



28 October 2015

Mr Peter Duncan
Chief Executive Officer
Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
Level 19, 101 Miller Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Email: peter.duncan@rms.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Duncan

Maintenance of Speed Limit Signs & Line-marking on Regional and Local Roads

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of sixteen municipal and city councils. SSROC provides a forum for the exchange of ideas between our member councils, and an interface between governments, other councils and key bodies on issues of common interest. Together, our member Councils cover a population of over 1.6 million, or one third of the population of Sydney.

This letter is in response to concerns expressed by the sixteen SSROC member councils' transport and traffic officers, expressing the situation in their councils. At the SSROC Traffic & Transport Infrastructure and Planning Group meeting on 9 July 2015, SSROC was unanimously urged to liaise with the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to resolve unsatisfactory and ambiguous maintenance arrangement for speed limits and line-markings.

While this letter has been written to draw your attention to the important matter raised as soon as possible, it will be tabled for review and endorsement at the next SSROC Ordinary Meeting. We will get in touch if any issues arise as it is reviewed.

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to request the development of a formal agreement between SSROC member councils and the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) on the maintenance of speed limit signs and line-marking on Regional and Local Roads.

Background

The Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999 enables the RMS to set and administer speed limits in New South Wales. RMS is also responsible for the installation of speed limit signs and line-marking associated with speed zones.

Prior to the appointment of Leighton Boral Amey Joint Venture as RMS' preferred maintenance Contractor for the Sydney Southern Region in late 2013, maintenance of speed limit signs and line-marking on both Regional and Local Roads was undertaken by RMS. This was the unanimous position of officers from the sixteen councils.

Under this arrangement, councils would forward requests for speed sign maintenance to RMS through the relevant RMS Local Traffic Committee representative for consideration and decision.

The issue

Since the appointment of the Leighton Boral Amey Joint Venture, the previous arrangement with RMS has been abandoned. RMS representatives now state that the maintenance of speed limit signs and line-marking on both Regional and Local Roads is the responsibility of the individual council except for signs and line-marking associated with 40km/h School Zones and 10km/h Shared Zones.

This change in RMS position has been undertaken without any consultation or agreement from individual councils and is another example of cost shifting from the NSW Government to councils.

Although RMS requires individual councils to maintain speed limit signs and line-marking on both Regional and Local Roads, RMS retains the right to set and administer speed limits in NSW and install all new speed limit signs and line-marking associated with a change in speed limit.

Transfer of asset and RMS policy

The change in RMS position would essentially require each individual council to accept the maintenance of each new speed limit sign and line-marking installed on Regional and Local Roads under their control. Where this is the case, RMS has a specific policy that applies to the transfer of assets and asset management functions between the RTA and other roads authorities, Policy Number 192 (Infrastructure Maintenance Policy).

The Infrastructure Maintenance Policy outlines the steps that must be agreed upon between RMS and an individual Roads Authority when the responsibility for an asset is transferred.

If RMS has opted to change its approach and now expects councils to take over the responsibility of maintenance of speed limits signs and line-marking installed by RMS, then the agency should follow its own Policy. The issue of transfer of assets and agreement with SSROC member councils on arrangements for asset maintenance needs to be discussed.

There is concern within SSROC member councils that in the particular case of the arguable transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of speed limit signs and line-marking, RMS has not followed its Policy.

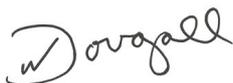
Way forward

Considering the continuing ambiguity concerning responsibility for the maintenance of speed limit signs and line-marking on Regional and Local Roads, it is recommended that RMS and SSROC member councils develop and agree on a formal agreement to clarify this issue.

Continued ambiguity can only cause loss of confidence, diminish quality of service and put the safety of road users at risk.

If you have any queries please contact Vincent Ogu, Strategic Planning Manager or myself on 8396 3800.

Yours sincerely



Namoi Dougall
GENERAL MANAGER
Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

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