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INQUIRY INTO THE ROAD SAFETY BENEFITS OF FIXED SPEED CAMERAS

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY, 6 AUGUST 2010

Brisbane

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Committee met at 8.36 am

FLEITER, Dr Judy, Senior Research Officer, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety—Queensland

SOOLE, Mr David, Assistant Project Officer, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety—Queensland

WATSON, Professor Barry, Director, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety—Queensland

DEPUTY CHAIR (Ms Menkens): My name is Rosemary Menkens and I am the deputy chair of the committee. In view of the time lines we will start in the chair's absence. I call this public hearing of the Economic Development Committee to order. I would first like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which this hearing is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state. The committee conducts this hearing pursuant to the resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. This resolution requires the committee to monitor and report on issues in the policy areas of employment, infrastructure, transport, trade, industry development, agriculture and tourism.

Today's hearing is to assist us with our inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras. The inquiry is looking at the appropriate role for fixed speed cameras in Queensland's overall speed management program. The committee is considering issues such as the effectiveness of fixed speed cameras in reducing speeding and road trauma, the correct criteria for choosing fixed speed camera sites, the most efficient use of resources in managing Queensland's road safety and the impact of new technologies on fixed speed cameras. The committee's hearing today is to stimulate debate and allow the committee to consider views put forward by interested groups and individuals.

I would like to introduce the other members of the committee here today: Mr Evan Moorhead, who is the chair and member for Waterford—and I have no doubt he will be with us very shortly after he has completed his radio interview; Ms Tracy Davis, the member for Aspley; Mrs Betty Kiernan, the member for Mount Isa; Mr Shane Knuth, the member for Dalrymple; Mr Jason O'Brien, the member for Cook; and Ms Jan Jarratt, the member for Whitsunday. We also have apologies from a number of other members and officials who were invited to attend as observers. I will incorporate that list of people.

Mr Wayne Wendt MP, Member for Ipswich West

Professor Tim Prenzler, Chief Investigator, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS) School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University

Ms Simone Talbot, Local Government Association of Queensland

Mr Nick Wall, Private Submitter

Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations

Mr Colin Harris, Private Submitter

Mr Dean Wells MP, Member for Murrumba

Mayor Les Tyrell, Townsville City Council

Mrs Liz Cunningham MP, Member for Gladstone

Mayor Ron Dyne, Gympie Regional Council

Mayor Robert Loughnan, Roma Regional Council

Ms Lindy Nelson-Carr MP, Member for Mundingburra

Mayor Tom Gilmore, Tablelands Regional Council

Mayor Paul Pisasale, Ipswich City Council

Mayor George Creed, Gladstone Regional Council

Mr Paul Hoolihan MP, Member for Keppel

Mr Ray Stevens MP, Member for Mermaid Beach

Ms Mary-Ann O'Neill MP, Member for Kallangur

Mayor David Carter, South Burnett Regional Council

Lord Mayor Campbell Newman, Brisbane City Council

Mr Terry O'Gorman, Vice-President, Queensland Council for Civil Liberties

Mr Steve Wettenhall MP, Member for Barron River

Ms Desley Scott MP, Member for Woodridge

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Mr O'BRIEN: Could you also add Desley Scott to that list. I saw her last night and she wanted to put in her apologies.

DEPUTY CHAIR: The proceedings here today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. Witnesses have been provided with the guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees adopted by the Legislative Assembly, which the committee is bound to follow. Have any of the witnesses not read these guidelines? Hansard, please note that the witnesses have read the guidelines. Under the guidelines, you may object to answering any question put to you on the grounds the question is personal and not relevant or the answer may incriminate you. The committee will not require you to take an oath or affirmation; however, we expect our witnesses will respect the proceedings.

It is our intention to keep to the times on the hearing program, although I am sorry that we have started a little late. We will finish at 3.30 pm, if not before. To assist us in keeping to the program, please keep your answers succinct. If you take questions on notice, we ask that you provide your answers by Monday, 16 August 2010. To assist the Hansard staff, we ask that you state your name before you speak this morning. Due to time constraints, we ask that all opening statements are brief. Would any of you like to make a two-minute opening statement?

Prof. Watson: Yes. To begin, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide verbal evidence to support our submission. While we have endeavoured to provide the committee with a comprehensive evidence based submission, there are some key priorities we would like to emphasise. Over the last 10 to 15 years, Queensland has adopted a multifaceted approach to reducing speed involving improvements to the road infrastructure, speed enforcement practices and public education. While all three of these are vitally important, my comments today will focus on speed enforcement.

A number of evaluations have demonstrated the crash reduction benefits of the Queensland speed camera program as well as randomly scheduled police patrols. While no formal evaluation of fixed speed cameras has yet been undertaken in Queensland, there is evidence from other jurisdictions that they are effective in reducing crashes in the vicinity of camera sites. Despite these initiatives, speeding remains a key issue of concern in Queensland, contributing to over 20 per cent of fatal crashes. Based on the available evidence, CARRS-Q would argue that the following priorities need to be addressed to further enhance speed enforcement in Queensland.

Firstly, the speed enforcement program needs to utilise a variety of enforcement approaches which are tailored to specific situations. A one-size-fits-all approach to speed enforcement is unlikely to be fully effective. For example, due to their localised effects, the most appropriate role for fixed speed cameras is at locations with a demonstrated crash history or the potential for such a history and where the use of other types of enforcement is difficult for practical or safety concerns. Similarly, randomly deployed mobile speed cameras and on-road traffic patrols have an important role to play in reducing speeding at other locations on the road network. Therefore, a key priority is ongoing research into the best mix of enforcement approaches for a state like Queensland.

Secondly, there is an ongoing need to adopt innovations in speed enforcement that have been shown to be effective elsewhere. For example, there is growing evidence from overseas that point-to-point cameras, or average speed cameras, are very effective in encouraging compliance with speed limits and reducing crashes. In addition, it appears that this technology has good community acceptance, since it measures persistent speeding rather than transitory or spot speeds.

Thirdly, without sufficient speed enforcement, it will remain difficult to achieve a sustained reduction in driving speeds across the road network. Further research is required to determine the optimum level of speed enforcement in a state like Queensland. However, it is worth noting that the number of speed cameras currently used in Queensland appears lower than many other Australian and overseas jurisdictions, particularly in terms of the size of our road network.

Fourthly, it is important that public education continues to focus on the role of speeding in crashes and the safety benefits of speed enforcement. This is essential to reduce misconceptions and build public confidence in speed enforcement. A good example is the need to better communicate to the public that speed camera revenue is not channelled into consolidated revenue in Queensland but is exclusively used to run the program and to fund other road safety initiatives. Many Queenslanders would probably be surprised to know that 44 per cent of the speed camera revenue generated in the 2008-09 financial year was channelled back into road improvements.

Finally, effective enforcement programs require effective penalties. Recent CARRS-Q research has revealed that high-range, repeat speeding offenders are a problematic group who are more likely to have prior convictions for drink driving, unlicensed driving and a range of other offences. As such, more tailored penalties may be warranted for this group, such as the use of vehicle impoundment or the fitting of intelligent speed adaptation devices to their vehicles.

In closing, the key objective of speed enforcement is to reduce road crashes by improving compliance with speed limits. There is strong evidence that our current approach achieves this goal in areas where cameras and patrols operate. However, the opportunity exists to broaden this effect by enhancing the mix and reach of our operations and by utilising innovations such as point-to-point speed cameras.

CHAIR: Thank you. I apologise for being late this morning. We might go straight to questions.

Mrs MENKENS: Some submitters, including the NMAA, have identified that in 1997 speed was identified as contributing to 51 fatalities and 14 per cent of the road toll and that this has increased, with speed contributing to 75 fatalities and 22.5 per cent of the road toll in 2009. They claim that if automated speed enforcement was effective the road toll would be significantly lower. Do you want to comment on this?

Prof. Watson: Yes. This is actually a difficult question to answer, and I think we need to be cautious in the way we do it. There are a few words of warning I would like to note. Firstly, focusing solely on fatal crashes and fatalities arising from speed is only really the tip of the iceberg. We need to look at total crashes. Secondly, without an in-depth study, it is very difficult to be definitive about the overall effectiveness of our speed enforcement approach; particularly, for example, we do not know what would have happened if we had not introduced speed cameras. In fact, the situation could have been worse.

Finally, overall I do not think we can attribute the performance of our system in terms of reducing speed solely to one thing such as speed cameras. We have tackled the problem of speeding by using a whole variety of approaches, including improving the roads and public education. Whilst acknowledging those things though, I think it is possible to put forward a plausible response to your question.

If you look at the available evidence, there is good evidence to suggest that our speed cameras—both our mobile speed cameras and evidence from elsewhere for fixed cameras—reduce crashes in the areas where those cameras operate. As such, I think it is plausible to say that what we have seen happen is that the intensity of our operations has not been strong enough to achieve a widespread effect.

The lesson, for example, that we learnt from random breath testing and the introduction of random breath testing is that those jurisdictions that did it in a boots-and-all way and had high levels in the intensity of their enforcement achieved the best results. I think it is possible that what we have seen here is that our resources, particularly in terms of speed enforcement and speed cameras, have been spread too thin to actually achieve a widespread deterrent effect.

One last thing I would add on this topic is that, over the last five to 10 years, alcohol related fatalities in Queensland have been plateauing as well. I do not think we would be suggesting, based on the other evidence that random breath testing has been effective, that based on that plateauing we would get rid of random breath testing. On the contrary, I think it highlights that we need to look at how we enhance random breath testing and augment it with other approaches to reduce alcohol related crashes.

CHAIR: This seems to be the crux of the issue that the Queensland government is facing, that the program has traditionally had a very strong focus in locational based enforcement and it has been quite successful at that. However, the government seems to be struggling with this notion of how to get that network-wide enforcement. You are talking about point-to-point enforcement having that effect. Does that have an effect across the areas where it is not being enforced? How do we deal with that issue of network-wide enforcement?

Prof. Watson: It is a difficult issue. You have issues about achieving a certain critical mass. I would say at the moment that this is an area which requires more research about what is the best mix of enforcement approaches. The evaluations—and I will ask my colleague to comment on this, too—of point-to-point, I believe, are mainly concentrated in the areas where they have operated. The big advantage of point-to-point enforcement is that it can cover longer distances.

It is interesting, too. I was recently at a speeding conference in London at which there was discussion about plans to introduce point-to-point enforcement in urban areas in London. This is something that I thought was very highly innovative because most of the other discussions and literature I have read about it is focused on longer distances in rural settings. It is a challenge to find out how we can better spread the deterrent effect. It is well known in road safety that enforcement often does tend to have a short-term deterrent effect and sustaining that can be difficult. In the case of random breath testing, we have good evidence that we have been able to do it. I think it requires using a mix of approaches, not relying on one type of approach solely. I have already seen signs that the government is broadening the speed camera methods it is using. It also relies on continuing to utilise on-road policing patrols as well. So it is that broad mix and looking at what is the best way of maximising that deterrent effect.

Mr Soole: Just on the point-to-point stuff, as Barry said, because it enforces speeds over a greater distance, there is that opportunity for more network-wide effects. A number of studies have also shown diffusion of benefits effects to road sections adjacent to those enforced having reduced numbers of crashes and reduced speeds as well. I do not think we can discount the indirect benefits of point-to-point, and that is on driver attitudes. If we can associate reduced speeds or driving to the speed limit with improved traffic congestion and improved traffic flow, we might be able to actually shift some of the social acceptability of speeding and sort of change driver attitudes at a more underlying level, which would have a greater impact on speeding in general. But, as Barry said, I think another thing to emphasise is that point-to-point will not be a silver bullet either and we do need to continue using other forms of enforcement including on-road traffic policing.

Mr O'BRIEN: First of all, I want to congratulate you on the depth of your submission to the inquiry. It is a great submission. So thank you for all of the work that you have obviously put into it. Just a short question for you: you talked about the benefits of the fixed speed cameras being localised. Is that just
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immediately where they are? How local is local, I suppose? Is it just in the immediate vicinity of the cameras and people get used to them and speed up after them? Is that the evidence? What sort of research have you done on that?

Mr Soole: In terms of Queensland, obviously, there is no real evidence regarding fixed speed cameras, but from evidence from other places the effects are quite localised, especially with fixed cameras. One thing to keep in mind is that that is not necessarily a bad thing when we are talking about fixed speed cameras. Fixed speed cameras are typically located in areas with a high intensity of speed related problems. Even if the effects are quite temporary, that can still have significant road safety benefits.

In terms of mobile speed cameras, the effects are still quite localised, but there is some evidence of more network-wide and general deterrent effects associated with these methods.

Ms JARRATT: I really like your thoughts about how we actually change the mindset about speeding. There is a great resistance to this, much greater than we had even to drink-driving, wearing seatbelts, wearing helmets on bikes and things like. I like the idea that, if we can somehow link obeying the speed limit to a reward, such as improved traffic flow, then perhaps that is one way of attacking it. So what do you think of the idea that perhaps with the use of point-to-point cameras on some of our longer roads—and we have a lot of those in this state. Where the road is in good condition, do you think we should consider increasing the speed limit under those circumstances as a type of reward for a general sense of sticking to the speed limit in other parts?

Prof. Watson: I would have to say on the whole that the evidence regarding increasing speed limits indicates it is normally associated with an increase in crashes. One issue we do need to keep in mind is speed variance. On the whole, when vehicles are mostly travelling at similar speeds, that is generally associated with fewer crashes. For example, fewer overtaking manoeuvres are required. I would have some reservations about using the increasing speed limit as a reward because, whilst some people may want to speed up, others may still want to travel at the speed that they are used to. So that might actually increase speed variance, causing problems.

Perhaps another tack, though, is to communicate to the public the benefits of travelling at the speed limit that are not just related to road safety. One of the ones—and we touch on it in our submission—that I think will be of growing community concern is the environmental benefit of reducing vehicle emissions and, similarly, this applies to eco driving as well. Some people may well want to obey the speed limit because they are concerned about the environment rather than perhaps safety. I think we need to look at all different aspects of improving safety in that way.

CHAIR: Just quickly, does that include running costs? Is it cheaper to run a car if you follow the speed limit?

Prof. Watson: I must admit I am not an expert in that area so I probably cannot comment. I do believe that, certainly, vehicle emissions increase rapidly once you exceed speed limits.

Mr Soole: I might just add something there. I am not a hundred per cent on this, but I am pretty sure that the increased costs come in when the car starts travelling over 80 or 90 kilometres per hour. That is when you see the real cost increases with increased speed.

Ms DAVIS: I also congratulate you on the submission that you provided to the inquiry. Some of the other submissions have questioned the validity of research that is conducted solely by psychologists and those trained in psychology. Do you see value in a more multidisciplinary research base? For example, are any of your researchers, say, engineers?

Prof. Watson: Road safety is a very multidisciplinary area. In most of the research centres like our own, you get a mix of disciplines. At our particular research centre there are a lot of psychologists, but we do have IT specialists and also engineers. I would actually say that a lot of the speed enforcement evaluations have been not solely but often conducted by statisticians who are informed by experts in engineering and psychology. Over and above that, I think we do need to bear in mind that no one evaluation is ever perfect. All studies will have some limitations. It is critical to look at what the balance of the evidence says.

In the case of speed enforcement, if you look at the evaluations, it may seem a bit confusing that some will be suggesting that this type of enforcement has produced a certain reduction in crashes in that jurisdiction but in another one it is different. There is variability in the results. I think that is inevitable because the way these programs are implemented do vary. Also, it does, in part, depend on the methods used. But it is incumbent to look at what the balance of the research says. In relation to speed enforcement, the overall balance of the evidence does suggest that particularly camera technology has been effective, albeit often with localised effects.

Mr KNUTH: This inquiry is more focused on fixed speed cameras and obviously it appears that, where there are fixed speed cameras speed is reduced. Weighing it up, is it better to focus more on mobile speed cameras and unmarked vehicles? Are we better to spend more time, money, effort and education on focusing on unmarked or fixed speed cameras?

Prof. Watson: This comes back to the issue of the optimum mix between the different methods. At the moment I do not think we have the perfect recipe. I think through development, research and evaluation we can move towards that. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I think the role of fixed cameras, because of the localised effect, should be at black spot locations or those locations which have a potential for a crash history, particularly where it is difficult for the police to conduct other types of enforcement. Mobile speed cameras are much better in terms of dealing with the rest of network. I think it is important to note that the evaluations of the Queensland program do indicate that one of the key factors that appear to underlie the success of our mobile speed cameras is that they are randomly deployed. That is not unique around the world but it certainly is unique and has been a strong feature not only of our speed camera program but also of other traffic control programs.

In terms of covert cameras, their role is very much about maintaining the uncertainty and unpredictability in the public's mind. Whilst I must admit that personally I am a fan of highly visible enforcement, we need to be mindful that—and I will get Judy to comment on this in a minute—there are people who believe that they can become good at spotting where the cameras are. Therefore, by thinking they are aware where the cameras are they really are only slowing down where they think the camera sites are.

To overcome that I think covert cameras do have a role to play. There is emerging evidence that a mix of both visible and covert methods appears to be the best. I do not think we know exactly what the right ratio is between the two. I would also warn about moving too far towards a totally covert operation because it is the visible cameras that produce the strong general deterrent effect.

Once again too, we would be arguing that point-to-point cameras need to be an important consideration to augment what we have got and not just in rural areas but we need to look at those in urban areas. I might throw to Judy to talk about people's perceptions about cameras.

Dr Fleiter: Some work that we have conducted at CARRS-Q in recent years was interviewing specific groups of drivers. We were specifically wanting to spend time and talk with people who identified as people who do not exceed the speed limit or at least try not to—we termed them rare speeders—versus people who set out almost intentionally for the majority of their driving time to flout the speed limit—regular speeders or people who exceed speed limits by large amounts and were happy to disclose such.

The differences in the way that they viewed their obligations to comply with the speed limits was quite marked and quite interesting, I thought. Speed limits were seen by one group of drivers as something that is merely a sign on the side of road that does not relate to them. So it relates to other people—people who are not safe in controlling their vehicle—but for them it is a discretionary act to obey a speed limit, not a mandatory act, even though they recognise that it is a mandatory act and legislated by the law. Speed limits do not apply to them. This issue of safe speeding you raised a little earlier. We have talked a lot in the literature and in the popular media about this—'It is safe to exceed the speed limit as long as I am in control of the vehicle.' The issue of the perception of safe speeding is one that is very difficult to convince people otherwise.

We are not arguing—and I do not think many people would argue—that we would need to remove random breath testing because it appears that alcohol related crashes are not decreasing. I am not sure that we would find many people who would argue that we would perhaps want to remove speed cameras from outside a school zone, for example. The people that I spent time talking with, whom I identified as regular speeders, did not have a problem with reducing their driving speeds around schools. That was not a problem. In actual fact, there is a recognition on their part that that could be a dangerous activity—that is, driving fast around a place where there are likely to be a large number of people, particularly a large number of children. This issue of when it then becomes safe for them is anywhere after that. The perceptions of being able to control the car at speed and that they are a safe driver is something that is very difficult and a great challenge I think for road safety authorities generally but also for the rest of us who share the road with those drivers.

I refer back to a point that was raised earlier about rewards for complying. I noticed in some of the submissions that there were suggestions about rewarding people who do comply with the speed limits. I think there is some benefit in that. What we do not have at the moment is many social rewards for complying with speed limits. We certainly have social community acceptance that it is good not to drink and drive. That message has been sold very well in Australia, and in many other places as well for that matter.

In relation to driving faster than the conditions or faster than the speed limit—whichever way you choose to look at it—that is a message that we have not really come to grips with as a community, and particularly for the people that I spent time with who are what I termed the regular speeders. For them there was no social problem in the groups that they mixed with—in fact in some circumstances it was described as almost a badge of honour—in exceeding the speed limit; it was no big deal. It is this issue of 'I am safe' and 'I am in control' versus are you actually safe if something happened. Because people do exceed the speed limit and nothing bad happens on the majority of occasions, that is a very difficult behavioural pattern to overcome.

Mrs KIERNAN: I would like to congratulate you on your extensive submission to the committee and thank you for being here today. I want to know more about the outsourcing to private organisations and the monitoring. In Victoria, for example, they outsource. I note you said that there is no evaluation of fixed speed cameras. Do you believe that outsourcing affects how the camera detected speed enforcement

programs are perceived—that is, that it could be just revenue raising; it is put out there and run by a contractor and it is somehow distanced from government particularly? Do you think that this could affect the integrity of the program?

Prof. Watson: As far as I am aware, no-one has conducted any research specifically on this issue. However, in our role we do monitor the media quite closely. There is no doubt that the media in Victoria and more recently in New South Wales has focused on this issue of outsourcing. So it does provide an opportunity for those who have negative views about camera programs to suggest that there is other than road safety benefits or goals associated with it.

It is obviously important to maintain the credibility of the program and there are many ways of doing that. Having said that, I think it is important that we always look for efficiencies in what we do. In road safety we want to make sure that our dollars stretch as far as possible. We do need to look at how the cameras are operated.

Personally, I have some reservations about outsourcing because I think it is important to maintain credibility, but there may be some other options. One is whether it is possible, for example, for unsworn police to be involved more in the activity and in that way freeing up sworn police resources to be undertaking other traffic activities. I think we need to look at it. I do not think there is any firm evidence from research as to whether outsourcing undermines the overall credibility, but I think there is certainly a possibility that perceptions can arise from that.

Mr Soole: Just following on from what Barry said, a lot of my research was looking at public perceptions of police speed enforcement. One thing that came through a lot is that people are less concerned about what the police are doing than how they are doing it. My concern with outsourcing would be that you would reduce the perceived legitimacy of speed enforcement practices.

It is all about interpretation. You might have the best intentions in terms of efficiency when you make the decision to outsource, but if it is interpreted in such a way that it reduces the perceived legitimacy of the overall practice that you are implementing then that can have really detrimental effects on compliance. My argument would be that the higher the perceived legitimacy of what we are doing the higher voluntary compliance will be amongst motorists. I think that really needs to be considered when it comes to this issue of outsourcing.

Mr O'BRIEN: I do not particularly want to verbal the Victorian police, but what they told us when we visited Melbourne was that it was more effective using private organisations. I think that was something that surprised many members on the committee. You are saying there is no research to compare the effectiveness of private organisations doing it and police doing it?

