**Debunking the myths of “low level speeding”**

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So welcome to the webinar today. Today we’re covering Debunking the myths of “low level” speeding. My name is Angela Racz, and I will be I guess your technical support person today. Joining me here in the studio I have Jerome Carslake. I think we saw his slide there just a moment ago. So Jerome is the manager of the NRSPP, and today’s webinar is in fact an NRSPP webinar together with ARRB.

So it’s with pleasure I welcome Jerome to the studio today. And Jerome will be doing a little bit of an intro about the NRSPP and also welcoming our presenter. So just the next slide please gentlemen.

**Jerome Carslake
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Hi Angela. Thank you very much for the opportunity. Basically the National Road Safety Partnership Program is an initiative that’s been set up to really help organisations, businesses really strive towards creating a good practice road safety culture and prioritising within your organisation. It’s really about trying to get everyone to do more with less, and focusing around driving forward that red tape.

So we have all different elements in the program. There’s website material, working groups, and this webinar we have right now by our esteemed Chair of the industry led steering group is by Ian Johnson. So I look forward to hearing him delve into this issue and explain why this is such a crucial component. Ian.

**Angela Racz:**

Welcome Ian.

**Professor Ian Johnson AM
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Thank you very much Jerome and Angela, and hi to everyone out there. My pleasure to give today’s seminar which is about debunking the myths around low level speeding. It’s an issue that I spend a long time dealing with one way and another.

And I want to start by really emphasising that the reason people get hurt in road crashes is the kinetic energy that gets put on the human body, and really if we want to prevent injury we have to manage the energy exchange. We’ve known this for hundreds and hundreds of years really, because Newton discovered that the amount of kinetic energy is half of the mass, times the square of the speed. So if something is heavy and hits you, that’s important. But if it hits you fast, that’s doubly important if you want to put it like that.

Now everyone knows that the impact speed is directly related to injury severity. The bigger the object that hits you and the faster it’s going when it hits you, the more you’re going to get hurt. Now nobody disputes that, but what an enormous number of people do dispute is that speed has any influence on crash risk, that is on the likelihood of a crash occurring. And the argument goes ‘Well I can go as fast as I like and if I don’t have a crash, when I stop the potential energy is now zero’. And that’s absolutely true. So the big issue is does travel speed seriously increase the risk of a crash occurring, not just impacting the amount of injury that occurs.

Well there are several different kinds of scientific methods that have looked at this, and the problem with research in this field is we’re out in the real world. We’re not working in a laboratory with rats, and so we don’t have the sort of control that one would normally have. Now if you go into police crash data you’ll find statements, many statements like a third of crashes are the result of speeding. Now I’m not even going to touch that, because the police in investigating serious crashes are always looking for illegal behaviour, and if someone has been speeding that’s illegal. It doesn’t necessarily mean that it caused the crash. So I’m going to set that aside and talk about three other methods.

The most robust method is what’s called the case/control method. University of Adelaide looked at all of the casualty crashes, serious casualty crashes in a single year in Adelaide, and they used crash reconstruction computer technology using skid marks and amount of damage to vehicles and so on to compute the best estimate of the pre-impact crash speed of those vehicles in casualty crashes. So they got a speed distribution of vehicles that had been in crashes.

Then they went back to the same sites of those crashes on the same days of the week, same time of day. So if it was a Wednesday and a night time, they went back on a Wednesday and a night time, and they collected the free speeds – that is where the vehicle was unconstrained by other traffic – and measured how fast people were going in those conditions. They stopped those vehicles further down the track and made sure that they eliminated drinking drivers and all the rest of it. So it was just having a look at the speed distribution for vehicles that weren’t in crashes, and then they compared the two distributions. And just as you might expect, if vehicles were doing 80 in a 60 zone, the risk of a casualty crash was about 30 times what it was if they were doing the speed limit. And that’s exactly what we’d expect. If you’re really hooning, you’ve got a bigger likelihood of having a crash.

But the very interesting finding was that at 65 in a 60 zone the risk was double what it normally is. And double a not very big risk is still not a huge risk, but I’m going to come back to why that matters a little later on.

