

Proposal to reduce the speed limit in Falmouth and install pedestrian-friendly signage

Background

There are approximately 105 dwellings in Falmouth, 50 houses with permanent residents and 65 holiday homes and shacks, around 20 of which are listed as holiday rentals (eg AirBnB). The village has a permanent population of about 100 people which rises to 300+ during the summer and in holiday periods.

There are no footpaths in Falmouth. While there are wide and well-maintained grass verges on many Falmouth streets, most residents and visitors walk on the formed roads. Traditionally, Falmouth has been a place where children are free to roam relatively unsupervised between shacks and homes of relatives and friends. Until recently this caused few issues as there was little vehicular traffic and most drivers were familiar with the habits of pedestrians and the need to watch out for children.

Issues

With the increase in short-term holiday rentals such as AirBnB in recent years, the amount of car traffic in Falmouth has increased. More importantly there are now many more first-time visitors who are not expecting to come across pedestrians on the roads. The Break O'Day Council's **Transport Master Plan** notes the majority of traffic incidents occur during the day between 9am and 2pm, supporting the argument that in Break O'Day a large number of crashes can be attributed to visitors and tourists¹.

An area of great concern is Grant Street (the main road into Falmouth) between James Street and the lagoon parking area and the bottom of Hammond Street.



With the recent sealing of Morrison Street and Franks Street it appears that average speeds within Falmouth have increased and there have been a number of near-misses reported, especially at the junction of Morrison and Franks Street and the junction of Franks Street and Falmouth Main Road with drivers either failing to give way or assuming there is no traffic.

Jurisdiction

Speed limit changes are approved by the **Commissioner for Transport** as the legal authority for setting speed limits on all roads in Tasmania. The Commissioner will review a speed limit if they receive a speed limit change application from the relevant road manager, which in Falmouth's case is the Break O'Day Council.

Proposed Actions

1. Reduction of the speed limit throughout Falmouth to 40km/hr (State Growth)
2. Installation of "pedestrian and cyclist" **advisory warning signs** on Grant Street heading north approximately opposite 122 Grant Street and on Hammond Street heading west approximately adjacent to 2 Hammond Street (Break O'Day Council)
3. Installation of **stop signs** on Morrison Street at Franks Street and on Franks Street at Falmouth Main Road (Break O'Day Council).

Precedents

The speed limit in **Binalong Bay** and many of the area's smaller foreshore streets is 40km/hr.

In January 2022, the speed limit in **South Arm** was reduced from 60 km/h to 50 km/h after a request by the local school and community groups.

Also in January 2022, the speed limit in **Stanley** was reduced from 60 km/h to 50 km/h for 2.3 kilometres. Consideration was given to the proximity to local tourism attractions and businesses and how it compares to road and speed limits in similar townships.

The complete list of recent speed limit reviews can be found on the Tasmanian Government's [Transport Services](#) website.

Petition

A petition has been started to show broad community support for this initiative and can be [signed electronically](#) or on paper by contacting David Godfrey-Smith, Dave Cannon or Murray Schier. This petition is required to make the case to the Commissioner for Roads for reducing the speed limit in Falmouth from 50 km/hr to 40 km/hr.

Letters of Support

Letters of support will be sought from:

- Falmouth Community Centre
- Break O'Day Council
- Tasmania Police
- Road Safety Taskforce
- RACT

Discussion

Pedestrians and cyclists represent one in four serious casualties in Tasmanian cities and towns. Pedestrians and cyclists are at high risk of serious injury or death if hit at speeds above 30km/hⁱⁱ. Research also indicates that a 10 km/h reduction in travelling speeds can lead to a 25 percent reduction in deaths and serious injuries. The **National Road Safety Action Plan**ⁱⁱⁱ, recommends a 40 km/h (or lower) speed limit in high pedestrian and cyclist use zones.

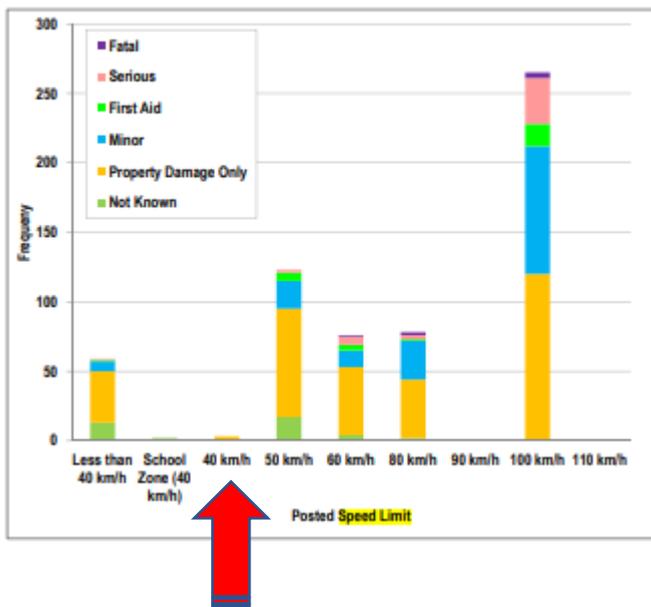
Pedestrians and cyclists are extremely vulnerable in collisions. The risk of death or serious injury increases markedly over impact speeds of 30 km/h. The average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle is 10% at an impact speed of 25km/hr, 25% at 40km/hr and 50% at 50km/hr¹.