Prof. Watson: None that I am aware of in the public domain. That does not mean that the Victorian government may not have done some work in that area as part of its decision to do it. One thing to note, too, of course is that the Victorian program has been operating longer than the one in Queensland. It commenced back in 1989.

One argument that could be put forward is that the more established the program is and the more public acceptance it has then perhaps the more feasible it is. Queensland was one of the last jurisdictions in Australia to introduce speed cameras. We are perhaps not as far along the line as some of those other jurisdictions.

CHAIR: Many of the submitters talk about the concept of the 85th percentile and seem to rely on it. How does the 85th percentile work for speed limits? How does it reflect safety of roads? Does it reflect safety of roads?

Prof. Watson: I must admit that this is not an area that we have expertise in. That is a traffic engineering issue that I presume Transport and Main Roads would be in a position to answer better. One thing I am mindful of is that there is a range of factors that need to be considered when setting speed limits. The 85th percentile is one that has traditionally been looked at. But there are other issues as well including things like the crash history of the road, the function the road is performing and roadside related activity.

Whilst traditionally the 85th percentile has been something that has been focused on heavily, my understanding of the area—and I profess not to be an expert in the issue of speed limit setting—is that there is a greater focus now, consistent with the safe systems approach, on making sure that speed limits are not just about reducing the severity of vehicle-to-vehicle crashes but protecting particularly the vulnerable road users if they are involved in a crash.

Mrs MENKENS: I was interested in Dr Fleiter's comments about the psychology of drivers. You then flowed on to the rewards. I would be interested in how you think we should handle the psychology of the driver who really does not care about the speed limits? What type of education do we need? In terms of rewards, would there be benefit in a different type of licence or when a licence is renewed that the driving history—

CHAIR: A no-claim bonus.

Mrs MENKENS: A no-claim bonus, that is exactly right. Do you have any thoughts or comments or have you looked at that area at all?

Dr Fleiter: I do have some thoughts about that that I would like to share with you. If I could touch on the second point first—the rewards. I was heartened really to read in some of the submissions that people noticed that it is quite a punitive system. That is not unique to Queensland. The punitive approach is a very widespread approach in trying to reduce road trauma around the world.

Rewarding people for good behaviour, good driving patterns, is not something that has been tested in the general literature, the general research around the world. There are many more findings on if we continue to fine people and if we raise penalties what will happen to their behaviour. If I could just indicate in relation to if we continue to raise penalties that there is fairly mixed research from around the world. A large project that CARRS-Q is undertaking with a number of partner organisations here in Queensland is looking at the penalty change that happened in Queensland in 2003 when demerit point and monetary fine penalties were increased for speeding. There is not a lot of evidence from other parts of driver behaviour to say that when you increase the severity of a fine or a sanction the behaviour automatically reduces. That is certainly something that we are starting to find in the results of the work that we are doing here.

It is not to say that we should not increase them, but for some people I think monetary and demerit point sanctions have very limited impact. For people who will then continue to drive even without a licence, continuing to give them demerit point sanctions makes absolutely no difference to them as they will continue to drive.

My personal experience is that there are not a lot of things to point to in the literature to advise us on how rewarding somebody's good behaviour in the driving setting can influence their ongoing good driving habits. There is a lot of research from the behavioural literature more generally, but that is not something that we know much about in driver behaviour. It is something that I would like to pursue. Certainly we need to do some work in that area. I notice that some of the submissions talked about reducing the cost of the next licence. If you were to apply for your licence to be renewed there would be a substantial reduction if you could demonstrate a good driving record. Those sorts of incentives are certainly worth exploring, I think, but we do not have any good evidence to point to that. It does not mean we should not do the research so that we can provide some evidence for the rest of the world.

Prof. Watson: Just on the psychology of driving and speeding, there are two other points I would like to make. One is that in Britain particularly there is a lot of work that has been going on looking at speed awareness programs for traffic offenders and speeding offenders, and I think this is an issue we need to look at more. We know that alcohol rehabilitation programs are quite effective, particularly when combined with other penalties such as licence loss. So we do need to know more about the effectiveness of these speed awareness programs. One other group though that I think we need to focus on is that research we have been doing linked to the research that Judy has mentioned which has looked at high-range speeding offenders. We have identified a group historically who had committed two or more offences in a period by 30 kilometres or more above the speed limit. This was not necessarily a large group, but what we found when we looked at their crash histories was that these were problematic drivers. They had a much higher level of alcohol related offences, unlicensed driving, dangerous driving, seatbelt offences and other offences.

There is an old saying that people drive as they live and I think that among a persistent group of high-range speeders what we need to be considering is other types of penalties for them, just like we do with drink-driving offenders. Amongst the things that we need to consider is perhaps vehicle impoundment. In fact, they have vehicle impoundment in Victoria for high-range speeding as part of their approach to managing hooning offences. The other one is intelligent speed adaptation devices. I think at the moment we have had a 'one size fits all' approach to speeding penalties. In the future we will need to get better either perhaps through education programs or these more constraining penalties. I am not saying all offenders; I am saying that hard-core group of offenders who in our research does not necessarily represent a large group but certainly its driving history is different to other drivers.

Ms JARRATT: In relation to that, it is my understanding that we do have a penalty whereby you can lose your licence and possibly your car for speeding at a certain level over the limit.

Prof. Watson: There is automatic licence suspension but, as I understand at the moment, not vehicle impoundment. There are other offences for which you can have your vehicle impounded, including things like street racing.

Ms JARRATT: Yes, hooning.

Prof. Watson: Hooning and also the type 2 offences now such as repeat disqualified driving and drink driving, but I do not believe so for high-range speeding.

Ms JARRATT: I think you might be right. I want to go back to the psychology area and perhaps be a little bit controversial. My husband drove in Germany for many years and there is this autobahn mentality that says having to drive at 100 kilometres an hour on a perfectly good highway is boring and is likely to put you to sleep. I think that is that sort of particularly male attitude—I said I would be controversial—that we sometimes fight against. In regional Queensland we do a lot of driving on reasonably good roads. I guess my argument to him is that there is always that element of the unexpected, and that is what you cannot account for in speeding and in going over the speed limit. One of the most frustrating things for drivers on these country highways are the drivers who do not even reach the speed limit—the vehicles on our road that hold traffic up—and then people get frustrated and that is when I see dangerous things happening. So, being controversial, do you think that there is a case to be mounted for speed cameras being able to detect and a penalty enforcement regime put in place for people who do not reach certain speeds on our roads?

Prof. Watson: There was a group of studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s that actually showed that the relationship between variations around a speed limit was U-shaped—in other words, there was an increasing crash risk associated with speeds higher than the speed limit and also lower. However, there were a lot of methodological debates about that in that in the lower speed zones they were including crashes particularly where, for example, people had come on to the road at a slower speed and also U-turn manoeuvres and things like that. With regard to those studies, you may have heard those referred to as Solomon's U-curve. There has now been a lot of criticism of that and more recent studies have not showed any major increase in crash risk for speeds lower than the speed limit.

So I would have to say that based on the evidence at the moment I do not see a strong direct road safety benefit for doing this. It is important though that you do reduce speed variations. I think the challenge here is that frustration is potentially a factor that can, for example, lead to aggressive driving. So I think one issue here is of course the quality of our road system and the opportunities that are provided, for example, for overtaking. It is interesting to note that in Sweden as part of their Vision Zero system they have gone for a lot of what is called two plus one roads. If you have a section of, say, country road that is one lane each way, rather than wait for the money to be available to upgrade that and duplicate it they have spent their money more immediately to provide an additional overtaking lane using wire rope barriers so you have one lane one way and two the other and then at regular distances swapping those over. One of our challenges is to use our funding as effectively as possible to enhance the quality of roads, not necessarily in a way that means that they are going to be the Rolls Royce of roads but ones that reduce the likelihood of crashes, and one of those things is about providing overtaking possibilities.

Ms JARRATT: But no penalty regime for slower drivers?

Prof. Watson: I would not suggest so.

Mr Soole: If I can add something, while the newer research has shown that the curve is not actually U but more of a J, I think it would benefit—because this is something that is quite strong in the public's eye, the fact that slower drivers cause crashes—from more research, because the research is quite limited. More research into the crash involvement of slower drivers is needed because it might not be that they are crash involved per se as much, but their effect on other drivers' behaviour might be important. There is no real evidence that that is the case, but I think there is a need for research in that area to appease that public view.

Ms JARRATT: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIR: We are doing gray nomads next, so we will tell you about caravan haulers.

Ms DAVIS: My question is for Dr Fleiter. I was interested in your research regarding the regular speeders. I guess what I am interested in learning is that of those who made up those particular groups were they of a particular demographic. For example, I assume that the flouters—the speeders—may have had a cohort of young male drivers, but I would be interested to know whether it was a much broader group of individuals that made them up, both in the regular speeders and those who made up that normal speeding group, if you like.

Dr Fleiter: Thank you for that question. That particular piece of research was qualitative in nature, so they were a much smaller sample than we would normally gather for a large quantitative survey. I had the same thoughts myself as to whom I would find to interview when I put those advertisements out to attract participants to that piece of research, and I was surprised. The stereotypes die hard in our minds and we know that young male drivers are a particular risk group in Queensland and many other places. But I was surprised to find that there were people across pretty much all of the decades of ages. I did not interview anyone over the age of 75, but for the regular speed group I did speak with three women in their 50s and a number of young women. In those groups altogether I think there were probably only 13 or 15 drivers who came forward as the regular speeders. That does not mean that there were not more of them out there. Numbers are limited in qualitative research and I wanted to spend a decent amount of time with people and get their thoughts.

In the rare speed group generally the age tended to be a little higher, but there were also men and women in their 30s. So we cannot draw a representative sample from that and say that that extrapolates the broader population. But I was very interested—and people often ask me that question—that a woman in her mid-50s would say to me, 'I have no idea what the speed limits are on the road. I just know how fast I need to drive to get to work and pay no attention to the speed limits,' which is very nonstereotypical when we have in mind young men who are fast drivers on our roads.

Prof. Watson: I take the point that Judy is making that we have to be careful not to presume that a problem like speeding is just among one particular group, but I would just mention in that research we have been doing looking at high-range speeding offenders—so these were the people who had committed two offences by more than 30 kilometres over the speed limit—that compared to the low-offender group they were more likely to be male, younger and hold a provisional licence. Whilst the majority of speeding offenders are car drivers, the high-range offenders were also more likely to be motorcycle riders.

Dr Fleiter: Can I just make a distinction there. We are talking about two separate pieces of research. We are talking about the qualitative interviews, but that work that Barry just points to is actually Queensland offence data that we received from the Queensland police, Queensland Transport and Main Roads. So we were looking at a cohort of 42,000 drivers who had received one or more speeding offences

prior to the penalty change in 2003 and about 46,000 driver records of speeding offences that were committed post 2003. So that information that Barry has just given you relates to the people who have actually received speeding offences as opposed to the much smaller number of people that I interviewed.

Mr Soole: Can I just add one little thing. From the overall evidence, there are definitely some sorts of characteristics associated with those more high-range and repeat offenders. But I think it is important to note also that with regard to the 10 per centers, as I call them—those who feel it is okay to drive within 10 per cent of the limit—there does not really seem to be too much of a characteristic trend with those. So it is a bit more and anyone can do that. I think that is important to note.

Mr O'BRIEN: We are running short of time, but we have received a letter from the Minister for Transport who has told us that 60 per cent of fatalities last year were on locally controlled roads. Do you believe it is appropriate for fixed speed cameras to be used on locally controlled roads?

Prof. Watson: In the end I think drivers need to perceive that enforcement can occur anywhere, and you do not want to create the impression that there are certain places where enforcement cannot occur. I am not sure what the best mix is, whether it is cameras, patrols or whatever. That needs to be determined, but I do not think you want a situation where people think that there are certain types of enforcement that they are not going to encounter on certain types of roads.

Mr KNUTH: I just want to add to what Jan said before, because I am led to believe that some European countries have a slow lane and a fast lane and if you are driving slow in the fast lane you will possibly get booked, and obviously there is a reason for that. I noticed that the Northern Territory has speed limits of 130 kilometres and I have been advised that, in terms of getting tired and falling asleep on a good road, you are more focused if travelling at a faster speed. Is that right? There are big, long roads in Queensland such as Townsville to Mount Isa. Would it be beneficial to put the speed limit up to 130 kilometres per hour?

Prof. Watson: There are a number of issues you have touched on there, but just briefly I think any regulations that promote better movement of traffic need to be examined. For example, failure to keep left is something that I know does frustrate certain drivers and can lead to instances of aggressive driving. So if there are approaches which try to separate out the fast-moving or slow-moving traffic, I think they need to be looked at and evaluated. In terms of this idea that I have heard people suggest that it is easier to stay alert by travelling faster, I have seen no evidence to support that. The last thing I would like to mention is with regard to this issue about higher speeds, and coming back to the example of Germany, a key issue that we need to bear in mind there is that on autobahns the quality of the roads are very high and many of the country roads in Queensland just are not of that standard. It is like comparing apples and oranges. The other thing we are aware of in Germany is that it is very difficult to obtain good, clear data about the crash rates on German roads and the different types of roads.

From what I can gather, unlimited speed limits, particularly on the autobahns, is a historical and political issue; it is certainly not road safety based. Although I do not have the evidence in front of me, recent discussions I have had in the road safety community have been that there are a number of sections of unlimited speed limit on the autobahn that have been removed because of the higher crash rate.

So I would strongly encourage the committee to perhaps approach the authorities in Germany to find out more about this, because I think there are a lot of myths about the speed limits, the reasons for them, how widespread they are and the current practices of unlimited speed limits.

Mr Soole: If I can just add one little thing on the fatigue issue and the thought of raising speed limits to battle how long drivers are on the road, I think it is very dangerous to try to attempt to manage fatigue by increasing speed limits. I think a much safer approach would be to manage fatigue and create more rest stops and educate the public on how often they should take breaks. Those are going to be much more effective than raising speed limits, because if you are already driving a long distance you are still going to be fatigued after a period of time. If you are fatigued and driving faster, you are just going to be increasing the crash risks. So I think it would be much better to tackle it at the grassroots and put in infrastructure that allows drivers to pull over and take a rest.

Mrs KIERNAN: Can I just make a comment backing that up? I think we place a lot of emphasis on conditions of roads—better roads, or slow lanes or fast lanes. I do not know that we have a great deal of emphasis on who uses our roads. I am in a regional area that has that highway that Shane mentioned—the Mount Isa to Townsville. It is who we share the roads with that there is not a great deal about and that fatigue issue—long-distance driving and major trucks. I have seen two horrific fatalities involving trucks and cars just outside of Mount Isa on good pieces of road and it was the vehicle that was speeding that crashed into the truck ultimately. I think that there has to be more emphasis on that road use—who we share the roads with. It is not about speeding; it is about conditions.

I get down here and drive and I am just absolutely petrified, I have to say. I head up the coast and I think I take my life in my hands every time—or down to the Gold Coast. We do not promote it enough. We have the campaign 'Drink drive and you're a bloody idiot' but the greater emphasis on speeding, conditions and who is on the roads with us is as important. That is just an observation, not a question.

Dr Fleiter: Can I make a comment on that?

Mrs KIERNAN: Yes.

Dr Fleiter: I share your thoughts. You just made a comment there that it is almost like you take your life into your hands. I would argue that the general driving public around the world do not realise that every time we get into a vehicle we are taking our lives and everybody else's who we share the road environment with into our hands. If I could hark back to that phrase of safe speeding, there was a comment that was presented at a conference in Australia recently about the issue of reframing the debate of safe speeding to consider healthy speeds rather than safe speeds, because the pop psychology of the driving world is we are all drivers and, therefore, we are all experts. We get home safely most days of our driving life and probably we exceeded the speed limit to do that and possibly we drank alcohol before we did that and possibly we were talking on our phone—all of those sorts of risk factors that have been identified in the literature.

Safe speeding is different from perhaps a survivable speed and a healthy speed. Barry made the comment a little while ago about cars colliding being quite a different outcome from when a car collides with a more vulnerable road user like a cyclist, or a pedestrian, or a child in one of our schools. So I think there are issues to do with how we talk about speeds that we need to reconsider.

CHAIR: Thank you Professor Watson, Mr Soole and Dr Fleiter. We very much appreciate not only your appearance today but your fantastic submission to our inquiry. It is very comprehensive and has given us a lot to work with. Thank you for your time. We will now move to our next witnesses, who are from the RACQ.

TUCKER, Mr Joel, Senior Road Safety Advisor, RACQ

WIKMAN, Mr John, Executive Manager Traffic and Safety, RACQ

CHAIR: Good morning and welcome. The committee conducts this hearing pursuant to the resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. The proceedings today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing orders and rules. Witnesses will have been provided with the guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees. Have you had a chance to read those guidelines.?

Mr Wikman: Yes, we have.

CHAIR: For the Hansard record, I note that the witnesses have read those guidelines. You can object to questions put to you that may incriminate you. We do not expect you to take an oath or affirmation, but we ask that you respect the proceedings before you. If you can, could you keep answers succinct and direct. You do have the opportunity to take questions on notice if you do not have the information before you here today. Would you mind starting by providing your names and positions for the record.

Mr Wikman: My name is John Wikman. I am the executive manager of the traffic and safety department at the RACQ.

Mr Tucker: My name is the Joel Tucker and I am the senior road safety advisor for the RACQ.

CHAIR: Do you want to make a short two-minute statement to add anything new to your submission or highlight some points for the committee's consideration? The committee has had a chance to read the submission.

Mr Wikman: Thank you. Yes, we would like to take this opportunity. The RACQ appreciates being given the opportunity to provide comments today at the inquiry into the road safety benefits for fixed speed cameras. With some 1.2 million members, road safety is a primary concern of the club and safe travel speed is an important contributor to road safety.

We have been actively involved in Queensland's mobile speed camera system since the mid 1990s. The RACQ has always supported the openness and accountability of the mobile speed camera program and believes that it sets a good model for the introduction of any future programs, such as those for the proposed fixed speed cameras. We are aware that research has shown that the mobile speed camera program has been effective as a road safety initiative in Queensland. The RACQ would like to see Queensland's fixed speed camera program subjected to similar scrutiny before any proposal for its widespread rollout. We see fixed speed cameras as one type of device in a range of speed enforcement tools available to police. They are no replacement, however, for an effective, on-the-road police presence.

To promote public acceptance and understanding of fixed speed camera devices, including point-to-point or speed/red-light camera combinations, the RACQ would appreciate more active involvement in all parts of the program, particularly in regard to the site selection criteria, which should be established and published. We welcome any questions from the committee in relation to our submission.

CHAIR: Thank you. I might start. In your submission you talk about providing statistics to install fixed speed cameras. It appears that there is not—at least readily available for the public—information about those road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras. How do you think that could occur so that we could provide the community with that transparency, that information about, 'This fixed speed camera program has this effect?'

Mr Wikman: It is very hard to separate just fixed speed cameras without referring to the mobile speed camera. So if you do not mind, I will probably be referring to that. We were very actively involved with consultation and in the setting up of criteria with the Queensland department of transport at that time and the police. It was a very active involvement. We discussed things, primarily setting those site selection criteria guidelines. They were established and written up in documents that were publicly available as well. So there was a good understanding out there about the types of crashes that were being targeted by mobile speed cameras and then, following on from that, when the sites were nominated based on that crash criteria they went before a traffic advisory committee that was out in the communities where they were nominated and they had an RACQ representative on those committees as well. So it has always been an open and fair and accountable program, which we see has set a good model on which to base any future programs such as the fixed cameras.

Mr Tucker: I would just like to make another comment on that, too. With the fixed speed camera sites, if you were going to get the message out to the community about why they are good, what the research says and what that site's crash history has been, the Victorian Department of Justice has speed cameras on their website. They mention where the fixed speed cameras are and they provide the calibration information for them. One step further than that would be to provide the crash history that supports the site's selection and the information as to the research. Hopefully, if there is research done to give an example of the crash reductions involved with fixed speed cameras in Queensland, that could be there as well.

Mrs MENKENS: Your submission states very clearly on page 17 that your organisation believes that all speed enforcement in Queensland should continue to be conducted exclusively by appropriately trained Queensland Police Service officers. Would you care to expand on this point or whether you feel that there could be wider benefits to the community by freeing up police resources for other police duties?

Mr Wikman: I guess the concept of freeing up police for other duties has been raised when some of the automated types of enforcement came into being, such as the mobile camera, which previously had been manned by about five or six on-the-road police for the radars where they used to set it up beside the road. We would be saying that enforcement to ensure the respect and the consistency of the application of a ticket to someone—it is the same fine, it is the same points—should really attach the same kind of credibility and respect and awareness that police project out there. So whether it is the policeman stopping you beside the road with a lidar or whether it is a speed camera or a mobile camera or a patrol, we believe that it all should be operated by the police.

Mr O'BRIEN: The Victorian police told us—and again I am verballing the Victorian police; I am certainly not going to be driving down there for a while—that they believed that it was more effectively done by the private organisation that they had outsourced their fixed speed cameras to and their mobile speed camera to.

CHAIR: While the police still write the tickets.

Mr O'BRIEN: They thought that the incentive based system that they had introduced down there was more effective than them doing it themselves. That was the evidence that they provided to us.

Ms DAVIS: And they would not go back to the old system. That came across very clearly when they were speaking with us. So if you have a comment on that, too—

Mr Wikman: I think the system that operates in Victoria is a little bit different from what happens in Queensland. We have been openly very supportive of what we have learned in Queensland from other states, including Victoria, and how the mobile speed camera program operates. It probably is not as extensive and as intense as their enforcement program is down there. They are pretty proud of what they have. I reckon our system, for the resources that we have—and MUARC showed that it has been very cost-effective—I believe that we have the best system here. As far as any kind of business operation of it is concerned, I think that is probably outside our bounds to talk about. But we believe the system that uses the police for what they are there for is the best way to go.

Mr O'BRIEN: But their fatality data is considerably better than ours in terms of deaths per 100,000.

Mr Tucker: There are a range of reasons for that, though. Road quality, population density and things like that can contribute to that as well. I do not think attributing the Victorian road safety record solely to speed, in comparison to Queensland, is really the right way to go about it.

