

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

At Sydney on Monday 21 November 2011

The Committee met at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr G. J. Aplin (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. R. H Colless
The Hon. C. M. Faehrmann
The Hon. W. Secord

Legislative Assembly

Mr S. L. Ayres
Mr R. A. Furolo
Mr D. J. Webber

CHAIR: Good morning and thank you for attending this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the hearing last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality.

TERESA SENSERRICK, Associate Professor, Transport and Road Safety Research, University of New South Wales, sworn, and

DICK VAN DEN DOOL, Level 2, 815 Pacific Highway, Chatswood, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Could you state your occupation and in what capacity you are appearing before the Committee?

Professor SENSERRICK: I am Associate Professor at the University of New South Wales but I am here representing the Australasian College of Road Safety where I am the Chair of the Sydney Executive.

CHAIR: Could you state your occupation and in what capacity you are appearing before the Committee?

Mr Van Den DOOL: I am a director of GTA Consultants and I am here as a member of the Australasian College of Road Safety.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. As time is limited today the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and will be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Professor SENSERRICK: Yes.

Mr Van Den DOOL: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief statement of not more than five minutes?

Professor SENSERRICK: I am representing the College, as I mentioned. We have several submissions, including from Dick Van Den Dool who can represent some of the research that shows that we think there is quite strong support for the 40 kilometre zone limit and that there has been increasing acceptance of the limit. However, we would also like to point to other measures that can be taken around schools that we think can be applied more consistently across New South Wales that could also be of benefit in reducing traffic safety around schools.

CHAIR: Mr Van Den Dool, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Van Den DOOL: I have nothing to add.

CHAIR: Professor Senserrick, could you briefly outline the role of the Australasian College of Road Safety and the work in the field of road safety, in particular school zone safety, and could you identify who makes up the New South Wales chapter of the Australasian College of Road Safety?

Professor SENSERRICK: We are a College with members from anyone working in road safety—it could be researchers, practitioners, Ministers, insurers. It is an organisation that represents anyone involved in road safety and sets up a network so that people can interact. It is Australasian, so it is across Australia and New Zealand, and we have seminars on things of interest to the Committee and we also put out a quarterly journal. So it is a professional society rather than a group that personally takes on issues rather than members might have certain issues that they take on.

In terms of school safety, when the invitation to put in a response came in we sent it out to the members in the New South Wales chapter asking if they had done any work in this area and if they had anything to comment on, and that is where Dick became involved—he had done some consultancy work on this and also there was a paper from the formerly called RTA on an issue as well, as I personally have been working with the Northern Territory to adapt the Western Australian guidelines for the Northern Territory and so had reviewed them in depth and felt that they had quite a lot of good content for this issue. That is where the response came about.

CHAIR: Your submission at page 1 notes that consideration should be given to whether school zone times should be extended following the example of the Australian Capital Territory. Could you just give us an

indication of the extended school zone times in the Australian Capital Territory? Are they otherwise similar to New South Wales in terms of speed limit and other restrictions?

Professor SENSERRICK: In the Australian Capital Territory they operate all day rather than closing during that middle part of the school day. The entire school day they are in operation. Also, discussing with Dick outside, South Australia has them operating 24 hours.

Mr Van Den DOOL: For seven days.

Professor SENSERRICK: If you think of what schools are, they are not just used as a place where kids go and learn for the day and then leave; the school halls, in particular, are frequently used after hours and during the day for dances and parent-teacher meetings, et cetera. So they are operating more than just for teaching.

Mr Van Den DOOL: Many schools have playgrounds that are still open to the general public. Many schools have markets and other activities where large numbers of children are involved. The issue there is that the schools do not just attract children when they go to school and when they leave school; they attract children throughout the day and on weekends, and even in the evenings. In essence they are a hub of activity and a good school can make some money to help with maintenance by hiring the school halls out—things along those lines. It is a very appropriate way of managing the school ground but at the same time it attracts children, not quite 24/7 but certainly for much longer periods of time than the normal school zones would suggest.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Which one do you prefer? The Australian Capital Territory or the South Australian model?

Professor SENSERRICK: As a researcher I like to report on objective data, but unfortunately these measures have recently been introduced so we do not yet have any evaluations in terms of effectiveness. Certainly, in terms of road safety data, in terms of the tolerance of the impact force that children can sustain and still have a high chance of surviving an impact, it is pretty much at 30 kilometres an hour that they are likely to survive an impact. The 40 kilometres an hour zone, it would be great if in the future we could look towards making them 30 kilometres an hour for that reason, but 40 kilometres an hour usually allows some braking time before impact and if we can get the impact speeds down there is a much greater chance that a child can survive.

There is definitely strong evidence of why we need to reduce the impact speed of a collision with a child and therefore there is support in respect of why we need that around schools where there is high child pedestrian activity and high risk of crash. Apart from that, through the school day there are still children coming back and forth, especially as we get into secondary school; they often leave the campus at lunchtime et cetera. So I think there is theoretical support for why we would have them operating at least for the school day, but, as Dick has explained, South Australia's argument is that they are used quite more than that, and obviously you would not have police out enforcing them after midnight most likely, but just to raise attention in the area that this is a high pedestrian area, there are children around, and that can be happening at all times that you are driving through there during the day.

CHAIR: I know they are using a combination with other measures—you mentioned briefly enforcement and I would be interested to know what additional enforcement measures there may be and, additionally, any patrolled crossings outside of the nominal school zones that we have established already New South Wales.

Professor SENSERRICK: Did you examine that with your report, Dick?

Mr Van Den DOOL: No, I did not so much. Before we answer that question I think it is important to draw your attention to page 27 of the walking data study that my company conducted for the Premier's Council on Active Living. It includes a graph that shows a very strong reduction in impact speed at 40 kilometres per hour. You see two parts to the graph: one with a fairly shallow slope and one with a very steep slope, and that is right at 40 kilometres per hour and it is based on research both in New South Wales and around the world. It indicates that that is really the cut-off mark, and it talks about the impact speed rather than the speed limit or the driving speed. That is an important differentiation. But the issue here is 40 kilometres per hour, hence that suggestion to go down to even a bit lower as a speed limit is really quite significant.

CHAIR: You will be suggesting that as a permanent reduction in that zone?

Mr Van Den DOOL: Yes.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: In your submission you talked about your concern that New South Wales was not involved in the Safe Routes to School program which operates in Victoria and Queensland. Can you provide any more information about this program and are there any specific lessons or examples from the program which could be implemented in New South Wales?

Professor SENSERRICK: I am happy to research that and provide you papers on that. That came from another one of our members so I am afraid I am not across all the issues with that except to say that the Safe Routes to School is an international initiative. It is quite extensive in countries such as in parts of the United States. It really involves concerted educational and awareness programs in schools to think about how you are travelling to school.

Actually within the Western Australia guidelines in the school edition that was provided there are some examples. It includes, for example, thinking about where you are a pedestrian, where you are a cyclist, how you are arriving at school, perhaps marking out with footprints where the safe side of the footpath is and safe crossing areas. Particularly very young children can be very prone to looking at those markers and indicating which are safe ways and not safe ways. So particularly, for example, if you have a highway on one side of the school you could look at approaching the school from the other directions.

There has been small community-based research to show that it has been effective in changing the behaviour of children going into school. Again you need long-term data to look at crash impacts because the numbers are very low, but I am happy to do a search to see if there has been any new research released in that respect because they have been around for quite some time now.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Some of the submissions we have received have suggested that less than half of motorists obey the 40-kilometre an hour speed zones. What is an appropriate or effective way of ensuring compliance with that speed limit?

Professor SENSERRICK: Number one is always enforcement. If we think of human nature, particularly if you are in a hurry and you do not see any consequence, if you do not see children around and if you do not see police you are more likely to go through. It is human nature. I think public education campaigns are favoured to increase awareness but on their own they are unlikely to have an impact if they are not followed up with enforcement. So raising the understanding—it is quite interesting to think that if it was your child at that school you are more likely to slow down rather than for other people's children.

So just raising that awareness that you have got young children, they are unpredictable, they will obey a crossing without necessarily looking to make sure the cars are obeying the crossing, which does not always happen. Children can emerge from behind vehicles and are difficult to see. So I think increasing awareness and understanding through education is useful but you really need enforcement to happen.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think fixed speed cameras in school zones are a good idea?

Professor SENSERRICK: Certainly they would be effective. Certainly they would raise community angst initially but, with all such programs, once they have been in place for some time community acceptance tends to increase. Certainly that would work in having some permanent enforcement there. It certainly would be expensive to try and put them in all areas but I think if there was a strong issue with lack of compliance with a school zone it would work even as a temporary measure to change behaviour. You find once people have been going there and changed their behaviour that even once the camera is moved they can sometimes maintain that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you or the college have a view about the recent removal of fixed speed cameras in school zones?

Professor SENSERRICK: The College definitely supports speed cameras and it is important to monitor them and check that all are working as has been done. Actually the Roads and Traffic Authority was regularly doing that. It is a bit of a catch 22: Once a speed camera has been in place for a long time it can permanently change that behaviour and therefore be looking like it has no effect because the behaviour has changed. If you move that away you would still need to monitor that area for a while to make sure that the behaviour does not come back. But definitely there is strong research to support the use of fixed speed cameras in reducing speeds and they are effective not only at that very point but generally in wider areas around the neighbourhood. So we would strongly support the use of fixed speed cameras.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How do you feel about the removal of the eight speed cameras from school zones by the Government?

Professor SENSERRICK: Sorry, I missed that point. Several of them were shown to not be effective at that point and in fact the Roads and Traffic Authority had already turned at least two of them off prior to that, as far as my understanding was. So they are monitored and it is okay to turn them off if you see they are not working. But, as I mentioned, there is the chance that there is nothing happening there because the cameras are there. So, yes, you can turn them off but I think there is—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Sorry to interrupt you. Those speed cameras may have in fact reduced speeding in the area and that is why people were not caught by the cameras?

Professor SENSERRICK: Correct. So that might become a permanent change because people drive as a sense of habit, especially in a school area where you are going all the time, assuming that you are connected with the school, that becomes a habit and can change your behaviour. If you are just a passerby occasionally it will not change your behaviour at all. But it is quite possible that it has caused a permanent shift in behaviour. It is also possible that over time that behaviour will creep back up and therefore the camera might need to come back there.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about mobile speed cameras that are moved around so that people see the signs and they are not sure where they will be?

Professor SENSERRICK: That is very effective. Enforcement works on two levels basically. One is a general deterrence that people need to feel that they are out there and that they are happening. Having very visible programs is very important. Even though people might feel they know where they are and they can slow down and then speed up when they are out of it, there is a sense that there is enforcement happening and that is the general deterrence level.

The specific deterrence level is needing to feel that you can get caught. For certain segments of the community—the small percentage that like to speed all the time—they really need to get caught to feel that that enforcement is effective. That is where sometimes more covert cameras are needed to help change the behaviour.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In short you believe that speed cameras in school zones would save lives?

Professor SENSERRICK: Yes.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Page 7 of the Graham and Sparkes report shows that casualties in school zones also decreased outside of the operating hours. In relation to what we were talking about regarding South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, does that show that even at times when it is not enforced a school zone is still a deterrent to speeding?

Mr Van Den DOOL: That is really the research by Andrew Graham of the Roads and Traffic Authority. I am familiar with the paper and I very much endorse the general findings in it. I am not privy to all the details in the research though. I would be doing an injustice to his breadth and depth of knowledge in this area if I were to elaborate too much further.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: But it is a reasonable assumption that a high visibility school zone would be a deterrent to speeding through that zone even if it was not enacted?

Professor SENSERRICK: That would be my assumption and I would hope that there would be an evaluation soon of the Australian Capital Territory program that would be showing that. Certainly having the cameras up and being alerted to the fact that you are in a high child pedestrian area alone for the responsible driving community, which is the majority, will have an impact. Whether it will affect the small percentage that are highly prone to speeding is unlikely but at least I agree that it can have an overlapping effect for later, in the same way that speed cameras can spread to wider areas.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Outside of fixed speed cameras, mobile speed cameras, flashing lights and yellow road signage, what measures do you feel would be strong deterrents to speeding through school zones that have not necessarily been enacted in New South Wales?

Professor SENSERRICK: Again I would draw attention to the Western Australia guidelines. The school edition in particular has a lot of areas for schools for planning how people access in and out of the school. So if you do have a very busy road can you reconfigure your drop off zones, et cetera, to be in low speed areas in local roads, which is preferable in all cases. Certainly for some schools it is not going to be financially possible to reconfigure the school, but perhaps the Committee could think of a grant scheme in that respect. In the way that we have had support for school buildings, perhaps they could look at ways to help the school configure their parking. This includes where buses drop off students and where the staff park as well as areas for parents to just drop off and keep going that must be on the school side of the road. Also other areas for those parents that are dropping off and coming in for assembly, that there is sufficient parking areas and sufficient crossings.

Quite often with a school there will be one manned crossing, as you mentioned, which is important for school crossings. But if it is only in one area and the parking is several streets down on the opposite end of that road, it is only human nature to get their kids at school on time that people will be crossing away from that crossing. So quite often the guidelines for Western Australia talk about working with your local government association to get better advice on how to reconfigure that space. That includes a community survey and getting a group involved at your school which can include volunteer time from parents, et cetera, so that it is taken on by the school raising awareness of the issue. I think a lot of parents or others who are dropping kids off to school are busy themselves and are not really thinking about the implications of how that works.

So having programs within schools to look at not just the education and awareness but looking at some of the engineering. It could be as simple as painting, which is a fairly low cost measure, painting of other areas, marking the safe routes, doing some speed counter measures, making the roads look narrower than they are to slow traffic down. There are quite some low cost options that could be looked at by schools as well.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: On an existing school that does not have room to expand or change access, particularly on a busy road like the Pacific Highway, what would your advice be for the most effective way to reduce speeding outside of a speed camera if a flashing 40-kilometre an hour zone is already in place?

Professor SENSERRICK: Certainly having somebody at a school crossing in the area and also if the school could organise to have safety monitors out in those areas. I think it is a viable case where the speed zones have reduced down to 40, but obviously on 80 kilometre roads they are only coming down to 60 and on 100 kilometre roads down to 80. Really while there is some benefit in raising awareness it is nonsensical in thinking that it would reduce the injury in terms of impact. That would still be a certain death because you could not brake anywhere near the 30 kilometre limit at those speeds. There needs to be more consideration of reducing those and in the case of those schools on highways it might be best to start by seeing if those schools could get help to reorganise the entry so it is not on the main road and reduce the pedestrian travel in that area.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Unfortunately many of them have no side roads so we are stuck.

Professor SENSERRICK: Can we look at building them? Even if it cuts into the school area it will make it a lot safer.

CHAIR: Following that through, we have talked about the punitive means of enforcing change in behaviour, namely speed cameras, but obviously we are more inclined to follow up some of the ideas that you have referred to, such as flashing lights as a form of education. What other forms of education are there? You have mentioned some treatments, but how do you see that fitting into the mix particularly with flashing lights and are there measures that can be added to that, such as controlled crossings, to assist in awareness, which I think is the central issue you have raised?

Professor SENSERRICK: These are the measures included in the Western Australian guidelines. Certainly having a safety committee within the school; schools can take on a lot of raising the awareness of the parents and people dropping off kids as well as among the children. The focus is often on schools educating children but there is also a lot more they can do. If they have a safety monitoring group they can be out there observing and giving warnings about people parking in the areas or behaving illegally, and looking at speeding. Some schools have put up their own signs to get cars to slow down. Schools can be very active in addressing

where they have a problem and then calling for enforcement when it is a particular problem rather than needing it all the time at all schools.

Mr Van Den DOOL: There have been quite a number of different school programs run typically by road safety officers from the Roads and Traffic Authority, now Roads and Maritime Services, and many of them have been very effective in bringing down speed. Many of them are school based and there are signs that say, "Slow down to 40 for me", for children. Many of those are very effective.

CHAIR: A personalised approach; make it human.

Mr Van Den DOOL: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about expanding the numbers of lollypop men and women in school zones?

Professor SENSERRICK: Again I think it is probably more a cost issue than anything else but it definitely helps increase safety if you have them at the crossing. The main difference between a school crossing and a regular pedestrian crossing is that you must wait until everyone has completely left the road before you drive through. I do not think there is good public awareness of that. On a regular pedestrian crossing you might continue once a person has crossed to the other side, but because children are unpredictable and can turn around and dart back the rule on school crossings is that you must wait until everyone is off the crossing. Having the lollypop person there makes the cars wait until everyone is off the crossing and is much more effective than trusting that everyone understands the rules.

Mr Van Den DOOL: In addition to school crossings, legally to have longer setbacks for parking gives greater sightlines so drivers can respond to children behaving unpredictably.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In an earlier submission from Waverley Council we heard about the introduction of wombat crossings where you drive up to a ramp and go across it and it slows you down significantly. What do you think about that?

Professor SENSERRICK: They are very effective but they have issues with drainage, so it will depend on the school.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Drainage?

Professor SENSERRICK: Because they are raised the water can collect in certain areas so you need to make sure there is proper drainage to handle storm water et cetera. For example, in some remote communities and rural areas where there is not full drainage they could be problematic and you might need to look at another type of—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you think they are a good idea.

Professor SENSERRICK: Yes they are; they are effective and they are recommended.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What makes them effective?

Professor SENSERRICK: Because you need to slow down. You can adjust the slope of entry onto the wombat crossing to force different speeds and you can make them so that quite low speeds are required outside schools. There is also a platform area that you are not going to speed across because you have to go down the other side. It keeps motorists slow across the whole platform. Compared to a speed hump, which people can often take quickly and then speed up rapidly as they get past, the wombat crossing is elongated and combined with a pedestrian crossing it can be very effective in slowing the cars over a longer distance and stopping them from speeding away.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Are they practical on main arterial roads?

Mr Van Den DOOL: No, you cannot do that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you can only use them on secondary roads?

Professor SENSERRICK: Local roads.

Mr Van Den DOOL: I doubt it is an appropriate speed control device for any major road that you and I would know the name of. In local streets, yes. On the corner of Smith and Jones Streets, yes, but not on the Pacific Highway or on Ourimbah Road or other major roads that carry heavy traffic—I would say that with anything over 10,000 vehicles a day it would become problematic.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Because it is simply slowing down traffic?

Mr Van Den DOOL: It will be very effective in slowing down traffic.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So what is the problem?

Mr Van Den DOOL: It is the impact on the traffic. You get traffic jams and you may get some rear-end crashes because people slow down and you start affecting the traffic capacity.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: One theory for the drop in pedestrian casualties in school zones is that there are fewer children walking to school. Can you comment on that?

Professor SENSERRICK: I have seen no figures on that so I cannot say yes or no. Certainly as the population grows there are a lot of people in cars but there are still a lot of pedestrians and cyclists. It is a little puzzling but it does not really matter whether it is a small number or not, you still need to protect the ones that are there. Given the more substantial drop when the measures were put in place than you might expect with numbers going down I think even if it has partly played a role these other measures are necessary.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you clarify an earlier statement you made? Which model do you prefer: the South Australian model, which is 24-hours a day set school zone speed limits; the Australian Capital Territory model, which is the entire school day; or the New South Wales model, which is part of the school day?

Professor SENSERRICK: Again I do not have any data on that, which is why I cannot—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you must have a preference.

Professor SENSERRICK: I think if we had them 24 hours a day with the understanding that the late night hours are not enforced—that it is there to cover whenever activity is occurring at the school—would be the most effective.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you would not really worry about the midnight to 6.00 a.m. period?

Professor SENSERRICK: You might have a school dance that goes to midnight. That is why it is difficult to have set hours. That is why South Australia has adopted 24 hours so that it covers whenever there is activity around the school.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: There is confusion about different school zones across New South Wales, which is part of the problem.

Professor SENSERRICK: Correct.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Regardless of the time zone it should be a uniform time.

Professor SENSERRICK: The understanding is that schools are used not just during regular school hours. There is a lot of activity around schools.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On balance, the 24-hour South Australian model?

Professor SENSERRICK: Correct. As you say, the New South Wales model can be confusing because it changes. When there are flashing lights and clear 40 kilometres an hour zones it is quite obvious, but sometimes they are not so obvious and it can be difficult for people to see the signs. That causes angst with the program and it can be confusing. If there is consistency across the State for the longer hours, I believe at the

minimum the ACT model for school hours raises the understanding that you have to be careful in those areas at all times. I cannot show you any effectiveness data to say that South Australia's model would be more effective than the ACT model. That is why I hesitate because I do not believe in having it across the board if it is going to greatly affect motorists and therefore reduce acceptance and consequently reduce compliance. It is a balance. If you go too hard and people do not agree with it people might rebel and ignore the signs. The ACT model may be sufficient but I do not have enough evidence to say that at this point.

CHAIR: We have traffic lights to stop traffic; would the presence of flashing lights in school zones override the models we have been talking about—in other words alerting drivers to the operation of a school zone and therefore counteracting the 24-hour model? Is awareness more important than the blanket approach?

Professor SENSERRICK: I have no evidence but I can certainly say that flashing lights definitely attract more attention and will bring more compliance. I am not so sure that having them just during the school hours as they are at the moment rather than for a longer period of time would be more effective.

CHAIR: Our Committee secretariat will send you any questions you have taken on notice. Thank you for appearing before the Committee today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

DAVID McTIERNAN, Engineer and Team Leader Safe Systems, Australian Road Research Board Group Ltd, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Thank you for attending the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety in its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. Evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to information you provide. Any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. The Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of the evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to further questions?

Mr McTIERNAN: Certainly.

CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr McTIERNAN: To clarify my background, I have had 16 years in local government working as a traffic and design engineer, primarily in the south-west Sydney area. I am formerly from Camden and Wollondilly councils. I have been with the Australian Road Research Board [ARRB] Group for four years leading a team of mostly engineers looking after road safety research, practical applications of that research, and working for the Roads and Traffic Authority and other government and non-government agencies. I believe my perspective on school zones is something the Committee may want to hear. The basis of the submission I made was a research paper that I co-authored with a behavioural scientist from our Melbourne office that was presented to a road safety conference in Canberra last year. There are other documents that support that research paper that I am happy to table if the Committee wants to see them. It was based on a project that we did for the Roads and Traffic Authority Centre for Road Safety on school risk and the flashing lights project.

CHAIR: We are interested in the work you have undertaken and any similar work you might have undertaken for other governments or road safety bodies in other States of Australia or in New Zealand. Could you comment on the school risk program and any other major projects undertaken?

Mr McTIERNAN: The Centre for Road Safety approached ARRB Group in 2008 asking for assistance with developing an objective risk-based approach to ranking school zones with a view to using that risk score to highlight which school zones may be most suitable in terms of priority for installing the flashing lights technology that was being trialled at the time. I was involved in that project team and I had also done an evaluation of the effectiveness of flashing lights in gaining compliance from motorists driving through. I understand that before my time at ARRB Group there was a similar trial of flashing light technology, I think in early 2002 or 2003.

