

**Submission
No 575**

MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW

Name: Mr Edward Forgacs

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The removal of signage for mobile speed cameras removes any credibility to the claim that these cameras contribute to road safety and this policy should be reversed. If the mobile cameras were truly being used to reduce speed in known black spots, they should be as visible as possible, like signposted fixed cameras in NSW. The timing of this change appears to have been opportunistic and motivated by revenue protection, due to traffic changes as a result of COVID.

It seems that quite apart from being a road safety tool, mobile speed cameras are a taxation and revenue tool, and the removal of signage supports this agenda. Road taxation is understandable. However, the hidden nature of mobile speed cameras end up disproportionately imposing this tax on those who live in regional areas, and therefore need to travel longer distances, or others such as professional drivers who spend more time on the road. Often these very people are those who can least afford it, i.e. from lower socio-economic groups. The penalty system in NSW also means that younger drivers (P platers) can be very disproportionately affected by what is in reality a very minor offence. The collection of the required road taxes should be fairly distributed via a more transparent system, such as increased registration costs, rather than subterfuge and luck, justified through a propaganda campaign.

The NSW government needs to adopt a radical new road safety strategy, with a lot more focus on driver training and vehicle roadworthiness. These are major factors which materially impact road safety and need to be part of the long term strategy. For too long they have been neglected by both sides of government, while simplistic, short-sighted and ineffective strategies have been prioritized. The NSW government should look at moving towards a more positive road safety campaign, and away from a punitive, scare-tactic approach towards motorists. NSW also needs to acknowledge that the safety improvements in vehicles in recent decades are very significant and these have been the major contributor to a reduction in the road toll. The fact that the state now has stricter penalties than ever, and in fact some of the harshest penalties in the western world (demerit points) is totally unjustified in light of the long-term reductions in the road death toll.

In relation to speed enforcement, the state needs to review its road safety policy with regard to the longstanding fixation on speed as the main (and arguably incorrect) contributor to road deaths. In particular, some of the most-often cited claims are based on studies conducted by the Monash Accident Research Centre in the 1980s and early 1990s, and have in the past been taken out of context or misinterpreted. The research from this single centre is extremely disproportionately represented in Australia, despite it being out of step with more up-to-date international studies, and due to the age of the studies, it fails to take into account safety improvements in modern vehicles. NSW needs to place much more emphasis international research and approaches towards driver training and road safety.