Ms JARRATT: I notice that in your submission the RACQ recommends that the government establish and maintain a website—you have spoken about that—detailing the location and types of fixed speed cameras in use across the state. I heard the word 'fairness' being used in relation to that. I guess you are talking about fairness to motorists. Tell me what is not fair about being caught breaking the law by speeding.

Mr Wikman: Our idea of fairness is to have the whole system open and accountable so that people, not just the government—if you want to draw the community along with you—have that better understanding of how these sites have been established. Victoria probably is a case in point. They do put the location of them on a website. It is not saying that the cameras are right there then, but it actually highlights some of those riskier parts of the network where people might need to slow down and take care.

Ms JARRATT: But don't they need to obey the speed limit, full stop?

Mr Wikman: Yes, definitely. The RACQ does not condone any speeding at all. We believe that people need to drive to the prevailing conditions, stay alert and keep a safe following distance. With those three simple rules we would probably avoid a lot of crashes out there on the road.

Ms DAVIS: Your submission on page 6 discusses how the relationship between the RACQ and relevant Queensland government departments has changed, particularly in regard to speed enforcement. You might like to share with us what you see as an ideal relationship.

Mr Wikman: The ideal relationship stems back to what we learned—how it was possible with the mobile speed cameras back in the mid-nineties, and even that ongoing procedure where we have been involved with the traffic advisory committees and kept up to date and consulted actively about site selection, which is very important. We believe that the fixed speed camera program has tended to be a little bit rushed. It was a statement that was made back at a road safety summit at the beginning of 2006. 'We shall have fixed speed cameras by the end of 2007,' or something the statement was. So there was a lack of consultation between the government and RACQ which we were very disappointed about. We really did not hear about the location or even the establishment of some guidelines until quite close to when the first one was switched on at the end of 2007. We are now aware of the site selection criteria. It is not that we are against it, but I guess that we would have liked to be more involved in it. Learning from that, we just want to restate that we would like to be more actively involved with the rollout of anything in the future.

Mr Tucker: If I may, I would like to make another comment. With RACQ representing nearly 1.2 million Queenslanders, it is about the provision of information and taking the public with you. We have good information to show that mobile speed cameras are a good thing and that they reduce crashes. So it is about publicising that and making the public aware that these are effective devices so that they perceive it to be more fair or they are more accepting of the situation. The provision of the location of the sites and why they are there, based on crash data, will enhance that, in our view.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to what you were saying about mobile speed cameras. Obviously this inquiry is more about the benefits of fixed speed cameras, but does the RACQ believe that it would be better to emphasise education and the unmarked vehicles and sort of promote this in the hope that this will provide a better outcome than fixed speed cameras would?

Mr Wikman: Basically, we would see fixed speed cameras as just one of the many tools, methodologies and procedures available to the police to follow. You have mentioned quite a few there where there has been the introduction of an overt and covert operation of the vans. We believe that mobile speed cameras are probably more effective to address any problems with site learning as well and that 'anywhere, anytime' probably is effective with the covert operation of some of the vans out there, too. Mind you, it all comes down to site selection and targeting those crash locations where speed has been a problem. Basically what we are on about here is reducing the road toll and where best that speed enforcement can be addressed using the available resources.

CHAIR: But to put it bluntly, John, local government have come and said, 'We think we should be involved in the local committees for site selection.' Are you saying that RACQ should be on those committees as well or be involved in that process?

Mr Wikman: Our understanding of the mobile speed camera program is that there are a number of representatives around the table. Local government is one of them, RACQ is one of them and the government departments, including Police and Queensland Transport, have always been members of those committees as well. Maps that justify where crashes have occurred are presented to those committees. That is where the openness and accountability and the sharing of the information has always been invaluable to everybody's understanding. They walk away convinced that we are addressing a speed related crash site with the enforcement there.

Mrs KIERNAN: Some jurisdictions offer individuals who have been detected speeding in a lower range, for example eight kilometres over, a downgrade to a warning. How do you think that affects the aims of the camera detected speed enforcement programs in reducing crashes and injuries that result from speeding? I get a lot of complaints to say, 'Look, I was just doing over,' and representations to me as the state member. Our first rule is that we send them off to a more senior police officer within the district. But how do you think that works?

Mr Wikman: We probably are aware that there has been some type of a tolerance that has been applied over the years and people make simple mistakes. After all, we are only human. Also, I understand that there was a tolerance in place due to the accuracy of the devices themselves and the accuracy of a speedo in a vehicle. So I guess that all added up together has introduced some kind of a perception out there in the community that 'I'm allowed to sneak over'. RACQ does not condone that type of behaviour. The speed limit in the zone that has been set out is the maximum speed you should be going at and you should be aware of that and travel at those speeds.

CHAIR: It seems from your submission, the CARRS-Q submission and a few others that the historic program in Queensland of targeting fixed road safety crash points has been quite successful at those points but not so successful everywhere else—this notion that people slow down for the speed camera and then speed up. How do you think we make drivers slow down across the network, not just where they think they are going to get caught?

Mr Wikman: That is an ongoing educational problem. I think we need to better understand what causes crashes. It can be a result of speeding but, as we heard in the previous submission, there is fatigue and there is distraction, which is a growing problem. We need for people to be aware and travel to those conditions regardless of where they are. I suppose you have got a point there, that we have to spread that perception of detection across the network. We are saying that it is probably about the best use of those resources, whether it is a mobile speed camera or whether it is a patrol that is going up and down the highways. It is not all about fixed speed cameras. I think that is where we were coming from.

Mrs MENKENS: I was interested in your suggestions about a website to outline the position of these sites. I would be interested if you have any more description or ideas on that website.

Mr Tucker: As we said, it would be good to be able to identify the locations of, for example, fixed speed cameras and how that site was selected, based on whatever criteria it was. It could be, for example, based on casualty crashes or potential for risk. For example, the Clem7 tunnel had no crash history when it was opened but there were still speed cameras in it, and that was based on the fact that if a crash did occur it would be very difficult to get to. So it would be to educate the public that 'the speed camera is here and this is why' and to promote that understanding out there. That is what it would mainly be. It could be map based for example, like the speed camera section of the Victorian Justice website. I would see that as a starting point.

Mr O'BRIEN: You state in your submission that you think the minimum speed limit applying to roads on which fixed speed cameras should be used is 60 kilometres an hour. Does that mean that you do not think they should be put on to local roads? Should it not be, as you say, based on the evidence rather than on the speed limit?

Mr Wikman: I think it comes down to the best use of resources. The roads with a speed limit of 60 and above would probably be the busier roads, carrying more traffic. These are expensive devices that you will be installing at one location along that road. We believe that you can enforce speed limits on any road but choose the most appropriate form of enforcement. That could be a policeman with a hand-held lidar standing beside a 40-kilometre-an-hour road or 50-kilometre-an-hour road. That is still enforcement of the speed limit. A fixed speed camera is not necessarily the answer to enforcement on that street. You could still do other activities there.

Mr Tucker: Also, a police officer on a local road is able to enforce more than just speed. They can enforce people not wearing seatbelts because they are just going down to the corner shop or something like that. There is a range of things they are able to enforce. The other thing with the 60-kilometre-an-hour roads is that, because of the higher speed limits, the crashes are usually a lot more severe than they are on a 40-kilometre-an-hour road or a 50-kilometre-an-hour road.

Ms JARRATT: With fixed speed cameras, I think there is general agreement from our witnesses so far that crash data is quite relevant and a quite legitimate way of establishing where these cameras should go. We have spoken about the new way of placing fixed cameras according to risk factors or other things like being in a tunnel, where if there was an accident it could be quite catastrophic. Driving to the coast the other day and I guess general experience tells me that roadworks are another area. There was an 80-kilometre-an-hour section for roadworks on the way to the coast. I was the only one doing 80 kilometres an hour. Do you think there is a case for mandatory fixed speed cameras at roadworks, particularly where those roadworks may be there for an extended period of time?

Mr Wikman: That is a possibility. Roadworks are a prime location where crashes can occur. We have always been pushing for road authorities to make sure that signs are appropriate for what is happening on the road at that time, to instill that confidence and that credibility and accountability that 'I can expect to see the stop/go man or a heavy piece of machinery or something working on the road or beside the road so it is dangerous'. That said, if it is all properly signed then there probably is more scope for enforcement of speed limits at roadworks sites. But whether it has to be all fixed speed cameras or not, I reiterate that it is about choosing the most appropriate form of enforcement. It is amazing how those flashing red and blue lights can even slow people down.

Ms DAVIS: Further on from that question about roadworks, I refer to not the big roadworks but the small ones around the local area that often are not manned by anybody. Perhaps that makes motorists not consider the implications of not slowing down at those more important sites. Do your members ever have any comment on those smaller roadworks that are not manned by anybody?

Mr Wikman: Definitely. It is that old 'boy who cried wolf' type of thing. They have travelled through four or five sites and have seen no activity, so when they come to the sixth site where there probably is activity they might not slow down and that might be the very one that has the high risk and is legitimate. That is why we are reinforcing the fact that people can access our website and the website of Main Roads to notify them of a site that they do not believe is appropriate and needs rectification.

CHAIR: John and Joel, thank you so much for your time today. That is all the time we have for questioning. Again, your submission was very comprehensive and we appreciate your taking the time to make the submission and come along today. Thank you for your time.

Mr Wikman: Thank you.

Mr Tucker: Thank you.

Proceedings suspended from 10.01 am to 10.30 am

BATES, Mr Michael, President, National Motorists Association Australia

GOELDNER, Mr Gavin, Vice-President, National Motorists Association Australia

CHAIR: I call the hearing to order. The committee's hearing today is pursuant to a resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. The proceedings here today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. Witnesses will have been provided with guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees. Can you confirm that you have received and read those guidelines?

Mr Bates: I can confirm.

Mr Goeldner: Sorry, no. I am not sure I have seen those.

CHAIR: We will get you a copy of the guidelines and ask you to read them before we proceed. Under the guidelines you may object to answering any question put to you on the grounds that the question is personal or not relevant or that the answer may incriminate you. The committee will not require you to take an oath or affirmation. However, we expect our witnesses to respect the proceedings of the parliament. It is our intention to keep to the hearing program. To assist us in keeping to the program, please keep your answers succinct.

We might give you a moment to read those guidelines. If you do not have the information before you, you can take questions on notice and, if you do so, the committee requires those answers by 16 August. Have you had a chance to read them?

Mr Goeldner: Yes, I have.

CHAIR: For *Hansard*, both witnesses have indicated that they have read those guidelines. We have an opportunity upfront for two minutes for you to add something further to your submission or bring some salient points to the committee's attention.

Mr Bates: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and thank you to all committee members for the opportunity to talk about this very important topic. Initially I would like to note that Kloeden's 1997 paper—that is the one which concluded that going five kilometres per hour above a 60-kilometre per hour speed limit doubles the crash risk—unfortunately appears to be a primary justification for much of the speed enforcement methodology. The conclusions that are cited have been found to be false under peer review. Indeed, John Lambert actually described it as flawed. Our concern is that road safety authorities continue to quote it to this day and our concern is that it might justify flawed enforcement.

We have noted already that the long-term trend in speed related crashes, with speed camera usage and increased speed camera usage, has been upward. We are concerned that that indicates that speed enforcement might not be as effective as it should be. We are suggesting that a more evidence based approach be taken, and that does not mean claiming to be evidence based and then relying upon a flawed conclusion in a study. We have various suggestions that we would like the opportunity to make.

CHAIR: The crux of your written submission seems to be comparison of the figures of fatalities from 1997 to 2007.

Mr Bates: 2009.

CHAIR: When you look at the number of fatalities per 100,000 people, it seems to me that the year after the introduction of speed cameras it was the lowest we have ever seen it and, again, this year we are on track for a similar record when we introduced covert cameras. The number of fatalities per 100,000 seems to be lower in the last 10 years than it was in the 10 years before that. How does that sit with your submission that speed enforcement does not work?

Mr Bates: I do not say speed enforcement does not work at all. There is certainly a place for it. But we do say speed cameras do not work. 1998 was a very good year, as is this. I have a photocopy of a *Courier-Mail* letter to the editor in 1997. I do not have any articles from the time period, but the letter to the editor says, 'Three speed cameras caught 1,600 motorists speeding in the first three days of Easter (*Courier-Mail*, March 31st)'. That was a letter to the editor a few days afterwards. If speed cameras were introduced in March 1997, it was a completely foreign concept in Queensland at the time. In this state we had never had speed cameras before. If they were going to have an effect, I would have thought that the effect would have been in early to mid-1997.

I am looking at a cumulative road toll for Queensland which compares 1996 with 1997. 1996 was performing significantly better, at least up until September, which is the end of the sample that I have. I have the cumulative road toll commencing in January up to September. At that time the two lines were significantly apart and 1996 was performing better. I cannot say exactly what happened after that, but I would note that in September 1997 the 'If you drink then drive, you will be stopped' campaign commenced. It may be a coincidence. There could have been other factors. The dip seemed to start then, and we had a very good year in 1998. We ended up with a good result in 1997 but not as good as 1998, quite clearly. Again, if speed cameras had been the answer, I would have thought the effect would have been much sooner.

CHAIR: From memory, when speed cameras were introduced by the then government, they came in part way through the year. They were only in for a part of 1997.

Mr Bates: That is correct. I am not sure when they were introduced. But from the record that I have in front of me, the letter to the editor refers to a *Courier-Mail* article on 31 March, which had reported on the number of motorists speeding in the first days of Easter. That was early 1997. They were not used for the full year that year, no.

Mrs MENKENS: I note and respect your comments that you believe speed cameras do not work. But I would be very interested in your thoughts on what safety measures you do believe could be implemented, or perhaps are being implemented, that do improve road safety because I have no doubt that road safety is of prime importance to you.

Mr Bates: Certainly. Mr Goeldner might want to add to what I say. I am sure he has his own ideas.

Mr Goeldner: One of our big focuses has been on driver education. We believe that that is probably where you are likely to get the most return for your money. Just following on from what Michael said before, it would be a big mistake to try to attribute all of the road toll decline over any period of time just to speed enforcement. There have been all kinds of improvements—road infrastructure, braking, anti-lock brakes. All kinds of other factors have contributed to the decline in the road toll over the past 10 or 15 years. Oftentimes, there are the big initiatives—and certainly Victoria is a prime example. They introduced their speed camera program immediately after there was an up tick in the road toll. Just by virtue of a return to the mean, it appears as though all of a sudden speed cameras cause the road toll to go down.

CHAIR: The evidence we heard this morning was that there is a similar effect with our random breath testing program. Do you think the same thing applies there, that that is no longer effective?

Mr Goeldner: I am not sure what you mean.

CHAIR: The effect of an immediate drop and then a return as the initiative has been implemented for some time is similar to the effect of random breath testing.

Mr Goeldner: That is certainly possible. One of the key things I was wanting to draw to the committee's attention is that we seem to have glossed over the question of whether or not speed enforcement is even necessary, let alone how to make it effective. That was one of my concerns. Certainly CARRS-Q has not addressed it. RACQ has not addressed it. We are starting from the point of how do we make speed cameras more effective, but we have not really answered the questions of do we need them or is speed a big problem?

Mr O'BRIEN: I have had a look at your website and cannot find out how a motorist could join your association. I could not find an ABN or find out if you are an incorporated association or company which somebody could belong to. I was interested in finding out who you represent here today. Are you a membership based organisation and how many members do you have?

Mr Bates: We are a volunteer organisation. We are not an incorporated association. We formed in 1998. We were more membership based at that time and then we shifted to a subscriber base to make it easier. In 1998, within a few months we managed to have membership within every state of Australia. We do not tend to send out press releases these days. We do occasionally but it is very seldom. Media tend to be more aware of us. Our first press release resulted in a page 2 *Sydney Morning Herald* article with our own title. We seemed to fill a void and provided a voice that was not present at the time. We tend to attract people on that basis. I do not know how many subscribers we have.

Mr Goeldner: It is in the hundreds. We are certainly not a big organisation like RACQ. We are a volunteer organisation and we certainly try to make a contribution on that basis.

Mr O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Ms JARRATT: I am keen then to explore this premise that you want to put out there that questions whether enforcing a speed regime has any relationship to road safety. Is that the question you want us to consider? If so, can you flesh out your point of view on that for us?

Mr Bates: Mr Goeldner has strong views on that. I would initially like to point out that the scientifically accepted international method of setting speed limits at the 85th percentile seems to be a particular problem in Queensland. In 2009 I am aware that there were speed reviews. I am not aware of whether or not it measured free-flowing speeds so as to enable the calculation of the best speed limits. The surveys indicated that the speed limits currently could not be set at the 85th percentile because the number of people exceeding them was much too high. So, if you do not have a valid speed limit, it is hard to talk about promoting safety by enforcing the speed limit. You need to work on the speed limits and have a speed limit which will promote safety and then focus on enforcement once you have achieved that point.

Ms JARRATT: So you think we are taking it the wrong way around?

Mr Bates: Yes, but Mr Goeldner has got strong views on this.

Mr Goeldner: I would just echo what Michael said. People will respect a speed limit that has been set according to scientific principles, and they will tend to drive to that speed limit. If you have speed limits that have been set for arbitrary reasons—such as to protect koalas or provide residential amenity—then there may be good reasons for doing that but it is not a scientifically based speed limit and people just have a sense of what is an appropriate speed as a rule. That is the idea of the 85th percentile. It is basically that 85 per cent of the people have chosen a speed at or below that speed as appropriate. When you do a speed survey that shows somewhere between 30 and 50 per cent of people are travelling at above the speed limit, that is clear evidence that the speed limit has been set too low.

Mr Bates: Can I also add that here in Queensland the Travelsafe Committee discussed the issue of more scientifically valid speed limits and that appeared to lead to the introduction of certain 110-kilometre per hour speed limits. When the seven-year trial came to an end and the thousands of kilometres of Queensland roads became permanent, from my recollection the then transport minister, Mr Bredhauer, made the comment that the research had indicated that safety had improved on the roads where they had raised the speed limit. That is an effect you can get with 85th percentile speed limits. It does tend to cluster the traffic because, if you have a reasonable limit, people take it more seriously.

Ms DAVIS: You argue in your submission that being apprehended by a police officer is more effective in changing behaviour. Why do you think this is?

Mr Bates: We listed a few issues; I hope I can do justice to this on the spot. There is an immediacy, there is a consequence for the action. You are pulled over, and a lot of people find it pretty intimidating I believe when they are pulled over by a police officer and it is a bit of a learning experience. With speed cameras, it is just another bill in the mail. It just does not have the same effect. We use the example that if human beings functioned in a manner that that could be an effective approach, then credit companies would go out of business because it is just not rational to get a huge credit card bill, people just lose sight of the long-term consequences. I have heard—I am not clear on this, but it is something the members can certainly ascertain for themselves—that it may take up to two weeks to get notices from speed cameras at present. I am not sure if that is correct or not.

CHAIR: It is longer, I think.

Mr KNUTH: It appears that you do not have faith in the speed cameras and you are focusing a lot on this driver education. Do you consider that is the main factor here? There is a federal election going on at the moment and I am not hearing much about funding going to upgrade roads and good roads. Where do you sit here? Are you focusing on education?

Mr Bates: Mr Goeldner has got engineering qualifications so I am sure he is bursting to deal with that, so please allow him the opportunity when I stop talking. I listed a few points in regard to improving the situation, like engineering improvements to roads. As with car safety, it is a very reliable way of achieving a positive outcome so we fully support improved roads, that is for sure.

Mr Goeldner: On the question of driver training, I think that has been very, very severely underdone in most states of Australia. Part of the reason for that has been that the road safety community, if you like, has kind of poo-pooed the idea of driver training. There seems to have been a perception that if you teach people to drive properly then they will be overconfident and they will want to go out there and do crazy things on the road. From my own experience, as someone who has done a lot of driver training and driven at track days and things like that, that is definitely not the case. I have seen a lot of young people who probably were offenders on the road come along to a racetrack and truly experience some fast driving, and once they have done that they realise it is absolutely pointless to be trying to go out on the road and be a hero. In every other discipline—whether it is a bus driver, an airline pilot or anything that you do—training is the key but for some reason with drivers we say, ‘Just learn the minimum and then go out and be really, really scared.’

Mr KNUTH: So would the cost be on the driver or the government?

Mr Goeldner: We would be quite happy for people to have more opportunities to do driver training. That might be a good use of some of the millions of dollars of speed revenue—that is, to subsidise advanced driver training, particularly for young drivers because you would then get a pay-off throughout the whole of their driving life.

CHAIR: Can I just clarify this: are you talking about training with a driving instructor to get a licence or are you talking about what used to be known as defensive driving courses?

Mr Goeldner: Basic driver training we can take for granted.

CHAIR: Like driving instructors and those sorts of things?

Mr Goeldner: Yes. Certainly in my experience, a lot of people I know who have done advanced driver training courses have all felt they really benefitted from that and they feel they are far safer drivers as a result of it, because you learn things about skid control, proper braking techniques and things like that which will help you avoid an accident.

Mr Bates: I think we should concede though that there have been some positives—although it is still a large issue—with hazard perception and increasing the driver experience. Both of those things are significant, and all accolades for those improvements that have been made.

Mrs KIERNAN: On page 6 of your submission, you state that punishing a number of drivers does not benefit safety and that only a minority of drivers need to be selected for punishment. Surely in the interests of fairness, it is more appropriate for drivers who exceed the speed limit to be punished. Could you explain to the committee your statement?

Mr Bates: What number was that?

Mrs KIERNAN: It is on page 6, it is around No. 4.

Mr Bates: The comment is hinged on the 85th percentile rule. We are saying that only a minority of drivers need to be selected for punishment. If most people are doing what is considered reasonable behaviour, then it should not be a behaviour that is punished. The 85th percentile rule indicates that it is not unsafe and unsafe behaviours should be punished.

Most people do not, in any aspect of their life, behave in extreme, unsafe, antisocial manners. There seems to be an innuendo that putting somebody in a car suddenly makes them a different person. I do not believe that is the case. People do not go around endangering other people. Some people do; there are some people who will drive antisocially and behave antisocially. People kill people, they do all sorts of negative things, but that is only a small minority of people. Most people behave much more reasonably and they should not be subject to the risk of punishment.

