

Economic Development Committee

Inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed  
speed cameras

Submission 35

**Alistair MacLennan**

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**From:** Tim Prenzler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 30 April 2010 12:28 PM  
**To:** Economic Development Committee  
**Subject:** Submission to inquiry into the safety benefits of fixed speed cameras in Queensland

To: Evan Moorhead MP  
Chair, Economic Development Committee

Dear Mr Moorhead

Thank you for your letter inviting submissions to the 'inquiry into the safety benefits of fixed speed cameras in Queensland'.

I strongly support any proposals to enlarge surveillance of motorists and increase the detection of breaches of traffic laws. There should be no concern about 'excessive' monitoring when it comes to road safety. The government should go ahead with a major roll out of fixed speed cameras to all major roads and all dangerous sections of road.

From a criminological perspective, current technologies should be harnessed and evaluated to reduce harms wherever possible. If managed properly, speed cameras should create a sense in motorists that their behaviour could be monitored at any time and breaches of regulations detected and sanctioned. Fixed speed cameras should therefore contribute to greater compliance by those who have a stake in conformity and are deterred from non-compliance by the prospect of fines or loss of licence. Fixed cameras should also help detect and catch the small number of high risk serious repeat offenders who need to be incapacitated and taken off the roads permanently or for very long periods. It is very important that the committee reject the common argument that such innovations are simply about revenue raising. Existing research indicates that these technologies save lives and reduce injuries, as reported in the discussion paper.

There is an urgent need for government action in this area. The rate of non-compliance with traffic rules in Queensland remains very high. This proposition is easily tested. A person only need drive from Coolangatta to Noosa and observe the behaviour of drivers to see that there appears to be an almost total absence of law enforcement with the result that the rule of law hardly seems to apply. Hundreds of people drive well above the speed limit. Many others drive at dangerously slow speeds. Others are talking on mobile phones, texting, tail-gaiting, changing lanes without indicating or weaving. A condition of near chaos obtains and the state is conspicuous by its absence.

The discussion paper focuses on reducing crashes, deaths and injuries. This is appropriate, but there is an additional rationale for a roll out of fixed cameras. Law abiding motorists should not have to tolerate non-compliance on the roads even when crashes do not occur. Non-compliance is not only dangerous but also intimidating, stressful, inconvenient and unfair to other drivers.

I would like to add one important qualifier to my support for fixed speed cameras. The policy should be extended to include 'mobile fixed speed cameras'; that is, cameras that are not permanently stationed at one location but which can be moved to different locations and 'fixed' for a period to increase the sense amongst motorists that any stretch of road could be monitored at any time. This will help to avoid the readily observable phenomenon of drivers learning the whereabouts of fixed speed cameras, slowing down near them and then speeding up again. Mobile cameras should also be used at road works where, at least in south east Queensland, there appears to be no attempts made to enforce reduced speed limits.

I would also like to recommend that the committee follow on from this review to explore other options to reduce the road toll, such as reducing speed limits, raising the driving age, using drag nets to check vehicle and driver compliance, increasing disincentives for motorbike usage, and tightening exemptions for offenders' loss of licence. Currently in Victoria there is a Royal Commission into the deaths of 173 people in last year's bushfires. But each year approximately 350 people are killed in horrific smashes on Queensland roads, and more than 6,600 are so badly damaged that they need to be hospitalised.

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Queensland has been a laggard when it comes to road safety innovation and enforcement. It's time we became a world leader. Successive state governments have been negligent in this area. Particularly telling is the anti-democratic nature of government inaction on road safety. Thousands of Queenslanders have been killed and maimed in grotesque multi-vehicle accidents at notorious black spots that were the subject of frequent complaints from local residents and motoring organisations. There is a palpable failure to match intervention to risk in the current road safety system. There are no tests, for example, to renew a licence and demonstrate currency with the law and road safety principles. There has long been a culture of under-enforcement in traffic law. This urgently needs to be reversed.

Sincerely

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