical aspects of speed management and setting speed limits. However, critical to the success of any speed management project is effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the community. Currently there is little guidance on this important part of the process and as such, it is often overlooked by practitioners. This paper identifies good practice guidance for engagement and consultation to effectively implement speed management interventions.

Background

Speed limit setting guidelines in Australia and New Zealand generally require or recommend that consultation be undertaken as part of speed limit reviews. It is important to distinguish between engagement and consultation in the speed limit setting process. The NZ Transport Agency Engagement Handbook (2018) states that:

Engagement is different from consultation. It's about creating the right environment within which to undertake consultation. Good engagement begins before consultation, it continues through the required consultation phase, and beyond any decision.

Research

Austroroads commissioned a research project to establish good practice on engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the community as part of effectively implementing speed management interventions. This research was informed by a desktop review and interviews with representatives from Australasian jurisdictions.

Results

Internationally, there is very little best practice guidance for engaging and consulting stakeholders and communities on speed management interventions. Most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand adhere to the basic requirements for consultation as part of speed limit setting guidelines.

VicRoads has provided guidance on speed management engagement as part of their Speed Zoning Guidelines (VicRoads, 2017). The overriding community engagement principle in this document is:

When determining or changing a speed limit, engagement with affected communities and road users shall be undertaken so that expectations and impacts are understood and considered.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads have prepared a Queensland Speed Conversation document which is targeted to the public and promotes the link between speed and road safety (Queensland Government, 2017).

The NZ Transport Agency's Engagement Handbook (2018) provides an engagement framework based on five principles (Figure 1) that encourage road controlling authorities to undertake extensive community engagements, to engage consistently and potentially modify their approach based on community and stakeholder input.



Figure 1. Five Principles for Positive Engagement (source: NZ Transport Agency, 2018)

Best Practice Guidance

Based on the desktop review and interviews, best practice guidance for engagement and consultation is summarised below:

- Undertake surveys to understand public attitudes towards speed. This is necessary to ensure messages are relevant and targeted.
- Engagement and consultation should focus on speed and its close link to road safety outcomes rather than speed limits.
- Engagement should be undertaken throughout the project phase, but especially before the formal consultation process. It is important for road controlling authorities to explain their strategic objectives early to build understanding and support.
- While state authorities are responsible for setting speed limits, there is scope for a shared role between state and local authorities in community and stakeholder engagement. High-level strategic direction from the state authority, coupled with knowledge of local authorities, is considered good practice.
- State authorities should take responsibility for supporting local authorities in their engagement and consultation practices by providing training, tools and templates, and support for developing and resourcing communication strategies.
- State and local authorities should listen to and consider the views of stakeholders and the public.
- Engagement and consultation should use a range of media such as local newspaper ads, social media (Facebook) and online advertising to ensure wide coverage.
- Speed management interventions should be planned and implemented at a pace at which stakeholders and the public can accept and support.

References

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