CHAIR: Can I take you to this concept of the 85th percentile. I am a bit confused about how you can define what is safe by what they do. If I as the local MP told motorists that they should all relax on a road outside a school and go 60 kilometres an hour and that 85 per cent of them did go 60 kilometres an hour, are you saying that we should lift the speed limit to 60 kilometres an hour? Isn't there a point where you have to look objectively at what is safe, rather than looking at whether 15 per cent of people are engaging in unsafe activity?

Mr Bates: We would not be telling people to drive any faster than they are driving. We are suggesting that that is objectively safe, that they have researched that and that people can be trusted—I should say most people, not everyone—to choose a safe speed, and the research on the 85th percentile demonstrates that they tend to do that.

Mrs MENKENS: I do find some of your comments very, very interesting. There was quite a discussion earlier about websites where the information about the fixed cameras could be put. Do you have any objection to this being totally open knowledge so that drivers are aware that they are in what could be called a dangerous spot? Do you have an objection to everyone being aware that the fixed speed camera is there?

Mr Bates: If the fixed speed cameras have to be there and they cannot just improve the road and sort out the problem and have enforcement that focuses on the bulk of the crash causes, then I would have no problem with them being public knowledge. There might be some people who might occasionally go through who might benefit from the flagging of the area as a dangerous spot. Most people show a propensity to be able to identify it for themselves, but there could be an occasional person who might benefit from that. I cannot see any problem with it.

Mrs MENKENS: There would be areas as has been outlined here, such as the Clem7 tunnel, the new tunnel that has been opened.

Mr Bates: Yes, although there is nothing inherently dangerous about it. I wish they had made it a bit wider and planned for future use more, but there is nothing inherently dangerous that I can see about the Clem7 in the current situation. So is there really a need for the cameras in there?

Ms DAVIS: I have just a very simple question. I would be interested in your views as to why you think people cannot stick to the speed limit as signed.

Mr Goeldner: If I can jump in there: most people have a perception of what is safe. I will digress briefly to say that people consider the road toll to be quite a serious thing, but a recent study in England said that the odds of having a fatal crash are one in 136 million kilometres. So people are not exposed to life threatening situations every time they go driving and they also have this perception of what is safe and what is not. If speed limits are not set according to those engineering principles that we were talking about—like the 85th percentile—then people resent the fact that they are being made to drive slower than what they believe is reasonable and safe. That is probably the reason people tend to choose to go a bit above the speed limit.

Mr Bates: I would also invite you to look at page 12 of our submission and the graph. If you were to stand near the edge of a cliff, you would not tend to stand right on the edge of the cliff. If you had a cliff face on both sides, you would stand in the middle automatically. There would be a gut feeling or something that you just do not like to endanger yourself. The curvilinear relationship that has been identified with speed and crash risk would tend to make people feel much more comfortable if they are sitting down towards the bottom of the curve and in the safer region, rather than if they were to adopt something more extreme.

Ms JARRATT: I think any government would have a great deal of difficulty building a road safety regime around people's gut feelings, knowing that there are people on the roads who have been drinking alcohol and perhaps taking drugs or who have medical conditions and that there are cars that can have mechanical failures. However, they are not the only people who use roads. There are pedestrians and cyclists—any number of people need to use our roads. I am having a great deal of trouble accepting and understanding this belief that governments can base its road safety and its speed regime on this average person gut feeling sense of what is right when there are so many variables in that.

Mr Bates: I have no concerns with that whatsoever. I was adopting a theory to explain the behaviour, but it was just my own personal view. What we are asking you to accept is the engineering research and what it has found about driver behaviour and driver safety; that is all. We have nothing more. In relation to my own speculation as to what drivers are feeling or anything else, you do not have to take that into account if you do not want to.

CHAIR: We probably have time for one last question and I am going to take it. A lot of your submission seemed to rely on this research by Solomon and this notion of a U-curve. We heard this morning that when that academic work went through the peer review process it was subsequently criticised because a lot of those injuries and crashes caused at low speeds were actually U-turns, people turning out of streets and those sorts of things. So it was not necessarily people driving along at a lower speed; it was actually people performing dangerous manoeuvres from a stationary position. Do you have a response to that?

Mr Bates: I do. There is, I believe, a view which takes that into account whereby the curve found by Solomon basically flips over and it is higher at the increasing speed end. It goes up faster at the increasing speed end and goes up slower at the other end. Recent research has found a similar thing.

CHAIR: That is a J-curve rather than a U-curve?

Mr Bates: Yes, it is a bit more like a J-curve—or just less steep on the slow side. Recent research, namely that Kloeden study—when John Lambert re-analysed it he found a similar curve. The general curvilinear relationship has withstood the test of time and continues to be found on data.

Mr Goeldner: There has been some research that has kind of targeted the Solomon curve, which started in the sixties, and it has actually been repeated in a number of research studies since. The dissenting view on that seems to have been from a couple of studies that I think were probably commissioned to try to dispel what they perceived as the myth of Solomon. Most of the studies I have seen support the view of a U-shaped risk curve as recently as 2000 in the Lambert study and back to the sixties for Solomon.

CHAIR: Thank you for taking the time to come before the committee today and also to make a submission. We were grateful to you for coming in because you had written such an extensive and thorough submission. Thank you again. We will now move on to the next witnesses, who are the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Institute of Public Works Engineers.

Mr Bates: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and thanks, all members.

Mr Goeldner: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

HOFFMAN, Mr Greg, Director of Policy and Representation, Local Government Association of Queensland

MICHAEL, Ms Rebecca, Principal Adviser, Local Government Association of Queensland

BARNES-GILLARD, Ms Suzanna, CEO, IPWEAQ

DELLER, Mr Jason, IPWEAQ

CHAIR: Mr Hoffman, you are back before us again. It has been almost 12 months since we saw you.

Mr Hoffman: We have to stop meeting like this.

CHAIR: Thank you everyone for joining us. The committee conducts this hearing pursuant to the resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. The proceedings here today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and are subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. Witnesses will have been provided with the guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees adopted by the Legislative Assembly. Have you had an opportunity to read those guidelines?

Mr Hoffman: Yes, thank you.

CHAIR: For the benefit of Hansard, the witnesses have indicated that they have read the guidelines. Under those guidelines you are entitled to object to answering a question put to you on the ground that it is personal or not relevant or that the answer may incriminate you. We do not ask that you take an oath or affirmation, but we expect you to respect the proceedings today. I might ask if you could state your name and position for the record before we start.

Mr Hoffman: Greg Hoffman, Director of Policy and Representation for the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Ms Michael: Rebecca Michael, Principal Adviser, Local Government Association of Queensland

CHAIR: We are starting to get numerous appearances by the LGAQ.

Mr Deller: Jason Deller, Principal, Strategic Transport Planning for the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and representing IPWEAQ

CHAIR: You are here in your capacity with IPW—

Mr Deller: IPWEAQ.

Ms Barnes-Gillard: Suzanna Barnes-Gillard. I am the CEO of IPWEAQ.

CHAIR: We might ask each of the two sets of witnesses here if they want to make a two-minute statement to add to what they have submitted or to highlight any particular points they want the committee to consider. Mr Hoffman?

Mr Hoffman: Thank you. The issue of road safety for local government is a very significant one. Local government is responsible for 156,000 kilometres of the state's 180,000 kilometres of road network. Regrettably, the incidence of road fatalities on local government roads in the past 10 years has increased by some 30 per cent, whereas on state roads it is decreasing. Forty-one per cent of all fatalities are on local government roads and 54 per cent of crashes requiring hospitalisation or medical treatment are on local government roads.

Speed has been identified as a factor in 48 per cent of the fatalities on local government roads and 63 per cent of fatalities and 78 per cent of hospitalisations on local government roads, where speed limits are 60 kilometres or less. Quite obviously, the issue of speed on local government roads is a significant contributing factor to death and injury on the state's road network and is an issue of concern for us. Consequently, we have been involved now for a number of years in responses to try to address that particular problem.

Through our Road Alliance, an initiative between Transport, Main Roads and local government, we are focusing on the issue of roads and road construction. More recently we have been working in a multiagency situation to explore more fully the issues of road safety and appropriate responses. That has been done in conjunction with Transport, Main Roads, police and particularly with pilot studies of Moreton Bay Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Toowoomba Regional Council. We have now established a partnership that is bringing state and local government together to formalise our joint approaches to dealing with the problem. There is certainly a commitment on our part to play a greater role in dealing with the problem.

The issue of speed in particular has been the subject of representations from local government in the past. In 1997 Logan City Council, as it was at the time, made representations through us to government for the application of mobile speed cameras on its local roads, and Hervey Bay council more recently in 2000 did likewise. We know that under the legislation fixed speed cameras can be installed on local roads, but the issue is criteria. I should say there appears to be no impediment to their installation, but

it is subject to criteria. The process by which assessments are made is not one that immediately or readily engages local government. We would like to be involved in that process of assessing and being in a position to bring to the attention of appropriate agencies the circumstances that could generate the need or justification for cameras on local roads.

The other issue is that the state legislation currently identifies that funds that are generated through fines resulting from excess speed, subject to costs being offset, are applied back to state controlled roads for appropriate treatment. Obviously, if speed cameras are to be located on local government roads, we would like to see local governments being able to access that funding to ensure that the benefits that we can obtain from that funding are applied where they should be. Through the processes that we have now established, the Queensland road safety partnership that I referred to previously, we have a mechanism where the identification of needs and the appropriate responses can be explored and agreed upon and the application of funds can be done in a most strategic fashion—not necessarily an individual council view. They are the points I would like to put on the table for the moment.

CHAIR: Mr Deller or Ms Barnes-Gillard?

Mr Deller: Thank you. I welcome the opportunity to talk here today. From a local government perspective, speed cameras are one of the aspects in the suite of tools to address road trauma. From a practitioner point of view, speed is an issue that is raised daily. It is not necessarily out on the highways but in local streets and local communities. It is quite often a really difficult issue to address. From my perspective and from the IPWEAQ's perspective, it is merely a tool—a very valuable tool—that we believe can be expanded to help address this issue. Quite often there are locations where every other mechanism has been exhausted and this could be a really important tool to undertake that.

One of the issues that I constantly get accused of as a government operative is that it is all about revenue raising. I say to them, 'Yes, it is, but you do not have to contribute to it.' I am very positive about the negative aspect of that and no-one can argue that. They say, 'Oh.' They cannot; they do not have to contribute to it. Once you have that dialogue with the community—and I have had that dialogue on a daily basis—they begin to understand that it is their issue, that they are speeding, that they can take matters into their own hands. I think we should be more positive about the negative aspect of speed cameras.

Further to Greg Hoffman's comment about the money going back into the local areas, there are many more areas where we could be more proactive about some treatments as opposed to waiting for incidents to happen when there is a recorded fatality or a serious injury. Local government officers know areas that are under stress. We would like to be there before things happen. I think that is a far more positive outcome. We do not want just infrastructure but behavioural campaigns. The state government does a wonderful job with the behavioural campaigns. Local government is well placed to leverage off that and enhance the state's campaigns and deliver at a local level, which has been done elsewhere in Australia. We can do that as well. We just need some mechanisms. This is one way that we can use some revenue to go back into the community. We would be encouraging the government to be more proactive about that as opposed to waiting for a history to occur.

Finally, technology is rapidly changing. One of the issues about speed cameras is that people do not know that they have actually been issued an enforcement ticket until two or three weeks—or whatever the period is—later. Technology is rapidly changing. You could get a message on your phone now to say, 'The owner of this vehicle has just been issued with an infringement.' With the new apps on the new iPhones—I know that there are things in the states that are developing. There is no reason that this type of technology cannot be utilised. I think we can be smarter about the way we address road trauma. I see this as a really valuable mechanism to allow in the treatment of road trauma, but it is just part of the suite of treatment.

CHAIR: My question is about those criteria you were talking about in terms of allocation of speed cameras to local roads. Do those criteria need to change, or is it simply that local government needs to be at the table to discuss them? Obviously, there is no sense in putting a camera in a cul-de-sac, but at the same time a lot of local governments have subarterial roads. How do we make sure that the criteria is relevant and that it suits local governments' submission?

Mr Hoffman: I will answer your first question and I will defer to my colleague, Rebecca, to answer the second. Local government involvement in the process is something that we are advocating for not only in relation to issues concerning local roads and the concerns that we have there but also in relation to the ability to contribute to a better understanding of the scope and scale of traffic management and related issues on the network. This is not something that you can easily or readily separate by saying state road and local road. Motorists do not differentiate—they are on a road.

The design, the construction and the responsibility for that network might lie with particular levels of government but the processes for planning those networks are very much integrated, increasingly so and appropriately so. So decision making about speed cameras specifically should have both levels of government participating because enforcement on one part of the network can divert traffic onto another. The collaboration between the levels of government in the processes of identifying where best and how best to manage speed enforcement should involve all parties. I will defer to my colleague, Rebecca Michael, on the question of criteria, if you agree?

CHAIR: Of course.

Ms Michael: My understanding of the current process is that in determining the criteria for site selection it is based on crash history and crash potential. In terms of crash potential, it is essential looking around characteristics of the road and the road infrastructure itself to determine whether it presents a higher crash risk.

The point is that we know that speeding is probably chronically underreported. Just because the road infrastructure presents in a certain way it does not mean that then there are no other potential crash risks or risks to the community. What I am trying to get at here is stipulating that within local roads and communities we have schools and community safety. Even though one of the criteria pertains to community reports they need to be validated. It is a validation process through the QPS and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

From that decision-making process it then goes back to the local speed management advisory committee which then votes on the proposed site. What I am trying to identify through the submission is that another additional consideration is around the community infrastructure. Crash potential should not just relate to the infrastructure characteristic itself but also the aspects of the community that are under threat from speeding in that area.

CHAIR: Are you talking about schools, kindergartens et cetera?

Ms Michael: Yes, in particular schools, kindies and things like that.

CHAIR: Mr Deller, do you have anything to add to that.

Mr Deller: I think Rebecca did it very well. I would like to try to prevent the crashes from occurring. One of the key criteria is that there has to be a history of crashes. I would like to be more proactive than wait for things to occur before we demonstrate that a site is of concern. We do know the locations where there are concerns. Perhaps we have just been lucky that there has not been a history. I for one would certainly not like to see fatalities occur before we put a camera in.

Mrs KIERNAN: The Minister for Transport, Rachel Nolan, gave us some statistics on road fatalities by year by speed limit. Those statistics show us that the number of fatalities that occurred between 60 kilometres an hour and 90 kilometres an hour was 757. That was almost equal to the number for people going over 100 kilometres an hour which was 771. This is about state and local controlled roads. By and large, we know that state controlled roads are our highways and our major arterial roads. The local controlled roads are those roads within communities or back roads. In my instance there are many, many back roads. This is probably particularly directed towards local government. Would you agree that these statistics—and backing up your submission that says that fatalities are climbing on local roads and dropping on state roads—give you a stronger argument for danger spots?

Mr Hoffman: The answer is obviously, yes. The discussions that we have had with our colleagues—previously with main roads and QT but more recently with the combined department—is giving us the integrated approach to how we deal with this, not just in an engineering sense but in terms of road profiles and design. A lot of our efforts to date have been in identifying risks in that regard.

We continue to spend a lot of time and effort driving the network to identify the condition that we have got. We can do so much through engineering but the other aspect is the circumstance of the road use. This is particularly so in urban areas and those very sensitive areas around schools and shopping centres—places where people gather in large numbers, and particularly young people at schools. You have to do everything to ensure that inappropriate behaviour does not of itself give rise to a problem. Hence the need to manage speed in those locations where people are particularly vulnerable.

Mrs MENKENS: I think there is certainly quite a difference between state roads—that is, long distance roads and higher speed roads—and council roads. They do have the slower speeds but also a much higher number of people surrounding them which means there are different problems and potentialities when it comes to dangers and accidents.

I noticed that the submissions of both groups mention the local road safety advisory committee and recommend that local governments are included as full members of the LRSACs within the regions. Could you give us a brief explanation of the local road safety advisory committee and explain the type of membership that local governments currently have with this organisation and how you believe that could be enhanced or improved?

Ms Michael: 'Local road safety advisory committee' is basically a generic term that applies to local committees that exist for the purpose of road safety issues at a local level. They are predominantly a structure between QPS and the Department of Transport and Main Roads and they have representation from other community based groups, mostly RACQ but also local governments.

The availability to be a member is open to all local governments. That is not in dispute. There are speed road safety advisory committees as well. QPS and the Department of Transport and Main Roads liaise to identify site assessments and then they go back to that committee for endorsement.

We are looking at a partnership approach. Owning more than half the fatalities and most of the network we believe that local government should be more than just a rubber stamp for these site assessments and more heavily involved in the actual process.

Just getting back to a previous point in terms of the issue for local government around this, patterns of road use are changing as well. Local governments are increasingly under pressure to open up their network to the growing freight task. In Queensland with tyranny of distance that is an extremely salient issue. The risk of speeding associated with heavy vehicles has such a catastrophic impact when these things occur that local governments that do not have any access to any funding from speed offence revenue to actually improve the treatments on their roads again are more reticent to open their roads up knowing that they do not actually have that revenue available to them to actually make their communities safer while they are letting trucks barrel down a 60-kilometre-an-hour speed limit area at whatever speed they are actually going.

I think we have tapped on two things there. There needs to be a more collaborative partnership approach in this process but also that the inherent risk faced by local governments in terms of speeding as an issue is increasing in association with other forms of road use.

CHAIR: Did you have anything to add, Mr Deller?

Mr Deller: No, that was well put.

Mr O'BRIEN: In terms of the representation that you are seeking on the speed advisory committees, you are looking at community representation from elected councillors as well as representation from your engineering departments in councils? The RACQ has this morning come and asked for representation on those bodies as well? Is there anybody else besides transport and police that you think should be represented on those committees? My supplementary question is in a different vein. In Far North Queensland we have Road Alliance. I do not know whether they operate throughout Queensland, but are they the mechanism to deal with the distribution of funds?

Mr Hoffman: Certainly Road Alliance is an established mechanism—some 10 years old now—that brings local government and state government together on these issues. As I indicated, a lot of the work that has been done to date has been around assessing the condition of the network and the safety implications that hang off that. We are now progressing our work to the wider agenda of the behavioural issues and situational issues that need to be engaged. Local governments involved in that process are well equipped to bring the information that they have and the issues they are dealing with to these particular committees. There are 19 of these regional road groups that form the Road Alliance across the state. That would enable local governments, in the particular locations where the committees operate, to bring that knowledge to the table.

Mr Deller: We are well placed as local government representatives through the Road Alliance. It is an established forum. The mechanisms are in place to distribute any funding that would come through.

Mr O'BRIEN: In terms of the representation would you comment on that?

Mr Hoffman: We are certainly familiar with the RACQ's involvement. It is part of the partnership that I alluded to earlier at the state level. There may be particular committees at a local level that are active and could reasonably argue a case for presence. I do not have any other suggestions.

Ms JARRATT: Just picking up on that point about local community groups. Perhaps school safety committees could be involved. I noticed on the news last night that the Mackay Regional Council has successfully lobbied to make a change to their school speed zones. The length of time is to be shortened so there is an intensity placed on people's requirement to actually know that there is a difference in the speed limit around that area. I think that has probably come from a very active traffic advisory committee that has been established in the area.

Sometimes it is those community groups around schools who put up those signs—I forget what they call them—that indicate your speed as you go through. That really brings it home to local communities on local roads that there is an issue there. I just wanted to acknowledge that and say that I think sometimes there are some very active local groups that need to be as much a part of these advisory groups.

I want to come to the really important point that Mr Deller made about instant feedback and the role that that might play in the future. I think that was a fine point that you made. Technology increasingly gives us capacity to do this. I think that is very much the point, is it not? It is about the instant feedback and the association that you look down and realise that you were speeding. You know that there is a punishment coming in the way of a fine. Do you have any other thoughts around that? You have obviously given some thought to how this might work? You have mentioned the capacity with our phones these days. Are there any other mechanisms that you have thought of?

Mr Deller: My only point is that technology is changing, and rapidly. Only yesterday it was announced that in Switzerland they have developed this new smart camera which can detect 10 types of different offences across four lanes of road, including pedestrian and cycling offences. That is just evolving now, and obviously there will be issues with how that is going to be implemented, but the technology is changing. I think we should be trying to embrace what is happening, but there is clear evidence to suggest that behaviours do change when you know straightaway that an infringement has been undertaken. I know that there has been a lot of research that supports that in that there is not this wait and you get it a couple of weeks later. I think the issue is we have a number of different technologies becoming available to the younger generation. They are very techno savvy. My four-year-old is already using a computer and printing and turning it on and off. I think we need to be very mindful of that and not be afraid to venture into some new technologies. Speed cameras are certainly an avenue where we can utilise this technology.

Ms DAVIS: In both submissions a recommendation was made that the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 be amended to allow moneys collected from fixed speed cameras to be used for road safety education, rehabilitation programs and others. Do either the LGAQ or IPWEAQ have policies on how this money would actually be spent and what places local government in a better position to spend this money than state government?

Mr Deller: I will go first this time. Just recently there has been a growing swell in developing road safety strategies at local government, and one of the key issues with that is it is not just infrastructure. It is about delivering behavioural programs, and I spoke about that before—about leveraging off what the state is doing in developing local campaigns. The big issue for local government is that there is a funding issue. With small amounts of money—and I am only talking small amounts of money—there are a lot of things that can be done with \$20,000 or \$30,000. A lot of things can be done—campaigns at schools, officers can go around and talk to different organisations at the local level. So the regional road group can be an avenue to disburse that funding under developed criteria.

I do not have a mind on how the criteria for that would be, other than there would be an allocation across those that have road safety strategies in place where they can clearly articulate where that money would go, and they are evolving now. Moreton has theirs already, the Sunshine Coast is developing theirs and Toowoomba is developing theirs, and I know that Mackay is talking about developing one. There are a number of them being developed around the state, so they could clearly articulate where that funding is going and demonstrate that right up through the regional road group back to the state. So I think there are mechanisms in place. We could articulate how that would be and we could evolve that through the regional road group process.