Now the second method in this real world science is looking at places where the speed limits have either gone up or down. And I’m going to start at the bottom there with Rune Elvik’s what we call a meta-analysis, where you look at all of the literature on a particular topic. And what Elvik – who’s a famous Norwegian transport economist – did was take all of the studies of the impacts and speed limit changes, he ruled out all the ones that had serious scientific flaws, and then examined the ones that were left. And he found – it was about 95 percent of the studies – if the speed limit went down, casualty crashes came down, if the speed limit went up, casualty crashes went up.

And there are other examples, this time from Victoria. In the Hume Highway, at one stage 15/20 years ago now it was raised from 100 to 120, and the casualty crashes went up enormously. And then it was dropped again because of that, and down they came again.

Same thing happened when urban speed limits were lowered from 60 to 50 in residential streets in Melbourne. A big decrease in casualty crashes, particularly the ones you’d expect – pedestrians, cyclists, all of the vulnerable road users.

The US interstate one is extremely interesting. In the US during the first oil crisis in the 1970s, the federal government reduced speed limits on US interstate highways as a fuel saving measure. And they saved a lot of fuel, but they also saved a lot of lives. And so when the fuel crisis was over they retained the lower speed limit as a safety measure and kept reaping the benefits, until a lot of states objected to the federal government telling them what speed limits they had to set. And so various states started to increase the limits, and in those states that did, up went the casualty crashes again.

Now there’s kind of a rule of thumb that’s come out of that that says if you get a five percent decrease in average speed you can get approximately a ten percent decrease in all injury crashes, and a bigger decrease in fatal crashes. So that’s the kind of rule of thumb.

Now the third method, which is worth a quick look, is looking at roads of differing engineering standards. And in the UK what they did was they took three classes of rural roads – low standard rural roads, medium standard and high standard ones – went out and measured on several examples of each standard of road the prevailing speed distributions, and then had a look at how that tied in with the casualty crash records of those standards of road. And again within whether it was a low standard road or a high standard road, the ones that had the higher average travel speeds had the higher casualty crash frequencies.

So really what that’s saying – forgetting the police estimates – there are three different scientific methods that come up with exactly the same result. So if the science is so clear, why is speed moderation so controversial as a measure?

Well the first reason is the way traditionally we’ve set speed limits, and along with that the way we’ve handled enforcement over many, many, many decades. Historically speed limits were set as 85th percentile. Now what that means is simply you go out, you measure the speeds that people are travelling at and you – excuse me one second – you measure the speed that people are travelling at, and the speed at which 85 percent of them are at or below, you say that seems a reasonable estimate of the limit we ought to have. The assumption is that drivers generally know what’s safe. Now I’m not sure we want to buy into that assumption, but be that as it may, the second thing that’s really important is that are the posted limits really seen as limits.

Now the police historically and for decade after decade had an enforcement tolerance of approximately ten percent or ten kilometres an hour.

And the reason for that was twofold. First the old mechanical speedos had to be calibrated within plus or minus ten percent for their accuracy, and secondly as speed cameras came in they had to be calibrated plus or minus three kilometres an hour. So if you take a 60 kilometre an hour zone and you say okay, worst case the speedo’s out ten percent, well they ought to be allowed 66. And let’s worst case the camera is three kilometres an hour out, well that gets to 69, so we better not enforce below 70. And that’s precisely what happened across pretty much all of the speed limits. Sort of ten kilometres an hour or ten percent.

And what that really meant – and I’m going to come back to this later on as well – is that the limit was not seen as a limit, and that’s a fundamental problem. The second reason that it’s a very controversial issue is the vehicle design and the way it’s advertised. Now it’s really interesting that vehicles have become safer and safer things to have crashes in, engines that go under the passenger compartment in the event of a head on crash, airbags, seatbelts, collapsible steering columns and so on and so on. But there is not one vehicle design rule that relates to top speed capability or acceleration performance. Not one.