CHAIR: Obviously the school risk model was developed for the Roads and Traffic Authority, which is now called Roads and Maritime Services, for the prioritisation of flashing lights in school zones, as you said. Do you know whether they are still using that particular model? How long would a risk score remain relevant, or how often might a school zone need to be reassessed?

Mr McTIERNAN: The risk model was based on an environmental assessment so it looked at all the different elements that comprised the road environment and the school crossing environment where children were predominantly crossing within the school zone. The risk assessment would remain valid as long as the main parameters that were assessed did not change. Obviously, if there was an assessment that there was no overbridge or underpass at the time and then subsequently that was put in, obviously the risk score for that environment would change significantly. Similarly, if the traffic volume changed considerably from the time of assessment to a later period, the risk score may also change.

CHAIR: Would it be an appropriate tool for evaluating whether to place fixed speed cameras in a school zone?

Mr McTIERNAN: The school risk model was only ever meant as a tool to guide the prioritisation and consideration of treatments generally. The Centre for Road Safety specifically asked us to consider a risk score

model for flashing lights. In developing the model we identified the opportunity that it could be used for other types of physical treatments, typically engineering treatments. In relation to speed cameras, I think that would be a stretch of its capabilities. It is more about engineering treatments and that sort of thing.

CHAIR: Clearly we are looking at ways to enhance school zone safety, awareness being paramount, but enforcement obviously being a necessary related treatment. In the school risk project were any school zones deemed sufficiently low risk that you considered removing restrictions?

Mr McTIERNAN: We developed a tool but we did not do the actual analysis of the school zones, so I am not sure whether I would be able to say that school zones should be removed. That would depend on the range of the school zones that were assessed at the time and obviously the scores that came out of that and we were not involved in that at all. We tested a few sites just to make sure that the scores came out and we concurred that it was giving reasonable results. I have not seen the entire assessment that may or may not have been done by the Roads and Traffic Authority.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you give us a bit of information on a couple of those test sites? Where did you test it? Could you give us some examples?

Mr McTIERNAN: It was more a desktop assessment to be honest. It was data based on—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you must have applied your model. Can you give us a few examples?

Mr McTIERNAN: The data that we got was from the Roads and Traffic Authority school zone database. Quite a range of schools were initially assessed and we then discussed those outputs with the Roads and Traffic Authority and it agreed that it was giving reasonable results. As I said, 36 schools are listed in this particular report—Corpus Christi, Punchbowl Public School, Minto Public School, Mt Austin Public School, and Bulli Public School. The scores have no numerical significance as such but in this report they range from 654 down to 9.7.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: What is the range of scoring?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Which school got 654?

Mr McTIERNAN: That was Corpus Christi. This report is ranked in priority order.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is 654 bad or good? Is it dangerous or safe?

Mr McTIERNAN: It is relatively high risk compared to the others that were assessed as part of that process.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What was 654? What school would that be?

Mr McTIERNAN: That was Corpus Christi Link Road.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How did Minto Public School fare on that?

Mr McTIERNAN: Minto Public School was third on this list and it is 606.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The third most dangerous on your list?

Mr McTIERNAN: I would not say dangerous; it is the third highest risk score.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Does highest risk not equal dangerous, which means that your child has a greater chance of being run over?

Mr McTIERNAN: Relatively. Corpus Christi, Punchbowl Public School and Minto Public School on Pembroke Road were deemed to be the three highest risks in the test of the school risk tool. Relatively they have higher risk elements in the road environment for a child crossing the road at that location.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you think they should put speed cameras there?

Mr McTIERNAN: To be honest, I do not know those individual schools. I have not visited the actual sites. As I said, this was a desktop assessment based on the data that we required for the school risk model.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Again just give me a comparison. What school was 9.7?

Mr McTIERNAN: Griffith East Public School.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is a country school on a secondary road.

Mr McTIERNAN: I do not have the road name, to be honest, so I cannot advise what that was. The type of data that we looked at included the approach speed limit of vehicles, the pedestrian volume, which is predominantly an estimate for practical reasons—there are 11,000 odd schools so collecting the actual volumes is difficult—traffic volumes, the number of lanes that a child would have to cross, whether on-street parking is present or what type of configuration there is, whether it is parallel parking or angle parking.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you proud of this model? Do you think that it stacks up?

Mr McTIERNAN: Considering there was nothing else available I think it is quite a good model. It considers all the engineering features found relevant. That was based on literature review of international research and Australian research. Is it the pinnacle? Yes, I think anything like this can be revised and modified. Indeed, the Centre for Road Safety recently requested that we review it to look at other factors that may be put into there.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Such as?

Mr McTIERNAN: From memory, the bands of speed zones that were ranked were above 70 kilometres and below 70 kilometres per hour and below 50 kilometres per hour. The Centre for Road Safety wanted to see whether there was any research or a risk mechanism that could look at 10-kilometre per hour bands—so a finer assessment—the percentage of heavy vehicles that might be comprised in the traffic mix, because there is a public perception that more trucks in the mix is a more dangerous road, and a variety of other factors were looked at that were not included in this.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are the 36 listed in your submission?

Mr McTIERNAN: Because time was pressing I think the submission was based on a research paper that was presented which did not specify these lists.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can we get the list of the 36 schools, their ranking and the materials?

Mr McTIERNAN: I am happy to table that, sure.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Just out of interest, is it on the public record? I am wondering whether it is on the website.

Mr McTIERNAN: Roads and Maritime Services, or the Roads and Traffic Authority or the Centre for Road Safety at the time, engaged us on a consulting basis. With reference to my submission to this Committee, I did not have time to get its consent to include this information, so I am happy to provide it assuming that Roads and Maritime Services approves it from a commercial perspective.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Fair enough, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. This includes a risk model here so we have that information.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But it would be nice to get those 36 schools.

CHAIR: That is a separate issue. On the considerations for coming to the risk we realise from many of the submissions that they quote those considerations. At least there is a base from which we are working which appears to be fairly strong in identifying all the factors.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: You state in your submission that the greatest proportion of casualties occurred on roads with a posted sign limit of 50 kilometres. I am wondering whether that is just because there are more roads with that speed limit. Is that the case? My concern is whether there is an issue there.

Mr McTIERNAN: I believe that would be exposure. There are far more 50-kilometre per hour approach speed limits since 2000 when the general urban speed limit changed than there would be for 60-kilometres per hour. Obviously most of those 50-kilometre per hour roads would be local roads and not major arterials.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: What do you see as the most effective tool for reducing traffic speed when you are approaching a school zone?

Mr McTIERNAN: The study we did for the Centre for Road Safety into the flashing light technology showed that they were quite effective in reducing the general speed of vehicles through the school zone. From memory it was of the order of six to seven kilometres per hour. The level of compliance was still not great; there was nowhere near 100 per cent compliance but there was clear evidence to show that drivers modified their speed coming into the speed zone due to the flashing light technology. I think awareness would certainly be the greatest. I believe that the vast majority of motorists would not speed intentionally through school zones when they know that children are present, but awareness clearly would be the most effective.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: When we spoke earlier to other witnesses they indicated that there was confusion across New South Wales with the different times allotted to school zones. The Australian Capital Territory and South Australian models change into all day or 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Do you have an opinion on that or any statistics to show us? I know that it is early days as it has only just been implemented but is this something that you would support in New South Wales?

Mr McTIERNAN: It would only be an opinion similar to Professor Teresa Senserrick's evidence. I do not have any data to back it up one way or another.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you are an expert in the field so what is your opinion?

Mr McTIERNAN: I am happy to give my opinion. In my experience from working in the city I do not drive through school zones very often. When I do on my days off, or if I am out and about, there is a lack of understanding by me that a school zone might be active at the time. I think it is almost a "depends" sort of question and response. In my opinion I do not believe that a 24-hour model would be appropriate. In my view it does not raise it as a special speed zone in people's minds. We have done some work for Roads ACT, not for school zones, so I was exposed to that when driving around the Australian Capital Territory. In my view that would probably be more effective than a 24-hour one.

But again it relies on people understanding that the schools are active. I think it could be effective. You would still need to raise people's awareness of it. Whether it is a New South Wales experience or view, I think the model that is in currently is probably the most effective balance between impact on the traffic stream and safety for students. However, clearly compliance and awareness issues need to be addressed. My opinion is that I think the current New South Wales one is effective but obviously there are things that could be done to enhance compliance with that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Your submission notes that boys are more likely to be injured in accidents in school zones than girls. What are the most appropriate interventions to address this and do you think more targeted education would be effective in this regard?

Mr McTIERNAN: I am an engineer, not a behaviouralist so I think it is probably a bit limited. Equally, I was a boy once so I think it will be a general understanding of the difference between boys and girls. Boys will be horsing around more and may be more distracted. A behavioural awareness campaign may be more effective but again it is purely a personal opinion and not an expert one.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Given your experience in local government and in school zones throughout your professional life, in your view or in your experience are accidents around schools in school zones more likely to be from through traffic or parents or people attending the school and pulling out and parking badly, for example? Do you understand the distinction that I am making?

Mr McTIERNAN: Yes. When I was in local government I always held the view that the parents of the children are almost the children's own worst enemy. They are contributing to significant congestion and they are double parking. Compliance with the speed limit, given that they are going to the school, is probably pretty good. I do not have specific evidence about that. I think most of the issue of non-compliance would be through vehicles. Again it is almost a "depends" type of response. It depends also on the road environment. Obviously if it is the Pacific Highway, the Narellan Road or some major arterial road, it will be heavily influenced by the type of activity on that road, so it would be through vehicles. But on a local road or local street it will be the parents, their behaviour and their activity. It may not be something active that they have done in pulling out inappropriately, but it may be the double parking. It may be the heavy congestion, or parking in the bus pick-up area instead of the parent pick-up area.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you know if there is any data on that at all?

Mr McTIERNAN: I do not know if there is any data on that, to be honest. It would be anecdotal experience from local government. I think you will find that a lot of councils would have that information generally through parent surveys or working with schools. Whether the RMS has it, I am not sure.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think the issue with parents around school zones is through a lack of understanding of the road rules or a disregard for the road rules?

Mr McTIERNAN: A lack of understanding and I think it also is time pressure and just a lack of awareness of their environment. They are focused on their child and the next appointment perhaps, getting home to do whatever. I think it is just a general lack of awareness more than a disregard.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: One of the points a previous witness mentioned was this idea of safer routes to schools and footpaths that are marked clearly for the students to understand that this is the safe side. Do you think with parking and drop-off zones around schools that maybe a colour-coded system would work well where the kerb and gutter perhaps is a particular colour to say it is safe to stop here, it is not safe to stop there, rather than trying to rely on different signs? Some people have a clearer understanding of that than others.

Mr McTIERNAN: It could. It still would require an awareness campaign so that people understand it. It would still require enforcement.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Something like traffic light colours: if it is red there is probably a problem, if it is green it is probably okay?

Mr McTIERNAN: That would improve people's awareness, but you still will have a compliance issue. I travel by train everyday and Macarthur railway station has a new upgraded bus interchange and people drop off passengers in the bus pick-up and drop-off area. You always will have a compliance issue. If something was more clearly colour coded, whether it is a pavement issue or a kerb painted issue, the delineation needs to be clear. I guess that takes away some of the excuses drivers may have. If it is clearly there and a police officer or a council ranger says, "You're in the red zone, you're not allowed to be here" that takes away that excuse. As I say, I do not think it is a disregard; I think it is just time pressures and perhaps a bit of laziness in the fact that parents just want to park as close to the school as possible.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Do you think there is sufficient education for new drivers?

Mr McTIERNAN: I have had my licence a long time. To be honest, I cannot answer that.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: That presents an issue. Do you think there is merit in the idea for a driver's licence renewal examination? I understand that that is off the topic.

Mr McTIERNAN: It is a little bit. I think clearly there is an awareness issue for motorists and the general public. Whether it is effective through licensing, resitting the licence exam or whatever, I do not know, to be honest. Certainly, a public awareness campaign may have some effectiveness.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: One issue raised in evidence to the Committee last week was that local schools should have more say in the speed limit and the times their school zones apply—essentially, there should be a local committee that determines the hours of operation and the speed around their school. Is it your

professional view that consistency is more important than a local response so that all schools are 40 kilometres an hour and all schools operate at the same time so that all drivers know where they operate? Or is it more important that it be relevant to a local school?

Mr McTIERNAN: I believe the input from the local council and the local school is important. But in the end, I think consistency across the State probably is a higher priority because in the end it is a balancing act. Councils and school communities probably feel a lack of empowerment in setting the speed zone or having an input to it. That rests with the RMS. Local traffic committees obviously try to have input into it and lobby where they can. But in the end I think consistency is a far more effective way because if I am travelling along the Pacific Highway between, say, seven and 10 o'clock in the morning and I am going through various school zones, I can be switched on to one rather than looking at individual ones, unless, of course, the flashing lights or some other awareness facility was increased. Then, as different schools came on line and went off line, you would be taking your cue from the flashing light. So I think that comes down to a cost issue as well.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Were you present when the previous witness talked about wombat crossings?

Mr McTIERNAN: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As an engineer, how do you feel about them?

Mr McTIERNAN: I was at Fairfield council when they were first introduced. I think they are an effective engineering treatment on local roads. I would agree with Teresa and her offsider that they have limited use on heavily trafficked roads. Again, it is a balance because they are 24/7 measure. If you have a heavy vehicle truck route, for example, the impact on that could be quite adverse, and you would not want to have it. But on a local street with a certain traffic volume, I think they can be quite effective.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Did it work in Fairfield?

Mr McTIERNAN: I would say they have because they have been adopted by many councils throughout the whole State. We have even recommended them to other jurisdictions and internationally as well as a measure not only of slowing down vehicles but also of raising the child slightly higher into the driver's line of sight. Issues such as drainage and whatever are technical issues that can always be dealt with. You mentioned earlier footpaths, safer routes and whatnot. I think in my submission it showed that something like 986 child pedestrian crashes were recorded over a five-year period. Only 96 of them were in school zones. I think that issue needs to be kept in mind as well: school zones represent less than 10 per cent, for that period at least, of child pedestrian incidents.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Do you think that is a good reflection on the current system?

Mr McTIERNAN: I think it shows a focus on where it was needed. But children would spend a greater length of time walking to and from school outside the actual school zone where they are protected. Once they are outside that, it is back to normal. High concentration and high focus definitely is required, but outside of that we have almost left them to their own devices. There is plenty of evidence. For example, when there is a lack of a concrete footpath and the ground is muddy because it has been raining for a while, where is the child going to walk? They will walk on the side of the road. They have now increased their exposure or their risk.

CHAIR: The school risk model was developed in 2008-09 for prioritisation of flashing lights for school zones. Can you link that to any other measures that have been adopted as a result of that school risk model that you now consider appropriate and which should be rolled out perhaps across the majority of school zones?

Mr McTIERNAN: Other safety treatments, for example?

CHAIR: Yes. Was there a direct correlation between flashing lights? Are there other measures? Have you seen that school risk model become very effective as a result? Can you link it to results?

Mr McTIERNAN: Discussion with people within the Centre for Road Safety has indicated that they have not used the school risk model more broadly in treatment identification. As I said, they commissioned the ARRB Group to develop it for the flashing lights technology itself. We had identified that a school might be

high risk, but it may not be in an appropriate location for flashing lights for a number of different reasons. You could then identify what factor contributes to that high-risk score than others. It might be the number of lanes that need to be crossed or there might be a roundabout nearby that children have to cross, for example. It may be just outside the school zone so the flashing lights may not be appropriate. But the input and output data could highlight that that sort of issue may need some other engineering treatment to be addressed. Is there evidence of linking it? No, I am not aware of anything from the RMS whether it has used it that way.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Again from your experience in local government, councils need the concurrence of the RTA to install pedestrian crossings, wombat crossings and what have you having done the work with their local communities through their traffic committee. Do you think it is a good idea that the RTA can veto a request of a council to put in a pedestrian crossing on a local road?

Mr McTIERNAN: There certainly is a hot issue in Camden at the moment on that matter, reading from the local papers. I think the community has an expectation that zebra crossings, for example, are the best treatment, particularly outside of schools. I would personally disagree with that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: It presents a false sense of security?

Mr McTIERNAN: It presents a false sense of security. The children and parents will see the solid white lines as being a zone of protection and they are not. Children's crossings, as mentioned by the previous witness, place a great onus on the motorist. I think the RTA in the traffic committee structure tries to keep it consistent with policy both at a State level and what is appropriate for the individual location. But, equally, I have been involved in projects where the RTA has vetoed it on policy grounds and the local politics and the local community have still wanted it. So you then have to appeal it. The mechanism is there to have a second independent review of that policy. It is not necessarily inappropriate that the RTA in the end as the statewide holder of that requirement has some capability to say that that is not appropriate based on these grounds. Perhaps the system is not well communicated or well applied, in my view.

CHAIR: Thank you for appearing before the Committee today. That concludes this part of the hearing.

(The witness withdrew)

CHAIR: You are attending the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the earlier hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness and minimise the risks of injury and fatality. I do welcome you on behalf of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia Roads and Transport Directory to our hearing today.

MARK DAVID TURNER, Executive Manager, Institute of Public Works Engineering Association, New South Wales Division, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should point out that deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of the Parliament which is an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time is limited and the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing the replies to which will form part of the evidence being made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr TURNER: I will.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions, would you like to make a brief opening statement of perhaps five minutes?

Mr TURNER: I thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak to you. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia is a membership based organisation comprising people engaged in supplying public works and services predominantly within local government. That is not just an engineering function. You may have noticed from our submission that we do have members that are actively engaged in road safety, being traffic engineers and road safety officers who are employed by local government usually on a 50/50 basis: 50 per cent funded by the RTA and 50 per cent by the local government themselves. We run in conjunction with the Local Government and Shires Association and the roads and transport directorate. From the perspective of why we make the submission: Firstly, a substantial proportion of our membership is engaged in road safety; secondly, from a road management point of view local government does manage or own 85 per cent of the road network within New South Wales and from the statistics I have been given by the RTA and elsewhere 50 per cent of road trauma occurs on that 85 per cent of the network. Certainly that is an issue for local government and for our members in particular.

When the call for expression of interest and the invitation came to provide a submission we circulated that request through our membership and the submission that I have put together today reflects some of the views that have come through from practitioners in local government as well as some of the views gleaned from our Roads and Transport Directorate.

CHAIR: Your submission does raise some of the problems that local government areas have in providing and maintaining sufficient safety measures in school zones. What are the main reasons for the difficulties in those areas and what can be done to help in those areas ensuring that the school zones remain well maintained and efficient?

Mr TURNER: The basis of our submission indicated that the majority of the provisions that are provided of the safety zones—the dragon's teeth and other measures—are adequate, but our philosophy to road safety within local government, within our membership base, is that we have actively promoted what you would call a Safe Systems approach. It is not only aspects of good engineering, traffic control devices and traffic calming, but it is also connected with having safer people, the education program and the enforcement that goes with it and to a lesser extent, it is not particularly relevant in this discussion, safer vehicles. I guess technology develops there. Our two specific interests within local government are that of maintaining the safe road aspect of good engineering but it must be accompanied by good education for students, parents and the driving public generally.

CHAIR: One of your members called for a better education campaign aimed at motorists. What would be some of the effective ways of doing that and are the current education programs sufficient to be built upon or do we need to adopt a new approach?

Mr TURNER: One of the difficulties with anything which is behavioural in nature is trying to assess the effectiveness and it has always been that question. One of the reasons we put an example within our submission of the Dungog Radar School Safety Project which combines a measure of awareness and—although that is not an enforcement type attitude—makes people aware of their situation: Is that education? I think that had demonstrable results. There are aspects of how to measure the effectiveness of our road safety officers in delivering those education programs at a community level. In many ways they can only do it on a quantitative level; in that we have delivered so much. The scattered nature of road trauma and accidents is sometimes hard to

measure. I think we identified there is obviously a large proportion of our resources devoted to education within schools. I do not know if the parents are as educated. We still see examples—and we highlighted the issues—of double-parking and bad parent behaviour setting bad examples. Those are anecdotal observations by people working in the areas.

CHAIR: It is a theme coming through in other submissions and hearings.

Mr TURNER: I see it firsthand myself but that is not the basis of my submission.

CHAIR: Can I take you to the installation of flashing lights? It was part of the submission, along with others, that were received by the Committee. Have you been involved in any local government areas which are currently using flashing lights and if so have you had any feedback on their effectiveness and do you support their introduction across all school zones?

Mr TURNER: There are three questions there. Firstly, personally I have not been directly involved. I understand that some of our local government areas have used them but I could not pinpoint those to you. The basis of our submission is that it is an extra tool, particularly in areas to raise awareness that we are entering a high-risk zone.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Your submission talks about the challenges of funding, particularly between State and local governments. In the area of new developments and safety infrastructure around schools, do you think the cost should be split more evenly between local and State governments or is there simply a need for responsibility to be more clearly defined?

Mr TURNER: The basis of our submission is that we already have a significant funding problem with maintaining our existing road infrastructure network. I did make reference to the benchmarking projects that the Roads and Transport Directorate has delivered every two years for the last six years. That identifies a funding shortfall in maintenance of something in the vicinity of \$600 million. If a new school is being developed or additional facilities of safety are coming through, it is an improvement to infrastructure. If those things are not specifically in the budget, where does that money come from? The basis of our submission is, and the question should be raised, should the Department of Education be picking that up and should it be factored into the cost of development and delivery of new education facilities.

We highlighted that some of our road safety officers identified that perhaps some of the private schools have been more cooperative in acceding to those requests and supporting the funding. The request to deliver a new set of traffic lights or additional facilities—be they bus bay parking and kiss and rides—they are costs that do not immediately get funded. We highlighted the reluctance of the Department of Education to meet section 94 commitments to local government when they are providing those, which would go some way to assisting the delivery of that material.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I did not quite catch your professional background. Have you worked in local government?

Mr TURNER: No. I started my career with in Sydney Water. I am a structural engineer by profession. For the last 16 years I have managed professional associations but I am an engineer by background with limited experience in traffic engineering.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I am not sure whether you can answer this question. In terms of road safety measures around schools, do you think the solution is more fixed events such as speed humps and traffic devices or is it more of a policy that we should aim for, such as, restrictions on speed limits and the hours of operation?

Mr TURNER: Some of the arguments that our members have put forward are that there needs to be consistency. I do not think we are within that approach. I do not believe that particularly on high-volume traffic roads we should have elevated crossings and so on, particularly outside school hours, because that would affect other flow. The question that came up was consistency in terms of what we provide in raising awareness, be they flashing lights or school zones. The timing of those seems to be consistent. We also highlighted there are some anomalies in the system where you have boundaries of schools on high-volume roads but with no direct access to that road. Why then impose a 40 kilometres an hour limit or the same restrictions on that section of road? We gave the example within that presentation of north Nowra.

