

Reducing Default Speed Limit on Residential Local Roads from 50km/h to 40km/h

By City of Vincent

Category: Roads and infrastructure

Motion Subject: Reducing Default Speed Limit in Australia on Residential Local Roads from 50km/h to 40km/h

Motion:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with the State and Territory Governments to reduce the default speed limit in Australia on Residential Local Roads from 50km/h to 40km/h.

National Objective

In 2024, there were 1,300 road crash deaths in Australia. In 2024, approximately 45% of the road crash deaths in Australia occurred in urban areas.

This means around 585 fatalities were in urban settings, reflecting the ongoing challenges of road safety in densely populated regions. 151 deaths occurred in 50km/h speed zones in 2024 and only 36 occurred in speed zones less than 40km/h.

Impact speed is the main determinant of injury outcome.

A 20% reduction in speed from 50km/h to 40km/h results in a 200% increase in the likelihood of surviving a collision.

Dropping the speed on all our local roads is the single most effective way to make our streets safer and the lowest cost. And it has a negligible impact on travel time across urban areas.

BACKGROUND

The default speed limit in built-up areas in Australia was progressively lowered from 60 km/h to 50 km/h during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This change was to improve road safety particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Since 2000, Australia's population has increased by nearly 8 million people from 19 million to 27 million and the number of registered vehicles has increased by 7 million from 12 million vehicles to 19 million vehicles. Nearly all this growth has occurred in major cities with increased traffic and vehicle related accidents.

In 2018 the City of Vincent proposed a [40km/h speed zone trial](#) within Vincent's southern suburban residential areas to study the impact of slower speed limits. The objective was that the trial would make neighbourhood streets safer and provide a better street environment for all road users and residents living close by.

The trial was a success and in 2023 Main Roads WA (MRWA) approved permanent 40km/h speed limits in parts of North Perth, in addition to an existing trial area in Vincent's southern-most suburbs. This covered 40 per cent of City of Vincent's local access roads.

Community consultations by City of Vincent demonstrated significant support for the reduction of the speed limits, with almost 60 per cent of respondents showing they were in favour of the change.

MRWA has now granted approval for the speed to be [permanently reduced on all local access roads](#) within the City of Vincent. The 40km/h speed limits will apply to local access roads only. Suitable adjoining 50km/h distributor roads may be considered for 40km/h and subject to an application to MRWA for approval on a case-by-case basis.

The Perth Inner City Group are now collaborating on the expansion of the 40km/h zones to the City of Perth, City of Subiaco, City of South Perth and Town of Victoria Park.