

Lenswood and Forest Range Community Association

Road Safety Report from John Tons (15th Sept. 2013)

This report is the outcome of a protracted community consultation process. That process consisted of two surveys and an extended discussion at the 2013 AGM of the Association. It is being circulated to the Adelaide Hills Council, our Local Members the Hon Mark Goldsworthy and the Hon Jamie Briggs, The CFS and the Lenswood Primary School. Some of the proposals are capable of being actioned immediately, others will require a longer time frame.

1. Executive Summary

To address local Road Safety problems a phased in approach is recommended. The objective is to commence with low cost solutions whilst at the same time lobby the Federal Government for assistance to address the more expensive solutions:

Specific recommendations are:

1. To provide safe pedestrian access from the School to the Shop and Bowling Club. In the first instance it is recommended that once the current footpath is extended from the school to the Gas Centre that a walk way be marked out that cuts through the reserve to enable children safe access to the Bowling club. In the longer term we would expect a footpath to be provided along Lobethal Road.
2. To create a safer environment at the school consideration be given to creating a footpath from the school to Plummers Road.
3. Road speed signage along Lobethal Road to be reviewed at present speed limits are poorly sign posted and seemingly inconsistent.
4. The stretch of road between Tiers Road and Plummers Road to have a speed restriction applied of 60Km
5. That an educational campaign be mounted to discourage cyclists from using Lobethal Road.
6. To discourage hoon drivers that speed limits be actively policed including, but not limited to, the use of speed cameras.
7. That overtime the various tight bends on the Lobethal Road be softened through a road widening programme.
8. That the road be monitored on a regular basis to ensure trees do not restrict traffic.

2. Background

Road safety issues have been a long standing concern for the Lenswood and Forest Range Community. There is a lack of safe walk ways, which means that parents have little choice but to drive their children to school. As there are limited drop off and pick up facilities at the school the lack of safe pedestrian access to the school represents a major problem.

Our roads are the lifeblood of our industry – our growers rely on these roads to take their harvest to market and or storage. In recent years, however, the roads have also attracted cyclists and motor enthusiasts who want to use them as impromptu raceways. These other users have compromised the capacity of everyone to use the roads safely.

This is by no means a new problem – there have been ongoing attempts to address these concerns but they generally have been deemed too expensive or too difficult. However, if the Council's attempt to secure world heritage listing for the agricultural areas of the Adelaide Hills is successful then improvement to the roads will be essential.

3. Pedestrian access

Although the focus of our attention is safe access to and from the school Parents and their children are not the only ones who require safe footpaths.

The most pressing need is to enable the school to get safe access to the bowling club. Lenswood Primary School's physical education programme incorporates regular lessons at the Bowling Club. There is currently no safe access to the bowling club. Primary school students are required to share the road with trucks delivering produce to the Cold Store.

Council has commenced the upgrade of the existing footpath from the school to the Gas Centre. We acknowledge the Council's budgetary constraints and so have proposed the following low cost solution.

Where the footpath finishes at the Cold Store a pedestrian crossing be created to enable the students to cross the road into the reserve. If council were to create a walk way through the reserve up to the Telstra towers then from there the students could walk through the Cold Store Car Park, cross Colstore Road and complete their journey through Mr Stafford's orchard. This has been discussed informally with both the Chairman of the Cold Store and Mr Stafford and both are receptive to this proposal.

Recommendation:

- To provide safe pedestrian access from the School to the Shop and Bowling Club. In the first instance it is recommended that once the current footpath is extended from the school to the Gas Centre that a walk way be marked out that cuts through the reserve to enable children safe access to the Bowling club. In the longer term we would expect a footpath to be provided along Lobethal Road.

With respect to access from the school to Forest Range the community acknowledges that there are limited solutions. However, there is the possibility of extending Rogers Lane. The Community is aware that part of the land between Rogers Lane and the War Memorial at Plummers Road includes a public road. Part of that road has been sold to a landholder. As the landholder lives overseas it has not been possible to discuss such a proposal with him to gauge his support or otherwise. The objective should be to create pedestrian access that will not compromise the ability of the landowner to graze his stock.