Our argument would be that just as there has been rationalisation in terms of speed zones, the ability to avoid confusion—what time is this operating or where is it—is a high priority across the State. Our members reflected that. Even though they come from a parochial view of what is right for their area, there seemed to be a consistent presentation they would argue for: a standardised set of measures but at the same time the measures are not applied in a senseless fashion to areas where they make no difference whatsoever.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Mr Turner, in your submission you highlight the complaints that councils in local government have made regarding schools not taking full responsibility for safety measures, in particular, crossing flags. What are the different responsibilities of councils and schools in terms of maintaining school zones and generally promoting school safety?

Mr TURNER: We have noted that the Roads and Traffic Authority runs education within schools and our own road safety officers supplement and add to that. We highlighted a resourcing issue to accompany those. Where we do have those road safety officers, they take that role and their relationship with the schools fairly significantly. Obviously, at a local government level we have the responsibility for maintaining the roads and infrastructure in a sound and suitable method. It was in a submission we made earlier this year to the National Road Safety Strategy what needs to be applied.

What we are arguing for is that when they are maintaining those roads they are provided adequately. We see the need for assessment of road safety should be an integral part of local government activities. The submission we made was that it should not be a role of changing existing legislation through local government's integrated planning and reporting. The road safety issues, be they around schools or anywhere else, within a shire or local government area should be related to part of their risk management plan, which is part of their responsibilities in integrated planning and reporting. That may require some change in regulation but not necessarily a change in legislation. It is of concern to us and we would continue to argue that, one, we need to be properly funded and, two, road safety—be it safer roads, safer people and to a lesser extent safer cars—should be an integral part of local government activities.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: We have heard from several sources now that there is an issue of policing of parking practices in school zones. Do you have any experience of or opinion on that?

Mr TURNER: My own personal experience and we have highlighted anecdotally from our road safety officer members that this does seem to be a recurring problem. Bad parent behaviour is as much an education need as double parking on crossings or in school zones and bus bays. We see mums and dads running their kids across roads not in safety zones. From my personal experience I have seen the outcome of that in my own local area, which is the north shore of Sydney. I also have personal experience from a son of a friend having been killed from probably an uncontrolled state—stepping out from behind a bus, running across a road and being hit by a car. Those sorts of things have a personal impact on me.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: A substantial part of your submission is the speed radar school safety project at Dungog and you say that the school principals were very happy with the results and that their observations and evaluations show a close to 100 per cent compliance when radar is being displayed. You say that "the beauty of radar is the immediacy of compliance". Can you take me through this and give me some observations about it?

Mr TURNER: I might say from the outset that we, through the Institute of Public Works, run a series of excellence awards each year and one of the categories is that of road safety and we invite submissions. This was one of six or seven submissions that came in for awards for excellence last year.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: And Dungog won?

Mr TURNER: No, they did not win this one; it was Dubbo council. But I put it in because in a way it highlighted them. One of the aspects of this whole systems approach to road safety is driver education or the education of behavioural change, which involves awareness and enforcement as part of it.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But the fact is that you found that speed cameras at Dungog school reduced speeding?

Mr TURNER: Yes, that is right.

CHAIR: Can I just clarify: We are talking about radar units as awareness or an actual punitive measure?

Mr TURNER: These were of an awareness nature not a punitive nature.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When you say "an awareness nature" what do you mean?

Mr TURNER: It flashes up your speed, just like when you are going through a construction zone and they have put the sign up which says, "Your speed is 65 kph", and you say, hang on, it is a 40 kilometres an hour zone. It is that sort of awareness.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you like to see these rolled out in other parts of the State? Rather than punishing people just sort of reminding them what their speeds are?

Mr TURNER: I see that as being of great value. I think Allen Shrimpton highlighted that this speed radar safety project formed out of the lower Hunter speed safety program, and I know that in other areas, particularly in areas like Port Stephens and so on, that awareness had been accompanied by an enforcement program, and obviously that provides a great deterrent as well. But the whole basis of this was to raise people's awareness that they were in a school zone and to improve compliance with that 40 kilometres an hour.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Let us leap forward. What do you think we should do with the results of the findings of this? With speed cameras you are not punishing people or fining them but you are changing their—

Mr TURNER: Changing their behaviour. We would love to see that rolled out. What we have highlighted there is that we saw a program that received support from the Roads and Traffic Authority—whether that should extend to all school zones or whatever I do not know, but it highlighted that there was an element of local responsibility developed in that some of the schools said that this is such a great idea, they have had such a great effect, let us raise the money for one of our own cameras.

CHAIR: Can you comment on the availability and funding of those units?

Mr TURNER: I could not comment on that, I am sorry.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If they wanted to raise money how much are we talking about?

Mr TURNER: I am not aware of that. I could follow up information. Allen Shrimpton has retired from Dungog council.

CHAIR: It is good to have it on the record as something obviously you wish us to pursue.

Mr TURNER: That may be something that you wish to follow up with, but I would be more than happy to research that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you take that on notice?

Mr TURNER: I can, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What other schools? Dungog Public School, St Josephs Catholic School, Glen William Public School, Clarence Town Public School and Vacy Public School?

Mr TURNER: Yes. As I said, this really highlighted that it is a behaviour issue; it is not just about engineering. This is one of the interesting things from my membership base that I have got both the engineering aspects of our membership and also the primary role of a road safety officer is that of behavioural change.

CHAIR: I am glad that has been raised because it is significant that we have not discussed it to date in our other hearings. Other witnesses have not discussed it in other hearings, but it is something one sees on major highways and it is fairly obvious that if it is used for highway speed control and awareness then here is an obvious one that could be better utilised in school zones.

Mr TURNER: I think there is also an awareness that on the major highway and construction zone that while there is that advisory nature to it, it is often backed up with an enforcement aspect to it as well, although that in itself raises issues in construction zones of putting police enforcement officers in harm's way.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about the general principle of speed cameras?

Mr TURNER: That is a little bit offline.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It does relate because it has come up in other areas.

Mr TURNER: I am quite supportive of them. Obviously the complaints that come from them—if you do not speed you do not have a problem. One of the problems I saw is if you have got inconsistency with too many variations in speed zones and so on to know exactly what the speed limit is. I would be pleased to see that steps are being taken to get some rationalisation there.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about the Government removing eight speed cameras from school zones?

Mr TURNER: I could not really comment on that. Certainly, I am not certain as to whether the decision behind that related to a lack of evidence to suggest that they had been a sufficient deterrent to reduce the speeds in the zones, and I think some of the questions related to whether it was revenue related or road safety related.

CHAIR: In your submission your comments went into the relationship between local government and State road authorities. I am interested because the work done by road safety officers and local traffic committees in school areas raises the question of shared funding from the Department of Education and Communities, and you referred to that in your submission. Could you explain a little further the current funding situation, whether it would be appropriate to share the funding across State and local governments? We have been aware that the road safety officer—and we are talking about that type of position—has been subject to review, so we would be interested to know what is the current state of the program as well.

Mr TURNER: The last I heard there has still been no decision made of the continuation. They are being funded through the local government road safety program. The last I heard was that no decision had been made for the continuation of the funding of their position 50 per cent by the Roads and Traffic Authority beyond I think the middle of next year.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Could you just repeat that? The funding for the road safety officers within local government, which is part funded or half funded by the RTA, at this stage there is no confirmation that funding will continue past next year?

Mr TURNER: The last I heard—unless I have missed something, and I think I indicated to Mr Aplin that I have been away for some time, but we have had no feedback.

CHAIR: We are aware from the previous witness that not all councils have road safety officers. Is your view, and we are particularly talking about school zone safety, that the role should be filled at the majority of councils?

Mr TURNER: I believe it should be. I think at last count there were about 85 positions across the 152 councils within New South Wales. One of the issues that we have seen is that because of the uncertainty a number of them have left and gone on to find other employment. One of the arguments I guess is that when you run a membership-based organisation you try to look where the future lies for your members, and irrespective of whether it is funded 50 per cent by the Roads and Traffic Authority or not, I would like to see a continued role for them.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you finding that some of the 85 are leaving the field because of the uncertainty?

Mr TURNER: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many would you estimate are in that area?

Mr TURNER: Possibly 10 or 15 so far.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Significant—about 20 per cent?

Mr TURNER: Yes. That concern and uncertainty came through earlier this year at our one-day conference. We run a road safety conference each year and that was one of the recurring concerns of our members.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is that a brain drain? Are there people with the expertise leaving and you have to re-skill them up?

Mr TURNER: They are drawn from a whole range of areas and, as I said, the role is predominantly behavioural. So you do not necessarily get an engineer; you may have somebody come out of an Arts or a psychology background. It is interesting to see how they develop that expertise. I see a continuing role—if we looked at taking that systems approach to road safety—because they have the expertise, and perhaps because they are psychologists, I think the agencies have changed to bring together both the engineering and behavioural aspects of road safety within their local government areas.

You asked about the awards program that the school did not win, one of the programs that did win was that at Dubbo and Wellington Shire Council where the road safety officer introduced a driver education program within council, which was so successful that it was picked up by both private industry and other councils in the area and other groups to educate their own fleet drivers, and as such they were having an impact both on the engineering and the behavioural roles within council.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: These positions are funded on a year-by-year basis?

Mr TURNER: Yes. They were on a three-yearly renewal program. The original program, the local government road safety program, started in 1995, and it is a three-way program between the Local Government and Shires Associations, IPWEA and the Roads and Traffic Authority. We provided the allocation of additional grants to Road Safety Officers to undertake specific projects, but within that context the funding came out 50 per cent Roads and Traffic Authority and 50 per cent local government. Some of those road safety officers are shared by several councils in the delivery of that program. I think I note in the submission that that changed at the end of 2010; it was the continuity of three years and saying, "This is up for grabs, we are reviewing the role of that road safety program", and they have basically continued to agree on a 12-month to 12-month basis, but it probably does not provide a great deal of job security or confidence for members who are engaged in that area.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You could understand why they would be leaving the field if they are only on 12-month contracts.

Mr TURNER: Yes. As a membership-based organisation we cannot do too much there in terms of saying we will create new jobs for them or whatever. But our argument would be that if road safety becomes a whole-of-council objective, an integral part of their risk management plan and integrated planning and reporting, then those road safety officers can have a vital role in terms of bringing together both the engineering and the behavioural aspects of delivering good road safety outcomes within local government areas.

CHAIR: With some of the engineering and possibly local roads responsibilities, your submission includes comments from members on how to improve safety in new developments. What would you consider to be key considerations for developing new school sites, particularly in relation to road safety and school zones?

Mr TURNER: I guess the provision of proper infrastructure, but it starts with an assessment of the planning and I think we make comment of the need to undertake a road safety audit, which for a lot of developments or new programs is required in local government or the Roads and Traffic Authority will require those to be undertaken. But it seems that a vital part of that is to assess the road safety impacts of any new development, be it a school or other infrastructure.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In one of your points you say "deter any new developments near major roads". You are supporting a ban on building schools near major roads?

Mr TURNER: Yes. I think we highlighted a couple of issues there where you have got three or four schools in a cul-de-sac area, which then empty out onto a major road.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Where are those three schools?

Mr TURNER: I am not certain.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you come back to us on that?

Mr TURNER: Yes, I can come back on that location. You might notice that the submissions we had came from five local government areas.

CHAIR: In terms of streaming students and keeping away from major roads obviously we have an issue where current schools are sited on major arterials and major highways. Are there any engineering approaches that you would like to expand upon that were included in your submission?

Mr TURNER: When they are sited on major roads the issue of isolation in the first place becomes one of the key things, which is the safety barrier fencing and pedestrian overpasses or underpasses, as the case may be. That should be the primary consideration. Where that boundary is of a secondary nature. I think I highlighted that the question is if they have got no direct access to that main road why the heck do we put a 40 kilometre an hour limit on those sections? The example at North Nowra was the example given in our submission. I have driven through those sections myself and scratched my head and said hang on, there is no real access to the road here; why do we do it? There are other parts of the metropolitan area where I see similar situations. The Princes Highway at Rockdale, somewhere down there, I think I have noticed very good isolation of the traffic flow from pedestrians.

CHAIR: Mr Turner, thank you for appearing before the Committee today. We will send you a copy of the transcript to check.

Mr TURNER: There are a couple of clarifications which I will be more than happy to research and provide the answers for. Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

CHAIR: Good morning. Thank you for joining us at this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the earlier hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risk of injury and fatality.

GREGOR MACFIE, Director, Policy and Research, New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People, and

VANESSA WHITTINGTON, Senior Policy Officer, New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act of 1901.

Time is limited today. The Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr MACFIE: Yes, we would.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of perhaps five minutes?

Mr MACFIE: Certainly. I do not think it would be five minutes but we would like to say that in terms of the developmental needs of children under the age of 18 we think that the school safety zone program is thoroughly justified and that the evidence is really there in terms of the effect that it has had in terms of the prevention of injury and death of not only children but also other pedestrians. As our submission makes clear, we have made some suggestions about how the school safety zones might be improved but overall we support the broad directions of the current policy.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. I would like to expand a little on the work undertaken by the Commission for Children and Young People in the field of road safety, in particular of course school zone safety. Has the commission had a role in promoting current school zone restrictions, for instance?

Mr MACFIE: We have not.

CHAIR: Do you think enough is being done to ensure the safety of children and young people in New South Wales in the area of road safety?

Mr MACFIE: I think, as the submission makes clear, there are areas where the promotion particularly in the school and among the parent community—we have made some suggestions about how that might be strengthened. I think there is certainly some broad public awareness of pedestrian safety, but there are specific issues that in our view are not receiving enough attention. Things like the drop off zones around schools, parental parking behaviour, how roads and the structure and location of school zones and other infrastructure do or do not contribute to injury and death of pedestrians under the age of 18 or those who are attending school.

CHAIR: Indeed. Those elements are being picked up in a range of submissions and through the hearings. The Committee notes the commission's recommendation to seek input from children and young people as part of the inquiry process. Were children and young people consulted as part of your submission?

Mr MACFIE: They have not been, no.

CHAIR: Have you received any feedback from children and young people with regard to road safety and the effectiveness of the current school zones? Do you have anything on record, for instance?

Mr MACFIE: We do not. We are actually in between two young people's advisory committees and we are just in the process of forming a new committee. That is certainly something that we can raise with the new committee but we do not have one currently and so we have not had the opportunity to do that in the short time available.

CHAIR: We have had the benefit of hearing from a large number of organisations, including the Parents and Citizens Association, so we are obtaining information from that avenue but we would obviously be interested in anything that comes to the commission's attention.

Considering that slower speeds are proven to be beneficial both in terms of reducing accidents due to decreasing stopping time as well as improving injury outcomes should an accident occur, do you think the current 40-kilometre an hour speed limit is appropriate or would you support lower speeds?

Mr MACFIE: I think our position at the moment is that the 40-kilometre limit has been shown to significantly reduce both the number of injuries and the severity of injuries. So at the moment that is our position, that the 40-kilometre zone is appropriate.

CHAIR: In your submission you recommended the creation of school zones for all early childhood education and care facilities. Would you consider the 40-kilometre an hour speed limit appropriate in these zones or should they be lower?

Mr MACFIE: I think there is a benefit in having consistency in terms of not having huge numbers of different speed zones. That is an important consideration. We really have not seen the evidence for what you would do in terms of lower speed limits or what that would actually achieve in terms of injury reduction or the severity of the injury. I think that is something that is open to further research.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you support 40-kilometre speed zones around childcare centres and day care centres?

Mr MACFIE: Yes, we do.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Another submission received by the Committee suggested introducing a consistent speed limit of 40-kilometres an hour throughout central Sydney and residential areas of Sydney. It sounds like that is something you would support since consistency is an important element of the road safety policy?

Mr MACFIE: I think that one of the striking findings from the research that has been done has been the overall reduction in pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the school zones, not just for children. Certainly when we are thinking about school zones—and one of our interests is in terms of children's ability to independently access services and open play areas and other things in an area. It is great having the 40-kilometre zone around the school zone but in terms of children's travel patterns we would certainly be very interested in perhaps expanding the 40-kilometre zone more widely to enable children to safely cross roads and deal with roads and traffic.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: We heard some evidence earlier that the number of children injured around school zones as a proportion of the total number of children injured as pedestrians is very low, meaning that their injuries outside of school zones was comparatively much higher. Do you say that would support your position there?

Mr MACFIE: It would appear to, although I think it is also worth pointing out that it appears that there has been a significant reduction in pedestrian injuries for children aged five to 16 outside the school zones as well. We do not really know why that is; others may be better informed about why that is. But to the extent that there is a difference then I think it would support the 40-kilometre reduction over time.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Part of the evidence we have also heard is that young boys in their early teenage years are much more likely to be involved in accidents around schools and outside of schools zones.

Ms WHITTINGTON: That is correct actually and that is consistent with other data on injury. We have also found the 10 to 14 year age group has a tendency to be more likely to be injured than other age groups.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Does the commission have a view about what steps need to be taken with the Department of Education or Roads and Maritime Services to address this issue specifically?

Mr MACFIE: One of the areas in which we have been working is the middle years of childhood and what happens to children's brains particularly in early adolescence. Some of the research—it is not our work—is suggesting that allowing children to develop capacities and abilities to deal with traffic and crossing roads prior to entering the adolescent years when they are more likely to take risks may well have a protective effect when they are developing and adopting rasher adolescent behaviours. I suppose there is a point in intervening early before children reach adolescence, boys in particular who take these sorts of risks before they have developed the foresight and ability—

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: So, more of an educative role through the school environment?

Ms WHITTINGTON: We recommended that in our submission. We favour education of children in the school environment and also education of parents about road safety measures. Some of the research is also saying that because of the issues with teenage brain development it is better to look at environmental measures and changes so the child is protected by those changes and that limits the danger from risk-taking behaviour.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Firstly I congratulate you both on your submission. It is always good in these committees that we serve on to get concise recommendations. It gives us a good lead as to what you would like to see. My question relates to the creation of school zones for early childhood centres and care facilities. Roughly how many early childhood education and care facilities are there in New South Wales?

Ms WHITTINGTON: There would be thousands. I could not tell you exactly.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Many of them, particularly those that have been there for a few years, are right next to very busy roads.

Ms WHITTINGTON: Some are, yes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you know the proportion that may be covered by existing speed restrictions either in conjunction with school zones or other measures?

Ms WHITTINGTON: No, I am sorry. We did not look into that. We had limited time to prepare our submission.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you encapsulate why you think we should put 40 kilometre an hour speed zones around childcare centres?

Mr MACFIE: Looking at the statistics we have seen an overall reduction in pedestrian injury but it is certainly an area where there are large numbers of children. We acknowledge that they are often accompanied by parents but people are often rushed in the morning and there are cars parked and there are poor practices there as well—

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Not every hand is being held.

Mr MACFIE: No, and children are going away on excursions, not necessarily with their parents, at particular times. The justification is about levels of injury, the potential for avoidance of injury and spreading the benefits of the 40 kilometre zone as we see them.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Whittington, would you like to add anything to that?

Ms WHITTINGTON: What Mr Macfie has said is correct. I would emphasise that children go on regular excursions and they may walk to an excursion in a local area, such as a local park, and be accompanied by staff. There may be a large number of children for the number of staff going with them. The research indicates that small children have a tendency to dart out and act impulsively so they may be more at risk from traffic for those reasons. We understand there are cost considerations so it may be best to prioritise which childcare centres are on the busiest roads and look at the matter from that perspective.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you recommend prioritising those childcare centres on main roads?

Mr MACFIE: At least where there is an identified risk in the layout and positioning of the childcare centre.

Ms WHITTINGTON: Research could be done on the number of accidents in the area and what people who work in the childcare centre think are the dangers.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are there any that have come onto your radar that are of concern?

Ms WHITTINGTON: There is nothing that I am aware of but we have not done a comprehensive literature review.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: From a planning perspective it would be important that consideration be given to isolating new facilities from high traffic volume. Would that be a given?

Ms WHITTINGTON: Yes. I think that was one of the recommendations in the Auditor General's report.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Generally speaking do these facilities suffer the same problems that other educational facilities do in relation to parking and traffic and things like that?

Mr MACFIE: We would say so. As you said, a lot of them are located near schools in populous areas where there is a lot of traffic. They do not necessarily benefit from some of the design and other facilities that you more commonly see around schools. There are often high volumes of parents and children drop-offs. Indeed, there are a lot more drop-offs with younger kids than there are with the older ones who might be walking to school.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Are their hours of operation consistent throughout the State, which would facilitate things like flashing lights that we have at schools, or do they vary?

Mr MACFIE: Long day care centres tend to have longer hours of operation which can commence as early as 7.00 a.m. or 7.30 a.m. and go right through to 6 o'clock, whereas schools traditionally are maybe 8.45 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. rather than the full day. Preschools in New South Wales would generally conform to the school hours.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Your submission recommends extending school zone hours to facilities that have sporting or other recreational activities on the weekend or after hours. That has also been suggested in other submissions. The concern is how to ensure motorists are aware of the extended hours given the need for consistency to make sure they are adhered to.

Mr MACFIE: This comes down to a broader question. It is not going to be only in contained hours; it might be that there are particular times when sporting fields and other facilities are being used quite actively during the entire day and children of various ages and levels of independence are using a facility, often where there is lots of traffic and lots of congestion. We do not have a specific proposal but you would think something more like a mobile flashing light system around places where there is heavy use of roads and facilities might be appropriate. Again, it would need a broader education program that it is not just about school zones but about reducing speed and finding ways to reduce speed in areas where there is heavy co-usage of transport facilities along with children accessing services or activities in the community.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: We have had a discussion about South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory extending school zone hours to 24/7, not just for the working day. Do you have a view about New South Wales undertaking a similar scenario?

Mr MACFIE: We have not addressed that specifically in our submission. We are certainly aware of broader policy debates about staggering school hours to reduce transport congestion so it would seem at least considering what hours the school zones could be expanded to and looking at the flows and usage by children at those times would be warranted.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In earlier evidence today we heard from one organisation that proposed banning schools being constructed on major arterial roads. What do you think of that?

Ms WHITTINGTON: There is merit in that but most land-use planning is looked at on a case-by-case basis. That is obviously the way councils operate. There is strong merit in that proposal.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about speed cameras? Do you think they reduce speeding in school zones?

Ms WHITTINGTON: We have come across research commissioned, I think, by the Roads and Traffic Authority, which indicates that they reduce speeding and injury or crashes. These were two indicators that showed they were successful.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you support speed cameras in school zones?

Ms WHITTINGTON: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about the removal of the eight cameras in school zones earlier this year?

Ms WHITTINGTON: To be honest I was unaware of that and I cannot really comment.

Mr MACFIE: From what we have observed in media coverage it was found that those particular speed cameras were not effective in reducing—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But as a principle you support speed cameras in school zones?

Mr MACFIE: Yes we do.

