

**Submission
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MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW

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It was most disappointing to hear the NSW government removed the mobile speed camera warning signs late last year. Not only does this not herald in any great advance in deterrence, it simply serves to financially deprive voters who are often coerced into taking worse and longer roads because of the government's privatisation of important toll roads. Unfortunately, after paying taxes, and sitting in traffic for many hours each week, the tax payer once again is ripped off. There are a few concerns.

First, it is confusing where the government mandate for the move came from. There was no mention of this made at the last election, and no opportunity for voters to decide the matter at the polls – certainly, had that been the case, many votes would have swung in another direction. But it is often the case that government policies are decided within their term. More grave is the comments made by the Liberal party in years prior to this policy, that would have suggested a completely opposite stance of the government.

On June 6th 2007, the Hon. Michael Gallacher asked the then Minister for Roads “why did the Minister not admit to the public of New South Wales that the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] had plans to use covert speed cameras?”. This would suggest the then opposition and now government were against covert speed cameras – for voters to vote for the Liberal Party knowing this indeed means voters voted with a false impression given by the party, and were misled.

Similarly, the Hon. Duncan Gay on May 10th 2007 asked the then Minister of Roads “Does his government still acknowledge the value that marked cars and marked cameras offer as a deterrent to speeding? Will the Minister indicate whether the Roads and Traffic Authority has put forward plans to use unmarked police cars and/o hire cars with no signage as stationary speed camera vehicles? Would this mean that the Government has given up on deterrent measures and has resorted to just revenue raising?”. It is confusing at what point the party came to the sudden realisation that it was indeed not revenue raising, but a legitimate tool for speed enforcement. It is certainly the view of the public, however, that that moment of realisation came at the point that the Government served to gain from that decision – in other words, the increased revenue serves some gain for the Government.

Clearly, there was a view portrayed by the Liberal Party that covert speed enforcement served only as “revenue raising”, and that the current policy represents a government who has “given up on deterrent measures”. At no point was that view corrected by the party, and therefore there could not have been an electoral mandate for this policy.

There is also significant disagreement within the community as to whether covert speed enforcement serves any real effect in minimising death or accidents on the road. There has been significant talk already on the fact the statistics do not support any significant change in death toll thanks to covert speed cameras. This, alone, is justification for the return of warning signs, which serve as a real deterrent in hot spot areas that should be targeted.

It was indeed comical for Andrew Constance to attend a memorial for the Abdullah children, killed by a drugged-up driver, and to advertise the removal of warning signs for speeding. In that instance, it was drugs, not speed, which took the lives of the Abdullah children. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that a drugged-up driver would have been deterred by the

distant fear of unmarked speed cameras on a one lane street – where there was not physically room for a covert speed camera operator on Bettington Road. It is more likely, as common sense would dictate, that a warning sign would have presented a greater fear of being caught for the driver. More police on the roads, rather than covert cameras, would serve to instil that fear.

I can assure the government that not only did they lose my vote, but my party membership lapsed on July 1 – I can put that membership fee to a fine I will inevitably receive if I stray a few kilometres over the speed limit. A genuine attempt to save lives is honourable, but one dressed up as such has only soured the mouths of many NSW residents.

Finally, the question of where these funds go – I am not particularly interested. If the government is interested in appealing to public support, the *facts* remain irrelevant. What is relevant is the public's *perception*. It is natural that the public should perceive this as penny pinching from a government that has only heightened taxes (privatisation of toll roads; an increase in State Land Tax etc). And to the claim that this goes back into road enforcement, this is viewed, quite rightly, by the public as a thinly veiled lie. More likely, funds go towards stocking up NSW Police's high-powered Bentleys (whilst tax-paying toll-road users ride in much more affordable cars), and the millions earned from covert speed enforcement means the government can divert money in the budget from policing, which will be covered by their theft of drivers.

I would encourage the committee to re-consider the policy, and realise that voters have little time to forgive a government that once again puts the public interest second to government greediness.

Richard Mills