

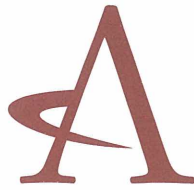
**INQUIRY INTO FOLLOW UP OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORTS OCTOBER 2009 TO  
SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Organisation:** NSW Audit Office  
**Name:** Mr Peter Achterstraat  
**Position:** Auditor-General  
**Telephone:** 9275 7100  
**Date Received:** 21/09/2011

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**Theme:**

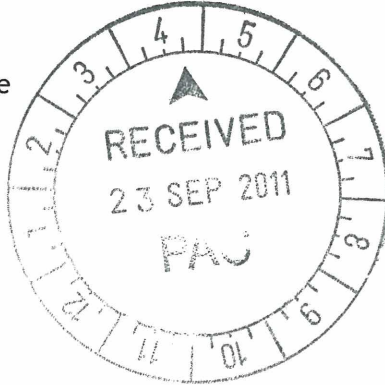
**Summary**



THE AUDIT OFFICE  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

CONTACT NAME  
TELEPHONE  
OUR REFERENCE  
YOUR REFERENCE

Mr J O'Dea  
Chair  
Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000



21 September 2011

Dear Mr O'Dea

**Examination of Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report  
*Improving Road Safety: School Zones***

We have reviewed the submission provided by the Roads and Traffic Authority concerning the recommendations in the above performance audit report.

Following tabling of the report, we were pleased that the Roads and Traffic Authority accepted most of our recommendations.

The submission indicates that the Roads and Traffic Authority is making progress in implementing the recommendations.

Please find attached our comments on the progress reported in relation to each recommendation in our original report. We have not substantiated the submission.

In some instances, more information would be helpful to better understand what has been done to address our recommendations.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Achterstraat  
Auditor-General

Attachment

Performance Audit - Improving Road Safety: School Zones

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
<p>1</p> <p>The RTA should retain existing school zone facilities.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The RTA will retain existing school zone facilities noting that adjustments will be made in line with current criteria and changes to educational institutions (e.g. a school is closed or the school access points are repositioned).</p>	<p>Completed. (Note that following the release of the Auditor-General's report on speed cameras, 8 of the total 44 school zone camera locations were identified as not providing road safety gains and were deactivated on 27 July 2011. The RTA will investigate alternative safety treatments at these locations.)</p>	<p>No further comment.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>To improve awareness, the RTA should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that school road safety programs encourage safe behaviour on roads</li> </ul>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Ongoing effort. Part of normal ongoing RTA road safety education program development in NSW schools.</p>	<p>Completed. The RTA delivers a comprehensive road safety program in NSW schools. The RTA in partnership with the three educational sectors (Government, Independent and Catholic) remains committed to the delivery of quality road safety educational programs in NSW schools.</p>	<p>The Committee may be interested in the RTA demonstrating how road safety education fits into the curriculum, how content reflects age and needs of schoolchildren, and how effectiveness is monitored.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the visibility of school zones by increasing use of flashing lights</li> </ul>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Implement the Government's \$13 million commitment to continue installing lights in school zones over four years, which will see the number of schools with lights almost double to cover around 50% of the state's schools by 2015.</p>	<p>On track. 689 school zones across NSW, covering 826 schools, had flashing lights installed by the end of June 2011. This is more than a quarter of the 3154 schools in NSW.</p>	<p>At the time of the audit report (February 2010) 366 school zones were fitted with flashing lights. The 689 school zones now equipped represents an 89 per cent increase. The Committee may be interested in the RTA indicating when the program to fit flashing lights to around 50 per cent of school zones will be completed.</p>