Ms WHITTINGTON: We have said that there is a need for enforcement measures, so not just speed cameras.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you have data on injuries to children and deaths of children in school zones?

Mr MACFIE: Certainly the Child Death Review Team would have detailed data on that. We do not have that to hand at the moment but we could certainly get that for you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Will you take that on notice? Of those children that were injured or killed in school zones in the past few years could you find out the number that were known to the Department of Community Services?

Ms WHITTINGTON: Okay.

Mr STUART AYRES: You referred to the cameras that were removed and you got halfway through a sentence. You were indicating that the cameras in those locations had not reduced speed—I think that was what you were going to say.

Mr MACFIE: We do not know that; it was reported, but there are also issues about whether they were operating properly. We do not know what was behind it.

Ms WHITTINGTON: The research we referred to looked at the effectiveness of speed cameras overall rather than at particular sites.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You were talking about cameras in school zones.

Ms WHITTINGTON: Yes we were.

Mr STUART AYRES: Is the commission doing any work with Roads and Maritime Services, formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority, to promote school zone safety for children and young people?

Mr MACFIE: As we said at the outset, we have not promoted that with other government departments. Leading on from the question about death and injury, the Commissioner has flagged that the

commission will be working over the next few years on child injury and looking in more detail at injury statistics and the context in which children's injuries occur. That will tell us a lot more about the context in which children are injured in school zones or elsewhere on the roads.

Mr STUART AYRES: Do you have any comment to offer about children with disability attending school and the layout of school zones and how it impacts on those children? Has that come up?

Ms WHITTINGTON: Obviously it is important that schools are accessible. I am not sure how that relates to road safety but it is certainly an important issue when you are looking at the planning and design of school environments.

CHAIR: Reducing traffic flow around schools would obviously have a benefit for school zone safety and serve to reduce the risk of children appearing from behind cars, which is clearly one of the most significant problems and you have identified it in particular with preschool children as well. Has the commission done any work to encourage alternative options for parents driving their children to school particularly your work in supporting the development of child friendly built environments?

Mr MACFIE: That goes to the heart of a lot of work the commission does in promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people and encouraging more active use of community facilities and walking and cycling and the like for the benefit of children's health. Our work through the built environment has been about encouraging planners, local councils and policy makers to think through how best to promote independent access for children to community facilities and thereby build their capacity to participate in the community for their physical and mental health.

CHAIR: Obviously awareness of the issue is of primary importance. Clearly the punitive measure, enforcement, is a follow-up but we need to aim specifically to achieve awareness and to come up with better measures. What are some of the agencies and departments you work with and what is the nature of that relationship in order to achieve that end?

Mr MACFIE: Could you repeat the question?

CHAIR: Which government agencies and departments do you work with to promote the recommendations that you made to this Committee in order to achieve the outcome of better road safety within the school zones?

Mr MACFIE: Probably the most relevant recent work has been the work of the Child Death Review Team, which was led by the Commission for a long time, which brings together departmental officers along with experts in child death. They work through measures to prevent and to look at measures to help prevent child death. That is probably the most direct work we have had with agencies such as the Roads and Traffic Authority and others.

CHAIR: In recommendation 8 you refer to the promotion of the availability of funding for school crossing supervisors. Is that something in which you are involved?

Mr MACFIE: I think that is something we would certainly like to explore with the Department of Education and Communities. That is a possibility but we have not spoken specifically to it in preparing this submission.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: On the issue of road safety around schools in general, do you think there is clear accountability for safety measures around schools? Do you think there is one organisation, whether it be education or roads, that is or should be accountable for the safety of children around schools?

Mr MACFIE: I think our submission made a recommendation that it is really a shared responsibility and we would certainly support a task force type thing.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: With having multiple agencies taking responsibility is there a risk that no-one will take responsibility, if you know what I mean?

Mr MACFIE: Yes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: It should be a lead agency, should it not?

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Yes. If that is the case, who should it be and do you have a view on that?

Mr MACFIE: I do not think we have a view on that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think it is preferable to have one agency, whether it be the Roads and Maritime Services or Education, which has ultimate accountability for children's safety around schools?

Mr MACFIE: I think in reporting or gathering data and that type of thing that certainly makes sense. An agency that has the power to work with others and to drive reform certainly makes sense.

Ms WHITTINGTON: I think the Roads and Traffic Authority has an existing structure. It has a road safety area.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The Centre for Road Safety?

Ms WHITTINGTON: Yes. It might make sense for it to have a lead role, but that is something we have not discussed.

Mr MACFIE: I come back to the model of the Child Death Review Team. In our research we did not focus so much on blame or responsibility in particular; we focused on finding out the evidence behind it and the context in which children were being killed in that case. However, it can be applied also to injury in order to understand much more about those dynamics. It then becomes clear where you might make the reforms or changes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: With respect to the design of the flashing lights, do you have any preferred option for different types of flashing lights?

Mr MACFIE: No.

Ms WHITTINGTON: In the report that we have read and referred to we know that the flashing lights were effective but that signage without flashing lights was not as effective. There were some technical difficulties associated with the operation of the flashing lights which meant that they were not operating at all times. Those are the key things of which we are aware.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I refer to page 5 of your submission which states:

The greater mobility of infants in their second year and increasing curiosity about their environment can place them at greater risk of injury. Children at the early childhood stage, (2-5 yrs) are also at great risk as pedestrians as they are becoming adventurous but have not yet fully developed depth perception, scanning ability or the capacity to judge speed.

Do you agree with that statement? This is in the context of 40-kilometre zones around preschools.

Mr MACFIE: Yes.

Ms WHITTINGTON: Yes. It is based on research done by the Roads and Traffic Authority on child development, so it is almost directly quoted from there.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Macfie and Ms Whittington for appearing before the Committee today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

CHAIR: Good afternoon, Mr Wolstenholme. Thank you for attending this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety which is inquiring into school zone safety. This public hearing follows the earlier hearing of last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is examining the adequacy of management and operations of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality.

MARK WOLSTENHOLME, Senior Policy Adviser, NRMA Motoring and Services, 9A York Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: In what capacity are you appearing before this Committee?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I am the NRMA Senior Policy Adviser for traffic and roads and I am a traffic engineer.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. As time is limited today the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes, certainly.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I am mindful of the time as I got the spot before lunch. Just to clarify, NRMA Motoring & Services obviously are the roadside people and not the insurance company. We have 2.4 million members across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. In the area of road safety or child safety we are strong advocates for improving safety for pedestrians and other road users across all roads. In 2009 we put an extensive submission to the Auditor-General. I apologise as the submission that we put to the Committee was a succinct submission but there is a lot more that we have to say on road safety. We have been advocating strongly for more flashing lights and, in particular, fluorescent school zone signs, since the release of the Auditor-General's report in 2009.

CHAIR: We recognise the work that is being done by the NRMA in the field of road safety. We are interested particularly in school zone safety. Have you received significant feedback from your members on the subject of school zones compared to other road safety issues?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes. It is one of those ongoing issues. From our perspective I think it generally revolves around the issue of whether people are aware that the school zone sign was there. Quite often we get letters from people who say that they were caught by a camera. It tends to be the infringement thing that drives people to complain. I guess it would be good if we could be more proactive in relation to the visibility of these signs. Obviously there are benefits from flashing lights and there are benefits from fluorescent signs. If you drive around you will notice that a number of signs are hidden behind trees, or they are faded and those sorts of things. In advising motorists that the school zone is there it is good to pick up on all those three aspects.

CHAIR: Let me pick up on your reference to flashing lights. In your submission recommendation 7 encourages the Roads and Traffic Authority, which is now Roads and Maritime Services, to publish the criteria involved in choosing sites for the installation of flashing lights and to incorporate the speed of passing traffic into this assessment. Do you support the installation of flashing lights at more school zones, or all school zones?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Absolutely. We certainly support them at more school zones. In relation to the issue about all school zones, obviously there is a cost element to that. I think in some local streets it may be arguable that flashing lights may not be required. Where there is not too much activity going on you may need only to signpost the school with a fluorescent yellow-green school zone sign, which obviously is a lot more visible than the standard yellow.

CHAIR: I was going to ask you about what you would consider the most appropriate when assessing whether to install flashing lights for a school. What other measures would create that awareness?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: In 2009 we conducted an audit. We picked the St George region and then extrapolated it around the State. It identified that a lot of the school zones signs that have been in place for many years are faded. We identified that some had been there since 1993. The yellow tape on the sign at the time was warranted for seven years so in that respect the sign should have been replaced in the year 2000, but they were

still there in 2009. We advocated strongly for the adoption of the fluorescent yellow-green school zone colour, which was the Australian standard. That has subsequently been picked up by the Roads and Traffic Authority, which is now Roads and Maritime Services. However, there was no wholesale replacement of the signs. The decision taken by the Roads and Traffic Authority at the time was to replace the signs basically as and when it thought they needed replacing. From our perspective, we still see a lot of signs out there which still need to be replaced.

CHAIR: In your submission you recommended that consideration be given to alternative types of flashing lights to use in school zones such as those used in the United Kingdom. Can you give the Committee any further details about the lights that are used in the United Kingdom?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: We have gone for the option in New South Wales of having the lights that link back to the Transport Management Centres, so that Roads and Maritime Services knows exactly when the signs are not working. Our view is that the technology these days is good enough that the lights really do not fail. Obviously there is quite a significant additional cost to have the communications from the lights back to the Transport Management Centre. In our view where there is a speed camera in a school zone and the Roads and Traffic Authority needs to know that the flashing lights are activated whilst the speed camera is operating, it sort of makes sense to have communications back to the Transport Management Centre on that.

But for others it is about awareness and it is about how to roll out more flashing lights to the signs with the limited funds that we have. The ones in the United Kingdom and also in Victoria are relatively basic flashing lights compared to what we have here. But we truly believe that on a lot of streets in regional areas, lower speed streets and those sorts of things, we could quite easily have these alternative technologies. That would then facilitate flashing lights at a lot more schools than we currently have.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: In your submission you stated that the majority of motorists do not intentionally exceed the speed limit in school zones, but the Committee has learned that compliance remains a problem. In fact, I believe that the NRMA said that around half the motorists still exceed the speed limit in school zones. How important is enforcement to ensure compliance with school speed zones?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Obviously, there is the enforcement side of things and there is the encouragement side of things. We think the fluorescent signs are great because they are a lot easier to see, but we think that the flashing lights categorically tell people when the school zones actually are operating. Certainly, in some situations it appears that enforcement is absolutely necessary. I think we highlighted that in the submission and also the Staysafe Committee in previous reports has highlighted how it appears that some speed cameras year in, year out are catching high volumes of motorists. That sort of questions whether the speed camera really is having the effect you would want it to have. The infringement data from the speed camera can be used to tell you not just whether the crash data actually is having an effect on fatalities and serious injuries, but the infringement data can tell you whether speed cameras are actually being effective as well. There are different levels of effectiveness.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: By effective you mean the lower the number of infringements, the more effective the camera?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: The lower the number of infringements, yes.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you see a role for fixed speed cameras in school zones?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes. I think speed cameras and speed management is just part of that toolbox of measures we can use for school safety. We have recommended a number of other measures to the RTA, now the RMS. But certainly I think they have a role to play. I suppose if I use the Cleveland Street speed camera as an example, again that is an example where year in, year out that camera was catching high volumes of motorists for speeding. Fundamentally, to me that means you have to question whether the road environment is correct. When the speed camera first went up I would not say the signs were great—far from it. We lobbied the RTA and got the signs improved.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is that speed camera near a school zone?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes it is. I do not know if all members are aware but, fundamentally, that section is between South Dowling Street and Anzac Parade. It leads to Fox Studios and the cricket ground. So it

is used by a lot of people who are not necessarily regular users. But, as I say, it is continuously catching high numbers of motorists. I think fundamentally that section of Cleveland Street just does not give the appearance of a 50-kilometre-an-hour street. There are flashing lights and school zone signs for the 40-kilometre-an-hour section, I expect, and I think they are quite effective, but motorists are being caught at 60-kilometres-an-hour thinking that it is a 60-kilometre-an-hour street whereas it is actually a 50 kilometres-an-hour area.

CHAIR: Just to develop that particular issue, clearly you have identified the need for other calming or traffic control measures. What would you suggest in that circumstance?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Again, fundamentally to me it does not give the appearance of a 50-kilometre-an-hour street. It is a big, wide street. You could have driven from Canberra and then come off the Eastern Distributor at 80 kilometres an hour and then you are straight into what is a 50-kilometre street.

Mr STUART AYRES: It is six lanes, is it not, three each side?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes. The other side has all the restaurants and, arguably, that should be 50 kilometres an hour. Just because it is Cleveland Street does not necessarily mean that it should still be 50 kilometres an hour. If it is to be a 50-kilometre zone, we need to do something. We need to have a better gateway or some sort of warning to tell motorists.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The Chair's question relates more broadly than specifically to Cleveland Street. In respect to road treatment, instead of cameras how would you deal with those issues more broadly?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: We are big believers in gateways, whether it is approaching a town where it goes to 50 kilometres an hour or a local school where it should be 40 kilometres an hour. In the UK they have personalised some of the signs as well; the school community has had input into the design of the signs. I guess that sort of makes it almost more emotive in a way rather than a technical approach to things. But I think then that means involving the school community, and currently the RMS has its guidelines and standards as to where it will put school zone signs and the types of signs it puts in. Probably for cost reasons it does not put in mast arms or signs on the other side of the road or signs on the median so that you find that school zone signs are actually obscured by heavy vehicles.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you aware of the Dungog school safety project where an electronic sign flashes up the speed at which the driver is travelling but they are not penalised?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: No, I am not, but those sorts of initiatives are quite good.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think of those kinds of initiatives in a school zone where the sign tells the driver how fast they are going, but an infringement notice is not issued?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I think our submission to the Staysafe Committee's inquiry into vulnerable road users recommended those sorts of signs. Are they the portable electronic signs?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is the one.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: From memory, I think we said that we recommend that the RMS should actually purchase some of these signs and then loan them to various school communities or various councils. Not all councils obviously have the same resources.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Quite often they are used where there are roadworks.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Does the NRMA have a view about the current value level of infringements? Should the penalties for speeding in school zones be increased? Do you think that revenue from infringements, particularly from traffic infringements, should be spent directly on road safety measures?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: To answer the first part about the fines, I think they were increased a couple of years ago. We think the fines and number of demerit points are appropriate. With respect to revenue, you may

be aware that a petition will be presented to Parliament calling for revenue from speed cameras to be hypothecated to road safety.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Only from speed cameras or from all traffic infringements? If it is one, why one and not both?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: That is a very good question.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I do not want to put you on the spot.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: No, thank you. I need to get back to you on that one. Certainly, the focus is on speed cameras, but I think it may also include parking revenue.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I congratulate the NRMA on its submission; it contains a number of recommendations, which always is good. Thank you for that. Returning to the fluoro yellow-green signs, you mentioned that signs are replaced only as the need becomes evident. Are they being replaced with the fluoro signs?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes they are. But if I may, there are a number of situations where, for instance the RTA today may install flashing lights at a school and replace that sign when the flashing lights are installed. But the other signs are not necessarily being replaced.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you know the cost comparison between the two?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: The fluoro?

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Yes?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: We did a comparison back in 2009. Going from yellow to fluoro yellow-green was marginal, but it was about \$130 a sign to actually go and replace the sign itself.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: If the existing sign did not need replacing?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: That is right, yes. We costed it for the State. We said there were about 25,000 school zone signs and that was a cost of \$3.25 million back in 2009.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: In your submission you mentioned the distances: 75 metres for a standard sign and 130 metres for a fluoro sign when the sign becomes visible to the driver. How does that compare with flashing lights?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I would need to look at the report the ARRB did for the RTA on flashing lights.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Would it be fair to say that flashing lights would be visible before the fluoro signs?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: They should be.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: All things being equal.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Depends on the technology that the RTA is actually installing and, obviously, where the sign is positioned.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you have a preference for the type of flashing light, the one with the ring or the lights on top of the sign? There are a couple of different models?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: The ARRB report had some information on that. There was another report the RTA did at the time that the NRMA was involved in but it was not released; it was commercial in confidence. I think that had a lot more detail as to which ones were the most effective. It just depends. On a multi-lane road I think you really have to go with quite a lot if you are trying to get traffic speeds reduced from,

say, 70 kilometres an hour to 40 kilometres an hour. Otherwise, the flashes themselves seem to really grab people's attention.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: From my perspective, the ones with the flashing red circle are far more visible than the other type.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: You highlighted that advertising on pedestrian bridges can distract drivers in school zones and then lead to infringements. Is that problem confined to school zones or do you think driver distraction from advertising signs is a wider problem on New South Wales roads?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I think it is. We did a submission again to the Department of Planning's review of State environmental planning policy 64. It was a review of advertising signs. The issue we had was that we were saying these things are a distraction and the advertising industry was saying they were not. They are quite an organised lobby group. We have changeable signs now as well. There are a number of locations I could point to. The airport tunnel as you are heading south is one. The Sydney Airport Corporation installed some very big advertising signs. Presumably, that was where there was a black spot because a speed camera had been installed. I know the RTA at the time said that it did not have any control over that land. So there is certainly an issue there about where these things are located.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: The NRMA is calling on this Committee to consider alternative ways to highlight schools within 40 kilometre zones. Other than the already raised maintenance issues, what are some of the current measures, devices or treatments that you believe are inappropriate?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: The dragon's teeth, perhaps. I understand what they are trying to achieve. They are trying to give you that gateway feeling. The dragon's teeth were actually installed after the sign. So it is almost a recognition that people are going through the sign too quickly. They are a huge maintenance issue and it is just unknown I suppose who is going to replace them. It is left to councils to replace them. The RTA is responsible for replacing any speed sign, but I do not think they are for the dragon's teeth on local roads. We have put forward a couple of suggestions. One issue we see is a persistent problem of people parking within no stopping areas or where they are not supposed to park. That is where we were suggesting we can use line marking.

I think we had some examples in the UK where it has zigzag lines. First off, it highlights where a crossing is. Obviously, it is different in the UK to here. We have to recognise that things have developed differently. They have zigzag lines in the centre of the road and on the left-hand side to denote a crossing is coming up and you should not park there. Parking is a big issue around schools where there either is not enough parking or parents are in a hurry. That brings in all sorts of safety issues.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Can I follow up on that. Some years ago we had a discussion with the Roads and Traffic Authority about coloured pavement for school zones and it was dismissed at that time because it was far too expensive. Since then bus lanes have coloured pavements and bike lanes have coloured pavements: What would your view be on coloured pavements outside schools?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Again it is about that gateway approach. We had a picture in our 2009 submission from the Auditor General from Singapore where they use coloured pavement. We get people writing in suggesting that lines should be different colours to denote different speed limits. I guess it is how far do you go with these things and are we comfortable that the technology we currently have—the fluorescent signs, the mast arms on multilane roads and flashing lights? We think we can do more with zigzag lines to denote that you are still within the school zone.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: That is one of the problems. Particularly going north on the Pacific Highway you are in and out of school zones and you are not sure if you are in one or out of one and everyone is roaring past you.

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Particularly when you have been stopped at traffic lights and your attention is elsewhere.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Do you have any suggestions on more effective visibility measures for school zones?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: That suggestion obviously may have value. I think it would, absolutely. It is a cost issue, it is a maintenance issue, and it is how far do we go? My belief is that the Roads and Maritime Services or the Centre for Road Safety's position is that with all these things that they have installed in school zones the risk to children is quite low and their focus is where people are killed or seriously injured. In terms of directing their resources that is why we have not much direction with the fluorescent yellow-green school zone signs. Unless they are directed that this will be the Government's position they want to put resources elsewhere where the risk is higher.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On page 19 of your submission you talk of the definition of the school day. You refer to the Sydney Morning Herald article where people complained that they were caught speeding on pupil free days. What do you think of the ACT approach where you make it the entire school day or the South Australian model where it is a 24-hour school zone, so there is no speeding whatsoever? Which do you prefer?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Between the South Australian and the ACT models?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you have any comments in general?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Representing the ACT motorists as well, the schools in the ACT have been planned differently, so they tend to be off the main streets and they have dedicated parking areas, and all those sorts of things. I know the ACT motorists accept the school zone being in place all day but we have to recognise that it is different here. The school zones here are on fairly major streets.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What about South Australia where it is 24-hours a day?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: That is an interesting one. I must admit I am not aware of that situation. It brings into question whether the schools are operating 24-hours a day.

CHAIR: You would certainly be interested in the motorist's reaction, being a representative body?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Absolutely, congestion is such a big issue here.

CHAIR: Can I follow that question by pointing at a particular issue which has been raised with the committee as being one traffic calming device and that is the raised crossing called the wombat crossing. Have you any experience, feed back or recommendations on that?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: In terms of crossings at schools the basic type is a refuge island in the centre of the road; then there is a school crossing with the flags; a marked foot crossing (zebra crossing) and then a wombat crossing, which is raised. A lot of schools have a preference for a marked foot crossing (a zebra crossing) or a wombat crossing. Obviously the wombat crossing influences the speed as well as raising the kids. Fundamentally there is a problem with the school crossings—the ones with the flags. In a previous life I worked for the Roads and Traffic Authority and I was in Victoria and I remember seeing this school crossing that had, instead of the pretty small metal posts that we use in New South Wales for the flags—and the post tends to be leaning—this had big red and white painted wooden posts on either side of the road. It struck me that what we were trying to achieve with the school crossings was that gateway feeling. It was patently obvious to me where you had to stop. Whereas here I think there is a lot of ambiguity.

The RTA or RMS will tell you that legislatively a school crossing is a lot safer than any other form of crossing because you have to stop if a child is waiting to cross the road. Whereas a marked foot crossing or a wombat crossing you only have to avoid them. If you talk to the school communities they tell you that people drive through school crossings. My belief is they do not know where they have to stop. It does not give the appearance of a crossing. The lines are quite far apart. The Victorian example I was talking about, it was patently clear to me that it was a school crossing, the posts were a lot larger and also where you had to stop.

CHAIR: Clearly our focus is on school zone safety, but it has been alluded to earlier by one of the members the number of school zones on the Pacific Highway, a main arterial road, and the effects on congestion: Have you any suggestion as to how that congestion and frustration caused to drivers from the

consequent increase in traffic flow could be ameliorated? Are there any measures that you would recommend we consider?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I believe that all the school zones on the Pacific Highway from North Sydney to the F3 now have flashing lights. Initially only a few of the schools had flashing lights and that set up an expectation in the motorist's mind that all school zones along the highway would have flashing lights. It caused some confusion when they first went in. I have noticed that people are still slowing down before the start of the school afternoon peak. They are wary about whether the school zone is operating or not. It gets back to the length of some of these school zones and whether we need additional flashing lights to remind people they are still within the school zones. They may have come out of a side street and not passed a sign with flashing lights. To me that is probably a cheaper solution than looking at pedestrian bridges and those sorts of things.

