

Submission

No 3

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

Name: Mr Richard Ure

Date Received: 15/09/2011

I am lucky to have access to excellent public transport so am an infrequent user of roads during school hours. Notwithstanding this rare road usage I am struck by the apparently mindless way in which the system has been "designed". When passing a school between the prescribed hours one rarely sees a school child and in my experience they tend to be vastly outnumbered by the number of cars passing through the zone during the relevant period.

In many cases a school zone operates on a street (e.g., Pennant Hills Road) where no child would survive one week if he attempted to cross the road at any time without using the lights and/or overhead walkway. In such areas, the traffic rarely slows during the relevant times anyway. Victoria Road outside Riverside Girls High is another example where the road is bounded by fences.

If school pickups take place in side streets, should there be a school speed zone on the main road just because the school has a boundary there?

The failure to instal flashing lights during school opening and closing times on the grounds of expense suggests governments' commitment to this issue is ambivalent despite utterances to the contrary. If flashing lights are too expensive, why not show and hide the signs by the traditional canvas curtain used for Men at Work signs, to signify when the **zone** is in operation? It's not much to ask of **school** communities to manage the visibility of the sign each time the **zone** is operative if safety is so much of an issue.

If school zone safety is so much of an issue why is it that a school zone ceases to apply at a certain distance from a school when students can still be seen in large numbers walking outside the boundary of the zone? If the zone is no longer needed, was it needed nearer to the school? In short, what is the criterion for establishing a school zone boundary in each case or is it just a common distance having no regard to local conditions?

Are school zones really needed outside secondary schools?

More students congregate at railway stations than at individual school gates. If school zones are such an essential safety measure, why are there not similar restrictions at (selected) railway stations or other major transport hubs?

Richard Ure



15 September 2011