

**Submission  
No 179**

## **MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Penrith City Council

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## Summary

Council is a strong advocate for road safety, and supports TfNSW in its efforts to achieve the “Towards Zero” vision for safety on our road networks.

Council also recognises that road safety and the “Towards Zero” vision is supported by a suite of strategies including education and enforcement.

Understandably there are differing views in relation to the changes introduced by the NSW Government in 2020 to the mobile speed camera (MSC) enforcement program, as recommended by The NSW Auditor General. TfNSW advises that these changes (unmarked mobile speed cameras) will provide a more effective general network deterrence by creating a perception that speeding can be enforced anywhere at any time. The general public however considers it to be, in part, a revenue raising exercise.

Whilst we recognise that the warning signs increased compliance at the sites and locations that MSCs operated, the signage did to some extent reduce the overall program effectiveness as it reduces the likelihood of achieving a general network deterrence - the main purpose of the mobile speed cameras. That said, the signage had the benefit of educating and reminding drivers of their speed – a beneficial, highly visible education and awareness tool. It is therefore recommended that consideration be given to the use of both overt (marked) and covert (unmarked) MSCs.

Further, the MSC's are consistently located at the same locations as if scheduled on a regulated rotation along arterial roads only. To be more effective to the broader road network, Council believes the MSCs should be more randomly located across the road network and at local speeding hot spots, to support more so the philosophy of “anywhere anytime”. Locations should be informed by statistics which support evidence based decisions regarding locations.

It is essential that the NSW Police continue to be part of the overall speed reduction approach in NSW as high visibility and direct enforcement still plays a critical role to change motorist behaviour towards speeding.

And finally, Council supports the NSW Government approach to invest (in a transparent and fully audited framework) all revenue raised by mobile speed cameras into the Road Safety Fund that will benefit the wider community in various road safety projects and provides councils with increased grant funding opportunities that responds to local community concerns regarding speed and other road safety concerns.



## Discussion

In NSW, speeding contributes to around 41% of road fatalities and 24% of serious injuries each year. This means almost 150 lives lost and around 1,270 people seriously injured each year. The trauma is dispersed across the NSW road network. No matter what causes a crash, vehicle speed directly affects the force of the impact and the resulting trauma (TfNSW, 2020).

The cost of speeding is not only a human one; it is estimated that speed-related crashes cost the community around \$1.7 billion each year in NSW. Community costs include emergency services, hospital and health care and loss of productivity in the workplace. A Premier's priority is to reduce road fatalities by at least 30% from 2011 levels by 2021.

Within the Penrith LGA, the five-year crash statistics reveal that crashes involving speed account for 13% of crashes which is above the Sydney Region of 9%. This equates to 376 crashes involving speed within the Penrith LGA. Of these speed related crashes 133 of were on state roads and 243 were on local roads (TfNSW, 2019).

Currently, 71.4% of resident workers travel to work by car either as a driver (66.5%) or a passenger (4.9%). This is higher than the Greater Sydney average (56.6%). Penrith residents who travel to work outside of the LGA travel an average of 23 kilometres, further than the average commute of 15 kilometres for Greater Sydney residents. The vast majority (93.8%) of people who work locally in Penrith also live in Penrith or surrounding western Sydney LGAs including Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury.

Speeding, which encompasses excessive speed (driving above the speed limit) or inappropriate speed (driving too fast for the prevailing conditions), is unquestionably recognised as a major contributing factor in both the number and severity of crashes in NSW. Research conducted by the Centre for Road Safety in 2019 on speeding attitudes and behaviours showed that:

- most drivers see speeding as widespread and acceptable
- many believe the only way to stop speeding is via enforcement
- for the most part, it seems that drivers are highly attuned to slow down when they see there is a camera coming up ahead, but also to then universally speed back up once past the camera.

Penrith City Council has a long history of working collaboratively with various NSW Government agencies in delivering safer roads, infrastructure, services and amenities. To reduce the overall number of casualties in the LGA continued and sustained joint effort (and funding) will be needed for both local and state roads as well as coordinated activities to improve road safety outcomes and reduce road trauma through raising awareness and improving understanding of road safety issues amongst all road users.

The purpose of the NSW Mobile Speed Camera (MSC) Program is to deter drivers from speeding on every trip by having enforcement anywhere, anytime by providing broad network wide deterrence. The NSW Auditor-General (2018) found that speed cameras change driver behaviour and improve road safety.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the report the NSW Government moved the NSW MSC Program towards best practice and national consistency –proven to reduce road trauma – through:



- Increased enforcement hours – Removal of portable warning signage for mobile speed cameras (NSW was the only jurisdiction in Australia to deploy portable signs before and after the vehicle).
- Updated and reduced high visibility livery on mobile speed camera vehicles and removal of livery across 30% of the camera vehicles, aligned to the Queensland program (noting Victorian vehicles have no livery).