There’s a picture there of a speedometer that goes to 260. So about half of the meter provided to us as drivers is to enable us to gauge the degree of our illegality in our driving, which is sort of bizarre I think. And the fancier the vehicle you buy – if you buy a really good sports model you’ll see it goes out to 300 kilometres an hour. And of course we’ve traditionally advertised vehicles on power and performance and paraded this as the greatest thing that a young man must have. So we’ve got that really working against us as well.

And in setting our speed limits, just look at the variety in the standards of these roads, all of which have the default speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour. So whether it’s got a broken shoulder or no shoulder, edge lining or no edge lining, trees right on the edge of the road or clear roadsides, they all have much the same default speed limit. So we have not matched the speed limits to the level of safety built into the road, and that’s a point I will make over and again before I finish.

And then the critical part of this controversy is that most folk exceed the speed limit by small amounts nearly every time they get out there, and nothing bad happens. In other words our everyday experience is that we don’t get into trouble. And this is where our dilemma comes in to a very sharp focus.

Well one of the rules of preventative medicine is that these things are about probabilities, not certainties. So does everyone who smokes get lung cancer? Does everyone who’s obese get heart disease? No. Does everyone who exceeds the speed limit crash? No. And you can do the reverse of every one of those too. Is everyone who gets lung cancer a smoker? No. It’s about risk.

And so what we’ve got in reality is exactly this. There are not very many people who speed at huge margins over the speed limit. They are a higher extreme risk, because we saw from the Adelaide research anything up to 30 times for 30 k’s over the limit. So it’s a dramatic safety problem, and when a crash occurs with someone doing that speed, we see it on the television every night, we see it in the newspapers every day. So it always gets the attention. It’s dramatic. But it’s still relatively rare. But there’s a very large number of people who are doing low range speeding offences, and the risk, it may only be two or three times what it is if you’re at the limit, but because it’s happening all of the time it becomes a very significant safety problem.

Now the interesting thing about taking a health prevention view of road safety is that you soon realise that where you have a small risk spread across an entire population, you have to get the population to change to prevent the bad outcomes that you don’t want. An example from outside the road safety field is inoculation of children. Now that’s become quite a controversial issue at the moment too. Everyone used to inoculate against things like whooping cough and the like, and these childhood diseases basically disappeared. Now people are questioning whether they have the right to not worry about anybody else but just take the very small risk that their own child might have an adverse reaction, and as the inoculation rates drop, so these diseases are beginning to reappear.

So back into our field, just take a look at why we’ve set .05 as our blood alcohol limit for drink driving. Well the same kind of case control research that has been done with the speeding as in Adelaide has been done several times in different countries around alcohol. At what point does alcohol start to seriously affect your performance on the road? And the answer is at .05 the risk of a crash is about double what it was if you had no alcohol at all. So at double, the government has said ‘Well it’s about time we take some role in protecting people’. So it’s kind of similar.

Why do we do random breath testing? Traditionally police used to sit outside the pubs, they’d look at people coming out, they’d watch the ones that staggered and couldn’t get the keys in the car door. They’d wait until they started driving, then they’d pull them over, and invariably they got a 100 percent hit rate. They could pick the drunks, but it wasn’t reducing the incidents of drink driving. But by going to enormous numbers of tests – I mean hundreds of thousands a year – then the risk of apprehension goes up, and although you don’t catch as many, you deter a lot more. So this is a health prevention approach.

Now I’ve already mentioned that when you’ve got a small risk very widespread, as we do with low level speeding – it is a small risk. It’s greater than if you were at the limit, but it’s relatively small – we have to change behaviours of the population. Now that’s easy when the cost to the individual is small. We all wear our seatbelts, but I wonder how many people listening in now can say honestly ‘My seatbelt has saved my life’.

