

**Submission
No 569**

MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW

Name: Cr Hugh Eriksson

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9 July 2021

Members
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Via online submission portal

Cc: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

Re: Inquiry into Mobile Speed Camera Enforcement Programs in NSW

Dear Members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and make a submission on the **Mobile Speed Camera Enforcement Programs in NSW inquiry**. I would like to thank Members for conducting this important inquiry, public confidence in road safety and its enforcement by government is crucial to its desired effects on better roads and reduced trauma, something that has unfortunately now been lost by many motorists as a result of the government changes made in November 2020.

Road safety and road policy is an issue close to my heart, as well as being an elected Local Government Councillor and former Deputy Mayor I also own a primary production property in the Central West of NSW. My family and I drive tens of thousands of kilometres every year across all types of roads and locations. I have been active in road policy for many years both in government and as an active citizen on this topic. I am very involved in my local traffic committee as well as assisting those in regional NSW with advice on road issues.

I would like to start by saying that **I do not support** the changes made by the government to the mobile speed camera program announced in November 2020. I believe them to be a regressive move designed to raise revenue and not to educate motorists and improve driving conditions and safety as it removed the opportunity for motorists to make an “at the moment” change to their driving behaviour. As I said in my opening paragraph the most important tool a government can have in making a worthwhile positive difference to the road toll is bring the public with them and carry their support in road enforcement.

These changes have had a drastic impact on thousands of motorists, the vast majority who do the right thing on our roads, without reducing the real issue – dangerous driving – Covert mobile cameras do nothing to deter dangerous drivers as many do not have a licence to lose so they simple do not care about them. Only highly visible policing and stopping them on the spot will deter these motorists who make up the majority of incidents that cause serious road crashes and trauma.

Recent statics show that most fines are for low range offences not high range speeding. This demonstrates that if there were warnings these drivers would have the opportunity to check their speed and make any adjustments on the spot. Receiving a fine in the mail two weeks later does nothing to improve road safety or grow the public’s confidence in the mobile speed camera program. Many motorists did not even know they were speeding as these covert cameras no longer show the speed limit at that location. Motorists are now forced to take their eyes off the road worried that they may be a few kms over the limit which raises another safety issue.

A personal example I have on the dangers of covert cameras – recently I was driving on Moss Vale Road, Moss Vale. This section of road is a high-quality straight road with a limit of 70km/h, traffic was light, and all vehicles were travelling at or below the limit. The vehicle in front of me (travelling at no more than 65km/h well under the limit) suddenly saw a covert camera car parked on side of the road and even though they were not speeding their natural reaction was to brake suddenly, fortunately I was maintaining a wide space between our cars and was able to brake without incident. Now this could have ended in a far worse outcome all caused because of a device designed to improve ‘road safety’. If the cameras car was sign posted with high visible markings – as they used to be – this driver would have had the opportunity to check their speed and see they were not speeding and thus not braked and continued on in a safe way. There is no doubt covert cameras have the opposite effect on what they are meant to do.

While the focus of my submission is the operational nature of the program, I will touch briefly on two other points in the terms of reference – namely the operation of the program by a private company and the funds generated by the fines. Of great concern to the public is the fact that the cameras are operated by a private company. In other states and territories in Australia the camera programs are operated either by their Police Road Commands or their version of TfNSW, not private companies. There is no doubt public distrust with a private for-profit company operating devices design to generate revenue. The second point of how revenue is used from fines is another point the government often refers to by saying every dollar goes into the community road safety fund and while this is good and the projects and upgrades that come from this fund are worthwhile to improving roads at the end of the day taking money from the public for government is revenue no matter what you call it, and while it does not go into general revenue the money used by the community road safety fund takes pressure off general revenue that would otherwise be allocated to road projects funded by the community fund.

While I hope the committee would recommend to the government that warning signs and high visible markings are returned to the mobile program and that the government ultimately see the safety benefits and frankly the fairness to the motoring public in doing so, I would like to offer two alternate solutions from other territories that may offer another option:

In **South Australia the Marshall government**, as part of an election commitment to improve transparency around speed cameras, has implemented more signage around fixed cameras (similar to what is used in NSW) but more importantly to this committee has a dedicated web site for speed cameras - <https://speedcameras.sa.gov.au/> the site outlines in plain English why there is a speed camera program and most importantly **lists the location ahead of time each day** the location of mobile speed cameras across the state (please see screenshot below) I recently spoke with the relevant cabinet Minister in SA about this and the public response has been overwhelmingly positive, there is no excuse now for speeding at camera sites and the public have regained confidence in the program being about safety not revenue.

Camera locations

The screenshot shows a website interface with two tabs: "Fixed camera locations" and "Mobile camera locations". The "Mobile camera locations" tab is active. Below the tabs, there is a list of dates: "Thursday, 8 July 2021", "Friday, 9 July 2021", "Saturday, 10 July 2021", and "Sunday, 11 July 2021". Under "Saturday, 10 July 2021", there are three columns of road names and locations:

Andrews Rd, Andrews Farm	Lyndoch Valley Rd, Lyndoch	President Ave, Andrews Farm
Calton Rd, Gawler East	Main North Rd, Mawson Lakes	Redbanks Rd, Willaston
Cavan Rd, Dry Creek	Main North Rd, Para Hills West	Salisbury Hwy, Mawson Lakes
Dalkeith Rd, Kudla	Martins Rd, Parafield Gardens	Salisbury Hwy, Salisbury
Dawkins Rd, Lewiston	Martins Rd, Parafield Gardens	Waterloo Corner Rd, Burton
Gawler River Rd, Lewiston	Pimpala Rd, Cockatoo Valley	Whites Rd, Paralowie
Kesters Rd, Para Hills West	Port Wakefield Rd, Bolivar	
Lyndoch Rd, Gawler East	Port Wakefield Rd, Mawson Lakes	

At the bottom of the interface, there are two buttons: "How fixed camera locations are chosen" and "How mobile camera locations are chosen".

In the ACT the Barr government makes a point to their motorists that speed cameras are not about revenue or getting people doing a few kms over the limit but the importance to road safety. They understand that some drivers accidentally speed because they do not know the speed limit for that area, while not sign posted ahead of the vehicle the mobile cameras have instead have clear signage on top of the van to show the limit for that location (please see screenshot below) this then educates the driver of the speed limit and ensures fairness in line with the intention of the program.



In closing it goes without saying that we are all wanting better and safer roads, however in order to do this we need public confidence in the programs government use to implement this. Right now, NSW has lost that support, covert cameras only increase the distrust from the public in government. They are also unfair and punish those that genuinely try to do the right thing on our roads while letting those who do not care about others off without penalty.

I again respectfully ask the committee and government to reinstate the warning signs and high visible markings on mobile cameras – they were working. Or at the very least consider the two alternatives above – as another option to the mobile speed camera program in NSW.

I thank the committee for holding this very important inquiry. I would like to offer any assistance you may ask of me including answering any questions you may have on my submission; I would also be happy to appear at any hearings you may hold.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Eriksson
Councillor
Willoughby City

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