¹ The average risk of death for a pedestrian is 10% at an impact speed of 40km/hr and 25% at 50km/hr.

			
Risk of injury	15%	30%	50%
Risk of death	5%	10%	20%

While 50 km/hr is the general urban default speed limit across Tasmania, a speed limit of 40 km/hr is consistent with high pedestrian activity areas and is documented in the **Tasmanian Speed Zoning Guidelines**^{iv} as being able to be applied “in beachfront areas with low traffic volumes and no formal footpath facilities”.

Crash data analysis done for the Break O’Day Council’s **Transport Master Plan 2013-2018** clearly shows that very few if any injury accidents have occurred in Break O’Day where the posted speed limit is 40km/hr, whereas there have been numerous injury accidents and damage to property where the speed limit is 50km/hr.



Footpath

Concurrently with the petition to lower the speed limit and erect appropriate signs, a separate application will be made to Break O’Day Council for construction of a **gravel track** (similar to the path recently constructed at the south end of Scamander) adjacent to and on the west side of Grant Street, between James Street and the Henderson Lagoon parking area, suitable for pedestrians and cyclists.

Questions

If you have any questions about this initiative, please contact:

David Godfrey-Smith

6 Hammond Street
Falmouth, Tasmania
Phone: 0488-537-000
Email: david_gs@mac.com

Murray Schier

70 Grant Street
Falmouth, Tasmania
Phone: 0427-603-488
Email: muzz@harboursat.com.au

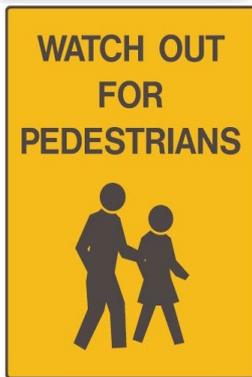
Dave Cannon

25 Legge Street
Falmouth, Tasmania
Phone: 0427-959-471
Email: bobbingalong@optusnet.com.au

Appendix 1: Proposed Actions



Appendix 2: Proposed Signage



- Replace the current 50km/hr speed limit with 40km/hr
- Speed limit to apply to ALL of Falmouth
- Replace the current sign on **Frank Steet** as vehicles enter Falmouth
- New sign leaving **Henderson Lagoon parking area** approaching intersection with Hammond and Frank Street
- New sign on **Hammond Street** at the junction with Legge Street for traffic heading downhill towards the lagoon
- New sign on **Grant Street** at the junction with James Street for traffic heading towards the lagoon
- New sign on **Morrison Street** at junction with Franks Street
- New sign on **Franks Street** at junction with Grant Street (Falmouth Main Road)

Appendix 3: Speed zoning principles - Tasmania

Speed zoning principles

Speed limits need to achieve a reasonable balance between road safety and local amenity concerns on the one hand, and traffic mobility expectations on the other. It is recognised that community views on the appropriate balance between these considerations continue to evolve over time.

In order to be effective, speed limits need to be realistic and credible. The speed limit should reflect the road's characteristics and environment so that its justification is self-evident to motorists.

Whilst it is noted that the effect of changed speed limits on the overall travel time of individual motorists tends to be small, experience has shown that arbitrarily low limits attract poor levels of compliance, even when subject to regular enforcement.

Speed limits are not always the most appropriate tool with which to address safety concerns – isolated hazards, such as a specific intersection or a tight bend are better addressed with physical works or the installation of warning signs, including speed advisory signs.

Motorists can become confused by too many speed limit changes along the same route. A balance needs to be achieved between matching the limit with the road characteristics at specific locations and avoiding excessive 'chop and change.'

Speed zones need to be clearly and regularly signed so that motorists are not confused about the limit which applies. These signs should be installed with accordance with ASI742.4.

Tasmanian Speed Zoning Guidelines
Department of State Growth July 2020
www.transport.tas.gov.au

Appendix 4: References

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- ⁱ *Break O'Day Council Transport Master Plan 2013-2018* published March 2014 www.bodc.tas.gov.au
 - ⁱⁱ *Towards Zero Action Plan 2020-2024*, Department of State Growth towardszero.tas.gov.au
 - ⁱⁱⁱ *The National Road Safety Action Plan 2018-2020*, National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) www.roadsafety.gov.au
 - ^{iv} *Tasmanian Speed Zoning Guidelines*, Department of State Growth July 2020 transport.tas.gov.au