



South Australian Outback Roads Consultative Forum

Communiqué 02 – August 2024

The August meeting of the **South Australian Outback Roads Consultative Forum** was held online on 15 August 2024. In this meeting, presentations were provided covering road classifications and maps of roads regularly subject to closure, and key issues discussed included speed limits, road closures and road condition reporting.

Presentation

Mick Lorenz, Director Road Maintenance at the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, briefed the Forum members on the **classification** of primary, secondary, minor and access roads and the rationale for determining these classifications. Forum members noted the need for nuance in classifications, when a single classification may not be suitable for the entirety of a road.

Mick also addressed the issue of **road closures**, providing an Outback Weakest Links map of unsealed roads that are regularly subject to closure, and a graph of road closures over 2020-2023. A project is underway to measure the amount of time roads are closed and the speed at which they are reopened, in order to improve levels of service.

Updates

The Department provided updates on a range of ongoing projects:

- Members were provided with an update on the Department's asset management plan.
- The Department also shared some of the new technologies being considered for monitoring road usage and condition. For example, weekly updates of vehicle speed data can be used as an indication of road condition, and soil moisture contents measured from satellite can help to identify saturated pavements ahead of physical inspections and assist in targeting grading where sufficient moisture remains in the pavement.
- Progress regarding the Department's grading program was provided. A map and website should be publicly available in September showing wet and dry grading programs and minor works.
- **The Department relies on community members providing feedback on road conditions and are keen to receive road condition reports from the public; contact details are provided below.**

Issues

Forum members identified a range of issues to be addressed:

Speed limits through towns and on Outback roads came up for discussion in a number of contexts.

- An update was provided on the move to lower speed limits in Marree, Oodnadatta and William Creek. The Department has advised that an area speed limit of 40km/h in Marree and Oodnadatta is supported, while a recommended speed limit for William Creek is yet to be determined. Site inspections will be undertaken during September/October 2024.
- Both Blinman and Parachilna have requested reduced speed limits of 40km in their townships.
- Speed limits at different ends of key areas need to be aligned; e.g. there is confusion about the speed limits shown at different ends of the road through Parachilna Gorge.
- There was a suggestion to lower speed limits where extremely dusty conditions reduce visibility and cause a safety hazard.
- Differentiating between suitable speeds for heavy vehicles compared to light vehicles was also discussed.

Discussion of **road conditions** and **road closures** also raised a number of issues:

- Members in the Flinders Ranges noted lengthy delays between road issues being reported and action occurring, and that the response may not always be appropriate.
- Blanket closures of Bunyeroo, Brachina, Parachilna and Glass Gorge roads based on automated conditions assessment have raised concerns with locals who note they are often not consulted when roads are closed.
- There can also be inconsistency in road closure signage, e.g. one end of a road may have a closed sign but the other end doesn't.
- The speed of reopening a road is also a concern, especially when closure occurs over a weekend.

Get in Touch

The next meeting for the South Australian Outback Roads Consultative Forum will be held Wednesday 19 February 2025. To raise issues for the Forum's consideration and/or subscribe to the communiqué please email oca@sa.gov.au.

To Report Road Issues

Please report road issues to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport by email to DIT.North@sa.gov.au.