Mr Hoffman: Yesterday there was the quarterly board meeting of the Road Alliance bringing together representatives from the LGAQ and Transport and Main Roads. We were discussing a review of what is known as the TIDS scheme, the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme. With the merging of the two departments and the Road Alliance maturing to look at the broader issues of road and transport needs, we did discuss looking at the application of those funds across the broad range of road and transport priorities. Jason is correct in that the Road Alliance as a mechanism is well placed and now, as we discuss how we can apply the funds available under that scheme to the full range of priority transport needs, the mechanisms are there to engage not only at a state level in terms of priority identification and resource application but engage with the regional road groups in the identification of the issues, the needs and the creation of the appropriate strategies.

Certainly out of our developing road safety partnership that I referred to before this is one of the priority areas that we will be working to—how we can identify the process by which you more appropriately undertake those assessments, develop the plans and the programs which then through the TIDS scheme provide the resourcing to enable good outcomes to be achieved. If that is supplemented with revenues from fixed cameras on local roads, then it provides the loop, if you like, between the source of the funds and the appropriate determination and application of those funds to the initiatives that will deal with the issues.

Mr KNUTH: Jason, earlier you mentioned identifying areas under stress relating to history of crashes et cetera. The Gregory Developmental Road in my electorate was a single-lane highway and tourists, livestock carriers and locals use that road in conjunction with the mines carrying lots of superconcentrate. There were continuously near misses, deaths, crashes and injuries. We received a bucketload of cash from both the state and federal governments and I believe that about 70 per cent of the area between Greenvale and Charters Towers has been upgraded. Since that upgrade there are few complaints about near misses or accidents. As part of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia, do you see that speed cameras and resolving behavioural problems could be a bandaid solution rather than the grunt, even though local government do have an issue here with the funding side of it, in terms of getting the funding and getting the road upgraded?

Mr Deller: I mentioned that it is part of a suite of tools to address road trauma. The development of appropriate infrastructure is a critical element. Forgive me, I do not know the road as well as you do, but obviously with an upgrade of that road to an appropriate design standard where you have recovery areas, where you have areas for pedestrians to move, presumably, and cyclists and all of the users so the freight and the normal vehicles can relate together in a safer environment is a very good outcome, and it is part of the tools that I talk about. We run road safety audit courses through IPWEAQ to explain that the appropriate design is the first step. However, we have areas that do not have appropriate design and then we have to look at other measures to address road safety, because we cannot afford to redevelop every road to the appropriate standard. We simply just do not have that funding. Where we can we do, and I applaud efforts where we can do that. We could all name a number of roads where we have improved that and provided those facilities and separated facilities where needed.

Sometimes we have to compromise because of land constraints or just the availability of funding. So I do not see speed cameras and fixed speed cameras as the only solution. I see it as part of a suite where we have exhausted other areas of solutions and it can contribute to improving that road safety. That does not mean that they have to stay there forever either. If there is a change of behaviour, there may be a decision in five or 10 years time to relocate that camera. I think we need to be dynamic and flexible in how we approach road safety and that there is not one solution for everything. It is a very complex issue, but it is only part of the suite that perhaps is not as available as we would like it to be.

Ms Michael: Local governments are embracing the safe systems approach to managing road safety, and speed is a consideration in that, as are safe roads, safe roadsides, safe road users, safe vehicles. Local governments through our pilot partnership projects are actually adopting that methodology going forward, so definitely road upgrades and engineering treatments are part of that in conjunction—just adding on to what Jason was saying about it being a suite—with a whole range of measures. It is like a jigsaw puzzle: if one piece is not there, it is not going to work, it is not going to be finished.

In terms of actually prioritising our projects and putting them up, councils engage with the Department of Transport and Main Roads in an extremely rigorous, defensible process of project prioritisation that has road safety aspects actually embedded into it as well. There is a real stringent sort of process that gets put in place to work out where engineering treatments need to be put in place and where roadside treatments need to be put in place and behavioural things need to be applied. So it is definitely comprehensive and definitely something that local governments are embracing in their approach to speed management.

CHAIR: In your opening submission you mentioned that in 1997 Logan City Council had lobbied for mobile speed camera involvement in their area, and I represent part of Logan. In 2007 when we announced fixed cameras a lot of the councillors there said, 'Have I got the road where I'd like you to put a fixed speed camera.' Is there an opportunity for local government to say, 'If we're going to get some of the revenue from it, we'll decide where the camera goes and we'll pay for it'? Can they take responsibility for that decision?

Mr Hoffman: I guess I could say yes, but their ability to do that is going to be a circumstance for each council. If the legislation did change—and, as we have suggested, if cameras are located on local roads then the revenue is applied back to a local road support process—that of itself might provide a funding stream that can enable cameras to go where they are not and could justifiably be placed. You would have to look at the issues of what revenue is generated, where the needs are and the balance. Whilst I cannot speak on behalf of an individual council in this situation, recognising Logan's representations that go back a decade now, if the issue is remaining a high priority—and your indication is possibly so—the councils may be prepared to make an investment, but probably support in that regard would make that process much easier, hence the return of moneys from the cameras into a local government application. It gets a reasonable combination of contributions.

CHAIR: I suppose local government are saying they would like to see those proceeds being applied to local roads, and I think it probably comes with some common responsibility for actually placing those cameras as well. The two things need to go together, I suppose.

Mr Hoffman: I agree, and I do not think councils would necessarily say, 'Under no circumstances will we stump up something to enable this to occur.' If it is a priority, they will decide accordingly, but getting support in that regard makes that task much easier.

Ms Michael: Can I just draw the committee's attention also to a project that is occurring in Western Australia with their councils at the moment. The Western Australian Local Government Association in conjunction with the urban councils and Curtin University have put together a project and a report will be forthcoming in September relating to councils' ability to buy their own speed cameras and what the actual legislative implications of that would be and the ramifications around enforcement and operational processes and things like that. So it is happening around the country. Councils are pursuing that as an option. Where it will go, who knows.

Mrs MENKENS: I noticed in your earlier figures, Mr Hoffman, that you said that speed has been identified as an important factor in a lot of road accidents within the local government area. I think you said 48 per cent. I realise that many local government roads are urban, but of course there are also a large number that are rural. Some of those are bitumen; a lot of them are not, certainly in my area anyway. Would you have a dissection of whether more speed accidents occur on your rural roads as compared with urban roads? This might be a rather difficult analysis to ask, not that I am suggesting that we get speed cameras on a gravel road heading out to somebody's property. Do you have any analysis on that, or is it more the city area or the town urban areas that you feel are the most dangerous?

Mr Hoffman: Fair question, but I regret I am not able to answer it.

Ms Michael: The short answer is, no, I do not have that data. We have had issues getting local government road data, but that problem has recently been addressed with the Department of Transport and Main Roads. However, I will say that the crash risk associated with speeding on an unsealed road would be far more than anything to do with speeding on a sealed road. Whether the actual number of crashes are there—which again would be affected by the fact that you would have, I would say, a lower level of traffic volume—I am not 100 per cent sure, but the crash risk definitely would far exceed an urban environment.

Mr Deller: I would say that, with exposure, with the volume of traffic increasing, the likelihood of an incident occurring. So I would certainly be focusing where there is high traffic volume. That is not to say that there is no risk on the unsealed roads; it is just that there is a lower volume. Given the cost of the infrastructure required for the speed cameras, I think it would be better placed to have those in the areas where there is a higher volume and try to address the crash risks on the unsealed, more rural roads through the other mechanisms that we spoke about before and that could be improving the shoulder construction and issues like that.

Mr O'BRIEN: This morning the RACQ gave slightly conflicting evidence to the committee in terms of recommending to us that fixed speed cameras be used only on streets that have a 60 kilometres an hour speed limit. Am I right in suggesting that they be put on only streets that have a 60 kilometres an hour speed limit, which would obviously rule out a whole lot of local government streets as well. I am taking it that you do not agree with that point of view?

Mr Deller: No.

Mr O'BRIEN: One of their rationales was simply the cost of putting them on those roads and what return you were going to get on that as well. Would you like to comment on that.

Ms Michael: No, I would not agree with that at all. I understand the cost and things like that, but the crash risk is not directly correlated to the cost. If you have a school, for example, nearby which has a high number of children around it, it may not necessarily have the speed limit commensurate with what the RACQ is suggesting. A car exiting that road has a humungous crash risk associated with it and I would never agree that cost would be a factor.

Mr Deller: I would like to add that if we recommend that it could go to 50 kilometres an hour roads that it should be blanketed and we put the fixed speed cameras everywhere where there are 50-kilometre-an-hour roads. Obviously, we would be targeting those areas that are deemed to have some risk. So where you are exiting from 100 kilometres an hour to 80, to 70, to 50, to 40 or whatever it is—through a school area where it is an environment where there are a lot of users at risk—we would be advocating that they are prime locations to encourage and ensure that vehicle speeds are reduced before it gets into that type of environment. So we would be totally opposed to a restriction on anything under 60 kilometres an hour.

CHAIR: Thank you for your time today and thank you for making submissions. We have appreciated the chance to put those questions to you. The committee will resume at 12.30 pm. Do you have anything to say before we finish?

Mr Hoffman: No. Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Proceedings suspended from 11.47 am to 12.30 pm

CAMPBELL, Col, Acting Chief Superintendent, Manager, State Traffic Support Branch, Queensland Police Service

HALES, Inspector Alan, Officer in Charge, Traffic Camera Office, Queensland Police Service

STAPLETON, Mr Mike, Executive Director, Road Safety, Department of Transport and Main Roads

STEWART, Mr David, Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads

STEWART, Ian, Deputy Commissioner, Specialist Operations, Queensland Police Service

CHAIR: We will call the meeting to order. The committee conducts this hearing pursuant to the resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. The proceedings here today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. Witnesses will have been provided with the guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees, which the committee is bound to follow. Can I ask that witnesses give their name and position for the record and indicate whether they have read those guidelines. I might start from my left.

Insp. Hales: Yes, I have. I am inspector Alan Hales. I am the officer in charge of the Traffic Camera Office.

Chief Supt Campbell: Acting Chief Superintendent Col Campbell. I am the manager of the State Traffic Support Branch.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: I am Ian Duncan Hunter Stewart. I am the Deputy Commissioner, Specialist Operations of the Queensland Police Service.

Mr Stewart: David Stewart. I am the director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Mr Stapleton: Mike Stapleton, executive director, Road Safety, Department of Transport and Main Roads.

CHAIR: You have all had an opportunity to read the guidelines? Just for Hansard I indicate that the witnesses have read those guidelines. We intend to keep to the hearing time frames if we can. So can I ask if you would like to make an opening statement to bring any new evidence or are there any particular points that you would like to highlight? You can keep it two minutes.

Mr Stewart: Sure, I would like to if that is possible.

CHAIR: Are we doing one statement or do you want to do two?.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: I am very comfortable with making some statements. I do not have a fully prepared statement for the committee but there are certainly some issues that I would like highlight.

CHAIR: Okay.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: But I am happy to follow.

Mr Stewart: I would like to welcome this opportunity to address the committee about the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras and their role in speed management in Queensland. Speeding contributes to numerous crashes involving serious injury and increases the severity of crashes caused by other factors, such as drink driving and fatigue. In 2009, there were 75 fatalities, or 22.7 per cent of the road toll reported as a result of crashes involving speeding drivers or riders on Queensland roads. This equates to an estimated social cost of \$195 million and increased pressure on hospital and health care costs and use of emergency services.

The results of the two state-wide speed surveys have been provided to the committee. Those surveys indicate that 20 per cent and 50 per cent of motorists state-wide are not complying with the posted speeds, dramatically increasing their risk of being involved in a crash. The Queensland speed survey reveals that more than one-third of motorists on 60-kilometre-an-hour urban roads are driving up to 10 kilometres above the speed limit, increasing their risk crash by up to a factor of four. As experienced by the growing body of research on the topic, speed increases a motorist's risk of having a crash and the severity of any crash they have. Cutting a vehicle's speed works, because it allows the driver to perceive a hazard and take action over a shorter distance. Consequently, the vehicle can be stopped in a shorter distance and reduce crash energy. I think we see that all the time in the research, and particularly some of the work that is happening with vehicles.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads with our road safety partners, the Queensland Police Service, have implemented a range of initiatives aimed at reducing driver speeds and the resultant crash risks across the speed management components of education, engineering and enforcement. This

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includes a camera detected offence program, which consists of mobile speed, fixed speed and red-light camera programs. Transport and Main Roads believes that fixed speed cameras have specific uses as part of a broader speed enforcement program.

Fixed speed cameras have been introduced because of their proven ability to deter drivers from speeding and to reduce crashes at specific sites. In addition to these benefits, fixed speed cameras can enforce speed limits in areas where it is difficult or unsafe for other types of enforcement, such as police officers performing speed enforcement. Fixed speed cameras also allow police more time to carry out other duties as the cameras do not require an operator.

Since late 2007, fixed-spot speed cameras have been used at a relatively small number of locations with histories of speed related crashes where other modes of enforcement are impractical. Fixed cameras have been introduced to the Clem7 tunnel due to the increased risk of an event of a crash in an enclosed road environment. Preliminary evidence indicates that safer behaviour with decreased infringement rates, and therefore increased compliance, has occurred in these locations. Their impact on the crash risk in Queensland will be evaluated once the data becomes available.

Over the next five years, as Queensland moves to digital camera technology, Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service will be working together to expand the camera-detected offence program. In line with road safety policy development in Queensland this expansion will be evidence based. I think that is a very important fact. This is evidence based research. By harnessing new technologies available, including point-to-point speed camera systems, we will focus on those enforcement methods with the greatest potential to prevent crashes, targeting areas with the greatest history of crashes or the potential for crashes.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the committee that the operation of the camera-detected offence program is aimed at road safety and road safety alone. Excess revenue from camera-detected offences is restricted by legislation and must be used for road safety education and awareness programs, road accident injury rehabilitation programs and road improvement funding. Once again, I thank the committee for this opportunity to talk to you today.

CHAIR: Thank you. Deputy Commissioner Stewart.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Thank you, chair. The Queensland Police Service certainly supports the state speed management strategy, including the use of speed cameras. Personal safety is obviously one of the strategic intents of our department and community and officer safety is paramount in trying to prevent road trauma. Fixed cameras are one of an array of tools used in speed management and enforcement activities by our department. To date, we believe that the use of speed cameras is being successful although, obviously, a significant evaluation is ongoing.

The Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2004-11 set the goals nationally to reduce the Queensland road toll to fewer than 5.6 deaths per 100,000 of population by 2011. In Queensland, the state goal was certainly, during 2011, to get to 5.6. Based on our current population figures, which we know are changing dramatically, that target would be met by, as I understand it, 248 deaths by 2011. In 2006, the road toll was 335 deaths, or 8.19 deaths per 100,000 of population. That has varied until last year when it was 331, or 7.48 deaths per 100,000 of population. Our challenge, of course, is to continue this reduction and the sustainability of the enforcement effort.

In 2009, that rate of 7.48 was the lowest recorded fatality rate for a calendar year since records began—and I believe that that is 1952. Almost one in four deaths were speed related last year. Of note, though, for the 12-month period from 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010, Queensland had 260 fatalities, or 5.8 deaths per 100,000 of population. This is a significant reduction.

Our service is committed to reducing the impact of road trauma. It is every service member's responsibility and this is a strategy that we continue to apply across the organisation. I am very glad that we have the opportunity to appear before you today and we are happy to try to help you in answering any of the questions that you pose. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. My question is about the time between the detection of an offence through a camera-operated device and the time that someone gets the letter in the mail. Can you tell us what that time is and how that could be made shorter, because that appears to be something that would improve both the deterrent effect and the public confidence in the camera-detected program.

Insp. Hales: Generally, we set a target of five to seven days to get the infringement notice out from the first point of detection. That may vary depending on interstate plates, or dealers' plates, or other plates where there has to be more inquiries made. So that is our target. Obviously, that will vary and we are always looking at ways of improving the efficiency to get the infringement notice out as soon as possible and digital technology is one of those areas that will provide that opportunity.

CHAIR: That is your target, but do you have a period now that, if I get detected today, how long on an average basis would it take me—

Insp. Hales: Five to seven days. It can go out to 10 to 14 days depending on the amount of inquiries that have to be made in relation to that infringement notice.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Alan, could you just indicate whether that is business days or whether that is just simply calendar—

Insp. Hales: Business days

CHAIR: Business days. Thank you,

Mrs MENKENS: I just notice one of your statistics that you mentioned there. This is coming from left field, this question. You said one in four deaths are speed related. Could you outline the other areas? Are there other areas that perhaps we should be focusing on from the perspective of safety that may not necessarily be speed camera or speed issues? I am coming from left field here and maybe some of the other members may like to comment on it, but one in four was speed related. Therefore, there were three that had been created from other reasons.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Absolutely. Fatigue management is a major, major issue and a contributor to serious road crashes, including fatalities, as is the consumption of alcohol. Drink driving is certainly one of the issues and the fourth one is the wearing of seatbelts. This is not an exact science, should I say, because often there are multiple factors involved and it could even be that you have a fifth and a sixth factor involved that may impact. I notice my colleague is looking at the statistics. We look at it on a monthly basis to determine and check what the major contributors to serious road trauma is.

Mr Stewart: For the benefit of the committee, I would be very happy to table this document that gives you a breakdown and an analysis of all of those factors. It could be quite useful for you. I just want to reinforce what the deputy commissioner has said. Drink and drug driving is certainly still a major factor. Seatbelts, believe it or not in this day and age, are still a problem, particularly in regional Queensland, and driver fatigue is certainly significant. But if you like, I would be very happy to table this, because it does give you a good breakdown.

CHAIR: Yes. You have to seek leave.

Ms JARRATT: Yes.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Stapleton: I just might mention that all of that information is available on our website.

CHAIR: Fantastic. Thank you.

Ms JARRATT: Thank you. I have so many questions that I do not know where to start, but let me start with this question about the speed regime that we have in place. It has been suggested to us today that we are starting from the wrong end of this equation and that instead of enforcing certain speeds we should be looking at what speeds are the right speeds for different roads. This is the theory around this 85th percentile. How do you justify the speed limit that you put on a road when we know that not every 100-kilometre-an-hour stretch, or every 60-kilometre-an-hour stretch are the same?

Mr Stewart: I would like to answer that. I think fundamentally we follow the practice of a safe management system. We have four attributes: safer roads, safer drivers, vehicles and safe speeds. Particularly in relation to establishing speed limits, we have a lot of guidance materials available for that. It is set out in part 4 of the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. For those who are not aware of that document, it is a very important reference document.

Some of the factors that we consider in setting speed limits are: pavement and shoulder conditions; lane widths—I think one of the questions asked before was the difference between regional roads and urban roads; the horizontal and vertical road alignment, so whether we are on undulating road or a winding road; the traffic volumes and activities—again, I heard discussion of that earlier; the roadside activities including the presence of pedestrians and cyclists; the frequency of intersections and property access; on-road parking activity; the magnitude of property setback; whether there is line marking; whether there is channelisation and medians; and the proximity to roadside hazards.

So it is not a simple process; it is quite an engineering driven process. In terms of having a simple methodology like the 85th percentile, whilst it has been used historically we think there are more relevant ways of actually setting to that environment, taking account of those factors.

Ms JARRATT: Nevertheless, there are a lot of 60-kilometre-an-hour zones. They are not all exactly the same; it is a standardised measure in a way.

Mr Stewart: It is a standardised approach. We take into account those factors in determining that speed. It takes very good engineering judgement.

Ms JARRATT: So do you see some benefits in having a standardised system?

Mr Stewart: We believe that the system we actually have is standardised. We follow those criteria. It is not as though we go and invent new criteria every time we go out and look at the speed limits on our roads. Remember, we as a department have something like 33,000 kilometres of road that we manage. In this state there are around 100,000 kilometres of road. It is a pretty intensive activity and we are very satisfied with the process that we use.

Mr Stapleton: I know that we forwarded the committee the results of our state-wide speed surveys. We started taking those surveys in May last year. We repeat them every six months. I do not know if you have them or not, but the 85th percentile speeds were observed in our first set of surveys. Given that we actually sampled six million vehicles, it was interesting to see the results. For the 50-kilometre-an-hour roads, which are basically the streets that our kids play on, it was 56.9 kilometres an hour. I make the point

that any speed over 30 kilometres an hour is potentially a fatality in a collision with a child. At 56.9 kilometres an hour it is a death sentence; they will not survive that crash. For our 60-kilometre-an-hour roads, in the urban areas it was 68.52 kilometres an hour and in the rural areas it was 67.97 kilometres an hour. Again, they are speeds above the limits that are currently set. You are familiar with those roads. I ask you the question: do you feel that those speeds are safe?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: There is a really practical issue here. It comes back to the standardisation of setting those speed limits. We do not get involved in that; that is very much in Transport's purview. But from a practical perspective, changing speed limits every couple of kilometres is a very difficult thing for drivers. I am not even talking about the enforcement regime. You can imagine that if you were travelling up the Bruce Highway and you came to one of those little winding pieces and suddenly the speed dropped you would become quite annoyed. The engineering and the education that goes into the standardised process we think is very good. It is sound because it gives people some consistency of speed, particularly now with the technology of cruise control. I am certain all of you know that technology. It certainly is very helpful in keeping people within those speeds.

Ms DAVIS: My question is about the purchase of speed cameras. The South Australian department of transport uses an open tender process to purchase their speed cameras which means that potentially every batch is from a different vendor. They could be different makes and models, so spare parts and training for staff would be different for each model. Once the fixed speed cameras have been tested and commissioned, they are then owned by the South Australian police department to manage and maintain. How are the fixed speed cameras in Queensland purchased? Do we end up with different systems that we have to maintain, requiring different support?

Insp. Hales: The first round of fixed cameras—the first three sites introduced in late 2007 and early 2008—were from a vendor that we had been using for some time. Because of that equipment we knew the reliability. There was a fairly ambitious time line for implementation of those. We have now entered into a review of digital technology. It is an open tender arrangement with a number of different vendors with different types of devices that provide us a better opportunity to deploy cameras in all road environments.

Ms DAVIS: So you are saying that, depending on the type of speed camera and its application, it may be a different vendor but that within a particular style of speed camera it would be the same vendor?

