

**Submission
No 576**

MOBILE SPEED CAMERA ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS IN NSW

Name: Mr Clif Munro

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PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Inquiry into mobile speed camera enforcement programs in NSW

I thank the Committee for allowing me to make comments.

I am a retired educator, a motorcycle rider and a motorist. I gained my motorcycle licence in 1957 and my motor vehicle licence in 1960.

In making this submission, I do so using the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

a) the nature and timing of those changes

There has been a change in the way speed enforcement has been applied over the past ten years.

'Mobile speed cameras used in NSW are in marked vehicles with signage placed both before and after the vehicle. A further initiative of the NSW Speed Camera Strategy is enhancing warning signage for mobile speed camera vehicles to ensure motorists see and recognise the enforcement activity. In addition to current signage, a further warning will be provided in each direction of enforcement.' [June 2012]¹

In 2020 Transport for NSW commissioned a research report on how other Australian States conducted mobile speed camera operations.² The MOBILE SPEED CAMERA OPERATIONS IN OTHER AUSTRALIAN JURISDICTIONS RESEARCH REPORT October 2020 included the following key points: [Contributor note: the Committee should note the passages I have marked in *italics*]

2 Mobile speed cameras in Australian jurisdictions

Speed cameras are used in all Australian states and territories. The following [pages] describe the mobile speed camera programs in key Australian jurisdictions

Clark et al (2019, page 15) point out that the largest jurisdictional variation in camera programs is in mobile speed camera programs

2.1 Victoria:

Cameron and Delaney (2008) describe what a covert mobile speed camera operation means in Victoria. The camera is car-mounted. The car is one of a variety of popular makes and models and the car is unmarked. There are no warning signs. *When there is enough natural light, the camera does not flash. The intention is that the driver should not notice the speed camera operation.*

2.2 Queensland:

However, the intention of covert mobile camera operations is to produce general effects over the network, and so the site-specific method could perhaps underestimate the mobile cameras' benefits.

Newstead and Cameron (2013 page 10) point out that it would be difficult to assess the generalised effects of covert operations.

2.3 Western Australia:

There had been signs to draw drivers' attention to the camera operation. The use of signs was discontinued in 2011 (Newstead et al, 2015, page 30).

Newstead et al (2015, page 50) related monthly variation in observed crashes at camera sites, to the monthly number of camera sessions undertaken. *The effects were measured within 500 metres and within 1 km of the camera. The mobile speed camera program resulted in a large reduction in fatal crashes, with the average reductions over the years of between 20% and 25%*

b) research, modelling, and the evidence base of fatality and serious injury reduction

Transport for NSW later commissioned a research report to estimate road safety benefits of expanding the NSW mobile speed camera program.³ Some key points from this report are: [Contributor note: the Committee should note the passages I have marked in *italics*]

ANALYSIS TO ESTIMATE ROAD SAFETY BENEFITS OF EXPANDING THE NSW MOBILE SPEED CAMERA PROGRAM [undated]

We know from a recent crash review completed by the Monash University Accident Research Centre that *86 per cent of all fatalities in NSW occur at intersections and on rural high-speed roads.* Therefore our speed camera program *needs to address this type of speeding behaviour* and site selection criteria must *ensure that speed enforcement can be concentrated at these locations.*

Table 2: Criteria for Measuring Camera Effectiveness

<u>Enforcement type</u>	<u>Mobile Speed Cameras</u>
Evaluation data	Measure of effectiveness
Annual speed surveys	Reduction in vehicles exceeding speed limit across the road network/ random sample of locations
Compliance data	Increase in compliance rates/Reduction in infringement rates
Crash data	Reduction in crashes and casualties across NSW

Table 3: Criteria for Measuring Overall Effectiveness of Enforcement Programs

<u>Program</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Mobile speed camera	Reduction in road trauma, speed-related crashes and speeding across the whole road network

The effectiveness of all speed cameras will be measured through the analysis of behavioural factors.

As drivers become more compliant with the speed limit, less infringements are issued relative to the amount of enforcement. *It is envisaged that infringement rates will reduce over time, both at specific speed camera locations and also statewide*

c) the views of key road user groups, including the community views towards these changes

Community reaction predictably only saw the changes to procedure as a means for government to raise money.

'state government plan to triple the number of unmarked mobile speed cameras a "cash grab".' 'a 1,600 per cent increase in low-range (under 10kph) speeding fines since the government removed mobile camera warning signs last year.'; 'the number of low-range offences went from 1,634 a month in March 2020 to 27,760 in one year.'⁴

'The NSW government raked in almost nine times the revenue from mobile speed camera fines in January compared with the same month last year, and it's set to get worse for motorists with operating hours of the speed detectors set to be tripled.'⁵

The message that NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said he had "received advice that up to 43 lives a year would be saved by removing mobile speed camera warning signs" did not cut through the trebling of operational hours.

c) the nature and oversight of compliance or enforcement contracts with government and private companies

'Transport for NSW has signed a \$112 million, five-year contract with Redflex Traffic systems to

deliver the current mobile speed camera program to 2023.' ⁶ This effectively means the first \$22.4 million in fines each year is paying the contractor approximately \$250k for each of its (reported) 45 vehicles to sit by the side of the road.

