



PREMIER OF TASMANIA

Government response  
to petition  
tabled L. Hiscutt  
19 NOV 2020

*Walt*

*Wickers  
deputy clerk*



Mr D.T. Pearce  
Clerk of the Legislative Council  
Parliament of Tasmania  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear David

Thank you for your correspondence dated 25 August 2020 incorporating the e-petition presented by Hon Josh Willie MLC, concerning wildlife safety measures on Tasmanian roads.

The Tasmanian Government continues to work collaboratively with road owners and the community to identify and implement effective measures to better understand and reduce the impact of roadkill in Tasmania.

Importantly, road users share the responsibility with road owners to mitigate roadkill and can readily adopt the most effective known measures – greater driver awareness of animals on the road and reducing speed in high-risk areas and at higher-risk times of the day. This is why the Tasmanian Government consistently promotes the message of “slow down between dusk and dawn”. Static and electronic signage which reminds road users of their responsibility has been installed in many high-risk areas across the State.

Roadkill data, which can be used to identify hotspots and inform the development of effective additional mitigation measures, are collected through a range of means, including public reports through the *Save the Tasmanian Devil Program's* “Roadkill Tasmania” app. Data is uploaded onto the Government mapping tool – the LIST – where spatial, temporal and species trends can be analysed, and the results are used to inform mitigation efforts.

In recent times, the Department of State Growth has undertaken strategic assessments of roadkill data throughout the State Road network. This helps to better understand the issues in terms of its potential impacts on road safety, impacts on our native fauna including threatened species and potential impacts to the travelling public and tourists.

The Department of State Growth has advised me that it completes a flora and fauna assessment for all road projects. Mitigation measures are implemented on a case by case basis where a species-specific issue has been identified.

In addition to focusing on wildlife awareness on our roads, engineering and practical mitigation measures have been adopted in Tasmania, including:

- removal of roadkill to reduce risk of scavenging and further mortality;
- engineering safe crossing solutions for certain targeted locations and species, such as under-road culverts for little penguins on Bruny Island, and Green and Gold Frog culverts which are required for all road projects that are situated within Frog core habitat or where the frog has been detected nearby;
- in a number of locations, a lighter-coloured road seal is used to help improve the visibility of wildlife to drivers at night; and
- using other infrastructure-based solutions designed to deter wildlife, such as barriers, rumble strips and virtual fencing technology, which have been installed in a number of sites across the state. For example, fencing has been installed on the Sorell Causeway (between Midway Point and Sorell) to protect seagulls and other birds from vehicle traffic on the causeway.

While virtual fencing technology – which involves an active electronic warning system that detects vehicles approaching at night and emits an acoustic warning with flashing lights to alert wildlife – is a promising mitigation tool, trials have demonstrated that the effectiveness is variable, ranging from 50% reduction in roadkill to no reduction detected at all.

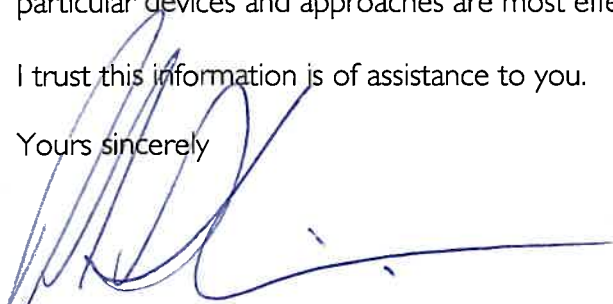
As part of the Department's strategic approach to roadkill, the use of virtual fencing devices on the Huon Highway has been trialed. Unfortunately, the results of this trial have shown that virtual fencing has not been effective at significantly reducing roadkill at this site.

Virtual fencing has significant purchase, installation and maintenance costs and as such, the Department is reviewing its potential applicability to the State road network in consultation with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment. A new trial site for this technology is currently being considered at a different location on the State road network. The effectiveness of virtual fencing depends upon a range of environmental, physical and other unique site characteristics and further assessment is required to identify the precise conditions where installation of the technology will be of most value.

It is acknowledged that roadkill is an issue in Tasmania and the Government is actively working to reduce its occurrence wherever possible. The Government will continue engaging with the research community and other stakeholders to refine our understanding of the conditions in which these particular devices and approaches are most effective.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gutwein', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Gutwein MP  
**Premier**