We all wear our motorcycle helmets. We all – well, not all. There’s a little group of early teenage males who think it’s not cool – wear our bicycle helmets. Now the personal cost for all of these preventative measures is relatively small. But goodness, when we find a personal cost or what we assume is a personal cost, then we fight like the very dickens. And low level speeding is just the classic example Everyone says ‘I’m running late. I hate this business of sitting behind the old fella in front with his hat on in his Volvo’. With congestion increasing all the time, we just don’t want to stop any time we – we want to stop as few times as possible. And with all of those years and years of enforcement tolerances, the concept of a limit has just disappeared from speed limit setting.

So this is the dilemma we’ve got. We know it’s a problem. We can’t get people to come on our side and help change it. So what are our tools for speed moderation? If it’s so important, what can we get? Well plenty of local area traffic management is available, slow points and the like. Intersection design is really, really helpful. Roundabouts are great, because you have to slow down to go around them. There are other options available which we haven’t got to time to go into. Roadside management, getting sealed shoulders and the like, and of course the speed limits themselves.

What we’re really trying to do with the infrastructure is to match the speed to the level of safety built into the infrastructure. If you’re going to have a high speed road, then you have to have a high level of safety built in. You have to have sealed shoulders. You have to have protected roadsides. So I’m not opposed to high speed roads. I have no problem with 130/140 if the road is built for that. If you eliminate intersections and grades so you can’t have intersection collisions, you have flyovers or fly-unders, if you can’t hit a tree or a bridge abutment because all the roadsides are protected, you can have a high speed road. No problem.

Urban areas much more difficult because you’re sharing the roads with cyclists and pedestrians, and so you have to do other things, and particularly you have to have limits. But it is all about matching the speed limits to the infrastructure, and we’ve got that pretty wrong at the moment.

The vehicles – well the vehicles are really critical in this area, and as I said earlier there is not a single vehicle design rule that has anything to do with controlling top speed capability, acceleration performance and the like. The promising signs are now what’s called intelligent speed adaptation, where the vehicle can either alert you when you’re over the speed limit as a warning system, or it can actually take control and apply the brakes to keep you down below the speed limit. We’re going to see more and more of this. I find it really ironic that the manufacturers are now starting to do that but are not yet changing the design of the speedometer and the like. So kind of interesting stuff.

And of course that brings us to enforcement. It would be wonderful if we didn’t have to do the enforcement, if we had all of our roads matched for safety to the levels that people complied with, but we don’t. And in fact as a holding measure we really depend on enforcement, which brings us to the cameras which are alleged to be revenue raising and all of that, which is all very sad. But you need – in the same way as random breath testing, you need a very high level of enforcement and you need minimal tolerances. Now you need a lot of education as well to support that, and I think we’re slowly getting there. If you do a survey of motorists, you’ll find a very high percentage support automatic enforcement for speed.

You won’t hear that from the shock jocks on the radio, but you will hear it from most of the population. So I think we are winning.

So this whole thing is really not rocket science. The research is abundantly clear. Not only does impact speed affect the amount of injury, the speed, where it exceeds the level of protection provided by the roadside, does seriously increase crash risk. The preventative medicine principles are clear. We’ve got to change the population behaviour, and that’s our problem. We have a disjoint between what people believe and what we need them to do. So we need to tackle all of those obstacles. We really do need social change. I think companies are going to have a big role in this, because they can drive it from a fleet perspective and that driving will flow through to their drivers when they’re in their family cars and to their kids and their partners and so on.

So that’s it. I’m happy to deal with such questions as we might have.

**Angela Racz:**

Great. Thank you Ian. And actually that’s a good point. We have run a number of webinars actually from various – Simons and so forth all talking about their safety initiatives within their fleets as well. So if anyone is interested to listen to any of those and catch up, they’re available on both the ARRB and the NRSPP websites which we can send you the details for later.

**Jerome Carslake:**

So I guess as a first sort of question Ian, how would you make the case to an organisation who sits there and goes ‘Look, I’m willing to let those sort of things slide a little bit, because the person that’s pushing those limits, just going over a little bit all the time, that’s my best seller. That’s the person that’s really making the runs for me. That’s my top marketer. I know they want to get out there, they want to get from A to B as fast as possible’? How do I engage and talk to them?