CHAIR: I have a question I put to previous witnesses reflecting a regional focus: Quite often in regional areas a school is situated on a service road adjacent to the main road, yet the whole of the area is blanketed by the 40-kilometre an hour zone. Do you have any comment on that model?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: We have not taken a formal position on it. The New South Wales Government decided to install school zones at schools—I think it was 1992. What we have not seen is any evaluation of the effectiveness of pedestrian bridges and fencing. We put some examples in our submission: One on Parramatta Road and Fort Street, near Leichhardt, where the school has a pedestrian fence, parking, and set-down and pick-up occurs in a side street. The policy currently says that we should have 40-kilometre school zones wherever the school has an access to the road. We need to evaluate how effective these things are. There has been a significant investment and it would be good to see an evaluation of that investment and how effective it is.

Mr STUART AYRES: Your submission highlights a number of alternatives and you have made reference in your submission to examples from Victoria and the United Kingdom. Can you offer any commentary about how effective they have been and whether they are more effective than models in New South Wales?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I do not have any hard data. From my own personal observations I think there is certainly a case for highlighting in advance and warning people as they approach the school zone.

Mr STUART AYRES: That there is a 40-kilometres zone ahead?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes. That is done to some extent in New South Wales. There is one school on the Pacific Highway where it is done. I think more could be done. We could highlight within the school zone that it is still a school zone. The signs we currently use are competing, particularly in urban areas, with shop signs, shop awnings and power poles. It is often difficult to fit the signs in along the street. The Victorian signs are more succinct, have a single post and are easier to install.

Mr STUART AYRES: And the flashing lights are not connected back to the Traffic Management Centre?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: That is what they do in Victoria, which from a cost perspective allows them to install a lot more lights. I caution against the comment about red annulus flashing being effective: If we went down the path of using relatively cheap lights we would still need to make sure that the really bright ones are used on the major roads.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Have your members raised with you the growing unity to one set of standards? Obviously driving around every day drivers grow immune to the current standards in terms of signage for a school zone: Has that been raised at all by your members?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: The lack of consistency?

Mr DARREN WEBBER: No. Drivers growing immune to set signage over the years; has that been looked into it at all in terms of having to regenerate the signage?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: No, not specifically. Certainly surveys we have done show that they are supportive of flashing lights and the fluorescent signs—anecdotally that means they are working.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: It indicates they are still working.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The ARRB group have developed a risk analysis tool called School Risk. Has the NRMA reviewed the methodology of this tool and are you satisfied with the way in which it operates?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: No, we have not reviewed it. We were involved in a project that ARRB were involved in as well in assessing the technology for flashing lights. The Roads and Traffic Authority does not publish the criteria that it uses for assessing whether a school should have flashing lights. There are a few schools where you would question whether anyone has been down on site and checked the conditions on site or whether they are sitting behind a desk and looking at crash data presented to them.

Mr STUART AYRES: I wanted to ask a question—it was in the submission of a previous witness—does the NRMA have any view about increasing the messaging involved in GPS systems around schools: For example, warning drivers that the speed limit is changing or they are entering a school zone?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: I think that is probably the future. You may be aware the Roads and Traffic Authority or RMS has undertaken a project in Wollongong where they mapped all the speed zones and used GPS devices to warn motorists that the speed zone was changing. From what I have seen the results of that survey indicate that it did influence driver behaviour. The future would be a device that controls the car.

Mr STUART AYRES: Is that survey public, has it been released?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: It may not have been published but the Roads and Traffic Authority is talking about it at conferences so it is available.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: We heard evidence a little earlier today that road safety officers employed by councils are part-funded by the Roads and Traffic Authority and have no certainty of funding past the end of next year. Are you aware of the Road Safety Officer program, do you support the work they do and would you be calling for their continuation?

Mr WOLSTENHOLME: Yes, absolutely. One other thing we suggested was annual audits around schools and that was involving RMS, the local council traffic engineer, the road safety officer, police, parents and citizens association, and the school principal. We think that would identify some of the issues schools are facing; whether it be signs behind trees or whatever. Road safety officers have an important role, they tend to know the local issues and they can target their campaigns to those issues.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before the committee today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Luncheon adjournment)

TERRY LEE-WILLIAMS, Manager, City Transport and Access Unit, City of Sydney, 456 Kent Street, Sydney, affirmed, and

LEONARD PAUL THOMAS WOODMAN, Road Safety Officer, City of Sydney, 456 Kent Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: Thank you for attending a public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of the management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality.

I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Unfortunately, time is limited and the Committee may wish to send you additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Yes.

Mr WOODMAN: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with questions, would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. The City of Sydney's formal submission covers most of the points that we wish to make. The City of Sydney has long advocated for a uniform 40 kilometre an hour speed limit in all residential and high-pedestrian areas. We believe that having school zones and different speeds zones around schools make it less safe because there is no consistency in the speed limit. We believe congestion around the schools, not speed, is the key issue to safety with lots of blocked lines of sight between school buses, parents dropping off children, children riding, children walking, controlled crossings and traffic exiting into major roads.

Therefore, we believe clearing and better managing the local environment around schools is far more important than having speed zones on major State roads, which have well-defined, well-controlled and safe crossings where there is very little evidence of there having been child-vehicle conflicts. Overseas experience suggests that lower speeds in urban areas have a major impact on reducing the severity of injury in incidents and the number of incidents that occur. We ask you to consider the three recommendations made in the City of Sydney submission to this inquiry.

CHAIR: In your submission you state that school zones are managed by the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], now Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], and issues are usually raised directly between schools and the then RTA but that when council has been involved the RTA did react promptly. How do schools raise issues with the RTA?

Mr WOODMAN: They go direct to the regional office, which for us is in Parramatta. They will go direct either to the manager of road safety there or to whoever is given the task of looking after school zones at any given time.

CHAIR: Is that the same process for the council?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes, we would talk to those same people as well. The actual putting in of school zones, marking them and so on, is totally down to the RTA.

CHAIR: When do schools raise issues with council and then ask you to take them further with the RTA?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: When they do not get the response they were expecting to get from the RMS and usually via the parents and citizens [P and C] when they are feeling stymied and hopefully before they go via the media and a local newspaper, but not always.

CHAIR: Can you give any specific examples where you have been involved and have achieved an outcome?

Mr WOODMAN: There have been situations where school zones have not been adequately marked, in our opinion. This has not happened recently, it was some time ago, where flashing lights had been put in before the current flashing light program that the Roads and Maritime Services are currently undertaking. In the past we have had situations where we have assisted the schools to get flashing lights put in. We also get involved where parking issues come up within a school zone.

CHAIR: Would you physically attend that particular site?

Mr WOODMAN: We would go and look at it and put our representations directly to the RTA. A long time ago we did put it through the Sydney Traffic Committee. But those instances are quite rare.

CHAIR: The use of the traffic committee is rare?

Mr WOODMAN: No, the situation where we have to go and lobby on behalf of the school. As we said in our submission, our experience is that the RTA do react pretty quickly to getting anything done that the school requires.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: There are interesting variations to that, I might add, that spring immediately to mind. One is right in the middle of the city, St Andrews College, where they have been requesting a flashing sign to indicate that it is a 40 kilometre an hour zone. It has been put off by the RTA, then the RMS, because we are making the centre of Sydney a 40 kilometre an hour zone anyway. They still feel they want that because the children are there and it would be of benefit to have a flashing light just to warn drivers when children are there that they should be paying more attention.

CHAIR: Are you talking about the whole block?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Particularly Bathurst Street. There is a bit of an argument whether Kent is an issue because traffic moving on Kent is rarely doing 40 kilometres an hour. The resolution to that required that the City of Sydney offer to pay for the installation of the flashing lights to speed up its installation. In the City of Sydney's perspective, as part of all the work that we are doing around there, it is not a significant impost but it is a transfer of a State government responsibility to a local government that is not funded to do those particular things. The second instance is in the back of Surrey Hills. I apologise, I cannot remember the name of this series of laneways connecting a school through to Bourke Street. They have now zoned that 40 kilometres an hour but physically it would be impossible to do 40 kilometres an hour through those laneways. But there are no curbs and no footpaths and children walk in the middle of the laneway.

There is also no ability under the current Act or regulations to put in a slower speed limit than 40 kilometres an hour without spending literally millions of dollars to turn it into a shared zone, which requires you to repave the entire area, change all the drainage and guttering, put flowerpots in, the whole thing. It does not require any of that; it just requires a slower speed. The City of Sydney has responded, at my direction, to put up its own recommended speed limit signs. We just pasted on our speed limit signs which says, "Recommended speed limit". They are not enforceable. They are not a legal sign, they are not an advisory sign and they are not a speed limit sign because otherwise the RMS would be go and tear them down. They have proven effective, however, in slowing the traffic and they have made it safer. Immediately we have done that, the RMS turned up and painted "40 kilometre" patches on the road at quite some expense but also it has sped the traffic up again.

Some flexibility in the speed setting by the RTA would be very good. We have proposed something called a "slow zone" which turns it into a 10 kilometre an hour zone. This is an area where you have very few cars going through it—back alleys and laneways where bicycles, pedestrians and vehicles just mingle. That has been with the State for about nine months and we are awaiting a response. That lack of flexibility in being able to provide tailored responses to where danger exists is one of the main impediments that we face.

CHAIR: We have explored with other witnesses options existing elsewhere, such as in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia, in terms of extending the school zone throughout the day or 24/7. What is your view on that?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: In our streets, the residential streets of the City of Sydney—I say "our streets" because we only control those that are under the control of council and the State controls the others and we control none of the intersections—we would recommend that they be 40 kilometres an hour in all instances and that the State roads be 60, 70 kilometres an hour, whatever they choose, and that school crossings not be provided on those State roads unless they are attended during the required school hours.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You would like 40 kilometres an hour across Sydney city?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Yes. About 20 per cent of the city is 40 kilometres an hour now. Once we do the CBD that would take it up to about 35 per cent and we would progressively like to roll that through. I say "progressively" because it is a cost issue, but we would progressively like to roll it through. The cost of doing that is significant, not because of the cost of signs, posts and those sorts of things but the studies and the hoops we must jump through for the RMS. It has cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars in studies.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you want a blanket 40 kilometres an hour?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: A blanket 40 kilometres an hour where it is predominately residential.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: What is that based on?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: It is based on the fact that if somebody is hit by a car at 40 kilometres an hour they are far less likely to die than if they are hit by a car at 60 kilometres an hour. Internationally it is 30 kilometres an hour but because it has taken about 12 years to get the RTA down to 40 kilometres an hour, we did not want to push the envelope to 30 kilometres an hour. Traffic also flows better in crowded areas at a slower speed because—I am getting technical here—you do not get compression between intersections: the vehicles are moving easily; they do not have to accelerate, decelerate, accelerate, decelerate. One of the side benefits is there are less particulates pumped into the air as a result of the slower travel speed.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Obviously we are talking about school zones. The principle is that 40 kilometres an hour is an appropriate speed because it gives vehicles enough time to stop if they need to and the risk of injuries is less. To apply that speed limit across the city area, is there a nexus between the 40 kilometre an hour zone and the amount of pedestrian activity or is it just any street in your city will be 40 kilometres an hour?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: About 85 per cent of our city has far more pedestrian activity than you will get around any school. It is only down on the southern end—Zetland, Beaconsfield and those areas—where it is not such an issue, but, of course, there are school kids crossing there. When it comes to the consciousness of the driver and enforceability, if you have a standardised speed limit people are going to drive 40 kilometres an hour. They do not have to remember what day it is, is it a holiday, what time of day is it, is it that 2½ hour time slot timeslot, is my clock different to the clock that the RTA is using, all those sorts of things. They just know if they go over 40 kilometres an hour they will get pinged. So you have a generally safer environment. There has also been a 60 per cent increase in cycling in the past 12 months in the city and most of the cycling is still done on roads; there are only 10 kilometres of cycleways.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do the cyclists get over 40 kilometres an hour?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Few, very few. They do but the ones who are going over 40 kilometres an hour are generally on the State roads and they are riding in pelotons; they are riding in groups and they are zooming along. The far greater growth in cycling has been because a lot of kids are now cycling to school—something we have been trying to reverse because there were almost no children cycling to school when we started the program. People like me—I do not look like a cyclist and I would never call myself a cyclist; I am a bike rider; I tootle along at 10 or 12 kilometres an hour very comfortably with electrical assist, but when cars are zooming past at 60 or 70 kilometres an hour I find that quite threatening.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You say between 2005 and 2009 there were 42 crashes involving school-aged pedestrians during school times within the Sydney city. Any bicycles smashing into kids?

Mr WOODMAN: Not that I am aware of. In fact, pedestrian-cyclist crashes are pretty low and even lower when we look at cyclists on footpaths, which comes up as an issue—there were only five recorded in those five years.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There are cyclists on footpaths?

Mr WOODMAN: Occasionally and there have only been five recorded incidents. Cyclists and children would be very much in the lower scale. I could come back with an exact figure on that for you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Could you do that?

Mr WOODMAN: We will do that, yes.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: There will be around one, if any—zero to one, I would suspect.

Mr WOODMAN: Cyclists themselves are also very aware that if they collide with a pedestrian or anyone else they are going to be injured themselves usually.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Children and dogs are the biggest threats to cyclists and adults on separated cycleways because adults tend to walk across separated cycleways without looking for bicycles. That is what we have discovered.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Who has the right of way on those cycleways?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Cyclists. They have pedestrian crossings at places to cross. It is just like any other traffic; it is just another traffic lane except it is people on two wheels rather than four.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Notwithstanding that you are proposing a 40 kilometres an hour speed limit throughout the City of Sydney, do you support the 40 kilometres an hour speed limit around school zones and maintain that it should be a consistent speed limit at all school zones?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Yes, absolutely.

Mr WOODMAN: Yes. Our evidence is that, as we have said in the submission, it must be working, so anything that comes in must not go against what has been happening for several years. But our concern, of course, is as we have said, that children away from the school zone are not protected anymore, and also when they are away from the school zone as they disperse there are probably fewer children together. In a school zone, at school times you can see lots of kids around, and that information given to a driver who is already travelling at around about a 40 kilometres an hour speed limit gives them the indication that it is a school zone. Currently, if they pass through the school zone and a few kids have straggled off, gone down a little side alley, like we were saying, all of a sudden the driver starts to think, "Okay, I can go quicker; I'm out of the school zone"—

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: "I'm out of the school zone and I can accelerate".

Mr WOODMAN: —but the children are still there. I think the issue with the 40 kilometres an hour constant speed limit around school zones is that there is always the odd child going off somewhere. We also have schools such as in my area—and I know that this was happening at the International Grammar School where due to lack of space during the lunch period the children were walked from the school to Wentworth Park for their lunch break because there were not facilities in the school. To assist them, for example, we put in a pedestrian crossing on one of the roads so that it made it easier for the teachers to move outside of what is now the normal school hours.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: One slight addition to that too is that the zones are absolutely arbitrary. There is a circle within which they say, "We are going to make it 40k", and in many instances there are train stations, cross-walks, just on the edge. So people come out of a 40 kilometres an hour zone and accelerate right when there are more pedestrians—and they are not only children, of course, there are adults and everybody interacting. Strips of shops and high pedestrian activity areas right on the edge of school zones do not get the 40

kilometres an hour protection. It is a half-done wish. It is a great idea and a good start but we would just love to be able to build on it more easily.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you think there is a danger that familiarity breeds contempt in that regard? If it is 40 kilometres an hour everywhere are people then going to pay less attention in those school zones? One of the things that I think happens is that when you see that flashing light and you slow down there is an awareness created around you: you want to look out for kids.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: I do not advocate the removal of flashing lights. Flashing lights should be everywhere and they should be activated by the school because the schools know when they are there and when they are not there and the 40 kilometres an hour limit should just be there all the time so that when that light is flashing you are paying more attention. I just think the 40 should extend. You could say that of every speed limit: why have speed limits at all? Familiarity breeds contempt and it does—ask Highway Patrol—but if you are consistently used to doing 40, if you are doing 50 you feel it is fast; if you are consistently used to doing 50, you are doing 60 before it feels fast, and that 20 kilometres an hour difference is what kills people, and that is what we are concentrating on. You will never get rid of vehicle-person incidents, but what you are trying to do is reduce the severity of them so that people can lead a fulfilling life after they have had that incident, and that is what we are aiming to do.

Mr WOODMAN: I recently returned from Belgium. In Belgium it is a 30 kilometres an hour speed limit and in most parts of the United Kingdom now it is 20 miles an hour, or 32 kilometres an hour. They make use of radar-operated speed limit signs in Belgium around the schools, so as you approach it measures your speed and it will flash the speed during school times, and those lights are put on apparently by the school. It is the responsibility of the school to put them on—they may even be on a timer; I do not know how they physically manage them. In some cases if you have children going to early morning school or staying late, and we also have issues here where we have kids staying later in school, particularly in secondary schools and the younger age in secondary school is still pretty young, we just need a system. As we said in the submission, we need to review this with the Roads and Traffic Authority and find out what is the best way of amalgamating a school zone within an overall 40 kilometres an hour area.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: And before and after school care goes from 7.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: If you are suggesting that schools are able to put the flashing lights on to suit their own school hours, that is counter to a lot of advice we have received in this inquiry about consistency and ensuring that the hours of operation of the school zones, although they may not be perfect for every school, are consistent for schools across the State so that motorists are generally aware as they are driving around what they are required to do.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: You need both: you need the consistent 40 kilometres an hour zone and then the warning is turned on and off by the school—the school operates the school crossing. Quite often a teacher is attending the school crossing and, if not, the school crossing guard provided by the Roads and Traffic Authority could do the same thing. The thing that causes people not to believe in the 40 kilometres an hour zones in my experience is the difference between private schools and public schools and the differences in the weeks—they are driving through a zone where there is no activity and they are saying, "Why am I doing this?" When the children are there the next week they are not ready for it. So you always get this overlap of a day or two before people realise they really do have to slow down. The consistency is one thing, the warning is another. You have to tie them together.

Mr WOODMAN: The speed limit should be consistent but the hours that they operate should be determined locally.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Determined locally so that they are real—they have a true and real effect.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Does that make it more confusing for drivers that this school zone is operating at 2 o'clock in the afternoon—

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: If they always have to do 40 it is just a warning.

Mr WOODMAN: The City of Sydney is different, I think, to the rest of the world.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: We are faster than most of the rest of the world.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: In terms of the rest of New South Wales, most of the speed limits are not 40 kilometres an hour. Forty kilometres an hour is actually a slowing down of most of the traffic around school zones. The hours that they operate you are suggesting should not be consistent?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Again, only if you do a consistent 40 kilometres an hour zone around the school. One has to go with the other; you cannot separate those two things. I think anywhere in New South Wales it would not be difficult to go a block in each direction and it is 40 kilometres an hour because you have kids going to and from the ovals, playing sport on the weekends, using those facilities that the taxpayer dollars have paid for. Why not make it safe all the time?

Mr STUART AYRES: I just wanted to clarify a point. The Hon. Walt Secord just quoted part of your submission which went on to say that "this data does not report any of these crashes occurring within the 40 kilometre school zones"—that relates to the 42 school-aged pedestrian crashes between 2005 and 2009. Those 42 crashes outside of school zones, does that mean time or location or both?

Mr WOODMAN: The time is consistent with the Roads and Traffic Authority's—Roads and Maritime Services—that is during the school travel time that they set. I do not know whether you have been made aware of the Roads and Maritime Services crash link data system, but their crash link data system states a particular time period which is considered school travel, which is slightly before the school zone time and slightly after. I took that data from the crash link data in those time periods. So those 42 do not include crashes that involved a Saturday or Sunday, it is merely to keep within the scope of the school zone.

Mr STUART AYRES: I think the common assumption here is that the 40 kilometres an hour zone around schools is working but the higher speed zones where younger people, or for that matter any pedestrian in the City of Sydney's case, is still exposed to a higher risk.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: School is a collector. You do not have one on every street so you plonk it there and everybody snail trails all the way to the school. If you say your school zone is where all your kids come from you end up with a whole suburb anyway. In the actual school zone itself speed is rarely an issue. Occasionally somebody zooms through a school zone but really carelessness is the issue because it is so congested. I do not know if you have been out at schools in school zone time; they are so congested. It is very hard to move a vehicle through and you cannot see anything because there are a lot of four-wheel drives and there are buses and there are people going everywhere, so that you are afraid to move through there quickly because it is uncertain, and uncertainty is a great principle in traffic management: the more uncertain the slower people go.

If you plant trees along the side of the road and you cannot see where you are going people slow down; you do not even have to put a speed sign there. But in school zones people just go very slowly. It is only on the main roads where you have this issue of pinging people for going too fast, but on those main roads there has not been an accident since 2005; you are generally providing either a separate crossing or a synchronised crossing and so few children independently make their way to and from school now along main roads because parents are worried. It is only when they are on the right side of the road in the local area that they are allowed to walk or cycle. So some of it is just common sense why you do not get the accidents; the other is just pure congestion.

Mr STUART AYRES: A secondary question: You have touched on lighting as an option. Putting aside the concept of cost shifting between State and local governments, do you think there is some validity in having lower-cost localised lighting as opposed to the high-cost lighting that connects back to the Traffic Management Centre?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Yes. It is not just cost shifting to us. There are a lot of schools who would be willing to put their own systems in if they did not have to go back to the TMC. I used to work at the TMC and I am a fan of centralised systems and high-end stuff, but when you look at how it affects the benefit of the community, that cost is exceptionally high. It has slowed down the rollout of a beneficial system because it is just so high even a \$4.4 billion budget cannot afford to deliver it. That is not the best solution for a community. You can always go through and do a system that does not call back and then come back and put a call-back unit into a system later on. I would have thought the first principle would be to get the greatest benefit by spreading it the furthest quickest.

Mr STUART AYRES: The flashing of lights is almost a reminder to say you have entered a school zone.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: It is. I drive very rarely and I find it fantastic when I do drive that somebody says, "Hey, a 40k zone", because I am usually on a 70 or a 90 kilometres an hour road.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On page 4 of your submission you say that in the city's current business plan city rangers are committed to spending more than 50 hours per month in targeted operations at school zones. Can you explain that a bit?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: That is parking. We cannot issue speeding fines; we cannot issue any moving violation.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No stopping?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Where you put that exclusion zone and nobody is allowed to stop their vehicle so that there is a line of sight of a pedestrian crossing and those sorts of things and the parents zoom up and do that, that is where we go out and penalise them to try and keep—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you have it under your business plan. Is it actually a revenue-raising exercise?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Nothing we do is a revenue-raising exercise.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Then why is it part of your business plan?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: In our business plan we have to say what we are going to do with all the resources we have. I have a business plan for every single activity I undertake and every single employee in the City of Sydney is part of a business plan.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How much revenue do you gain from those 50 hours per month?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: I would not have a clue. It is not something that would enter my head or that I would consider.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you come back to us on that?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Yes. It is like any of those things. It is like parking revenue. The issue is can you turn over the parking, not whether you make—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, I am curious and I would like to find out how much your rangers actually generate.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: We will tell you how much the rangers cost as well so you get an idea of—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, I did not ask that question.