Insp. Hales: No. There is still a range within each type. With our digital proof-of-concept cameras there are two types of red-light speed cameras from two different vendors. With point-to-point there is only one in the proof-of-concept range, and with our fixed there are three different types and three different vendors.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: With the open tender process, it is simply a matter of saying what the specifications are that we require. In other words, what is the data and how do we want that data delivered from the system? In the old wet film cameras—and that included our mobile group—certainly it was a photo that had a data block within it. With digital and the way that technology is moving so quickly, all you need to do is specify exactly what information you want to come with the actual physical photo that the digital camera is going to produce for you—in other words, the data streams. It is simply a matter of specifying that and allowing that to work through an open procurement process.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to Dave Stewart and maybe the deputy commissioner. I just want to share something with you because I believe this is a very pressing issue. We discussed it earlier. I was to open a CWA conference in Atherton. While I was travelling from Milla Milla to Atherton there was a vehicle in front travelling at about 80 kilometres per hour in a 100-kilometre-an-hour zone. There were probably 10 to 15 cars lined up behind this vehicle. There is a lot of winding road. All of these drivers were trying to look around the corner to see if they could get past. I was quite frustrated, too. I ended up being late to this conference and I suppose—it was at 8 o'clock—everyone was trying to get to work.

Is Queensland Transport prepared to put in a submission? I know that you may have fixed speed cameras down the track, but what is the department of transport's position? Had these drivers overtaken, there is a possibility they could have had a head-on or been booked for speeding. People are not perfect. This is a matter of frustration, which can cause a lot of accidents. Is there anything Queensland Transport is looking at to resolve this?

Mr Stewart: That is an excellent question. One of the pillars of our safe system is safer roads. One of the things we always look at is investment in overtaking lanes and investment in fixing up the geometry so that there are more straights, much better sight distance and those sorts of things. That is a constant thing we work on. It is a constant part of our program. It is also fair to say that money that comes out of the camera detected offences program gets invested into Safer Roads Sooner. I think in my opening statement I reminded you that, legislatively, we have to invest money back into the health side of it but also into Safer Roads Sooner. We are always looking at that investment opportunity. When you look at our Roads Implementation Program you will see that we are always looking at those sorts of investments.

I agree with you: two weeks ago I did 4,000 kilometres on our road network driving out into Western Queensland. Some of them were unsealed roads. We have all sorts of roads. There is always a requirement for more investment. I think we just have to get very focused on making sure we put it where the safety requirements are.

CHAIR: We met with the Victorian police and department of justice. One of the very useful statistics they could provide us with was the number of people who had passed speed cameras and were not speeding. Rather than showing the number of people caught, it actually showed that the rate of speeding had dropped significantly. Do you keep that sort of data? Is there some way that we could get that data about how many people pass a speed camera and don't speed?

Insp. Hales: With the camera program, one of the performance indicators is the number of cars that are monitored by cameras. An example is the fixed camera sites at Tarragindi and Main Street. Roughly half a million vehicles pass those cameras per month. We measure the performance of the cameras by number of vehicles monitored per offences. That is reported to government in terms of how that performs. So we do have the information about the number of vehicles that pass the cameras and are measured by that device and the detection rates and the offence rates for that. That is available for you.

Mr Stewart: That is attachment 5 in our submission.

CHAIR: My apologies.

Mrs MENKENS: I would be interested in a general comment from both sides, I guess. It probably relates more to Mr Stewart's area. Do you envisage setting up more point-to-point speed cameras in Queensland? It was interesting to listen to the comments from the Victorian police when we spoke to them, when we were in Victoria.

Mr Stewart: I think one of the key issues on road safety is that there is no silver bullet. It is about a raft of interventions and a raft of strategies. I think that is a really important thing. One of the key things about road safety and one of the things I am particularly proud of in road safety is our evidence based approach to road safety. You will find—no doubt the deputy commissioner will verify this—that it is not one technique for all situations. It is mobile, it is point-to-point, it is fixed and it is covert. As well, as you know, the traffic police are out there all the time. So there are a number of strategies. My view and my belief is that we need to invest appropriately in each of those technologies. I think that is a pretty simple answer, and I think the research really backs that up. You have already had submissions from CARRS-Q. If you go and talk to MUARC or the University of Adelaide or some of our international experts, I think you will find that they would actually concur in that area.

Mr Stapleton: I might just add another point. Historically, Queensland has always run a modest speed camera program. The core of the enforcement strategy in Queensland is on-road policing. You may recall that only during the last two years the government has announced increases in the number of traffic police on the roads. That is in process at the moment. Our program is small. We have 30 on-road cameras, which have been there since about 2002. Prior to that it was about 20. The fixed cameras have been introduced in the last couple of years. So this is a modest, well-managed program that is really based on random allocation of cameras to sites so that people become uncertain about where enforcement will occur.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Point-to-point is a very interesting technology. As you well understand—you would probably know from what you have already heard through the committee—fixed speed cameras have an impact over a reasonably short length of roadway. So there really are some issues in relation to the impact of a fixed speed camera whereas the impact of point-to-point, depending on how you set it up, could be over quite a lengthy distance. I think MUARC said that the fixed speed cameras had an impact of about half a kilometre on each site but with point-to-point it is 14 to 17 kilometres. You get a much greater impact over the roadway.

There is a long history of point-to-point in Australia. You might know that Western Australia did point-to-point by aerial surveillance. They had their aircraft and they had lines on the road and they would simply time people as they went across a limit. They were timed at the first line and timed at the second line, and then a decision was made about whether to enforce the speed limit. That was on those very long stretches, as I understand it—places like the Nullarbor Plain. The Queensland road system has many of those very long stretches, as we all well know. This is about making sure that people do obey a sensible road speed limit.

CHAIR: The challenge seems to be that Queensland's program has been successful in tackling specific crash sites with crash histories. But the struggle is about changing behaviour away from visible enforcement across the network. That is what the new announcement seems to be trying to struggle with. How do we deal with that? How do we change people's behaviour away from speed cameras?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: It is a challenge. I would agree with David. I think we have to continually reinforce with the public that fixed speed cameras are only one component of a large array of tools which I mentioned in my opening address. On-road enforcement is another one of those very, very important tools.

Mr Stapleton: I just make the comment that fixed speed cameras do have limits. They work very well where you put them. Not surprisingly, people learn to slow down around fixed speed cameras. That is where our mobile program has been extremely effective. I will point to an article in the *Economist* from June 2007 where one of the English counties was writing up about their fixed program and their intention to move to a more random based program based on the Queensland model. That particular case study was where a wholly and solely fixed speed camera program had run into difficulties and they had come to the conclusion that a more random based program was the way to go—therefore their move to mobile. We believe that a balanced approach incorporating all aspects is the way to support our on-road police.

Chief Supt Campbell: One of the issues that may not have been mentioned yet is that the use of fixed speed cameras is at locations where it is unsafe for us to deploy operational police or where it is unsafe for us to put a mobile speed camera van. So the sites that we select are also based on the health and safety of police officers who need to enforce the law at that particular point, combined with the road safety aspects. In some locations the need is so significant that we must do something, yet the only safe way of doing it is with a fixed speed camera.

Ms JARRATT: I want to talk about fixed speed cameras and fairness. In some of our submissions it has been suggested that there is some unfairness associated with the way fixed speed camera fines are not so much delivered but paid. I would like you to comment on company cars, for example. Companies often can absorb costs associated with these fines and perhaps the actual driver who was responsible avoids demerit points. I am not sure how that works. The other example is rental cars where we have holiday-makers who may never receive the fine and therefore are not subjected to the same punitive effort that residents are. Speed tolerance is the other issue. Other states have a known tolerance level built into their cameras; Queensland does not. A few submitters have said that there needs to be some tolerance with this because human error occurs and that would make the system a lot fairer. So there are three issues there.

Mr Stapleton: Just on the first couple of issues that you raised, all speed camera programs that rely on actually posting out an infringement notice to a person are reliant on being able to identify the driver of the vehicle. The first port of call is the registered owner of the vehicle and we rely on the registered owner to nominate the person who was driving the vehicle. The system works reasonably well. We do run into some problems with companies, although I would point out that, from memory, approximately 90 per cent of companies generally are able to nominate the driver. We do run into problems with organisations that have people rotating through vehicles. Taxi companies are a good example of that, as are hire companies. The situation in Queensland is if you are unable to actually pay or identify the driver the fine is five times that listed. So they pay a penalty five times whatever the penalty may have been if they are unable to identify the driver. That is intended to be an incentive to identify the driver, and it does work. Generally speaking, people do identify the driver.

Ms JARRATT: And the tolerance issue?

Mr Stapleton: As a matter of policy we have never commented on the tolerance issue.

Ms JARRATT: But it varies from state to state.

Mr Stewart: It does.

Chief Supt Campbell: In terms of fairness, I recently attended a road safety conference internationally and a point was made that in Sweden they have made significant inroads into some areas of their road toll and have Vision Zero—that is, zero crashes, zero deaths and zero injuries. The point that was made by the Swedish representative there was that nobody has the right to take a life due to mobility.

Ms DAVIS: There has been a bit of discussion this morning regarding the use of revenues raised for educational purposes to try to get motorists to change their driving behaviour. I would be really interested to know how successful the 'Every k over is a killer' campaign has been? I have heard reports that it has been quite underwhelming and that it has not been as successful as hoped. I would be interested in your comments on that.

Mr Stapleton: Probably this is one of the problems we have—communicating what is happening at times. The 'Every k over is a killer' campaign ceased two years ago and it was replaced by 'Slow down stupid'. So that 'Every k over is a killer' campaign has not run in Queensland since early 2008.

Ms DAVIS: I think what that probably says is that I did not know that and if I did not know that then there are probably a lot of people out in the community who did not know that. So it is probably not being that successful either. How do we then connect with motorists so that they do start to change their driving behaviour?

Mr Stapleton: Just to explain the basis of 'Slow down stupid', if you look at the speed fatalities in Queensland from 2002 to 2007, you will find that nine out of 10 fatality crashes involved a driver, male, between the ages of 17 and 59. That is our target group for that campaign. That is the group that we have been targeting with a series of advertisements now over the past two years with ads that are actually targeted at the younger group. The more middle age group and the older group will be coming into focus in the near future. We obviously have limited funds to run those advertisements, so we do tend to target them in a very stringent period of time and we run those campaigns on that basis. We run evaluations of all campaigns. This campaign is midway through its life. We do run periodic evaluations but we have not run an evaluation on the current campaign at this point in time.

Ms DAVIS: Can you give me an evaluation of the 'Every k over is a killer'?

Mr Stapleton: I do not have one here with me at the moment, but it did run for a number of years and at that time it was considered to be quite successful. But we can organise for the evaluation of the 'Every k over is a killer campaign'.

CHAIR: Can that be provided to the committee?

Mr Stapleton: Yes.

Mr KNUTH: In our job we do get quite a lot of complaints in relation to speeding, for example. There were a couple of incidents where members of the community contacted me and I approached the senior sergeant and straightaway the police were out there with speed cameras. It did not take long before drivers knew that they had to slow down. I think that when there is a police presence there is a presence of law and order. Likewise, in those rural communities, if there are mobile speed cameras, when you walk in the pub they will let you know. In relation to fixed speed cameras, do you feel that to some extent they are artificial, that they are not the real thing? I do not know where we are at with the covert operation. But are we better off focusing on what we have now with this covert operation? Do you think the novelty has possibly worn off speed cameras?

Chief Supt Campbell: There are a couple of points there. One is in relation to proactive and reactive policing operations. We try to maintain a balance between both. Reaction to a complaint is probably a combination of both things. This happens all around the state of course. Police get reports about some sort of traffic danger issue in a street or in an area. We will then develop an operation in response to that information and then issue some infringements on the day or over a couple of days, and then word gets out that police are starting to get out on such and such a road. That is a reaction but it is also a proactive way of doing things.

We also develop our own operations through intelligence that we gather ourselves without information coming specifically from the community. They would be more proactive in many ways—that is, we get in and try to stop people from committing offences or having crashes in certain areas where there is a risk. Fixed speed camera and mobile speed camera locations are based on data that is reactive. So initially it is reactive in that we have crash data from those sites that shows that we need to do something to reduce the crashes in that specific area. We do not have enough speed cameras to get around every zone every day. We randomly—‘anywhere any time’ is the catch line—task speed camera vehicles to zones to try to increase the proactive nature of reducing crashes which potentially could happen in those zones. It is a roundabout way of answering your question but, again, it must be a combination of strategies to deal with the massive challenge that we have of trying to get everybody who is on the road, at all times every day, to and from the locations that they are driving.

Mrs MENKENS: I realise that this is probably verging into a policy area, but I would be interested if you are interested in making comments. We have heard varying opinions, I suppose you could say, this morning on whether it should be police or other personnel overseeing speed cameras and so forth. Should it be other people so that we could free up more police to do policing work? Some of the comments are that maybe those people would not be treated with as much respect or would not have the same powers that police have. I would put as a corollary to that the heavy transport drivers and say that those drivers treat the department of transport people and the police with equal respect. It could even be said that they treat the department of transport people with more respect—perhaps ‘or’, shall we say. But that is just an aside. However, I would be interested if you wish to make comments on that.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: I am happy to start. Thank you for the question. It is a very interesting one. As you probably know, at the moment our mobile speed cameras are operated by police officers entirely.

Mrs MENKENS: Yes.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: That is done outside of normal work hours. They are paid special duties rates to undertake those duties. Certainly any change to those arrangements would involve consultation with unions and, I am sure, with the government in relation to that. I do not see any change to that, although I am well aware that in other states basically the cameras are operated by personnel who are not sworn officers.

CHAIR: To follow on from that, the advice from the Victorian police was that when they had contractors their KPI was essentially accuracy, not necessarily the number of offences, and they had as high, if not higher, accuracy rates as police officers and could allow those sworn police officers to undertake more community safety activities. I know you are talking about the industrial arrangements. But, in terms of policy outcomes, do you have a view on whether you would have better or worse service if it were done by a non-sworn police employee?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: I would never say that without proper training and policy settings someone else could not do that job as well.

Insp. Hales: Just operationally, I know that the southern states have implemented other strategies to prevent attacks on their non-sworn officers so that is one of the issues you would have to consider moving into that model. We do have non-sworn technicians who look after our red lights, and that is expanding. There is an argument for both models. I am not sure which one would be better.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Alan has reminded me that certainly there is a big difference between someone sitting in a speed camera van for several hours and being exposed to the public, or potentially exposed to the public, in that way as opposed to someone who is a technician simply going out and changing a film over or potentially downloading a hard drive from a digital camera because they are only there momentarily. They are not there for a period of time. One thing I would say is that we are very concerned about officer safety in our covert cameras, our mobile speed cameras. That is an area we have

under consideration in terms of our policy. In reality, we would have to put a lot of checks and balances in place to ensure the safety of personnel operating covert speed cameras, we believe, as opposed to our sworn officers operating those same covert cameras.

Mrs MENKENS: Although the danger is still the same, isn't it.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: It is, but obviously a sworn police officer can carry certain personal safety equipment and have use-of-force options—for instance, OC spray, handcuffs, batons, tasers and a firearm if necessary—as opposed to non-sworn personnel who would not. There would have to be significant training involved if you were to give them any use-of-force option.

Ms JARRATT: I was really fascinated this morning to start thinking about how new technology might change this whole area in future years. I got a new toy the other day. I got a navigator for my car; it is brand-new, it does some amazing things. It tells me what the speed zone is at a given time, although I have to say there were some roadworks it did not adjust for, but that is really handy when you are in an unfamiliar area and the speed zones change regularly. The other thing it did was have the speed of my car, which I have to say was different to what my speedo was telling me so I was a bit concerned about that.

The other thing it did was tell me when I was going through a traffic light that had a safety camera on that site. I do not know whether that is something you condone or not—I see some benefits to that—so I would like you to comment about that. Also, will the covert cameras be put up on a website? Will you be advertising where those sites are? Will they come up on our navigators? Is there any technology? Is it desirable for motorists to know where those sites are? I guess it is a little counter to what you are trying to achieve.

Chief Supt Campbell: The covert speed cameras—the mobile vans or vehicles—are used in the same way and at the same sites as the marked mobile speed camera vans. We do not put them in their own unique sites so they still have to be within an approved site.

Ms JARRATT: If you listen to the media, you could be driving along your street in your neighbourhood and you will never know when you are going to come across a covert.

Chief Supt. Campbell: That could be the case if it is an approved site.

Ms JARRATT: Okay.

CHAIR: What about covert fixed cameras? Do you publish them and make them available?

Chief Supt Campbell: There is no such thing as a covert fixed camera.

Ms JARRATT: Do you advertise where your mobile speed camera approved sites are?

Chief Supt Campbell: No.

Ms JARRATT: Are you comfortable with this red-light camera coming up on the GPS?

Chief Supt Campbell: I am not sure whether the accuracy of what is in your GPS is something you would rely on or that members of the public should be relying on specifically to manage the road safety operations of your vehicle.

Ms JARRATT: I was hoping you could tell me because it was news to me.

Chief Supt Campbell: It could be a guide. Another thing we would note is the inattention factor. Trying to decipher all the data in your GPS device may distract you from the road as well, and that distraction itself can cause accidents and could cause the person who is distracted to be prosecuted for an offence.

Ms JARRATT: I agree with that. It was not something I put into this device though. That is how it came off the shelf.

Mr Stapleton: I might add one or two points. The navigator is probably less accurate than your speedo. That has been an understanding I have got from talking to the engineers involved in the area. The technology you are talking about is being looked at across Australia at the moment as a basis of what we call intelligent speed adaptation, which is really about the ability to manage the speed of your vehicle in known speed zones. It is being considered as a punishment type sanction for repeat speeders. Those projects are happening at the moment. Victoria is leading one of those projects at this time.

Ms JARRATT: So you are saying it would govern the speed of your car?

Mr Stapleton: It would govern the speed of your car. That is the type of technology; I am not saying that is what they would be using. That is the type of technology we are now looking at in the area of speed management for recidivists.

Insp. Hales: Can I add to that: in regard to camera sites, there are 140 approved red-light sites and they are the ones that are probably in your GPS. There are over 5,000 mobile camera sites, so imagine if your GPS kept going off as you drove around. On top of that, there are another 1,000 speed detection devices that are non-camera based that police will be using in sites through the network. I am not sure what the message would be if you relied upon your GPS. Each day we hear them announce on the radio where the sites are. I am mixed about what message that sends to motorists, because there are a lot of other devices out there so what is the value of telling people where the ones that are working are?

Ms JARRATT: I do not know.

Mr Stewart: Nothing beats observation as a driver and being an attentive driver. I know that not only from my work in roads, but many maritime accidents occur because of people relying on their GPS and not looking out the window.

Ms JARRATT: That is true.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: If I could make a comment, and it is something that Mr Knuth raised earlier: it comes down to this question about covert being part of that array of tools that are available to us. We all know that fixed speed camera sites are learned, meaning that people who pass that site every day know that there is a fixed speed camera there and they expect it to be operating. They usually obey the law so there is not a problem. If people see a police officer on the road doing traffic enforcement—and this was Mr Knuth's point, I think—they slow down. You see it every day as you drive around. The idea of covert is to add that level of unsureness among motorists—that anywhere at any time their speed can be checked and enforced. It is an extension of that learning process that we are trying to achieve here by using coverts. The MUARC report was very clear—that having covert mobile speed cameras should be part of the array of tools that are available for enforcement for that very reason.

Mr KNUTH: Is there any feedback with covert at this time?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: In terms of some statistics?

Mr KNUTH: Yes.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Alan is probably best at that, but what we are finding is that the coverts have a very high hit rate.

Insp. Hales: They are but they are declining, which is a positive. It is very similar to a fixed camera site. Initially when they go in, even with the signage, detection rates are fairly high but they exponentially drop away to a very low detection rate, which is what we exactly want out of the fixed site. When cabinet approved the unmarked vehicles in 2008, we found the same thing. When they first commenced operation, the detection rates were higher and they declined. The coverts are doing exactly the same thing.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: The difference between unmarked and covert is that unmarked are our standard speed camera vans but just take the signs away, so you do not see 'police' and 'speed camera' on the side of them. The coverts are totally different. They are any type of vehicle that we can put a camera into, and we have already tested a number of different styles of vehicles. As I said, in terms of enforcement, they have come up with reasonably high hit rates. Can I also say that this covert program only started at Easter of this year, but I am sure they are contributing to the significant reduction in the road toll this year.

Mr Stapleton: On that point, evaluation of the speed program relies on crash data. You may not be aware but in Queensland we have upward of 28,000 crashes recorded every year. It does take a while for that data to get into the system. To evaluate a speed program such as this, we actually look at serious casualty crashes, not just fatalities; there are too few fatalities to allow an evaluation of the program. We are looking at that data but it often takes up to 18 months before all the data becomes available, so it does take a while. Time frames are quite long.

Ms DAVIS: When we were in Victoria, we learnt that motorists who have been detected speeding over the limit by a small amount—say, up to eight kilometres—can apply to have their infringement notice waived, which is quite popular down there.

CHAIR: If their record is clear.

Ms DAVIS: Yes, if they have had a clear record for a certain amount of time prior to that infringement. How do you think this affects the aims of the camera detection process and enforcement programs?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Earlier we mentioned that we do not normally talk about tolerances. The tolerances used in the program are at the behest of the director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Commissioner of Police, and that is a cabinet agreed position. I do not know what the tolerance processes are in Victoria, but I would imagine that at those low speeds where someone is booked for, say, five kilometres over the limit, you are starting to get into those really technical tolerances of the equipment, which includes the speedometer and the cameras. There is always a tolerance in any piece of equipment no matter what it is—an atomic clock or a speed camera. Certainly, to some extent, it potentially could defeat what you are doing in your program. If you are over the speed limit, you are over the speed limit and we know that people who drive within the posted speed limits are safer drivers in terms of their speed.

CHAIR: How do you address this issue though? The data seems to show that there is a small group of people who are high-speed drivers who just do not care and will go 10, 20, 30, 40 kilometres over the speed limit, but there is a very large part of the population who drive zero to 10 kilometres over the speed limit and think that is safe. How do you deal with that mentality in terms of enforcing that? That is really tough.