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make school zone locations available to GPS users</li> </ul>	Accepted	<p>RTA to complete the mapping of the remaining NSW road network speed zones. Explore dissemination of GPS information upon completion of the collection of all road network (including all school zone) location data.</p>	<p>On track. The development of the speed zone mapping system using a spatial GPS system has enabled a more precise analysis based on the GPS location of actual school zone signage (which denotes the exact start/finish of school zones). This system was developed in 2007 and data collection is now 100% complete, including all state roads. The RTA is currently validating the accuracy of the data collected. This is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2011. Following the completion of the validation process, the RTA plans to distribute the speed zone maps widely and ensure a robust update system is in place.</p>	<p>The Committee may be interested in the RTA indicating likely timing for adoption by GPS mapping providers of the higher-quality data on 100 per cent of school zones.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all school zone signs are correctly installed, of appropriate visibility and in serviceable condition</li> </ul>	Accepted	<p>Progressive update of existing 40km/h signage to new fluorescent, high visibility signage.</p> <p>Supplemented by:</p>	<p>On track. The RTA is progressively replacing old, faded, damaged or missing school zone signs with new high visibility fluorescent signage. As at end June 2011, there were over 6500 new fluoro signs installed, representing over a quarter of the state's school zones signs.</p>	<p>The Committee may be interested in the RTA outlining the future maintenance and inspection program for ensuring visibility and general condition of school zone signs and markings, and how problems with visibility or condition reported by school principals or members of the public are actioned.</p>
		<p>Rollout of Dragon's teeth to all school zones by December 2010 in accordance with RTA guidelines.</p>	<p>Completed. The visibility of school zones are being improved across NSW. The RTA installed dragon's teeth pavement markings at all schools in accordance with RTA guidelines by the end of December 2010.</p>	<p>The Committee may be interested in the RTA outlining the future maintenance and inspection program for ensuring visibility and general condition of school zone signs and markings, and how problems with visibility or condition reported by school principals or members of the public are actioned.</p>
		<p>Continue to utilise the RTA's current system of requesting schools to advise the RTA of any obscured, damaged or faded 40km/h school zone signs, patches and dragon's teeth</p>	<p>On track. As part of its Safety Around Schools Program, the RTA developed a booklet titled "A Guide To Addressing Road Safety Issues Around Schools" which is sent annually to every school principal in the state. Page 17 of this booklet requests principals to advise the RTA of any obscured, damaged or faded 40km/h school zone signs, patches and dragon's teeth and page 4 of the booklet provides them with a blank "Reporting Form For Addressing Road Safety Issues Around Schools" with which to advise the RTA.</p>	<p>The Committee may be interested in the RTA outlining the future maintenance and inspection program for ensuring visibility and general condition of school zone signs and markings, and how problems with visibility or condition reported by school principals or members of the public are actioned.</p>

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
		<p>The RTA conducted a major audit of school zone signage and facilities in 2008 and is progressively addressing issues raised in these audits.</p>	<p>On track. School zone sign maintenance responsibility is one area that is to be clarified in a new sign maintenance strategy. The draft document has recently been released to internal RTA stakeholders for comment. Currently on State Roads in the Sydney Region, there is a sign inspection / maintenance regime that include school zone signs. In other areas school zone signs maintenance issues are addressed in response to issues raised by customers.</p> <p>During the installation of the dragon's teeth, a spatially referenced photograph was taken of both the start and end of every school zone. These photographs therefore offer an opportunity for a future desk based audit and assessment of both signage and on road patches with an ability to improve where necessary.</p> <p>Completed. The number of infringements in school zones is currently publicised on the State Debt Recovery Office website</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The original audit of school zone signage and facilities was conducted in 2008. The Committee may be interested in hearing when all the issues raised will have been addressed.</li> <li>2. On roads other than State Roads there appears to be no inspection regime, with maintenance only being performed if customers identify problems. The Committee may be interested in whether the RTA has evidence that such a maintenance approach is appropriate and effective.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publicise the number of infringements in school zones.</li> </ul>	Accepted	RTA to liaise with State Debt Recovery Office.		The RTA could add value by linking its <i>Penalties for school zones</i> webpage to the SDRO page showing infringements. Only people already well informed are likely to bother looking for the SDRO.
3 To improve compliance, the RTA should:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fit flashing lights at all school zones with nonstandard operating times</li> </ul>	Accepted	Nil	Completed. Flashing lights have now been installed at all school zones with non-standard operating times. There are 26 non-standard zones in the state. Seven of these had lights installed between mid- 2004 and late 2009, with the remaining 19 completed between April and June, 2011.	The Committee may be interested in the RTA presenting a listing of where school zones with non-standard operating times are located.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider introducing higher fines for speeding infringements in school zones with flashing lights.</li> </ul>	Rejected	Nil	The RTA does not support the introduction of higher fines for speeding infringements in school zones. Increased fines and demerit points were introduced in May 2007 which means fines are now generally 50% higher and incur at least one additional demerit point than in non-school zones.	

	Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
4	<p>To ensure effectiveness, the RTA should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate that future investment in road safety initiatives is based on transparent assessment of risk</li> </ul>	Accepted	Ongoing use of fatality and injury crash risk in the criteria for determining future investments in road safety.	Completed. Site selection for the introduction of school zone measures (such as flashing lights) is based on criteria which are known to increase the severity, exposure and likelihood of a child pedestrian fatality or injury. The criteria include; approach speed, pedestrian and traffic volumes and crash history. RTA will seek to further demonstrate that future investment in road safety initiatives is based on a transparent assessment of risk.	The Committee may wish more details of how the RTA "will seek to further demonstrate that future investment in road safety initiatives is based on a transparent assessment of risk".
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inform the public of the effectiveness of its school zone initiatives</li> </ul>	Accepted	Ongoing	On track. When appropriate, for example in correspondence and media responses, the RTA promotes the value of its school zone countermeasures.  The RTA presented a paper on the initial school zone data analysis undertaken at the Road Safety Conference in November 2010. This paper provided a more accurate assessment of the crash profile of school zones.	The measures taken would only convey information on the effectiveness of school zones to a narrow audience. The Committee may consider it more useful for the RTA to include a summary of the historical crash profile of school zones on its school road safety webpages.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that school zone speed limits are applied consistently to all schools.</li> </ul>	Accepted	Nil	Completed. Since 2003 all school zones in NSW have 40km/h speed zones. These school zones relate to school access points and other related localised factors.	This does not address the findings of the report, which noted apparent school speed zoning inconsistencies which existed after 2003.

	Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
5	<p>The RTA should determine and publish progress on the commitment made by the Minister for Roads in 2006 as to the amount of revenue raised by school zone speed cameras and how much of it is reinvested in road safety projects.</p>	<p>Accepted in principle</p>	<p>The revenue from school zone fixed speed cameras will be used to support the large flashing lights program implemented between 2008 and 2011.</p>	<p>The revenue from school zone fixed speed cameras has been used to support the large flashing lights program that was completed in June 2011. Overall, more is spent on road safety programs than the Government receives in camera and speeding fine revenue. In the five years to 2009-10, the value of speeding fines issued from RTA cameras and Police was \$616.2 million. In the same period, \$822.6 million was spent on road safety programs. Camera revenue goes to Treasury Consolidated Funds for spending on all Government programs and is redirected back into the community through various State Government programs and initiatives, including health, education and road safety. The State Debt Recovery Office publishes camera revenue details on its website.</p>	<p>The RTA response clarified how much speed camera revenue is reinvested in road safety programs. The Committee may consider it useful for the RTA to provide a breakdown of how the \$822.6 million in the five years to 2009-10 was spent. The Minister's decision in 2011 to shut down 38 speed cameras following publication of the Auditor-General's report will reduce revenue. The Committee may be interested in seeking the RTA's view on the likely effect on its future road safety expenditure.</p>
6	<p>The RTA should determine and publish how many of the mobile speed cameras promised in 2006 have been acquired for school zone purposes and how often they have been deployed.</p>	<p>Rejected</p>	<p>Future actions to be determined by future directions with respect to the use of speed cameras in NSW.</p>	<p>The original commitment to deploy 25 fixed and 25 mobile speed cameras was revised by the Government to 50 fixed speed cameras. This rollout was completed in 2009 at 50 high risk locations. In July 2010, mobile speed cameras were reintroduced in NSW.</p>	<p>The RTA rejected this recommendation, as the Government had revised the commitment to exclude mobile speed cameras. However the reintroduction of mobile speed cameras in 2010 raises again the issue of their use in school zones. The RTA may wish to reconsider the original recommendation in the new context.</p>

	Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	Actions To Be Taken	Status (Completed, On Track, Delayed) and Comment	PAB comments
7	<p>All organisations, Government and non-Government, private and public, should cooperate to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new schools are built on roads where the risk of conflict with motor vehicles is minimal</li> <li>• school operating hours are standardised wherever possible.</li> </ul>				<p>The RTA did not respond to this recommendation, as its implementation is the responsibility of multiple organisations in both private and public sectors.</p>