**Ian Johnson:**

I think there are a couple of ways Jerome. The first one is getting people to understand that their travel speed is not actually reducing their journey time, or if it is it’s marginal. So I think that’s the first thing. The sales rep that speeds from client to client so he can get more clients in the day is not necessarily getting more clients in the day.

The difference is really astonishing. Simons Nationwide Transport have limited their trucks to 90 kilometres an hour for their long distance journeys, and they found if you’re complying with the fatigue management rules of a 15 minute break every two hours, they’re finding that the increase in time between Melbourne and Sydney is really very small.

Many years ago I was involved in – there was an attempt to change the national uniform traffic code from an urban speed limit of 60 to 50, and we computed the proportion of time spent on local residential streets that would be affected by this change, and the answer was on average about nine seconds per journey. And to us that seemed negligible, but Treasury, bless them, said there are squillions of trips and squillions times nine seconds is a lot of time. And at so many dollars per hour, that makes it uneconomic. Now I just think that becomes a nonsense argument, because I can’t add my nine seconds to your nine seconds, to Angela’s nine seconds to get extra productivity. So I think that’s the first point.

The second one is I think much the same as other areas of occ health and safety, a company that encourages speeding runs a serious risk when that speeding results in a crash of being found liable. So I think that’s the other aspect that needs to be thought of.

**Jerome Carslake:**

Thanks for that Ian. That was a great answer. And I guess just to draw on – Paul’s raised a good question here. It sort of just draws on this a bit further.

*Q: Is there any studies around the cost savings which can be achieved through driving at posted speed limits and to the relevant conditions?*

**Ian Johnson:**

Well I’ll tackle the second bit first. The relevant conditions is kind of an interesting one. You do find that if it’s raining, especially if it’s raining heavily, people do slow down. So yeah, people are aware. It means that they’ll go from a little bit over the limit to a little bit under. So that’s a good thing. And often people argue let’s get folk to drive to the conditions, but most people don’t know what that means unless the weather is obviously bad or the congestion is so bad you can’t go fast anyway.

Now the interesting thing about the Monash Freeway in Melbourne – and I’m not sure how many of our participants are familiar with it – it was undergoing some major reconstruction, and so the speed limit was lowered from 100 to 80. And when all the work was finished the 80 was retained, not as a safety measure initially, but as a congestion management measure. Because it was found that at 80 kilometres an hour the traffic flow was much more consistent and much more predictable. And the thing about a diverse traffic flow with lots of people going fast and some people going relatively slow, was you do tend to have a lot of congestion.

So there is a real argument for decreasing congestion through decreased speed limits. It sounds bizarre, but it’s true.

**Jerome Carslake:**

That would have the Finance and Productivity Commission quite fascinated I would think. Another sort of good question here, and this is from Kelly, and this always is one of the tough topics.

*Q: How do you get the speeders to use technology like ISA, and research shows that those who are interested in using it are the really hard ones to get to uptake it?*

**Ian Johnson:**

Yeah. That’s absolutely true. Well again in two parts. If you’re talking about companies and companies with fleets and companies that use someone else’s fleet to do their business, you can set conditions as part of the contract. So you can have a big influence that way. That’s at the kind of company level.

At the individual level there are people who are suggesting that in the same way that convicted drink drivers have to have an alcohol ignition interlock fitted, convicted recidivist speeders may have to have a speed control device fitted. So that’s one thing that’s not happening yet, but it’s one thing that’s certainly being looked at.

And many jurisdictions in Australia now have what they call hoon legislation. So if someone’s caught – I forget whether it’s twice – they can have their car confiscated for 24 hours or more, depending on the amount of speeding.

So there are things that are being done. I think they’re fairly blunt instruments at the moment, and I think we’re going to do a lot better with a massive effort to change the way people think about this problem.

**Jerome Carslake:**

And that sort of I guess answers the question Nathan raised about that as well, really around considering ways of limiting speed in cars and motorcycles such as is being done with heavy vehicles. That hasn’t been trialled I gather, which you sort of just pointed to then.

