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DRIVER BOOST WITH CRACKDOWN ON ROADWORK SPEED LIMITS

Motorists can expect better travel through roadwork zones on Victoria's arterial roads, highways and freeways thanks to a crackdown on inappropriate roadwork speed limits across the state.

Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas said while lower speed limits around roadworks were important to protect workers and provide safe conditions for motorists and crews, sometimes signage was left in place for too long, or when works were finished for the day.

"Across the state the Brumby Labor Government is delivering the largest ever program of road improvements and upgrades, thanks to the many projects underway as part of our \$38 billion *Victorian Transport Plan*," Mr Pallas said.

"As a result drivers are much more likely to be travelling through roadwork sites with reduced speed limits in place to provide safer conditions for them and for road crews.

"We understand the frustration of motorists driving through roadworks zones when there is no work going on, which is why we're introducing a Code of Practice that all contractors will have to adhere to or risk being excluded from bidding for future government-funded road projects.

"While recognising the need for roadwork speed limits, at times they are inappropriate for the type of works underway, are set out too far, or in some cases are left in place too long.

"We expect drivers to do the right thing when travelling through work zones, but it is just as important that contractors adjust or remove their speed limit signs in a timely manner."

The Traffic Management Code of Practice comes into play on 1 September, 2010, and includes:

- New measures requiring electronic message boards on long-term freeway work sites to advise drivers of the reason for lower speed limits;
- Only in exceptional circumstances will roadwork speed limits be set at more than 20km/h below the normal posted speed limit;
- Increased surveillance of work zones by VicRoads with greater scrutiny of contractors to ensure work hours and speed signing conform to traffic management plans;
- Where contractors are found failing to meet required standards, they will be excluded from bidding for future Victorian Government road projects; and
- Greater provision for cyclists and pedestrians around worksites where appropriate.

Mr Pallas said there were valid reasons where lower speed limits were in place with no works obvious, such as when traffic lanes are narrowed, where there is no line marking, or when trucks need to access work sites directly into fast-moving traffic.

"On projects such as the West Gate Bridge strengthening, works may be underway inside or under the bridge, requiring lower limits to minimise risks to workers and impacts on critical construction activities," he said.

The Government will work with VicRoads, local councils and power and water authorities to crack down on inappropriate speed signs and other measures at work sites affecting traffic.

Motorists can call VicRoads on 131170 to report hazards, faulty signs, or other road problems.