

**Submission
No 33**

MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW

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This is the new practice of using traffic fines to gather taxes rather than for road safety. Removing warning signs will not increase road safety or driver behaviour. It will be solely to get more money from covert methods to catch out the unsuspecting everyday motorists. NSW Police or the RTA does not operate these Mobile Speed Cameras. The RTA has subcontracted the operation of the cameras to a private company, which makes a profit from it.

The ridiculous situation currently exists where an infringement notice is sent to the registered owner of the motor vehicle sometime after the alleged offence – hopefully, the owner knows who was driving ‘weeks ago’. At least they had some warning of the camera even if they were still speeding, but with the new mobile speed cameras, there is no notice of a speed camera in operation. The best deterrent to speeding drivers is to have more Highway Patrol cars on the road, which has the instant effect of slowing traffic and can dispense speeding tickets and other driving penalties on the spot.

There are reports that the RTA intends to lower the ‘buffer’ zone for speeding infringements to 4km/h. If the RTA successfully makes this change, motorists will face a speeding ticket if they exceed the speed limit by just 4km/h. At 60km/h, this represents a deviation of 6%, at 110km/h, a deviation of only 3%.

NSW Roads Minister has expressed a similar attitude to the RTA, stating that; “Motorists should know... that if they speed by one kilometre over the speed limit, then they could be caught.”

Before July 2006, the Australian Design Rules require a motor vehicle to have a calibrated speedometer which indicates vehicle speed to an accuracy of 10%. (ADR 18.5.1.1.2). In theory, any motor vehicle produced before July 2006 is required to comply with ADR 18.5.1.1.2, which allows a 10% deviation for speeds above 40km/h.

If the RTA reduces the ‘buffer’ zone to 4km/h, motorists will risk being fined for exceeding the speed limit, even if their speedometer indicates that they are not speeding. Worse still, the natural reaction of drivers will be to take their eyes off the road to check the speedometer regularly. If this caused an accident through momentary inattention, the consequences could be devastating and involve a possible prison sentence if another person were to be seriously injured or killed.

Let’s remember that the supposed idea of these cameras is to reduce the road toll – yet on one view may result in people having accidents by paying less attention to their driving and more attention to the speedometer.

Further, if a vehicle has an incorrectly calibrated speedometer, low tyre pressures or improperly sized wheels, the speedometer reading may be inaccurate. This is a significant concern for all motorists, who are now under such strict scrutiny at all times.

The recent rolling out of the more Mobile Speed Cameras without signage represents the latest revenue-raising initiative from the RTA and the NSW Government. Traffic fines have risen by millions of dollars over the 2020/2021 financial year, undoubtedly reflecting the expected income from Mobile Speed Cameras. However, whether this multi-million dollar exercise will have any effect whatsoever, on-road fatalities remain to be seen.