Mr Stewart: I think my view is—again, based on research—that it is unsafe. Speeding is unsafe and I think the data is very, very clear. I think we have a responsibility as government on a whole raft of issues, and I am talking more broadly around the road safety agenda. Again, going back to the safe system process, we have safer roadsides, safer vehicles, better drivers, more education. I think there are a broader range of issues that we need to do as government, and I think we are doing it. The road toll today is 76 fewer than last year's road toll. Again, I think that is not because of one particular issue but a raft of policy issues—young drivers, motorcycles, drink and drug driving, the work that my colleagues from the Queensland Police Service do on a daily basis. It is a broad church and I think that is a really important thing.

Chief Supt Campbell: Can I add one point: that zone of, say, zero to 10 kilometres per hour over the speed limit is sometimes referred to as safe speeding. There is no such thing as safe speeding. What we also forget is that people using the roads are not all inside motor vehicles with airbags; there are pedestrians, children, kids in prams, bicycles, tricycles, scooters. At some of the speeds we are talking about—say, 65, 67 kilometres per hour—people think that is a safe speed to drive at, but if you hit a child on a scooter at that speed, there is no coming back.

Mr Stewart: Absolutely.

Ms DAVIS: Further to that warning system that they give in Victoria, given that I think the community looks at a lot of infringements as being nothing more than revenue raisers rather than for safety matters, do you think giving those safe drivers—even though you do not think they exist—that first warning is an alert to say, 'We're out there and just remember to keep safe on the roads'? I acknowledge the fact that if you are going over there is a potential to cause harm, but I just wonder whether this might find a nice balance, if you like, between the community's acceptance of fines being issued for going a small amount over the speed limit and acknowledging the fact that they have a responsibility to keep within the speed limit as signed.

Mr Stapleton: There are probably a couple of points—and I do not know a lot about the Victorian program. I probably know as much as you, and I understand you have been down there recently to visit. The Victorian program is a lot bigger than Queensland's. I am assuming they would have their own motivations for why they have introduced that. I believe their revenue is more than 10 times Queensland's. I would make the point that Queensland has had a modest, targeted program where we have actually used camera enforcement to support the work of our police on the road.

Occasionally, I do receive letters from people complaining about being booked for speeds under 5 kilometres an hour over the limit. They are not that often. However, often what we find is there are very good reasons why that has occurred. It could have been that they were actually speeding by low speeds in fog conditions. It is really about the conditions they drive within. Giving a blanket okay to that more or less says that it does not really matter, and we do have fog conditions here in Queensland on the mornings we have at the moment. I often think to myself, 'Why is that person doing the speed limit, let alone more than the speed limit?'

Mr Stewart: Or 48 kilometres an hour in a school zone.

Ms JARRATT: I think what we often forget is that those limits are maximum limits; they are not prescribed limits.

Mr Stapleton: The other point I will raise on this—and it is one that the chief superintendent raised a minute ago—is that very low levels of speeding can have quite catastrophic effects in certain circumstances. Children in suburban streets come readily to mind. The other fact you probably need to be aware of is that at the moment Australia has a serious issue with intersection crashes. Across Australia, 38 per cent of our serious casualties are coming out of intersection crashes. Once you are travelling at speeds above 50 kilometres an hour, you start moving into the danger zone because invariably collisions at intersections involved cars driving into the passenger side door of a vehicle or driver's side door. So those people are highly exposed. If the intersection is a 60-kilometre-an-hour intersection, you really want the traffic to be travelling at as low a speed as possible if that is to occur. So it is not as simple as providing a blanket solution when the risk profiles can change quite dramatically, depending on the circumstances.

CHAIR: Can I ask about local government involvement in both location of speed cameras and the use of the proceeds of the speed camera program? I am not sure if you were here for the LGAQ's session.

Mr Stewart: A little bit of it.

CHAIR: Their submission is that the criteria that has essentially been used has focused on state controlled roads and that has made it harder for them on local roads, particularly subarterial roads. That is the first point. Secondly, the provisions of the TORUM Act currently exclude local government roads from benefiting from the black spot funding that comes out of speed camera fines. They were saying that it only applies to state controlled roads. Their third point was that they wanted more involvement in the local safety advisory committees that pick the locations.

Mr Stewart: I will talk quickly about road funding and then I will hand over to the deputy commissioner. One of the key things on road funding is that we actually have what is called the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, as many of you would know. We are very mindful of the investment that local government makes in its road system. One of the things we do is we have a program that is an overarching program whereby money flows from the state government to local government. Our

preference is that they spend that on black spots, but there is a raft of reasons—there is a program around schools, as probably many of you know. It is a very important program. I think there is always going to be a discussion of how you equitably distribute funding on roads.

You are probably also aware that the Commonwealth government has Roads to Recovery funding that goes directly to local government. There are a number of sources of funding for roads. I am not saying that their level of funding is acceptable or superior or enough. I would say that we have the same calls on our funding as well. I think we try to get the balance right. The deputy commissioner might want to talk about how local government is involved.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: The Speed Management Advisory Committees, which are the SMAC committees that we talk about that determine where the speed cameras, the mobile speed cameras and the fixed speed cameras go, include local government representatives. So every one of those approved speed sites that we talk about have included local government in the decision-making process.

CHAIR: I think their view was that essentially the police and TMR sit down and do all the work and then produce the map and say to them, 'We think this is where we should go. What do you reckon?' They are saying that their engineers should be in that initial process of crash data, site selection and those sorts of things.

Mr Stapleton: Just so it is quite clear, the crash data is generated from the statistics. I think the superintendent made the point before that in actual fact there were some 5,000 sites. They are not selected by a committee. The zones themselves are based purely on the data. The actual selection of where we place cameras is based on an analysis that is undertaken by the police. We do not generate speed crash zones based on, 'Let's sit around the table and think where might be a good place to put a camera.' It is based on proven crash history.

CHAIR: So why are there no fixed speed cameras on local government roads?

Mr Stapleton: We have only really been rolling out fixed speed cameras for the last two years. I believe we have only got nine sites.

Insp. Hales: I am not quite sure why they would be saying there are no cameras on local government roads because the Southport site is on a local government road.

Mr Stapleton: Story Bridge.

Mr Stewart: Story Bridge is one.

Insp. Hales: The Warana site is on a local government road. I am a little bit confused about the terminology being used.

Ms JARRATT: The 50 kilometres per hour areas.

Insp. Hales: I think that is where there is some confusion because 40- and 50-kilometre per hour zones are not where we put cameras at the present time. As the committee heard this morning, the RACQ has not been supportive of that approach. All fixed cameras are on state and local controlled roads, but only in 60 and above zones and the same goes for the mobile fleet.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: There are many approved sites in the 60-kilometre-an-hour zones within urban areas right across Queensland.

Insp. Hales: Just to clarify, with regard to site criteria, the process is that the SMAC group—the Speed Management Advisory Committee—do look at and do approve the camera sites within those crash zones. With the fixed cameras, the SMAC group is involved in consultation. The utilisation of a fixed camera is one of the last solutions from an enforcement point of view after we have exhausted traditional enforcement, mobile cameras and then we go to fixed when we cannot sustain it or there are health and safety issues that the chief superintendent talked about. That is sort of the last bastion of enforcement. It does not mean we ignore the other options and keep reviewing them, but that is the last option. So it has already gone through local involvement earlier and been rejected because of some of those HR issues. Then it goes through is the risk enough to generate the creation of the site for a fixed camera?

Mrs MENKENS: From a policing perspective, have the speed cameras been of use to you as in identification of numberplates for other units in terms of the apprehension of criminals?

Insp. Hales: Mobile cameras probably provide a better opportunity for providing an image of the driver in some cases—not all. All of the fixed camera sites that we have in operation are rear detection. So we are only getting the rear plate. We do get queries from our crime operations groups about, 'Has this vehicle been monitored by a camera?' at a certain time and day to link to other events. That does happen.

Chief Supt Campbell: We have had front-on photographs from mobile speed cameras for a stolen car where you could clearly see the people in the vehicle driving along—

Mrs MENKENS: That would be useful, wouldn't it?

Chief Supt Campbell:—on the mobile phone without seatbelts.

Mr Stapleton: I might just add that we have always pursued unregistered vehicles as part of the program as well.

CHAIR: What about unlicensed drivers? How does that work?

Mr Stapleton: That is a bit more difficult in that normally you have to be able to prove who was driving the car. An unregistered vehicle is an unregistered vehicle; it is easy to enforce. Theoretically, it is quite possible to do that as well.

CHAIR: But if I get a ticket and I sign it to say that Joe Bloggs was driving and Joe Bloggs does not have a licence, do they then get prosecuted for not having a licence?

Mr Stapleton: There are follow-up investigations. They have been at times.

Insp. Hales: One of the provisions that relates to declaring that somebody else was the driver or responsible person is that it gets to that stage where there were no responsible persons. We do not a hundred per cent get categorically that they were the driver. We look at what is in the image: what information is contained within that, what the driver looks like. Then we do pursue false declarations. We have a number of investigations on the go at the moment where people have obviously made a false declaration.

Ms JARRATT: One of our submitters raised the issue about the move from wet film to digital in the fixed speed cameras in particular and the capacity for interference or inaccuracies in that type of evidence. I suppose I have a view about that. Could you put it on record? What level of guarantee can you give around the digital technology that is being used?

Chief Supt Campbell: I can answer part of that and Mr Hales can answer in relation to the accuracy of digital speed cameras. In policing, we have been using digital technology and digital photography for some years now in forensics and in other areas of policing—crash investigation, those types of things. There are strict guidelines and strict protocols in place in relation to the presentation of evidence on a digital platform. That will be maintained and those protocols will also be applied to speed camera operations and red-light camera operations when they go digital, as they are in the forensic world and the crash investigation world and other types of investigations.

Ms JARRATT: It is a matter of protocols?

Chief Supt Campbell: It is a matter of protocol. It is also a matter of integrity and evidence as well.

Ms JARRATT: Sure. Yes.

Insp. Hales: Just to reinforce, there is a lot of rigour about the handling of that. It is the continuity of that evidence and the reliability of it. So it follows a very similar path to the forensic handling of evidence.

With regard to the accuracy, the triggers for cameras vary between non-intrusive, which may be radar based, laser or ANPR cameras, or inroad sensors, which are loops or optical or piezo strips in the roads itself. Each one of those devices has a high level of reliability and most of the vendors that have provided a response to that open market tender that went out in 2008 have approvals from Home Office or Swedish standards. They have gone through a lot of reliability readings, and that accuracy and reliability is still there. Presently, the current digital cameras are going through validations for us to be comfortable with what information is coming in from those systems.

Ms DAVIS: I have the Auditor-General's report from 2002-03 which shows the process for camera detected offence infringement notices. I am wondering whether that process is still current today. I can table it. I just want to know whether that is still the process. I wonder how infringement notices are processed.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Could we just give Alan a few seconds to have a look at that process?

Ms DAVIS: Sure.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: The governance processes that surround the workings of the back office, as we like to call it—so once the image is transmitted, whether it is a hard image from a wet film or now digital, and they are more likely to be digital into the future—are very strict and have to follow certain guidelines and there is an auditing process. Particularly with fixed speed cameras, you will notice where they exist as there are lines on the road. They are there for a very specific reason: so you can actually calculate between the photos the speeds of the vehicle. So there is actually a cue, a visual cue that you can use—and this is in the audit process. Our auditors, the people who look at the actual screen and see the image, can pick up very quickly if there is a discrepancy because the vehicle has not moved far enough across those lines and that sort of thing. So there are those visual clues as well as the data blocks that tell us the actual speeds and the time and the place it occurred.

Ms JARRATT: We certainly would not be the only jurisdiction moving to digital photography for these purposes—

CHAIR: One of the last.

Ms JARRATT: That is right. That is the other point to make, is it not?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Exactly. If the technology was not sound it would be defeated very quickly.

CHAIR: Have you had a chance to have a look at that, Inspector Hales?

Insp. Hales: I am a bit confused about the collections remit to the state's Consolidated Fund. Is this the Victorian model?

CHAIR: That is from the Auditor-General in Queensland from 2002-03.

Mr Stapleton: That would be an error because it actually goes to another fund. It actually goes to the Camera Detected Offence Fund and always has gone to that source.

Insp. Hales: But the process is consistent with ours.

CHAIR: Following on from that, there has been the incident of the infamous Datsun 120Y from Victoria caught doing 180 something kilometres an hour in a tunnel. It significantly undermined confidence in the Victorian system and they have moved to secondary verification. How do we ensure that an incident like that cannot happen in Queensland?

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Could I ask Alan to answer this. I think we are still the only jurisdiction that provides a photo with the infringement notice.

Insp. Hales: I know we were. I am not sure whether that is still the case. I have not done a ring around.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: In the past we were the only ones who did that. Part of that is the visual cues and the checking processes that we undertake. Alan, could you run through quickly the process from when the photo hits the deck to say yes there has been a photo taken of the vehicle allegedly speeding and how many hands that goes through.

Insp. Hales: There are multiple levels of quality assurance and reliability factors included in that process. Victoria did go to a secondary verification requirement in their legislation. That is in direct response to that Datsun 120Y issue. The people within the department of justice and police probably think that is an overburden. Because of the implications for the community and the erosion of confidence in the program it was probably essential for the government of the day to do that.

One thing that Queensland should be proud of is that we have had a fairly robust and reliable program. We have admitted some mistakes we have made. We have identified them ourselves and have withdrawn notices. We have an in-house NATA accredited laboratory that tests and calibrates our speed equipment. We do have multiple steps within that process before we send notices out. Our rigour continues through to court matters. We have fairly good success within the court regime.

Mr KNUTH: This is an inquiry on the benefits of fixed cameras. I go to back to covert cameras because I find it so interesting. I probably wish this inquiry was 12 months down the track and looking at 12 months of success of covert cameras. Given that covert cameras have been very successful, reduced speeding and reduced accidents and deaths, would it be in the Queensland police and the Department of Transport and Main Roads submissions that we should invest our resources into marked mobile speed cameras and covert cameras because that is working? We are not quite sure how speed cameras are going to play out.

Mr Stewart: We try to base all of our work on evidence based research. The more data we have, the more ability we have to analyse. We can actually make recommendations on policy changes based on that information. But until we have that it is very hard. I think one of the key things and one of the benefits of road safety is that we are continually looking at improving. I can tell you from the department's perspective that if new evidence comes before us or new research suggests another way to reduce fatalities we will be there. We are passionate about safer roads, safer people and making sure we work on a safe system approach.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: From the MUARC report, which I understand you are well aware of and have copies of, it is very clear, based on an evidence based approach, that Queensland should have covert cameras and they should be mobile and operating about 30 per cent of the total mobile speed camera time. That is based on the research that underpins the MUARC report.

Mr KNUTH: The talk is out there about covert cameras. I was impressed because I had a feeling it was going to get results this early.

Mr Stewart: I think there are a lot of things that are getting results. Again I think it is a balanced approach. I do not take away from any intervention methodology, but can I also say that we have done a lot of work in driver training and driver education, drugs and alcohol, safer motorbike use. There has been an absolute plethora of investment and implementation of policy for road safety. Again, it is all evidence based.

I take my hat off to the police officers who are out there every day working on the streets as I do take my hat off to my own department's policy people and our support agencies from the universities. I think sometimes we hear a lot of people's personal opinions. What we do is go back to evidence based outcomes.

Mrs MENKENS: Jan earlier brought up the idea of rewards for good drivers. I wondered whether consideration has been given to acknowledgement of this on a licence when a licence is renewed? I think Evan said a no-claim bonus.

Mr Stapleton: I would like a dollar for every letter I have received in the last couple of years about this particular issue. It is very popular in terms of people writing in. Queensland did have a reward system. It ran through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. We evaluated it. It was a key ring badge type thing. We recognised how long you had gone without demerit points et cetera. An evaluation was done in the early 1990s and it was generally found that it did not have any effect because some of the people we were rewarding in actual fact had been engaging in the wrong type of behaviour anyway and we did not have speed cameras in those days and consequently did not catch them, I suppose. It is really that type of system. Some people we catch and some we do not. That is the nature of it. That is why a reward system is always hard to administer and why they have generally not flourished right across the world.

Ms JARRATT: The reward is that you keep your licence, I guess.

Mr Stapleton: You do.

CHAIR: One of the issues we have had is around the data and identifying what is a speed related crash. Can you tell us how from the statistics that you collect you identify what crash is speed related and what is not?

Mr Stapleton: I do not know whether anyone at the table is an expert on this. We really rely on crash reports—the work done by a combination of people including the investigating officer and the local road engineers who investigate a crash. They all contribute to determining what may have been the causes of those crashes, bearing in mind they are trying to recreate what has happened after the event. We actually rely very heavily on the scientific analysis that occurs around those crashes to make those calls.

Chief Supt Campbell: For each serious injury and fatal crashes our Forensic Crash Unit, which is made up of highly trained technicians in terms of investigation and reconstructing crashes, is called out. They are experts who put together those statistics. As well as that, the experienced police on the road overview the day-to-day operations of their first response officers. Through a supervisory role assessments are made of crashes as well as the less severe level. Quite a lot of experience and on-the-scene assessment goes into the analysis to come up with the final data. One of the issues is that there are sometimes several causes. It could be alcohol, seatbelt related or some other factor such as running stop signs or red lights.

Ms JARRATT: I spoke earlier about roadwork areas. I wondered whether they are one of your high-risk areas that you might consider for placement of either a single fixed camera or a point-to-point arrangement?

Insp. Hales: We have had a number of meetings with Transport and Main Roads over the years with regard to roadworker safety. There have been a number of issues progressed on that including a hotline number that people can call up to talk about that and make complaints about motorists. We also have that within our criteria for deploying a mobile speed camera. Complaints from the roadworker hotline does fit the secondary criteria.

Mr Stewart: We have just done a fairly significant review of our roadworker safety policy and particularly signage and safety around roadworks. It is actually interesting that one of the things you find with roadworks is that generally speed does reduce. What we are trying to enforce with our contractors is how important that is as a workplace health and safety environment. One of the things that no doubt annoys you—it certainly annoys me as director-general—is when there are no roadworkers at a site and the signs are still up. It is one of those educational processes. We want to make sure that when there is a speed reduction it is there to protect a workplace as well as the user. We have gone through a very comprehensive review. Minister Wallace, the main roads minister, is about to announce the results of that review.

Chief Supt Campbell: Last year there was an Ombudsman's investigation into roadworks. I was on the task force for the response to that Ombudsman's report. That work has finished now and is pretty well completed.

Ms JARRATT: Watch this space.

Ms DAVIS: I am the mother of three children—two of whom are young men, 22 and 24, who fall right in that category of the high road fatality cohort. I hope not to move into the policy area. It was raised earlier that perhaps advanced driver training may assist young people be better drivers. I am just interested whether you think, as part of the provisional licensing structure, that would assist that group of drivers be more sensible in their approach on the roads?

Mr Stapleton: So they have gone through the learner phase and got their licence?

Ms DAVIS: Through the provisional stage. Do you think that may assist them be more responsible drivers and reduce the number of road fatalities in that age group?

Mr Stapleton: This is always a complex question. There is no doubt that for certain individuals it may be of some assistance depending on the structure of the program. It does worry me sometimes that some of these appear to be high-speed driver training courses rather than true defensive driver training.

The only comment I would probably make is that the German department has just released a preliminary report into a voluntary program of defensive driver training that has operated in Germany since 2003-04. To say the least, the results are disappointing. They have identified I think it was in the order of a 30 per cent or 20 per cent higher infringement rate amongst the participants of that program and an even higher crash rate involvement amongst those participants.

That was a voluntary program. They had some drivers who, I believe from reading the report, were having difficulty complying with the law. But the results are indicating that there was no improvement. They are the preliminary results. That is just one. There have been quite a number of studies.

They generally indicate that as an across-the-board treatment these types of approaches do not necessarily result in what we hope they will. That is because it is quite counterintuitive, particularly for teenagers. They do not look at risk in the same way that we do. You look at a danger and see the danger; they may not. This is particularly true amongst young males, and it is a problem and probably one of the big challenges for road safety agencies across the world.

Chief Supt Campbell: I can add to that as well. From an operational policing perspective, that age group takes high levels of risk in all sorts of areas, not just on the road. They climb on the outside of bridge railings and all sorts of things that are high-risk activities. Road safety or their driving behaviour is a reflection, as somebody said this morning, of the way they live and what we have to do is address their risky behaviour as well as their driving capability.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you.

Mr KNUTH: When I was in the Northern Territory a man was booked, and it was a bit controversial in relation to fixed red-light cameras. He was booked and sent the notice three months later and a week before it was sent out he sold his car. When it comes to the accountability side of it with regard to the department of transport, is there a bit of leeway if it has gone over that three-month period?

Mr Stapleton: Alan may be able to correct me on this, but I am not aware of us ever taking that long to issue any tickets. We indicated earlier that we try to get the tickets out a lot quicker than that for the work that the Traffic Camera Office does. Alan, maybe you might be able to help.

Insp. Hales: I would probably prefer not to have it on the record, but if it goes over 35 days we do not proceed.

Mr Stewart: The Northern Territory is also not a good benchmark from a road safety perspective either if you look at those statistics that were tabled today.

CHAIR: To our witnesses from government representation, thank you so much for your time. We appreciate the submission that you have made and also the effort that you have put in today. It has been very informative for the committee and it is a good chance for both us and other submitters to test what you have said and what you do. Thank you for your time.

Mr Stewart: Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart: Thank you.

CHAIR: We had advertised that we would be having an afternoon tea break but, given that we have two witnesses left who, I understand, are both here, we will proceed.

BRYCE, Mr Trevor, Private capacity

HENDRY, Mr Scott, Private capacity

CHAIR: Welcome. Scott, you have been here for a little while, so you have probably heard me say this a number of times but I will go through it again. The committee conducts its hearing pursuant to a resolution of the Queensland Legislative Assembly of April 2009 that appointed it. The proceedings here today are lawful proceedings of the parliament and subject to the Legislative Assembly's standing rules and orders. Witnesses will have been provided with the guidelines for witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees which the committee will follow. Have you had a chance to read those guidelines?

Mr Hendry: Yes.

Mr Bryce: Yes.