The advantage of creating a walking track that follows the original surveyed road is that it will enable parents to use the War memorial as drop off and pick up zone, thus reducing the volume of traffic between Forest Range and the school.

However, there is the real concern that creating a walking track from Rogers Lane to Plummers Road does impact adversely on the current land owner –an alternative solution would be preferable and we would ask that Council be proactive in exploring alternative options.

Recommendation

- To create a safer environment at the school consideration be given to creating a footpath from the school to Plummers Road.

4. Lobethal Road Traffic

Signage along Lobethal Road right up to the Forest Range Post Office is confusing – unless you live locally you may be excused for not knowing what the speed limits are.

The stretch of road between the Gas Centre and Harris Road is particularly hazardous. The bends are so tight that some trucks cannot negotiate them without going across the double white lines. As these are blind bends oncoming traffic has no way of knowing whether or not there is enough space on their side of the carriage way – hence if someone, unfamiliar with the road, travels at the designated speed they could well find that they simply do not have enough room to stop. If we add to the mix cyclists then we have created a truly hazardous situation.

The success of the Tour Down Under has encouraged recreational cyclists to ride through the hills. During the warmer months it is not unusual to see groups of six or eight cyclists using Lobethal Road and Green Hill Roads. These roads are simply not designed to cater for cyclists. Cyclists appear to be blissfully unaware of the risks that they are creating for themselves and other road users.

We appreciate that this does not admit to an easy solution. We recommend that Council in conjunction with the State Government embark on an education campaign with respect to the way roads in the Hills are used. If this were combined with a set of recommended routes that encourage cyclists away from the narrow hills Roads we would be well on the way to creating a safer network of Hills Roads.

The other pressing concern is the reality of hoon drivers – motor cyclists and car enthusiasts regular use the stretch of Lobethal Road between Basket Range and Cold Store road as an impromptu race track. They know that they can do so with impunity for the road is generally not policed. We believe signs announcing that Police are targeting this area combined with speed cameras and patrols at various periods throughout the 24 cycle will go a long way to reducing that problem.

Recommendations

- Road speed signage along Lobethal Road to be reviewed at present speed limits are poorly sign posted and seemingly inconsistent.
- The stretch of road between Tiers Road and Plummers Road to have a speed restriction applied of 60Km
- That an educational campaign be mounted to discourage cyclists from using Lobethal Road
- To discourage hoon drivers that speed limits be actively policed including, but not limited to, the use of speed cameras.

The foregoing are generally low cost measures that can be readily addressed. The general problem with Lobethal Road requires a longer term solution. As it stands it there are too many very tight bends that cannot safely be negotiated by our trucks without them being forced across the double white lines.

A number of drivers have noted that there are a number of bends which would not require a great deal of work to bring them into the 21st century widening those bends to enable trucks to negotiate them more safely should be the first priority.

Attention can be given to ensuring that the verges are level with the carriage way so that when a truck is forced off the road it does not find itself in a ditch – a fully laden truck slipping into a gully on the side of the road becomes a very expensive and time consuming exercise.

We believe as a starting point the Government needs to commission a road survey to determine exactly what the most cost effective way is to address the problem of modern traffic.

The other ongoing challenge is overhanging trees. This will be an ongoing problem, branches that rip the side curtains of a truck pose an expensive problem.

As this is a council issue one easy solution would be to create a “snag hotline” this would not be a staffed phone line but rather one that provides the opportunity of drivers to log in potential hazards (with the new rapid numbering system locations can be easily provided.) This way Council can, on a daily basis, allocate work to deal with the identified hazards.

- That overtime the various tight bends on the Lobethal Road be softened through a road widening programme.
- That the road be monitored on a regular basis to ensure trees do not restrict traffic.