On Thursday 19 November 2020, the NSW Government announced changes to road safety in NSW including the enhancement of the NSW Mobile Speed Camera Program towards best practice and national consistency through:

- Removal of portable warning signage
- Updated and reduced livery on mobile speed camera vehicles
- Increased mobile speed camera enforcement hours

Early changes to the Mobile Speed Camera Program included the removal of portable warning signs, while updating vehicle livery and additional enforcement hours was rolled out in early 2021.

Independent modelling from Monash University Accident Research Centre estimated that the enhancements to the NSW MSC may save between 34 to 43 lives and prevent around 600 serious injuries in NSW each year.

### **Review of Changes to the NSW Mobile Speed Camera (MSC) Program**

#### **1. Greater consistency across Australia**

The mobile speed camera program in Victoria operates mobile speed cameras completely covertly with no signage advising of camera locations. Evaluation of the Victorian mobile speed camera program has confirmed the geographic impact of the program reaches well beyond the enforced sites and there has been a 25% reduction in casualty crashes in Victoria as a result of the program

In Queensland, the mobile speed camera program includes a mix of overt and covert operations. Evaluation of the Queensland mobile speed camera program has showed that the number of hours of deployment, use of randomised operations working in a mix of marked/unmarked vehicles (with no advance signage) have strong associations with road trauma reductions.

Council believes that there should be a mix of overt (marked) and covert (unmarked) MSCs; and that same are randomly located across the road network. If MSCs are to be seen as a deterrent, as opposed to revenue raising, they should target randomly the network, rather than simply at hot spots where offences prevalent.

#### **2. Revenue is directed towards road safety initiatives that benefit community road safety**

Revenue raised from speed camera fines is directed to the Community Road Safety Fund for important road safety initiatives such as:

- School road safety education
- School zone flashing lights
- Safety infrastructure upgrades
- Community road safety grants



It is important to remember that speeding does not only affect the motorist. Studies of survival and impact speed show that small increases in travel speed can result in large increases in braking distances and impact speed, resulting in both an increased risk of a crash and a more severe outcome. This is especially the case for crashes involving vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Council recommends that a transparent, fully audited, framework be established to demonstrate to the community that all revenue raised by speeding fines and other traffic offences is directed only to road safety initiatives.

### **3. Provides a lower cost enforcement option**

Automated speed camera enforcement is demonstrated as one of the most effective, evidence-based measures to reduce speeding and save lives and injuries. The mobile speed camera program is proven to be effective in targeting road safety risks including speeding. That said, there is a critical need to complement MSC with high visibility policing.

Penrith Council has a collaborative partnership with the Nepean Police Area Command that includes sharing vehicle speed data collected as part of Council's investigations into resident concerns relating to speeding on local streets. This data provides a more targeted approach to local speeding issues where Police can target speeding based on data.

It remains critical that the NSW Police are still involved with direct enforcement, targeted campaigns and local road safety initiatives. Consideration must be given to funding additional police presence on our road network.

### **4. Contributes towards changing driver behaviour speeding**

Research shows that best practice mobile speed camera programs with sufficient hours, a high number of enforcement sites, unmarked and unsigned operations and highly randomised deployment can deliver consistent, network wide 20-30% reductions in casualty crashes.

The NSW Auditor General reported in 2018 that a key aspect of providing an effective general network deterrence is creating a perception that speeding can be enforced anywhere at any time. Multiple warning signs have increased compliance at the sites and locations that MSCs currently operate but reduced the likelihood of achieving a general network deterrence - the main purpose of MSCs.

The mobile phone detection camera program has already changed behaviours when it comes to mobile phone use – no warnings mean you can be caught anywhere, anytime and we want to see that same result with mobile speed cameras.

### **5. Behavioural psychology of the mobile speed camera program**

Whilst we are aware that some residents and business operators may have concerns regarding the removal of the warning sign prior to the mobile speed camera, we recognise that this intervention will shift motorist behaviour and attitudes to speed and reinforce the “anywhere anytime” philosophy. Importantly highly visible speed reduction and enforcement signage is equally needed across the road network to educate and remind drivers of the consequences of speeding.



The benefit of mobile speed cameras in reducing speeding is not limited to mobile speed camera locations or the time the camera is located there; they produce a sustained change in driver behaviour by increasing the real and perceived likelihood that speeding can be enforced anywhere at any time. This would be more effective if delivered via both overt and covert operations and targeting randomly, locations across the entire road network.

Countermeasures to respond to speeding will require continued partnership with the NSW Government, Local Government, industry representatives, community and advocacy groups. Mobile speed cameras provide one deterrent to influence motorist behaviour towards speeding, other initiatives and campaigns will continue to support a shift in the wider community attitude towards speeding; including signage and high visibility police presence.

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