This is in sharp contradiction to the claim that 'There is a misconception that all fines generated from speed cameras offences goes to general government revenue when in fact all revenue is redirected into the Community Road Safety Fund' ⁷

d) the projected impact on revenue generated by these changes

From media reports, revenue will continue to rise as more vehicles are registered.

'In March 2020, 2455 people were snapped by mobile speed cameras, amounting to just under \$500,000 in fines.

A year later, in March this year, more than 33,000 people were issued speeding tickets as a result of being caught by mobile speed cameras.

That resulted in more than \$6 million in fines'.⁸

e) the ongoing funding of road safety and the Community Road Safety Fund, both through fines and enforcement activities, and future government contributions

The government states that all revenue from penalties raised by mobile speed cameras will be directed to the Community Road Safety Fund. It is possible that as penalties continue at an increasing rate due to more vehicles on the roads, that the government will reduce general contributions.

'This funds a range of Road Safety Programs including research, education, enhanced enforcement conducted by NSW Police, road safety engineering works, new safety technologies and the roll out of critical road safety infrastructure.

Fines from mobile speed cameras are currently being used to roll out lifesaving road safety treatments through the Safer Roads Program, including flexible safety barriers, audio tactile line markings (ATLM), wide centre lines and curve treatments, school crossing supervisors, and flashing lights which saves lives on our roads.' ⁷

f) enforcement activities, including the balance between direct police enforcement and camera enforcement

The only speed recording device highly likely to prevent a crash is one associated with a Police pursuit vehicle. The ability to apprehend an offender immediately, provides a circuit breaker to non-compliant behaviour. The Police power to suspend a licence and/or impound a vehicle on the spot when the offending is significant is an important factor in crash prevention. A letter in the mail three weeks after the infringement occurs is less likely to be remembered clearly or modify on-road behaviour.

g) the impact to people living in regional and rural areas

Behaviour modification is the key to reducing the road toll in regional and rural areas. An unmarked speed camera vehicle at the side of a road is not going to produce this outcome.

If the government follows the advice of its research report³ to concentrate mobile speed cameras in rural areas, there could be cases of hardship caused for rural workers should they have their licence suspended or cancelled and not be able to travel to their employment.

h) those of low socio-economic backgrounds and Indigenous people

People with low socio-economic backgrounds [low SEB] will be adversely affected by the use of covert operations. By definition, members of low SEB households have limited resources, may rely on government assistance and may have only elementary education. Driving past an unmarked speed camera several times will quickly accumulate fines beyond a capability to pay.

The Centre for Road Safety publishes the locations of speed cameras in NSW⁹ Looking at the list of locations, a number of camera sites are located in the vicinity of Indigenous communities.

As an example, Burnt Bridge at South Kempsey is listed and is an Indigenous community. There are other Indigenous communities where mobile speed cameras operate also.

There may be a low level of racial profiling happening when deciding where to place the vehicles.

i) the impact on P plate drivers

There is no fairness for P plate drivers as the unmarked mobile speed camera program is presently administered. The newly created P1 driver is without their instructor to help monitor for speed changes while they concentrate on driving their vehicle. Passing a covert mobile camera at less than 10 km/h over results in a suspension for 3 months and 4 demerit points.

Thus, a behaviour modification opportunity is wasted.

j) any other related matters

Not every light vehicle on the road is new. Older vehicles might be driven by enthusiasts or alternately drivers from low SEB backgrounds. Speedometers in older vehicles comply with different accuracy standards than newer vehicles.

Australian Design Rule 18 [ADR18] sets out the accuracy standards for vehicle speedometers. Until July 2006 this rule specified *an accuracy of +/- 10 percent of the vehicle's true speed* when the vehicle was travelling above 40km/h.

That is, at a true vehicle speed of 100km/h the speedo *could indicate between 90km/h and 110km/h.*

From July 1 2006 a new standard began its phase in and by 1 July 2007 all new vehicles had to comply. The new standard requires that: *The speedometer must not indicate a speed less than the vehicle's true speed or a speed greater than the vehicle's true speed by an amount more than 10 percent plus 4 km/h.*

What this means:

For a vehicle travelling at a true speed of 100km/h, *the speedometer must read between 100km/h and 114km/h.* The effect of this is that many drivers will find that at 100km/h they are driving up to 14km/h below the speed limit if they rely on the vehicle's speedometer.¹⁰

If the driver knows that the speedometer is reading slow, it becomes a 'hit and miss' issue to drive closer to the legal limit leading to unwarranted infringements.

In summary:

By deploying the mobile speed camera in a covert fashion removes the behaviour modification and crash reduction advantage of fixed and overt speed cameras.¹¹

Using a blunt trauma approach to force compliance is an ineffective method of regulation as

the prison system can attest.

The public consensus that covert mobile speed cameras exist to raise revenue would seem to be justified.

References

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³roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/msc-expanded-benefits.pdf

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