Mr WOODMAN: I will give you an example of that sort of time. Two years ago we did a program that is still seen as having a ripple effect and some positive signs. We did a major program where we went to all the schools in our area and we provided them with information—it was a flyer for every child to take home and give to their parents. We did that the first week of the second term of 2008.

On the second week road safety officers, other staff and uniformed rangers went out to all those schools, a certain number each day, and gave out the brochures to people stopped. The only time a ticket was given out was when someone was really being dangerous and not moving. They were given a brochure to tell them what the new fines were, what the new demerit points were and they also informed them that they could be issued a ticket in the mail if the ranger was not able to give them the ticket and that rangers could operate out of uniform. So that was the second week.

The third week the rangers went out there to enforce and we told the parents that they would be out there to enforce. If we had not told the parents that we would have got probably a lot more tickets. Then the fourth week we went out there in plain clothes. Mind you, many of the rangers did look quite obvious because they had their belt with every bit of equipment on. That did get in the media. We had the schools' backing of that and the ripple effect of that I understand from the manager of parking services is that there are lower numbers of tickets issued than what there were years ago. So programs like that we do not do for—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you also provide to the Committee the number of warnings you issued during that period?

Mr WOODMAN: Yes.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: One note I would like to put on record also is that half of the revenue goes to the State.

CHAIR: Thank you. We did indicate that time would be short and if we any further questions we will put them on notice. One quick question, Mr Furolo?

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Is the road safety officer position at your council funded by Roads and Maritime Services?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Fifty per cent.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Have you been advised whether funding will continue past June next year?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: We assume that it will. If it does not, we will fund the position.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Can I clarify that. The roads Minister said that there has not been any final decision made, so they would not have been advised.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You have not been advised yet?

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: No.

CHAIR: That is clearly one of many options that we will be exploring in this Committee. Thank you for appearing before the Committee today.

Mr LEE-WILLIAMS: Thank you for listening.

(The witnesses withdrew)

CHAIR: Good afternoon. Dr Olivier and Professor Grzebieta, thank you for joining us at this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the earlier hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risk of injury and fatality.

JAKE OLIVIER, Senior Lecturer in Biostatistics, University of New South Wales, sworn, and

RAPHAEL GRZEBIETA, Chair of Road Safety at the Transport and Road Safety Research Group, University of New South Wales, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Dr Olivier, would you state your occupation and in what capacity you are appearing before the Committee?

Dr OLIVIER: I am a senior lecturer in biostatistics. Prior to my current position I was at the New South Wales Injury Risk Management Research Centre. We published a paper that, amongst other things, looked at the school zones.

CHAIR: Professor Grzebieta, would you state for the record your occupation and in what capacity you are appearing before the Committee?

Professor GRZEBIETA: I am a professor of road safety and hold the chair in road safety at the Transport and Road Safety Research Group at the University of New South Wales. My occupation is as a civil engineer. I am presenting in front of the Committee as I was a joint co-author of the paper that Dr Olivier presented looking at school zones and road safety related to those school zones.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act of 1901. As time is limited today, the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Professor GRZEBIETA: Certainly.

Dr OLIVIER: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of, say, not more than five minutes?

Professor GRZEBIETA: I might defer to my colleague Dr Olivier who led the paper.

Dr OLIVIER: Last year we published a paper where we looked at trends in child pedestrian injury in New South Wales from 1997 to 2006 using data from the Roads and Traffic Authority, which I understand has a new name now, and the NSW Health. We were using the NSW Health hospitalisation data and the Roads and Traffic Authority's Traffic Accident Database System. Using that we noticed a downward trend in that period steady from 1997 to 2006. We tried to piece apart, sort why maybe that was happening.

Amongst several different analyses we tried to see if the school zone had an effect on things. The data that we had at the time did not include the time of the accident, nor the location of the accident. So we could not identify if an accident occurred in a school zone during school zone hours. So as a proxy measure what we did is we looked at accidents that occurred on school days versus non-school days. Our analysis demonstrated that accidents for child pedestrians are on the decline. If school zones are having an effect maybe we would notice a sharper decline on school days than non-school days. What we found was that the rate of decline was roughly the same for both school days and non-school days and so we could not attribute the school zone program as contributing more to that decline.

Also we would like to present research evidence that has been published internationally about speed limits. The 40-kilometres an hour speed limit is a very good idea for school zones in that the probability of fatal injury at 40 kilometres an hour is about 38 per cent. Thirty kilometres an hour is better in that the probability of fatal injury I believe is 10 per cent. So we feel that removing the school zones would be a bad idea in that the decline that we have noticed over the past 10 years or in that 10-year period might go away. Even though we cannot attribute it to the school zones, removing it may result in an increase.

In addition to that Graham and Sparkes published a paper I believe early this year or late last year where they actually had much better data than we had, so they were able to identify did an accident occur in a

school zone in school zone hours. They did not publish the data from that but they had a graph and I just on the back of an envelope tried to figure out what their values were. I looked at it over time and I reanalysed their data using their better data and I found that it was beneficial, the school zones, and that the decline was greater in school zones during school zone hours. We have not published this and it is sort of back of the envelope kind of things but it appears to be beneficial. But one caveat we would like to state is that for the year 2000 there were a lot more child pedestrian injuries in school zones during that year than other years and that sort of helps there to be a much greater decline. Had it not been as bad there would not have been as big an effect.

CHAIR: Your submission and your opening statement quote that research demonstrating the chance of being injured or killed in a collision drops significantly with reduced collision speed. You also noted that many road safety best practice European countries operate a 30-kilometre an hour speed limit in high pedestrian areas. Do you have research indicating the success of those restrictions in reducing pedestrian casualties and what would be your recommendation in school zones for New South Wales?

Dr OLIVIER: Professor Grzebieta is a biomechanist so he might be better qualified to answer that question.

Professor GRZEBIETA: I have been involved in a lot of biomechanics over recent years. The issue comes down to the acceleration of the body when it is struck by a vehicle. At 40 kilometres per hour the trauma is at a higher level, we see greater injuries. That study and that work has been done by numerous researchers. At 30 kilometres per hour the likelihood of a death is around about 10 per cent. Also I should add that I have been involved in the study of the Bidyadanga community up north of Broome. Their speed limit in their whole community is 30 kilometres per hour. What we noted in that community was there were not any serious pedestrian injuries or fatalities. It certainly works. We know it works. It is really a biomechanical injury criterion that is dominating here.

The other issue as well with 30 versus 40 is at night vehicles tend to travel in urban areas using low beam. If you are travelling at 50 kilometres per hour or even 40 kilometres per hour you will not stop in time. You will not perceive the pedestrian if they are out in front of you in a vehicle using low beam. You will strike them at a different speed at 50 kilometres per hour. I think it is somewhere in the order of about 50. You will not perceive them in time because your perception reaction time is about 1.5 seconds. By the time you put your brakes on you have already travelled that distance in which the low beam would have highlighted the pedestrian. At 40 kilometres per hour you are striking the pedestrian somewhere in the order of about 20 to 25 kilometres per hour. At 30 kilometres per hour, however, you do stop in time.

CHAIR: Given the benefit of slower speeds as you have been expounding and that you were also present for the previous witnesses, would you contemplate an extension of the 40-kilometre an hour speed limit to all major cities and to residential areas as announced by the members of the City of Sydney?

Professor GRZEBIETA: Most definitely. You would see a sharp drop. For every 10 kilometres per hour of average speed that you reduce a speed limit in a particular area you will see a reduction in fatalities of somewhere in the order of about 10 to 20 per cent. Pedestrians are the most vulnerable group. Cyclists alongside those pedestrians as well are vulnerable. It would certainly have a direct effect on the number of casualties.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Evidence presented to the inquiry indicates that in 40-kilometre an hour school zones roughly half the vehicles are travelling above that speed. In your view, how important is enforcement of those school zone speed limits to ensure compliance and the safety benefits that they bring?

Professor GRZEBIETA: It is critical. There should be enforcement for the simple reason that you are getting new drivers every year. There is a group of young drivers that are coming in. The older drivers may tend to comply. The whole point of the exercise of enforcement is that if anyone is travelling over that limit that they know they should not be able to get away with it. It is a behavioural issue.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: What is the most effective type of enforcement in your view?

Professor GRZEBIETA: Speed cameras, effectively, or probably police presence has the greatest effect. If you can issue a fine virtually on the spot it will have a considerable effect on behaviour. However, if it is a speed camera, either fixed or mobile, that is moved to a particular position, the infringement notice must be received within a week for it to have a beneficial effect.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: What is your view of the decision to remove fixed speed cameras from school zones? Six or eight were removed earlier this year.

Professor GRZEBIETA: We shall see at those school zones. Probably they need to be monitored to see whether injuries or casualties increase in those areas. It will most likely have the effect of people exceeding those speed limits.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: One of the theories for the drop in pedestrian casualties at schools is that there are fewer children walking to school. Do you have any comment on that and has any research been done in that regard?

Dr OLIVIER: There certainly has been research on that. There are a lot of factors that come into play in relation to why kids are not walking to school more. Parents are driving their kids to school more. That is probably the biggest one. Parents are less secure in letting their kids go off on their own. I guess you guys call it being wrapped in cotton wool; there is a big push for that. Kids are also cycling to school less. It is not just child pedestrians; child cyclists are doing it less. Whether the perception that things are unsafe might play into it I do not know. It is a multifactorial thing; it is not just one reason.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you think that raises a debate about the effectiveness of school zones?

Dr OLIVIER: Potentially, but a lot of things were implemented many years ago to try to reduce not just child pedestrian injuries but all pedestrian injuries. It is hard to pinpoint one thing that is having a greater effect than others. That was also part of what our paper was about. We also looked at the reduction in speed limits. The general urban speed limit used to be 60 and it was dropped to 50. In that paper we also could not find a benefit from that either. We are really reticent about claiming that none of these measures has had any true beneficial effect because child pedestrian injuries have about halved between 1996 and 2007, so something really good is happening but we could not identify what that was.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Your submission also notes that school crossings have had an overall calming effect on urban traffic by reducing the average speeds and, as a result, casualties. Do you think these additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians should be further publicised to increase support for school zones and help improve compliance in those areas?

Dr OLIVIER: Are you saying it should be dropped lower?

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: No, that those benefits should be publicised in order to increase support for those school zones.

Professor GRZEBIETA: Definitely. I think any sort of media coverage showing the benefits should be widely publicised. The community needs to know, particularly the driving community, that these are having a positive effect otherwise people drive through these areas wondering why they are driving at those lower speed limits. The problem is that the average driver or pedestrian is not aware of the biomechanical relationship between the speed of a vehicle and being injured. Also—this is something I have raised with Roads and Maritime Services—we did a review of literature on pedestrian fatalities for them a couple of weeks ago and one thing the community is not aware of is that if they do not abide by a pedestrian crossing light or do not use the appropriate facilities or jaywalk and are hit by a vehicle their insurance is appropriately affected. They are contributing to their own negligence and the coverage of their rehabilitation costs, particularly in New South Wales where there is an adversarial system as opposed to Victoria where there is no-fault claim insurance. It can have an effect and the public needs to know this.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Based on the research you have done on national and international practices regarding school zone safety measures how does New South Wales rate domestically and internationally?

Dr OLIVIER: Our study was focused only on New South Wales because our injury centre was funded by the Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Health and so we had a very New South Wales focus.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: So you have no data to compare it with?

Dr OLIVIER: We did not compare them with national and international bodies.

Professor GRZEBIETA: Overall, pedestrian fatalities are dropping. You can see the trend in the national data. The introduction of the 50 kilometres per hour urban zone speed limit default appears to be having an effect. Some of the world's best practice countries believe our speed limits are too high in these areas.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Earlier today we heard from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People who suggested they would like to see the 40 kilometres an hour school zones extended to all preschool and childcare centres across the State. What do you think of that idea?

Professor GRZEBIETA: I think that is wise. I have been involved already in a couple of pretty nasty dart-out cases where children have darted out—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: From childcare centres?

Professor GRZEBIETA: Not from childcare centres but just generally. A child is unpredictable up to a particular age, especially if they lose the grip of their parents. Something distracts them and then you have a dart-out. If you are travelling at 40 kilometres per hour it is better than travelling at a higher speed. At least you have some chance of reducing the speed of your vehicle prior to hitting the child.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Dr Olivier, would you like to add anything to that?

Dr OLIVIER: Also the parents are distracted around those zones as well so even an adult who can make a good decision on their own in terms of traffic coming and going, when they have hold of a kid—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You support it?

Dr OLIVIER: I definitely support that.

Mr STUART AYRES: Do you know where the eight speed cameras in school zones are?

Professor GRZEBIETA: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: They are no longer in zones.

Mr STUART AYRES: Do you know where the ones that have been removed were?

Professor GRZEBIETA: No, I do not.

Mr STUART AYRES: Have you conducted any research on those zones?

Professor GRZEBIETA: No.

Dr OLIVIER: It is too early to do that but a few years from now we would be able to do that. There is no longer a New South Wales injury risk management research centre. It is now the Traffic and Road Safety Research Centre and they have access to Roads and Maritime Services data so they can identify whether it happened in a school zone and in school hours, so I would expect them to do that.

Mr STUART AYRES: As a broad comment not specific to school zones do you think we should be moving towards lower speeds like 40 kilometres an hour or even 30 kilometres an hour in high pedestrian areas?

Dr OLIVIER: Certainly.

Professor GRZEBIETA: Absolutely. I think the whole of Sydney's central business district should be 40 kilometres per hour.

CHAIR: We have concentrated to a large degree on reduction of speed. Are there other traffic calming measures that you would recommend and in what priority?

Dr OLIVIER: This is only my opinion but I find that driving around school zones can be a bit difficult sometimes in that it is hard to identify where they are. If they have a flashing light it makes things much easier.

Drivers know the school zone is there, it is active and you need to slow down and watch what you are doing. If it is a 40 kilometres an hour zone overall in that part of the city, as the previous witnesses mentioned, that is also beneficial, but you need to have it in your face so you can see it. You cannot always see what is on the road—the yellow markings—and the signs on the side may be blocked by trees or whatever but the flashing light is by far the best.

Professor GRZEBIETA: One of the other pieces of technology which is now coming to the fore is the intelligent speed adaptation system. Given the ability of those systems to recognise a school zone and that it is active we should be utilising that technology a lot more. I suggest it should be mandatory for P-platers to have those systems installed in their vehicles.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you tell us a little more about this technology and how it operates?

Professor GRZEBIETA: It works off a global positioning system [GPS] and there is a road map that Roads and Maritime Services has been developing. John Walls is the contact person at the NSW Centre for Road Safety at Roads and Maritime Services who has been working on this. There have been a number of presentations nationally about this at various conferences. The different jurisdictions are now putting these maps together which will directly link to your GPS system or even your iPhone. There is an application coming out for iPhones or Motorola phones or whatever these intelligent phones are and if you put it in your car it will signal to you that you are in a school zone. It will either make a sound or talk or flash. There are various systems and I think we need to get that technology out there quickly.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: It is not uncommon to see people of all ages, not just young people, walking along with headphones in their ears and texting on their phones as they walk across the road. Does there need to be some regulation of the use of mobile devices whatever your form of locomotion on the road?

Professor GRZEBIETA: I do not think we should be using them when we are driving in a built-up area, that is clear. There appear to be benefits, contrary to the research, from hands-free mobile phones when you are on a long drive in the country. The jury is still out on that one in terms of research. In the central business district certainly and particularly for young P-platers and young drivers it should be locked off.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Pedestrians?

Professor GRZEBIETA: You should be watchful, obviously, but that is an imposition on pedestrians in a way that—

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I have seen young people walk across the streets in front of cars with earphones and music blaring madly in their ears and they are doing something with their mobile phone as they go. They cannot be focused on what is happening around them if they are focused on something else, can they?

Professor GRZEBIETA: Absolutely. They are contributing to their own negligence and that has implications. It is very difficult. How do you enforce that? We still cannot enforce cyclists stopping at lights or stop people jaywalking. What are we going to do—have a whole lot of police out there? My feeling is people need to be made more aware of their behaviour through—

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Maybe a media campaign.

Professor GRZEBIETA: —media campaigns and those sorts of things. I have been a little disappointed since coming to Sydney. I have found pedestrians quite bold in Sydney, which is interesting. I think it is because of the population density. I am also a bit disappointed that there is not media exposure about the vulnerability of pedestrians. A lot of focus is on the drivers, however the pedestrians and cyclists contribute to it as well and people should be made aware that if they are hit by a car travelling at greater than 30 kilometres per hour their risk of dying is quite high.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The Committee has heard a lot of evidence about the speed of vehicles driving through school zones. I am also concerned about vehicles dropping off and picking up in and around school zones. Are you aware of any data about the number of accidents with people who are dropping off and picking up as opposed to those—

Dr OLIVIER: I do not think the Roads and Traffic Authority actually collects that kind of data. They collect data through the computerised operational policing system [COPS] and it gets sent to research centres like ours as traffic accident data systems [TADS]. There are certain fields in there such as where the driver and the person in the accident were—driver, passenger, on the back of a motorcycle, pedestrian et cetera. I do not think any of that is in there and that would be confusing.

Professor GRZEBIETA: What about ICD10?

Dr OLIVIER: There would have to be a hospitalisation for something like that.

Professor GRZEBIETA: I have been involved in the Bethany Holder case. I was asked to give expert evidence on that. That was a particularly nasty one where a mother who was driving a four-wheel drive ran over the top of Bethany. The issues here are being able to see children wandering around larger vehicles. There are blind spots. In fact a lot has been said about buses and seatbelts on buses. It is people outside the buses, such as children, who are being killed, which is the big problem. It is really all to do with blindspots and children moving in and out of traffic, in particularly, younger children below the age of about 10 to 12 years. Parents need to be vigilant to ensure that they are not in harm's way.

Congestion around schools is a particularly difficult issue. I think you have to have cooperation between parents and the community as well as a certain level of enforcement. There have been some good programs. I am not sure whether you are aware of the Ranger program. A gentleman by the name of Michael Paine, a road safety researcher or expert, was involved in that program where the kids themselves were policing parents and children. That worked quite successfully. However, I think it requires the school community to work out exactly where you have your pick-up, drop and kiss zones and all that. It requires a whole community effort. You might approach it in a different way where you have safe walking to school rather than kids being dropped off in cars, in particular, big cars.

CHAIR: Professor Grzebieta and Dr Olivier, thank you for presenting to the Committee today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

CHAIR: Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today, Mr Achterstraat and Mr Moran. You are attending the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety which is inquiring into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the earlier hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is examining the adequacy of management and the operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality.

PETER CHARLES ACHTERSTRAAT, Auditor-General, NSW Audit Office, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney, and

GEOFFREY ROBERT MORAN, Performance Audit Leader, NSW Audit Office, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time, as you are well aware, is limited. The Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which would form part of the evidence and be made public. Would you be willing to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Yes. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. For those who are unaware, the Audit Office does approximately 12 performance audits each year which are in the blue and green folders. We also do financial audits on all 494 New South Wales agencies which are in the red volumes. I chose to do a performance audit in relation to improving road safety on schools, which we tabled at the beginning of last year. The process that is now used by the Public Accounts Committee, which I think is a very good one, was adopted two years ago. After a report is tabled the chief executive officer of the agency has an opportunity to comment on that, and that comment is incorporated in the report, and he or she either accepts or rejects my recommendations and findings. Twelve months later the Public Accounts Committee writes to the chief executive officer of each of the agencies that I have audited to obtain an update about what has happened with the recommendations.

That is what occurred in relation to this audit. My understanding is that the Public Accounts Committee has written to the Roads and Traffic Authority and asked what has happened in relation to my recommendations. When the Public Accounts Committee receives those responses it will decide whether to hold a public hearing in relation to it. On this performance audit I do not know whether the Public Accounts Committee has made a decision to go to the next step. Basically, what did we find in this and what did we recommend? Basically we found in this audit that there has been a drop in the number of casualties around school zones since school zones were implemented in the early 1990s. We could say that school zones are having an effect and there are only 60 or so casualties each year, "casualty" being an injury or death. There have been only two deaths in the 20 years and each year there are only about 60 other casualties.

Our first finding was that it is effective in reducing the number of casualties. Sorry, we do not know whether it is effective. There is a correlation between them being introduced and the casualties falling. Secondly, motorists are still speeding in the school zones, irrespective of speed cameras which are in only 1 per cent of the school zones. The Roads and Traffic Authority conducts surveys and a limited number of surveys have found that motorists are still speeding. Another thing we found is that there is an amount of community angst relating to the changing of speed zones on particular roads as they have to chop and change and things like that.

Our first recommendation related to an increased awareness of school zones. Specifically we said that they have to chop down all the overgrowth and trees and remove the graffiti that is obscuring some of the signs. Secondly, a GPS system has to be introduced as the data is there. Some of the private GPS companies have got it, but it is not official. We recommended that the official information from the Roads and Traffic Authority be made available to TomTom and other companies so when people are driving along a bell goes off in their car to alert them to the fact that there is a school zone in the area.

The first recommendation related to awareness and the second recommendation focused on 23 schools which have different opening zones from the rest. Of the 3,000 schools in New South Wales 99 per cent have a school zone between 8.00 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. But 23 schools have a different timing. Originally I wondered why they did not change it to make it all the same. However, I think there are travel issues such as connecting with buses and trains so they have to have different timing. We recommended that flashing lights be installed at all 23 schools. Another recommendation we made was that the web

continually refer to the number of infringements and fines that have occurred at each school zone. You can find that information, if you dig hard enough, through the Office of State Revenue, but we wanted to make much simpler. I guess those are the main representations.

There were some smaller recommendations. There seems to be an issue relating to the cost of these flashing lights. If you do the sums it suggests that it is \$120,000 for each flashing flight. When questions were asked in Parliament it suggested that the figure was a lot less than that. I think there has to be clarity about how much it costs for these flashing lights. I recommended that, if it costs a lot of money to put in a flashing light, perhaps they should consider differential fines. If you go through a normal school zone you get fined a normal amount. However, if are fined as a result of driving through a flashing light and you have been warned, perhaps you should be fined a bit extra. I think that is the only recommendation that was not accepted.

Other thoughts have been expressed by the community. Members of the community sometime send me notes stating what they think should happen. A couple of relevant issues related to a hotline to advise the Roads and Traffic Authority about when signs are obscured. People are frustrated when signs are obscured and they want to tell someone about it. Instead of ringing their local member they would prefer to have a hotline. When a person has been booked for speeding through a school zone the condition of his or her licence in future should be that a car can be driven only with a GPS in it that sends off an alarm in a school zone. Those people should be told that they will not lose their licence but they will have a restricted licence, for example, a yellow or gold P-plate, or something like that. Member of the community sent in some other ideas which were not as relevant. I am willing to answer your questions.

