

Terms of Reference

Special Interest Group on Low Volume Roads

Funding Heavy Vehicle Impacts

Purpose

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to specify the objectives, roles and responsibilities of a Working Group established to address issues peculiar to low volume roads and the impacts of intensive heavy vehicle activity on such roads.

Introduction

Nationally consistent policy advice for local roads is complementary to the philosophy of the One Network Road Classification system and Customer Levels of Service initiative. A working group appears to be the best means to address this by identifying the scope of the problems affecting low volume roads and developing such guidelines as are needed.

Calls for guidance on issues relating to forestry, agricultural vehicles and heavy vehicles on rural or low volume roads have been repeated for several years. In particular, there is a recognised need for a consistent best practice response to accelerated pavement consumption from forestry harvesting.

Ruapehu, Wairoa, Wanganui and Far North District Councils have all initiated investigations into policy development independently and a consistent approach nationally is desirable for planning investment in the forestry and rural sectors. Ruapehu has engaged with the Forest Owners' Group executive, Federated Farmers, and the Road Transport Association in a series of workshops and all have agreed that a consistent funding policy approach across transport networks is desirable. Other North Island members have raised related issues.

Although significant research has been done on forest harvesting effects on rural roads and the best practice response, additional research is needed to ascertain whether similar mechanisms might be put in place for other sources of heavy vehicle impacts on low volume roads, such as dairy conversions or quarrying, or whether available mechanisms are sufficient.

There is clearly a need to have robust and transparent processes to quantify the cost of these effects, agreed equitable mechanisms to respond to this cost and guidelines developed that allow for a nationally consistent application of funding mechanisms to provide greater certainty in investment decisions for both road controlling authorities and forestry investors.

Dust

An effect of increased traffic on low volume roads is dust. Low volume roads tend to be unsealed and traffic on these roads causes dust. Dust creates safety and health hazards for road users and those living or working nearby, and economic costs from lost productivity of land, livestock, vehicles and people, increased visits to doctors, increased hospital admissions and increased mortality.

Dust ranges in size from approximately 100 microns in diameter to less than 1 micron in diameter. Any airborne particle of 10 microns or less is regarded as capable of penetrating the air passages into the lungs. The health effects include coughs, asthma symptoms, bronchitis and death. There is also a link between exposure to dust and an increased risk of stroke.

In considering responses to dust, practitioners need to be fully aware of the full cost of dust and be able to mitigate it appropriately.

Objective

The objective of the Working Group is to:

- respond to issues that particularly affect low volume roads with guidance as appropriate.

Responsibilities

The Working Group will be responsible for:

- developing national guidelines on best practice for practitioners to plan investment to meet the future freight demand on low volume roads;
- developing national guidelines on best practice for practitioners to plan investment to mitigate the health, safety, social and economic costs of dust from unsealed low volume roads.

Tasks

The Working Group will:

1. Identify the likely freight demand on low volume roads in light of the Government's Business Growth Agenda for primary industries.
2. Provide a robust and transparent process to identify the cost impact of forestry and other intensive heavy vehicle activities on low volume roads
3. Determine an equitable mechanism to reflect the cost impacts of heavy vehicle activities on low volume roads.
4. Develop national guidelines on the best practice response to the future impacts of heavy vehicle activities on LVR that allow appropriate planning of investment by both road controlling authorities and primary sector investors, and provide all parties with greater certainty and consistency.

5. Identify the social, economic, health and safety impacts of dust from low volume roads.
6. Develop national guidelines on best practice for practitioners to plan investment to mitigate the health, safety, social and economic costs of dust from unsealed low volume roads.

Title

The Working Group will be the Special Interest Group on Low Volume Roads.

Representation

The Special Interest Group will comprise road controlling authorities with an interest in the impact of heavy vehicle activities on LVR. The following authorities will be represented:

- Wairoa District Council
- Whanganui District Council
- Ruapehu District Council
- Whakatane District Council
- Whangarei District Council
- Kaipara District Council
- Waikato District Council
- South Taranaki District Council
- Southland District Council
- Far North District Council
- Tasman District Council
- Marlborough Roads
- Auckland Transport
- New Zealand Transport Agency

The Group will liaise as necessary with key sector representative groups with an interest in the impact of forestry harvesting, dairy conversion, quarrying or other intensive heavy vehicle activities on LVR, which will include:

- Road Transport Forum
- NZ Forest Owners Association
- Federated Farmers
- Local Government NZ
- Aggregate and Quarry Association
- NZ Farm Forest Association
- Dairy Companies Association NZ
- Heavy Haulage Association

Meetings

Meetings of the Group will be held at intervals based on the needs of the project and the sector.

Group members will be asked to meet incidental costs of membership. Budget to assist with costs of travel will be available, but it is generally assumed that each member will cover a reasonable level of such costs.

It is expected that the Group will hold one national workshop and up to three meetings of the working group each year.

Term

It is expected that the Working Group will require a term of five years to deliver national guidelines on planning investment to fund accelerated pavement consumption of LVR through the impacts of intensive heavy vehicle activities.

Guidance on best practice in mitigating road dust is also expected to be delivered within five years, with a need for continuing review of trials of innovative solutions.

Convenor

Jamie Cox, Wairoa District Council.

Members

Warren Furner (Ruapehu), Rui Leitao (Whanganui), Martin Taylor (Whakatane), Jeff Devine (Whangarei), Henri van Zyl (Kaipara), Wayne Furlong (Waikato), Joe Bourque (Southland), Vincent Lim (South Taranaki), Steve Murrin (Marlborough Roads), Jamie McPherson (Tasman), Peter Scott (Auckland Transport), Murray Gimblett (NZ Transport Agency).

Budget

Activities will be funded from a separate budget. Convenor and one other member will sign off invoices for payment from this budget.

Administration

The Group will be supported by the Road Controlling Authorities Forum (NZ) and report to the Research and Guidelines Steering Group. The Research and Guidelines Steering Group will provide administrative support through Wayne Newman.