



THE AUDIT OFFICE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Mr Paul Gibson MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



7 July 2010

Dear Mr Gibson

**Examination of Auditor-General's performance audit report
*Improving Road Safety - Heavy vehicles***

We have reviewed the submission provided by the Minister for Roads concerning the recommendations in the above report.

We are pleased that the Roads and Traffic Authority's response indicates that it is making progress in implementing the recommendations.

Please find attached our assessment of the extent to which each response addresses the issue raised in the original report, along with a comment on progress. We have not substantiated the submission.

I plan to forward a copy of this correspondence to the Minister for Roads and the Chief Executive of the Roads and Traffic Authority.

I am happy to provide any further assistance the Committee may need in completing its examination.

A T Whitfield
Acting Auditor-General

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**Audit Office response to PAC follow-up of performance audit:
Improving Road Safety - Heavy vehicles**

Recommendations in the Performance Audit

Auditor-General's Recommendations Report 187: Improving Road Safety - Heavy vehicles Tabled: 13 May 2009	Does the RTA's response show appropriate action has started?	NSW Audit Office comments on progress reported in RTA's response.
1 Use Safe-T-Cam or better technology to enforce point to point speed offences against heavy vehicle drivers by July 2009 (page 31)	Yes	<p>The RTA has implemented one point to point system, with 18 more scheduled over the next 18-20 months. The cost to implement is quoted as \$16 million.</p> <p>It is not clear from RTA's response whether it is using the existing Safe-T-Cam technology or has moved to better technology.</p> <p>At the time of the audit, we understood that the existing Safe-T-Cam technology was able to detect point to point speed offences, but was not being used to enforce the law. We reported that the RTA had spent \$1.6 million in 2005 to upgrade the Safe-T-Cam system so that it could calculate the average speed between two sites.</p> <p>The PAC may want an explanation from RTA on its chosen approach, given the cost and time to implement.</p>
2 Routinely check the operation of all Safe-T-Cam cameras to maximise accuracy (page 31)	No	<p>The RTA reports that it is deploying Transportable Infra-Red Traffic Loggers (TIRTL) systems at all Safe-T-Cam locations over the next year. It is unclear if any have been installed to date. The TIRTL system is used to trigger a camera to record an image.</p> <p>The relevant audit findings for this recommendation did not refer to the Safe-T-Cam camera triggering system, but rather to site variations such as sun glare and lens focusing.</p>
3 Ensure that its fixed speed cameras detect all speeding offences by heavy vehicle drivers by December 2009 (page 32).	No	<p>The RTA advises that there is only one fixed digital speed camera affected by this recommendation. It is in a 110km/h speed zone on the F3 freeway.</p> <p>The RTA advises that it cannot proceed with this recommendation because speed cameras currently deployed are unable to differentiate the vehicle by weight and heavy vehicles are defined by weight.</p> <p>At the time of the audit we reported that the RTA had the technology available to distinguish heavy vehicles from other traffic and allow it to detect and enforce different speed limits.</p> <p>We were referring to the TIRTL system referred to in RTA's response to the PAC to recommendation 2.</p> <p>We understand that vehicles are generally classified using a national Austroads vehicle classification scheme which is based on axle configurations, not vehicle weight. This is the basis for vehicle definitions used by the TIRTL system.</p> <p>The PAC may want an explanation from RTA on its dismissal of this recommendation, given its investment in relevant technology for recommendations 1 and 2.</p>

Auditor-General's Recommendations Report 187: Improving Road Safety - Heavy vehicles Tabled: 13 May 2009		Does the RTA's response show appropriate action has started?	NSW Audit Office comments on progress reported in RTA's response.
4	Clearly define what is meant by visual mechanical check by July 2009 (page 27)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.
5	Standardising the weightings for serious road-safety criteria used in checking station screening lane templates by July 2009 (page 29)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.
6	Increase the risk rating of any heavy vehicle that is identified as high risk but not inspected to make sure that it will be inspected at the next available opportunity by July 2009 (page 29)	Yes	The RTA advises that it has undertaken a feasibility study for the required system changes. The PAC may want an indication from the RTA about when it expects to implement the system changes.
7	Introduce formal warnings for some minor breaches of regulations, including escalation options for repeating the same offence, by December 2009 (page 39)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.
8	Ensuring that it can identify all heavy vehicles travelling on NSW roads regardless of registration status by December 2009 (page 43)	Yes	The RTA advises that implementation is subject to efficiencies becoming available from other programs. The PAC may want an indication from the RTA about what this means and when it expects to fully implement the changes.

Auditor-General's Recommendations Report 187: Improving Road Safety - Heavy vehicles Tabled: 13 May 2009		Does the RTA's response show appropriate action has started?	NSW Audit Office comments on progress reported in RTA's response.
9	Take immediate action to identify drivers or operators who may have committed a safety breach (page 43)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation. The PAC may want an indication from the RTA about when it expects to implement the procedural changes.
10	Ensure that risk assessments are consistently used to determine where and when on-road inspections operate and that risks are regularly reviewed by December 2009 (page 24)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.
11	Introduce a risk-based approach to the annual inspection scheme for heavy vehicles by July 2010 (page 26)	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.
12	Introduce a mix of overt and covert methods to detect breaches of heavy vehicle safety laws by July 2009 (page 26).	Yes	RTA's reported action reflects the intent of our recommendation.