CHAIR: Under those guidelines, you may object to answering any question put to you on the grounds that the question is personal and not relevant or that the answer may tend to incriminate you. The committee will not require you to take an oath or affirmation. However, we expect our witnesses to respect the proceedings here today. You do have an opportunity, if you do not have the information you would like with you, to take a question on notice and provide it to the committee by 16 August. I offer you both the opportunity to make an opening statement for about two or three minutes on extra information that is not in your submission or particular points that you would like to highlight. The committee has had a chance to read your submissions since we received them.

Mr Bryce: Obviously I was not able to give you the details of why I made the submission, but I have been a courier driver for a number of years. So I am on the roads a lot of the time. I have also had the opportunity of driving interstate trucks as well, so I have done a lot of driving—even though I look young! I suppose the reason why I put in my submission is that I am on the road every day. Now that I have a four-year-old daughter, it just impacts more on me seeing people who are doing the wrong things. I think that things could be done a little bit better with regard to how we catch people who do the wrong thing, because I think it is a bit too easy still to get away with it.

Mr Hendry: I was interested in the statement by one of the previous witnesses about the defensive driving courses. I grew up in the US and at high school I went through a defensive driving course. I have noticed driving there and driving here that drivers in America are generally of a more courteous nature than they are here. I believe that that defensive driving course process was a national initiative that all high school students did. That was going back in the sixties. I do not know if they still do it. Part of that defensive driving course was we were exposed to a film that was shot by the Ohio State Highway Patrol with a camera crew that went to actual road crashes. We saw actual real road trauma in those films, and I can tell you that it left a lasting impression. When I say a 'defensive driving course', it was not the high-speed skid pan type stuff. It was driving around on a little track in an old dunger that was not roadworthy but we did that under supervision. We were given lessons on how to assume that everybody else on the road is out to kill you and that sort of thing. I think it went a long way to shaping people's perception and people's attitudes.

CHAIR: Was that prior to people getting their licence or after they had had their licence?

Mr Hendry: Yes, it was.

CHAIR: Scott, one of the things in your submission is that you say—I think, Trevor, you might mention the same thing—that speed cameras are only really effective where they are located, that people have a tendency to slow down around speed cameras and then speed up. How do we change drivers' behaviour away from visible speed cameras? I think that is what governments are trying to grapple with and I think that is what the committee is trying to deal with as well. How do we stop people speeding every day of the week, not just when they drive past a speed camera?

Mr Hendry: I think there are two aspects to that answer. One is that to change people's behaviour you need a visible deterrent which to me means more police on the road—more police patrols, a visible deterrent, a visible mobile deterrent. With regard to where speed cameras operate, quite frankly I think they should have warning signs before the speed camera to say, 'Warning: speed camera ahead; sudden braking may occur', because I have seen it so many times. I have nearly seen nose-to-tail accidents. Because some driver is not paying attention and suddenly sees the speed camera and slams on the brake, the guy behind him is not paying attention and slams on the brake and it ripples all the way through the traffic. I guess I am pretty cynical about speed cameras. I do not think that they are the right strategy.

The other aspect is that speed is only one factor that causes road crashes, and another witness made that quite plain. I think there are many aspects to it. I read something on the internet that it is not speed that causes speed related crashes; it is speed differential. It is where you have a difference in speed where a car, say, approaches another car at a 20-kilometre-an-hour difference. That is what causes jams in the traffic—a car coming up to another car and that car suddenly changing speed. So it is a speed differential that causes problems, not the speeding. I take as evidence of that a trip that I made to the US where I was on a six-lane highway and all of the vehicles—and it was in peak-hour traffic—were travelling

pretty much bumper to bumper and we were all doing at least 15 miles an hour over the speed limit and yet it was a reasonably safe environment because when you put on your indicator to change lanes people opened up to let you change lanes. So it was a different culture. So it is not the speed. It is not just the speed that causes crashes.

Mr Bryce: I think it is a combination of two things. I think driver education is really important, and that needs to start before you get on the road. When I was a young fellow growing up my dad put me in a car in a paddock and said, 'Go nuts,' and I learnt that the consequence of what happens if you go too fast around a corner is that you roll the car. So education is one aspect that really needs to be looked at.

The second aspect that I think would work is not so much having fixed speed cameras with signs up saying, 'There's a speed camera here'—and this sounds cynical coming from me—but covert cameras. I just think it is fantastic that the police have brought them out, because a number of times—and you guys have probably been in the same situation—you are driving along the road and you just see somebody doing something stupid, whether that be flying past you at a speed in excess of what the speed limit is, whether it be in roadworks, or a 60 zone or a 110 zone, or motorbikes doing wheel stands, or people doing burnouts, you just go, 'Where's that police car now?' Covert cameras in police cars—I would love to see the statistics when they come out. I heard them say 18 months roughly. I would love to see the statistics on what sort of change that has made. On reading the newspapers and seeing that the road toll now is the lowest that it has been for a long time, I really think that that is possibly a really good contribution to that.

In my submission I was going to the next level, which is saying instead of just having policemen in covert cars, having citizens with the ability to record data. That then gets a person penalised for doing the wrong thing. I know, but that takes the covert thing. Again, what I am saying is that, 'Where is that police car when I need it?' As I said, with the amount of time that I spend on the road, the stuff that I see is just absolutely incredible. I am no angel, but the stuff I see is incredible. I sometimes wonder why we do not have more fatalities and more casualties on the roads. It is just absolute luck that there is not.

Mrs MENKENS: That is interesting, Mr Bryce. Those of us who come from regional Queensland also spend a lot of time on the roads and I can certainly have empathy with how you feel. I notice in your submission that you think that the appropriate area for speed cameras is in mobile units. Do you feel that there is a role for fixed speed cameras? If so, the corollary of that is why the mobile unit is a better option.

Mr Bryce: At the moment, I am not 100 per cent sure where all the fixed speed cameras are in Queensland. I know there are some in the metropolitan area. To be honest with you, I think that is a stupid place to have them, because how many fatalities happen in those spots? In regional areas—and coming from a regional area myself—black spots are the spots where the fatalities are obviously happening. So are there fixed speed cameras in those black spots? If there are not, maybe that is where a fixed speed camera should be so that it actually stops the people from doing the wrong thing within that area—whether that be speed, or whether that be fatigue, or whether that be just cutting corners when they are in those areas.

I think there is a position for fixed speed cameras, but I think having them in metropolitan areas is just a waste, because people know where they are. They see the signs, they put the brakes on and slow down and then as soon as they pass the sign, off they go again. In saying that, in a black spot area where it is a narrower road, or a sharper corner, or whatever the case may be—or just a bad place—with a fixed speed camera with plenty of signage around it, what is a person going to do? They are going to slow down, because they are afraid that they are going to get their photo shot. The bad thing possibly with that is that the black spot might move 500 metres up the road.

CHAIR: Which is Scott's point, I think.

Mr Bryce: Exactly. I think if there was going to be a role for fixed speed cameras, that would be a better role—putting them in spots where there is a known fatality risk or a known casualty risk that gets them to slow down in those areas until the road can be improved from government funding.

Ms JARRATT: According to the evidence that we have heard today, fixed speed camera placement is based on crash data and crash risk potential. For example, in the Clem7 there are fixed speed cameras, because if there were to be an accident involving speed in that tunnel it is difficult to get to it and it could have larger consequences than on an open road. They are also placed in places, we understand from the evidence, where it would be difficult for the police to set up some other form of speed enforcement. That is the evidence that we have been given.

What we have heard in a few of our submissions around fixed speed cameras—and I guess to some extent speed enforcement generally—is that this is nothing more than government revenue raising; that it is really not concerned with changing driver behaviour or improving road safety. There is a widespread perception out there, whether we like it or not, while our police and government officials would say that that is patently not true and that any money collected goes back into road safety and road improvements. What is your experience—if I can start with Scott—around that notion of it being revenue raising? Do you agree with that and, if you do, what evidence would you need to change your mind about that?

Mr Hendry: Before I came here today, I could not see a use for fixed speed cameras. I guess I had not really considered all of the variabilities and possibilities and certainly the Clem7 tunnel is a case in point and I do see the benefit of that. As for speed cameras and revenue raising, it looks that way. Certainly this morning some witnesses were talking about how do we carve up the revenue and who gets what.

Local government now wants to buy in and buy their own cameras and it all sort of looks like a big cash grab, particularly from a road user's point of view. When you see the behaviour around fixed speed cameras you say, 'Okay, I have an idiot who is just weaving through traffic coming up behind me.' We get to the speed camera, he does the speed limit. Four hundred metres down the road, he is doing the same thing. It did not change his behaviour at all. With a fixed speed camera, it just looks like a cash cow. How do you change that perception? That is, as they say, a good question.

Mr Bryce: From working with a lot of truck drivers and just general motorists, yes, the perception is that it is a cash cow. However, it is funny how attitudes change at different life stages for a person. For a person who is in their 20s up to their 30s with no children, yes, it is revenue raising—'I've been speeding, I've been nabbed and bugged.' But when you have children in the car and you are thinking about their safety, all of a sudden your perception of that completely changes. It is 'Yes, I was speeding. I was doing the wrong thing. That money is going to be spent educating people, or changing the road, or doing something to a benefit for that.' So whether or not the revenue from it is targeted in a different way to target the life stages of people—and I know you have the ads on TV where you show crashes and as you mentioned in the States where you saw this video evidence of crashes and that—you would have to do some sort of research to see that it is actually impacting. If I were a 25-year-old and I was watching TV and I saw an ad come on with someone plastered all over the windscreen of a car I would probably go, 'Oh, well, lucky it wasn't me' and that is it. I would not think any more of it. That is the attitude of a 25-year-old.— you have to think like the stage you are trying to target to get them to slow down or be more responsible.

Ms JARRATT: It is a little hard for most government MPs.

CHAIR: It was not that long ago.

Mr Hendry: I would just like to add something that I just thought of. If you change the enforcement methodology somehow away from a monetary penalty to some other kind of penalty, then you might be able to change the perception that it is strictly an earner.

Ms JARRATT: What about the points system that exists in parallel to the monetary penalty?

Mr Hendry: I think the money looms a lot larger than the points system for people. Particularly with \$100 as opposed to three points—just the relative numbers—the money seems more of a penalty than the points, especially to somebody who does not speed very often.

Mr Bryce: I just wanted to add something else to that. I think one of the frustrating things with penalties is that they still seem to keep staying on the road. A case in point is that, in the job that I am in, I know of truck drivers who have been on the road for six months after they have lost their licence and I go, 'How does that happen? How do they still stay on the road?' It is because it is only if they get caught again. But still, even if they get caught again, the chances are that they might just get another slap on the wrist. They might get disqualified for a little bit longer. It comes back to what do you do if you get a serial offender? At what point do you lock them up and say, 'This is it'? Then you have the cost of putting them away over the guy who has just killed three people. Where is that line, I suppose?

Ms JARRATT: We are asking you.

Mr KNUTH: Basically, both of you sound like constituents in my electorate, actually.

CHAIR: That is why we have invited you.

Ms JARRATT: That is a nice thing.

Mr KNUTH: We have this inquiry right now that relates to the benefits of speed cameras. We have the covert operation. Obviously, it appears to be a success so far, with the speed reduction. If 18 months down the track there is speed reduction, accident reduction and death reduction, do you believe that the covert operation and the mobile speed cameras is enough?

Mr Hendry: I think that further down the track, after the covert cameras have been in play for some time, it would be useful to then do a public opinion survey and see what the public generally think—has it changed their behaviour? Have they perceived it as affecting the way that they drive, or what they do?—to see whether it is useful. I still maintain that there are only certain instances where fixed cameras are useful. I think the fixed cameras out on the open highway are more of a hazard than a road safety device. In the Clem7 and in closed situations like that, yes, I see a role for fixed cameras there, but not in a lot of cases where I have seen them.

Mr KNUTH: So you believe that there should be fixed cameras in a bad black spot area. Is it your view that a fixed camera should be placed only in a bad black spot area but that black spot areas needs to be upgraded as quickly as possible?

Mr Bryce: Definitely.

Mr Hendry: Yes, I would agree with that. I would agree that if you identify a black spot area—and I think this kind of goes to a comment that you made earlier on—if you identify an area that is a problem area, the fixed speed camera is a bandaid solution. What really needs to happen there is that alternatives need to be looked at. Is the road adequate? Is the road poorly maintained? There are other issues that are causing those crashes there and a fixed speed camera is a stopgap solution.

Mr Bryce: There is an area in New South Wales—I do not know if you guys are familiar with it—that is between Ballina and Grafton. It is just south of Woodburn and it is basically this big, long straight road with a forest on each side. You basically can drive for an hour and all you see is other cars coming in the other direction. When I was growing up nearly every day, or at least once a week, you would hear about an accident in that area, because I lived near it—an accident where someone was killed or somebody was maimed and it was put down to speed or fatigue. Because it was just a spot that was eight hours from Sydney and five hours from Brisbane, it was like, 'I'm going to doze off.'

Surprisingly, they now have a fixed speed camera there, but in the other spots they have actually invested in the road because they have said, 'Obviously there is an issue with fatigue here, so let's do something that is going to stop the fatigue.' They did not widen the road to four lanes and make it easier to pass or anything like that; they put barriers down the middle of the highway. If you are fatigued and you drift to the middle of the road, you are going to hit these barriers. That means that you are not going to kill somebody else and hopefully you are not going to kill yourself because you hit the barrier, your foot comes off the accelerator and you are okay. So if we are going to have fixed speed cameras in black spot areas, they are a bandaid. They are there until there is money or resources available to fix that area so that the casualties stop.

CHAIR: Are there some conditions, restrictions or circumstances that the government could put in place to ensure there is public confidence in the speed camera program? If you could make a recommendation to government about what we should do to make it a system with public confidence, what would you say?

Mr Bryce: Knowing other drivers that I am with, I actually think they are reasonably confident in the system. When I told them I was coming here I asked them, 'Are you confident in the system that is currently in place?' A lot of them hated the fixed speed cameras on the freeway, on the Warrego Highway, at Burpengary and at the end of the Story Bridge. How many people have rolled their car at the end of the Story Bridge because they were going at 100 kilometres an hour? They were frustrated with that aspect of fixed speed cameras, but they felt that there was a benefit to having a fixed speed camera in an area that had high fatalities.

Surprisingly, the feedback I got from a lot of these guys—I am talking about 400 guys that drive trucks every day—was that they really believe that the covert operations of the police are a very good deterrent for speeding. You do not know where the police car is. You do not know if it is right beside you or right behind you.

CHAIR: I am sure they hate getting caught.

Mr Bryce: I am sure they do, exactly. I know a couple of them who have been caught by the covert ones, and they said to me, 'I am watching myself now,' because they just do not know. I must admit, when I am driving along the highway and I see a Mitsubishi Lancer with some guy pulled over in front of him with the red and blue lights on I think, 'You beauty.' He has done what he is supposed to do. Someone was doing something stupid. The police officer was in the right spot and, bang, he got him. If I was doing the wrong thing and I did it in front of a covert camera I would wear the penalty, but I know that they are there now. Probably before they were there I was a good driver; now I feel that I am a better driver because I know that there are actually cars out there that might be unmarked police cars. So I have to think about that.

Mr Hendry: I think there should be some sort of signage. You see the 'Building better roads' signs and so on. I mean, the sign couldn't be this wordy but, just to get the idea across, there could be signage to the effect, 'This is an identified black spot which is in the process of being upgraded and as an interim solution we have put a speed camera here.' People can then understand the process that is actually going on rather than think, 'They've decided to put a camera here to raise some money.'

Ms JARRATT: The other useful fixed speed cameras are point-to-point. That I guess means that if you speed over that distance you are going to get caught. So it is not a one-place, slam-your-brakes-on situation. What do you think about the use of cameras in that circumstance?

Mr Hendry: I generally agree with the point-to-point set-ups. I am not sure how they work technically. I assume that it has some sort of licence plate number recognition software attached to it or something like that. Again, I think you need to make it visible. I think there is a point-to-point set up on the Bruce Highway going north. I have gone past a couple of cameras. There is a camera under one bridge and then further along there is another camera up under another bridge.

Ms JARRATT: I don't think we have that yet. They would be two single cameras, I think.

Mr Hendry: They are on that 110-kilometre-an-hour stretch from Caboolture. I have seen a camera sitting just on the north side of one bridge and then there is another camera and they are both pointing in the same direction.

CHAIR: Just before Caloundra somewhere?

Mr Hendry: Yes, somewhere up there.

CHAIR: I think that is the identified trial site that hasn't started yet.

Mr Hendry: I saw the cameras and I assumed that that was a point-to-point set-up. If it is signed that there is a point-to-point camera in a certain area, it tells people, 'You are being watched.' I think that is a useful thing, rather than do it covertly. People get to know where the fixed cameras are anyway. A point-Brisbane

to-point system is a fixed system, and people get to know it and say, 'Well, I'm doing 120 kilometres an hour. When I hit this bridge I have to slow down to 110 and then after that last bridge I can speed up again.' It is always going to be the case with a fixed installation. It is like fixed weighbridges.

Ms DAVIS: I do not know if you were here when the RACQ was here this morning, but they talked about their website, where they identify the camera spots. I am just wondering whether you think that is a good idea or whether you think motorists would actually refer to it. Do you think it assists people to modify their driving behaviour? You mentioned, Scott, that you know where the fixed speed cameras are. I can tell you on the north side of Brisbane exactly where they are, but I couldn't tell you on the south side. I wonder—

CHAIR: That's why we don't invite you over, Tracy.

Mr Hendry: I think those sorts of things are helpful to motorists to avoid detection but, in terms of modifying their behaviour, I come back to the point that I do not think fixed speed cameras are a behaviour modification tool; they are just a short-term fix. As I said earlier, I can see a use for a fixed installation in situations like tunnels and so on. But in terms of websites or iPhone apps telling you where speed cameras are, I think that just tells people how to avoid them. It is like radar detectors on cars.

Mr Bryce: In my submission I said—

Signage only works at the speed camera site, however in saying that people still get booked with the current signage. Which means they are blind or can not read and in both cases should not have a licence.

As we have said, most drivers slow down at those fixed speed camera sites. If you have signage up at fixed speed camera sites, I cannot understand why people get a ticket. They should lose their licence because obviously they are flouting the law deliberately. With the point-to-point system, I think that will be good but I do not think it should be advertised. I do not know if it will have the ability to move.

I live out in the Centenary suburbs. In terms of the road improvements that have been happening on the Ipswich Motorway, I have noticed the big new gantries with the LED speed signs that they are putting in. Obviously they are putting the gantries up with the ability to do point-to-points. They are spaced a certain distance apart, so obviously they are thinking ahead for that. But if you know it is there then you slow down for it and as soon as you get past it, people think they can speed up again. Until the data comes out, I think having covert stuff is the way to go because it will eventually sink in that you just do not know where they are. It is the same as when they brought in RBT. You could go along a road and say, 'I know there is going to be an RBT unit there. I'll just take a backstreet. Damn! There's one there as well!' You just do not know where they are going to be and when they are going to set up. I think that will be a better deterrent and catch people who are doing the wrong thing more often.

Ms JARRATT: And change behaviour.

Mr Bryce: Change behaviour, correct.

Mr KNUTH: I actually asked this question of the Queensland police and the transport department, but I want to hear from the private submitters. I was in a situation where I was late to a meeting which I was due to open at 8 o'clock. I was behind about 15 other vehicles who were behind someone travelling at about 80 kilometres an hour in a 100-kilometre-an-hour zone. There was a lot of frustration. Cars were going out to see if they could overtake, going back in et cetera. I got to that meeting late and there were a lot of frustrated people. What do you think about cars like that that are travelling 20 kilometres below the speed limit that are frustrating drivers? What do you believe needs to be put in place?

Mr Hendry: I would like to tackle that one. In the US they actually have minimum speed limits on some roads. So you cannot travel under a certain speed because you start to become a rolling obstruction. That should be considered an offence as well.

Mr Bryce: I would love to know every road rule in the book and come up to somebody and say, 'You just didn't do this right.' When you are on the road I think you have to be personally responsible for your actions. So even if you are running late for a meeting, you just have to wear the cost of being late rather than take the risk. To talk about the person who is doing 80 kilometres an hour in a 100-kilometre-an-hour zone, we have P-platers and L-platers who have to do those speeds. Does that mean that you limit them from being able to travel on those roads because they are on restricted licences?

People in New South Wales know how to merge. Up here in Queensland, you guys have no idea how to merge. Again, the frustration is that you are coming on to a 100-kilometre-an-hour stretch of road and you are travelling at 100 kilometres an hour and the person who is coming along does not know whether to brake or go or what to do. How simple is it? How do you police that sort of thing? It is not something that would go on every day, but I can certainly understand the frustration.

Mr KNUTH: If Queensland Transport suggested more overtaking lanes, would you be very supportive of that?

Mr Bryce: I love overtaking lanes. I love tollways. I hate traffic lights. Anywhere that I can keep going in one line without having to stop is brilliant.

Mr Hendry: I think that, again, overtaking lanes are a bandaid solution. If the road traffic density is such that you start to say, 'We need overtaking lanes,' I think it is a case to say that the road needs to be upgraded to dual carriageway.

Ms JARRATT: There is a lot of road out there.

Mr Hendry: Yes, and I heard a comment this morning that we just do not have the money. I have to ask: why not? These roads were built at a time when we had a lot fewer people in this country paying taxes, and the roads managed to get built. Why can we not maintain them?

CHAIR: On that note, thank you, Scott and Trevor. We very much appreciate you coming in to give evidence to the committee today. The committee has undertaken a process over the last year and a bit to try to make public hearings a standard part of our procedure, to open issues up to public debate, whether through submissions or public hearings. Having you here today is an important part of that, so thank you. And we know that it takes time out of your schedule, with dropping kids off to school and kindy and all those sorts of things, so we very much appreciate that.

I also thank all the other witnesses and observers who have played a part in the inquiry hearing today. It has been a very fruitful day for the committee and, hopefully, for those others who have participated. I also put on record my thanks to the committee secretariat, Lyndel, Alistair and Anne—without them this hearing would not happen—and of course to the parliamentary staff such as Hansard, who have been taking down everything we say all day, and even the catering staff who made lunch for everyone. Thank you to everyone. That concludes our hearing.

Committee adjourned at 2.45 pm