**Ian Johnson:**

Yes. With the changes in technology, yes it’s absolutely possible to control the top speed of vehicles. And the ISA systems – I meant the intelligent speed adaptation – can be set so that – in fact if you have an interactive system where the vehicle can talk to the infrastructure, so the speed limit sign is sending a signal to the vehicle – and that’s not out of the ordinary. That happens now. Ambulances trigger traffic lights and buses trigger traffic lights and the like. So these things can talk to each other, tell you the speed limit you’re in and set the vehicle to not exceed it. It’s quite possible.

The big issue at the moment is if only a few percent of the vehicles are so fitted, then the question is how do you manage the flows when other people are doing other things. But yes, technologically I think we’re going to approach it quite effectively and in the relatively near future.

**Jerome Carslake:**

And I guess this is sort of drawing on the technology angle again, from David.

*Q: Has any research on the use of cruise control for voluntary speed regulation been conducted?*

**Ian Johnson:**

Yes, and the best thing about – well, a lot of people anecdotally use cruise control as their best measure against a speeding ticket. So they set it. Obviously rural roads are the better one, because urban roads it’s much more difficult to set it on cruise control. But there is now intelligent cruise control where you set the limit you want and the vehicle does that limit whenever it can. So if it’s coming up to a vehicle ahead that’s going more slowly, it will apply the brakes and will come down to the speed of the vehicle ahead. And when it’s clear to do so it will accelerate again up to that limit.

Now what proportion of the vehicle fleet has got that at the moment? It’s not very high, but it will be within a relatively small time.

**Jerome Carslake:**

Thanks for that Ian. And just another question that pops up to me quite often when I present and talk at different sort of functions. I always get the question about speed going – and I know you sort of mentioned this earlier – is over in Europe, especially in Germany you have the autobahns. Do we have anything equivalent to that in Australia where we could sort of open it up and have that sort of experience that occurs over in Europe?

**Ian Johnson:**

Well as I said earlier, you simply need to match the level of infrastructure safety that’s built in to the speed limit. If you want autobahn speeds, then build autobahns. An autobahn has no intersections of grade. So the intersecting roads are going over or under. Now we have that on a lot of freeways, but all of the roadsides are protected. So it’s about building – and incidentally, a lot of German autobahns now have speed limits, simply because while their crash rate is normally low, if you get a heavy fog or something and you have a crash, they’re mighty pile ups because you’ve got so many vehicles going so fast that are unable to react in time.

So yeah, the answer is quite simple. If you want high speed roads you have got to build them to have all of the protection you need. We’ve just had the F1 races in Melbourne. There was a crash at 300 kilometres an hour and the driver walked away. Now that’s because the infrastructure of the racetrack and the safety built into the race car are such that it will tolerate – as I said right at the outset, it’s about managing kinetic energy. Now we could do that, but they’re going to be very funny roads and very funny cars that we’re in.

**Jerome Carslake:**

Thank you very much Ian. Do we have any other questions at all?

**Angela Racz:**

We’ll open it up, give our wonderful listeners another opportunity to send their questions through in case anything does pop to mind. And we did have the presenter’s details on one of the slides earlier which anyone accessing this presentation again can have a look at. And I’m sure he’d be more than happy to speak with anyone if there are any follow up questions after this webinar.

We’ve had a question relating to the recording of today’s session. So just to reiterate, this session has been recorded and will be made available to all of yourselves and your colleagues who wish to listen back at a later time. So please do keep an eye on your emails and we’ll send that through shortly.

**Jerome Carslake:**

I guess one sort of question here Ian is we’ve spoken about ISA a bit, intelligent speed adaptation. How much does that sort of cost? What sort of – any idea on that at all? No. I’m getting a face here.

**Ian Johnson:**

No. I don’t know the precise number. But if you build it in, as a number of manufacturers are now starting to do, it’s the old story. Any vehicle innovation when it first comes in is reasonably high cost, but when you’re tooled up for it and it’s across the entire range, it’s a very small add on. But the precise number? No. I’m sorry. I can’t tell you.

