SCHOOL SPEED ZONES IN CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Consult with all schools in the Council area regarding a proposed reduction in standardised school speed zones from 2 hours morning and afternoon to either:

   a) 1.5 hour morning and afternoon, or
   b) 1 hour morning and afternoon, or
   c) 1.5 hours in the morning and 1 hour in the afternoon.

2. Subject to the outcomes of the above consultation, commence discussions with the Department of Transport and Main Roads with a view to making changes to the school speed zones for the commencement of term 1 in 2020 and provide a report back to Council on the outcomes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

School speed zone times are currently set across the Council area at two hours in the morning (7 - 9am) and two hours in the afternoon (2 - 4pm). Council has requested that Officers review the options available for reducing the school speed zone times.

This report outlines the infrastructure and management actions that can be implemented to improve safety in and around schools, including school speed zones, and outlines the process required to enable a change in school speed zone times to be approved by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).

BACKGROUND:

Council at the October 9 Ordinary meeting resolved the following:

   That Council Officers review advice from Department of Transport and Main Roads referring to different time zones existing across the State in relation to school crossing times which range from 2 hours to 1 hour, and at varying times, and report back to Council as to what might be negotiated with TMR.

Traffic conditions in and around schools are complex for both motorists and school children due to the concentrated traffic and pedestrian movements in short periods of time at the start and end of the school day. This typically lasts 30 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon. In addition, school children can be impulsive, unpredictable, and inexperienced in and around traffic.
Guidance for speed controls in and around schools is provided in the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) Part 4. TMR have also produced a supplement titled *Speed Limits and Speed Management (2008 – revised 2018)* that provides solutions to improve safety at schools. These include the following infrastructure and management actions:

1. Provision of school pedestrian facilities
2. Supervision of school pedestrian crossings – typically for 1-hour morning and afternoon
3. Provision of off-street stop-drop-and-go facilities
4. Off-street parking facilities for cars and buses
5. School cyclist facilities
6. School warning signs including flashing lights
7. School speed zones.

According to TMR, school speed zone times were standardised in South East Queensland (SEQ) Councils to help motorists remember when to slow down when travelling past a school, and also to provide increased safety for school children and others attending a school. The mandatory school zones times in SEQ are 7 – 9 am and 2 – 4 pm.

There is an application process where Councils can request TMR approve a variation to the standard 2-hour school speed zones. The process uses a standardised form as shown in Attachment 1.

There are a number of Councils outside of SEQ that have applied for variations (reduction in hours) to the standard school zones times as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School speed zone</th>
<th>Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.30 – 9am and 2.30 to 4pm</td>
<td>Banana Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barcaldine Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bundaberg Regional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gladstone Regional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Burnett Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rockhampton Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30 – 9am and 2.00 to 4pm</td>
<td>Carpentaria Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Isa City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weipa Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30 – 9.30am and 2.30 to 4pm</td>
<td>North Burnett Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 9am and 2.30 – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Burdekin Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hinchinbrook Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mackay Regional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Townsville City*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whitsunday Regional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At least four schools in Townsville have extended hours above the 1 hour in the pm.*
COMMENT:

Council last reviewed the school zone matter in 2015 when a letter was sent to 36 School Principals requesting feedback on a proposal for a one-hour school speed zone trial between 7.30 – 8.30am and 2.30 – 3.30pm. The intent of the trial was to gauge the impact of reduced times on traffic flow, and to improve compliance with speed limits. Of the 36 schools, 28 either supported the trial or supported with some changes (eg 1.5 hours in the morning peak). Four schools objected to the trial.

Issues raised at the time by the schools include:

- Perceived reduced road safety
- General safety of children
- Catering for late arrivals
- Minimal traffic impacts for some schools
- Varying school start / finish times
- Activities before and after school hours
- Before and after school care.

The intent is to have consistent school speed zones across the whole Council area. School start times vary with some commencing as early as 8:10am but no later than 9am, and finishing between 2.30pm and 3.15pm. Based on these varied start times, an hour speed zone in the morning may suit most schools (say 8:15 to 9:15am) but 1.5 hours may be more appropriate for others. In the afternoon, it appears that a 1-hour speed zone would also suit most schools.

