RURAL JUNCTION ACTIVE WARNING SIGNAGE (RJAWS)

ROAD SAFETY UPGRADE

Background

The McLaren Vale District was surveyed in the nineteenth century, involving a predominantly grid-based network of roads and land parcels.

Whilst this logical road network pattern provides us with good levels of accessibility, the resultant abundance of four-way junctions increases the potential for crashes when drivers are distracted or are unfamiliar with the area. This is particularly concerning in an area that relies on high levels of tourism.

The traditional approach to reduce the risk of drivers accidently running through Give Way or Stop signs has involved significant and costly works such as offsetting the side roads so that they are staggered or installing a roundabout. Unfortunately, it would take many years to fund and build any such upgrades throughout the McLaren Vale area.

Project Proposal

New technology has been developed involving intelligent warning systems that detect when vehicles are approaching an intersection. This system will detect when vehicles are approaching on a side road and activate flashing warning lights for drivers on the main road. This will increase their awareness of the potential for a collision and improve reaction times should a side road vehicle accidently run through the intersection.

In addition, if the system detects that a vehicle approaching on a side road is not slowing down for the intersection it will flashing lights on the Give Way or Stop sign to increase awareness of the presence of an intersection.

Whilst RJAWS are already in operation throughout South Australia, with one local example operating at the intersection of McLaren Flat Road and Bakers Gully Road at Kangarilla, these systems are built to very high standards as they are based on temporarily changing the enforceable speed limit on the major road when a side road vehicle is detected.

We propose to install a new system known as ‘RJAWS Lite’, which costs around two-thirds less than standard RJAWS. This innovative system uses wireless communication between signs and can be solar powered.

Therefore, it is possible to install RJAWS Lite as a potential interim solution at a problematic intersection, whilst an ultimate solution is identified, designed and constructed. Then the RJAWS Lite system can be re-installed at the next highest priority intersection at minimal cost.

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