CHAIR: Thank you for your opening statement which anticipated some of our questions, as has clearly been evidenced by your audit. Compared to other audits, such as the one for young drivers, how do you rate the effectiveness of school zones in improving safety on New South Wales roads?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: We are not in a position to comment on that. That question should be directed to engineers. Mr Moran is the lead auditor in this area and I am from the accounting side. Forgive me if I defer to other experts. I was quite humbled when I heard of the engineering expertise of the two witnesses who appeared before me. I am only able to talk about certain financial issues.

CHAIR: That is fine. We heard you speak about recommendations for introducing higher fines for speeding infringements.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Correct.

CHAIR: How do you rate the effectiveness of fines as deterrents? Do you believe that more fixed speed cameras would be necessary to achieve that end?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: That is a matter for other people to decide. I know that people's behaviour can be determined by the level of penalty involved. The more chance you get of being caught, the higher the fine. I am not in a position to comment on the appropriateness of more speed cameras.

CHAIR: Obviously, you have views about speed camera fines being a deterrent and an enforcement category? Have you prioritised recommendations for awareness to prevent that final outcome?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: The three main strategies road authorities use around the world in this situation is increasing awareness, reducing speed and improving engineering around school zones. In relation to awareness, our recommendations purely relate to the GPS—one day every car will have a GPS—and graffiti. We have examples and photographs of a school zone sign in front of which is a tree growing so no-one can see it—or another sign saying "Eat at Joe's" coffee shop and things like that. There is a real need. You cannot expect the RTA necessarily to be patrolling every street. Maybe we should have seven million armchair auditors who can each phone in when there is an issue rather than just hoping that one of the RTA inspectors will see the growth.

CHAIR: What criteria should be used when making a decision on the prioritisation of school zone sites suitable for flashing lights?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: That is a good point. One of our issues was that the RTA's criteria were unknown and not known and also they were not known when engineering was going to be undertaken: where

are they going to put a fence in the middle of the road, where are they going to build a bridge. I guess we are not in a position to say what the criteria should be, just that they should be there and they should be transparent.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Were you satisfied with the response you received from the RTA, now the Roads and Maritime Service, regarding your audit?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Whenever you do an audit on an agency, there is always a professional relationship. There was a professional relationship here. I am pleased that at the end of the day it all worked out okay. In all audits, this one is no exception, there will be times when it gets a little bit testy. At the end of the day we were pleased with the end result. I cannot comment now as to what they have done in relation to these recommendations. They have said most of them they have accepted, one of them they said they do not accept—I understand that—and on some of them they have sort of said, "We'll think about it." I have not done an audit to find out how they are going. The proof is in the pudding. They can easily say, "Yes, we agree with this and we're going to do it." Have they done it or not, is another question.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Is there a process for you formally to follow that up?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: There could be. I would have the liberty of doing another audit now following it up, but that would eat into my limited number of audits that I can do. I find it more cost effective for the Public Accounts Committee to call the chief executive in and ask those specific questions. I will be liaising with the Public Accounts Committee—my apologies for not doing it before this meeting—to see if it will call in the CEO of the Roads and Maritime Service.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The Committee has received a little bit of evidence about compliance with school zone speed limits. Some estimates say that less than 50 per cent of vehicles actually comply with the 40 kilometre-an-hour speed limits that operate around school zones. In your experience and from the audit you have undertaken, what is the most effective way of ensuring compliance with those speed limits?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: In our report on a very small sample we found that in only two out of 12 school zones did motorists comply. That is based on surveys. I think only 1 per cent of school zones have a fixed speed camera in them and 97 per cent of the times people are fined for speeding in a school zone is from that fixed camera. There is really no other way, unless you have a mobile camera, which was suggested when previous RTA's were going to look at those. I am not in a position to give a definitive answer. We have the dragon's teeth, education in newspapers, Ralph the Giraffe that goes to schools and all those sorts of things, although that is more for the student and the parent rather than the driver. Conformity is always a good one. If everyone knows that this is the time it is going to be, there is no confusion, to a certain extent. Also if the sign is blasting at you, that is another one.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Are fixed speed cameras in school zones a good deterrent for speeding?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: It is proven. There is a very strong correlation between introduction of school zones and reduction in accidents. I cannot necessarily say whether one caused the other, but there is a strong correlation.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Would you recommend the rolling out of additional fixed speed cameras in school zones to ensure compliance with the speed limit?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I have to be very careful not to recommend more money being spent. Auditors-General are more to make sure that existing money being spent is spent effectively. I probably am not in a position to say whether that should be done, how many should be done and whether it should be done instead of something else. But if it is to be done, best to be done effectively, to quote Shakespeare.

Mr STUART AYRES: It seems in your opinion that there is a correlation between the effectiveness of the school zone and the location of flashing lights?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: No. I might have said that wrong. There is a correlation between the introduction of school zones and the reduction in casualties.

Mr STUART AYRES: Yes, I recognise that. Perhaps I phrased it poorly. Does the existence of lights in a school zone lead to a reduction in speed by the driver?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I do not know if it says in our report, but my gut feeling is yes, absolutely.

Mr MORAN: We were not able to separate data on school zones that had flashing lights over a long-enough period from those that did not. My personal observation is that I tend not to notice school zones without the flashing lights because I do not drive very much. But we were not able to separate that when we did the report.

Mr STUART AYRES: Is it worth the Government, or definitely the Committee, exploring whether lower cost flashing light options that are controlled more locally rather than through the Traffic Management Centre should be considered?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: From an economic point of view, economists value a life at \$2.13 million—I am not sure what it is at the moment. If that is what they value a life at, and I am not sure if that is the exact figure, then the cost of putting in a speed camera if it is going to save one life is cost effective. That is purely from an economic point of view. I have heard differences in the cost. Apparently some local people can install lights very cheaply themselves, not through the Government. One has to make sure that if those are done that there is quality assurance around them because I could put up one myself and forget to switch it on one day or something could go wrong, the solar might not work or something. If something is to be done outside the mainstream, there has to be pretty strong quality controls around to make sure you are getting the same level of quality.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you be interested in doing further research or reports into speed cameras?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Yes. We have done a subsequent audit. I did this audit on the school zones and then because of what that generated I then did a broader one on speed cameras themselves. My criteria for determining whether to do another audit is community interest, questions in *Hansard*, questions in Parliament and questions to the parliamentary library. But if there is another organisation looking at it, then I do not do it. If the Ombudsman was going to do it or if a parliamentary committee is looking at it or something like that, then I would not do it because I would have thought that there is no added value for me to do it again.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I do not know the mechanism, but is there a need, perhaps not for a parliamentary committee but a standing committee, to monitor or examine speed cameras permanently?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: The speed cameras issue is perennial. There are persons who are very keen on the safety side of it and there are persons who think it is a bit easier to travel if they do not have quite as many. There are different views. I am not sure what the cost would be, but anything that could use this valuable tool better would have a lot of merit.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you are saying yes?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I am not saying no. I am not in a position to comment on government policy. I never do comment on policy and I try not to comment on spending, but anything that can make speed cameras or road safety better and is cost effective, I would support.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Is it fair to say that they should be targeted more to those areas where the benefits are greater?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: Absolutely. That is one of the issues. If there are only going to be 65 speed cameras, they should be in the 65 highest risk areas. The Government or someone has to decide whether it is going to be 65 or 165 and, if there is to be a certain number, the RTA has to clearly establish why they are at certain locations.

CHAIR: We have covered a little of the same ground, but through your audit process which measures applied in school zones did you find to be the most effective in improving pedestrian safety in school zone areas? What can be best achieved by government in available budget? How would you prioritise that?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I guess things basically at no cost always attract me. The RTA does not like the idea of putting the number of fines on the web for each location, and as it is the expert we would have to ask

it. But that would not cost anything. The GPS business of the RTA giving that information for free to the Tom Toms of the world I think would not cost anything and that also is another good recommendation.

CHAIR: We tend to concentrate on the enforcement side, which obviously is a deterrent, but we would like also to equally gain information on the awareness and avoidance side.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: The awareness and the?

CHAIR: Avoidance of incurring penalties—in other words, doing the right thing in that particular school zone.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: In my subsequent audit I mentioned the speed camera lottery, which was not very popular but I will repeat it and I do not necessarily think it is applicable to school zones. In my other report, of the 18 ideas that came from the public, one revolved around the speed camera lottery saying that the Government should set aside 500 lottery tickets every year and people who are caught travelling at the right speed through a speed camera should be sent a lottery ticket. It works well in some countries but, apparently, it was not considered a good idea here.

CHAIR: I come from a marketing background and incentives area great means of promoting desirable behaviour.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: If the Government did not have money for 500 lottery tickets you could get a sponsor or something like that. You could say, "This particular camera is sponsored by Joe's Cafe" or something like that. I might be sounding flippant, but there is an element of passion in what I am saying. I will divide your question into two parts of education and avoidance of speeding. Education on behalf of children, parents and motorists, which is three different areas. We have the giraffe that goes around to the schools. I do not know if the giraffe talks about speeding anymore; it certainly talks about drugs and alcohol. That is the education part of it, although I am not sure about the education side for parents. In education for motorists, clearly if they know they exist and if they know other people have been fined at this particular location, that could well be a bit of a spur on them to educate them as to where the sites are.

CHAIR: What you suggest perhaps is signage of the number of people fined in that particular location?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: On the website? I am not necessarily saying it should be on the road.

CHAIR: Other countries have done that, particularly for fatalities.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: It would defeat my argument that there are too many signs, especially if you put it in front of the other one.

CHAIR: Thank you for appearing before the Committee today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

CHAIR: You are attending the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the earlier hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness and minimising the risks of injury and fatality.

JOHN DOUGLAS HARTLEY, Assistant Commissioner, APM, Commander Traffic Services, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time is limited and the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing the replies to which will form part of the evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr HARTLEY: Certainly.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes?

Mr HARTLEY: I have provided a response to the questions of the Committee which I could provide within our area of expertise. The issue of statistics is for the Roads and Traffic Authority as they have the results of our police reports. The New South Wales Police Force is responsible for enforcement. I will be here to talk about enforcement: Incorrect enforcement, better enforcement or other issues you may wish to elicit from me.

CHAIR: We did have representatives from those bodies present to us so there will be questions arising concerning enforcement. Was the New South Wales Police Force involved in formulating the policy governing the establishment and operation of school zones in New South Wales?

Mr HARTLEY: I assume we were, sir. I am not sure of the exact details. It is before my time.

CHAIR: What is the nature of coordination between the various agencies involved in monitoring and enforcement of rules governing the operation of school zones?

Mr HARTLEY: The role of the New South Wales Police Force is enforcement of school zones, identification of problem school zones and together with the Roads and Traffic Authority enforcement activity at those school zones.

CHAIR: From what you are saying The New South Wales Police Force are the primary enforcement organisation for school zone restrictions. Do you work in partnership with other bodies?

Mr HARTLEY: We work with the school principals and RTA to discuss road safety issues, areas of concern to both of us and about the safety around schools. I personally work with a couple of primary schools for programs such as the Road Safety Rangers at Balgowlah. It was a pilot program started three to four years ago to make sure schools were trying something different to ensure safety around schools.

CHAIR: Today we are concentrating purely on school zones: How do the New South Wales Police Force organise those enforcement strategies?

Mr HARTLEY: With some difficulty. There are 3,000 school zones around the State and for most of them we are unable to use the equipment we have as far as radar detection is concerned because of the inability to stop cars in multi-lane roads. We have problems with equipment in those zones as the equipment we have is either not capable of doing multi-lane scanning or it is capable of scanning multi-lanes but we then have to stop the cars. If we stop the cars that can cause traffic problems that are more disturbing and dangerous to students and families than letting the cars travel through. We try to have a high profile presence by parking a marked police car near the school.

CHAIR: Do you concentrate on specific infringements such as speeding? That is a deterrent rather than an active role.

Mr HARTLEY: Our main role is deterrence rather than enforcement and detection. If I can deter someone from speeding I can probably save a life. Deterrence will stop them from doing something wrong and killing themselves or others. We have a high profile with marked police cars parked near schools to ensure we

get the message across. There are so many school zones across the State that the New South Wales Police Force cannot run a 24/7 operation that concentrates on all school zones.

CHAIR: I am sure you will have questions put to you about cameras, but did you say that the mobile cameras are not currently used by police officers?

Mr HARTLEY: The New South Wales Police Force does not have cameras. The only equipment we have is mobile radars which are on-the-spot. One piece of equipment that we can use is a Lidar, which is a handheld radar device you point at a car like a pistol and the speed of the vehicle is measured by that device. It is the component of stopping the cars that is the problem.

CHAIR: I can assure you that in my region they are very active and I observe them. Can you tell us roughly how much of your resources are dedicated to enforcement around school zones?

Mr HARTLEY: No, I cannot. The fact is we have 1,200 highway patrol officers in this State. Tasking is done at local area command level across the State to deal with problem areas. With so many school zones operating local area commands concentrate on school zones of high risk.

CHAIR: What is the tasking in relation to that? If you cannot enforce speed limits what other infringements are your officers seeking to enforce with their presence?

Mr HARTLEY: Certainly parking offences in the no-stopping areas within the school zones and use of mobile phones within the school zones which are an additional offence rather than a basic offence. We have operations five or six times per year a week or two after students have returned to school. Following publicity of the operation we will make it a priority to enforce for a whole day across State school zones. We concentrate on school zones during the second week of school to get the message across.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Your experience and your professional life are in traffic services: If you had one thing you could change to improve safety around schools what would it be?

Mr HARTLEY: I, like others, can go through a school zone and unless you are fully alert be unaware of the fact you have driven through a school zone. People need to be given the best possible chance to realise they are in school zone.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: To recognise they are driving through a school zone?

Mr HARTLEY: Particularly when you do not drive at the school zone enforcement times. I drive at 6 a.m., or thereabouts, and at 5-6 p.m. in the afternoon. I am not driving at 2-3 p.m. but if I am out on the road coming to a meeting like this I have to be vigilant that this is a school zone time.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: It would not be good if you got caught.

Mr HARTLEY: There would be a new job for me somewhere. It is a fact of life that you have to be fully aware and concentrating and if you are not driving regularly at those times you can go through a school zone without realising it.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Particularly if you are on different roads all the time.

Mr HARTLEY: If we are talking about a single fix for school zones it would be better lighting or marks on the road.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you suggesting flashing lights would be an effective approach?

Mr HARTLEY: That is the ideal world for road safety, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Earlier today we had the City of Sydney Council representatives appear and they said they have 35 school zones in Sydney city. They are proposing 40-kilometres an hour throughout the entire city: What do you think of that proposal?

Mr HARTLEY: From a road safety point of view, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You would support it?

Mr HARTLEY: From a traffic management point of view we would be saying no. We know, and you will know, that the chance of surviving an impact with a motor vehicle at 30-40 kilometres per hour is much greater than surviving an impact when the vehicle is travelling 50-60 kilometres per hour.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People this morning submitted it would like to see school zones applied to preschools across the State. What do you think about that proposal?

Mr HARTLEY: If it is realistic and a real problem we support that. I have a four-year old and a two-year old who go to preschool, so I know the situation with drop-offs and pick-ups. It is pretty safe when you are walking to or from the front gate and locking the gate. It would have to be a strong argument as to why a child would be unattended outside that area. The problem with too many school zones is that no one gets the message and it becomes a blur.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You mentioned earlier being cognisant of school zones while driving: In South Australia 40-kilometres an hour school zones operate 24-hours a day and in the ACT it is 24-hours a day. What do you think of those two proposals and is there any application to New South Wales?

Mr HARTLEY: From a road safety point of view it is a much safer proposal but practically and taking into account the dilution effect of extending school zone times, you may lose the impact of school zones and it may be counterproductive.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Assistant Commissioner Hartley, there is a number of school zones that have fixed speed cameras. From what you said a few moments ago those brown bombers, as they are known, the mobile cameras, they are not able to operate in those areas?

Mr HARTLEY: The New South Wales Police Force does not have mobile cameras. The Roads and Traffic Authority have the mobile speed cameras.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you work with the Roads and Traffic Authority as to where the cameras need to be positioned or should be targeted?

Mr HARTLEY: We use criteria to work with the Roads and Traffic Authority to target highway black spots but those mobile cameras are not being used in school zone areas.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: You mentioned the identification of problem school zones, are you saying there is no liaison with the identification and communication to police of those areas?

Mr HARTLEY: With the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Yes.

Mr HARTLEY: The Roads and Traffic Authority liaise with local police. I am State level and then we have local area commands and regions. The local area commander meets the school principals twice a year and discusses all issues—including road safety. The school will contact the local highway police office and say: We have a problem with speeding through our school zone, can you help? The police will help where they can but we cannot do every job because our equipment might not work in that particular area, so it is more about profiling.

CHAIR: As a local representative I can assure you if we get contacted by schools or constituents the police do react to the inquiries when we make contact with the local area command.

Mr HARTLEY: As they should.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: The PLOs, are they actively sent out to the schools in a targeted campaign in terms of student awareness?

Mr HARTLEY: The PLOs are not particularly road safety aligned. Their job is more general behaviour, talking to students and we have other road safety programs that run on a different base across the State. The Roads and Traffic Authority are the lead agency for education in schools.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Getting back to the 40-kilometre an hour zones: Some of the evidence we have had from school groups suggests that the times at which school zones should operate should be determined locally. Other evidence we have had suggests there should be consistency so that motorists know from school zone to school zone at 2.30 p.m. it starts and at 4.00 p.m. it ends. Do you have a view about the value of consistency as opposed to local circumstances for local schools?

Mr HARTLEY: That is a difficult question to answer. There is one school zone that starts at 7.30 a.m. Apart from that everyone knows the core times it is a school zone and they are the times that you should be doing the right thing. If there are flashing lights from the time it starts people cannot say: I did not know. I do not want to catch them breaking the law; I want to make sure they slow down in that school zone.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: A lot of the information we have talked about and evidence we have received is speeding of cars driving through a school zone. There is also a lot of concern, particularly at a local level; people understand that school zones are congested areas. Not only is it a speeding issue, there is line of sight issues, parking issues and illegal u-turns: In your experience and from talking with other police officers do you have a view about which of those two broad areas—those driving through a school zone and those attending a school zone—is the bigger contributor to accidents?

Mr HARTLEY: Fortunately the data set is not that big on school zone incidents. It is good news that there is not a lot to compare. I have looked at three serious crash-in-school-zones: One was a young kid starting a car it should not have and some are straight through. It is hard to say from a statistical stand point which I would want to target more.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: What about anecdotally?

Mr HARTLEY: Speed is the most dangerous. If you are going more than 30-kilometres an hour or 40-kilometres an hour and hit someone they will not survive.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Getting back to my initial question, if there was one road safety technique that could be implemented across schools to improve safety, letting people know that they are in a school zone and to slow down would be it?

Mr HARTLEY: In this day and age, yes. I think in the future we will have vehicles with the ability to slow down in school zones and that will be the next step. I always say the future but ISA [intelligent speed adaptation] we talked about in this type of committee five years ago and it is here now. So it is the future but maybe not that far off, I hope.

CHAIR: In relation to the question about feedback from your local area commanders, we received submissions from local councils and as local representatives some of us are asked to participate in the work of local traffic committees to consider issues concerned with school zones, amongst other things. Does the New South Wales Police have representatives on local traffic committees across New South Wales?

Mr HARTLEY: Yes.

CHAIR: Do you find this to be an effective method to identify and deal with problems regarding specific school zones?

Mr HARTLEY: As far as school zones are concerned, I have heard nothing to the contrary to say it is not working properly. Again, there are some school zones—and I could provide the Committee with information—that are in zones that probably are not really school zones.

CHAIR: Have there been any innovative measures suggested by those various local traffic committees that might not be in the broad thinking of the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Police?

Mr HARTLEY: Not that I am aware of, no.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I go back to the comments that you are aware of a school that starts at 7.30 a.m. It was suggested to us earlier in the day that perhaps a better way to operate would be if the school principals operate the flashing lights. Do you see that as an option?

Mr HARTLEY: When I was at school we put the flag out, I can somewhat remember. The equipment that is being used now is reliable. It is timed to go on at the right time and I think the failure rate is pretty low. I think the process at the moment is pretty good. There are not enough, of course. Reliability is the most important part. If the principal is sick or forgets, do we risk a life because of that? The technology is there. Maybe the principal should go in check that light is on at 7.30.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: He may have the capacity to program it so that it starts flashing at 7.30 a.m.?

Mr HARTLEY: That is probably a bigger picture about signage and those sorts of things. We know the time to start is eight o'clock. If we try to program people differently, it might be a bit difficult.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: In terms of enforcement, what do you believe to be the most efficient methods for ensuring motorists' compliance with those school zone restrictions?

Mr HARTLEY: Certainly fixed cameras are the only real solution that would ensure compliance in the school zones.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you see that fixed cameras are more effective than a marked police car when it is there?

Mr HARTLEY: Fixed cameras are there all the time, which is the important part. The other option is if there was a mobile capacity there and you did not know the mobile car would be there, that may have some deterrent effect. It is all about deterrence.

CHAIR: What options does the New South Wales Police have to promote the presence of and the rules applying to school zones? How successful have those efforts been?

Mr HARTLEY: As I said, we have four or five major operations called Operation Compliance each year, which are for school zone compliance. The following day we do a large media release talking about the school zones and the need for safety around schools.

CHAIR: Advertising?

Mr HARTLEY: We do not have an advertising budget at all.

CHAIR: You might not but you can generate significant community service advertising.

Mr HARTLEY: Certainly we do in discussions and media releases talk about school zone operations. In the week before the first week of school going back I am always on the radio and in the press saying, "School's back, please slow down, young lives" et cetera. We do use that to the best ability we can.

CHAIR: That is part of an annual routine?

Mr HARTLEY: Yes.

CHAIR: Assistant Commissioner Hartley, thank you very much for your presence here today. We appreciate your time and expertise.

(The witness withdrew)

HAROLD CHARLES SCRUBY, Chairman, Pedestrian Council of Australia Ltd, 19A Young Street, Neutral Bay, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Good afternoon, Mr Scruby, for attending this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today follows the hearing held last Wednesday and continues to examine a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is looking at the adequacy of the management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. Would you please state your occupation and in what capacity you appear before the Committee?

Mr SCRUBY: I am a director and chairman of the Pedestrian Council of Australia and I appear in that capacity.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time is always limited and the Committee may wish to send you additional questions in writing, the replies to which would then form part of your evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr SCRUBY: Of course.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions would you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes?