The following options for reduced speed zones could be proposed to schools for their feedback:

a) 1.5 hours morning and afternoon, or  
b) 1 hour morning and afternoon, or  
c) 1.5 hours in the morning and 1 hour in the afternoon.

Based on the situation in Townsville where school speed zones are 1-hour with the exception of four schools, it may be possible to have the majority of schools at 1-hour and 1.5-hours for the few that this does not suit.

The process for gaining approval from TMR for reduced school speed zones will include consultation with all schools across the Cairns Regional Council area. Further, a risk assessment will need to be undertaken at all schools, and assessments made on potential traffic flow improvements as a result of reduced school speed zone times.
**OPTIONS:**

The following options are proposed for consideration by Council:

Option 1

That Council:

1. Consult with all schools in the Council area regarding proposed reduction in school speed zones from 2 hours morning and afternoon to either:
   
   a) 1.5 hours morning and afternoon, or  
   b) 1 hour morning and afternoon, or  
   c) 1.5 hours in the morning and 1 hour in the afternoon.

2. Subject to the outcomes of the above consultation, commence discussions with TMR for making changes to the school speed zones for the commencement of term 1 in 2020.

Option 2

That Council not commence consultation with schools at this time.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

Risk Management:

A risk assessment will need to be undertaken at all schools in order to support an application to TMR.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Should a change in school speed zone times be adopted, Council will need to replace speed signs and undertake an education campaign. There will be a minor impact on operational budgets as a result.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

This matter relates to Strategic Goal number 3 – Liveability - A safe and secure city that is easy to live in and connected to the world.

Statutory:

The Queensland MUTCD and its supplements, within the meaning of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*, contains the design of, and the methods, standards and procedures in relation to every sign, signal, marking, light or device, installed on a road.

Information contained in the Queensland MUTCD supplements provide further guidance or requirements under the relevant Queensland MUTCD clauses.
CONSULTATION:

TMR has been consulted with regard to school speeds zones across the State and the process for applying for variations to the standard 2 hours times morning and afternoon. As stated in the body of the report, the process for gaining approval from TMR for reduced school speed zone times will include consultation with all schools across the Cairns Regional Council area.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Application for Extension of School Speed Zone Time

Bruce Gardiner
General Manager Infrastructure Services
## Application for Extension of School Speed Zone Time

### School Details
- **Full name of school**
- **School address**
- **Postcode**
- **In which local government area is this school located?**
- **In which Department of Transport & Main Roads Region is this school located?**
- **Name of the person making this application? (please PRINT)**
- **Date**

### Proposed School Zone Time Details
- Please note:
- **School Zones mandated as**
  - **Mornings:** 7am to 9am and 12pm to 3pm
- **Afternoons:** 2pm to 4pm

1. **What are your local government’s school zone times?**
   - **Mornings:** am to am
   - **Afternoons:** pm to pm

2. **Why are the mandatory school zone times not suited to this school?**

3. **Are school children likely to be present on the road outside of the standard school zone times?**
   - **No**
   - **Yes**

4. **Have any other options been considered apart from extending the school zone times?**
   - **Yes**
   - **Please specify**

5. **What new school zone times are to be considered?**
   - **Mornings:** am to am
   - **Afternoons:** pm to pm

   **Note:** It is a mandatory requirement to install enhanced (flashing light) school zone signs in areas with extended school zone times.

   **Does the Road Authority agree to install enhanced school zone signs at this school?**
   - **No**
   - **Yes**

### School Zone Impact and Risk Details
- **6. Are there other schools on the same road as this school which will be affected by introducing new school zone times?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**
  - **Which schools?**

### Consultation details
- **7. Were all key stakeholders consulted?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**
  - **Please provide key stakeholder’s details**

### Road Authority Recommendation
- **Are the extended school zone times likely to have an impact on traffic management?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**
  - **In what way?**

- **Do you recommend the school zone times to be changed?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**
  - **What are the new school zone times to be?**

### Assessor’s Recommendation
- **Has this application been approved?**
  - **No**
  - **Yes**

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**Queensland Government**

**Road Authority Delegate’s name (please PRINT)**

**Road Authority Delegate’s signature**

**Date**

**Justification for decision**

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**Director (Safer Roads) name (please PRINT)**

**Director (Safer Roads) Signature**

**Date**

**Corporate Forms Area**

**Form F4855**

**V1 Oct 2011**