Open speed limits to remain and be extended

3 September 2015

Open speed limit zones will remain and be extended by a further 60 kilometres to allow one continuous open speed limit zone (excluding past road houses and through communities) on the Stuart Highway from north of Alice Springs to the Ali Curung rail overpass.

Releasing the Open Speed Trial Review summary report, Chief Minister Adam Giles said Territorians had acted responsibly since the trial began in February 2014 with a lower number of accidents in the trial sections and 130km/h zones compared to the five year average.

“The expansion of open speed limit zones is part of the Country Liberals’ commitment to give back responsibility to the individual,” he said.

“Driver safety has always been paramount during the trial and the sections of the Stuart Highway selected were chosen because they represented the least risk and lowest crash statistics.

“The traffic counter data shows there was only a small increase in driver speed in the trial sections, with 85% of drivers travelling between 133 and 139 kilometres an hour.

“The survey results indicate most drivers are driving to the conditions and believe the upgrades have improved the safety of the road.”

Of 11 crashes that occurred during the trial period on the trial stretches of the Stuart Highway, there were no fatalities. Of the one serious injury reported, alcohol and not wearing a seatbelt were identified as causal factors.

Minister for Transport Peter Chandler said the Territory Government would continue to take an evidence-based approach to speed limits on the Northern Territory’s major highways.

“The Northern Territory Government spent $4.4 million on the initial trial for a 204 kilometre stretch of the Stuart Highway between Alice Springs and Barrow Creek, and on a further 72 kilometre stretch from Barrow Creek when the trial was extended,” he said.
“With the success of the open speed limit trial to date, we are now investing $2.5 million dollars to upgrade the remaining 60 kilometre section between the two existing trial sections of the Stuart Highway.”

Mr Chandler said the upgrade works would start this month and include clearing trees away from the edge of the highway, widening curves, upgrading the guard rails at Barrow Creek bridge, stock fencing, and improving line marking, reflectors and signage.

“The Territory has a unique road network with long distances between towns and low traffic volume. With the expansion of open speed limit zones, we are putting responsibility on motorists to drive to their own capabilities and to the conditions of the road,” he said.

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[Open speed limit trial summary report](#)