Mr SCRUBY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. The Pedestrian Council has been involved in this particular issue for a very long time. If you have not clicked onto the links, as an example, I think we can claim that we were responsible for the first 40 kilometre per hour speed limit or speed school zone on a main road in Australia back in 1995. We achieved that wonderful result with the help of Peter Collins, who was then the local member, and Mr Bruce Baird, who was then the Minister for Roads. That particular zone ended up getting a speed camera in it. I live close to there and I was the deputy mayor at the time of Mosman Council. Where it was booking thousands of motorists a quarter when it first went in, it is lucky to book 200, 150 every quarter now.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You would say that is a success?

Mr SCRUBY: It is a wonderful success, and the aim, of course, is to book nobody. However, if I can break my submission down into two parts, our main concerns are, one, speeding in school zones and, two, illegal parking in school zones. I will attend to speeding first. There would be very little doubt, Mr Chairman, that there are three Es in road safety: engineering, education and enforcement. We do pretty well with the engineering and we do pretty well with the education. But the enforcement in New South Wales—and these are not my words, these are the words of the Auditor-General—up to 99 per cent of school zones are not properly enforced. It is interesting he came to this conclusion because several years before that we took out some FOIs [freedom of information] to look at how many people were being booked by speeding in school zones. The remarkable finding was that where there were speed cameras, in every instance not only were the number of people being detected dropping quite significantly once the speed cameras were in but, in fact, there was very little, if any, enforcement in the other zones. There are up to 10,000 zones in New South Wales around 3,500 schools.

During that time a police officer called Peter Wilson was killed during an operation using LIDAR [light detection and ranging]. As a result of that—and I am sure you know about this—WorkSafe introduced some very strict requirements as to the use of LIDAR. During the same time the New South Wales Police were letting go of some of their 24 mobile speed cameras. We came to the conclusion, and so did the Auditor-General, that the only effective means of enforcing school zones was through mobile speed cameras. We then undertook some more FOIs and we discovered that we used to have 24 and that they had been gradually let go—mainly, I think, because the Police found that the technology was wearing out and they could not afford to replace them. As a result of this, the Police recommended—we found this out in the FOI—that they be replaced. The Victorian police commissioner gave other evidence showing that these were the most effective part of their suite of enforcement. At the time the former Minister Roads released these mobile cameras, for some strange reason he released only six of them and said that they will not be used in school zones.

During the same period a lady called Ms Yvette Vignando, who was, I think, president of the P and C of Gladesville school—and this is only an example—was desperate because motorists were speeding through that school zone on Victoria Road. She contacted three separate sections of the Police. They all stated categorically that they were unable to enforce speeding in that zone because they could not use the LIDAR and there was no other method. We were able to help them by getting flashing lights around that school, and we believe that helped. But when motorists know there is no enforcement it is the old axiom: non-enforcement of the law will encourage its disobedience. These are not again just our findings that came out of the FOI; these are the findings of the Auditor-General in his report in 2010. He stated:

It is clear that enforcement of the 40 kilometre per hour school zone speed limit in school zone times is almost entirely dependent on fixed speed cameras. The 44 school zones fitted with speed cameras represent 1 per cent of school zones yet account for 93 per cent of the school zone speeding infringements. Only 7 per cent of speeding infringements in school zones are recorded in the remaining school zones without speed cameras.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Scruby, we are getting up to six minutes. Can we ask you some questions?

Mr SCRUBY: You certainly can.

CHAIR: Did you complete your answer? You had two parts.

Mr SCRUBY: The other part that is very concerning to us is the parking. We can also, I think, claim some of the responsibility for getting demerit points and tougher penalties for parking in school zones. I think New South Wales, to its credit, has the best system in the world. I do not know of any other jurisdiction where motorists get demerit points for parking illegally in a school zone. That came about because so many motorists who were wealthy were just flouting the law. We had so many rangers say they just tore up the tickets in front of them. I think it has been very successful, and the good thing about demerit points is that it treats everyone equally; it does not discriminate. Where it is enforced it has shown remarkable change.

However, as we found in an FOI and as the Auditor-General found, and I quote from him: "Most councils do little or no enforcement of parking restrictions in New South Wales school zones". We believe that is an indictment upon our society.

CHAIR: Have you evidence of that other than the Auditor-General's statement?

Mr SCRUBY: My own FOI again proved the same thing. In fact, I can quote from it. It states that, for instance, councils like Maitland with 106 school zones issued nine tickets and Cessnock with 111 school zones issued one ticket in an entire year. There is a full FOI we could show you of the tickets they issue for parking meters versus the tickets they issue in school zones. This was done in 2009; the Auditor-General did his study in 2010 and came to exactly the same conclusion. We would be hopeful that this Committee might be recommending that either the Minister for Local Government or this Committee have an inquiry into this. Dangerous parking in school zones is as potentially lethal as speeding because it obscures line of sight. Children are small, they behave erratically, and we need to give them maximum protection. We have got all the bullets; we have got a terrific system now.

There are three anomalies in the parking system in school zones. I apologise to the Committee, I got an email as late as this afternoon from the President of the Local Government Rangers Association. There are three anomalies, which for some reason were missed out: parking too close to double lines does not attract demerit points or a higher penalty; parking facing the wrong way does not attract two demerit points or a higher penalty; and parking too close to intersections within 10 metres does not attract two demerit points or a higher penalty. All other parking penalties, including no parking, attract two demerit points and higher penalties, and we ask that those anomalies be fixed.

CHAIR: Thank you for observing that. I have noticed personally that there has been, particularly in my area, much more activity by council, but I would hope that that would be replicated across the State. We have been having a series of representatives appearing before the Committee. Could you provide the Committee with details about the membership base and charter of the Pedestrian Council of Australia?

Mr SCRUBY: The Pedestrian Council is a non-profit organisation; it has been in operation for 15 years. Our primary objectives are the continuing improvement of the safety, amenity, access and health of

pedestrians throughout Australia. We have a board membership which represents a very wide constituency, including members from the parents and citizens association; members from disabilities groups, including Vision Australia and people in wheelchairs; we have a former deputy commissioner of police from Victoria, because we are a national organisation; we have three senior surgeons from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, including Dr Danny Cass from Westmead; we have people who are in council who do planning—

CHAIR: How is the organisation therefore structured? It is interesting to hear of some of those people who are involved. Is it mainly concerned with pedestrians in New South Wales? You mentioned Victoria.

Mr SCRUBY: Australia.

CHAIR: Does it aim to represent pedestrian interests in those other States and Territories?

Mr SCRUBY: Very much so. In fact, if you notice, we conduct the national Walk Safely to School Day. That goes into 8,000 schools across Australia. It has incredible awareness and participation. We have letters from every Premier in Australia commending it. In fact, this year I walked with Premier O'Farrell and Tony Abbott to one of the schools in western Sydney and we spent an hour and a half there teaching children about health and safety. It is definitely a national organisation and we have national directors.

CHAIR: Your submission refers to inconsistencies between designated school zone hours and signposted parking times and it is claimed that this may result in motorists parking across the pelican crossings during standard zones, as you have mentioned. How prevalent is this practice of parking across those zones and how would you suggest that it be addressed?

Mr SCRUBY: Thank you for bringing that up. You saw the photo there—that is Balmain school. This is the problem that sometimes local councils are more concerned with the residents than the school children. In fact, that particular zone has residential parking exceptions, so when all the parents come there to park in the pick-up and drop-off zone it is filled with local residents and there is nowhere to park and they all double- and triple-park there. I was on the Channel 9 *A Current Affair* and we did a major thing showing how dangerous it was. But if you look at the signposting and the times they are extraordinary. I totally agree now—I used to think it should be "8 to 5: Ensure they survive", but we have come to agree that the 8.00 to 9.30 and 2.30 to 4.00 is reasonable. If you have a look at the photo you will see that the parking times are completely different.

There is nothing better than consistency to get people aware of the fact that you are in a school zone. But if you have a look at the one at Balmain it shows the five-minute parking is from 8.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 2.45 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. That is a time when the pelican crossing is also working. How does a child, who might be five or six, know that it is a different time or that mum should not be parking across it at a later time or in front of it? We would like to see all parking times consistent with the school zone times. It is right across the State; this is not unique.

CHAIR: That was in your submission and we have certainly taken that on board.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Mr Scruby, thank you for your submission and for attending here this afternoon. You mentioned two particular areas where pedestrian safety around schools is a problem; one was as a result of speeding and one was as a result of parking. Do you have any evidence— anecdotal or otherwise— about the relative impact of both? Is speeding a bigger issue or is the parking and double-parking and illegal U-turns outside of a school a bigger impact on safety?

Mr SCRUBY: I think number one is speeding; I do not think anyone would doubt that. I attended all these inquiries 10 years ago when they went right around the State. I would hope that the Committee would recommend not to tinker with it too much. It has been a terrific win, and I think you have had people ahead of me who have told you the stats. Speeding was the problem. In this one, if you have had a chance to look at the link there, we were on *A Current Affair* and we were measuring people going through that Middle Harbour school zone at 90 kilometres an hour before they put in the cameras; there were people going straight through the red light. That has changed dramatically. It has taken a while but I think most Australians agree with school zones.

As for the parking, I think it is still out of control. I have got an idea for the enforcement of school zones, if the Committee would like to hear it. I would really like to see the mobile speed cameras go back to police. I would like to see every penny of that hypothecated back into road safety, so it only went into those

speed cameras, and let the police decide where and when they should be placing those speed cameras. It is extraordinary that for some reason or other we cannot use them. Apparently there is a committee that decides where they will go, and that is made up of the police, the Roads and Traffic Authority and the NRMA. We believe that the NRMA either should not be there because it is a private organisation or a non-profit organisation like we are or all of the stakeholders in road safety should be on that committee; it should not be just about motor vehicles. School zones are about pedestrians being hit; there are very few crashes in them in terms of motor vehicles hitting other motor vehicles. That is what school zones are about: they about little pedestrians.

I do not think it is a good thing that these mobile speed cameras went to the Roads and Traffic Authority. I would like to see all speed cameras put back to the police and all the money from that hypothecated straight back into road safety so no-one could accuse anyone of revenue raising. That is where this furphy has come from. You and I know road trauma costs New South Wales \$6 billion per annum and yet the money from fines is about \$200 million. We have not raised a penny yet. We have got a long way to go. But if it was in the hands of the police I think we would all be much happier; it would also take away the opportunity for people who may go and assault the people who are operating these vehicles. A police officer is able to control that, whereas a public servant who is stuck out there alone in a car could well be under threat.

That is an idea we have. We would like to promote that idea, that the whole thing goes back to police. Even if you were just to confine it to the mobile cameras we would love to see the 24 returned; there are 30 in Victoria and I think 15 in Queensland, and they are all covert; I do not have a problem with them being covert, but we can do so much better. We have got to let motorists know that school zones are being enforced.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think there is a role for fixed speed cameras in school zones?

Mr SCRUBY: You may not need them if you have got a fleet of mobile cameras that are being deployed randomly so that motorists do not know where they are.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: But is not the idea to be a deterrent, and evidence suggests that when the speed cameras are put in, over time people's behaviour is changed because—

Mr SCRUBY: Yes, it is just the cost I am thinking of; it is the cost of having a fixed camera. The problem with hypothecation is the better the system gets the less money you get; so it sort of acts against itself. You do not have that so much with a mobile camera; you do not have sight learning. At Neutral Bay or Cremorne we have got sight learning: everyone knows they are there so everyone slows down. That is great; that is protecting that one school. But there are 10,000 locations. Going back—I am sorry I did not say it earlier—I think on every main road where there is a school zone there should be flashing lights. You can see that in my evidence 10 years ago, and we have stuck with that. That is very important; that is preventative. Enforcement—please have a look at that option of hypothecating back to the police.

CHAIR: Thank you for raising that. One of the aspects in relation to speed cameras is another option, which is the radar speed advisory, which again follows the line of thinking that you have put forward of the mobility of a deterrent. Can there also be a mobile advisory, and you would be familiar with those that are often used on construction sites where they advise you of your speed? Do you see that as part of an awareness program that should also be part of the suite of services?

Mr SCRUBY: I am not so excited about those. I see them coming in from Liverpool or going out to, say, Campbelltown and I have never seen so many people speed, because again the mobile speed cameras are not allowed to be used there. The good people behave. Eighty per cent of New South Wales drivers do not have one demerit point for speeding. It is this vociferous minority that is making all the noise, but the vast majority of motorists are not speeding. But I think what we have got to have is at least the thought in the motorist's mind that if you do speed there is a good chance of being caught. At the moment in a school zone there is very little chance of being caught unless there is a fixed speed camera.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Earlier today Sydney City Council came in and said that there are 35 school zones in Sydney city itself. They propose that they would like to see the State Government change Sydney City Council to 40 kilometres an hour everywhere. What do you think of that?

Mr SCRUBY: The whole Balmain peninsula is 40 kilometres an hour; right outside this building is 30 kilometres an hour, and I have never heard one complaint. Going back historically, we wrote to the Roads and Traffic Authority 10 years ago and I think it was then Minister Scully—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: A very good Minister.

Mr SCRUBY: A very good Minister. But he agreed, and so did the Roads and Traffic Authority, to make the whole of the central business district 40 kilometres an hour and pay for it. But they needed the agreement of the then Lord Mayor, which was Sartor, who did not want it. Then along came Clover Moore, who said, "Yes, we would love it", and along came Mr Costa, who said, "You are not going to get it". So 10 years ago we had the Roads and Traffic Authority and—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: She is back; she wants to do it again.

Mr SCRUBY: I know she wants to do it again but now we have other problems. You have got to be very careful with 40 kilometres an hour. I believe they should be in areas of high pedestrian activity, but if you took it out across the city of Sydney where are you taking it? You are going to Glebe, to Zetland—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Two senior traffic people made that recommendation today.

Mr SCRUBY: They are well ahead of us, aren't they? We have got to get the motorists onside. The Pedestrian Council had a lot to do with changing the demerit points for speeding; we got that down to one demerit point for under 10 kilometres over the limit. We went and saw the former Minister, we convinced him it was unfair to give people three demerit points for doing under 15 kilometres over the limit when it was the same as under 30, and he reduced it to one and made it more or less a misdemeanour. You can speed 13 times in three years in New South Wales and not lose your licence.

I know we admit to that, but we wanted to make it fair for those people who were arguing that sometimes you are over because of this, that or the other. But once you were really speeding and it was deliberate, the penalties were tough. We have got that buffer. It is a misdemeanour under 10 kilometres. It is \$88 and one demerit point. Surely when people are going faster than that they are doing it deliberately, and they should be penalised. I do not whether I can agree with 40 kilometres right across the city of Sydney. I would like to see it 40 kilometres in all areas of high pedestrian activity. I would even like to see 30 kilometres but I do not think that is on the agenda today.

CHAIR: It is certainly something that has been raised by several engineers in previous hearings.

Mr SCRUBY: It has been 30 outside here for over 10 years, right down to the art gallery, and no-one says boo about it. It is an area of high pedestrian activity. It may be something worth looking at.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: School zones in other States are different. In South Australia it is 24 hours a day for a school zone; the limit is 40 around the clock. In the Australian Capital Territory it applies to the school day itself. What is your comment on that? Do you think there are any applications for New South Wales?

Mr SCRUBY: We are on record as saying the South Australian legislation is probably the worst legislation of anything in the road safety or traffic Acts in Australia.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The 24-hour?

Mr SCRUBY: You have to look at the details, and the devil is in the detail.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Why do you say that?

Mr SCRUBY: Because after it it says "when children are about". If you look at 25 kilometres when children are about, if it is 80 kilometres and the motorist does not see the child, which is 99 per cent of the time anyway, he or she can say, "I didn't see the child, therefore it is not my fault." The beauty of our system is that it is irrelevant. It does not matter if there are children about or not. We would hate to see that sort of legislation come in here. We have been trying to convince them in South Australia that we would prefer 40 at all times, because you do not see the child you hit. In fact, if you look at most of the trauma, it is called a dart-out and the brakes after the child has been hit.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It is a dart-out.

Mr SCRUBY: It is a dart-out, and therefore we would be totally opposed to that. I would be cautious tinkering with this system. It has been around for a long time. I think most motorists now like it. Once you started fiddling with it and go the South Australian way, remember we are supposed to have Australian road rules. We are supposed to be all on the same page, pardon the jargon, and here we are rushing off doing different things in every State.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In the last session we had some Waverley Council experts here, and they suggested something called wombat crossings, an elevated one and then a plateau. What do you think of that?

Mr SCRUBY: We would like to see one standard crossing right throughout New South Wales. We do not like all these different crossings. Children do not understand the difference. If you have, like in that photograph, what looks like a crossing and a child goes out, he does not know that it is not a crossing after 3.33. We want standard crossings.

CHAIR: Supervised, patrolled crossings.

Mr SCRUBY: They could still be supervised but still be a crossing afterwards. We do not like all these changes in crossings. Crossings should be—

CHAIR: I think what the Hon. Walt Secord was alluding to was that that would be a traffic calming device rather than just a crossing.

Mr SCRUBY: That would be fabulous. We do not like the idea of a crossing not being a crossing after a certain time. Children leave school at different times. They go to sport, they go to the library, they go to plays, they go home sick. A child does not know that it is no longer a crossing. Therefore someone might be parked in front of it, obstructing the line of sight. You look at all these schools. The child thinks, "Well, that is a safe place to cross". Yet you can park right across the thing. So we would like to see a standardisation, one-size-fits-all, one type of pedestrian crossing. But certainly raised, that does not change the definition. A raised crossing is terrific. Again, what is the most critical thing in road safety? Line of sight—pedestrians being able to see motorists; motorists being able to see pedestrians.

CHAIR: Have you had any consultations with the Centre for Road Safety or, indeed, any other New South Wales agencies about your proposals for greater use of electronic messaging to notify drivers about school zones?

Mr SCRUBY: We have spoken to them a lot and we have serious concerns about what we call variable message signs [VMSs]. These are the ones that they tow around on trailers.

CHAIR: I am thinking more of the GPS alerts to drivers.

Mr SCRUBY: What, telling them a school zone is ahead?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr SCRUBY: What do you mean—the TomTom?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes, that is what the Chair is referring to.

Mr SCRUBY: It is mixed emotions. It is a very difficult issue. The newest TomToms, you can push a button. If you see a mobile speed camera you can push a button on the TomTom and it immediately sends an alert to head office. If they get three of these alerts—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Alerting people about a speed camera?

Mr SCRUBY: They go straight out and warn everyone immediately that there is a speed camera.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: So everybody would slow down.

Mr SCRUBY: Yes. I started that with mixed emotions. I have mixed emotions because in one sense it is good, and we do that with a fixed anyway. But in another sense, is it illegal to warn drug pushers that there is a drug raid coming? These are police operations. I think the best thing—and this is what the head of the Victorian police says; this came from the RACV and the RACQ in writing and I can present it to the Committee—is that the covert system of mobile speed cameras has a far better effect than overt. I think the jury is out in New South Wales on that. I take your point that it is good that they slow down but I do not know whether it is good that we keep alerting them of where these cameras are so they can speed up as soon as they know that they are past them. So there are the mixed emotions, as I said.

Mr STUART AYRES: Surely alerting people to the fact that they are entering a school zone is not a bad thing?

Mr SCRUBY: Terrific. Alerting them to the school zones which are being enforced versus the ones that are not may not be a good thing. I think we should always expect that every school zone may be enforced and we should not be telling one group of the public who can afford a TomTom or a mobile device versus the other than can enter these unsuspecting. I am sure within time we will have such technology that we will all know. In fact, in Europe I believe after 2017 all motor vehicles will be equipped with GPS devices and governors, so you will not be able to speed anywhere. Whether that is a good or a bad thing, I leave to the Committee. We know speed contributes to up to 40 per cent of deaths on our roads. We know we can avoid this. We have done a terrific job in New South Wales, getting trauma down, getting deaths and injuries down. We are doing a great job. Let us keep doing it.

CHAIR: You were here for my question to Assistant Commissioner Hartley from the police earlier in relation to public awareness campaigns. Is the Pedestrian Council in favour of more targeted public awareness campaigns to alert drivers generally to the rules governing the operation of school zones? What would you suggest? We have been discussing GPSs. What else would you suggest would be beneficial to raise awareness and change behaviour? That is what we are about.

Mr SCRUBY: Technologically I do not know the answer to this, but I think everyone now has an e-tag. I do not know whether an e-tag can be programmed to emit a certain beep when you are entering a school zone or even a changed speed zone. We are all on about changed speed zones. Can one of these devices be programmed to emit a certain beep? Is it expensive to have these around school zones? I do not know. We all know our TomTom tells us now when we are entering certain zones, but at the moment they are not programmed to operate during school zone times. They could be. Some of them do; some of them do not. I think the last silver bullet is technology. Alerting a motorist to a school zone is the primary objective. We do not want them to speed through. I think there is technology already there. I think we should explore whether the e-tag can be programmed to emit something that would alert you to the fact that you are approaching one. I do not know whether it is feasible.

CHAIR: Thank you. We are looking for all those ideas. Some of the more generalised uses of other devices for controlling pedestrians in the vicinity of traffic have been pedestrian overpasses or, indeed, underpasses and fences to ensure that pedestrians cross at designated zones. What are your opinions of those?

Mr SCRUBY: You will not believe it but I have a very close friend who made a fortune out of doing this. It was a brilliant idea. I think he was in business with Transfixed and they had already pre-constructed bridges. They would go to the local council and say, "You give us the advertising on this for 10 years and after 10 years the bridge will revert back to the council and they can do what they like with it." But they could put them in for nothing. What a great idea. And they did it all over Australia, I think. I do not see why we do not continue to do that. I know a lot of the councils do not like this advertising thing and I know there are arguments about driver distraction. But if you have a look at Cremorne and SCEGGS they are making a fortune out of that bridge. I think it is \$60,000 either a week or a month for one advertisement.

CHAIR: I think some of the evidence told us that it was \$3 million, from previous evidence, for some of those pedestrian bridges.

Mr SCRUBY: That one is a very expensive one; it has lifts and all sorts of things. But where you have a big freeway or highway, I think this friend of mine was putting them in, I think they were under \$1 million but the advertising is incredibly valuable. If you can only convince the councils to get behind this scheme for 10 years, they get the bridge back for free, everyone benefits, school kids can cross safely. I know there are other arguments about environmental blight and too much advertising and distraction, but generally speaking I think it

is working very well and it might be worth further exploration as to how many other sites. You do have this problem with people with disabilities and whether they can get up to the top and how you keep the lifts going. There are problems there, but he seems to have surmounted these and it has been a win-win for everybody as far as I know.

CHAIR: Thank you for that view because the purpose of this Committee is to explore all opportunities to enhance road safety around school zones.

Mr SCRUBY: Can I forward to the Committee—I am sorry I did not bring it—the letter that came from the President of the Rangers Association saying unanimously they are behind changing these three—

CHAIR: Please do as that was a question that was asked. Thank you for appearing before the Committee today.

(The witness withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 4.25 p.m.)