**Angela Racz:**

If anyone does have any insight on that, feel free to type on through in the questions box and we’ll read that out.

We’ve had a lovely comment here from an Ian Foggs who says ‘Thanks Ian. I enjoyed the webinar, and it’s always a pleasure to hear you speak’.

So there you go. I hope everyone else has felt the same.

Kelly’s commented here. ‘Jerome, you call me on ISA costs’. Thanks Kelly. We might do that.

**Jerome Carslake:**

We will.

**Angela Racz:**

Alright. Ian it’s been an absolute pleasure having you with us today, so thank you so much for coming in and joining us in the studio. It was definitely a pleasure hearing you speak, and you’re most welcome to join us in the webinar studio at any time that you like.

We hope our audience has enjoyed the presentation also. And upon us closing down this webinar, you will get a short feedback survey pop up on your screen. So it’s just a few short questions and we’d love to hear what you think about how we went today.

Thank you also to Jerome for your good work in managing not only the program, but for also your moderator extraordinaire capabilities. So lovely working with you as always.

Hope to see you all again at our next webinar.

**Jerome Carslake:**

Hang on. We have here:

*Q: Have we time for one more question?*

Yes Karen. Certainly. Fire on through.

**Angela Racz:**

Alright. Well we’ll give Karen a moment to type that through, and thank you in fact to everyone who’s typed through questions today. It’s been great to see everyone get so involved in the topic.

It might be a long question that Karen has there, but we’ll leave it open for a moment longer.

Actually if it’s not too much trouble Ian, we’ll flick it back to your slide at the beginning of the presentation in case anyone does wish to speak to you at a later time. Then they know exactly who to contact.

**Jerome Carslake:**

There we go. So Karen’s question has come through here.

*Q: Please comment on the role of parking on local roads in relation to reducing local area speeding.*

**Ian Johnson:**

A fascinating question.

Most councils now do try and control speeding during peak times, but that’s about increasing the capacity of the local roads, less about the local area speeding.

One of the things we learned a long time ago was that if you design – and this comes back to this whole issue about matching speeds to the infrastructure – if you’ve got a wide, straight, local road, the speed will be much higher than on a narrow local road with parked cars on either side. And that’s kind of interesting.

And the Dutch have developed a thing, what they call the woonerf, which is really turning the local roads, the residential streets, into clear low traffic zones. So they’re quite happy to put trees in concrete boxes in the middle of local roads because it forces everyone to slow down. So it’s about saying there are roads in which you live, and we’re going to make them really – they’re obviously low speed roads. And there are roads that get you from suburb to suburb and we’re going to provide for them, and there are roads that get you from city to city and we’re quite happy to make those high speed roads. So I think the Dutch are trying to get to just those three qualities of road. Now can they do it overnight? No. But that’s their objective.

**Jerome Carslake:**

Thank you Ian. If we can squeeze maybe two more minutes in, Karen’s given a second question through during this.

*Q: How do we go about getting the community to accept the additional cost of infrastructure to allow speeds that the community want?*

**Ian Johnson:**

Well I think the first thing is to get the community to understand what the speeding issue is really about. And I repeat again I’m not opposed to high speed roads. You’ve just simply got to build them. Now while the community still believes that it’s really the hoons who are the main problem, we’re not going to get extra expenditure. I’ve talked to so many road authority engineers who say ‘Well, what more can we do? What is the point in shifting all the utility poles so that nobody can hit them, because the hoons are still out there. They’re still going to do all these bad things’.

So you’ll only get the money for the infrastructure, like you only get the money for anything else, if the community yells at the government and saying ‘That’s what we demand’. That’s how the world works. If the community demands something, the politicians tend to listen. And nobody is demanding that we spend more money on infrastructure in order that we can go faster.

**Angela Racz:**

Yep. Fair enough. Alright. Well thank you very much Karen for getting those last minute questions through. It’s been very insightful to hear what Ian had to say about those, so thank you again.

Alright. Then on that note we will say our goodbyes once again, and thank you for joining us this afternoon. Hope to see you again soon. Bye bye.

[End of Transcript]